
Karin M. Ekström and Helene Brembeck, Editors

European Advances in Consumer Research, Volume 7

(Duluth, MN: Association for Consumer Research, 2006)
Preface

This volume contains the papers presented at the seventh European Advances in Consumer Research Conference held in Göteborg, Sweden, June 15-18, 2005. The overall aim of the conference was to contribute to the development of consumption research by including a wide range of consumption phenomena, perspectives and disciplines. We are very happy that Sweden had the honour to host the conference and we would like to thank the authors, reviewers, chairs and discussants from 25 countries for making the conference successful.

Our ambition was to create a conference that would be rich in rewards both professionally and socially. We wanted to set the scene for a conference that made use of the full potential of in-depth specialization as well as interdisciplinary cooperation. We hope the conference has strengthened the ties between researchers who work within the field of consumption and that the presentations and discussions have enhanced our knowledge of consumption as well as stimulated conversations with old friends and new acquaintances.

To organize a conference involves support from many different people. First of all, we want to thank all the reviewers who gave of their scholarly expertise, Jonathan Schroeder for organizing the doctoral symposium, the program committee for generous involvement and Russell Belk and Robert Kozinets for organizing the film festival. We are also grateful for friendly advice from the previous EACR co-chairs 2003, Darach Turley and Stephen Brown. Finally, we want to thank Charlotta Ekman and Karoline Axelson at the Center for Consumer Science (CFK) for assisting with the conference home page and media contacts.

We also want to thank our sponsors, the School of Economics and Commercial Law at Göteborg University for providing financial support to organize the conference, the conference dinner and the Thursday evening get together party, as well as the City of Göteborg and Lord Mayor Jörgen Linder for hosting the reception at the City Hall. We also appreciate that Liseberg amusement park provided free tickets for Thursday night.

It was a great pleasure to welcome you to the 7th EACR conference and to Göteborg, Sweden. Göteborg is the second largest city in Sweden with more than 600,000 inhabitants. The city was founded in 1621 by the Swedish King Gustav II Adolf, but it was developed largely by city planners and canal experts from the Netherlands and Germany. A couple of decades ago, the mouth of the Göta River was lined with shipyards. Today the north shore, Norra Älvstranden, has undergone impressive transformation. A smaller city is being built at the north shore, with the creation of over 20,000 jobs in an area totalling 300,000 square meters. The Göteborg region has become one of the world’s four leading centers within telematics, due in large part to the presence of Volvo, Ford, GM and Saab, as well as Ericsson. There are two universities, Göteborg university and Chalmers university of technology. They are both founders of the Center for Consumer Science (CFK), a national interdisciplinary research center supported by the government. The purpose of CFK is, besides to gain knowledge of consumption and consumption patterns to serve as a forum for consumer researchers nationally, as well as internationally. CFK is situated at the School of Economics and Commercial Law at Göteborg university.

Welcome back to Sweden!

Karin M. Ekström and Helene Brembeck
Conference chairs
Center for Consumer Science
www.cfk.gu.se
Conference Co-Chairs
Karin M. Ekström
Helene Brembeck

Programme Committee
Eric Arnould
Russell Belk
Janet Borgerson
Richard Elliott
Fuat Firat
Jim Gentry
Margaret Hogg
Robert Kozinets
Pauline Maclaran
Lisa Penaloza
Linda Price
Michael Saren
Alladi Venkatesh

Organiser of the Doctoral Symposium
Jonathan Schroeder
EACR Reviewers

Laurie Anderson, Arizona State University
Jennifer Argo, University of Alberta
Zeynep Arsel, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Susan Auty, Lancaster University
Carlos Ballesteros, Universidad Pontificia Comillas
Emma Banister, Lancaster University Management School
Fleura Bardhi, Northeastern University
Michael Basil, University of Lethbridge
Anders Bengtsson, University of Southern Denmark
Mariam Beruchashvili, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Serkan Bolat, University of Tennessee
Alan Bradshaw, University of Exeter
Terry Bristol, Arizona State University
Fiona Chan, University of Hong Kong
Chiu-chi (Angela) Chang, Shippensburg University
Lan Nguyen Chaplin, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Subimal Chatterjee, Binghamton University
Amar Cheema, University of Wisconsin in Saint Louis
Glenn Christensen, Brigham Young University
Athinodoros Chronis, California State University
Magdalena Cismaru, University of Regina
Elizabeth Creyer, University of Arkansas
Carolyn Curasi, Georgia State University
Vassilis Dalakas, Northern Kentucky University
Daniele Dalli, Università di Pisa
Prakash Das, Queen’s University
Gonzalo Díaz Meneses, Las Palmas De Gran Canaria University
Kristin Diehl, University of South Carolina
Kathleen Doran, Lasell College
Jane Ebert, University of Minnesota
Alet C Erasmus, University of Pretoria
Reto Felix, University of Monterrey
Shelah Ferguson, University of Otago
David Fortin, University of Canterbury
Thomas Foscht, University of Graz
Lorraine Friend, University Of Waikato
Maria Frostling-Henningson, School of Business
Alexandra Ganglmair-Wooliscroft, Dunedin New Zealand
Larry Garber, Appalachian State University
Markus Giesler, Schulich School of Business
Gunne Granqvist, Göteborg University
Julie Guidry, Texas A&M University
Hävard Hansen, Norwegian School of Management
Curtis Hautvdet, Ohio State University
Angela Hausman, UT- Pan American
Andrea Hemetsberger, University of Innsbruck

Carina Holmberg, Stockholm University
Ulrika Holmberg, Center for Consumer Science
Chris Joiner, George Mason University
Jufei Kao, Baruch College
Harold H. Kassarjian, CSUN
Jeremy Kees, University of Arkansas
Sajid Khan, Cardiff University
Dannie Kjeldgaard, University of Southern Denmark
Susan Kleine, Bowling Green State University
Jordi López, Universitat Autonoma Barcelona
Fredrik Lange, Stockholm School of Economics
Roy Langer, Roskilde University
Gretchen Larsen, Bradford University School of Management
Susan Lloyd, American University
Orvar Löfgren, Lund University
Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University
Anne Mågi, University of Florida
Agnete Marell, Umeå University
Rita Mårtenson, Göteborg University
Morven McEachern, University of Salford
Charles McMellon, Hofstra University
Risto Moisio, University of Nebraska
Elizabeth Moore, University of Notre Dame
Kaj Morel, Delft University of Technology
Ruth Mugge, Delft University of Technology
Sharon Ng, Nanyang Business School
Barbara Phillips, University of Saskatchewan
Elsa Rosenblad, Center for Consumer Science
Salvador Ruiz, University of Murcia
Karin Salomonsson, Lund University
Nicola Sauer, University of Mannheim
Jan Schoormans, Delft University of Technology
Jonathan Schroeder, University of Exeter
Surendra Singh, University of Kansas
David Sprott, Washington State University
Malin Sundström, University College of Borås
Scott Swain, Boston University
Bernhard S. Swoboda, University of Trier
John Thogersen, Aarhus School of Business
Darach Turley, Dublin City University
Marc Vanhuele, HEC School of Management
Patrick Vargas, University of Illinois
Nancy Wong, Georgia Institute of Technology
Folke Ölander, Aarhus School of Business
Jacob Østergaard, Stockholm University
Per Østergaard, University of Southern Denmark-Odense
Program for the EACR Doctoral Symposium

Wednesday 15 June 2005

9:00 – 9:10

Welcome and Introductions:
Jonathan Schroeder (University of Exeter, England)

9:10 – 10:20

“Psychological Foundations of Consumer Research”

‘Unexpected Effects of Marketing Actions’
Ziv Carmon (INSEAD, France)

‘Implicit Factors in Consumer Knowledge and Attitudes’
W. Fred van Raaij (Tilburg University, The Netherlands)

‘Persuasion via Associate Mechanisms’
Amitava Chattopadhyay (INSEAD, France)

10:20 – 10:40 Coffee

10:40 – 12:20

“Social and Cultural Dimensions of Consumption”

‘Experiencing the Utopian Marketplace: An Emergent Conceptual Framework’
Pauline Maclaran (DeMontfort University, England)

‘The Utopian Nature of Brands’
Benoît Heilbrunn (ESCP-EAP, France)

‘As Easy as ABC? A Research Journey from Advertising to Bereavement via Consumption’
Stephanie O’Donohoe (Edinburgh University, Scotland)

‘Re-viewing the Literature’
Michael Saren (Leicester University, England)

12:20 – 1:30 Lunch
1:30 – 2:40  “Theoretical Insights into Consumer Behavior”

'A Critical Theory of Brands'
Adam Arvidsson (University of Copenhagen, Denmark)

'Methodological Coherence and Conceptual Analysis'
Janet Borgerson (University of Exeter, England)

2:40 – 3:00  Coffee

3:00 – 4:00  Small Group Discussions

4:00 – 4:20  'Tips on Talks: Things to Think about for Professional Presentations'
Jonathan Schroeder

4:20 – 4:30  Wrap-up and Conclusion

---

**FILM FESTIVAL SUMMARY**

**The First European ACR Film Festival**

Russell Belk, University of Utah, U.S.A.
Robert Kozinets, University of York, U.S.A.

**Part 1**

*Selling Tragedy: The Commodification of Ground Zero*
21:00 minutes, NTSC
Jean-Sebastien Marcoux, HEC-Montreal, Canada
Renaud Legoux, McGill University, Canada

*The Unfree Consumers: Consumption and Freedom Under Subaltern Conditions*
30:00 minutes, PAL
Rohit Varman, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, India
Ram Manohar Vikas, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, India

**Part 2**

*Christmas in Japan*
19:30 minutes, NTSC
Junko Kimura, Hosei University, Japan
Russell Belk, University of Utah, U.S.A.

*Re-Examining Cosmopolitanism*
11:00 minutes, PAL.
Kirsten Blackwell, University of New South Wales, Australia
Kirsty Tulloch, University of New South Wales, Australia
Marylouise Caldwell, University of Sydney, Australia

*Consumer Ethics Across Cultures*
26:00 minutes, NTSC
Russell Belk, University of Utah, U.S.A.
Timothy Devinney, Australian Graduate School of Management, Australia
Giana Eckhardt, Australian Graduate School of Management, Australia
1:1 Special Session: Towards a Culturally-Informed Resource-Based Theory of the Customer

Chair: Eric Arnould, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, U.S.A.
Discussant: Fuat Firat, University of Southern Denmark-Odense, Denmark

Special Session Summary
Towards a Culturally-Informed Resource-Based Theory of the Customer ......................................................... 6
Eric Arnould, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, U.S.A.

Consumer Projects: Cultural Resources and the Pursuit of Consumer Agency
Risto Moisio, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, U.S.A.
Eric Arnould, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, U.S.A.

Consuming It Cool: Status Multiplicity and Contextualized Cultural Capital
Zeynep Arsel, University of Wisconsin–Madison, U.S.A.
Craig Thompson, University of Wisconsin–Madison, U.S.A.

Negotiating Distinctions: How Brands Become Cultural Resources ................................................................. 10
Marius K. Luedicke, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
Markus Giesler, York University, Canada

1:2 Competitive Session: Global Brands in Cultural Contexts

Chair: Glenn Christensen, Brigham Young University, U.S.A.
Discussant: Torsten Ringberg, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, U.S.A.

Consumers’ Accounts Re-producing the Cultural Contradiction of Global Shopping Brands—A Socio-Cultural Level of Analysis ................................................................. 12
Sofia Ulver, Lund University, Sweden

Where Does our Food Come From?—The Relevance of Source of Origin in International Marketing .................. 19
James Hosea, Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Norway
Brynjulfur Eyjolfsson, Møre forsking in Ålesund, Norway
Ingeborg Astrid Kleppe, Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Norway

The Marketing of What? On the Intertwining of Textual Differences .............................................................. 27
Cecilia Cassinger, Lund University, Sweden

1:3 Competitive Session: Glocal Identities and Communities

Chair: Christina Goulding, University of Wolverhampton, UK
Discussant: Christina Goulding, University of Wolverhampton, UK

Glocalisation, Authenticity and Consumption: A Qualitative Investigation of the Australian Hip Hop Culture ..................... 34
Damien Arthur, University of Adelaide, Australia

The Consumption Logic of Subcultural Capital: Constructing the Stockholm Brat Enclave ..................................... 36
Jacob Ostberg, Stockholm University School of Business, Sweden

Up-dating Cosmopolitanism: Replicating and Extending Key Studies ............................................................ 38
Marylouise Caldwell, University of Sydney, Australia
Thu 1:4 Competitive Session: Pensions and Investments

Chair: Joydeep Srivastava, University of Maryland, U.S.A.
Discussant: Fred van Raaij, Universiteit van Tilburg, The Netherlands

Determinants of the Use of Heuristic Choice Rules in the Swedish Premium Pension Scheme: An Internet-Based Survey ................................................................. 44
Ted Martin Hedesström, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Henrik Svedsäter, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Tommy Gärling, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

Masculinity and Femininity as Predictors of Financial Risk-Taking: Evidence from a Priming Study on Gender Salience ................................................................. 45
Katja Meier-Pesti, University of Vienna, Austria
Elisabeth Goetze, University of Economics and Business Administration of Vienna, Austria

Framing Effects and Information Processing of Individual Investors ......................................................................................................................... 47
Martina Steul, University of Leipzig, Germany

Thu 1:5 Competitive Session: Metaphores and Rhetoric in Ads

Chair: Charles McMellon, Hofstra University, U.S.A.
Discussant: Michael Saren, University of Leicester, UK

Burn Fat and Build Muscle: How Conceptual Metaphor Shapes Consumer Belief ................................................................. 49
Barbara J. Phillips, University of Saskatchewan, Canada
Edward F. McQuarrie, Santa Clara University, U.S.A.

Copyless Ads: The Impact of Complex Advertising Images on Attitude Toward the Advertisement ....................................................... 51
Tze Wee Chan, Saatchi & Saatchi, Malaysia
Margaret K. Hogg, Lancaster University Management School, England

Towards a New Typology for Visual and Textual Rhetoric in Print Advertisements ..................................................................................................................... 59
Margot Van Mulken, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Thu 1:6 Competitive Session: Media Consumption and Technology

Chair: Helene Brembeck, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Discussant: Kaj Morel, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

Face the Music: Mobile Multimedia in Social Context ................................................................. 66
Ilpo Koskinen, University of Art and Design, Finland
Petteri Repo, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland

Patterns of Audiovisual Media Consumption: The Symbolic Role of Free Will ................................................................. 70
Jordi López, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
Ercilia García, Universitat Rovira i Virgili of Tarragona, Spain

Consumables in the CME: Towards a Typology of Products ...................................................................................................................... 72
Shakeel Siddiqui, Dublin City University, Ireland
Darach Turley, Dublin City University, Ireland
Thu 2:1 *Special Session*: Sub-Cultures of Consumption: A Critical Reappraisal

Chair: Avi Shankar, Exeter University, UK  
Discussant: Richard Elliott, University of Warwick, UK

**SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY**

*Sub-Cultures of Consumption: A Critical Reappraisal*  
Avi Shankar, Exeter University, UK

*From Rebellion to Commodification: The Case of ‘Goth’*  
Christina Goulding, Wolverhampton University, UK  
Mike Saren, Leicester University, UK

*Over The Counter Culture?*  
Robin Canniford, Exeter University, UK  
Tim Newton, Exeter University, UK  
Avi Shankar, Exeter University, UK

*Subcultures, Neotribes, Countercultures, or New Social Movements: The Case of Voluntary Simplicity*  
Hélène Cherrier, Westminster University, UK  
Jeff B. Murray, Arkansas University, U.S.A.

Thu 2:2 *Special Session*: Consumers’ Cross-Cultural, Cross-Demographic and Cross-Communal Co-Creation of Brand Meanings

Chair: Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University, UK  
Discussant: Margaret Hogg, Lancaster Management School, UK

**SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY**

*Consumers’ Cross-Cultural, Cross-Demographic, and Cross-Communal Co-Creation of Brand Meanings*  
Pauline Maclaran, DeMontfort University, United Kingdom

*Brands in Transit: The Dynamics of Cross-Cultural Brand Meaning and the British Royal Family Brand*  
Eileen Fischer, York University, Canada  
Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University, UK  
Cele Otnes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.  
Pia Segal Munther, York University, Canada

*The Development of Brand Meaning in Children and Adolescents*  
Lan Nguyen Chaplin, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A.  
Deborah Roedder John, University of Minnesota, U.S.A.

*Look What They’ve Done to My Brand: Clashes of Brand Tribes*  
Bernard Cova, ESCP-EAP, France  
Stefano Pace, Bocconi University, Italy
Thu 2:3 Competitive Session: Brand Extension and Ambiguity

Chair: Andrea Morales, University of Southern California, U.S.A.
Discussant: Kent Grayson, Northwestern University, U.S.A.

Could the Results of Consumer Research in the Case of Manufacturer’s Brand Extension be Transferred to the Brand Extension of Private Labels – An Exploratory Study ................................................................. 84
Bernhard Swoboda, University of Trier, Germany
Sara Samadi, University of Trier, Germany
Thomas Foscht, University of Graz, Austria

Dirt! An Interpretive Study of Negative Opinions about a Brand Extension ................................................................. 92
Henrik Sjödin, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

Some Consequences of Category Ambiguity: A Comparison of Hybrid and Non-Hybrid Products .............................................. 97
Kaj P.N. Morel, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

Thu 2:4 Competitive Session: Family Influence and Consumer Socialisation

Chair: Carlos Ballesteros, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Spain
Discussant: Jim Gentry, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

Differences and Similarities in Measuring Family Influences on Young Adult Consumers. An Integrative Analysis .................. 104
Rafael Bravo, University of Zaragoza, Spain
Elena Fraj, University of Zaragoza, Spain
Eva Martínez, University of Zaragoza, Spain

“If We’re Not Going to Italy, I’m Not Coming” ................................................................. 112
Malene Gram, Aalborg University, Denmark

The Relative Influence of Consumer Socialization Agents on Children and Adolescents: Examining The Past and Modeling The Future ................................................................. 119
Monali Hota, University of Western Sydney, Australia
Robyn McGuiggan, University of Western Sydney, Australia

Thu 2:5 Competitive Session: Experience, Events and Sponsorship

Chair: Jordi López, University of Navarra, Spain
Discussant: Jan Schoormans, Delft University, The Netherlands

Consumer Motivations to Participate in Marketing-Events: The Role of Predispositional Involvement ........................................ 125
Markus Wohlfeil, Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland
Susan Whelan, Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland

Experience-Based Design: Some Concepts and Issues ................................................................. 132
Sayantani Mukherjee, University of California, Irvine, U.S.A.
Alladi Venkatesh, University of California, Irvine, U.S.A.

I Spy a Sponsor: The Effects of Sponsorship Level, Prominence, Relatedness and Cueing on Recall Accuracy ............................................. 136
Kirk L. Wakefield, Baylor University, U.S.A.
Karen Becker-Olsen, Lehigh University, U.S.A.
T. Bettina Cornwell, University of Queensland, Australia
Thu 2:6 Competitive Session: Representations of Gender

Chair: Magnus Mörck, Centre for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Discussant: Craig Thompson, University of Wisconsin-Madison, U.S.A.

The Weight of the World: Consuming Traditional Masculine Ideologies
Andrew Dunne, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
Olivia Freeman, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
Roger Sherlock, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

Representation of Gay Families in Advertising: Consumer Responses to an Emergent Target Group
Janet L. Borgerson, University of Exeter, UK
Britta Isla, Stockholm University, Sweden
Jonathan E. Schroeder, University of Exeter, UK
Erika Thorssén, Bond University, Sweden

Depicting Romantic Couples in Advertising: The Roles of Gender and Race on Audience Perceptions
Michael Callow, Morgan State University, U.S.A.
Charles McMellon, Hofstra University, U.S.A.
Dawn Lerman, Fordham University, U.S.A.
David Luna, Baruch College, U.S.A.

Thu 3:1 Special Session: Creating and Enacting Family through Consumption

Chair: Amber M. Epp, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.
Discussant: Eric Arnould, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

Special Session Summary
Creating and Enacting Family through Consumption
Linda L. Price, University of Nebraska, U.S.A.
Amber M. Epp, University of Nebraska, U.S.A.

Reflecting Family: Home Furnishings as Consumption Symbols of Family Identity
Amber Epp, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.
Linda Price, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

“My Nana, My Mom and I Went to American Girl”: Brand Experience in the Construction of Family Mythology
Robert V. Kozinets, University of Wisconsin-Madison
John F. Sherry, Jr., Northwestern University
MaryAnn McGrath, Loyola University Chicago
Stefania Borghini, Bocconi University
Nina Diamond, DePaul University
Al Muniz, DePaul University

‘Soccer Moms and Dads’: Family Values Enacted Through Sports
Tandy D. Chalmers, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.
Patricia F. Kennedy, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.
Lynn R. Kahle, University of Oregon, U.S.A.
Thu 3:2 Competitive Session: Shopping Orientation and Mood

Chair: Paul Hewer, University of Stirling, UK
Discussant: Andrea Gröppel-Klein, European University Viadrina, Germany

Shopping Orientations as Determinants of Attitude Towards Food Retailers and Perception of Store Attributes .............................................. 160
  Dirk Morschett, Saarland University, Germany
  Bernhard Swoboda, University of Trier, Germany
  Hanna Schramm-Klein, Saarland University, Germany

Shopping Motives and the Hedonic/Utilitarian Shopping Value: A Preliminary Study ................................................................. 168
  Gianluigi Guido, University of Lecce, Italy and University of Rome, Italy

Product-or-Store-Induced Mood and its Influence on Product Evaluations and Identification with the ........................................ 170
Product: The Case of Clothing
  Anna Broback, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden
  Hanna Hjalmarson, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

Thu 3:3 Competitive Session: Possessions, Meanings and Value

Chair: Adam Arvidsson, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Discussant: Avi Shankar, Exeter University, UK

To Possess and to Be Possessed: The Sacred Facet of Gift Giving .......................................................................................... 176
  Domen Bajde, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Sacralising the Profane: Creating Meaning with Christmas Consumption in the UK .............................................................. 182
  Caroline Tynan, Nottingham University Business School, United Kingdom
  Sally McKechnie, Nottingham University Business School, United Kingdom

Dealing in Secondhand Goods: Creating Meaning and Value .................................................................................................. 189
  Elizabeth Parsons, University of Keele, United Kingdom

Thu 3:4 Competitive Session: Nostalgia and Authenticity

Chair: Maurice Patterson, University of Limerick, Ireland
Discussant: Russell Belk, University of Utah, U.S.A.

Exploring Nostalgia in Russia: Testing the Index of Nostalgia-Proneness .................................................................................. 195
  Susan L. Holak, City University of New York, College of Staten Island, U.S.A.
  William J. Havlena, Dynamic Logic, New York, U.S.A.
  Alexei V. Matveev, City University of New York, College of Staten Island, U.S.A.

In the Land of the Morning Calm: Exploring How Ex-American Soldiers Construct and Maintain Identity by Recycling Past Experiences ........................................... 201
  Charles A. McMellon, Hofstra University, U.S.A.

Consuming Authenticity at Gettysburg ......................................................................................................................... 208
  Athinodoros Chronis, California State University-Stanislaus, U.S.A.
  Ronald Hampton, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.
Thu 3:5 Competitive Session: Self, Risk and Deception

Chair: Jufei Kao, The Graduate Center, City University of New York
Discussant: Jeremy Kees, University of Arkansas, U.S.A.

Self as a Source of Self-Positivity Bias .................................................................................................................. 210
Parthasarathy Krishnamurthy, University of Houston, U.S.A.
Magdalena Cismaru, University of Regina, Canada

Problem-Oriented Anxiety and Consumer Behaviour ............................................................................................... 212
Sonia Capelli, Lyon1 University and CERAG, France

Motives for Deception in Consumer Word-of-Mouth Communication ................................................................. 221
Jennifer J. Argo, University of Alberta, Canada
Katherine White, University of Calgary, Canada
Darren W. Dahl, University of British Columbia, Canada

Thu 3:6 Competitive Session: Memory Reconstruction and Evaluation

Chair: Nancy Wong, Georgia Institute of Technology, U.S.A.
Discussant: Curtis Haugvedt, Ohio State University, U.S.A.

Reconstructing Memory for Evaluations: The Role of Past Feelings, Past Behaviour, and Post-Experience ................. 223
Information
Elizabeth Cowley, University of Sydney, Australia

Memory Reconstruction Following Written Testimonials ............................................................................................. 224
Terence A. Shimp, University of South Carolina, U.S.A.
Stacy Wood, University of South Carolina, U.S.A.
Laura Smarandescu, University of South Carolina, U.S.A.

Brand Names and Transitive Implicit Associations .................................................................................................. 225
Claudiu V. Dimofte, Georgetown University, U.S.A.
Richard F. Yalch, University of Washington, U.S.A.
Anthony G. Greenwald, University of Washington, U.S.A.

Thu 3:7 Roundtable: Political Consumerism

ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY
Political Consumerism .................................................................................................................................................. 227
Ingeborg Astrid Kleppe, University of Bergen, Norway
Kristin Strømsnes, University of Bergen, Norway

Discussion leaders: Ingeborg Astrid Kleppe, Stein Rokkan Centre for Social Studies, Norway
Kristin Strømsnes, Stein Rokkan Centre for Social Studies, Norway

Participants: Fuat Firat
Eivind Jacobsen
Lisa Peñaloza
Frank Trentman
Alladi Venkatesh
Thu 4:1 Special Session: The Influence of Religiosity on Consumption

Chair: Aric Rindfleisch, University of Wisconsin, U.S.A.
Discussant: Craig Thompson, University of Wisconsin, U.S.A.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

The Influence of Religiosity on Consumption

Aric Rindfleisch, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

Religiosity and Social Risk
Malcolm Smith, University of Manitoba, U.S.A.
Lynn R. Kahle, University of Oregon, U.S.A.
Kristina D. Frankenberger, Western Oregon University, U.S.A.
Rajeev Batra, University of Michigan, U.S.A.

Among the Faithful: Religiosity in Brand Communities
Albert M. Muñiz, Jr., DePaul University, U.S.A.
Hope Jensen Schau, Temple University, U.S.A.

Religious Fundamentalism and Brand Connections
Aric Rindfleisch, University of Wisconsin-Madison, U.S.A.
James E. Burroughs, University of Virginia, U.S.A.
Nancy Wong, Georgia Institute of Technology, U.S.A.

Thu 4:2 Special Session: User Involvement in Product Development

Chair: Petteri Repo, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland
Discussant: Päivi Timonen, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

User Involvement in Product Development

Petteri Repo, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland

Users in Innovation: Potential, Problems and the Role of Experience
Eva Heiskanen, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland
Ilpo Koskinen, University of Art and Design, Finland
Petteri Repo, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland
Päivi Timonen, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland

Participatory Development of Climate-Friendly Products
Esther Hoffmann, Institute for Ecological Economy Research, Germany

User Involvement of Different Target Groups in a Mobile Context
Pekka Isomursu, Nokia, Finland
Minna Isomursu, University of Oulu, Finland
Eeva Leinonen, University of Oulu, Finland
Thu 4:3 Competitive Session: Food and the Postmodern Family

Chair: Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University, UK
Discussant: Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University, UK

Feeding Post-Modern Families: Food Preparation and Consumption Practices in New Family Structures ........................................ 249
Simona Romani, University of Pisa, Italy

Home to McDonald’s. The Domestication of McDonald’s in Sweden .......................................................................................... 256
Helene Brembeck, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

Elixir of Eternal Life or Libation to Ethnic Spirits: The Meanings of Tea in Japan ............................................................... 262
Yuko Minowa, Long Island University–Brooklyn Campus, U.S.A.

Thu 4:4 Competitive Session: Online Shopping and Advice

Chair: Solveig Wikström, Stockholm University, Sweden
Discussant: Solveig Wikström, Stockholm University, Sweden

A Comparison of Four Online Shops with Different Degrees of Interactivity and Consequences for Affective, Cognitive and Intentional Customer Reactions ........................................................................ 268
Sandra Diehl, Saarland University, Germany
Ralf Terlutter, Saarland University, Germany
Peter Weinberg, Saarland University, Germany

Determinants of Consumers’ Adoption of Online Grocery Shopping .................................................................................. 276
Torben Hansen, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Hans Stubbe Solgaard, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Flemming Cumberland, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

The Proof of the Pudding is in the Tasting—Or is It? Novice Consumers’ Trust in Providers of Online Advice ......................... 278
Peter de Vries, University of Twente, The Netherlands

Thu 4:5 Competitive Session: Collectors and Online Buyer-sellers

Chair: Frank Trentman, Birkbeck College, UK
Discussant: Karin M. Ekström, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

The Music Collector ........................................................................................................................................................................ 285
Michael Sullivan, Nottingham University Business School, UK
Sally Hibbert, Nottingham University Business School, UK

Multiple Realities, Multiple Meanings and a Mountain of Objects: Collectors in their Social World ....................................... 292
Nia Hughes, Staffordshire University, UK

Buyer-Seller Role Malleability; A Dip in the eBay ......................................................................................................................... 295
Shakeel Siddiqui, Dublin City University, Ireland
Darach Turley, Dublin City University, Ireland

Thu 4:6 Competitive Session: Morality and Social Responsibility

Chair: Elin Brandi Sørensen, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
Discussant: Eivind Jacobsen, National Institute for Consumer Research, Norway

The A-B-C of Recycling ........................................................................................................................................................................... 297
Folke Ölander, Aarhus School of Business, Denmark
John Thøgersen, Aarhus School of Business, Denmark
Striving To Be Good: Moral Balance in Consumer Choice .......................................................... 303
Mariam Beruchashvili, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.
James W. Gentry, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.
Linda L. Price, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

The Numbers (Never) Lie: Corporate Fraud, Generalized Suspicion and Investment Behaviour ...................................... 308
Peter Darke, University of British Columbia, Canada
Jennifer Argo, University of Alberta, Canada

FRIDAY, 17 JUNE
Sessions Fri 1:1-6
08:30-10:00

Fri 1:1 Special Session: How Consumer Beliefs Affect Subsequent Behaviors
Chair: On Amir, Yale University, U.S.A.
Discussant: Itamar Simonson, Stanford University, U.S.A.

The Effect of Decision Procedures on Choice and Strength of Preference
Wendy Liu, Stanford University, U.S.A.
Itamar Simonson, Stanford University, U.S.A.

The Effect of Depleted Resources and Weak Preferences on Consumer Choice
On Amir, Yale University, U.S.A.
Anastasiya Pochepptsova, Yale University, U.S.A.
Ravi Dhar, Yale University, U.S.A.
Roy Baumeister, Central Florida University, U.S.A.

Placebo Effects of Marketing Actions: Consumers May Get What they Pay For
Baba Shiv, University of Iowa, U.S.A.
Ziv Carmon, INSEAD, France
Dan Ariely, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), U.S.A.

Fri 1:2 Competitive Session: Bungyjumping and Reflexivity
Chair: Shelagh Ferguson, University of Otago, New Zealand
Discussant: Janet Borgerson, University of Exeter, UK

Uncovering Sport Game Covers–The Consumption of Video Game Packages ................................................................. 310
Sven Bergvall, Royal Institute of Technology–KTH, Sweden
Mikolaj Dymek, Royal Institute of Technology–KTH, Sweden

Videography: New Kid on the Research Block or Significant Contribution to Consumer Research? ................................. 317
Shelagh Ferguson, University of Otago, New Zealand
Sarah Todd, University of Otago, New Zealand

Researcher Reflexivity: A Personal Journey ................................................................................................................. 322
Helen Woodruffe-Burton, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom
Fri 1:3 Competitive Session: Children in Consumer Culture

Chair: Fleura Bardhi, Northeastern University, U.S.A.
Discussant: Emma Banister, Lancaster University, UK

Children and Their Money ................................................................. 327
   Barbro Johansson, Center for Consumer Science, (CFK), Sweden

Material Values, Valued Possessions, and Their Use: A Study of School Children Age Nine to Fifteen 333
   Hanna Hjalmarson, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

An Exploration into Children’s Use of Brand Knowledge and Consumer Culture as a Social Resource: A Discourse Analytic Approach 339
   Olivia Freeman, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

Fri 1:4 Competitive Session: Cyborgs and Body Parts

Chair: Karin Salomonsson, Lund University, Sweden
Discussant: Jonathan Schroeder, University of Exeter, UK

Cyborg Consciousness: A Visual Culture Approach to the Technologised Body 344
   Norah Campbell, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
   Aidan O’Driscoll, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
   Michael Saren, University of Leicester, United Kingdom

The Symbolic Meaning of Body Parts In Images: The Case of Hands In Advertisement 352
   Mali Pohlmann, Stockholm University and Witten/Herdecke University, Germany
   Marcus Giesler, York University, Canada

Embodying Mortality: Exploring Women’s Perceptions of Mortal Embodiment in Shaping Ambivalence towards Cadaveric Organ Donation 360
   Ai-Ling Lai, University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom
   Janine Dermody, University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom
   Stuart Hanmer-Lloyd, University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom

Fri 1:5 Competitive Session: Customer Satisfaction

Chair: Ulrika Holmberg, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Discussant: Magnus Söderlund, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

The Effect of Primary and Secondary Product Attributes on Customer Satisfaction 367
   Inge Brechan, Institute of Transport Economics, Norway

Relationship Quality and Relationship Satisfaction: An Application at Retail Banks in Brazil 368
   Paulo Henrique Muller Prado, CEPPAD UFPR, Brazil
   Rubens da Costa Santos, EAESEP FGV, Brazil

Retail Channel Portfolios: Channel-Attributes or Integration-Benefit – What Counts More? 377
   Hanna Schramm-Klein, Saarland University, Germany
   Dirk Morschett, Saarland University, Germany
Fri 1:6 Competitive Session: Messages in Advertising

Chair: Flemming Hansen, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Discussant: Fredrik Lange, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

“If You Can’t Say Anything Nice, It Had Better Be Funny!” – The Impact of Humour in Two-Sided Messages ........................................ 385
Martin Eisend, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

In Search of Moderators of the Effect of Message Framing on Persuasion ................................................................................... 387
Sunghwan Yi, University of Guelph, Canada

Moderators of Vividness Effects and Statistical Formats on Framing-Message Effectiveness Relationship ........................................ 388
Chun-Tuan Chang, National University of Kaohsiung, Taiwan
Yu-Kang Lee, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan

Fri 1:7 Roundtable: Food Consumption and the “Grey” Consumer

ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY
Food Consumption and the “Grey” Consumer ......................................................................................................................... 390
Helene Brembeck, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

Discussion leader: Helene Brembeck, Centre for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

Participants: Marylyn Carrigan
Malene Grams
Margaret K. Hogg
Lena Jonsson
MariAnne Karlsson
Pauline Maclaran
Eva Ossiansson
Simona Romani
Dominique Roux
Helena Shanahan
Isabelle Szmigin
Craig Thompson

FRIDAY, 17 JUNE
Sessions Fri 2:1-6
10:30-12:00

Fri 2:1 Special Session: New Perspectives on Collecting–Focusing on Fabric, Paper and Glass

Chair: Karin M. Ekström, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Discussant: Russell Belk, University of Utah, U.S.A.

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
New Perspectives on Collecting–Focusing on Fabric, Paper and Glass .......................................................................................... 391
Karin M. Ekström, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

Remembrances of Things Past: Silent Voices in Collections ................................................................................................. 392
Russell Belk, University of Utah, U.S.A.
Fri 2:2 Competitive Session: Intentions and Goals

Chair: Alet C Erasmus, University of Pretoria, Republic of South Africa
Discussant: John Thøgersen, Aarhus School of Business, Denmark

Increasing Store Brand Purchase Intentions through Product Sampling .......................................................... 409
Terence A. Shimp, University of South Carolina, U.S.A.
David E. Sprott, Washington State University, U.S.A.

Intentions are Plural: Towards a Multidimensional View of Intentions in Consumer Research ................... 410
Magnus Söderlund, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden
Niclas Öhman, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

Fri 2:3 Competitive Session: To Break Up or Not Break Up

Chair: Magdalena Petersson, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Discussant: Pirjo Laaksonen, University of Wasa, Finland

The Art of Breaking Up ......................................................... 416
Christina Ioannou, University of Sydney, Australia
Jeaney Yip, University of Sydney, Australia
Natalina Zlatevska, University of Sydney, Australia

Faithful and Satisfied? Consumers’ Loyalty to Grocery Stores ................................................................. 418
Ulrika Holmberg, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

Categories of Loyalty. Toward Meaning-based Theory of Customer Loyalty .................................................. 420
Heli Paavola, University of Tampere, Finland

Fri 2:4 Competitive Session: Navigating the Global Brandscape

Chair: Eric Arnould, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.
Discussant: Fuat Firat, University of Southern Denmark-Odense, Denmark

A. M. Kaleel Rahman, University of Sydney, Australia

Consumption in Transnational Social Spaces: A Study of Turkish Transmigrants ........................................ 431
Mine Üçok, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
Dannie Kjeldgaard, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Navigating Culture in the Asian Regional Context ......................................................................................... 437
Giana Eckhardt, AGSM, Australia
Julien Cayla, AGSM, Australia
Fri 2:5 Competitive Session: Servicescapes and Expectations

Chair: Jean-Sebastien Marcoux, HEC Montréal, Canada
Discussant: Jacob Östberg, Stockholm university, Sweden

Finding Home in Hotels: Home as Order—An Alternative Perspective to Study Consumption of Servicescapes .............................. 438
Fleura Bardhi, Northeastern University, U.S.A.

Balance in the (Re)making: A Deep Metaphor Analysis of Consumer Recovery Expectations .......................................................... 440
Glenn Christensen, Brigham Young University, U.S.A.
Torsten Ringberg, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, U.S.A.

Fri 2:6 Competitive Session: Seniors and children in advertising

Chair: Barbro Johansson, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Discussant: Isabelle Szmigin, University of Birmingham, UK

Effects of Baby-Faced Endorser on Credibility, Affect, and Purchase Intention ................................................................. 442
Gianluigi Guido, University of Lecce, Italy, University of Rome La Sapienza, Italy.
Alessandro M. Peluso, University of Lecce, Italy

The Control of Commercials Targeting Children: An Experimental Approach to Investigate Context Effects ......................... 444
Claude Pecheux, LABACC, Catholic University of Mons, Belgium
Christian Derbaix, LABACC, Catholic University of Mons, Belgium
Ingrid Poncin, LABACC, ESC Lille, France

FRIDAY, 17 JUNE
Sessions Fri 3:1-5
13:30-15:00

Fri 3:1 Special Session: Symbolic Consumption: The Interplay between Distinction, Distastes and Degrees of Rejection

Chair: Emma Banister, Lancaster University Management School, UK
Discussant: Margaret Hogg, Lancaster University Management School, UK

Special Session Summary
Symbolic Consumption: The Interplay between Distinction, Distastes and Degrees of Rejection .................................................. 453
Margaret K. Hogg, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom
Emma N. Banister, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom

Approach and Avoidance Behaviours in the Symbolic Consumption of Clothing
Emma N. Banister, Lancaster University Management School, UK
Margaret K. Hogg, Lancaster University Management School, UK

Anti-Madridista: Negative Symbolic Consumption by Football Fans
Alain Decrop, FUNDP, University of Namur, Belgium

Clothes Maketh the Man: Symbolic Consumption and Second-hand Clothing
Dominique Roux, University Paris XII, France
Fri 3:2 Special Session: Motherhood: Ideologies, Experiences and Consumption

Chair: Lisa O’Malley, University of Limerick, Ireland
Discussant: Andrea Prothero, University College Dublin, Ireland

Special Session Summary
Motherhood: Ideologies, Experiences & Consumption
Lisa O’Malley, University of Limerick, Ireland.

Paperback Mother: Parenting Manuals and the Ideology of Motherhood
Lisa O’Malley, University of Limerick, Ireland
Maurice Patterson, University of Limerick, Ireland
Caoilfhionn Ni Bheachain, University of Limerick, Ireland

Becoming a Mother: The Symbolic Meaning of Pram Consumption in Denmark
Elin Brandi Sørensen, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
Thyra Uth Thomsen, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

The Convenient Mother: Myth or Reality
Marylyn Carrigan, University of Birmingham, UK
Isabelle Szminig, University of Birmingham, UK

Fri 3:3 Competitive Session: Personalities, Movies and Tourists

Chair: Athinodoros Chronis, California State University, U.S.A.
Discussant: Simone Pettigrew, Edith Cowan University, Australia

Product Attachment and Product Lifetime: The Role of Personality Congruity and Fashion
Ruth Mugge, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Hendrik N.J. Schifferstein, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Jan P.L. Schoormans, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty: Conscious and Unconscious Evaluation of Archetypes Used in Advertising and Movies - Results from an Experimental Study
Andrea Groeppel-Klein, European University Viadrina, Germany
Anja Domke, European University Viadrina, Germany
Benedikt Bartmann, European University Viadrina, Germany

Are Recommendations of Venturers Valuable?–A Study of Word-of-Mouth Communication Behavior of Variety-Seeking Tourists and Opinion Leaders
Herbert Woratschek, University of Bayreuth, Germany
Chris Horbel, University of Bayreuth, Germany

Fri 3:4 Competitive Session: Flow, Space and Sales

Chair: Daniele Dalli, Universitá di Pisa, Italy
Discussant: Karin Salomonsson, Lund University, Sweden

Belongings: Consumption and Flow
Sue Eccles, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom
Helen Woodruffe-Burton, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom
Richard Elliott, Warwick Business School, United Kingdom

Consuming Space: Finding Meaning within the Servicescape--A Research Agenda
Micael-Lee Johnstone, University of Otago, New Zealand
Sarah Todd, University of Otago, New Zealand
Margo Buchanan-Oliver, University of Otago, New Zealand
Attitudes Toward Seasonal Sales: An Exploratory Analysis of the Concept and Its Antecedents ............................................ 485
Christine Gonzalez, Université de Nantes, France
Michaël Korchia, Bordeaux Ecole de Management, France

Fri 3:5 Competitive Session: Chaotic or Rational Behaviour

Chair: Folke Ölander, Aarhus School of Business, Denmark
Discussant: Folke Ölander, Aarhus School of Business, Denmark

Learning Unit Prices in an Unfamiliar Currency .......................................................... 495
Asgeir Juliusson, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Amelie Gamble, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Tommy Gärling, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

Can Consumers Behave Chaotically? ........................................................................ 496
Andrew Smith, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
Leigh Sparks, University of Stirling, United Kingdom

Fri 3:7 Roundtable: Consumer Experience from a Consumer Perspective

ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY
Consumer Experience from a Consumer Perspective ........................................... 497
Solveig R. Wikström, Stockholm University, Sweden

Discussion leader: Solveig Wikström, School of Business, Stockholm University
Participants: Kara Chang
Bernard Cova
Fuat Firat
Niklas Gustafsson
Eva Heiskanen
Dannie Kjeldgaard
Jacob Östberg
Günter Silberer
Päivi Timonen
Alladi Venkatesh

FRIDAY, 17 JUNE
Sessions Fri 4:1-5
15:30-17:00

Fri 4:1 Special Session: The Sounds of Consumption: Listening to the Musical Landscape

Chair: Jonathan Schroeder, University of Exeter, UK
Discussant: Jonathan Schroeder, University of Exeter, UK
Markus Giesler, York University, Canada

SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY
The Sounds of Consumption: Listening to the Musical Landscape ................................................. 498
Markus Giesler, York University, Canada
Jonathan E. Schroeder, University of Exeter, United Kingdom
Theorising the Relationship between Music and Marketing: The Musician’s Perspective

Alan Bradshaw, University of Exeter, UK
Pierre McDonagh, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
David Marshall, University of Edinburgh, UK

Soundtrack to Paradise: Sonic Branding in the South Pacific
Janet Borgerson, University of Exeter, UK
Jonathan Schroeder, University of Exeter, UK

Music as Posthumanist Prophecy: Listening to the Sonic Cyborgs
Markus Giesler, York University, Canada

Fri 4:2 Special Session: Product Design and Consumer Preference

Chair: Dirk Snelders, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Discussant: Jan Schoormans, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

Special Session Summary
Product Design and Consumer Preference

Jan P. L. Schoormans, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Marielle E. H. Creusen, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Dirk Snelders, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

The Influence of Design Symmetry and Complexity on Product Preference
Mariëlle E.H. Creusen, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, The Netherlands
Robert W. Veryzer, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, The Netherlands
P.L. Schoormans, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

The Relationship Between Design Typicality, Novelty and Aesthetic Judgments
Dirk Snelders, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Paul Hekkert, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

Designing for Inclusion Rather Than Exclusion
Lena Hansson, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

Fri 4:3 Competitive Session: Brands, Brains, Choice and Switching

Chair: Claes-Robert Julander, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden
Discussant: Ziv Carmon, INSEAD, Singapore

Outstanding Brands “Emotionally Speaking”
Flemming Hansen, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Larry Percy, U.S.A.
Steen Lundsteen, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

The Fire of Desire: Neural Correlates of Brand Choice
Hilke Plassmann, University of Muenster, Germany
Peter Kenning, University of Muenster, Germany
Dieter Ahlert, University of Muenster, Germany

Brand Switching as a Function of Variety Seeking Behavior and Product Characteristics: Testing the Hoyer and Ridgway Model
Nina Michaelidou, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom
Sally Dibb, Warwick Business School, United Kingdom
Fri 4:4 Competitive Session: Brands, Authenticity and Identity

Chair: Marylyn Carrigan, University of Birmingham, UK
Discussant: Richard Elliott, University of Warwick, UK

Marius K. Luedicke, York University, Canada

Brand Trust and Authenticity: The Link between Trust in Brands and the Consumer’s Role on the Market ....................... 522
Clara Gustafsson, Stockholm University School of Business, Sweden

Consumer Meaning and Identity Production and Consumer Research—Issues of Literacy, Gender and Identity .................. 528
Fuat Firat, University of Southern Denmark-Odense, Denmark

Fri 4:5 Competitive Session: Health and Risk

Chair: Helena Shanahan, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden
Discussant: Jacob Östberg, Stockholm University, Sweden

Re-Examining Smokers’ Perceived Vulnerability to Disease: Self-Report Measures May Not Tell the Whole Story .................. 533
Jeremy Kees, University of Arkansas, U.S.A.
Elizabeth Creyer, University of Arkansas, U.S.A.
Eric Knowles, University of Arkansas, U.S.A.

“Doing Something I Might Regret” Developing ‘Self-relevant’ Alcohol Campaigns: Implications for Public Policy from Consumer Research .............................................................. 535
Emma N. Banister, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom
Maria G. Piacentini, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom
Balogianni Kyriaki-Ioanna, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom

Coping with Making and Maintaining Dietary Change: A Comparative Study ................................................................. 536
Liz Logie-Maciver, Napier University Business School, Scotland
Maria Piacentini, Lancaster University, England
Douglas Eadie, Stirling University, Scotland

SATURDAY, 18 JUNE
Sessions Sat 1:1-6
09:00-10:30

Sat 1:1 Special Session: Subjective Value of Money

Chair: Joachim Vosgerau, INSEAD, France
Discussant: Priya Raghubir, University of California-Berkeley, U.S.A.

Special Session Summary
The Subjective Value of Money .............................................................................................................................. 542
Joachim Vosgerau, INSEAD, France

The Denomination Effect
Priya Raghubir, University of California-Berkeley, U.S.A.
Joydeep Srivastava, University of Maryland, U.S.A.

The Shopping Momentum Effect
Ravi Dhar, Yale University, U.S.A.
Joel Huber, Duke University, U.S.A.
Uzma Khan, Yale University, U.S.A.
Sat 1:2 Competitive Session: Pets and Flattery

Chair: Andrea J Davis, University of Leicester, UK
Discussant: Ingeborg Kleppe, Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH), Norway

Pets as Extended Self in the Context of Pet Food Consumption
Henna Jyrinki, University of Vaasa, Finland
Hanna Leipäämaa-Leskinen, University of Vaasa, Finland

Purchase Availability: Trick or Treat?
Yael Steinhart, Tel-Aviv University, Israel
David Mazursky, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Consumer Responses to Flattery: Empirical Evidence of the Sinister Attribution Error
Kelley J. Main, York University, Canada
Darren W. Dahl, University of British Columbia, Canada
Peter R. Darke, University of British Columbia, Canada

Sat 1:3 Competitive Session: Technology and Research Methods

Chair: Petteri Repo, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland
Discussant: Alladi Venkatesh, University of California, U.S.A.

A New Approach to Assessing Cognitive Processes at the Point of Sale: Video-Cued Thought Protocols
Günter Silberer, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany

Consumer Cognition at the Point of Sale: Results From a Process Tracing Study
Oliver B. Büttner, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany
Manuel Rauch, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany
Günter Silberer, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany

Mapping the Different Purposes for Integrating Off-line and On-line Data Sets in Discovery Oriented Consumer Research
Margaret K. Hogg, Lancaster University Management School, England
Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University, England
Carolyn Folkman Curasi, Georgia State University, U.S.A.

Sat 1:4 Competitive Session: Marketplace and Identity in Transition

Chair: Aric Rindfleisch, University of Wisconsin-Madison, U.S.A.
Discussant: Lisa Penaloza, University of Colorado, U.S.A.

Cultural Marketing and Consumer Research: Analytics of Cultural Practice
Johanna Moisander, Helsinki School of Economics, Finland
Anu Valtonen, University of Lapland, Finland

The Lived Meaning of Symbolic Consumption and Identity Construction in Stable and Transitional Phases: Towards an Analytical Framework
Elin Brandt Sørensen, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
Thyra Uth Thomsen, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Home Confined Consumers: Identity Continuities and Discontinuities .................................................................................................................. 577
Hilary Downey, Queens University Belfast, United Kingdom
Miriam Catterall, Queens University Belfast, United Kingdom

Sat 1:5 Competitive Session: Consumption, Images and Symbols

Chair: Gary Bamossy, University of Utah, U.S.A.
Discussant: Darach Turley, Dublin City University, Ireland

The InDependent Traveller: A Rough Guide to the Discourse of Independence in Alternative Guidebooks ............................................. 582
Robert Caruana, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
Andrew Crane, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom

Hierarchicality in Consumption Visions: Imagic Anticipation and Dynamics Within the Goal Structure ................................. 584
Glenn L. Christensen, Brigham Young University, U.S.A.
Jerry C. Olson, Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.
William T. Ross, Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.

Consumption Symbols at the Cinema: Italian Masters’ Movies (1945-1975) ......................................................................................... 586
Daniele Dalli, Università di Pisa, Italy
Giacomo Gistri, Università di Pisa, Italy

Sat 1:6 Competitive Session: To be in Control or Not

Chair: Terry Shimp, University of South Carolina, U.S.A.
Discussant: Tommy Gårling, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

Deliberate Self-Indulgence vs. Involuntary Loss of Self-Control: Exploring the Influence of Culture on Consumer Impulsiveness Trait ........................................................................................................... 593
Piyush Sharma, Nanyang Business School, Singapore
Bharadhwaj Sivakumaran, Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai, India
Roger Marshall, Nanyang Business School, Singapore

Preference Reversals and the Reflection Effect: The Moderating Role of Uncertainty Avoidance ........................................ 595
Subimal Chatterjee, Binghamton University, State University of New York, U.S.A.
Junhong Min, Binghamton University, State University of New York, U.S.A.
David W. Taylor, Binghamton University, State University of New York, U.S.A.

Strategies to Improve the Probability of Winning a Lottery: Gamblers and their Illusions of Control ........................................ 597
Elizabeth Cowley, University of Sydney, Australia
Colin Farrell, University of Sydney, Australia
Michael Edwardson, Victoria University of Technology, Australia

Chair: Andrea Morales, University of Southern California, U.S.A.
Discussant: Kristin Diehl, University of South Carolina, U.S.A.

Special Session Summary
Andrea Morales, University of Southern California, U.S.A.
Kristin Diehl, University of South Carolina, U.S.A.

Great Expectations?! Assortment Size, Expectations, and Purchase Likelihood
Kristin Diehl, University of South Carolina, U.S.A.
Cait Poynor, University of South Carolina, U.S.A.

Effect of Product Assortment Changes on Customer Retention
Peter Boatwright, Carnegie Mellon University, U.S.A.
Sharad Borle, Rice University, U.S.A.
Joseph B. Kadane, Carnegie Mellon University, U.S.A.
Joseph C. Nunes, University of Southern California, U.S.A.
Galit Shmueli, University of Maryland, U.S.A.

The Impact of Attribute-Level Product Assortment on Consumer Preferences for Variety in the Buying Process
Andrea Morales, University of Southern California, U.S.A.
Wendy Moe, University of Maryland, U.S.A.
Barbara Kahn, University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

Sat 2:2 Special Session: Consumer Culture Theory: Retrospect and Prospect

Chair: Eric Arnould, University of Arizona, Tucson, U.S.A.
Discussant: Richard Elliot, Warwick University, UK

Special Session Summary
Consumer Culture Theory: Retrospect and Prospect ................................................................. 605
Eric Arnould, University of Arizona, Tucson, U.S.A.

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research
Eric Arnould, University of Arizona, Tucson, U.S.A.
Craig Thompson, University of Wisconsin-Madison, U.S.A.

CCT Research: Methodological Mythologies and Future Challenges
Kent Grayson, Northwestern University, U.S.A.

Material Culture, Memory and Identity
Jean-Sebastien Marcoux, HEC Montréal, Canada
Sat 2:3 Competitive Session: Ethical Consumption

Chair: Nancy Wong, Georgia Institute of Technology, U.S.A.
Discussant: Adam Arvidsson, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Exploring the Dimensions of Ethical Consumption 608
Isabelle Szmigin, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom
Marylyn Carrigan, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

Consuming Ethical Codes of Conduct? 614
Johanna Fernholm, Stockholm University, Sweden

Towards a Measure of Individual Consumer Morality 616
Marco Grix, University of Otago, New Zealand
Sarah Todd, University of Otago, New Zealand
Rob Lawson, University of Otago, New Zealand

Sat 2:4 Competitive Session: Culinary Practises

Chair: Marianne Ekström, Göteborg University, Sweden
Discussant: Marianne Ekström, Göteborg University, Sweden

Stoveside Potterings and other Transformations: On Cooking Representations of Culinary Culture 623
Paul Hewer, University of Stirling, Scotland
Douglas Brownlie, University of Stirling, Scotland

The Relevance of the Quality Construct to Wine Consumption 635
Stephen Charters, Edith Cowan University, Australia
Simone Pettigrew, University of Western Australia, Australia

The Value of Ritual Theory for Understanding Alcohol Consumption Behaviours 641
Kieran Tucker, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

Sat 2:5 Competitive Session: Attachments, Judgements and Images

Chair: Päivi Timonen, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland
Discussant: Eva Heiskanen, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland

A Longitudinal Study of Product Attachment and its Determinants 641
Ruth Mugge, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Hendrik N.J. Schifferstein, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Jan P.L. Schoormans, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

Inexperienced Consumers’ Judgment of the Quality of Major Household Appliances 648
Alet C. Erasmus, University of Pretoria, Republic of South Africa
Meriam M. Makgopa, University of Pretoria, Republic of South Africa
Mphatso G. Kachale, University of Pretoria, Republic of South Africa

The Role of Exposure Frequency, Prominence, and Memory of Brand Placements in Effects on Brand Image 659
Eva van Reijmersdal, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Peter Neijens, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Edith Smit, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Author Index 660
The first European ACR Film Festival
Russell Belk, University of Utah, U.S.A.
Robert Kozinets, University of York, U.S.A.

The first European ACR Film Festival drew a wide range of films. The topics, cultures, and filmmakers represented three continents and phenomena including commodified souvenir selling, the trap of rural impoverishment, Christmas in Japan, global cosmopolitanism, and consumer ethics. Of the films presented, the first film summarized below, Jean-Sebastien Marcoux and Renaud Legoux’s “Selling Tragedy: The Commodification of Ground Zero,” won the People’s Choice Award.

We hope that this is another important step in the evolution of film and video in consumer research. As we write this, we are about to issue the call for entries for the 5th Annual North American ACR Film Festival. The year 2006 will also see the First Latin-America ACR Film Festival and the First Asia-Pacific ACR Film Festival. For the past two years, the North American ACR Film Festival People’s Choice Award has gone to European filmmakers. This, in addition to the cultural diversity of other films and filmmakers in the festivals, is a good indication that videographic consumer research is able to speak across cultures and to vivify global phenomena and events for local audiences.

We are thankful the conference chairs and organizers, the filmmakers, and the conference attendees who attended the showing of these films. As has been true in other ACR Film festivals, at least half of this year’s filmmakers showed the first film they have made. Surely this is good evidence that you too can become involved in consumer behavior film. We invite your presentation at future film festivals.

“Selling Tragedy: The Commodification of Ground Zero”
21:00 minutes, NTSC
Jean-Sebastien Marcoux, HEC-Montreal, Canada
Renaud Legoux, McGill University, Canada

This film deals with the complex issue of the selling of souvenirs at Ground Zero in New York City. It started from the persistent observation of an intensive commercial activity on and around the site of Ground Zero, two and a half years after the 9/11 attack.

We are interested in the role of the numerous street vendors on the site, and use them as a lead to better understand the memory construction process taking shape through the selling of miniatures of the Towers, and other commodities. Indeed, we wish to account for the moral and the social debates taking shape in the wake of the commercial activity. On the site and in the media, we observed a moral debate. Selling souvenirs is condemned, and street vendors are often accused of making profits off of tragedy. Critics often say it is in bad taste, or worse, disgusting. They characterize the selling of souvenirs as a crass commercialization of the tragedy, an opinion more clearly expressed by New Yorkers as we moved further away from the site. Still, street vendors play an important role in a memory process that is under construction, and, for many visitors, buying souvenirs fulfills a felt moral duty: they do it with respect for the victims of the terrorist attack.

In the line of Russell Belk, Melanie Wallendorf and John F. Sherry’s classical works on the sacred and the profane, this film aims at better understanding what brings people to buy souvenirs, and how these commodities are used in attempting to cope with a traumatic, overwhelming situation. It is grounded in current debates in anthropology, art history, and philosophy on the use of material culture in the social construction of memory. It also draws on the growing body of social science literature on 9/11, as testified by the recent publication of a special issue of Critique of Anthropology in March 2004. As such, this film aims at extending the consumer research literature on the sacred and the profane to the question of the construction of social memory, and its appropriation by individual consumers.

On a methodological level, this film relies upon a field research conducted between March 2003 and March 2004. It uses ethno-videography (a method drawing on documentary production that is inspired by contemporary ethnography), and other qualitative methods such as open-ended interviews in situ, observation, and archive analysis. Video offers a systematic means of collecting visual, oral and auditory data on the topic. It also provides the template for a reflexive editing process. Viewing, reviewing, selecting, juxtaposing and trimming scenes, images and sounds, become an integral part of the analysis of the results; and, as a consequence, of the writing process. Finally, video gives access to some of the practices and gestures that are often unaccounted for, and helps us capturing the visual texture of the people’s experience. Hopefully, it will help us reach a broader audience than the traditional ‘scientific’ article. We should say that this film is part of a broader project which includes articles. It is used, however, as a means to spark discussion, and create a debate.

“The Unfree Consumers: Consumption and Freedom Under Subaltern Conditions”
30:00 minutes, PAL
Rohit Varman, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, India
Ram Manohar Vikas

Freedom is one of the most celebrated of the human values. Enlightenment, post-enlightenment philosophers have considered human liberty central to civilized existence (Berlin 1969; Sen 2000). Consumption is another significant aspect of contemporary existence. It has been argued that consumption plays an important role in defining individuals (Belk 1988; Ritzer 2004). Scholars have further observed a close association between consumption and freedom (Bauman 1988/1997; Fiske 1989/2000). It is indicated that in this period of late capitalism or postmodernity, consumption is increasingly defining human freedom.

We question this conceptualization of human freedom with consumption as its prime facilitator. We contend that relationship between consumption and freedom is only a tenuous one. This argument is based on a case study of a subaltern group of consumers. We observe that majority of consumers continue to live in abysmal material conditions. This also implies that their very state of existence limits the role of consumption in contributing to freedom. Relationship between consumption and freedom can be defining only at the margins, where consumers have the resources to exercise their freedom of choice. In a capitalist system governed by markets, access to resources remains critical for consumers to exercise this freedom. For a vast majority of consumers, especially the subaltern groups, work continues to be defining for their state of unfreedom. We show that lack of empowerment in the domain of production translates into lack of freedom in the sphere of consumption. Most significantly, through this research we question the artificial nature of separation of the spheres of production and consumption suggested by some theorists. We argue that capitalism as an economic system is fundamentally concerned with its propagation and separation of spheres of production or consumption offers only a limited understanding of this systemic thrust. Finally,

European Advances in Consumer Research
Volume 7, © 2006
with the concept of positive freedom we contend that realization of this systemic thrust is essential for subaltern groups to emancipate themselves.

Our video provides an account of extremely tough living and working conditions of subaltern workers in a North Indian city of Kanpur. These workers lack legal protection, despite existing government laws, to ensure payment of minimum wages and put in long working hours, far exceeding legal working limits, without any system of over-time payment. Work place remains extremely hazardous, but workers have no right to protest. These workers have no employment guarantees, which make them particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Inefficient and corrupt government machinery fails to provide any protection against exploitation by their contractors. Disempowered workers in the sphere of production find it impossible to protest and demand better wages or exercise greater control of their working conditions. Video exhibits that lack of control in the domain of work directly translates into unfreedom for workers in the sphere of consumption. It can be seen in the video that workers struggle to make their two ends meet. They live in shanty houses and under extremely unhygienic conditions. These houses are also overcrowded with little provision for personal space for their inhabitants. Food consumption just about meets the bare minimum requirement that is necessary for their biological survival. These wretched living conditions lead to frequent outbreak of diseases, which further worsen the lives of these workers. Our data show that most of the workers barely possess a set or two of clothing, which is just about adequate to cover their bodies. These low levels of consumption in the areas of food, clothing and shelter, provide a powerful, albeit tragic, description of unfreedom of this subaltern group in the area of consumption. We further contend and demonstrate in our video that consumption itself can become a panopticon and freedom entails self-realization. Our work supports Fromm’s (1949) contention that human freedom lacking in positive control is only limited emancipation. Positive freedom is necessary because in its current form markets, corporations and elite reference groups control the ideology of consumption.

Positive freedom also raises the issue of consciousness and understanding of the ideological forces at a systemic level. The production system described by us supports the analysis of capitalism provided by Marx (1983), which focuses on generation of surplus value through exploitation of labor. Workers described in the video do not exercise freedom in the sphere of consumption or work, with their existence as another factor of production. Thus, unfreedom of the subaltern group described in the video is not just a result of lack of control in their work place. It is evident that the relationship between their production system and the economic system of capitalism is much more important. Subaltern groups are forced into unfree existence because their work follows capitalist mode of production and as delineated by Baudrillard (1969), it is this systemic logic that also entails unfreedom in the sphere of consumption.

Summarizing, the discourse of freedom inflected with elite interests, obfuscates the systemic dimensions of capitalism. For the subaltern groups described in the video, liberation from the systemic exploitation will only translate into freedom in the domain of consumption.

References


“Christmas in Japan”

19:30 minutes, NTSC

Junko Kimura, Hosei University, Japan
Russell Belk, University of Utah, USA

In his book Unwrapping Christmas, Daniel Miller (1993) called the Christmas the global festival of consumption. Today Christmas is celebrated in such seemingly unlikely locations as Turkey, Thailand, China, and Japan. The researchers and producers of this video have both written extensively on Christmas in Japan and the West and set out to conduct a comparative visual ethnography focusing on the degree to which Christmas in Japan can be regarded as adopting or adapting the Western Christmas. The video shows that both patterns occur, with adaptation being more common. For instance, despite some effort by the small number of Christian churches in Japan to preserve religious aspects of the holiday and an even smaller number of Christmas nativity scenes, the Japanese Christmas is overwhelmingly a secular celebration devoid of religious meaning. Nevertheless, the abundance of depictions of secular Christmas icons, including Santa Claus, sleighs, reindeer, snowmen, Christmas gifts, department store Christmas window displays, Christmas trees, interior and exterior Christmas lights and decorations (some private home decorations shown in the video cost as much as US$50,000), and Christmas music, all suggest that the celebration of Christmas in Japan has numerous elements that would be recognized world-wide as representing the contemporary Christmas. In this respect, the Japanese celebration of Christmas is global and shares key elements with much of the world. As the manager of the Osaka Ritz Carlton Hotel reflected, a spectacular Christmas setting helps consumers feel like spending much more freely. This global consumer Christmas in Japan has been promoted by a number of global merchants, media, and brands, including Universal Studios-Japan, Disney, the Muppets, Coca Cola, Visa, Hyatt Regency, KFC, McDonald’s, Vogue, Martha Stewart, and many others. At least superficially, Christmas in Japan would seem to be a prime example of cultural imperialism by Western multinational corporations and media.

On closer inspection, however, there are also a number of aspects of the Japanese Christmas celebrations that would not be recognized by Christmas celebrants in the West, even when they are presented in Japan as representing Christmas in certain Western locales. Examples shown in the video include a wedding for 8 couples hosted by a singing African-American “minister” under a giant Christmas tree, an Italian Christmas tree decorated with red women’s underwear, a 70-year tradition of fancy and expensive German Christmas cakes, a huge Christmas tree in the Kyoto train station decorated with the Japanese superhero Astro Boy, Christ-
mas cards featuring kawaii (cute) Japanese cartoon characters, multiple “real” Santa Clauses such as those from Finland and Norway (Japanese Santas are not acknowledged as being “real” as much as dress-up pretenders), and a large number of young couples exchanging Tiffany Christmas gifts before spending a night or two in an expensive hotel (or for those who book too late, lining up on Christmas Eve to get into a by-the-hour “love hotel”). Each of these examples suggests a hybrid domestication of Christmas in Japan, contributing to making something that is uniquely a part of Japanese culture. This appropriation of the global occurs in other cultures as well, but is especially prevalent in Japan.

At the same time that Japan has adapted Christmas to local tastes, we find that there are places in Japan that seem impervious to Christmas influences. They include not only obvious bastions of tradition such as Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, and the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, but also less obvious strongholds like Japanese restaurants, tatami mat homes, Japanese gardens, and Japanese sports like Sumo wrestling. In this way, Christmas is partitioned geographically and kept foreign, exotic, and separate from what is regarded as truly Japanese. Not only is Christmas partitioned in space, but in time as well. By the end of Christmas Day (December 25th) in Japan, virtually all Christmas decorations have been removed from homes, stores, streets, and offices in order to prepare for New Year decorations and celebrations.

Still, all tradition is invented. This is evident, for instance, in Buddhism (which traveled from India to China to Korea to Japan), the Japanese tea ceremony and kanji writing system (from China), and Japanese foreign trade (forced on Japan by the “black ships” of US Commodore Perry in 1853). The new traditions of Christmas ushered in by global media and global brands differ from these earlier cultural adaptations primarily in their speed, degree of branded commercialism, and multicultural character. But what makes Japan different, thus far, from the hybridization of Christmas traditions from Europe that melded together in the US during the 19th and 20th Centuries, is not so much these factors as the Japanese partitioning of Christmas in time and space described above. This partitioning has allowed Christmas to continue to be perceived as largely gaijin or foreign (as illustrated by the Finnish and Norwegian “real” Santas). Nor have seemingly hybrid examples like Astro Boy Christmas tree decorations, Christmas weddings, or kawaii Christmas cards supplanted Western Christmas iconography or come to be thought of as uniquely Japanese. Such “glocal” examples show a Japanese appropriation and partial reconfiguration of Christmas, but not (or not yet) to the extent that these local adaptations dominate what Japanese consumers regard to be the global or foreign elements of Christmas.

The video concludes by suggesting that a parallel may be found in other global consumption phenomena such as intercultural tourism. To the extent that tourist destinations homogenize and offer only world food and drinks, world hotels, world airports, world music, world media, and world tourist attractions, there is little incentive to leave home. Only if these destinations promise something different, even if it is a stereotyped cliché that is otherwise hard to find in the host culture, is there reason to become a global traveler. The same can be said of more local visitation to theme parks and themed cities such as Las Vegas. It is the desire to consume something different that attracts us, not the desire to be the same as others in the world. The video finds that similar desires apply to Christmas in Japan, suggesting that globalization equates with a search for differentiation and otherness rather than homogenization.
Significantly, we convincingly validate Cannon and Yaprak (2002)’s idea that Thompson and Tambiah’s (1999) masculine and feminine aspects are not orthogonal; in particular the high presence of feminine traits does not inhibit the creation of a cosmopolitan identity if sufficient masculine traits are concurrently displayed. In sum, a cosmopolitan consumer orientation simultaneously embracing consumers who maintain close ties to their cultural roots and those that do not.

Additional theory extension is evident in depictions of consumers’ efforts to construct their cosmopolitan identities including: 1) expatriate enclaves as desirable milieus and 2) discomfort upon returning home.

The study suggests that expatriate communities likely play a more important role in cosmopolitan identity formation than previously thought. This is especially so for consumers who live in countries with a colonial heritage and large established expatriate communities. These expatriate communities are typically a blend of the local and Western cultures and are characterized by their own beliefs, norms, values, and social hierarchies. Informants who moved with an organization to a country with a colonial heritage reported far more assistance in settling in, than those who moved without. Significantly, informants indicated that they were happy to embrace the expatriate lifestyle because it gave them opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment.

It’s an unreal life; actually it’s not real, being an expat. You’re sitting down, reading the paper, and watching the gardening guy mow the lawn. You’re thinking this is wonderful, this is great. No house to paint, no lawns to mow, we could just indulge ourselves.

This may explain why, as we previously proposed, cosmopolitans are unlikely to show much enthusiasm for immersing themselves in local communities.

Informants described difficulties upon returning home. Notably, we found that despite showing flexibility in adapting to foreign cultures, some informants were less flexible when settling back into their native environment. Informants felt they had grown and displayed dissatisfaction with a life perceived to be less interesting.

I hadn’t realized that I’d changed a bit and we did find everybody around here a bit parochial. I found a lot of people were very stuck in their ways and didn’t want to know anything about where you’d been.

Often informants preferred to make new friends with other returned expatriates because of similar experiences or shared cosmopolitan attitudes.

We propose that future studies into cosmopolitanism will reveal new consumption activities, behaviours, and trends that will have implications for marketers. For example, how people satisfy their desire to experience the new and different within their proximal environments (physically close or virtual rather than abroad), and in which situations they are more likely to seek out products that increase the cultural diversity of their consumption.

With the collapse of Enron and Arthur Andersen in the US and numerous examples of ethical and governance transgressions elsewhere, there has been noticeable heightening of the thought given to the actual and supposed role of ethics in business. Commensurate with this concern has been a rise in the part that the ethical stance of business plays in determining consumer product choice and the nature of the way in which consumers make decisions about products of firms with differing ethical positions. Yet despite this interest, there is little definitive understanding as to the extent to which consumer choice is affected by ethical positioning and how consumers deal with the ethical conflicts embedded within many of their fundamental purchasing decisions.

Moreover, with globalization taking center stage in the business world, there is a need to understand how ethical interpretations and behavior may differ in various consumer markets around the world. To address these issues, we conducted and videotaped depth interviews with consumers in eight countries—China, India, Turkey, Australia, USA, Germany, Sweden and Spain—focusing on the rationales they used to justify the ethical conflicts that may arise in their consumption activities. We recorded their elaborated thoughts, elicited through their responses to three different consumption scenarios involving ethical choice dilemmas. The choice dilemmas revolved around the ethicality of purchasing counterfeit products, purchasing a popular athletic shoe manufactured under conditions of worker exploitation, and the ethicality and purchase behavior for a product that is potentially harmful to the environment or that uses animal by-products and animal testing. We sought to learn how much, if at all, they thought those issues are, or should be, connected to their own purchasing behavior.

The video details the rationales consumers in a wide variety of cultures use to explain and justify both their ethical stances and their consumption behavior. Our findings reveal that consumers are not generally very concerned with the ethical issues raised in the scenarios. Some consumers do bring ethical concerns into their choices, but most would rather have a good product at a good price, regardless of who makes it, the conditions of workers, the uses made of animals, or issues of copyright versus counterfeit. Many consumers offered a justification involving ethical abuses by multinationals that make these goods. Corporations were said to be out only for profits, and they were described as not caring for workers, consumers, or natural resources harmed in this pursuit.

In citing prominent cases of corporate abuse, like Enron, consumers invoked the argument that since sellers don’t care about what is right, why should they? Some consumers also claimed that the prices charged by companies like Nike and Louis Vuitton are immoral. While some of these arguments may be excuses for pursuing their own perceived interests as consumers, a link between producer ethics and consumer ethics does exist in our data.

Culture influences these justifications and ethical stands less than we anticipated. At least among the middle class informants studied, even those in less affluent countries where worker abuse is more likely are not very upset by the ethical issues raised in the scenarios. Although some informants in these countries said that they had seen such ethical abuses and were angered by them, others said it was simply the way of the world. Informants from the more affluent world often offered an additional justification for their
attitudes and behavior by saying that the problems that exist in the less affluent world are far away from them and their lives. When they did care it was often because of investigative reporting that brought these dilemmas to their attention in a vivid and concrete manner.

This suggests that at least some consumers can be made to bring ethical factors into their choices, but that they are not likely to do so without help. Our findings also suggest that better ethical behavior on the part of business can influence ethical behavior on the part of consumers.
The presentations in this special session represented efforts to make steps toward fleshing out a cultural resource-based theory of consumer behavior as envisioned in Vargo and Lusch (2004) and Arnould and Thompson (2005).

The purpose of Risto Moisio and Eric J. Arnould’s presentation, “Consumer Projects: Cultural Resources and the Emergence of Actorhood” was to call for a more epistemologically viable theory of consumer actorhood, that is, the discursive, ideologyladen folk models of action that organize consumer’s understandings of the possibilities for and limits to purposive consumer action.

The authors argue that in consumer culture theory actorhood has generally been glossed as agency. Agency in CCT opposes the deterministic idea of (sociocultural) “classification systems that direct the meanings of things, reflect the social order and are central to its reproduction of inequality” (Murray 2002, p. 428). Empirical studies often suggest “consumers have free rein in the play of signs to piece together a collage of meanings that express the [individual’s] desired symbolic statements” (Murray 2002, p. 428). Examples of agentic claims in CCT research include individual’s sense of control (Kates 2004, p. 456), autonomy (Thompson and Haytko 1996, p. 16), or free will (Belk, Ger and Askegaard 2003, p. 331); ability to produce culture (Peñaloza 2001, p. 393); produce producer’s products (Kozinets et al. 2004, p. 671); or, to transform brands into symbolic markers of cultural categories (Fournier 1998, p. 367).

The authors review a number of problems with the concept of agency that raise doubts about its utility in consumer research. To begin, prior studies often lack the actor’s perspective of their actions, and sometimes do not show how researcher derived definitions of agency connect to specific consumer behaviors. More abstractly, the term agency implies an axiomatic belief in a particularly western view of autonomous selfhood (Meyer and Jepperson 2000). As used, agency evokes the possibility of “freedom”, which is bound to be a topic for philosophical, not sociological or empirical discussion (see discussion of the illusion of freedom in Bourdieu 1990). The term is value-laden; it idealizes and valorizes some actions as “agentic” and demonizes culture as a structure of constraints (see Bauman 1999 on discourses of culture). It also presupposes the possibility of separating empirically “free” from “determined” behaviors (Loyal and Barnes 2001), which theoretically appears problematic. Further, it also attributes (either axiomatically or in a post hoc fashion) some form of innate capacity, ability, or intention to actors and their action (e.g., Fuchs 2001). In short, its use as Fuchs (2001) says, is rather fetishized, that is, used to affirm a western myth of self-efficacy, and really amounts to little more than a folk model, i.e., if consumers appear to exert influence over events, they are deemed agentic. Finally, research generally ignores the point that agentic behaviors can hardly exist apart from cultural templates that guide action (on resistance see Thompson 2004, p. 172). The construct’s strongest critics argue the construct is a circular and indeterminate red herring; there is no evidence of sociological utility even in the work of Parsons and Giddens the staunchest theoretical proponents of agency (Loyal and Barnes 2001). Thus, agency seems at best a projection of a western folk model that perpetuates one kind of actorhood and evokes value-laden notions of freedom, constraint, and transcendence of constraint via choice.

One alternative strategy to developing a stronger theory of consumer action is to approach “agency” by focusing on consumer’s own folk models of actorhood and their ideological underpinnings (Bleiker 2003; Arnould and Thompson 2005). Action guided by folk models may be viewed as performative (McNay 2003), patterned by cultural resources that limit, enable and predispose consumer action (e.g., Foucault 1988; Bourdieu 1977). As a corollary, change (and reproduction) of social structure may be viewed as an unintended outcome of cultural resource deployment (Sewell 1992). Some existing research may lay groundwork for this approach, e.g., consumers of self-help products appear to enact a private, empowering actorhood constructed from templates provided by new age, democratic liberal, neoliberal, and psychotherapeutic discourses (Rimkun 2000; Redden 2002).

In order to illustrate the potential to develop folk models of actorhood, the authors focus on the perspective of one 39-year old middle-class male informant engaged in a “Do-It-Yourself” home restoration project using McCracken’s “long interview” format for data collection. This case foregrounds actorhood by examining it at a moment of crisis (or unsettled times; Swidler 2001), when taken for granted models of action are challenged, evoked, played out, reproduced and/or reformulated. The informant’s experience seems to follow a script that resonates with classic social science descriptions of life crisis ritual, pilgrimage, and vision quest, including experiences of a break with normal modes of action, a liminal period in which the self is lost, and more primordial psycho-social aspects of the person operate, a moment of resolution and reintegration of both a personal and interpersonal sense of self, in such a way as to affirm the informant’s sense of his performative efficacy.

The authors’ empirical case shows how consumer’s sense of actorhood emerges at the intersection of action and discourse from a disparate array of metaphors and cultural resources in response to crisis. Partial folk models of masculinity, heroism, redemption, vision quest, pilgrimage, and the Frankenstein tale make their appearance. Folk models help informants organize activities, and activities in turn provide a kind of pre-disposing for possible actorhoods. In addition, these folk models convey moral legitimacy and illegitimacy on particular courses of action.

The authors contend their inductive approach to actorhood transcends Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998) dispositionalist model and incorporates Fuchs (2001) relationalist model into an actor-focused model of agency. Unlike previous models of agency, the authors’ actor-focused approach relies on actual, performing subjects and is more suited for empirical study than previous models bound by the “red herring” problem (Loyal and Barnes 2001).

A second paper was presented by Marius Luedicke and Markus Giesler, entitled “Negotiating Distinctions: How Brands Become Cultural Resources.” This paper provides very useful guidance in thinking about how to conceive of marketer provided materials as resources that consumers may put into play.

The authors argue that the metaphor of “cultural resource” has been widely used by researchers in consumer culture theory (see Arnould and Thompson 2005) to describe the role of brands in assisting consumers in the production of culture. In his dialectical theory of brand and consumer culture, Holt (2002), for instance, emphasizes the ability of brands to become “authentic cultural resources” (p. 70) as they “inspire and provoke and stimulate” individual “identity projects” (p. 87). Investigating the consumption patterns of gay communities, Kates (2004) contends that The Body Shop and Absolut Vodka are authentic cultural resources as
they are jointly negotiated “between the marketer and the community” (p. 463). The idea that brands serve as cultural resources is also reflected in the consumer literatures on branding and identity (e.g. Holt and Thompson 2004), the cultural meaning of brands (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001) and brands and consumer emancipation (Giesler and Pohlmann 2003; Kozinets 2002). Yet despite its widely acknowledged significance, particularly in the context of consumption, we know little about the processes by which brands are discursively constructed as cultural resources. The goal of Luedicke and Giesler’s presentation was to address this gap in knowledge.

The authors first provided useful definitions of four fundamental concepts. “Resources” are material or immaterial input factors for production. Following Habermas (1984a; 1984b), they defined “culture” as an amalgam of social communications. In the social entourage of brands, consumers, marketers and mass media are the most relevant cultural “observers.” A “brand,” according to Giesler and Venkatesh (2005), can be defined as a set of economic, social, political, and aesthetic distinctions. HUMMER vehicles, for example, are distinguished from other sport utility vehicles by function, price, logo, claim, and design, yet above all by the communications they have created and still create.

These concepts were brought together in Giesler and Venkatesh’s notion of the “brand system” (2005). Following these authors, “a brand system embeds consumers’ and marketers’ brand related social communication” (p. 16). In this sense, brand-related communication develops and alters elements of culture. In the case of the HUMMER brand automobile for instance, observers can either accept, ignore, alter, or oppose a marketer’s suggested meaning of the brand (e.g. Elliott 1998). Competitors may use the brand’s characteristics to refine their own brands and thus allow for more complex markets (e.g. Aaker 1995). Consumers may use it to reshape their identities or create communities around and against it (e.g. Kozinets 2002; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002). Mass media may report on the vehicles, and researchers may reflect on how consumers socialize around it. In summary, these communications shape the brand system and make it a resource for further communication.

Based on this concept, the authors proposed three key characteristics of brands as cultural resources: First, brands can only become cultural resources with respect to an “observer.” Yet no matter how the observer adopts the brand, as long as it does not go unnoticed, communication is created and thus new elements of culture. Second, consistent with the suggested meaning of the word “resource,” brand systems assist consumers in the production of culture. Relying entirely on intangible operations, they proliferate with every reference made, but fade at the speed of oblivion in the moment consumers fail to communicate about them. Third, as brand systems and culture are established on and brought forth by communication (Luhmann 1995), they resist both ownership and exclusion.

In sum, the proposed concept of brand system helps consumer culture theoreticians to understand better the social potentialities of brands to create and reproduce culture through ongoing communication.

Zeynep Arsel presented a third paper co-authored with Craig Thompson, “Consuming It Cool: Status Multiplicity and Contextualized Cultural Capital.” Her presentation dovetailed nicely with the previous ones in suggesting how subculture adherents mobilize differentiated (intangible) cultural resources in the service of identity projects.

Historically, coolness has been associated with cultural practices that are fundamentally at odds with the dominant norms of American culture. In order to achieve cool status, consumers seek and embody countercultural dispositions and stay away from the monotony of standardized consumption choices and conformist lifestyle norms. Marketers now see this situation as a profitable opportunity and hunt through the counterculture to find resources on which to capitalize (Frank 1997). An example is the research technique of coolhunting (Gladwell 1997; Goodman 2001). However, contemporary subcultural studies scholars reject the clear dichotomy between counterculture and mainstream (Clark 2003; Muggleton 2000) and claim that postmodern cultural processes have caused significant shifts in subcultures, blurring the mainstream-subculture divide and weakening subcultural boundaries.

In countercultural social formations, cultural capital is highly contextualized, providing a basis for creating and maintaining fine-grained in-group distinctions as well as symbolic boundary management strategies (Muggleton 2000; Thornton 1996). Accordingly, the meanings of consumption practices and the statuses they convey need to be analyzed in relation to these contextualized forms of cultural capital rather than in terms of uni-dimensional status games. Viewing these social groups as complex and fluid cultures of consumption, where individuals deploy both subcultural and generalized cultural capital, the authors provide a complex analysis of in-group status games as well as explaining how consumers differentially get involved with a culture of consumption.

The author’s empirical context is indie culture. This subculture of consumption is not monolithic, but a network of interrelated practices (music, fashion, cinema, art, liberal politics, DIY, etc.). Historicizing the concept of indie, the authors find that the “hipster myth” acts as a normative model for the practices that could be labeled with this term. Since the first pseudo-anthropological text on the hipster, The White Negro (Mailer, Polsky and Malaquais 1957) the marketplace appropriated and transformed the hipster myth to such an extent that current documentations of this countercultural form neither resemble, nor refer to the Mailer, et al. text. Yet the classic dissident, the hipster, became a folk narrative, contemporarily referring to a protean coolness icon whose mode of action is distinction based on appropriating the newest countercultural styles. Indie consumers differentially relate to this iconic model, making individualized interpretations of the hipster archetype based on their social class backgrounds.

Although indie culture establishes its cool status by adopting the least accessible styles, the media selectively confers mainstream visibility and availability on its practices. This commodification of stylistic expressions poses a threat to established status hierarchies and symbolic distinctions to the cultural mainstream, thereby motivating reflexive changes (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Holt 2002). However, while appropriating and eventually dissolving the hipness of indie styles, the marketplace plays a considerable role in generating the resources for acquiring and updating subcultural capital to the cultural mainstream. When these objectified symbols become adoptable by everyone, countercultural consumers find more subtle tactics or refer to different narratives to negotiate their cool status and position themselves apart from the masses. Therefore, the mainstream-counterculture divide relies less on objective stylistic differences, but rather is constructed through more delicate games of distinction.

A comparative analysis of two phenomenological interviews demonstrates that consumers’ level of generalized cultural capital orient the ways they relate to indie culture. More specifically, one informant with a higher generalized cultural capital background goes back and forth between mainstream and countercultural ideals and accumulates comparable cultural capital in both social circles. In contrast, another informant with a lower generalized cultural
capital background invests highly in subcultural capital. Furthermore, while the low generalized cultural capital informant gets defensive about any threats to established stylistic boundaries between the indie and mainstream, the high generalized cultural capital informant is cynical about this animosity towards the mainstream and is critical of the esoteric in indie culture.

This study extends prior work on subcultural capital, advances an understanding of the ways marketplace myths are utilized as resources in consumer identity projects and exemplifies how coolness is negotiated within a culture of consumption.

Fuat Firat’s discussion focused on the importance of agency discourse and that all papers shed light on this issue; and that thinking in terms of an order of multiple orders rather than a single order, in which people will inevitably be limited to a form of agency allowed by that specific order, might now provide fruitful new avenues for reconceptualizing agency.

References
Habermas, Jürgen (1984a), The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Cambridge, UK: Polity.


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The metaphor of “cultural resource” has been widely used by researchers in consumer culture theory (see Arnould and Thompson 2005) to describe the role of brands in assisting consumers in the production of culture. In his dialectical theory of brand and consumer culture, Holt (2002), for instance, emphasizes the ability of brands to become “authentic cultural resources” (p. 70) as they “inspire and provoke and stimulate” individual “identity projects” (p. 87). Investigating the consumption patterns of gay communities, Kates (2004) contends that The Body Shop and Absolut Vodka are authentic cultural resources as they are jointly negotiated “between the marketer and the community” (p. 463). The idea that brands serve as cultural resources is also reflected in the consumer literatures on branding and identity (e.g. Holt and Thompson 2004), the cultural meaning of brands (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001) and brands and consumer emancipation (Giesler and Venkatesh 2005) to elaborate the processes by which brands are discursively constructed as cultural resources.

The goal of this presentation is to address this gap in knowledge. We proceed as follows: First, we provide an overview of the different interpretative uses of the cultural resource metaphor in recent consumer culture literature on brands. Then we use the interpretive key construct of brand system (Giesler and Venkatesh 2005) to elaborate the processes by which brands are discursively constructed as cultural resources. Finally, we discuss the implications of our findings for the relationship between brands and consumer culture using the example of Apple’s ipod mp3-player.

We establish our analysis on four fundamental definitions: We understand “resources” as material or immaterial input factors for production. Following Habermas (1984b; 1984a), we define “culture” as an amalgam of social communications. In the social entourage of brands, consumers, marketers and mass media are the most relevant cultural “observers.” A “brand,” according to Giesler and Venkatesh (2005), can be defined as a set of economic, social, political, and aesthetic distinctions. Apple’s ipod music player, for example, is distinguished from other mp3-players by its function, price, logo, claim, and design, yet above all by the communications it has created and still creates.

These concepts are brought together in Giesler and Venkatesh’s notion of the “brand system” (2005), which makes it especially useful for our purpose. Following these authors, “a brand system embeds consumers’ and marketers’ brand-related social communication” (p. 16). In this sense, brand-related communication develops and alters elements of culture. In the ipod example, observers can either accept, ignore, alter, or oppose Apple’s suggested meaning of the brand (e.g. Elliott 1998). Competitors may use the ipod’s characteristics to refine their own brands and thus allow for more complex markets (e.g. Aaker 1995). Consumers may use it to reshape their identities or create communities around and against it (e.g. Kozinets 2002; McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002). Mass media may report on the ipod, and researchers may reflect on how consumers socialize around it. In summary, these communications shape the brand system and make it a resource for further communication.

Based on this concept, we propose three key characteristics of brands as cultural resources: First, brands can only become cultural resources with respect to an observer. Yet no matter how the observer adopts the brand, as long as it does not go unnoticed, communication is created and thus new elements of culture. Second, consistent with the suggested meaning of the word “resource,” brand systems assist consumers in the production of culture. Relying entirely on intangible operations, they proliferate with every reference made, but fade at the speed of oblivion in the moment consumers fail to communicate about them. Third, as brand systems and culture are established on and brought forth by communication (Luhmann 1995), they resist both ownership and exclusion.

In sum, the proposed concept of brand system helps consumer culture theoreticians to understand better the social potentialities of brands to create and reproduce culture through ongoing communication.

REFERENCES


Habermas, Jürgen (1984a), The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Cambridge, UK: Polity.


Consumers’ Accounts Re-producing the Cultural Contradiction of Global Shopping Brands—
A Socio-Cultural Level of Analysis
Sofia Ulver, Lund University, Sweden

ABSTRACT
Oppositional discourses create cultural contradiction and consequently anxiety in consumer society (Holt, 2003abc; 2004). In this investigation, the cultural contradiction of global shopping brands is explored on its socio-cultural level through inter-textual analysis of texts written by twenty-four university students of ten different nationalities. As part of a larger cross-cultural research project, the aim of this paper is to begin conceptualizing the contradiction by identifying ideological themes in the oppositional discourses. The detected themes were not only inherently contradictory, but also consisting of the same content and form as the oppositional discourse, by Foucault (1978) called “tactical polyvalence of discourses”.

INTRODUCTION
We seem to love and hate them at the same time— the large global brands. Global brands are evidently profitable and popular enough to spread their wings wider and wider globally, but unpopular enough to get the full and non-misinterpretable1 attention from anti-consumerists (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Thompson & Arsel, 2004). As an example of popularity one can spot Zara’s fashion logo in urban areas stretching from Abu Dhabi to Santa Domingo to Stockholm, or IKEA’s home furnishing logo in suburban areas all the way from Beijing, Jeddah, Netanya, San Fransisco, to Copenhagen. But, like mentioned above, they are not the only ones spreading their wings, so are anti-brand products (i.e Klein’s (2000) book “No logo”, Schlosser’s (2002) book “Fast-food nation”, Blythman’s, (2004) book “Shopped”, and Spurlock’s (2004) movie “Supersize me”). Consequently, not only are consumers today more literate (Holt, 2002) and informed about consumer society’s and branding strategies’ diverse consequences for cultural diversity, environment and locality, preached by the anti-globalization advocates, but paradoxically enough also about the notion that the anti-brand preachers use the exact same branding strategies they are criticising, to market their opinions (Higgins & Tadajewski, 2002).

Global brands as an academic topic has during the last decade emerged within different research domains. Although often empirically investigated amongst consumer, most marketing research on global brands takes the perspective of brand management, i.e. by studying the benefit from positioning the brand as global (Steenkamp, et al., 2003; Holt, et al., 2004; Kapferer, 2002), the difference between local and global brand image (Alden, et. al. 1999), the effect on brand image of certain global brand dimensions such as country-of-origin of the brand or of ethnocentrism amongst consumers (Pereira, et al., 2005; Brodowsky et al., 2004; Wang & Chen, 2004; Insch & McBride, 2004; Kaynak & Kara, 2002; Moon & Jain, 2002), etc. In contrast, in the literature on consumer culture (anthropology, ethnography, sociology, and marketing) the analytical categories of “the local” and “the global” are often used in order to make possible to analyse the complexities of globalization in relation to consumer culture (i.e. Belk, 1996; Wilk, 1995; Miller, 1995; Campbell, 1995; Appadurai, 1990). Hence, the scope there is

1It is hard to misinterpret the culture jammed logos of Starbucks like the one where “Starbucks” has been replaced by “Fuck” and “Coffee” by “OIl”.

more on a macro level of societal forces, where the meso- or micro level of the consumer “meeting” the brand is left for future micro research. Although substantial consumer cultural research regarding “the global” and “the local” has been done (i.e. Askegaard & Csaba, 2000; Askegaard & Madsen, 1998; Ger & Belk, 1996), very little research, to my knowledge, with one exception (Thompson & Arsel, 2004), has aimed to define and conceptualize the global brand’s inherent cultural contradiction, per se, as experienced by consumers.

On top of this scarcity of consumer research regarding the inherent complexities of the global brand contradiction as part of the predisposed discourses circulating in local and global consumer arenas, a detection of maybe the most provocative and at the same time provoked type of brand there is, namely the shopping brand, in all its nude street presence (think of the new social movement “reclaim the streets”), its homogenizing effects of globally disparate city scenes, and its carrying of globally standardized products (very often manufactured in third world countries, adding extra sensitivity to the infected matter), has not been a priority. Shops cannot be ignored. They govern what is suggested you buy; they are the law-enforcing politicians in a consumer society of mandatory choice, the guarantee givers for what is “in” and what is “out”, what is cool and what is not cool. They serve as hotels for mingling guests, where the latter are both visiting brands (sometimes) and visiting consumers. They are the rule-makers in the democracy of differentiation and in the totalitarian ruling of sameness. They give consumer society its options— and they are right there in the street in front of us.

As part of a larger, cross-cultural research project on globalizing shopping brands, in this paper I will start the exploration of the complexities that characterize the global shopping brand contradiction. Approaching the contradiction on three different levels of analysis and interest, namely; (1) a socio-cultural level, (2) a brand-political level, and (3) a market offer level, I will, by drawing from the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) research brand (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), in this specific paper begin exploring the socio-cultural level, using inter-textual analysis of texts written by twenty-four University students from a variety of countries in order to find dominant discourses constituting the contradiction I aim to conceptualize.

METHOD
In terms of epistemological choices, containing the one between a priori or emergent approaches to theory, I will lean on the basic ideas of Grant McCracken’s (1988) “four-part method of inquiry”, which originally is developed for long qualitative interviews. However, the iterative mode of the method lends itself specifically well for these written accounts as both analytical, and cultural categories need to be reviewed in previous theory and discovered in extant data following upon each other, in order to find emergent discoveries in individual cases but also in between (relationships) the different accounts. Hence, this method suggests an emic and etic approach to research data, where previous theory doesn’t function as an absolute a priori lens but where the data and previous theory instead “talk” to one another and constitute templates for each other iteratively.

On the methodological level, in order to see how the socio-political cultural contradiction contributes to forming the large
global shopping brand culture, a structural text analysis (Hellspng, 2001) was used on, by the respondents, written texts. The structural text analysis as defined by Hellspng (ibid.), has as purpose to describe a text’s multi-layered language-, content-, and social-structure in light of its context. The analytical questions to be asked concern its situational, inter-textual, and cultural context, its textual structure, its ideological structure, its inter-personal structure, and its general contextual relationships. For the sake of this specific investigation, the main focus will be on inter-textual and cultural context as well as on the ideological structure in terms of themes, propositions and perspectives. This way I should be able to see which the different texts are that interplay to create the discursive contradiction.

Data Collection

The sample and questionnaire

Drawing upon an investigation on “green consumer” marginalization by Moisander & Pesonen (2002), I generated accounts in written text from respondents by asking them to imagine themselves being pro- or against global brands (see questions below). This way the stereotypical discourses, as experienced by the respondent, used by each “side” are probable to emerge. The twenty-four respondents (n=22: age 20-30; n=2: age>30), came from ten different countries (Singapore, China (Hong Kong), Canada, USA, France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Estonia, Sweden, and Denmark), and were all doing their Master’s degree in business administration at different universities around the world, temporarily joined at a large Swedish University for a short, international course in retail Marketing. The fact that the respondents had some knowledge in retail marketing was rather considered as an advantage than a biasing disadvantage, as it is probable that they incorporate a higher sensitivity to the topic at hand (yet without being pre-occupied like a researcher of the topic), and therefore more likely to have picked up stereotypical discourses from each “side”. The purpose of choosing respondents with different nationalities was not to trace differences to national cultures (unless there were emergent obvious reasons to do so) but rather to search for the similarities in dominant discourses as we here are talking about global brands, and wanting to do this with nationally spread respondents to not have an immediate national bias. This not to say that differences between national cultures wouldn’t have any relationship to differences in dominant discourses, quite the opposite; dominant, stereotypical discourses are of course often springing from the discourses active in national media, as well as from social class belonging and gender. Although these differences are very interesting and important to investigate, that is not the purpose of this specific paper. Rather, researching the cross-national similarities in dominant discourses characterising the polarities within this electrical field of tension, should be seen as a starting-point in understanding the cultural contradiction of global shopping brand better, thereby not saying they work on a higher level of scientific importance than differences do.

The following questions were given to the respondents:

(1) Imagine that you are an anti-global-brands/corporation consumer. What do you value, what do you search for in life, what is important to you in your life, society and the world? Please, describe you values, beliefs, and feelings as thoroughly as possible,

(2) Imagine that you are a pro-global-brands/corporation consumer. What do you value, what do you search for in life, what is important to you in your life, society and the world? Please, describe you values, beliefs, and feelings as thoroughly as possible,

(3) If you personally had to choose to speak for or against (or both), a large, “global” retailer, say IKEA, what arguments would you use?

The students were asked to look at one question (one whole page to write on per question) at a time and to take about ten minutes per question. They were also asked to fill in a fourth page with direct personal data consisting of gender, age, country of residence (and how long time it had been and would be), home country, parents’ country of residence, as the last step.

The actual analysis of the text was made by reading the 66 pages many times after the other in random order during a three-week period of time, trying to see patterns emerging after the many repetitive readings. When themes seemed to “jump out” at me I would go to relevant literature and look for further understanding or explanations. I would then go back to reading the texts, and follow the same procedure iteratively. When presenting extracts in the analysis below, no changes of the respondents’ formulations were made, that is: grammatical errors were not corrected or changed.

The choice of IKEA

The choice of including IKEA as a case in the third question was based on the following reasons:

(1) IKEA is one of the world’s 40 “most valuable global brands” (Businessweek, 2004),
(2) IKEA is a retailer, taking a lot of public space (although often in “less attractive” neighbourhoods),
(3) IKEA exists in the form of 186 stores in 31 countries/territories across the globe,
(4) IKEA has in its mission statement the duty to grow further in order to “create a better everyday life for the many people”,
(5) in an ideal IKEA-world all its stores (up to almost 40,000 m² large) should look exactly like the standardized guidelines, that are provided by Inter IKEA Systems, state they should,
(6) IKEA is large also in turn-over: ? 11,3 billion 2003,
(7) IKEA has stores on four continents: Asia, North America, Europe, Australia,
(8) IKEA is predominantly consumer oriented,
(9) IKEA has a highly standardized (homogenized) store and range concept (with small variances like bigger furniture in the US, or odd bed sizes in Switzerland), but adapted (heterogenized) market communications (TV-commercials, advertising in magazines and newspapers, store communications etc), apart from the IKEA-catalogues which are more like hybrids (i.e. having different front-covers, structures and product category sales-priorities between the continents, but within each continent the differences are very small apart from the translated language)
(10) IKEA is not your “normal” global brand as in “American” (Holt et al, 2004), but from Sweden, a very small (and therefore less “threatening”? ) country in Scandinavia.
The textual analysis of the data had as purpose to define, by connecting to ideological themes, perspectives and propositions, the dominant discourses regarding anti- and pro- global brands, as well as seeing if discourse regarding global shopping brands would in any way differ in terms of above-mentioned themes.

Anti-global-brand discourse

Brand Reification

The texts reflect a contradictive view upon humanity. In order to defend the cynical view upon corporations, which are run by humans, a de-humanization is made where brands are reified into active and cynical subjects far alienated from humanity. Some texts un-critically express this (extract1) whilst some (extract 2) sarcastically ironize this view.

Extract 1
I think that global brands will destroy ethical and cultural diversity all over the world. These brands do not care about particularities; they only want to make profit. Small brands will be eliminated, bio-diversity as well, since global brands only want to be profit efficient. (French male)

Extract 2
The funny thing is that “I” believe that there is something good in all people. But on the other hand global brands/corporations are just blood-sucking scum, that just want to make money- no matter the consequences (Danish male)

Ideological Conflation

In accordance with Beck’s (1994) description on the dissolution of traditional left- and right wing dichotomy, we see in the texts how terms used in traditional right-wing discourse are tweaked and understood as left-wing values (ex.3-7). Instead of talking about the good for the collective and humanity as such, left wing claims are mixed with conservative priorities being family, friends and religion. Although all anti-global brand texts indicate that this discourse is left wing in terms of humanistic priorities instead of capitalist, the conservative undertones reveal a non-progressive genre of leftism which, as opposed to right-wing conservatism which, in spite of its strive backwards in terms of morals, encourages technological development, innovation, globalization and cultural exchange. This political melting pot permits multiple interpretations creating a contradictive stereotype that could be anyone. It is a conflation, which in its complete form lacks clear consistency in ideological direction.

Extract 3
It’s about being honest with yourself and the rest of the world. Nature and “back to basic” play an important role in everyday life which reflects in buying products. (Dutch female)

Extract 4
I search for happiness and fulfillment. In my life the most important thing would be family. (American male)

Extract 5
I have a strong respect for human beings. My family is very important for me. I try to spend most of my free time with them and my career is not so important. (Canadian male)

Extract 6
I think maybe the most important thing in my life would be my family, and religion would also take an important place (French female)

Extract 7
My close environment like my family and friends are those important to me. Not money or job-related success. (…) My biggest concern would be to be dependent on somebody or something. I would be a very individualistic person who wants to be in control of my life. (Canadian female)

Extract 8
I would want to avoid this “mass consumption”, and defend smaller stores (like butchers, and bakers) that allow us to keep the traditional way of life. (French female)

Underdog-Power Urgency

The texts call for societal and individual action in an urgent manner which signals that something can be done if only people let their ego go. This opposed to the more fatal view according to which there is no way out of this development. Still, the expressed urgency indicates that once the huge corporations have, which is soon according to this discourse, swallowed the globe with all its consumers and family firms, there is no way back (ex.9-10).

Extract 9
If we do not resist this process, we will be all the same, and the planet will certainly be in danger, because it’s not good to play at changing the rules of nature. I prefer to go to the market place, buy farmers’ products. (French male)

Extract 10
Most large corporations sacrifice the well being of the individual, and of course the entire community in order to seek profit (Canadian female)

Particularist Multi-Culturalism

As opposed to cultural diffusion theories, such as the late heliocentric Manchester school of thought, led by Grafton Elliot Smith and William J. Perry, arguing that only one civilization was responsible for all cultural development, and hence, that all heterogeneous cultures radiate from one single source, in this investigation the texts express a discourse which assumes a diametrically opposite view upon cultural development. That is, the “real” and authentic cultures emerged separately and isolated, whereupon local cultures should stay local as some kind of natural law, assuming that mixing them would be like a gene manipulating operation which challenges and destroys the natural system. Some would probably call this “left-wing multi-culturalism”, where cultures are seen to be helped by being kept untouched, “clean” and not mixed. Again, we see a contradiction between the claims of human equality (as patented by the left-wing discourse) and the claims of freedom to enhance natural individual differences (as patented by the right-wing discourse) (ex.11-12).

Extract 11
I think that it is very important for each society to keep their own values, without being influenced by others (Canadian female)

Extract 12
It’s important for me to associate with something I feel really familiar with and which is related to my own country. (…). The key value in this case concerns identity. Globalization has a
standardization effect on people and cultures, which I do not appreciate. (Canadian female)

Authenticity Guardians
Thompson & Arsel (2004) talk about a hegemonic brandscape, which they define as: “a cultural system of servicescapes linked together and structured by discursive, symbolic, and competitive relationships to a dominant (market driving) experiential brand” (ibid p.6). In other words it is a cultural model, which: “shapes individuals’ actions through conventionalized social practices, interactions with its material objectifications, and internalization of its discourses via cognitive structures and embodied habits” (ibid).

Their thesis is based upon an assumption that especially experiential (i.e. shopping brands) and market-driving brands exert influence on local markets (referring to Pine & Gilmore (1999) and Schmitt (1999)). Through the lens of hegemonic brandscape they found support for the theoretical standpoint that global brands systematically use their power to influence the “cultural heterohybridization engendered by glocalization” (p.26). According to this standpoint, Starbucks first created a global coffee shop “revolution” and then became indispensable as referents for more local coffee shops to be able to even make a point. In line with this argument the texts in my investigation tend to argue for the same asymmetric symmetry, or symmetric asymmetry if you will. That is, complete asymmetry, as preached by Adorno or McLoughlan, is denied as there is an assumed consumer power, which can change the rule of the game (if urgently taken care of). Also, the “victims” (the consumers and the smaller family firms) are assumed to use the “bad” image of the huge corporations to, in a post-structuralist sense of relativism, create an oppositional image of “good” where smaller firms neatly fit in (ex.13-16). Hence, this asymmetry is presumably necessary, for the anti-global brand discourse, and therefore becomes partly (not completely!) symmetrical in terms of power. That is, on one hand the image of the small, local cafés has transformed into “saint-like” based on a sense of authenticity,

Extract 13
Most large corporations sacrifice the well being of the individual, and of course the entire community in order to seek profit. (Canadian female)

Extract 14
All the global brands take away the chance for small companies, brands, to perform in their business. I think that it’s unfair. I’ll try to buy small brands to help them to survive in the world (a wild one). (Belgian male)

Extract 15
I think that business people and managers have only capitalist goals. They try to make as much money as possible and don’t really care about me, the final consumer. (Canadian female)

Extract 16
I value small companies from my local region who cannot compete with the world scale competitors. I’m ready to pay more in a small store than in a big store like Wal Mart. I think the big companies don’t pay their employees enough and they should pay more. (Canadian Male)

Pro global brand-discourse
Fatalism
In these texts consumers see them selves as victims, but not of corporations per se (they are also victims), but of an unstoppable force which will, through successive osmosis, strive towards a harmonic equilibrium of cultural homogeneity, like a heliocentric reverse (ex.17-18). The Darwinist undertone is clear and sometimes expressed directly (ex.18-)

Extract 17
In a sense we are all the same : we all need to eat, we all need to wash, why not the same way? (French male)

Extract 18
I think it is possible to live with similar standards in every country. I think that powerful people who can’t afford to expand must take profit even at another one’s expense. I also think that in the world, it’s possible to reach a common vision in a long-term view. Cultures’ differences are not that important for me and don’t consist in a value-added form in this multi-ethnic world. (Canadian female)

Extract 19
A global corporation may seem to be a little too powerful sometimes, but at the end of the day, it is also the customers that make a choice to purchase the products. If a large corporation cannot answer the majority’s need, it is impossible for its survival anyways. As such, adaptation is the most important thing in today’s world, not only for the corporations, but for individuals as well. (Chinese-Canadian female)

Extract 20
I know that the big corporations are dominating this world and many aspects of our lives, but I probably work, or aspire to work in one of those big firms who are doing the dominating.. (Singaporean female)

Extract 21
Even though I believe that it is sad for companies that cannot compete with big competitors, I think that it’s just the way it is and there is nothing we can do. It’s the law of the strongest. I also believe that it’s okay to pay employees a low wage because if they are not satisfied they can go work elsewhere. (Canadian male)

Extract 22
I strongly believe in the market system and that everybody gets what he deserves based on his own effort. “Only the fittest survives” would be my motto.(German male)

Humanistic Capitalism
The texts reveal a clearly contradictory blend between clichés on greedy capitalism (ex.23) and honest devotion to the belief in a better world as a result of globalization leading to economical and cultural exchange (ex.24). Inter-textually they both typically stem from bi-polar perspectives (compare Norberg (2003) and Klein (2000)) of discourses on globalizing capitalism. Maybe more interesting is, in line with Foucault’s thesis on “rule of tactical polyvalence of discourses” (1978, p.101), that not only do “the accused” use counter arguments of the same form, but also of the same content as their accuser (ex.25-26).

Extract 23
They [the pro-global-brand people] want to have the best value for money, even if this means that others have to pay for it, e.g. poor countries being exploited by large corporations to satisfy the needs of the 1st world. They may believe in the
value of the family, strength in themselves and religion. These people may be conservative and/or liberal, but rather more conservative than liberal. Furthermore I think people like these tend to be arrogant. (German male)

Extract 24
Internationalization is a value I would believe in, building larger political or economic organizations (EC/WTO). (…). I would believe that by having larger multinational/international markets the standard of living could be increased. I think that cultural exchange is of high value. (German male)

Extract 25
They [the global corporations] have the means to do good. More, with their quality and low prices, they offer value for everyone all over the planet. (…). Those companies settle everywhere and give job opportunities to everyone, including in poor countries, that’s important! (…). I think that globalization will increase incomes for everyone on the planet. (French male)

Extract 26
I think the global brands bring to the consumers a lot of advantages. The prices will decrease due to scale economy. It’s very important nowadays (everybody wants the cheapest items). Secondly it’s more relaxed to do shopping everywhere and can find the items that we want and that we know. Finally, I think that the global brands help the fairly working condition. I think that Carrefour has a lot of interest in that. That also help people of not developed countries. Those brands give them a job, and escort their products all over the world. I think that global brands are benefits for everybody. (Belgian male)

Progressive Conservatism
Family, Religion, and the State is a reoccurring trilogy in the pro-global brands texts, which signals a traditional right-wing leaning on values and morals. At the same time it is, in these texts, also the discourse that encourages most development and change for the future of the world (such as globalization, free trade, technology etc), which is an ideological blend or even contradiction (ex. 27-30), although not historically. The pro-globalization discourses are presented in the texts analyzed in this study-at least another, somewhat surprising (at least to this author), the texts on global shopping brands reveal no reflection upon the, by anti-large-corporation opinion leaders like Naomi Klein and Anne Blythman, often brought-up issue of large retailers’ occupation of public space. Instead, the discourse concerning the actual market offer (quality, consumer needs, price, design, etc) completely takes over.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION
It is quite striking how inherently, and not just in-between one-another, contradictory the accounted-for anti- and pro- global brand discourses are presented in the texts analyzed in this study-at least in terms of this author’s pre-disposed theoretical understanding of ideological perspectives. The inherent contradictions somehow make it more understandable how complex the ultimate cultural contradiction of global shopping brands is in relation to necessary navigation amongst arguments, for the collective as well as for the individual. They (I have for sake of pedagogies recapitulated the themes in Table 1) don’t contrast as much from each other as one would have expected considering mass-medial debates. Instead, as mentioned earlier, Foucault’s thesis on the “rule of tactical polyvalence of discourses” (1978, p.101), is highly supported by the results of this investigation. Not only do the respondents use the same categories when arguing for the two oppositional sides in the dichotomy, but also they use the same content. The accused uses the
argument of the accuser and twists it to be the platform of defense, and vice versa. This way a contradiction stays alive and un-solved, which consequently would make it easier for the collective and/or the individual to avoid choosing “sides”.

The discourse revealed in the texts about IKEA is rather a brand management discourse than an anti- or pro- brand discourse. That is; when moving down from a macro-level to a specific brand level (in this case a brand that amongst the respondents was very appreciated), the socio-political and socio-cultural danger aspects are marginalized and forgotten. On one hand this could be a sign of IKEA managing their brand just right, in terms of corporate social responsibility, global influence and image. On the other hand, IKEA has a highly standardized offer, which in long-term could have socio-cultural homogenization or “McDonaldization”-of-the-home effects sketched out as the dominant threat in the anti-global-brand discourse (Ritzer, 1993) (also see “Multi-culturalism” above).

For future explorative research on the matter, using respondents from multiple and diverse social strata would be of interest. Applying, in literature, extant consumer typologies, such as shopping orientation, on the accounts and themes may also help us to further understand more about the global brand dimensions. For increased knowledge on possible sources of similarities relative to differences in discourse, research on national media rhetoric would come well at hand.

REFERENCES


### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anti-global-brand discourse</th>
<th>Pro-global-brand discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Reification</td>
<td>Fatalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Conflation</td>
<td>Humanistic Capitalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underdog-Power Urgency</td>
<td>Progressive Conservatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particularist Multi-Culturalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity Guardians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*European Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 7) / 17*
Where Does Our Food Come From?—The Relevance of Source of Origin in International Marketing
James Hosea, NHH-Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Norway
Brynjólfur Eyjólfsson, Møreforsking in Álesund, Norway
Ingeborg Astrid Kleppe, NHH-Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Norway

ABSTRACT
Regulations requiring the identification of the Source of Origin (SoFO) of food products in most developed countries offer a potential source of competitive advantage to firms by using the SoFO as part of a branding strategy. This study investigates the different images held by consumers for an SoFO in a target market and how these images compare with those held for other SoFOs both within and across markets. The findings suggest that SoFO is a complex concept that potentially offers a source of competitive advantage but that it should not be studied in isolation from other competing SoFOs.

INTRODUCTION
Regulations regarding food products in most developed markets now require firms to clearly identify the Source of Origin (SoFO) for their products at the point of sale (Louereiro & McCluskey 2000). EU regulations 2081/92 and 2082/92 provide for the protection of geographic indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and by the end of the year 2000 526 names had been registered, including Parma Ham, Champagne and Galician Veal (Dimara & Skuras 2003; Louereiro & McCluskey, 2000). WTO negotiations on the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights allow non-EU countries to apply for protection of their products and to object to EU product registrations where there is a legitimate interest (Dimara & Skuras, 2003).

As well as official, regulated designations of SoFO and quality, there are also designations established by industry bodies to infer origin or to act as a guarantee of quality from a specific place, region or country. These include the Tartan mark of the Scottish Quality Salmon Association and the Parmigiano Reggiano mark stamped on Parmesan cheeses by the Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano Reggiano. Individual firms also use specific place names in their produce to infer origin or to act as a brand, but sometimes they do not genuinely correspond with an actual geographic origin. Differentiation by SoFO should allow a product to command a premium price, but consumers must be able to perceive a higher quality as well as being able to differentiate the product from others (Louereiro & McCluskey 2000).

In marketing research the SoFO has been viewed variously as a product cue, a product attribute, or a brand (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). Several studies have compared the effect of different SoFOs on products, but few studies have compared the effect of different SoFOs across multiple target markets. The work of Hofstede (2001) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) has illustrated that national markets can be very different and that international marketing more often than not requires customised strategies (Usunier, 2000; Roth, 1995).

Given the increasing relevance of SoFO to food products, this paper addresses the importance of understanding the different consumer perceptions faced in export markets for food products. First consumers in different target markets may have different perceptions of the same SoFO. Second, in each target markets there may be several competing SoFOs, which constitutes a unique competitive context of multiple exporters on each market. We therefore argue that we need to know both the absolute and relative position of an SoFO in a target market to be able to determine whether a specific SoFO have the necessary leverage and competitive position to benefit from the SoFO in the marketing mix.

First we give a brief introduction to the importance of SoFO to food products in international markets. Then we discuss how an SoFO can be used as part of a branding strategy. To explore our propositions we use data from an attribute elicitation study, which we conducted among a small sample of consumers in three different target/country markets. The data—a multi source and multi target country data matrix (3x3)—gives us a unique opportunity both to explore one country’s image across multiple markets, and to study relative position of different sources of origin in different target markets.

IMPORTANCE OF SOURCE OF ORIGIN TO FOOD PRODUCTS
Even if food products would appear to embody strong associations with places as they have a geographic origin by nature the body of research on SoFO with respect to food products is scarce (Juric & Worsley, 1998; Tregear et al, 1998). Evidence suggests that there are often strong historical and symbolic links between places and foods due to the interactions between natural resources and people’s lifestyles (Tregear et al, 1998). Consumers can use SoFO as surrogate information for unfamiliar products and in evaluation of intrinsic food characteristics that are difficult to define (Juric & Worsley, 1998). Perceived quality is related to a product’s ability to provide satisfaction and a consistent level of performance, taste, freshness, aroma and other properties (Dimara & Skuras, 2003). Perceptions of taste are formed on experience, so consumers use general country attitudes to evaluate the taste of unfamiliar products (Juric & Worsley, 1998). Geographic associations may be considered quality cues by making reference to socially constructed attributes such as being authentic, healthy, and traditional (Dimara & Skuras, 2003).

A change in labelling or information can change the consumers’ perceptions and behaviour (Louereiro & McCluskey, 2000). One element of success for the protected EU designation PGI (Protection of Geographic Indication) is the collective reputation of the products covered. When the reputation is good, the label becomes a powerful tool signalling quality, especially where the firm is unknown (Louereiro & McCluskey, 2000). In particular PGI can play an important role for the higher quality/higher value products and may facilitate the identification of more specific SoFOs that are perceived to affect the taste and quality of the product (Louereiro & McCluskey, 2000; Bjorkum, 1999).

SOURCE OF ORIGIN AS A BRAND
Some firms attempt to develop competitive advantage based on familiarity with SoFO, using an SoFO and its secondary associations as a kind of branding strategy (Keller, 1993). Both brands and SoFO provide identification and allow a degree of protection from imitation. They also both influence consumer perceptions and, in so doing, assist in the reduction of perceived risk in a purchase. It is therefore important for a firm seeking to adopt such a branding strategy to learn about and understand the associations and images
that the consumers in a target market have for a particular SofO. These associations and images are in the minds of the consumers in the target market, and it is therefore important to study them in the target market where these images exist (Roth 1995). An SofO image can be viewed as the “total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs about a particular country” (Martin & Eroglu, 1993, p193). The concept of SofO Image corresponds to the concept of Brand Image, and can be defined as: “the overall perception consumers form of products from a particular country based on their prior perceptions of the country’s production and marketing strengths and weaknesses” (Roth & Romeo, 1992, p480).

Like a Brand Image, SofO Image is a knowledge structure, with associations varying in uniqueness, favourability, strength and salience (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 1993). When consumers have a high depth of awareness of an SofO and strong, favourable and unique associations, there is an opportunity for value to be created by using the SofO to differentiate the product. Elicitation of both SofO Image associations and other target market characteristics are crucial to create an optimal match (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 1993). This process may be influenced by the degree of sophistication and maturity of both the production culture and the consumption culture. There are many good examples of products where this can be seen, with some notable examples being Havana cigars, Champagne, Parma ham, Scottish malt whisky, and Norwegian salmon; all products with mature production and sophisticated consumption cultures.

Developing an understanding of the image held by consumers in a target market of a specific SofO is not enough in itself for a firm seeking to find and leverage competitive advantage. Firms are rarely alone in a target market. There are usually many competing exporters within a target market and consumers in the target market have SofO Images for these other exporters as well. Before deciding on a branding strategy that uses SofO a firm needs to know the relative position of their SofO Image when compared to the images of the competing exporters/sources held by target market consumers. Comparing the strength, favourability and uniqueness (Keller 1993) of competing SofO both between and within target markets will allow the identification of the competitive landscape of SofOs. A strong and favourable image is a prerequisite for any successful branding strategy (Aaker 1995). However, when competing with other suppliers unique associations are crucial in addition to strength and favourability of associations (Keller 1993). If the relative SofO Image is weak or negative, there is no competitive advantage in using the SofO as part of a branding strategy.

**Proposition 1:** Customers in different target markets may have different associations of one Source of Origin

**Proposition 2:** The strength and favourability of customer associations of one Source of Origin may differ across target markets

**Proposition 3:** One Source of Origin may have different competitive positions relative to other sources of origin in different target markets

Together the three propositions define the cross-national competitive landscape of multiple sources of origin that operate on the same international markets. Leverage associated with SofO in one market requires strong, favourable, and unique associations compared to the competing sources of origin. It is also expected that the relative position of one SofO may differ across target markets (Roth 1992).
Image attributes were measured by associations written in the free elicitation of the questionnaire. The five most important associations were identified to recognize image attributes strongly or uniquely associated to the source countries in the target markets. The relative importance of associations was identified by the number of total mentions and the five most important ones are presented in an ordinal scale of relative strength 1-5 (15 or more mentions=5; 11-14 mentions=4; 7-10=3; 4-6 mentions=2; 4 or less mentions=1). Each of the associations is also presented with a valence given by the consumers themselves (+=positive,-=negative, "blank"=neutral) and with a reference to whether it was unique for the SofO in the particular target market or not. In addition, we comment on the number of mentions per SofO for the SofO in the particular target market in the sublevel). These findings are summarised in two tables and presented separately for each market. Table 1 depicts the results from the elicitation and Table 2 depicts the results from the attitudes measured in the questionnaire.

Sweden: An open and knowledgeable market. In Sweden the strength, favourability and uniqueness of the associations that comprised the SofO Images for the source countries differed somewhat. Canada had relatively strong associations and these were regarded very favourably by the Swedes. Canada and Norway also shared many associations (for example fish) but some unique associations existed for Canada. Ice hockey was a strong one and there were several nature related ones as well depicting Canada as a large, wild, untouched country, with bears another unique association.

The SofO Image associations for Norway were very strong and quite favourable, although the closeness of Norway and Sweden probably leads to the Swedes being more open and associating a lot of negative things as well as the positive ones to Norway. For Norway the close relationship and similarity between Norway and Sweden, the fjords and the very strong association with salmon gave some unique associations.

The strength of associations was relatively low for Chile compared to the other source countries and a lot of the associations were negative. Chile had mostly negative unique associations but the Swedish consumers did relate wine to Chile, unique to Chile in this study.

These findings could suggest that Swedes would be more likely to buy Norwegian products than Canadian or Chilean products, with Canadian products in turn being favoured over Chilean products. This should be more so in the case of salmon.

The Swedish consumers had a similar attitude towards Canada and Norway (although slightly more positive for Norway), but they differed in purchase intention and intention to visit. They were much more likely to visit Norway than Canada which was probably closely related to the geographical closeness of the two countries.

The Swedes had a more neutral attitude toward purchasing Norwegian products than products of the other two source countries, with both Canada and Chile receiving negative purchase intentions. The picture was very different with regards to salmon purchase intentions. Swedes were very strongly positive towards Norwegian salmon, neutral towards Canadian salmon and negative towards Chilean salmon. Even though the Swedes had quite favourable product associations for Chile, they did not seem to want to purchase Chilean products.

France: A positive attitude and interested in Source of Origin. The strength of associations in France was relatively high for Canada and was medium for the other two source countries. The image associations for Canada and Norway were very favourable and for Chile they were fairly favourable. This suggests that the French did have a strong and very positive image of Canada, giving Canada a strong position relative to the other source countries. Norway had a better position than Chile did due to greater favourability, even though the strength of the image associations was at a similar level.

The unique associations linked with Canada were again linked to the big territory, but also maple syrup and salient places such as the Niagara Falls, Quebec and Montreal. Norway is uniquely linked strongly to salmon (although it is mentioned under Canada as a weaker association). Chile has unique associations linked to wine, fruit, the Andes, adventure, the Incas, and also to poverty. These findings would suggest that French consumers would be more likely to purchase Canadian products than Norwegian or Chilean products, but that Norwegian salmon would be the most positively received of the three source countries. They also suggest that Chilean products would be the least best received of the three source countries. With respect to attitude towards the source countries and intention to visit, the French consumers’ attitude toward Canada was very positive, perhaps reflecting the historical (and lingual) relationship between the two. The French were positive towards Norway as well and would like to visit the country. Chile on the other hand did not engender a positive attitude in France at all, but the French seemed to be slightly positive towards visiting Chile. Even though the French were positive towards products of Canada, they were only moderately likely to purchase. In fact they seemed just as likely to buy products from Norway as products from Canada, if salmon was excluded. Norwegian salmon seemed to have a very strong position in France and the French were eager to purchase it, as was apparent in the SofO Image associations and Product-SoFO associations. Attitude toward Canadian salmon did not come close to that for Norway, but was still much preferred over Chilean salmon. Attitude towards purchasing Chilean products or salmon was negative.

Japan: Limited Source of Origin knowledge and simple images. The Japanese recorded much fewer associations about the source countries than the Swedes and French did. Knowledge about the three source countries therefore appeared to be limited in Japan, but differences between the images held by Japanese consumers for the three SoFOs could be seen. The strength of image associations in Japan was higher for Canada than for the other two source countries. Both Norway and Canada had favourable associations, with Norway having slightly more favourable image associations. The associations for Chile were mostly neutral, although there were much more negative associations than for the either Canada or Norway.
The product associations for the three source countries were very simplistic, with the Japanese having strong and somewhat favourable associations about maple syrup from Canada (there were also a few about salmon), strong and quite favourable associations about Norwegian salmon and strong and not quite so favourable associations about Chilean wine. These strong, favourable product associations and the weak overall images for the source countries indicated that the Japanese consumers had an almost one-dimensional view of the source countries.

These findings would suggest that Japanese consumers may not favour one of the three source countries over the other, except when the product concerned fits the one-dimensional image the consumers have for the source country. This is backed up by the Japanese consumers’ purchase intentions. Attitude towards Canada and Norway and their products was positive, with Canada being slightly more so than Norway on both counts. The Japanese were positive towards visiting Canada, and slightly positive about visiting Norway. They were neutral about Chile, products of Chile and visiting Chile. When the purchase intentions were examined, it could be seen that the Japanese consumers were equally negative towards all three source countries. With the specific product salmon this was not the case. The Japanese were slightly positive about the intention to purchase Norwegian salmon, neutral regarding the intention to purchase Canadian salmon and negative towards purchasing Chilean salmon.

**SOURCE OF ORIGIN BRANDING IS A COMPLEX ISSUE**

Together these results indicate that SofO does not influence consumer purchase intentions in a simple way, but instead that SofO is a rather complex branding tool that can influence and interact with consumers at different levels. These findings appear to
be in line with the notion that some consumers are more likely to be influenced by SofO than others, and that the level of this influence is reliant on how much these consumers know about the SofO. SofO brand equity and its influence on consumer purchase intentions is therefore a complex concept which is difficult to assess with simple indicators. Selecting an appropriate target market may not be enough in itself for an SofO co-branding strategy to be successful. It is important to quantify the actual level of SofO Awareness in a target market or segment and to qualify the actual SofO Image that consumers in that target market or segment have for an SofO.

With regard to using both SofO Awareness and SofO Image when assessing the viability of an SofO co-branding strategy, the results presented above appear to show that neither feature on their own is sufficient to predict the consumer response to SofO in terms of purchase intentions. SofO Awareness appears to be a less reliable predictor of consumer purchase intentions on its own than SofO Image. Using an SofO with both strong SofO Awareness and a negative SofO Image could have disastrous effects for a company launching an SofO branding strategy. The example of Chile in Sweden illustrates this point. Strong awareness of Chile was linked to a fairly negative image, although in some areas the image was positive. This shows the importance of a thorough analysis of all the influencing factors before embarking on an SofO Branding strategy. Emphasising the Chile brand on wine in Sweden may be a winning strategy as Swedes appear to be aware that Chileans make wine, but marking distinctively Chilean salmon could potentially be disastrous. Would Swedes be prepared to purchase salmon from a country they do not currently associate with salmon but instead associate with poverty and economic problems?

On the other hand, a positive SofO Image that is not backed up with a reasonable level of SofO Awareness in the target market or segment may not deliver the results expected. This may be the case

| TABLE 2 |
| Summary of SofO attitudes from the questionnaire |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Chile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target markets</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sweden</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product purchase</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon purchase</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>France</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product purchase</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon purchase</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Japan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product purchase</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon purchase</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Attitude separated by 5 categories for each topic in questionnaire. Results converted to an index.
in the results from Japan, Norway is strongly identified with salmon and yet the consumers’ salmon purchase intentions were only slightly positive, and not that far ahead of either Canada or Chile. There may be other factors at work in Japan as well (e.g. culture), but it does appear that weak SoFO Awareness may handicap potential competitive advantage for Norway in the Japanese market.

Another feature of SoFO Image is the non-product related associations, such as those concerning politics, nature, the state of the economy, or the level of economic development. Consumers may seek to avoid purchasing or being very positive toward purchasing products from certain SoFOs because of such non-product related associations. For example the Swedes may be hesitant in purchasing Chilean wine because negative associations with former Pinochet regime and French consumers may try to avoid American products due to their opinions regarding the current US involvement in Iraq. These are purely political reasons for not purchasing products from countries, but there can be other reasons as well. Both Swedish and French consumers may not be so keen to purchase salmon from Chile because of perceptions about the current level of economic development or of food safety standards in Chile and therefore the perceived risk in purchasing food products from there. Then again, positive associations about political and economic stability or positive associations about beautiful, clean and safe surroundings can invoke or increase a sense of trust in a particular SoFO even though no particular product is associated to that SoFO, just as positive associations about one product or category can potentially be extended to another product or category. Associations about tourism, famous persons or about sports can also have positive effects on unrelated products. All these elements illustrate the complexity involved in evaluating the potential benefit of pursuing an SoFO branding strategy.

DISCUSSION-LINKAGE BETWEEN PRODUCT AND SOFO IMAGES

One interesting finding in this study is the consistency with which Canada was associated with maple syrup and Chile with wine across the three target markets. Although the strength of these associations varied between target markets, the associations were evident in all of them. As was mentioned in the introduction, food products by nature imply a geographical source of origin. This special link between food and place appears evident in this study as many of the Product-SoFO associations identified for all the source countries in all the target markets were for foods products.

The link between SoFO and product highlights the importance of ensuring that there is a match between a positive SoFO image and the consumers’ perceptions of the product (or Product Image) or that they at least complement each other. This would be especially the case when there is weak consumer Product Knowledge and/or a weak parent brand. The main issue here would be that with any Product-SoFO Image that is developed by marketers and promoted to consumers in a target market in an attempt to capitalise on this effect, the products would have to meet the expectations developed by consumers. With less control over an SoFO brand than with a traditional brand, ensuring delivered quality meet or exceed consumer expectations requires some degree of control over who can use an SoFO label. The use of the EU-PGI registration scheme offers one approach to limit the use of SoFO labels to genuine suppliers, and the approach taken by industry associations and quality certification bodies like Scottish Quality Salmon and Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano Reggiano offer an even more controlled method of ensuring the quality of the product matches the consumers’ expectations raised by the product source.

The Product-SoFO Image phenomenon also raises interesting possibilities for SoFO “Brand extension”. For example could positive associations about adventure, the Andes and the Incas be leveraged to sell a range of brightly coloured Chilean fleece jackets in France, would a maple syrup flavoured ice cream marketed by Canadian ice hockey players be a success in Sweden, or could Norway launch a range of packet fish soups in Japan? This is another area that requires further research.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis and results indicated that consumers have different levels of awareness and different images for different SoFOs, much like they would for different brands. The results would also appear to show that SoFO influences consumers’ product purchase intentions. This does not appear to be a simple relationship, but is instead a complex connection with many variables that may affect the degree to which SoFO influences consumer purchase intentions.

One of the implications of this complex relationship between SoFO and consumer purchase intentions is that not all markets are the same. There are differences between markets in the degree to which consumers are influenced by SoFO. Culture appears to play a part in this, but so too do the level of Product Knowledge, the level of awareness consumers in each market have for an SoFO and the image they hold for the SoFO.

There are also differences in the way that consumers across markets perceive the same SoFO. Although there were some commonalities in the images that consumers in the different target markets had of the SoFOs in this study, there were also great differences. It is therefore important to be aware of not only the SoFO Brand Equity of competing SoFOs within a market, but also of the difference in SoFO Brand Equity across markets.

Consumer perception is important. For an SoFO to have a high level of awareness amongst consumers is not in itself enough for it to have a positive influence on consumer purchase intentions. The SoFO must also have an image that the consumer perceives as beneficial to the product it is attached to or linked with. The example of Chile in Sweden illustrates the point that for an SoFO to be easily recalled and relatively well known does not necessarily guarantee that consumers wish to purchase products from it.

SoFO and its influence on consumer purchase intentions may be a complex concept, but it also offers the companies the opportunity to leverage Brand Equity from an existing source and differentiate their products without the large investments required to build an entirely new brand. In the food industry this opportunity is very real as consumers associate food with geographic places. Leveraging an SoFO as part of a co-branding strategy merely builds upon the perceptions the consumer already has and can build value in the process.

SoFO co-branding is a complex issue and decisions should not be made on simple indicators alone. It offers a source of low cost value creation, but the key is to understand the needs and perceptions of consumers in each market or segment.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT
This paper employs an approach of explaining and understanding to examine what is promoted by the global corporation. While the concept of intertextuality illuminates that texts are endlessly referring to other disparate texts within the same realm of cultural production, structural semiotics view language as a system of negative differences. With this in mind I examine how Swedishness is promoted in the marketing communication of the furnishing retailer IKEA. In conclusion, it is argued that Swedishness is made ambivalent in order to appeal to a global audience, which may encourage transformations and rearrangements of the marketing material when interpreted.

INTRODUCTION
Most of the time, beautifully designed home furnishings are created for a small part of the population — the few who can afford them. From the beginning, IKEA has taken a different path. We have decided to side with the many. That means responding to the home furnishing needs of people throughout the world. People with many different needs, tastes, dreams, and aspirations. People who want to improve their homes and create better everyday lives (http://www.ikea.com).

Despite being forced to make adaptations in product lines and marketing communication over the years, the furnishing retailer IKEA is employing a business strategy that in pursuit of low costs manifests a higher degree of standardisation than almost any other global company (Pitt 1996). Besides the retail store, the IKEA catalogue constitute the most important channel through which IKEA reaches audiences in the 33 national markets where it currently operates. At the end of August every year, 145 million copies, encompassing 23 languages, are distributed to mailboxes worldwide from the Swedish town Älmhult, where IKEA once was founded (http://www.ikea.com). The 300 pages long catalogue offers furnishing ideas and suggestions of how IKEA-s products can be used at home (ibid.). In addition to a picture of a realistic room setting, each page typically has a short written text explaining what is being portrayed. This paper is based on a series of standardised excerpts that were found in several editions of the IKEA catalogue including Hong Kong, Canada, China, Sweden, Poland, Russia and Germany. Later on a selected sample of these excerpts will be displayed in the text. The question I will address with reference to the IKEA catalogue concerns the composition of the standardised excerpts in order to appeal to various audiences located in diverse places. It is not my intention to investigate whether global corporations should adapt or standardise to perceived cultural differences in national markets, but provide a rich illustration of the textual strategy by which a large number of people are approached.

My central concern in the following discussion will be the principles of structural semiotics that have characterised and still characterise some of the research on marketing texts. I suggest that it may be problematic to view highly standardised marketing texts as either structured or unstructured. To the principles of structural semiotics, the concept of intertextuality is added as a complementary mode of grasping the composition of the text. With this in mind, I explore the connections between the excerpts from the IKEA catalogue and other historical texts. Given IKEA’s strong emphasis on its Swedish heritage, I am particularly interested in the texts to which this story refers. Towards the end, I return to the question of how the global retailer (as represented by IKEA) attempts to reach the many.

Reflecting on Intertextuality
In everyday interactions language is rarely used as isolated clauses or random words. Rather language is encountered through texts that have been shaped by past social interactions and future expectations (Kristeva 1966/Moi 1986, p. 37). The excerpts from the IKEA catalogue will here be regarded as texts, following Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2002) notion of the text as carrying discursive articulations and practices. Past research has demonstrated the usefulness of combining literary theory with marketing communication research. According to Barbara Stern (1996), the influence of literary theory occurred in three waves. The first wave was characterised by a text-centred approach based on structural principles (e.g. Hirschman 1988; Stern 1995; Arnold et al 2001), whereas the second wave was oriented towards the reader involving the reader-response theory (e.g. Hirschman 1998). In an attempt to account for the continuous shifts in textual meaning, Stern initiated the third wave by applying the ideas formulated by the influential Tel-Quel group of French literature critics in the 1960s on marketing texts. Later the members of this group were labelled poststructuralists to denote their shared scepticism towards the structural semiotics as once introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure. For de Saussure, language was a pre-given system of signs that derive meaning from their negative differences within internal structures in language. Hence, structural analysis attempts to explain the text by means of uncovering systems of contrasts and differences within the text (Ricoeur 1988, p. 72). The sole focus on the relations between signs inside the frontiers of language closes the text towards other texts and obstructs it from being situated in history. Thereby, the text is locked in a semiotic circle whose pre-programmed end constitutes its beginning (Kristeva 1966/Moi 1986, p. 65). Inside the circle the value of the contrasting components that frequently compose mythical stories like, for instance, the hero and the villain, are seen as inherent to language (ibid.). However, as Derrida has pointed out, dichotomies are asymmetrically valued due to their historical heritages (Derrida 1972/Kamuf 1991, p. 69).

Recently, Douglas Holt (2004, p. 7) ascribed the success of American corporations that have attained the status of brand icons to their capability of delivering mythical stories that people can use to solve contradictions between the national ideology and the individual experience. By means of historical genealogies of America’s most successful brands Holt identified myths that reinforce individual identities. In addition Belk and Tumbat (2005) found that Apple’s marketing communication of Apple’s Macintosh computer corresponds to the structure of the myths of the creation, Messiah, Satan and the resurrection. Similarly to the structure of language, the structure of the myth is made up of a logical sequence of contrasting events that derive meaning from their relation to each

1I want to thank Sofia Ulver for providing the IKEA catalogues.
2The group was called Tel-Quel after the magazine with the same name and involved amongst others Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva and Jacques Derrida.
other. These studies take for granted that customers recognise the mythical structures corporations offer them as if these structures were inherent. In addition the continuous recall of myths about the male free-agent or the Messiah raises questions of whether marketing research perhaps is spoken by a myth discourse in which a certain set of conservative structures are included. Hence, identifying a myth simultaneously means re-introducing the asymmetrically valued contrasts embraced by it.

In his later works, Roland Barthes (1977) challenged his own idea of the contemporary myth by declaring the death of the author. Instead he now argued that because the author is located in an intersection between clashing quotations, s/he is an organiser of quotations rather than a writer of original texts. It is first when the orchestrated constellation of quotations is chained together with other texts that the text becomes a meaningful unity (Barthes 1977, p. 146). This reasoning removes the original intention behind the text and includes both the reader and the writer in the narrative system as subjects. Because we are included in the narrative systems, the intertwined sets of texts become constitutive of the reality presented to us rather than its mirror (Kristeva 1966/Moi 1986, p. 37). To account for this onto-ontological shift in a theory of language, the concept of intertextuality was introduced by Kristeva in the late 1960s. For her intertextuality offered a possibility to rupture the programming of the semiotic circle by destabilizing the differences on which textual meaning depends. One of the ways in which destabilization is accomplished is through illuminating how quotations are absorptions and transformations of others in continual plays of texts (ibid.). The purpose is not to deny the existence of difference but to redirect focus from difference as inherent to language to account for them as constituted in and through interlaced texts. Intertextuality complicates the asymmetrical valuing of binaries as they come to exist not only because of each other but in each other.

Illuminations of the interrelatedness of commercial texts and other texts and discourses have not been scarce in the academic literature (e.g. Jansson 2004; Stern 1995; O’Donohoe 1997; Gould and Wong 1997). In a study of how consumers use intertextuality to interpret advertising, Stephanie O’Donohoe (1997) found that the referencing to other commercial texts may be more important to advertisers than the actual brand promoted. She further suggested that intertextuality could offer consumers more freedom in interpreting advertisements. However, intertextuality has also been criticised for obscuring communication. Developed as an attack on the commodification of literature and its straightforward language, which in the 1960s was looked upon as means by which conservative forces sought to control meaning, the concept has an outspoken political agenda (Irwin 2004). It could also be argued that making connections between texts in intertextual analysis involves the same authorial intentions that the concept sets out to criticise, the only difference being that the power to determine meaning has transferred from author to reader. On the other hand, the idea that the experienced reality is constituted intertextually seems to dismiss a notion of power as located in either the author or the reader, by placing them in the same interwoven texture where each thread is a centre for power.

Hence, intertextuality involves an increased reflexivity, which may allow more complex interpretations of how texts come into being. At the same time it rejects explanations of the principles according to which the text is structured. What I wish to sketch out in this paper is a place in between structural semiotics and intertextuality from where marketing texts can be analysed. While it is theoretically plausible that the text is a tissue of endless referrals (Barthes 1979), in the concrete analysis I am confined to interpret the excerpts from the IKEA catalogue in relation to the texts I know. The IKEA catalogue, then, is what Paul Ricoeur has called a limited field of possible constructions (Ricoeur 1988, p. 52). Ricoeur shows that reading occurs in the tension between explaining and understanding (Ricoeur 1988, p. 44). As readers we may consider the text as closed against the world on the basis of its internal relations (structure), but we can also transgress the closed state by inserting the text into a context by interpreting it. In the next section of the paper, I attempt to account for this double position in discussing the marketing communication of the furnishing retailer IKEA. In order to explain how IKEA reach the many, I seek to understand how Swedishness is constructed in the retailer’s catalogue. On the one hand the construction of Swedishness is illustrated through a structural analysis of the relations between the home furnishing products in the catalogue, on the other I trace these contrasts to texts outside the given.

**THE MARKETING OF WHAT?**

IKEA has articulated that all its key messages have their roots in a Swedish way of living. The core range of products should be conceived as typical IKEA in Scandinavia and as typically Swedish elsewhere (En M belhandlarens Testamente, 1996).

The key IKEA messages all have their roots in the Swedish origin of IKEA. The warm welcoming Swedish style has become a model of simplicity, practicality, and informality that is now world renowned. In the late 19th century, the artists Carl and Karin Larsson combined classical influences with warmer Swedish folk styles. They created a model of Swedish home furnishing design that today enjoys worldwide renown. In the 1950s the style of modernism and functionalism developed at the same time as Sweden established a society founded on social equality. The IKEA product range—modern but not trendy, functional yet attractive, human-centred and child-friendly—carries on these various Swedish home furnishing traditions (http://www.IKEA.com).

At the world exhibition in New York 1939, Swedish design was praised for its nationalisation of cosmopolitan functionalism (Elhn et al 1993, p. 40). As a consequence of the national romanticism in the 17th century, it became important for the modernising nations in Europe to demarcate themselves from each other by developing distinct national aesthetics. In Sweden the simple folk style of the farmers was considered to represent the true Swedish spirit (Frykman and Löfgren 1979, p. 58). It was believed that the calm, restricted and light interior decoration in the home was able to foster light, harmonic and calm minds of the people. In addition, the strong protestant ideals incorporated in the Swedish society contributed to define the good taste as unpretentious and restricted (Rampell 2003). Therefore, it was no coincidence that functionalist ideals of practicality and efficiency came to dominate the social engineering of the Swedish welfare state. Folkhemmet (trans. The People’s Home), during the 1940s and 1950s. Functionalism developed in a historical period marked by a perceived loss of community resulting from the recent industrialisation (Hirdman 2000, p. 81). In Sweden the movement’s turn against traditional class-structures and established environments was influential on domestic politics. The functionalist emphasis on rationalising the domestic work through scientific methods was materialised through detailed architectural planning of the home (ibid., p. 9). Political experts invaded the Swedish homes to calculate and measure the good living. People were advised how much time to spend in front of the TV and what size the furniture in the household should be. Nowadays, it seems as if this advisory role has been transferred to the market. In the IKEA catalogue, for instance, consumers are guided in how to...
create different room settings and therefore, in part, also how to lead one’s life at home.

According to IKEA, Swedishness is principally represented through the core range of blond wooden furniture echoing the functionalist design tradition.

Many people associate Sweden with a fresh, healthy way of life. This Swedish lifestyle is reflected in the IKEA product range. The freshness of the open air is reflected in the colours and materials used and the sense of space they create: blond woods, natural textiles and untreated surfaces. In a climate that is cold and dark for much of the year, these light and bright living spaces create the sensation of summer sunshine indoors all year round. (http://www.IKEA.com)

IKEA encourages customers to combine home furnishing products in various ways to personalise the home. Not least is this evident in the wide supply of complementary products offered to refashion the core furniture. The wooden furniture can, for instance, be repainted with a special kind of paint that IKEA vends, and the sofa covers can be switch in line with the colours of the season. Within the frames of the IKEA catalogue, an ordinary bedroom with a white bookshelf, two squared bedside tables, a wardrobe and a king-size bed becomes a place in a remote village in Africa, by adding to the setting mosquito net, large green plants, two dark wooden wall ornaments and two white fur carpets (figure 1). In the written text next to the image IKEA tells us that the bedroom is a place for dreaming, a leeway where one can escape to distant places through the decoration.

Even though IKEA’s story of Swedish heritage may be understood in the intertextual sphere of Protestantism, folk style aesthetics and functionalism, the staged catalogue settings seem to latch on to texts of the radical change in the bourgeoisie home environment during the late 17th century. Not unlike the structuring of the IKEA catalogue around different functions of rooms like bedroom, living room, children’s room, workroom, bathroom, and kitchen, the bourgeoisie home was staged as landscapes or exciting atmospheres to shield away from and escape the everyday life, but sometimes also in order to mark social position and show off the good taste (Frykman and Löfgren 1979, p. 106). In this sense the home became a counterpart of the public life – a place for rest and recreation. Fearing the minimalist the bourgeoisie covered empty spaces with decorative artefacts, thick carpets, paintings and heavy curtains (ibid.). In one of the catalogue’s living room settings the ceiling is decorated with stucco work and a dangling crystal lamp below which a woman enters through a white ceiling door. A wardrobe setting displays a pearl necklace in an open box placed on a Persian carpet. By drawing on the seemingly contradictive fragments of functionalism on the one hand and bourgeoisie aesthetics on the other, IKEA constructs a place with an undecided location. Because the settings are made up by elements of several texts, they become detached from a the signified. The lack of a clear signified makes it problematic to speak of inherent meanings. Stephen Linstead (2001) notes that the idea of McDonaldization has been replaced by the term Las Vegasizing implying that we are seduced by consumption phenomena because we are uncertain of their origin. Just like the pyramids of the Luxor Hotel in Vegas were built to overshadow the pyramids in Egypt (Firat 2001), IKEA’s room settings offer environments that may be more exciting than a bedroom in a remote village in Africa would be.

More examples can be found of how the core furniture is refashioned by decorative objects from supposedly exotic places. In the kitchen settings, decorative foods and plants that are specifically not made or grown in Sweden, such as mozzarella cheese, olives, colourful spices, papaya, mango, bonsai trees, orchids, soy sauce and coffee beans are placed in relation to the blonde wooden cupboards, tables, chairs and knife stands (figure 2). Behind the glass doors of the cupboards rice bowls and espresso cups in rows can be hinted. By means of a series of textual references to other localities IKEA tells the story of Swedish heritage. On one double-page (figure 3) the long time bestseller sofa, Klippan (trans. the Rock), is portrayed in two seemingly different settings. However, taking a closer look, the difference between the images is the colour and decorative elements. In the left image the sofa is put against a pink wall together with a white fur (supposedly polar bear), small cotton stools and a tea table in pink, while in the right image it is combined with pictures of zebras, small stools made of banana fibres and cane, and a blanket which looks like the skin of a wild animal. The capture below reads: “The adaptable Klippan”.

IKEA’s functionalist outlook is also conveyed through the neatly folded towels in the bathroom. Olive soap, plants, collections of stones and seashells and bottles with undecided contents rein-
force the word ‘Relaxation’ in the introductory capture (figure 4). Conversely, the workroom settings are more strictly arranged and the decorative objects are scarce (figure 5). Especially the objects used for decorative purpose in the catalogue refer to the unrefined nature. Until recently the conception of nature was based on the peasant perspective and his/her dependency on the earth and its cycles (Englund 1991). Wo/man constituted fearful servants subject to an impulsive and tyrannous nature. When the flowerpot and the modern garden made debut, they demonstrated that this ancient conception started to disappear. Wo/mankind separated itself from nature and started to idolise, organise, objectify, and manage it. Thus, the historian Peter Englund sees the flowerpot essentially as a display of power, symbolising the European finally come out the winner in the long struggle against nature. Nature became conceived as having moral capital; the flower was to be grown for its sign value and not for its use value. Deforestation, pollution and cruelty against animals became ugly and sympathy and compassion for nature ensued. As a result, people mustered enough confidence to literally move nature into the living room and transform it into home decoration. The artefacts used to refashion IKEA’s core range of furniture can be seen as examples of how nature has been disciplined and made into trophies on display. Strangely, none of these artefacts can be found in Sweden. Bamboo does not grow there, zebras cannot live in its cold climate, and mosquito nets are usually not needed as protection at night. Furthermore, these artefacts are promoted as low priced items that can be replaced at any time. In the workrooms they are conspicuously missing, as if they could distract the professionalism and concentration that should be facilitated by this sphere. On the other hand, but still in line with this reasoning, it is also conceivable that IKEA’s blonde wooden furniture refers to birch. However, from my viewpoint, birches have been refined to the point that their material no longer signifies trees but wood.

By representing otherness in the shape of the wild nature, the self may be established as refined and cultivated. However, in so doing IKEA seems to be caught in discourses of the orient and the primitive, part of what Pushkala Prasad has called the ethnographic imagination (2003, p. 151). Her argument of the western ambivalent construction of the other as a dangerous fantasy while simultaneously a pleasure, is not far from the safe form of primitivism offered by IKEA. The exotic objects that are ordered and arranged according to IKEA’s functionalist ideals in the catalogue testify that the underlying taboos and hidden fantasies that previously characterised the desire of the other are now staged in the open by

FIGURE 2
Rationalising the exotic

FIGURE 3
The adaptable Klippan
consumer culture (Sernhede 1996, p. 81). It has been proposed that the reason for the return of the native is the longing of late industrial society after a culture not dominated by the functionalist emphasis on rationality and efficiency. In this sense otherness becomes that which our own identities must exclude for reasons of societal constraints in a specific historical moment. Through romanticising foreign places it is possible to return to the imagined origin – an opposite of the present – characterised by the true, good and spontaneous (ibid.). In portraying remote places as something attractive, IKEA puts otherness on a pedestal, which turns it into an idealised object. The image of the other is also present in IKEA’s portrayal of the Danish cosy (koslighet). A dining room setting shows a wooden table dressed for dinner around which candles in different shapes are placed (figure 6). The fire controlled by the candleholders may be taken as a safe form of the wild and primitive. A possible explanation for portraying the Danish cosy in this way may be found in how the historical construction of Swedishness has changed over the centuries depending on its contrasting points (Ehn et al 1993, p. 76). One of these points is the neighbouring Danes. The current stereotype of the Danish national character as relaxed may be viewed in the light of an old struggle between Denmark and Sweden over the meanings of each other’s national characters. At the turn of the last century, Sweden felt inferior to the industrialized and sophisticated Denmark. The Danes were perceived as more refined than the mystical impoverished Swede who were always ready to draw knife (ibid.). Along with the shaping of the Swedish welfare state, the Swedes were increasingly portrayed as rigid and obsessed by control in Denmark. In turn, for the Swedes, the Danes became more laid-back, natural and bohemian.

Making the Ambivalent

The nation is perhaps one of the most powerful mythical stories of the modern times. Still, it is a story characterised by conflicts like military inventions, imperialism and exclusion of dissidents (Delanty and O’Mahony 2002, p. 175). Although Sweden never took active part in the colonization process, definitions of the Swedish in relation to other cultures need to consider the global histories of colonialism (Eriksson et al 2003, p. 17). In the western mind culture was long thought of as national or ethnic belonging (ibid.). However, as a growing number of people nowadays live in countries other than their birthplace, it has become increasingly harder to equate nationality with residence. This societal change has contributed to the shift from multiculturalism, where cultures are seen as separate entities, to the view of cultures as hybrid.
Analogous to how the notion of intertextuality called attention to the intertwining of texts, cultural hybridity underscores that cultures are constantly transformed while simultaneously transforming others. Because translations from one culture to another involve discrepancies in how people understand the surrounding world, the original meaning of a message (when interpreted) is cast into a contextual idiosyncrasy (Bhabha 1994, p. 228). The interpretation process is thus a site for the hybridisation of cultures, a crossing of the self and the other, from where new cultures and patterns of interpretations can emerge (ibid.). Can it be this awareness that causes IKEA to inexhaustibly offer solutions for how the Swedish can be refashioned and turned into something else? IKEA offers devices to open the story of Swedishness to interpretations inconsistent with how Sweden is imagined in IKEA’s overall corporate narrative. There is a strong reference to the 17th-century bourgeoisie home culture in the conspicuous display of artefacts, citing imagined places outside Sweden in the IKEA catalogue. When these artefacts are placed in relation to the functionalist core range of furniture, as in the case of Klippan, the sofa not only is a place to sit but a decorative object.

The supposedly non-Swedish artefacts have in common being manufactured by IKEA and marketed as low-priced items, which can be easily replaced according to the cycles of fashion. Currently, the oriental and the primitive are not only popular at IKEA but seem fashionable in general. On the catwalk for spring 2005, for instance, fashion designers showed traditional tribal costumes and patterns imitating the animals of the savanna (http://www.elle.com/article). Suggestively the fashionable artefacts direct the interpretations of IKEA’s Swedishness by updating the story to the contemporary conditions. Hence, the structure of the story is continuously modified by the fashion cycle. Within the frames of the catalogue, IKEA can be a signifier of the rational and efficient as well as of escapism and status. It may then be deceiving to view IKEA’s blonde furniture as Swedish on the basis of its difference from the non-Swedish articles, as it includes the non-Swedish in its signification of the Swedish.

To offer a little effortless but illustrative example, displayed food products like olives, soy sauce and coffee beans are imported to Sweden but nevertheless a central part of what is called the Swedish contemporary cuisine. The reconsideration of Swedishness according to the fashion cycle seems to disturb the structural order of the mythical story. Under the influence of fashion the story both begins and ends at a specific point in time, i.e. now, which turns the Swedish into something fragmented and undecided. Going further, we may even say that IKEA’s adaption to fashion transforms the retailer into an ambivalent matter so as to be able to include the many. In order to be able to continuously update the version of Swedishness to contemporary needs, IKEA employs quotations, which are absorptions of the texts constituting the sequence of events, that is to say, the structure that comprise the myth. Thus, along the lines of intertextuality, the structure of the myth dissolves when analysed as intertwined in a mesh of other texts.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper I have sought to examine how the global retailer IKEA appeals to the many through the ambivalent construction of Swedishness. I proposed that the borders constituting the contrasting components of this mythical story could be reconsidered in the tension between the approaches of explanation and understanding. Because these contrasts are historical constructions it was not satisfactory to keep within the frontiers of the mythical structure, but consider them outside the given text. When updated by the employment of the quotations referring to the orient and the primitive, the mythical structure of the Swedish dispersed. As this is written a new IKEA catalogue is distributed. This season IKEA uses ‘Italian’ connotations to refashion the Klippan sofa, which is now performed in red leather (IKEA catalogue 2005/2006). In Sweden IKEA has moderated its association to a Swedish design tradition promoting itself only as IKEA (En Möbelhandlare's Testamente, 1996). Thus, it seems that when the myth returns to its claimed origin, it becomes self-evident and consequently invisible for the people part of the history it claims to tell. In addition, the story about Sweden may not be recognised in all the markets where IKEA is active, but used more for internal purposes (as my own observations at IKEA in Shanghai indicate). In that case, what IKEA sells us is not a structure but pieces for self-assembly, not unlike assembling the furniture bought at IKEA. Previous research has suggested that intertextuality serve as a catalyst for less stereotype interpretations, which may give consumers more space to make sense of advertisements. According to my reading though,
this space is highly sanctioned by IKEA and what enables the retailer to reach the many through standardised marketing texts. Even though IKEA offers ideas of how to assemble these textual fragments into meaningful entities, they do not explicitly tell us how to organise the parts into a coherent picture. We are invited to fragments into meaningful entities, they do not explicitly tell us

Even though IKEA offers ideas of how to assemble these textual

retailer to reach the many through standardised marketing texts. This space is highly sanctioned by IKEA and what enables the customer to


**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In an increasingly inter-connected world, brands are crossing borders at a faster rate than ever before (Solomon 2003). Consequently, the meaning of brands is increasingly interpreted outside of their culture of origin (Howes 1996). When a brand is consumed outside of its culture of origin, its meaning is often altered, and adapted by the host culture. In an effort to develop a greater understanding of this process, this paper examines the symbolic meaning assigned to Hip Hop brands by members of the Australian Hip Hop culture.

The increase in global trade and the existence of global media outlets has created a global context where mass cultures are spread across the world (Appadurai 2001). Many academics have argued that this causes global homogenisation and the disappearance of local cultures (Howes 1996; Strinati 1995). However, the meaning associated with products and brands as they enter other cultures is often interpreted differently (Howes 1996). Furthermore, it has been found that as the artefacts of mass culture exit their culture of origin they fuse with local cultures to create new glocal cultures (Miller 1994; Robertson 1995). A growing body of research, which collectively examines the role of Hip Hop in a range of culturally diverse settings, has found evidence of such glocalisation (Mitchell 2001).

Over the past two decades the Australian Hip Hop culture has been fighting a stigma, perpetuated by the media, that its members are imitating US culture. Only in the past four years has that stigma begun to dissipate, as the culture has glocalised. Previous research has found evidence of this glocalisation in Australian Hip Hop culture (e.g. Maxwell 2003). However, to date, no research has investigated the effects of such glocalisation on the consumption practices of what is currently the fastest growing youth culture in the nation (Donovan 2004). In order to fill the gap this study examines the effect that the local interpretations of foreign brands and the glocalisation of the Australian Hip Hop culture have on the consumption practices of members, explores the reasons for such effects with a particular focus on authentic self-expression and draws some marketing implications.

This study of the consumption practices of the Hip Hop culture in Australia was conducted using three principal methods of ethnographic research: semi-structured in-depth interviews, informal conversations, and participant observation. During the course of the study, which formed part of a larger research project on the symbolic consumption of subcultures, 30 semi-structured in-depth interviews with members of the Australian Hip Hop culture were undertaken and more than 100 Hip Hop events were observed. This approach was chosen as it has been found to be particularly useful when cultural categories are under investigation (McCracken 1988; Wells 1993).

The findings suggest that symbolic representation within the Australian Hip Hop culture takes the form of consumption of brands congruent with the values of authenticity and self-expression at the core of the Australian Hip Hop culture.

Many mass-produced Hip Hop brands originating in the US were not perceived as authentic as their meanings were associated with commercialisation and artificiality by cultural members. Hence, it is important for marketers to remember that the meanings attached to those brands in their culture of production can become indigenised in the foreign culture. Therefore, marketers of mass-produced and global brands should be aware that the meanings associated with their brands may differ amongst glocal cultural members and may be perceived as inauthentic.

Furthermore, members of the Australian Hip Hop culture appear to express authenticity by being true to themselves and refusing to imitate African-American Hip Hop style and rejecting what they perceived as ‘black’ Hip Hop brands. Members of the Australian Hip Hop culture were found to consume more ‘white’ preppy US brands, or brands that represented their particular role within the Hip Hop culture (be it MC, DJ, breakdancer, or graffiti writer) as these were seen as a more authentic form of self-expression. Hence, it is important for marketers to realise that membership in the Australian Hip Hop culture doesn’t require the wholesale adoption or rejection of all US brands; rather it requires members to express themselves truthfully via consumption.

The research also found that the values of the Australian Hip Hop culture required members to represent their geographical place. Hence, members generally preferred Australian Hip Hop brands to US ones, supporting previous country of origin findings (Phau and Prendergast 2000).

Finally, the competitive nature of Hip Hop, and the desire to represent one’s place, has created a situation where members even try to represent their place over other Australian places, by consuming brands with meanings associated with their home city. This also constituted a form of subcultural capital, ascribing higher membership status on those who were ‘in the know’. Marketers should be aware of such motivation and develop products to meet such needs.

REFERENCES


Douglas, Mary and Baron Ischerwood (1979), The world of goods: towards an anthropology of consumption, London: Allen Lane.


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Are markets capable of nurturing genuine communities? If so, what do these communities look like, what functions do they serve, and what consumption phenomena do they revolve around? These questions have occupied consumer researchers over the last decade. Recent consumer research has increasingly acknowledged that the marketplace seems to be a place where new types of communities spring to life. In this paper, one such community—the Stockholm brat enclave, an exclusive group of young, affluent consumers living their lives in the fast lane, and frequenting the trendiest nightclubs in Stockholm—will be looked at in more detail. The focus is on how the community continually uses external factors, such as the media and popular culture, to structure its social organization. In explicating this, the concept of subcultural capital will be introduced (Thornton 1997).

This paper presents findings from ongoing empirical work among the Stockholm brat enclave. Most studies of consumption communities have focused on the consumption of one brand, product, or activity despite the fact that a call for an increased focus on “ensembles of objects” have accompanied consumer research for almost two decades (Belk 1988). The Stockholm brats’ consumption ethos is about carefully assembling, displaying, and using various consumption objects to create just the right ambiences of being “in the know”. If one had to settle for one term to describe the cultural organization of social logic by which the brats operate, it would have to be “style”. But what is this mysterious quality? This cultural value? How is it embodied? How is it displayed? What are its social uses, its demographics, its biases and discriminations?

A first step towards answering those questions is looking at how the members of the particular community are governed by a sense of history; they see themselves as bearers and upholders of a proud tradition. This historical awareness leads them to engaging in a number of shared rituals and traditions, what is portrayed as one of the core prerequisites for qualifying as a community (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001). Many previous studies of youth subculture emphasize their ephemeral character and downplay the sense of history (cf. Hodkinson 2002). A second step towards understanding how a community creates a sense of shared style is looking at how the community defines its limits and its prescriptive behavioral codes. Here a focus is put on a diachronic process between the internal dynamics of the community and external factors. The community under investigation is under constant scrutiny by the media which causes its members to take action and change their internal codes depending on the type of media coverage they receive.

To illuminate how the brats actively use both popular culture references and the attention given to them in the media I will draw on the concept of subcultural capital (Thornton 1997). This concept helps show the mechanisms through which the members of the community embody the cultural codes necessary to maintain one’s membership. Responding to the media and knowing, as well as performing, relevant aspects of popular culture are important parts of the subcultural capital. So, rather than trying to show that the Stockholm brat enclave is yet another type of consumption community, I will expand our knowledge of consumption communities by introducing the concept of subcultural capital.

The data material for this project has been collected over a one-year period as part of a research project focusing on the consumption patterns of the Stockholm brat enclave. The fieldwork consists of three main parts: (1) a study of the group’s whereabouts on the Internet, this is the main part of the study, (2) a study of the group’s presence in the media and popular culture, and (3) participant observations at venues where members of the group congregate.

The main contribution of this paper is that it sheds light on the ways in which a consumption community is dependent on the external world in constructing its internal codes. Emphasis lies on contextualizing the communal consumption by looking at the dialectical process with the media and popular culture whereby the community defines its limits and its prescriptive behavioral codes. By employing the concept of subcultural capital, and showing how this is transformed into practice and both objectified, as in owning the right “stuff”, and embodied, as in expressing a certain style the paper furthers our knowledge of community and consumption.

REFERENCES


Rudberg, Denise (2003), o.s.a., Stockholm: Bokförlaget Fischer & Co.


Up-dating Cosmopolitanism: Replicating and Extending Key Studies
Marylouise Caldwell, University of Sydney, Australia

ABSTRACT
A cosmopolitan consumer orientation warrants greater attention from researchers. This paper addresses this situation by replicating and extending key consumer studies of cosmopolitanism: 1) Thompson and Tambyah (1999), and 2) Cannon and Yaprak (2002). Theory development originates from elaboration, extension and refutation of a priori themes and identifying additional aspects of expatriate consumer lifestyles. I conclude that at least three dimensions likely characterise a cosmopolitan consumer orientation, including a) wanderlust-global, b) homebound-rootless and c) true-centric venturing. A significant direction for future research includes examining the usefulness of these dimensions in explaining consumer behaviour in domestic as well as international settings.

When anyone asked him where he came from, he said, “I am a citizen of the world.” (Source: Diogenes Laertius, Life of Diogenes the Cynic)

INTRODUCTION
Despite achieving prominence in other theoretical domains (e.g., Calhoun 2002; Hannerz 1990), cosmopolitanism remains under-investigated by consumer researchers. I address this situation by replicating and extending key consumer studies of the phenomenon: 1) Thompson and Tambyah (1999), and Cannon and Yaprak (2002). These studies present substantive insights into a cosmopolitan consumer orientation across varied market segments and consumption contexts. Alternate studies are less comprehensive, viewing cosmopolitanism as one of many taste practices and consumption contexts. Alternate studies are less comprehensive, viewing cosmopolitanism as one of many taste practices adopted by well-educated upscale consumers (Holt 1998; Lamont 1992) or studying its impact within specific product categories, for example the Internet (Spence 2001), or consumer durables (LaPlaca, Punj and Randazzo 1985).

My findings offer substantial support for Thompson and Tambyah’s (1999) theory and add credibility to extensions proposed by Cannon and Yaprak (2002). I enrich theory by 1) synthesising, validating and elaborating past findings, 2) generating new theory, in particular clearly delineating three dimensions likely to characterise a cosmopolitan consumer orientation including a) wanderlust-global, b) homebound-rootless and c) true-centric venturing, and 3) detailing additional aspects of cosmopolitan; especially the influence of expatriate enclaves on consumer behaviour. I suggest that future research explore the potency of cosmopolitanism for consumers who do not live abroad; especially in multi-cultural societies, not only expatriate consumers.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS
Investigating expatriates from different national cultures living in Singapore, Thompson and Tambyah (1999) conclude that cosmopolitanism manifests as consumers striving to create cosmopolitan identities, an on-going process that comprises resolving tensions between dominant masculine and counter-veiling feminine traits. Exhibit 1 presents the traits and sub traits comprising Thompson and Tambyah’s (1999) cosmopolitan identity. I re-label Thompson and Tambyah’s (1999) masculine and feminine traits as wanderlust and homebound to more clearly distinguish them from Hofstede’s (2001) better-known masculine and feminine national culture dimensions. Based on Thompson and Tambyah’s (1999) findings, I present relevant examples of consumer behaviour for each sub-trait to facilitate further clarification. The above discussion suggests the first a priori theme (APT₁) for testing:

APT₁: A cosmopolitan consumer orientation includes dominant wanderlust and counter-veiling homebound traits. See Exhibit 1.

Cannon and Yaprak (2002) argue that Thompson and Tambyah’s (1999) conceptualisation of cosmopolitanism fails to embrace well established notions of cosmopolitanism expounded in the community and organisational literatures by Merton (1957) and Gouldner (1957) respectively. Summarily, they suggest that a cosmopolitan consumer can also be a globally oriented person who seeks goods and services that are the best on offer globally regardless from where they originate. This type of consumer is not particularly interested in partaking of cultural diversity.

The above discussion suggests the second a priori theme for testing (APT₂):

APT₂: A cosmopolitan orientation comprises dominant traits that are wanderlust and/or global in type.

Cannon and Yaprak (2002) further suggest, based on factor analysis of data derived from a multi-country pencil and paper study, that wanderlust and homebound behaviours comprise two independent dimensions rather then one dimension. A cosmopolitan consumer “can transcend their local culture without abandoning it” (Cannon and Yaprak 2002: p. 34). They elaborate that a cosmopolitan consumer orientation can have rootless or homebound qualities as long sufficient wanderlust or global behaviours are concurrently present. Their view garners support from recent press reports which suggest that expatriate consumers often know more about the daily events in their homeland compared to those living at home (SMH 2005). The above discussion suggests third a priori theme for testing (APT₃):

APT₃: A cosmopolitan consumer orientation can include a strong display of homebound or rootless traits as long as wanderlust and/or homebound traits predominate.

Plog’s (2002) work on tourism further enriches our understanding of cosmopolitanism. He proposes the existence of a psychographic dimension called venturesome-ness to explain tourist behaviour. Significantly he suggests that tourists who seek cultural diversity (contrasting with touring within one’s own culture) display the following behaviors:

- Venturing: Venturing occurs when cosmopolitans seek cultural experiences markedly different from their culture of origin. They typically prefer authentic rather than homogenized or highly commercial cultural experiences. For example, a British holiday-maker shares everyday life with an Italian family in Tuscany for three weeks.
- Centric-venting occurs when cosmopolitan seek cultural experiences that are different, but not markedly different, from their culture of origin’s. For example, a British tourist takes a two week package tour run by an English tour company to Italy.
EXHIBIT 1
Traits of a Cosmopolitanism Consumer Orientation
(Thompson and Tambyah 1999)

Wanderlust Traits (dominant)
(reflect from informants’ travel narratives)

1. Self-Development through Consumption of Cultural Diversity

Refers to consumers’ quests for self-transformation by moving beyond their familiar cultural surrounds to experience new cultures. They seek authentic rather than highly commercialised tourist experiences. For example, a British expatriate seeks personal growth by undertaking a self-guided exploration of Singapore in a rental car rather than taking a package tour.

2. Being Included in the Local

Refers to the value consumers place on feeling included in the activities of the local people of the foreign culture in which they are living. For example, a British expatriate is invited to participate in family celebrations of local Singaporean business colleagues.

3. Encountering Cultural Differences

Refers to consumers’ proficiency in recognizing cultural differences. For example, a culturally sensitive British expatriate rightly observes that bargaining figures strongly in everyday marketplace transactions in Asian countries.

4. Being Adaptable and Flexible

Refers to consumers’ ability to adapt their consumption practices and outlooks to different cultures. This “fitting in process” is typically relished and rarely regarded as an impediment to relocation. For example, a British expatriate living in Singapore gives up eating eggs and bacon for breakfast, replacing it with fresh tropical fruit and mango juice.

Homebound Traits (counter-veiling)
(reflect from informants’ dwelling narratives)

1. At Home in the Body

Refers to consumers’ longing for familiar physical-sensory aspects of their home country. This desire originates from internalisation of tastes during socialization, especially during pre-adulthood. For example, a British expatriate sorely misses drinking English breakfast tea and listening to the BCC news on the radio every morning.

2. Questing for Community

Refers to consumers’ desire for stable satisfying social relationships that provide emotional support. For example, expatriates find it easier to make friends with other expatriate inhabitants by participating in companionate leisure activities, which inhibits their immersion in the foreign local community. For example, a British expatriate joins an English bridge club in Singapore.

3. Ties to Home and Feeling out of Place

Refers to consumers’ feelings of not fitting in, prompting consumers to seek products and services that remind them of home. For example, a British expatriate in Singapore regularly goes to Raffles hotel on Friday nights to meet with other British expatriates and drink English beer.

I relabel Plog’s (2002) venturing dimension as true-venturing to more clearly delineate this dimension from centric-venturing. The above discussion suggests the first proposition for testing (P1):

\[ P_1: \text{A wanderlust orientation can comprise true or centric venturing.} \]

RESEARCH METHODS

Data collection comprised in-depth face-to-face interviews between 45 to 75 minutes in length, allowing informants to talk freely and easily about their consumption experiences as expatriate consumers. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions that covered topics similar to Thompson and Tambyah’s (1999). Photo-elicitation enhanced data-collection. Visual material typically prompts informants to recall associations and memories that might otherwise remain uncovered. Sixteen informants participated in the study, including former expatriate Australians and expatriates, that is, people from other national cultures, who are currently working or studying in Australia. All informants had lived in at least two countries other than their home country for at least six months (with the exception of one informant, who only worked in one country, and moved to Australia from Ireland when he was ten). Informants’ ages ranged from twenty-seven to sixty-two years. Males and females were equally represented. Informants were
recruited using referral sampling, in which contacts of the researchers identified initial informants, who in turn proposed additional suitable informants.

Analysis was an iterative process involving interpretation of interview transcripts, photographic captions and photographs supplied by informants. As the research objectives seek evidence of a range of theme types (a priori, current or emergent), measures were taken to ensure that analysis and interpretation was not biased towards a priori constructs. Three research assistants separately read the textual data looking for evidence of themes, discussed these findings as a group to come up with a set of agreed themes and then reanalysed the textual data within the construct of the framework developed. A funnel-like process was used to refine ideas or constructs identified in the data into theories.

**FINDINGS**

A Priori Theme One (APT1)

APT1 achieves qualified support. Some, but not all cosmopolitan consumer orientations displayed by informants comprise dominant wanderlust and counter-veiling homebound traits. My later discussion of P2 findings shows that a cosmopolitan consumer orientation can comprise an equal display of homebound compared to wanderlust traits, hence a cosmopolitan consumer can be rootless or homebound. In this section I demonstrate that Thompson and Tambyah (1999)’s wanderlust and homebound sub-traits are supported and further elaborated by my research.

Supporting Thompson and Tambyah (1999), I find that cosmopolitans regard experiencing other cultures as a means of self-development.

I think it is important, at least once in your life, to move out of your comfort zones and challenge your preconceptions of what the world is what you are. (Mr. Shamrock, Australian)

Elaborating upon Thompson and Tambyah (1999), I suggest that opportunities for self-development are possibly greatest for cosmopolitans who participate in ‘colonial’ expatriate lifestyles, that is, where servants performed most domestic activities. These cosmopolitans possibly have more time and energy to engage in activities associated with self-development.

... in those sort of countries, where you have home help, there’s big opportunity for personal development because you’ve got the time. (Mrs. Batik, Australian)

Extending Thompson and Tambyah (1999), I find that cosmopolitans have additional reasons for moving abroad, for example, 1) wanting to free themselves from the ties and responsibilities at home, 2) escaping unpleasant everyday circumstances and 3) freeing themselves from the constrictions of cultural mores to which they find compliance difficult.

I was twenty-two at the time and it was the first time I was living outside so it was all a big adventure. I only had me to think about, no attachments... It was a different country, it was a different culture, and it was very exciting. (Mr. Quinine, Scottish)

I had thought of traveling overseas maybe to Europe, and then I had heard about this. I had also broken up with a long-term boyfriend. I suppose that made me fairly restless. (Mrs. Quinine, Australian)

As a Japanese [woman] living in Hong Kong, it was a much easier life. In Japan the woman is supposed to be step back three steps behind the man, never even step on the husband’s shadow...and the woman is supposed to be married and stay home and you know give birth to children. You know it wasn’t me. To express myself, I couldn’t live in Japan. (Mrs. Victoria, Japanese)

Extending Thompson and Tambyah (1999), I suggest that cosmopolitans do not always find immersion easy in the local community, sometimes encountering barriers from the locals.

I said, right, what I’d like to do is while I’m here; I’d like to speak French... So [my boss] went out to the office where the staff was and he said, I just want to make an announcement, [Mr. Manquer] wants to speak French while he’s here. But nobody changed anything; they just kept on speaking English because I was their [key to learning English]. (Mr. Manquer, Australian)

Contradicting Thompson and Tambyah (1999) I suggest that cosmopolitans do not necessarily place high value on being included in local cultural events. When speaking about authentic local cultural events, informants’ descriptions typically suggest a preference for maintaining an outsider’s vantage point rather than greater involvement.

There were lots of local festivities. We didn’t actually participate in them. I’ll tell you the grossest one... basically what the people do is they put themselves into some sort of a trance and they skewer their bodies with pins and chains and they wear like a big cage over themselves ... I have never seen anything like that in my life. (Mrs. Daniels-November, Australian).

I further suggest that immersion in local culture can be inhibited by locals’ resistance to forming what they consider short term and hence wasteful relationships with cosmopolitans.

...There’s a certain bit of distance... they know you’re going to leave as well. They’ve got their family and friends as well, years of connections, so they’re less likely to have space for a friend...(Mrs Daniels-November, Australian)

Supporting Thompson and Tambyah (1999), I find that cosmopolitans demonstrate sophistication in their understanding of how other cultures differ from their own.

... I just needed to break away from a society that focuses a lot more on work than on the social aspects of the lifestyle... I just wanted a different lifestyle. (Miss Reeta, Singaporean)

Supporting Thompson and Tambyah (1999), I find that cosmopolitans display adaptability and flexibility when encountering new cultures. I elaborate that the more positive their prior experiences are in this respect, the greater their confidence and desire to relocate again and continue their cosmopolitan lifestyles.

...I think we’ll be quite enthused, in going someplace else. There will be a confidence that we can do that. That there’s no reason to fear going to a new country, we’re actually quite good at it. (Mr. Daniels-November, Australian)

Extending Thompson and Tambyah’s (1999), I suggest that cosmopolitans’ inclination for cultural adaptation is context depen-
dent. More specifically, if the local culture suits their personal tastes they were more likely to try to adapt to the local culture.

[In Hong Kong] I more or less slipped into a totally expatriate role [i.e., remained distance from local culture]. Sometimes you would visit the market and get a few things, but it was a bit dirty and smelly, whereas in Malaysia, I didn’t think like that at all. (Mrs. Quinine, Australian).

I elaborate that cosmopolitans find cultural adaptation easier if the new culture they encounter resembles their own.

I had a big culture shock… The people in Burma they speak Burmese of course and …they speak a very, very little English. The people in the office, they did speak English but it was a huge culture shock because although it was another Asian country, it was very different culturally…I didn’t get a culture shock in Australia (Miss Reeta, Singaporean).

I further add the expatriate enclaves provide invaluable social contacts and assistance for cosmopolitans when settling into a new country.

We were fortunate that my husband was part of a large company, and in both countries there were other expatriates who immediately helped you and took you under their wing...there were always expatriate organizations that we joined and it made life very easy (Mrs. Batik, Australian).

I suggest that in countries where expatriate enclaves are absent, consumers are likely to encounter more problems adapting to foreign cultures. For example, Burma and Belgium were situations in which Miss Reeta only knew a few people and could not speak the local language. Miss Reeta adapted well to Burma, due in no small part to the support of local expatriates.

We made friends very quickly because you were in an expatriate community... and you get to know people within that group because there will be get-togethers and stuff and you know there are clubs that you go to, even to the gym you know, you meet people there and talk to them. (Miss Reeta, Singaporean)

In Belgium, no such expatriate enclave existed. Miss Reeta reported considerably difficulty and eventually left the country.

…I didn’t adapt very well in Europe, I was in Belgium and it was just very hard to get around without my friend who spoke the language, even to the shops was a bit scary because …the street names were in foreign language…. (Miss Reeta, Singaporean)

Expanding upon Thompson ‘and Tablyah’s (1999) feminine trait of ‘questing for community,’ I suggest that cosmopolitans can consider home as wherever their partner or family members reside; not only places that physically resemble home.

…when I was in London that felt like home, and same with Singapore that felt like home… I think that’s what made it home, the fact that we were there together (Mrs. Daniels-November, Australian).

I find mixed support for Thompson and Tablyah (1999) idea that cosmopolitans take items overseas to create a sense of home. Some cosmopolitans do, reflecting Bardhi’s (2005) idea that home is derived through personalization of space.

…as soon as got somewhere, we’d put down our rugs and pictures and things and then it would be home (Mrs Daniels November, Australian).

In contrast, other cosmopolitans take little if any possessions abroad. Possessions that these informants reported taking, tended to be highly personal sentimental items that foster feelings of nostalgia for life history and family ties, rather than home.

I took a couple of teddy bears—quite embarrassing… and some photographs of my family, and just clothes, but I didn’t really take anything else. (Miss Rhodes, English).

I extend Thompson and Tablyah (1999)’s work by pointing out that language difficulties exacerbate cosmopolitans’ feelings of being out of place. Although informants sought to experience life in countries that are distinctly different to their own, they were not immune to the frustrations caused by language difficulties.

…it was heartbreaking not being able to read signs, getting lost and not being able to read signs… then you ask someone for the way and they don’t speak English. (Mr. Tannenbaum)

Oh yeah, and you had to pick your vegetables, put them on the scale, and then choose the name… but we didn’t know what the names were… Actually, trying to figure out what a can of something is when it doesn’t have a picture on the can and you can’t read the language, you don’t realise how easy things are when you can read as opposed to when you can’t… (Mr. Shamrock)

A Priori Theme 2 (APT2)

APT2 is fully supported. A cosmopolitan consumer orientation can include wanderlust and/or global traits. Mr Manquer displays wanderlust.

Oh the great thing was the music festival at the beginning of summer every year… Wonderful fun, you go around the corner, down the street [in France] and there’d be some kids playing jazz band and all the cafes have people playing music of some sort… (Mr. Manquer, Australian)

In contrast Miss Bromley displays a global orientation.

I just loved going to the Italian supermarkets and buying all the yummy stuff we don’t have here [in Australia]… all those cheeses, we do have them, but they are just not the same thing… The [Italian] coffee, ooohhh… How you would go anywhere for it. It’s just the best coffee in the world. (Miss Bromley, Australian).

Global behavior by cosmopolitans can reflect from an observation that people irrespective of culture suffer similarly.

Some other Japanese said, ‘Don’t go out on ANZAC Day,’ but that’s not right, you know. If you feel the war, you know it’s terrible… I [have] respect for everybody did what they had to do. I just came here [to the monument] to pay respect to everybody for fight for their own rights, country’s rights, you know, their own country, whatever the reason is… (Mrs. Victoria, Japanese)
Significantly cosmopolitans likely display a dominant mix of wanderlust and global traits, rather than exclusively one or the other. Informants’ self-reports suggest typically display both.

**A Priori Theme 3 (APT3)**

APT3 is fully supported. Supporting Cannon and Yapprak’s (2002) idea, cosmopolitans can be rootless or homebound as long as wanderlust and/or global traits concurrently predominate. Miss Rhodes acts as a rootless-cosmopolitan with her many descriptions of how she makes any place feel like home regardless of where home is geographically located.

I think I’ve got a set structure, like if I move to a different country straight away I’ll sort out all legal requirements, opening bank accounts, doing this, doing that, making sure that all the small things that you have to do to function in the country. I kind of like to do that first week, so that makes me feel really settled and at home... (Miss Rhodes, English)

In contrast Mrs. Daniels-November’s displays homebound-cosmopolitan behaviour. First, she displays cosmopolitan traits such as an openness to and curiosity in other cultures; a willingness to understand and participate in local practices and customs; and a desire to learn the local ways in order so as not be treated as an outsider.

…we were just talking to the Eastern people on the train in German and asking them about the Wall coming down and what it meant and what they were going to do and that kind of stuff. We felt pretty clever. Also that we were involved in history (Mrs. Daniels-November, Australian).

As a manager [in Singapore], I had to give my staff money in a little red envelope called a hung bao [as part of a traditional Chinese New Year custom]. It had to be an even number with even notes... you had go to the bank particularly and get crisp notes as well (Mrs. Daniels-November, Australian).

Concurrently she demonstrates strong ties to her home country by appreciating the ease of connecting with familiar social contacts; and wanting to maintain relationships with family and social networks from home.

We were kind of lucky in the sense that a lot of the friends we had in Singapore who were English had gone home [to England]... so we had a network of friends already established [in London]... so we could call people to go out and do things, which is something that would’ve taken six to twelve months in Singapore.... So that was good, that was a big difference to our free time (Mrs. Daniels-November, Australian).

We wanted to come home, it was time... we thought if we didn’t come back, we didn’t know how we’d ever connect back with people [at home] again... I’d love to live overseas again. I think we’d most likely go somewhere in the States. New York or Boston somewhere. Yeah, let’s have a look at what else is out there. Sort of re-charge and go again(Mrs. Daniels-November, Australian).

Despite her missing items from home, she still enjoys living abroad.

…you’d rather have [the good glasses and plates] with you. That said though, you don’t actually need anything [to feel okay]. (Mr. Daniels-November)

**Proposition One (P1)**

P1 is fully supported. Wanderlust cosmopolitans can be true or centric venturing. Mr. Tannenbaum’s (German), love of a Japanese bar is an example of a true venturing cosmopolitan. He tends to seek cultural experiences that are markedly different from those typifying his home culture,

Yakatori is my favourite out of all [Japanese foods], it’s really a bar with this huge display of barbeque sticks under glass and this dude is dressed up really traditional … and they also have this big drum behind them and every time a customer comes in one of them quickly hits the drum and all shout Yiroshoi… (Mr. Tannenbaum, German)

In contrast, Miss Rhodes acts as a centric venturing cosmopolitan because she typically prefers cultures not markedly different to that of her culture of origin.

As young teenager I moved to Brazil… I went to a British school there...I actually went to university just outside of London… I chose the United Kingdom because... I knew my family were from Scotland, so that’s my roots... [then] I came to Australia [because] I’d been told Australia was very much like South Africa. [Actually] my heart remains in South Africa (Miss Rhodes, born Zimbabwe, grew up in South Africa, lived in Brazil 3 years, England 6 years, Australia 1.5 years).

True or centric venturing might differ across consumption contexts. For example, a consumer might be very adventurous with choice of travel locations but more conservative in their food and beverage choices.

**EMERGENT THEMES**

Certain themes emerged during data analysis, including: 1) expatriate enclaves as desirable social milieus, and 2) discomfort upon returning home.

1) **Expatriate Enclaves as Desirable Milieus:** These communities likely figure strongly in the cosmopolitan consumers’ lives; notably those living in countries with a colonial heritage with large established expatriate communities. These enclaves comprise hybrid groups consisting of people from different cultures which have distinctive norms, values and hierarchies that likely profoundly influenced consumer behavior.

[Hong Kong] was completely different. It was a bustling city and the majority of the people didn’t speak English and I was living in a very isolated expatriate community. It was a large expatriate company where everybody just kind of mixed with each other … in the 70s where the expatriates held all the major positions and it was still very colonial and I wasn’t working,...

You were considered a bit odd if you didn’t continually exchange coffee mornings [with the other wives].... And also, if you went to a party, the first thing people would ask you was: ‘Who does your husband work for?’ And then you were labeled. ‘Where do you work?’ was another one… Yes, it was very rigid in those days. … You had to please the boss and the boss’ wife… (Mrs. Quinine, Australian)
Enjoyment of the lifestyle within these enclaves might explain why expatriate cosmopolitans have little enthusiasm for being included in local cultures (as discussed earlier).

That was a huge difference in the way one lives as an expat. You’re sitting down, reading the paper, and watching the gardening guy mow the lawn. You know this is wonderful, this is great. (Mr. Manquer, Australian)

An additional source of expatriate cosmopolitan satisfaction might originate from being part of an elite group.

People [locals in Burma] actually deemed you as quite superior in terms of your work…it was very nice. (Miss Reeta, Singaporean)

2) Discomfort upon Returning Home: Some expatriate cosmopolitans have little enthusiasm for returning to their home countries.

I’m also not that sort of person like you meet that says I can’t wait to get back to Aussie. Not at all. Each time … it’s been a wrench to leave. (Mr. Manquer, Australian)

These cosmopolitans show a distinct lack of flexibility when settling back into their home environment.

I found everything difficult when we got back…I thought it would be like another move, but it was completely different to another move. (Mrs. Daniels-November, Australian)

They feel different from others who have not shared similar expatriate experiences.

I hadn’t realized that I’d changed a bit and we did find everybody around here a bit parochial … I found a lot of people were very stuck in their ways … didn’t really want to know anything about where you’d been or what you’d done. (Mrs. Batik, Australian)

FUTURE RESEARCH

My findings suggest that future research should focus on validating the useful of at least trait three behavioural dimensions in describing a cosmopolitan consumer orientation. These dimensions include: 1) wanderlust-global, 2) homebound-rootless and 3) true-centric venturing. This study cannot infer the validity and reliability of these dimensions due to the limitations imposed by a small convenience sample. Furthermore some of these dimensions might benefit from additional exploratory research to tease out potential sub-traits. For example, we have a much more sophisticated understanding of wanderlust versus global behaviour.

Additional future research might address the possibility that a cosmopolitan orientation figures not only in the lives of expatriate consumers but also consumers who live in their home cultures and consume products reflecting cultures other than their own. For example, consumers, especially those living in multi-cultural societies, need not leave home to partake of ethnic cuisines, watch foreign films and wear international fashion brands. Does their consumer behaviour differ from that of expatriates? Finally, the extent to which consumers adopt a cosmopolitan orientation needs to be investigated with respect to certain individual difference characteristics (e.g., education, occupation type, cohort generation, income, religion, and personality), situational influences (e.g., location of tourist destination, companionate pressure) and product type (e.g., culturally bound products such as food, clothing, entertainment versus more universally received products such as electronic devices, cars). Prior research suggests that these variables are likely sources of substantial variation in cosmopolitan behaviour.

REFERENCES

Hannerz, Ulf (1990) “Cosmopolitans and Locals in a World Culture”, Theory Culture and Society, 7 (June), 237-251
Determinants of the Use of Heuristic Choice Rules in the Swedish Premium Pension Scheme:
An Internet-Based Survey
Ted Martin Hedestrom, Center for Consumer Studies (CFK), Sweden
Henrik Svedsater, Center for Consumer Studies (CFK), Sweden
Tommy Garling, Center for Consumer Studies (CFK), Sweden

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In many countries public retirement schemes are being reformed, as citizens are expected to take more responsibility for their own future pension. In the premium pension scheme, Swedish citizens can choose which stock and/or interest funds 2.5% of their income will be invested in. A brochure describing the 655 available funds is sent out to all eligible citizens, who are then required to make a sequence of choices: whether to invest in the default stock fund or in other funds, how many (one to five) and which funds to select, and how to divide the investment across the selected funds.

In analyzing people’s choices of premium pension funds at the introduction of the scheme in 2000, Hedestrom, Svedsater, and Garling (2004) found indications of the following heuristic-driven biases: a tendency to select the default option (default bias, Johnson et al. 1992); a tendency to choose many funds seeking maximal variety (diversification heuristic, Read and Loewenstein 1995); a tendency to avoid funds with extreme low and high risk (extremeness aversion, Simonson and Tversky 1992); a tendency to choose domestic funds (home bias, Kilka and Weber 2000); and a tendency to divide investments evenly across the chosen funds (1/n heuristic, Benartzi and Thaler 2001).

The aims of the present follow-up study were twofold. Firstly, as heuristic-driven biases may depend on the complexity of the choice task (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1993), we wanted to investigate whether the results would be replicated in a simplified controlled experimental setting. A second aim was to disentangle possible individual determinants of heuristic-driven biases. A particular focus was on the role of involvement, since highly involved individuals may use more sophisticated decision processes (Verplanken and Svenson 1997).

A sample of 392 employees at Göteborg University from all levels and areas of duty completed an Internet survey. They were asked to make a fictitious choice of premium pension funds as if for the first time. The same fund categories as in the brochure were presented. However, instead of specifying particular funds, respondents made a choice among the categories of funds, selecting one to five unspecified funds in each chosen category. Information about social demographics, savings, and level of involvement was included in a series of regression analyses. Level of involvement was measured on three self-report rating scales (not important – requires no deliberation; requires deliberation; nothing to lose–much to lose) that were averaged (α=.734).

Having a larger amount to invest, being young, and owning stocks was shown to increase involvement.

The default stock fund was chosen by 56.0% (224) of the respondents compared to 32.9% in the previous study. This increase may be attributable to participants’ awareness of the fact that so far (the Internet survey was carried out in 2003) the default fund had performed better than the average actively selected fund portfolio. Being more involved, having a larger amount to invest, and owning stocks showed independent effects of reducing the tendency to choose the default fund.

Replicating the results of the previous study, the typical choice among respondents who did not choose the default fund was to include the maximal number of five funds in the portfolio. More involved individuals included a larger number of funds than did less involved individuals. A majority selected funds all belonging to different categories. Men and stockowners tended to choose fund portfolios with a higher average risk.

Also mirroring the results of the previous study, the proportion of choices of stock funds investing only or predominantly in Sweden was larger than the relative availability of such fund categories, thus indicating a home bias. As in the previous study, and in accordance with the 1/n heuristic, the most popular investment allocation was to divide the total amount evenly across the chosen funds. Neither involvement nor any of the background variables were found to affect the proportion of Swedish stock funds included in the portfolio or the use of the 1/n heuristic, except that older people tended to use the 1/n heuristic to a larger extent.

To summarize, although the choice task was simplified, the results largely replicated those of the previous study. Being more involved had an effect in reducing choice of the default fund, and this effect was independent of amount invested. However, no other effect of involvement was observed, except that being more involved meant including a larger number of funds in the portfolio.

Thus, raising people’s level of involvement in the premium pension scheme is likely to decrease choices of the default fund and increase diversification, but not to reduce the home bias or use of the 1/n heuristic. It cannot be excluded that simplifying the choice task even further would reduce heuristic-driven biases, but informing and educating scheme participants may be of greater importance.

REFERENCES


Masculinity and Femininity as Predictors of Financial Risk-Taking: Evidence from a Priming Study on Gender Salience

Katja Meier-Pesti, University of Vienna, Austria
Elisabeth Goetze, University of Economics and Business Administration of Vienna, Austria

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Women have proven to be more risk-averse than men in investment decisions in many studies (e.g., Bernasek and Shwiff 2001; Jianakoplos and Bernasek 1998; Powell and Ansic 1997). Observed differences between men and women in financial risk taking were explained with regard to various theories, which may be roughly divided into those providing on the one hand biological, and on the other, social explanations (e.g., Anselmi and Law 1998). Biological theories elaborate on sex differences (male versus female) and assume that hormones and genes are the underlying basis for found differences between men and women in financial risk taking. Social theories identify gender socialization as the underlying cause and therefore specify on gender differences (masculine versus feminine). In two studies (Meier-Pesti and Penz 2003), biological sex and gender as predictors of financial risk taking were explicitly distinguished. Masculinity was confirmed to be a strong predictor of financial risk taking and mediated the effects of biological sex on financial risk taking. Femininity, on the other hand, seemed not to affect financial risk taking.

The present study aims to pursue existing research on effects of masculinity and femininity on the propensity to take financial risk. Through a priming procedure gender affiliation was made salient, which was hypothesized to elicit a high gender identification and responses congruent to sex role stereotypes; making men to act in a more masculine way and women in a more feminine way. Masculinity, in turn, is assumed to affect financial risk taking positively, femininity negatively. Via these effects gender differences in their propensity to take risk should increase.

A random adult sample of 241 respondents completed the questionnaire. Sex was balanced, average age was M=44.08 (SD=14.78), and educational level was rather high. A 2 (biological sex) x 3 (salience of gender affiliation) experimental design was applied. Gender salience was manipulated by either a short text, in which men and women were described as being different, or being similar in behavior and characteristics, or no text in the control group. After this priming task, participants completed a questionnaire that consisted of measures of a) gender identification, b) Bem’s Sex Role Inventory (Bem 1974), c) two risk measures, and socio-demographic variables. In general, participants had the choice between seven answering options.

Manipulation of gender salience was successful: Both texts (differences and similarities) on gender characteristics and behaviors made gender affiliation more salient and increased gender identification in relation to the control group. As both experimental settings produced a difference in relation to the control group, but did not differ within, both experimental settings were accumulated in further analyses.

In a first step, effects of gender identification and biological sex on masculinity and femininity were confirmed in an analysis of co-variance. For women, higher gender identification leads to higher scores on femininity, but had no effect on their description of masculine characteristics. Patterns in the male sub-sample were the other way round: gender identification increased scores on masculinity, but was not correlated to male femininity scores. Interesting to add, only if gender affiliation was made salient men indicated higher scores on masculinity than women. On the femininity scale, biological sex and experimental manipulation on gender salience produced no significant effects.

In a second step, effects of gender salience and biological sex on risk taking were analyzed in an analysis of variance. Interaction between gender salience and biological sex qualified the significant main effect of biological sex. Men and women differed only in the experimental setting in their hypothetical risk taking, and not in the control group. In both risk measures, significant sex differences in risk taking disappeared after masculinity and femininity indices were introduced as covariates. A subsequent path analysis with the two groups (men and women) highlighted the underlying effect patterns: Experimental variation affected gender identity, making participants feeling more close to the social category of men or women, respectively. Gender identity increased femininity in the female sub-sample, and masculinity in the male sub-sample. For both sexes, higher scores on femininity reduced their tendency to take financial and general risk, and masculinity supported hypothetical financial risk taking.

In line with previous research (Meier-Pesti and Penz 2003), high values on the masculinity scale went along with higher financial risk taking. The often found difference between women and men in their tendency to take financial risks seems to be based on different levels of identification with masculine attributes. Recent research has shown that the difference between men and women in terms of masculinity has decreased (Auster and Ohm 2000; Twenge 1997). Women may also display masculine attributes and act in what was traditionally considered a “masculine” way. Therefore, differentiation between sex and gender seems to be crucial. In addition, the present study sheds some light on the underlying process of effects of masculinity and femininity on risk taking. With activated sex categorization gender identification of both sexes increased. Gender identification, in turn, made men to answer in a more masculine, and women in a more feminine way. Trough these effects on femininity and masculinity differences between men and women in their propensity to take general and financial risk increased. Keeping identification to both sex role stereotypes constant eliminated sex differences in hypothetical risk taking.

Sex categorization has a high chronic accessibility in real settings (Stangor et al. 1992) and may influence financial transactions of men and women in the banking practice. E.g., some banking promotion strategies address women only. Women investors are invited to information evenings which are labeled as “ladies events”. But with the presence of only women, feminine stereotypes may be activated and masculine attributes may be suppressed. Activities aimed at reducing female risk aversion may, on the contrary, strengthen this behavior. To find additional support for these assumptions, we plan to conduct a similar experiment in the real setting. By analyzing sex categorization as predictor of actual and hypothesized risk taking, new insights into the understanding of gender differences in investment behavior may be gained.

REFERENCES

Buss, David M. (1994),
Bem, Sandra L. (1974),
Deaux, Kay (1985),
Bem, Alexandra and Stephanie Shwiff (2001),
Grasmick, Harold G., Charles R. Tittle, Robert J. Bursik, and Erb, Hans-Peter, Antoine Bioy, and Denis J. Hilton (2002),
Jianakoplos, Nancy Ammon and Alexandra Bernasek (1998),
Daly, Martin and David S. Wilson (1983), Sex, Evolution, and Behavior (2nd ed.), Boston: Grant Press.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The framing of financial products can strongly influence the information processing and thus the risk-taking behavior of the individual investor. For example, financial products such as investment portfolios can be presented in aggregated or segregated framing, meaning that either the overall distribution or the single investments of the investment portfolio itself are displayed. Therefore, contractors of bundled financial products as well as investment companies are confronted with the question of how the information processing and the decision behavior of the individual investors are influenced by the framing of the products. Is an investment portfolio always evaluated more attractive by individual investors when only the portfolio’s overall distribution rather than its single investments are represented?

According to this example, the influence of framing on the information processing and the risk-taking behavior of individual investors are analyzed. Up to now, framing effects and the information processing of individual investors are not examined in the context of investment portfolios. A few experimental studies concerning the framing of lottery portfolios have shown that the acceptance of a sequence of lotteries is (significantly) higher if the overall distribution is displayed rather than the set of lotteries itself. According to the standard utility theory, such behavior is irrational. However, this risk-taking behavior can well be explained by Prospect Theory. It is assumed that framing induces a certain type of information processing in terms of mental accounting; this explains why in aggregated framing decision makers process and evaluate in one mental account and in segregated framing they process and evaluate in different mental accounts.

However, investment portfolios differ from simple lottery portfolios to some extent. Investment portfolios consist of different investments that are correlated and ambiguous. These characteristics are included in the two experimental studies concerning the framing of investment portfolios. In both experiments which have been carried out, different security papers were chosen as typical investments; these were then bundled into portfolios. Besides the variation of the framing of the portfolios in an aggregated and segregated presentation mode, the risk situation was also varied. The participants were presented either with the investments under risk or with those under ambiguity. Ambiguity was induced by four experts’ probability estimations on three possible environmental states (e.g., positive and negative trends on the financial market as well as sideward movements). The presentation of estimations by experts was deemed realistic in this context as investors often request several professional estimations or gather information on the predicted performances of risky investments from different sources.

Thus, the experiments were carried out based on a 2 (framing) x 2 (risk situation) design. The experiments were designed as between-subject as to framing and risk situation and as within-subject as to variation of portfolios. The participants’ preferences were measured by their willingness to pay.

As loss aversion and mental accounting are mainly used to explain framing effects, the experiments shall demonstrate to what extent Prospect Theory is suitable for the analysis of framing effects. For the portfolios used in the experiments, subjective preference values can be determined by means of Prospect Theory depending on the framing. As compared to segregated framing, which assumes the processing and the evaluation in separate mental accounts, aggregated framing implicates the processing of the performance of the portfolio in one mental account. Looking at the subjective preference values of the portfolios in the experiments, different preference values depending on the framing and higher preference values for aggregated framing appear. This demonstrates that according to Prospect Theory, the participants should prefer aggregated framing.

As framing effects appear less often when individual investors are not influenced by framing but rather think analytically when they have to take decisions, it may be suitable to test the individual’s information processing directly in order to explain the effects of framing. This results in the hypothesis that the type of information processing is a factor influencing the effect of framing, and framing effects are observed mainly in intuitive and less in analytical decision makers.

The experimental studies demonstrate that the correlation and the variance of investment portfolios as well as the information processing of the investor have great influence on the preferred framing. Framing effects can be particularly observed for positively-correlated portfolios under ambiguity. Nevertheless, a ‘threshold value of risk’ was also observed. If the variance of the portfolio is extremely high, the aggregated presentation mode is no longer significantly preferred. Therefore, Prospect Theory cannot be used to explain the effect of framing for every portfolio for the bundled investments tested in a definitive manner. The information processing in these decision situations and the effect of framing appear to be more complex than Prospect Theory is able to display.

Framing effects are also mainly observed for individuals who decide intuitively rather than analytically. Furthermore, it was shown that women tend to decide more intuitively and are therefore more sensitive to the framing of investment portfolios. Thus, the framing of portfolios, such as investment funds, influences the individual investors’ preferences. These framing effects should not only be taken into consideration when consulting individual investors and when communicating financial products, but also where the making of new products in investment companies is concerned.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Conceptual metaphor comprises a family of systematically related metaphorical comparisons. We contend that conceptual metaphor is a persuasive rhetorical tool that has the potential to make salient certain aspects of a concept while masking others. Interestingly, the influence of this rhetorical figure on the attitudes and behaviors of consumers is, for the most part, unexamined, both by consumers themselves and by consumer behavior researchers.

We use two exploratory methods—content assessment and multidimensional scaling (MDS)—to (a) introduce conceptual metaphor and explain why it is important to consumer behavior research, (b) provide an extended example of conceptual metaphor within the consumer behavior domain of exercise, and (c) develop research questions for future work in this area.

What is conceptual metaphor and why is it important?

Conceptual metaphor can be defined as a family of metaphors organized around a common implicit theme (Ritchie 2003). For example, exercise is construction is a conceptual metaphor which organizes the ad statements, “build muscle,” “give your body the building blocks for muscle mass,” and “lay the foundation for lasting fitness.” Conceptual metaphor allows us to understand vague, abstract domains of knowledge (e.g., exercise and fitness) in terms of more specific, concrete, and familiar domains (e.g., building a house) (Gibbs 1998). Conceptual metaphors also are often used to help individuals understand and explain their emotional states (Cacciari 1998). Thus, conceptual metaphors are useful wherever we seek to understand abstract, intangible or multivalent ideas that might otherwise be difficult to capture in a straightforward declaration.

Conceptual metaphors are frequently found in cultural discourse; researchers estimate that 6 individual metaphors are used per minute of ordinary conversation (Gibbs 1994, p. 121). This ubiquity makes metaphorical language almost invisible; people process it without noticing (Gentner et al. 2001). Although metaphors often go unnoticed, this does not rob them of their power. On the contrary, because we are hardly conscious of the underlying system of relations, a regularly proffered conceptual metaphor gets internalized as normal (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Consequently, the relationships underlying the conceptual metaphor come to define and structure the way we think and reason about a situation. Because the essence of a metaphor is that one domain is like another, the relationships that allow the two domains to be joined also functions to highlight the similarities between the two concepts and mask the differences.

The potential of conceptual metaphor to highlight and mask has a powerful impact in shaping consumers’ knowledge (Kokinov and Petrov 2001), beliefs (Holyoak and Thagard 1995), and behaviors (Markman and Moreau 2001). In addition, the ubiquity and subtlety of conceptual metaphor suggests it may be processed with less effort and conscious awareness than other types of analogous thinking. If this proposition holds, then conceptual metaphor may be particularly suited for directing and even misdirecting the thoughts of consumers to a desired conclusion. Based on the above discussion, the purpose of our empirical research is: (1) to provide an extended example of complex conceptual metaphor in the consumer behavior domain of exercise, and (2) to show that multiple conceptual metaphors exist and compete in this consumer behavior domain with the potential to influence how consumers think and act in that domain.

Study 1: Content Assessment Method and Results

A content assessment of the conceptual metaphors commonly used in North American culture to describe exercise was conducted. Two current issues of the two most popular men’s and women’s exercise magazines were selected for examination. The researcher examined every ad and article in the magazines looking for metaphorical statements in both the pictures and the words; these individual metaphors were collected as examples of metaphors of exercise disseminated by cultural intermediaries (Coulter et al. 2003). Each magazine also had a Web site where consumers could post messages regarding exercise; the individual metaphors taken from the Web sites were collected as examples of metaphors of exercise disseminated by consumers themselves. Based on the advice by Low (2003), individual metaphors were grouped into conceptual metaphors by the researchers.

The six conceptual metaphors identified through the content assessment include: exercise is a journey, exercise is work for pay, exercise is construction, exercise is sculpting, exercise is combat, and exercise is heat. These complex conceptual metaphors comprise the most common ways that individual consumers and cultural intermediaries think about and express their thoughts about exercise. Next, we identified the underlying systematic relations that grouped or differentiated these metaphors.

Study 2: MDS Method and Results

Six metaphor statements, derived from the individual metaphors collected during the content assessment, were selected for each of the six conceptual metaphors. The 36 statements generated allow for \( \frac{n^2-n}{2}=630 \) unique pairwise comparisons; we created 6 unique subsets (each \( n=105 \)) using a partially balanced incomplete block design and randomly assigned 76 subjects to receive one of these subsets. The ALSCAL procedure in SPSS 11.5 was used to conduct a nonmetric MDS analysis using a model of Euclidean distances. A three-dimensional solution was computed, with Kruskal’s stress=0.215 and an RSQ value of 0.631. The insights gained from the content assessment were pressed into service in interpreting the dimensions of the MDS analysis.

The first dimension of the three-dimensional MDS model is interpreted as degree of control over the exercise process. It suggests a continuum ranging from ‘contingent’ to ‘predictable’, that is, whether exercise and its outcomes are contingent upon the actions of someone or something else or whether they are under the control of an individual. The first dimension separates metaphors that highlight individual control of exercise—journey, work, sculpting and construction—from those in which exercise is viewed as a process that is not under the direct control of one individual—combat (competing force) and heat (force of nature).

The second dimension can be interpreted as process duration, along the continuum of ‘short-term’ to ‘long-term.’ This dimension separates journey (long-term) from heat, combat, and sculpting (short-term). That is, a journey typically represents a long-term process that may take months or years to reach a desired goal, if a definitive goal even exists. In contrast, heat (e.g., “fire up,” “burn”),...
combat (e.g., “attack,” “destroy”), and sculpting (e.g., “whittle,” “chisel”) are viewed as short-term processes that achieve a definitive end, often quickly.

The third dimension can be interpreted as type of procedure, varying along a continuum from ‘variable’ to ‘routine.’ This dimension separates work for pay from all other conceptual metaphors. Unforeseen obstacles may be encountered during a journey, and sculpture relies on creative thinking, but only work is characterized by its habitual routine.

Discussion

The content analysis supports the idea that different conceptual metaphors are presented by cultural intermediaries in order to highlight and mask aspects of the topic under discussion. Specifically, the conceptual metaphors exercise is a journey and exercise is work for pay are commonly found in the articles in fitness magazines, but less often in the ads. As demonstrated through the MDS analysis, these conceptual metaphors make salient the idea that exercise is both a long-term process (journey) and a routine procedure (work), ideas that are attractive to magazine publishers who want consumers to subscribe to their magazine regularly month after month. In contrast, exercise is combat and exercise is sculpting appear more often in ads for exercise products directed at men and women, respectively. Advertisers, as opposed to publishers, might favor these metaphors because they focus on processes that are shorter and more variable than journeys or jobs; the salience of achieving desired results in the shorter term may spur consumers to buy the brand offered.

In summary, the content assessment supports the idea that a small number of complex conceptual metaphors are likely to structure the discourse in any particular consumer behavior domain. In addition, the MDS analysis provides a sense that these conceptual metaphors are distinct from each other on several dimensions of importance to the domain. By using both methods to assign meaning to the dimensions underlying the conceptual metaphors of exercise, the ideas that these metaphors highlight or mask become clear. Finally, the content assessment suggests that these distinctions between metaphors are, in fact, used systematically by marketers to focus consumers’ attention on some aspects of exercise behavior and consumption and mask other, non-compatible, aspects.

References


Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson (1980), Metaphors We Live By, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.


Copyless Ads: The Impact of Complex Advertising Images on Attitude Toward the Advertisement

Tze Wee Chan, Saatchi & Saatchi, Malaysia
Margaret K. Hogg, Lancaster University Management School, England

ABSTRACT
Metaphorically embedded messages are an increasingly important part of complex advertising images and include copyless ads. We use qualitative data and descriptive statistics to investigate how consumers interpret complex advertising; and how this execution style influences consumers’ attitudes towards advertisements and brands. We explore direct and indirect relationships between attitudes toward the advertisement (Aad) and towards the brand (AB) (and thus advertising effectiveness). Complex advertising images particularly influence the indirect relationship between consumer attitudes toward the advertisement and brands. Consumers sometimes misinterpret the meaning of complex no-copy ads; and correct interpretation of the meaning of the ad can lead to negative attitudes towards the ad and the product/brand.

INTRODUCTION
Metaphorically embedded messages are an increasingly important part of complex advertising images and include copyless ads. These advertising executions invite the reader to “think into” an advertisement’s message (Phillips, 1997), relying on simplicity, economy, reduction and the rejection of clichés for effective communication (Heller and Fink, 1999). Barthes (1973) expounds the “pleasure of the text” as the reward that comes from processing clever arrangements of signs to elicit meanings in a message. However the impact of creativity over content on advertising effectiveness is a critical issue for marketing communications and consumer research. We use qualitative data and descriptive statistics to examine the impact of interpreting complex advertising images or no copy ads (which do not illustrate the product and have either minimal or no verbal copy) on advertising effectiveness by investigating, firstly, consumers’ interpretation of complex print advertisements; secondly, consumers’ attitudes towards complex advertising images (Aad); and thirdly the effect of no-copy advertising in generating positive or negative attitudes to the brand. We build on earlier research which has examined the inter-relationships between advertising imagery and advertising effectiveness (Bone and Ellen, 1992), and respond to Bone and Ellen’s (1992:93) argument that there have been few empirical studies to support the key assumptions of consumer behaviour researchers that “imagery increases recall, enhances attitude toward the brand and positively affects behavioral intentions.”

LITERATURE REVIEW
Advertising influences brand equity through consumer brand attitudes or memory structures for a brand (Edell, 1993). Ads seek to impress and associate the brand name and claim in the consumers’ mind (Krishnan and Chakravarti, 1993). An ad uses executional cues to facilitate brand name encoding and retrieval, credibility in terms of claims to quality, and key positioning associations (MacInnis et al., 1991). Most importantly, it seeks to spur a predisposition or intention to purchase the product or service. Lack of interaction between message and brand associations may create well-remembered ads but may not facilitate processing brand name and claims (Pieters and de Klerk-Warmerdam, 1996).

McQuarrie and Mick (1999) argue that advertisements can deliver brand-attribute linkage through varying forms of executions because consumers appraise variety in style and content. Thus, positive communication outcome in consumer processing levels will affect the strength and enduring nature of memories and brand attitudes (MacInnis, et. al., 1991). This depends on how strong and compelling consumers regard the ad to be (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983) and whether perceptions are in favour of or against the ad message (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Rossiter and Percy, 1987).

Rhetorical figures in ad messages are artful deviations (Corbett, 1990) that function through various operations such as metaphors to capture the reader’s attention. The irregularity (trope) is created via the similarity between two verbal terms that are not associated (McQuarrie and Mick, 1996; Tanaka, 1994). This character of deviation or incongruity suggests that advertising language in complex advertising images is more memorable than literal advertising language (Corbett, 1990). Where readers have a positive response to the ad, the ads will generate a more positive attitude toward the ad (Aad) because it requires more processing (McQuarrie and Mick, 1996).

Research into consumer interpretation of advertising images has historically focused on linguistic processing of textual information (e.g. Barthes, 1986; Mick and Politè, 1989; McQuarrie and Mick, 2003; Forceville, 1995). A few studies have drawn attention to non-linguistic features (e.g. Edell & Staelin, 1983; Childers & Houston, 1984) as well as visual communication (e.g. Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Most images are accompanied by some form of text that assists in reducing any ambiguities found in an image (Barthes, 1986).

No-copy ads fall outside the conventional advertisement categories of product-information or product-image formats of representation (Leiss et. al., 1990). In these complex advertising images, the product is not explicitly found in the ad to explain its utility. No-copy ads fall mainly into Barthes’ (1973) connotative level where meanings are neither precise nor limited and require interpretation. Forceville (1996) argues that this lack of anchoring in no-copy images makes them open to a wider range of interpretations than generic advertisements.

In this exploratory study we focus on pictorial metaphors in no-copy ads. Mick and Politè (1989), investigating semantics in advertising imagery, found that denotations in advertising images did not give due attention to connotative figures, including metaphors. Forceville (1995, 1996) used Black’s (1962, 1979) theory of metaphors, and found that consumers are able, firstly to identify metaphors in ad images; and secondly, to interpret these metaphors correctly by associating the figurative secondary subjects to the literal primary subjects of an ad. Phillips’ (1997) research found that consumers interpret ad messages by creating strong and weak implicatures triggered by how far complex advertising images deviated from reality.

Message comprehension is a prerequisite to formation or change of attitude and intentions (Mick and Buhl, 1992). It is also a function of the message characteristics and the reader’s opportunity, motivation and ability to process the message (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Aad is one of the dominant mediators of advertising effectiveness (e.g. Lutz, MacKenzie and Belch, 1983; Mitchell and Olson, 1981; Shimp, 1981; Edell and Burke, 1984). Five
FIGURE 1
Conceptual Framework
(Source: based on Peracchio and Meyers-Levy (1994); Mitchell and Olson (1981); Lutz et. al. (1983))

Trope (irregularity) ➔
Metaphor (pictorial) ➔
High ambiguity because product is not shown ➔
High ambiguity prompts extensive processing and thus extreme affective responses ➔
Positive effect from making sense of ad (ambiguity relief) ➔
Reader likely to recall brand ➔
Positive or negatively valenced effect on brand evaluation

Trope (irregularity) ➔
Metaphor (pictorial) ➔
High ambiguity because product is not shown ➔
High ambiguity prompts extensive processing and thus extensive processing and thus extreme affective responses ➔
Positive effect from making sense of ad (ambiguity relief) ➔
Reader likely to recall brand ➔
Positive or negatively valenced effect on brand evaluation

Liking ➔
Perception ➔
Attitude Toward the Ad (Aad) ➔
1
Attitude Toward the Brand (AB) ➔
2
Advertising Effectiveness ➔

Processing Motivation ➔
Ad Cognition ➔
Processing Ability ➔

Ad Claim Discrepancy ➔
Attitude Towards Advertising in General ➔

Attitude Toward the Ad (Aad) ➔
Attitude Toward the Brand (AB) ➔
Advertising Effectiveness ➔

Ad Credibility ➔
possible antecedents of Aad (Lutz et al., 1983) can be identified: ad credibility; ad perceptions; attitude toward the advertiser; attitude toward advertising in general; and mood. Consumers of advertising messages develop attitudes toward an ad that influence advertising effectiveness in terms of brand attitude or purchase intentions (Lutz, MacKenzie and Belch 1983). Response sequences that follow from exposure to communication include: firstly, affective reaction to the ad i.e. Aad; and secondly, affective reaction toward the advertised brand i.e. attitude toward the brand (AB).

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

A conceptual framework (Figure 1) was derived from Peracchio and Meyers-Levy (1994), integrating textual theories, interpretation and information processing (Section 1); and from Mitchell and Olson’s (1981) and Lutz et al.’s (1983) work on attitudes towards advertisements (Section II), notably Model 1 (direct influence of attitude to the ad on attitude to the brand); and Model 2 (indirect influence of attitude to the ad on attitude to the brand).

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The objective is to examine how complex advertising images contribute to the formation of or changes in attitudes toward the advertisement and the brand. We investigate the effects of no-copy ads on consumers by examining firstly, consumers’ interpretation of complex print ads; secondly, consumers’ attitudes toward complex advertising images; and thirdly the effect of no-copy advertising in generating positive or negative attitudes to the brand.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

Participants: We recruited 42 male and female student participants aged 18–35 by convenience sampling (Mick and Politi 1989; Phillips 1997). We chose university students because of their ability to process visual information; and because substantial cognitive resources (e.g. abstract thinking) are required to understand no-copy ads (Aaker 1982).

Questionnaire: The first part of the questionnaire (Mick and Politi 1989; Forceville 1995; Phillips 1997) elicits interpretations of three complex no-copy advertisements using four exploratory open-ended questions. The second part of the questionnaire uses Likert scales to examine the impact of the ads on attitude formation and change towards the brands (based on Lutz et al. 1983).

Advertisements: Three advertisements were chosen from print and poster campaigns (Appendix A) where visual dominated over verbal material (Mick and Politi 1989). The advertisements do not illustrate the product or the brand advertised; and metaphors are rendered pictorially with minimum or no copy. The ads were chosen from award-winning campaigns across a range of product categories (e.g. alcohol, tobacco and media) relevant to the participants. All three campaigns have been run at different times over the past five years, thus increasing the chance of participants’ exposure to the ads.

**METHOD**

At the beginning of the questionnaire participants were told that the purpose was to: “discover the thoughts and feelings of consumers by answering some questions on print advertisements (e.g. magazines, newspapers, billboards)”. In Part 1, four open-ended questions elicited participants’ interpretations of three ads (based on Forceville 1995; Mick and Politi 1989):

1. *In your own words, please describe the ad.*
2. *Ignore what the advertiser may have intended and describe your opinions and feelings about the ad.*

**European Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 7)** / 53

3. *What do you think the advertiser was trying to communicate with this ad?*
4. *How do you know what the advertiser was trying to communicate with this ad? What makes you think so?*

The three ads were arranged in ascending order of difficulty of the complex imagery, allowing for learning effects. The participants answered the four questions for ad 1; then for ad 2; and then for ad 3 (Mick and Politi, 1989; Forceville 1995).

Part 2 comprised twenty-two dichotomous questions and 5-point Likert scales anchored by “strongly agree-strongly disagree” to assess responses to the advertising images. Aad was assessed by the mean summation of 8 items (α=0.85); anchored by the Likert-scaled sub-variables of liking, perception, motivation, ability, ad credibility, ad claim discrepancy and attitude towards advertising in general. AB was directly measured from participant brand perceptions based on one question anchored by high-low quality of brand on a 5-point scale. AE was assessed by the mean summed total of 4 items (α=0.78); anchored by message conveyed, ad remembered, brand remembered and brand noted. Correlation analysis between these three variables is used to investigate advertising effectiveness (Figure 1 and Table 2).

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

NUD*ist was used to code 504 participant statements (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996) to four open-ended questions about the three ads. In advertisements, one or more features from a secondary object (the source domain) are mapped on to the primary object (the target domain) (Black, 1979). The secondary object of an advertisement is generally taken to be the image of the product or something that refers to it. The primary object is the product or service advertised. With no-copy advertisements, the secondary object exercises a much stronger influence on the primary object because no product is pictorially represented.

We used Forceville’s (1996 p. 174) method to determine participants’ comprehension and interpretation of the metaphorically framed messages in the ads. This involved three evaluative criteria (Ratings 1, 2 and 3). A number of themes and keywords were identified for each rating:

1. *Which are the two terms of the metaphor?* Does the participant explicitly mention the brand and the primary object identified by the researcher? (This is derived from the brand logo or name.)
2. *Which is the metaphor’s primary subject and which its secondary subject?* Is it explicitly or implicitly acknowledged that the advertised brand is to be understood in terms of the primary object?
3. *What feature(s) is/are mapped from the secondary on to the primary subject?* Is at least one feature of the primary object mentioned that is to be attributed to the brand?

Ratings 1 and 2 require participants to explicitly identify elements of the metaphor. Ratings have to be judged cautiously by taking participant responses one question at a time as well as in terms of how all four questions for each ad are linked. Responses for Ratings 1 and 2 were coded as success or failure in fulfilling its requirements. Rating 3 incorporates positive and negative re-

---

1 42 questionnaires X 12 questions in each questionnaire. A detailed description of analysis using NUD*ist, e.g. categories and index tree, is presented in full in ***(2003), but omitted here for reasons of space.***
TABLE 1
Breakdown of Participant Responses for Part 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad 1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad 2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad 3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad 1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad 2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad 3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad 1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad 2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad 3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FINDINGS

Rating 1: Successful Rating 1 responses (identifying the two terms of the metaphor) were high at 92.9% for Ad 1 which was the simplest of the three ads. All participants mentioned the brand name Guinness as the primary object e.g. “A pint of Guinness is being portrayed as an ice cream” (Jake). Participants interpreted this advertisement as a new version or brand extension of Guinness and not as the original Guinness Stout product itself e.g. “a cold variant of the original” (Anna). Unsuccessful ratings did not mention either brand or alcoholic beverage when describing this ad: “Alcoholic drink in the form of an ice lolly/ice cream” (Tim). For Ad 2, the presence of the government smoking warning was an important part of the ad’s description e.g. “Silk Cut. It is a slice in a piece of purple silk. My feelings are that because cig advertisers were not allowed to show pictures of cigs they had to come up with another irrelevant way of advertising their product” (Nick). For Ad 3, text anchoring of the Economist’s brand name is paramount to identifying the ad: “The Economist magazine, but I only know this from the writing. I would not have been able to tell it was the Economist just from the picture” (Chloe).

Rating 2: Nine out of ten respondents correctly identified the metaphor’s primary and secondary subjects for Ad 1: “New product-it is written that this taste is new. The product is from Guinness. The taste is extra cold. The picture of the ice cream is the analogy” (Wayne). Some responses failed because, although they correctly acknowledged the presence of the product, they interpreted the ad image as advertising for a completely different product: “From the word “new”, it is a new product...so it could be ice cream with Guinness flavour and alcoholic” (Pamela).

Most participants understood that Ad 2 was a cigarette ad though the brand name was not always explicitly stated: “The warning contained in the advertisement would suggest that cigarettes are being advertised” (Tina). The secondary object of silk with a cut is meant to allude to the brand name rather than the product i.e. cigarette. Several participants associated the colour purple better with the brand as they find this trait more distinctive than the imagery of the silk and the cut itself: “Based on the colours and the slit I knew it was Silk Cut, which advertises cigarettes” (Chris). Responses failed where participants interpreted the ad as having a different object source e.g. health warning instead of the silk and the cut: “…it is not really a product being advertised, it is more of a government warning about smoking harming the unborn children of mothers” (Ray).

Ad 3 was interpreted in two ways. Some participants associated the image with the characteristics of the magazine whilst others associated this with the readers of the magazine. Colour association was also important for the Economist brand, traditionally known for a red background with contrasting white typeface: “An ad for the periodical the Economist. Red is the principal colour for the magazine (used quite often in their ads)” (Angelina). Responses failed where participants did not associate the relevance of the image of the switch to the brand: “A new magazine about businesses. To give a view like this is a process of unleashing the hidden potential of your company” (Todd).

Rating 3: This rating establishes whether participants have experienced any significant formation or change of attitude towards the ad and/or brand. The “yes” category is therefore sub-divided into positive or negative feelings held about the ad or brand.
Participants who correctly interpreted the advertiser’s messages and yet unequivocally dismissed the product or advertising message were categorised as negative responses.

For Ad 1 participants observed the ad’s strong source of appeal from its ability to target its specific audience by relaying a personalised message from the ad. However, negatively framed responses show that a message has been conveyed as the participant makes positive inferences about the ad: “I enjoy the visual humour, but, since I don’t drink stout, it doesn’t influence me towards buying a particular product…” (Mark).

For Ad 2 some negative feelings were attributed to the nature of the ad execution: “The colour contrast and the simplicity of the print work caught my eye, but I had to spend some time looking in order to understand what was the product advertised. The brand name is almost invisible and in general I don’t like the ad” (Stan). On the other hand, positive responses focus on the ad’s creativity: “The advertisement…forms an illustrative representation of the brand Silk Cut and encourages people to think of its significance” (Tim). Saliency is relevant here as participants who described themselves as being opposed to smoking automatically dismissed the ad message. Negative feelings about the brand could flow from negative interpretation of the ad image: “annoying because makers are so confident of selling their product…That the product is high class, that the dangers of smoking the product aren’t worse than the benefits, i.e. appearing ‘cool’” (Brandon). One consequence of the limitless interpretation of no-copy ads were that participants’ attitudes towards the ad might have been unnecessarily altered for the worse due to the ambiguous nature of the ad: “Obviously the name Silk Cut is linked to a piece of silk being cut but I feel that there is a deeper meaning that I do not fully appreciate/understand” (Natasha). Responses that failed rating 3 associated the wrong objects with the brand “…illustrating the delicacy of silk in comparison to the delicacy of a pregnancy. That babies are delicate, just like silk” (Rio).

For Ad 3 participants responded positively to figuring out the message: “…its quirky in-game makes me feel part of the gang. A sense of exclusivity and intellectual elitism. The idea that readers will be empowered by the information within…” (Marcus). In contrast, a negative response occurs when a participant’s explicit recognition of the ad’s novelty is followed by dismissal of the brand. Here, the novelty of the ad apparently overshadows the brand name: “It makes one think about the advert itself, and not the product it is selling. Personally, it wouldn’t make me buy the product” (Tim). Responses failed where participants were unable to draw the requisite ad associations: “Confusing. I think they (the advertiser) assume that the readers are familiar with the word “The Economist”. I don’t” (Mary).

Rating 3 is cross-tabulated (Tables 2a-c) with participants’ appreciation of complex ads, quantified as ad effectiveness. These cross-tabulations demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of no-copy ads in relation to ad comprehension difficulty. Most participants found Ad 1 (Table 2a) easy to interpret and understand. Eleven participants who agreed about the effectiveness of complex ads also positively interpreted Example 1’s ad message. For Ad 2 (Table 2b) there was a more diverse mix of responses from the same 11 participants, including four negative responses and two wrong interpretations. Similarly, two negative responses and one wrong interpretation are recorded for Ad 3 (Table 2c). This crucially shows that comprehension of ad messages is influenced by the nature of complex ads and is capable of affecting an ad’s effectiveness.

The correlation matrix (Table 3) shows significant correlation for Model 2 (Figure 1)(r=0.38, p<.01), suggesting that ad credibility influences consumer attitude toward the brand, AB. There was no significant correlation for the direct relationship between Aad and AB (attitude to the brand) in Model 1. In terms of other influences on attitudes to ads and advertising effectiveness, perceptions of advertisements were positively correlated with Aad (r=0.637, p<.01); and ad credibility with Aad (r=0.738, p<.01).

DISCUSSION

Whilst early communication models assumed the audience to be largely passive in the consumption of advertising, our results support later arguments about the important role of active individual interpretation and attitudes in the consumption of advertising (Scott 1994; Phillips 1997; Stern). In line with earlier studies (Mick and Politi, 1989; Forceville, 1992; Phillips, 1997), it was shown that consumers can interpret complex ads. In general, consumers are capable of identifying and interpreting pictorial metaphors in complex advertisements. In no-copy ads, this is largely through previous exposure to the ads or by forming some inference of previous knowledge of the brand to the ad. The accuracy of consumer comprehension of meanings is of critical concern to advertisers who assume that consumers attach salient importance to their intended advertisement messages (Mick and Buhl, 1992). However we did not find that no-copy ads are necessarily more effective than other types of executions in marketing communications strategies. There was mixed reaction about the need to interpret complex advertising images as opposed to more generic forms of executions. In a practical sense, most consumers were not willing to spend time on ads that they did not find relevant to themselves. Factors that influenced consumer desire to interpret ads included academic background, time constraint and appreciation of the message.

We extended previous research into the interpretation of rhetorical figures in advertising (Mick and Buhl 1992; Scott 1994; Forceville 1995; Phillips 1997) by incorporating earlier models (Lutz et al 1983) of advertising effectiveness into our conceptualisation and research design. Our findings confirmed Lutz et al’s work on the importance of the indirect influence of attitude to the ad (notably its credibility and perception of the ad) on attitude to the brand. In terms of changing advertising attitudes and generating substantial effectiveness, there was no significantly observable impact. Purchase intention and brand attitudes, as components of advertising effectiveness, were not significantly influenced by this specific method of ad execution.

Complex advertisements tend to attract more attention. However the extra effort expended in interpreting complex advertising images does not necessarily lead to consumers being more persuaded. For both attitude towards the brand and attitude towards the ad, the net effect of persuasion is ultimately negligible when the benefits of complex advertising are significantly negated by confusion, miscomprehension and even irritation (McQuarrie and Mick, 1999). Relevance in the form of previous knowledge and usage of brand play a big factor in appreciation of these ads. This is supported by a positive correlation between the ad credibility and ad claim discrepancy variables with consumer attitudes toward the brand.

Consumer attitude towards the brand (AB) is not significantly directly influenced by their attitude toward the advertisement (Aad) in complex no-copy advertising. Consumer attitude toward the brand is significantly influenced by their attitude towards the advertisement indirectly through acceptance of ad claims or ad credibility in complex no-copy advertising. Our findings also contributed to earlier research by exploring complex advertising in a cultural setting (i.e. U.K.) different from earlier studies in the U.S, Canada and the Netherlands.
**TABLES 2A, 2B AND 2C**

**Rating 3 Sample 1 * Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness Crosstabulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>neither/nor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating 3 Sample 1 negative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating 3 Sample 2 * Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness Crosstabulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>neither/nor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating 3 Sample 2 negative</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating 3 Sample 3 * Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness Crosstabulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>neither/nor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating 3 Sample 3 negative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Mean Summated Ad Effectiveness</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION (INCLUDING LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS)

In terms of methodological limitations, firstly we presented participants with stimulus material which did not coincide with how people actually process research stimuli (Kreuz and Roberts 1993). Secondly, we did not necessarily capture the whole meaning of our participants’ responses (Mick and Politic 1989); but rather settled for responses to pictorial interpretations that identified and characterised significant concepts and themes. Thirdly, we could not estimate the level of processing opportunity of each participant that ties in with ad repetition. Results from studies of ad repetition have been associated with increased levels of cognitive response (Petty and Cacioppo, 1980), more enduring ad and brand attitudes and stronger purchase intentions (Batra and Ray, 1986; Edell and Keller, 1988). Finally selective ad processing, as occurs in real life, was not accounted for in this study. We don’t seek to mimic real-life exposure but to provide for relevant and spontaneous interpretations (Phillips, 1997).

Future research could explore at greater length the relationships of ad credibility on attitude towards the brand and the

**TABLE 3**
Simple Correlation Matrix (r values)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VE</th>
<th>VAD</th>
<th>VAD1</th>
<th>VAD2</th>
<th>VAD5+6</th>
<th>VB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VAD</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAD1</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAD2</td>
<td>-0.053</td>
<td>0.637**</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAD5+6</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>0.738**</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.255</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VB</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td>-0.067</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.38**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Model 1) (Model 2)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)**

[KEY: VE: Advertising Effectiveness; VAD Attitude to the Ad; VB: Attitude to the Brand; VAD1: Liking; VAD2: Perception; VAD5: Ad credibility; VAD6 Ad claim discrepancy].

APPENDIX A

No copy ads

Ad 1

[Image of Ad 1]

Ad 2

[Image of Ad 2]

Ad 3

[Image of Ad 3]
influence of perception and liking on attitude toward the ad within the context of the debate on the effectiveness of no-copy and complex advertising and purchase intentions; and also the impact of branding and brandmarks on the model.

In conclusion, complex visual images in advertising have the potential to alter consumer perception of brands by virtue of deriving emotive rewards from interpreting the ad message. The advantages from complex images are most notably derived from pleasure and greater engagement in the ad, which translates into liking towards the ad. Conversely, the advertisement may not be effective when consumers are not able to interpret the ads. General doubt about an ad message is more often than not expressed as a negative response to the ad.

SELECTED REFERENCES
[full list available on request]


Towards a New Typology for Visual and Textual Rhetoric in Print Advertisements
Margot van Mulken, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT
Several studies have shown that rhetorical figures enhance the appreciation of print advertisements. In order to predict the effect of these figures, a typology of figures in relation to their complexity and deviation is required. McQuarrie & Mick (1996, 1999, 2003) have been the first to combine text-interpretive analysis with consumer response. In this paper an expanded model, based on the one developed by McQuarrie & Mick, will be presented and tested. With the help of semiotic content analysis a large sample of 600 ads will be used to test the validity, interrater reliability and feasibility of the taxonomy. Results show that the integration of verbo-pictorial figures in the rhetoric framework for print advertising deserves to be considered.

INTRODUCTION
“Top People Take The Times” is a nice example of a rhetorical figure in advertising. The catchy alliteration and colloquial phrase ‘top people’ suggest the liveliness of the newspaper. Rhetorical figures involve more elaboration (Mothersbaugh et al, 2002, Schilperoord & Maes, 2003), assure longer retention (Tom & Eves, 1999, Toncar & Munch, 2001, McQuarrie & Mick, 2003), and are seen as more rewarding for persons with a relative high need for cognition (Perachio and Meyers-Malaviya, 1994). Lee and Mason (1999) and Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989) have also shown that unexpected (or incongruent) information elicited better recall and more appreciation. Houston et al (1987) report more elaborate processing in cases of picture-word inconsistency in advertisements. In other words: it pays to put rhetoric in ads. The number of rhetorical devices, however, is very large. Do all rhetorical devices contribute to the appreciation of ads in the same way? We therefore need a framework that allows to describe and classify the different rhetorical figures of speech.

RHETORICAL FIGURES IN ADVERTISING
The first encompassing typology of figures in advertising, related to their complexity and deviation, is proposed by McQuarrie & Mick (1996, 1999, 2003). McQuarrie & Mick define rhetoric as an artful deviation relative to audience expectation and propose a text-interpretive typology, in which they exploit the classical distinction between schemes and tropes, and which they apply to both visual and textual figures. This is a clever attempt to discern more simple figures from more complex figures, and this presupposes an underlying difference in effect and appreciation. In line with Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1995[1986]), it can be assumed that more complex figures require more elaboration and cognitive effort. However, since readers/viewers are compensated for this extra processing effort in terms of pleasure or self-contentment (for having solved the riddle) (cf. Tanaka (1994), Forceville (1996)), more complex figures are more appreciated than less complex figures.

McQuarrie and Mick show that the Quintilian distinction between schemes and tropes is very valuable for the discernment between more simple figures, schemes, and more complex figures. Schemes are based on overcoding, in that they involve a deviation from the ordinary pattern or arrangement of words, for example, excessive order or regularity (cf. alliteration or rhyme). ‘Beanz meanz Heinz’ is a well-known example. Tropes involve a deviation from the ordinary and principal significations of a word, when a text or image contains excessive irregularity (undercoding) (McQuarrie & Mick 1996). ‘Put a Tiger in your Tank’ is a nice example of a trope. Schemes represent deviations that occur on the surface of the text, tropes function at the level of meaning (McQuarrie & Mick 2003). Within the category of schemes, schemes of reversal (e.g. alliteration, rhyme) are distinguished from the slightly more complex schemes of reversal (e.g. antimetabole, antithesis). Tropes are subdivided in a similar way: tropes of substitution (e.g. hyperbole, ellipsis) are less complex than tropes of destabilization (e.g. metaphor, homonym, irony). The difference can be quite subtle: “Whereas in a trope of substitution, one says something other than what is meant and relies on the recipient to make the necessary correction, in a trope of destabilization, one means more than is said and relies on the recipient to develop the implications. Tropes of substitution make a switch, while tropes of destabilization unsettle” (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 433).

Van Mulken (2003) has shown that this framework works well, but that it is too coarse grained: too many ads belong to the class ‘Destabilization’ (e.g. metaphor, irony, puns), the most complex figure in the typology. Further, interrater agreement is fairly low, which too limits its feasibility. Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) also criticize the McQuarrie & Mick framework by pointing to the fundamentally textual nature of the taxonomy. They propose a new grid for analyzing visual rhetoric apart from textual rhetoric (Phillips & McQuarrie 2004), Forceville (1996) and Leigh (1992) also propose analyzing grids, and they too constrain their models by limiting the scope to either metaphors (Forceville) or verbal rhetoric (Leigh). Since the goal of the typology is to be able to predict the effect of all the rhetoric in advertising, we think it is necessary to develop and refine an all-encompassing framework. In order to refine the McQuarrie & Mick framework, we decided to include more aspects in the typology of rhetorical speech. We retained the distinction between schemes and tropes, but not the respective subdivisions, since these classes were not explicative enough. Apart from the difference in schemes and tropes in both the visual and textual mode, we added, on the basis of Heckler & Childers (1992), the features ‘expectancy’, and ‘relevancy’, and on the basis of Barthes (1964) and Phillips (2000), ‘verbal anchoring’. ‘Mention of brand/logo’ and ‘Depiction of the product/service’ was added on the basis of Hager (2001) and Kröber-Riel (1993). All criteria will be illustrated below. The inclusion of ‘expectancy’ is in line with the findings of Heckler and Childers (1992), where they define expectancy in the visual as the relationship of the message with the ad theme (Heckler and Childers 1992, Lee & Mason 1999). Verbal Anchoring was added on the basis of Barthes (1964) and Phillips (2000), where it shown that the degree in which the text guides the interpretation of the visual (and vice versa) imports for the distinction between simple and complex figures. Hager (2001) and Kröber-Riel (1993) stress the fact that the absence of the product or service in the visual can be an indicator of indirectness. This is also in line with the observation of Phillips and McQuarrie (2004), where they show that juxtaposition (two side-by-side images) or fusion (two combined images) is less complex than replacement (where the image points to an absent image). Groupe Mu (1992) define this criterion as In absence or In presence (Groupe Mu 1992).

Generally, the Sender of the message is identified in the logo or in the brand name. However, it may occur that the Sender presupposes that the reader/viewer is so familiar with his or her
advertising style, that he or she even dares to leave out his or her
stamp. This is our final criterion, based on Hager (2001). Table 1
presents all criteria used.

We will illustrate these criteria with examples. The already
mentioned “Top People Take The Times” is an example of a verbal
rhetorical figure. It is a schematic figure, since the repetition of the
sound signals that something is deviant. Figure 1 presents an
example of a visual scheme, the presence of a visual rhetorical
figure. The folds in the woman’s dress are repeated in the form of
the perfume bottle. “Nothing comes between me and my Calvin
Klein jeans” is an example of the third criterion, a verbal tropical
figure, where the pun resides in the ambiguity of the expression
‘nothing comes between’. Figure 2 is an illustration of the fourth
criterion, the presence of a visual trope. The Mercedes is like the
pearl in an oyster, and thus constitutes a metaphor.

Figure 3 (Bulova Watches) illustrates Expectancy: the position
of the watch is not where one would habitually expect to find
watches. Verbal Anchoring is illustrated in Figure 4: the header
‘Nymphomaniac’ adds a rather deviant interpretation of the person
eating a bar of chocolate. Absence of the product is shown in the
Wonderbra ad in Figure 5. The bra is not depicted, just the button
of the blouse that tried to hide it. And absence of logo or brand name
is shown in Figure 6, where the reader has to infer that this pen
allows to write infinitely, just as the mathematical symbol indicates.
Only if the reader understands that this ad serves to sell Bic pens, he
or she catches the meaning of this ad.

This expanded taxonomy was tested for validity and reliability.
Note that all criteria are dichotomies, and each criterion is either
plus or minus rhetorical.

METHOD
In order to check whether the various criteria are effectively
informative for rhetorical communication, a sample of 600 magazine
ads was composed. We gathered the first 100 full-page advertise-
ments in the German opinion weekly Der Spiegel, of the years

TABLE 1
Typology of Rhetorical Speech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Brand/Logo</td>
<td>Visual/Verbal</td>
<td>Hager (2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 1
Visual scheme (cr. 2)
FIGURE 2
Visual trope (cr. 4)

FIGURE 3
(Bulova watches) Expectancy (cr. 5)

FIGURE 4
Verbal Anchoring (cr. 6)
performed on 25 percent of the sample. Further, in order to check whether it is possible to cover all forms of visual and verbal rhetoric with this framework, we tested whether a generally accepted diachronical trend in advertising development would appear (=validity). Phillips and McQuarrie (2002) detected a change and transformation in the rhetorical style in magazine advertisements since 1954, in American magazines. Pollay (1985) and Gross & Sheth (1989) found a similar development. The hypothesis we tried to falsify is whether a diachronical evolution in stylistic approach can also be detected in German print advertising.

A pretest was used to verify the usefulness of the above mentioned criteria.

The criteria of rhetorical communication have been coded as dichotomies, 0 for absence, 1 for presence, and, in the case of Verbal Anchoring, following Phillips 2000, we coded 0 (=complete), 1 (partial) or 2 (absent). The coding reflects an increasing degree of rhetorical speech. Analysis concerned only header, primary visual and logo/brand name. Body copy and secondary visual supports were not included in the analysis.

RESULTS

Two independent judges have categorized 25% of the data. The reliability check that we performed on 25 percent of the sample showed that interrater agreement was rather comfortably high for most of the dichotomies. As was to be expected (cf. Van Mulken 2003), interrater agreement was lowest for the variables ‘tropical transformation’ (κ=.427, moderate) and ‘Verbal Anchoring’ (κ=.387, fair), since these variables require interpretation of the advertisement. This aspect is renown to Cohen’s kappa.

To test the validity of our framework, we tested the diachronical hypothesis, and the results are presented in Table 2.

We see then that there is a general trend, for all variables except Logo or Brand Mention, towards the use of more rhetorical speech. One-way ANOVA were performed to determine if there was a significant difference between the means per decade. It appeared then that all criteria show significant development on a p<.001 level, except for the absence or presence of a textual rhetorical figure (p=.08).

We collapsed these remaining criteria to create one measure for rhetorical speech. Table 3 shows the means (and standard deviations) per decade. Again, we used ANOVA to verify the significance of the change thru time. It appeared that the evolution is indeed significant (F(5, 559)=21.82, p<.001). Figure 7 illustrates this evolution.

A post-hoc test (Tukey HSD) revealed that the decades 1950 thru 1980 constitute a subset, that 1970 thru 1990 constitute another subset (but without the decade 1980), and that 2000 is a separate subset.

A principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used because correlated factors were expected. To isolate the factors, a minimum primary loading of .30 was used. Overall, the three factors explain 63.6 per cent of the variance—a substantial performance. Three factors emerged in the analysis (Table 4).
TABLE 2
Mean scores (and standard deviations) for each indicator of rhetorical speech (0=non rhetorical, 1=rhetorical) per decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Rhetorical Figure</th>
<th>Tropic transformation</th>
<th>Expectancy</th>
<th>Product depiction</th>
<th>Anchoring</th>
<th>Rhetorical figure</th>
<th>Tropic transformation</th>
<th>Logo/brand mention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.32 (.47)</td>
<td>.06 (.24)</td>
<td>.93 (.7)</td>
<td>.5 (.5)</td>
<td>.27 (.45)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>.11 (.31)</td>
<td>.1 (.30)</td>
<td>.27 (.44)</td>
<td>.15 (.359)</td>
<td>.82 (.67)</td>
<td>.43 (.49)</td>
<td>.19 (.39)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
<td>.27 (.45)</td>
<td>.27 (.44)</td>
<td>.13 (.34)</td>
<td>.64 (.63)</td>
<td>.41 (.49)</td>
<td>.49 (.5)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>.03 (.17)</td>
<td>.11 (.32)</td>
<td>.18 (.39)</td>
<td>.06 (.24)</td>
<td>.8 (.71)</td>
<td>.43 (.5)</td>
<td>.51 (.5)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>.14 (.35)</td>
<td>.25 (.43)</td>
<td>.31 (.47)</td>
<td>.12 (.33)</td>
<td>.97 (.73)</td>
<td>.48 (.5)</td>
<td>.57 (.5)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>.14 (.35)</td>
<td>.49 (.5)</td>
<td>.55 (.5)</td>
<td>.36 (.48)</td>
<td>1.27 (.68)</td>
<td>.6 (.49)</td>
<td>.65 (.48)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
<td>.2 (.4)</td>
<td>.32 (.46)</td>
<td>.35 (.01)</td>
<td>.91 (.71)</td>
<td>.48 (.5)</td>
<td>.44 (.5)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>21.33</td>
<td>7.54</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Verbal Anchoring: 0 = complete verbal anchoring, 1 = moderate verbal anchoring, 2 = no verbal anchoring

TABLE 3
Means (and standard deviations) of Rhetorical Speech per decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,0800</td>
<td>1,29240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>2,0309</td>
<td>1,41755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2,2737</td>
<td>1,65954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2,0538</td>
<td>1,46232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2,7283</td>
<td>1,66478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3,9886</td>
<td>1,78431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>2,5027</td>
<td>1,68706</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We see then that the first cluster groups the presence of expectancy, visual product depiction, verbal anchoring and pictorial tropes. The second cluster combines the presence of pictorial tropes with pictorial rhetorical figures. A third cluster is defined by the presence of textual tropes, the textual representation of the product, and verbal anchoring.

CONCLUSION
The reliability check of our typology worked fairly well. We also were able to confirm the diachronical hypothesis, we used to test the validity of our taxonomy. We found a diachronical evolution in rhetorical speech in ads in *Der Spiegel* from 1950 until 2000. We were enabled to confirm the hypothesis based on Phillips & McQuarrie (2002). Indeed, the degree of rhetorical speech is highest in the year 2000. We also see a sudden decline of rhetorical speech towards 1980. Gross & Sheth 1989 detected a similar curve in time-oriented ads in American Magazines. This may correspond with a different trend in creative advertising in the 80s—for instance, the emergence of media policies in advertising agencies.

We therefore conclude that the refinement of the McQuarrie & Mick framework permits a detailed account of rhetorical speech in advertising. Presence of brand name or logo appears not yet to play a role as a rhetorical feature in German advertising. Rhetorical speech in text seems to be a constant factor since the 1950s; there is no relative increase or decline thru time. All other factors indicate a strong development, towards an increment in rhetorical speech in 2000. It appears then that the increased use of rhetorical strategies can be explained by the fact that with the advent of more media exposure, and new technologies, copywriters tried to differentiate their messages by using more complex rhetorical communication.
However, the decade of the 80s shows a different aspect: a sudden decline of rhetorical features. This is in line with other findings (Pollay 1985, Gross & Sheth 1989, Phillips and McQuarrie 2002) where in American Magazine a similar trend is to be found. It is not easy to explain this sudden collapse, but the history of advertising agencies might furnish an explanation: towards the 1980s economic development and the emergence of more commercial television chains in Europe, obliged copywriters to rethink their strategies, and focus might have been on commercials.

With regard to the feasibility of our taxonomy, we conclude that the integration of verbo-pictorial interaction—in other words: verbal anchoring—and the place of the figure (in text, in visual, in
both) allow to refine the analysis of rhetorical speech in advertising. The three clusters of criteria point in the same direction: verbal rhetorical strategies, pictorial rhetorical strategies and strategies that combine the two modes, i.e. verbal anchoring, deserve to be analyzed separately to discover the rhetoric used.

One important limitation of our taxonomy is that we have not yet accounted for the possibility that an advertisement contains more than two figures within the same mode. Phillips and McQuarrie refer to this phenomenon as ‘layering’ (Phillips & McQuarrie 2002). Of course, if an ad contains a rhetorical figure in the visual, and in the text, then this is accounted for in our taxonomy. But the text may contain more than one figure, and the same is true for visual figures. We therefore hope to integrate layering in a further refinement of the taxonomy.

In the mean time, the new typology offers an alternative account of how rhetorical strategies may play a role in advertising and defy readers/viewers.

REFERENCES


Face the Music: Mobile Multimedia in Social Context
Ilpo Koskinen, University of Art and Design, Finland
Petteri Repo, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland

ABSTRACT
First studies have shown that mobile telephony in general is a “disturbing” technology and that people use several techniques to manage these disturbances. Mobile multimedia raises new issues because it is not based on interpersonal communication and it is typically noisy. In our data from a field trial on streaming video to mobile phones, a half of uses prompted significant social involvement. Avoidance, reparative processes and social action were evident as strategies to manage mobile multimedia. We use the notion of “face-work” (Goffman 1967) to explain the social context of the multimedialization of mobile telephony.

INTRODUCTION
Mobile phones and multimedia phones grab people away from their previous involvement, be it conversation, daydreaming or instruction in the classroom. Often these new lines of action disturb other people, distracting them from their previous lines of activity. In some institutional settings, mobile technology may even be forbidden for this reason. In less strict settings, people have to negotiate a momentary balance between their real and distant involvements. Mobile technology, then, is morally loaded technology: people take sides with mobile-initiated contours, and relate to them in many ways, ranging from doing nothing to verbal and, sometimes, physical violence. This paper shows that these ways to manage these moral problems cannot be separated from technology; successful mobile technology must cope with this fact, or its chances of survival decrease (cf. Mick & Fournier 1998; Giesler and Pohlmann 2002).

The first studies of mobile telephones showed that mobile telephony in general is a “disturbing” technology and that people use several successful techniques to manage these disturbances. The first analyses focused on the etiquette of the use of mobile phones (see Kopomaa 2000: 87–101; Ling 2004: 125–130). Rules concerning the use of mobile phones specify places, times and situations in which they can and cannot be used. In many settings—such as restaurants—the use of mobile phones is discouraged (Ling 2004: 127). Users can address the problem through technical solutions; for example, by turning off or silencing the phone when appropriate. Multimedia applications such digital television, visual radio, multimedia messaging and media streaming all potentially create disturbing noise and disrupt social settings. The use of mobile multimedia challenges established socially acceptable behavior in many cases. This is an important product development issue because mobile phones are carried around at virtually all times and potentially used in a much greater number of places than any other piece of technology.

The tensions between situational demands and the decontextualizing effects of the mobile phone have been analyzed by Licoppe and his colleagues from a perspective stemming from Goffman’s sociology (Licoppe and Heurtin 2001, 2002; Morel 2002; Licoppe 2003). For example, the contexts of receivers of calls may be upset by the call. The call may even infringe on the personal space of the call-taker. Licoppe also shows how call-takers’ try to imagine the recipient’s schedules and location when making a call. These social psychological constructs guide use just as etiquette does.

FACE AND MOBILE TECHNOLOGY
Following Licoppe, we may build on Erving Goffman’s work to understand how mobile multimedia functions in interaction. How these actions take place in detail can best be studied in terms of Goffman’s notion of “face.” People maintain a line of activity that maintains their self-image in an internally consistent way that is supported by judgments and evidence conveyed by other participants (Goffman 1967: 6). For people, face is ritually important. More than convenience is at stake: ultimately, it is the participants’ trust in that they can go about in their lives in an orderly manner that may be threatened (see Garfinkel 1967; Sacks 1994, II: 220-222). The concept of face also makes it possible to compare findings from cultures that value face highly (for example, East Asia) and those that put less stress on face (like Europe).

In another paper, we have described three face management strategies (Koskinen and Repo 2005). Firstly, face-work consists of avoiding contacts that are likely to threaten the person’s face. People figure that they would get into problems, if they did something that is too far from the bounds of normal, and keep in line because of the imagined bystander responses. Secondly, when someone’s face is threatened, a four-step interchange is performed to re-establish its sanctity. In a challenge, participants call attention to misconduct. The response is the offering: the offender is given a chance to correct for the offense and re-establish the expressive order by, say, showing that the threat was meaningless, or unintentional. One may also compensate one’s actions for others. The third move is typically acceptance, followed by the offender’s “gratitude for those who have given him the indulgence of forgiveness” (Goffman 1967: 22). Thirdly, people can exploit face-saving actions. For example, one may fish for compliments by being overly modest; another may threaten the bystanders’ face to make them flounder; a third can arrange for the others to hurt his feelings and thus to force them to feel guilt (Goffman 1967: 24).

The concept of “face-work” directs our attention to understand how by transforming ordinary courses of action, new technology is judged by these transformations by users and bystanders alike. In this paper, we focus on mobile multimedia, which is fast becoming ubiquitous. However, we cannot extrapolate results from the conventional mobile phones directly to mobile multimedia. Firstly, creating multimedia messages is a disruptive activity. For example, people pose for the device (see Koskinen et al. 2002). Secondly, there is the noise from the device which, with ring tones aside, is not typically the case with mobile phones. Thirdly, people routinely share content with mobile phones (Kasesniemi 2003; Weilenmann and Larsson 2001), but this practice is apparently more common with multimedia (see Repo et al. 2003; Scifo 2004). In sum, mobile multimedia reorganizes the interactional domain significantly. How does it happen, and which techniques do people use to manage the implications of these activities?

DATA AND METHODS
This paper is based on a field trial on streaming video to mobile phones, carried out in Helsinki at the end of 2002. Mobile phones suitable for viewing videos were given to persons of various ages,
gender and backgrounds. They were encouraged to watch videos in various different situations and asked to report their experiences in a diary. Technically, the trial was carried out with Nokia 7650 phones running the Symbian operating system, RealOne Player and video streaming over a GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) connection at 22 kbps. (More details in Repo et al. 2003). In video streaming, the phone simply shows that part of the video currently being transmitted. This means that the length of the streamed video can, in principle, be infinite. On the other hand, streamed videos cannot be saved, nor can they be forwarded.

Users were asked to watch the videos available at Elisa.TV, a mobile portal for streaming videos (wap.elisa.net/elisatv). The supply comprised 46 ready-made videos in which entertainment and karaoke accounted for the majority. The trial setting was not set up for the purpose of our study.

Nine users filled the diary for a week, starting from Monday. In the diary, people described their routines and activities with the phone daily, including details of the physical and social context of use. The diary was designed so that it prescribed a task for each evaluation day. It also contained more specific instructions and one A4 blank sheet per day for reporting. Participants were entitled to keep the diary as they best saw fit. Some of the participants used up the whole space while others only wrote down a few principal comments. On average, the users were 25.1 years old. There were six women and three men with, on average, secondary degree education and little experience of multimedia phones. During the week, 115 use-episodes were described in the diaries, i.e., roughly 2 episodes a day for each person.

The diary method has its strengths and pitfalls (see De Longis et al. 1992). A diary produces data from places where researchers might not obtain access and it provides an insight into the users’ interpretations, especially if the diary uses open-ended questions, as in this study. However, people are generally unreliable observers of some aspects of their own behavior. In particular, they may find it difficult to observe other people and interaction. Also, they get tired with the diary: four diary-keepers got increasingly imprecise as the week progressed. This potentially decreases data quality because if not every field (event) in a diary is filled completely, cell frequencies are too small for cross-tabulation with several variables. Consequently, we keep our analysis simple and emphasize taxonomy over statistical analysis. The data is translated from Finnish and Swedish, and the people are kept anonymous.

**MOBILE MULTIMEDIA IN SOCIAL CONTEXT**

In the diary data, there were 31 instances in which the device was used alone, i.e. outside social context (27%). In 28 cases, there was no description of the use context. In 56 cases (49%), the phone was used in a social context. Table 1 breaks the social context into three separate classes. In roughly 51% of cases, the device became a focus of joint attention because of the user, who used the device for certain ends that can roughly be classified into three main categories. In 23% of cases conform to Goffman’s notion of the avoidance process, while in 25% of cases, interactions were initiated by bypassers.

As a backdrop, we may start with the 29 cases in which the user initiated that interaction, typically with a purpose. These use situations range from relaxing after evening meal to having something to do while waiting for service in banks and buses. Here the device was used as a portable television. One informant tells: “I was waiting for my turn to get to the pitch, and watched clips. Still somewhat bored to see the same videos again. Music videos are perhaps the best thing” (diary # 2, episode 12). Of course, this is a classic use of portable games, personal stereos (Bull 2000), mobile phones and text messages: people use these devices to relax and to entertain themselves in boring situations in everyday life.

More purposeful uses are possible as well. In one instance, a woman tells how she used the device to entertain his pre-teen boy. She managed to keep him silent with the device: “I walked to the station to meet my son, and went to the barber’s shop, where we had to wait for 15 minutes. Said to my son that we can watch videos for that time. He watched ‘Small bird,’ or was it the ‘Toad’ clip. I’m not sure anymore. He had a good time with the video. The barber and his customer did not react to the phone” (Diary #9, episode 19). As these examples show, people can use the device for a variety of purposes. For adult users, it becomes a tool of sorts, something to be used skilfully to manage primarily the emotional

---

**TABLE 1**

Breakdown: the social context of mobile multimedia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User-initiated interactions</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Keeping children quiet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=29 (51%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Relaxing (an alternative for television)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Having something to do while waiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Other purposes or no data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoidance*</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=13 (23%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bypass- initiated interactions*</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Reparative process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=14 (25%)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Prompts social action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aggressive uses of face-work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Drift: entertaining children leads to interaction among adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Face-work involved.
contingencies of everyday life, boredom being the most prevalent of these contingencies.

Avoidance

In many cases, mobile video was watched among strangers, but with no attention whatsoever by them. This is how avoidance works: people refrain from actions that might lead to exchanges with outsiders. This is one way to manage the potentially disruptive tendencies of mobile multimedia. One user relates: “I wouldn’t use [the device] in the bus. What if next to me is someone who is exhausted from his job and harassed by his boss who gets annoyed because of the scratchy sound. No thank you.” (Diary # 6, episode 7). Thus, politeness and consideration is practiced in normal situations. Other vocabularies of motives that people used to explain avoidance were a wish to avoid aggressive bystanders’ remarks, and a wish to avoid being labeled as snobs who just want to “show off” with their new gadgets.

Imaginary as these possible responses are, they have significant consequences for action. This strategy lets people go about their lives undisturbed and keeps people away from troubles. As a result, the most common experience was “civil inattention,” a failure to extendcivil inattention to others is not negatively sanctioned in a direct and open fashion (Goffman 1963: 87). This footing is a key element in the smooth accomplishment of everyday life. Even so, there is an important social process going on. When users think that bystanders could respond to their actions in a face-threatening fashion, they might avoid challenging the perpetrator to avoid any risks. In consequence, others are not bothered, and normal order is maintained.

Bystander-Initiated Interactions

Above we gave examples of user-initiated interactions. This section turns to bystander-initiated interactions that center around mobile video. By “bystanders,” we mean people who are not originally a part of the user’s addressed audience. Thus, a friend whom one asks to see a video is not a bystander; a stranger who peeks in over the user’s shoulder and poses a question concerning the device is. In contrast to the avoidance process, here we face a combination of social psychological orientations and real actions. Such bystander-initiated responses were prevalent in data: in all, there were 27 such cases.

In the first type, bystanders somehow signaled the user that they were disturbed by what the user was doing. Typically, bystanders’ reactions initiated a restorative process in which the user turned down the device and behaviors around it. In all cases in these data, these repair-initiations were indirect and in many ways inconspicuous. In one particularly illustrative case, a woman tells what she did when she noticed her activities disturbed other people: “On my way back to [suburban Helsinki], I watched something. The mood in the train was really calm. Some people woke up, but didn’t say anything. I felt terrible... I immediately turned the volume down.” (Diary # 9, episode 13).

This is a minimal, truncated reparative process, consisting of only two steps instead of the four-step procedure described by Goffman (1967). Here, the three last steps as described by Goffman are amalgamated into the second step, which becomes interactionally dense. In the example given above, the turning down of the volume not only acknowledged the bystanders’ reaction, but it also offered an apology, which was accepted without words or smiles of any sort. This action may be dense, but it is meaningful and does its job.

In a few cases, more extensive social action evolved around the device, which brought bystanders into contact with the user around the device. Goffman (1963: 174) described “drift” as a process in which participants are carried further and further into the encounter up to a point in which they rule the environing reality out from their concerns. In six cases, the device was used to manage the ebb and flow of social life typical to children.

The difference to just keeping children entertained is that here, action spills over to adults. The device becomes an object of intergenerational attention. Children—and particularly boys—are key players in this process in that their curiosity not just attracts adults’ attention, but also lowers their threshold to pose questions and express their amazement significantly.

Finally in two cases, the device was used for aggressive face-work (Goffman 1967). When people used the device, they noticed that bystanders were disturbed. However, they did not tone their behavior down. Rather, they got more excited because of the disturbance, and continued on their previous line with more vigor. Thus in one case, a group of teenagers decided to watch karaoke videos from the phone, and sing along: “We watched karaoke today in the school cafeteria. It was fun, all of us at the table singing together. The other diners looked at us with an expression of ‘good grief!’ on their faces—but we didn’t let that bother us” (Diary # 8, episode 5). Users did not attract bystanders’ attention to the device. Rather, they just used it, and the use attracted attention.

DISCUSSION

This paper has shown that mobile multimedia is a social device in many ways. It is used to initiate interactions, and it attracts bystander attention that sometimes lead to toning the device down, sometimes to more extensive joint action. In our data, roughly 49% of uses described had evidence of significant social involvement. In nearly 51% of these, the user used it to initiate interactions. In 25%, it was the bypasser who initiated interaction. In the remaining 23%, the users took the social context account to the extent that no noticeable social effect was noticed, for example, by keeping the sound so quiet that no one got disturbed.

Moreover, and just as importantly, this analysis has shown that mobile multimedia technology is not morally neutral; it affects the way in which people act and allocate their involvement. In reorganizing their priorities and attention, it becomes a target for moral judgment. The main benefit of the late sociologist Erving Goffman’s (1967) notion of “face-work” is that it sensitizes us to these interactional and moral issues, thus making it possible for us to understand the social context of this ever-growing aspect of mobile telephony. “Face-work” describes well coping with tensions arising from mobile multimedia with the exception of the truncated reparative process. Although our data is from one culture only, the concept of face could also be used to explore variations in interaction patterns across cultures (cf. Ito 2005; Ling 2004; Licoppe 2003).

An analysis of interaction with the concept of face provides us with an access to the interactive grounds of moral reasoning, reflected in people’s opinions and attitudes. Closing one’s eyes from these moral issues leads to neglect important social forces at work in the domestication process of new technology.

REFERENCES


Patterns of Audiovisual Media Consumption: The Symbolic Role of Free Will  
Jordi López, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona , Spain  
Ercilia García, Universitat Rovira i Virgili of Tarragona, Spain

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
In the early 1960s Katz (1959) suggested a move towards viewing mass communication as something sought by people (active audience) instead of the usual focus on the consumption of media and the production of effects (passive audience). Central to this new approach in audience research is the concept of an active audience, because, these authors suggested, audiences are aware of their communication goals, evaluate different communication channels, and select the channels they believe will gratify their needs (Katz 1979; Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch 1974).

Many researchers have criticized the selective audience concept because the findings about the gratifications sought and the types of viewing television programs suggest that audiences are selective as well as ritualistic (Greenberg 1974; Lee and Lee 1995). According to Bradley (2002), this fact may be the most controversial aspect of the uses and gratifications approach. Nevertheless, as media use can be considered a cultural practice, we propose that all these contradictions could be solved by grounding the research on the theoretical developments of the sociology of culture, especially on the theory of habitus.

According to this theoretical framework, media use and orientation are not objectively determined, nor are they an outcome of free will, but the result of the dialectical relationship between action and structure (Bourdieu 1977; Ritger 1992). While habitus is an internalized structure that constrains thought and choice of action, it does not determine them. Thus, habitus varies depending on the nature of one’s position in the class structure, and this throws light on the confusion about whether the gratifications sought were a psychological construct or a structural one (Elliot, 1974; Swanson 1979). Or as Katz (1979,76-77) puts it, “although the social and psychological situation may be externally constrained, the resultant web of roles and orientation, and the motives arising there from, is the individual” (emphasis in the original). If an individual striving for mobility finds the culture of the upper middle class helpful in climbing in the social ladder, Katz says, “shall we say that he is externally compelled to listen?” (see also the findings of DiMaggio and Useem 1978; DiMaggio 1982).

From the literature reviewed we can infer that media audiences will make a different use (will form a set of homogeneous clusters) of audiovisual channels according to their position in social space. When clusters of users are associated to the audience’s social class, then media uses are structured in a similar way to society (homology thesis), that is, consumption symbolizes status (the distinction effect). Nevertheless, the distinction effect has just been challenged by research conducted in diverse symbolic spaces (see Peterson, 2004, for a review of findings about the omnivorous effect).

The data of this analysis were obtained from the “Habits of Cultural Consumption” survey requested by the Sociedad General de Autores Españoles (SGAE) in 1998. The survey conducted home interviews of over 9000 individuals of either sex, 14 years of age or older, living in Spain. It is a representative random sample, stratified by autonomous regions and municipalities according to size. Further technical characteristics are described in SGAE (2000).

To find the types of audiences, we used an exploratory latent class model (Lazarsfeld and Henry 1968) to look for support for the hypothesis that people consume patterns of products. To account for the audiences’ heterogeneity in responses, the latent class model splits the original sample into 1 clusters, and then the association among indicators of media use is completely explained, if the model is correct. To plot results we used a flexible multivariate descriptive tool, correspondence analysis, CA (Greenacre 1984). Finally, to find the media orientations and its association with types of audiences we used an exploratory factor analysis to classify a set of indicators of interest in TV programs.

We have found support for the homogeneity thesis proposed by Bourdieu (1984[1979]). Our findings suggest the existence of five types of audiences, namely: 1) a cluster of occasional moviegoers, 2) another of light moviegoers, 3) an additional one of movie fans, 4) one of audiovisual fans, 5) and a set of TV addicts. Movie fans seem to be the up-scale snobs of other studies (van Eijck and van Rees 2003; van Rees, Vermunt, and Verhood 1999), the ones who like the seventh Art in its purest form, and audiovisual fans appear to be the up-scale cultural omnivores found in different places and symbolic spaces during the last 15 years (see Peterson, 2004).

When the five types of audiences were put into a scale formed with audiences’ social position indicators, they were ordered as follows, from the lowest to the highest status: TV addicts, occasional moviegoers, light moviegoers, movie fans, and audiovisual fans. The social hierarchy indicators are clear defining the symbolic role of audiovisual media consumption: low-scale indicators are associated with TV addicts, occasional and light moviegoers; and upscale indicators, to movie and audiovisual fans, giving support to the distinction effect and omnivorous effect as well. The generational indicators follow the same pattern: older audiences are associated with low-status audiences and the younger to high-scale audiences. The freedom from care giving responsibilities is associated to the heavy users of the media, as well as males, as expected (Robinson 1981; Henning and Vorderer 2001; van Eijck and van Rees 2000).

Finally, the analysis of media orientations suggest that low-scale audiovisual media users seem to look for audiovisual programs that offer them a social compensation for their meager social resources (lack of companionship and social resources; they only buy and rent videos for their children and documentary videos) whereas upscale audiences are interested in mood management programs (popular and highbrow entertainment; they buy and rent entertainment motion pictures of different genres).

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

It has been postulated that contemporary consumption is characterized more by an electronically conducted flow than by embedded heavy commodities (Bauman 2000). An individual in his social life, in terms of emancipation, individuality, time/space, work and community, faces a fluidity “malleable to an extent unexperienced by and unimaginable for, past generations; but like all fluids they do not keep their shape for long.” (Bauman 2000, p 7). Technology has emerged as a significant contributor in creating and maintaining this malleability. While technology shapes our lives, we as consumers in turn shape the character of technology (Venkatesh 1997). Although the prime reason for developing a technology may have been functional utility, consumers then mould and adapt it to perform functions beyond this originally envisaged use (Holt 1995, Escobar 1994), and since “No one eludes technology” (Mick and Fournier 1998), we consume technology as much as technology consumes us.

Computer Mediated Environment (CME) technologies have lately become a representative form of technological consumption. Many leisure and working hours are spent in it. Though not an element of producers’ initial design, but definitely an outcome of consumers’ desire, CME now contains increasingly immersive hedonic, aesthetic, semiotic and functional consumption spaces for an individual, where the self can be limitless extended (Gould and Coyle 2000, Schau and Gilly 2003), where pastiche and countercultural impulses can be satiated, and where geographically ungrounded consumption conventions can be created. It can be argued that each moment spent in a mediated environment entails a moment given up in the real world, that each act of consumption within a mediated environment replaces an act of consumption in the real world, and that each simulated ‘virtual’ product replaces a ‘tangible’ one.

Questions may be raised about life behind the screen; identity construction, self expression and extension through acts of hedonic, aesthetic, semiotic and functional consumption in the CME. Do these acts originate and terminate within the medium? What is it in the CME that we consume, and how do we consume it? Are there any consumables involved here? Some spend up to ten hours a day in front of a computer, immersed in a seemingly ethereal, disembodied, fluid and limitless domain of consumption. What is consumed during those long hours in front of the computer? Is it representations and technologies of simulation and virtual reality? But technologies are not ghosts in thin air; they have to be moulded and adapted to perform functions beyond this originally envisaged use (Holt 1995, Escobar 1994), and since “No one eludes technology” (Mick and Fournier 1998), we consume technology as much as technology consumes us.

The study reported in this article is an exploration of real consumables in virtual world–products in the CME. In the following sections, we begin by examining the theoretical literature and relate it to the ability of mediated environments to provide an expansive array of alternate experiential consumables and activities. After describing the methodology, we present a sequential analysis of data with a view to proposing a typology of consumables in CME. We conclude by arguing that if consumables in CME are considered products in their own right, some of the theoretical corpus relating to consumption in a material environment may not be directly applicable and thus may need revisiting.

Conceptual lineages and A-priori themes

Current research into CME consumption behaviour is now gravitating towards theory building. The discipline of consumer research, however, is not the pioneer in the study of consumption phenomena in CME; it has followed on initial leads in disciplines such as communication research, behavioural psychology and sociology in accepting virtual reality as a locus of consumption. After the initial quantitative examination of the internet as an alternate shopping channel (bits v/s byte debate), academic literature over the last fifteen years on the subject has gradually developed along two distinct themes; first, the exploration of consumption of the internet as a commodity per se, and second examination of the individual’s social/interactive behaviour and its expression in cyberspace.


Examples of social/interactive behaviour would be studies on chatting (Kwak, Zinkhan and Pitt 2001, Zinkhan, Kwak, Morrison and Peters 2003), privacy in online relationships (Franzak, Pitta and Fritsche 2001), presentation and multiplicity of self in the cyberspace (Gould 2000). Some later literature has linked existing consumption theories to the internet, such as: flow in goal directed and experiential activities (Novak, Hoffman and Duhachek 2003), affect of physiological factors on consumption in CME (Rosa and Maller 2003), effects of language and culture on consumption in CME (Luna, Peracchio and de Juan 2003), virtual communities of consumption (Kozinets 1999) and identity construction by using brands in cyberspace (Schau and Gilly 2003). Essentially, all the available literature deals with why we click on-line, what motivates our clicking and what we present and post after we have clicked.

However, despite this burgeoning body of literature, it is evident that the thematic orientation of the extant literature within consumer research is underdeveloped in the following two significant areas:

1. Most of it considers the internet rather than CME as the medium. This, in our opinion, is too narrow a view of the whole phenomenon, and is akin to equating CNN with television, and to overlooking all other forms of visual mediation as well as all other channels. We believe that this restricted view, while assisting consumer researchers to focus on and explain online-offline dichotomies, obscures various other consumption forms of the CME. Just as CNN is a single example of network channels available through television, Internet is only one dimension of the CME. Computer generated mediation is a mediation of sensory inputs and not merely a medium of interconnectivity between individuals and peripherals.
The literature does not consider consumption within the CME as consumption of products per se. Rather it treats CME as a browsing window onto the real world, as if real consumption only took place off-line and was simply mirrored on-line, as if the consumption phenomenon was a derivative of tangible material objects and the physical environment. In a way, this approach mirrors our earlier orientation towards the visual media where television was a window upon some idealized fantasy world distinct from the real everyday world. Perhaps reminiscent of traditional notions of consumer research, where acts of consumption are structured by the properties of the product, this orientation does not take into account the fact that, due to the multi-sensory, immersive, interactive and fluid nature of the CME, products can be created and consumed within this medium itself. Microsoft has been among the world’s largest companies for over a decade now, and it would be hard to explain its financial success if it were not producing consumable products.

Based on the arguments above, for the purpose of this study, we have expanded on the prevailing themes within consumer research by treating CME as the medium and the internet as one of its elements, by accepting that even stand-alone computers can provide a mediated environment and that perhaps there are real consumables within the CME.

**METHODOLOGY**

An ethno-sociological approach has lately become one of the mainstays of naturalistic enquiry into the study of emergent consumption behaviour (e.g. see Holt 1995, Brownlie 1997, Kozinets 2001, Elliot 2003). Recent research into the consumption behaviour of CME has adopted the very effective, if unconventional method of netnography (Kozinets 1997, 2002). Grounded in the notion that in a CME an individual’s physical and phenomenological worlds are independent of each other, netnography essentially follows a phenomenon in cyberspace with little commitment to landscape localization and has proven very effective in exploring communal sub-consumption as well as identity construction and extension of self through web pages in cyberspace. Another method of following consumption in CME may be multi-sited ethnography (Appadurai 1986, Marcus 1995) which we have adopted. As a more conventional multi-sited, multi-method approach, it has a slightly higher commitment to landscape localization compared to netnography (Miller and Slater 2000) and creates a bridge for researchers to observe informants in both physical and phenomenological worlds (Giddens 1991).

Although our multi-modal ethnography was sizeable in terms of number of informants, this study uses data from 72 Irish informants collected over a period of one year. All informants were gainfully employed adults who spent at least 3 hours per day in a CME. The criteria of adulthood and employment were applied to social/cultural deviations and communal sub-consumption. We used thick descriptions grounded in lived experience (Ellis and Flaherty 1992), field notes and observational data that were analyzed to generate interpretations of meanings and functions (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994). This data-set was further strengthened using field notes and observational data from venues such as public internet kiosks and video game arcades.

Initial interviews lasted around one hour and were unstructured. The informants were also observed while engaged in the CME. Besides the modes and modalities of their interaction with/ in the medium, their functions and activities were also observed, and many revelatory insights were gathered during the process. The observation component varied from informant to informant and lasted between one to three hours per session. Multiple observation sessions were conducted with nineteen of the informants, while the rest were observed for a single session. Informants were occasionally questioned during the observation exercise and field notes were taken. Follow-up examination of informants took the form of occasional brief visits, phone calls or e-mails. Follow-up questions related mostly to the emergent themes and provided clarity and coherence in informants’ accounts and actions. A selected sample list of informants and their demographics is presented in figure 1.

**Consumables in the age of Simulacra.**

Informants’ descriptions as well as observations of their activities in CME were the primary data set. All descriptions of these activities were listed and updated with each interview, observation or field note. This process was continued until additions to the list became very infrequent. At the end of the listing process, a very expansive and generic unbranded assemblage emerged that indicated both a range of functions and activities the informants performed in the CME together with the products they used. This raw list, which became our universal set, is presented in figure 2.

**Generation of Typologies.** This descriptive list of functions, activities and products, being emic in nature, was full of disjuncture between claimed and observed behaviour. Many informants used different terms for similar activities and functions. Resolution of such connotative ambiguities helps reduce apparent disjunctures and creates standardization and coherence in descriptive data (Osgood and Tennenbaum 1954). Using Osgood and Tennenbaum’s work as a guide line, these items were semantically feature analyzed (Landauer and Dumais 1997) and item denotations were grouped on the basis of similarity in characteristics or functions. Observational data and field notes were also used as an additional input in the grouping process. This yielded five broad categories or typologies of consumables available to the consumer in a CME. While some of these consumables were easily identifiable as simulated replacements of tangible products or services (e.g. E-mail and e-cards, E-newspaper, E-books, CD-ROM versions of encyclopaedia, musical instruments, travel and banking services) others were less obvious (e.g. Web pages, search engines, eBay)

One very important feature of these emergent consumption / product typologies was that even with semantic feature analysis and efforts to resolve ambiguities, there remained a certain degree of fluidity and interchangeability in the way consumables occupied consumption categories. Such fluidity may be explained in the light of Holt’s (1995) finding that consumers embrace a variety of ways to consume a particular product, and that consumption practices are highly context dependent. It should be noted here that although the placement of a ‘virtual product’ in a certain group is only indicative and by no means definitive, they are all examples of a simulated virtual replacement of a tangible product or service. Typical examples of such replacements would be letter by e-mail, printed newspapers by online editions, books by e-books, greeting cards by e-cards, auctions and bank visits by online equivalents. The proposed typology of consumables in the CME is presented in figure 3.

**Reflexive Validation:** In order to test the placement of consumables (both products and services) in specific categories, the list was reduced to the categories alone: Social interaction products,
FIGURE 1
Sample List of Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Routinely used products, activities and functions in the CME</th>
<th>Time in CME P.D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Academician</td>
<td>E-mail, News, songs, info-seek, E-books</td>
<td>3-4 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>IT professional</td>
<td>Info-seek, industry news, research, product development, (E-mail)</td>
<td>3-6 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Banker/Amateur musician</td>
<td>E-mail, Musical instruments, Entertainment</td>
<td>10 + hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Retired mariner</td>
<td>E-mail, Newspaper, info-seek, greeting cards, communications</td>
<td>3-4 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hick</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>E-mail, Info-seek, research, Business &amp; industry contact, advertising, e-books, Communications</td>
<td>8-10 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holt</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Chat, Gaming, Video / audio entertainment,</td>
<td>3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Office worker</td>
<td>Business Pub co-owner</td>
<td>E-mail, info-seek, gaming, greeting cards, chat, communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Business pub co-owner</td>
<td>Newspaper, cards, soundtracks, email, music, industry news, (E-mail)</td>
<td>2-3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Trade info, gaming, porn, simulation, news, audio-video, (E-mail)</td>
<td>6 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>ISF operator</td>
<td>E-mail, Accounts, News, Video-conference</td>
<td>5-6 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Chat, info-seek entertainment, News, E-mail, E-books, communications</td>
<td>2+ hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>E-mail, entertainment, musical instrument, sports news, shopping, info-seek, e-books</td>
<td>2-3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer/trader</td>
<td>E-mail, News, Info-seek</td>
<td>2 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Home care</td>
<td>E-mail, entertainment, greeting cards, audio video, communications, shopping</td>
<td>2-3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Office worker</td>
<td>E-mail, chat, entertainment audio/video</td>
<td>2 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Student/Clerk</td>
<td>Info-seek, email, chat, audio/video, communication, e-books, entertainment, gaming</td>
<td>5-6 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marian</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Banker</td>
<td>E-mail, entertainment, chat</td>
<td>5-6 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Info-seek, Shopping, E-books, entertainment, communication (E-mail)</td>
<td>3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mireille</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Bar tender</td>
<td>E-mail, News, Encyclopedia, gaming</td>
<td>5-4 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Info-seek, Entertainment, E-books, Communications, gaming</td>
<td>2 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niels</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Security guard</td>
<td>E-mail, Recruitment service, news, entertainment</td>
<td>2 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niles</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>IT professional</td>
<td>Industry news, e-mail, info-seek, web-site, research, shopping, audio video, product development</td>
<td>6-8 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
<td>Chat, Entertainment, greeting cards, E-mail, porn</td>
<td>2-3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>News, Info-seek, Entertainment, E-mail, Trade and Marketing, chat</td>
<td>2 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Store clerk</td>
<td>E-mail, News, Banking, Shopping, Entertainment, Pictures, religion</td>
<td>2-3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Composer, picture editor, library, encyclopedia, medical record, synthesis</td>
<td>3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Web page, info-seek, trade and industry, travel, banking, shopping, e-mail, picture album, scheduler planner, alerts, communications, advertising, news, television, audio video, chat, accounts, religion</td>
<td>5-6 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>E-mail, chat, entertainment, gaming,</td>
<td>4-6 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Office Manager</td>
<td>News, E-mail, Entertainment, Shopping, E-mags</td>
<td>6-8 hrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bracketed items were prompted when missing from the original list from informant. Bracketed items in italics were included from interview notes.

FIGURE 2
Consumer Descriptives-Activities in the CME

experiential products, information products, service products and functional products. A selected group of informants was shown the five category headings and asked to identify any virtual replacement of tangible products that they themselves used in the CME. All were able to suggest at least one product in each category. They were further asked to list the consumables in CME that they thought had replaced an existing consumable for them. Surprisingly, all respondents were able to generate multiple examples of such products or services.

A Brief Discussion of the Typology

**Information Rich Products.** This is the broadest category of products available in the CME. Given that some of the synonyms for CME technologies are derivatives of the term ‘information technology’, it is no surprise that a majority of informants placed consumption of information at the top of the list of their activities and functions within a CME. Many thought that a computer, due to its inherent ability as a data storage and retrieval platform coupled with interconnectivity and accessibility was a powerful source of information.

Almost all informants were found using one or other form of information rich product in the CME. While only three informants admitted going to a newspaper website to read news, many of them thought ‘internet was great place for breaking news’. A selection of our informants tended to be very interested in sports, and used the CME to keep up with current games, scores and team positions.

Our informants also thought that the internet was a ‘great big library of sorts’. Steve, a doctor, did not think his sizeable collection of books was a library because it was neither complete nor organized and catalogued. However, he called the small stack of CD’s at the side of his computer his library.

An encyclopaedia is a good example of an information rich product easily adaptable to CME. One of our informants, Michael, was a typical consumer who bought the Britannica CD-Rom version for being ‘cheaper providing the same function’ and ‘much easier to use’. On the other hand his enthusiasm for a CD-Rom version was not shared by another of our informants, Liam, who thought he could never replace his Britannica with a computer. He felt that the joy of owning the real thing, ‘smelling the leather and paper as it ages’ was far greater than any reservoir of knowledge on a screen.

Though we did not find the use of E-books to be widespread (only eleven of our informants had ever used one), quite a few considered them a qualified improvement and a possible future replacement of the printed edition. Many thought that given a choice, they would prefer an e-book over the printed version. The reasons cited for E-books preference were accessibility, cost, currency and available updates to newer editions.

**Social interaction rich products**

CME is a very potent social interaction platform. It provides instant multimedia interconnectivity between individuals unmatched by any other medium. We found several examples of social interaction rich products in the CME; E-mail, chat forums and personal web-pages being the most commonly cited.

E-mail was an almost perfect example of a simulation replacing a tangible. Although our informants did not think they used their computers primarily for this function, E-mail was the most commonly mentioned use of a CME. All used their computers as means of sending and receiving e-mails and greeting cards. Most of them admitted to having reduced or altogether stopped sending regular mails. Many used the term ‘snail mail’ to identify regular posted mail. E-mail was found to be more or less a complete replacement for paper letters and was used for personal and business communications with friends, family, colleagues and organizations. Some were using chatting (online as well as web-SMS to cellular mobile phones) alongside e-mail as their primary means of one-to-one communication. Because of the range of variation in the way it was
used, we found chatting to be an experimental and malleable mode of communication. Where many of our informants used chatting to maintain and strengthen relationships with very close friends and family there were others who only chatted on anonymous sites with total strangers.

A webpage has been considered a psycho-social extension of one’s self in cyberspace (Schau and Gilly 2003). Although all of our respondents were familiar with the webpages their friends and associates had made, only four had put up webpages of their own (these four had in fact established multiple webpages). Many indicated that the effort and complexities of establishing a webpage had deterred them from doing their own, but as Jackie put it, it was one of those ‘I will get to it one day’ types of activities in the CME.

Experience rich products

CME, because of its multi-sensory captive immersive ability, is a very potent platform for experiential consumption. Many of our informants used their computer as a tool for entertainment; in fact entertainment along with gaming was found to be a major form of consumption in CME. Ted thought that CME provided an excellent platform for multi-tasking, such as listening simultaneously to a soundtrack while engaging in other activities like writing mail or a professional assignment. Most also used their computers as DVD or MP3 player to watch movies or listen to soundtracks. 3-D simulation gaming was found to be another popular type of experiential product in the CME, which most had consumed at least occasionally. Some of our informants were also found playing simulated musical instruments on their computers. One individual, Garry, was a budding composer specializing in string instruments, but confessed to being ham-fisted with percussion instruments. For practice sessions he used CME-based percussion and rhythm tunes that he composed and pre-recorded on his computer as accompaniment to his Yamaha synthesizer guitar. He confessed to spending as much time on his computer perfecting his compositions as he did on his guitar and thought the experience of a ‘plugged-in’ session was far richer and rewarding than his unplugged ones.

Service oriented products

Service consumption is by far the most common commercial activity in CME. CME lends itself well to many types of services. It allows service providers to offer service ingredients, which can be channelled into an on-demand pull type automated service by the consumers. Such an arrangement in CME not only reduces the cost of providing such services, but also makes them temporally and spatially flexible. Several examples of service oriented consumption were observed. Many of our informants were found amplifying service functions, finding bargains and maximizing both options and gains by choosing to consume in the CME. While travel, accounts and banking are apparently the most common types of services being consumed at the moment, we did find Internet shopping to be a prominent but deceptive activity in the CME; most of what consumers thought and called shopping could best be described as browsing or window shopping (Rowley 2001).

Banking along with travel planning were the most frequent use of CME based services. Several of our informants stated that they had stopped going to the local bank branch altogether. Many were frequent travellers and had used Internet based travel planning and booking services as their preferred means for booking flights, hotel reservations and car rental.

Functional products

As well as being the mainstay of Microsoft’s business, functional products in the CME deserve a little more attention than they have enjoyed thus far in marketing literature. Word processing, composing and accounts have now become a computer’s primary domain. In effect the physical computer was introduced as a trade-up machine to word processors or manual typewriters. Although we found all of our informants had purchased and were using such functional products on their computers (such as composer, editor, browser, spreadsheets, diary, calendar, spell checker etc.), initially none of them could identify and associate with them precisely as products and thought of them as integral components of the physical ‘computer’. Interestingly, however, in the later part of our study when a select group of respondents was shown the typology list, there was a unanimous identification of one Microsoft product or the other with this category.

DISCUSSION

In our study we strove to see beyond the micro-world of computers as linear and logically acting machines and networked technology by focusing instead on the macro-world of CME in which consumers live. Since all our informants used computers for a few hours daily, all had lives within CME. They related to their computer as a tool of efficiency, a toy for recreation and a necessity. For many it was a source of strength and empowerment as well as of recreation. Within their CME world, there were patterns of consumption that were quite similar to other more tangible forms. These consumers were increasingly using the simulation technologies available through their computers to consume the virtual in place of the real. The more time they spent on their computers, the higher was their tendency to perform all or most of their functions within the CME.

We found that on a typical day, some of our informants were spending up to 10 hours in front of their computers. Their computers were both centre and origin of many activities; many of their real life acts of consumption were derivatives of their actions in CME. Many consumption choices have now migrated to the mediated environment provided by a computer: reading breaking news; listening to satellite radio or watching online television; sending and receiving letters, pictures and cards; checking and managing accounts; ordering pizzas, as well as almost anything else; socialization or expression of views on issues of significance; clipping, collecting and saving memorabilia; religious practices, including reading a chapter from the bible; consulting a dictionary or an encyclopaedia; role or game playing; indulging in erotica; watching a movie on a DVD, to name a few. All these acts are parts of a world, an individual’s own world in the universe of CME, full of meanings, emotions, collections and possessions.

CME–Beyond consumables: We also noted that at times some consumption activities in the CME could be voyeuristic experimentation in contrast to the consumer’s real world consumption choices. For example, one of our informants, James confessed to posing as Ms. D on the web at various chat sites. Where James was observed to be a lay-low, religious, responsible, law-abiding monogamer in his real life, he portrayed Ms. D as a truly rebellious individual who worked at an S & M bar and indulged in orgies. He also had porn and fetish site accesses in the name of Ms. D, and routinely accessed explicit pornographic content on the web which was paid for through his credit cards. We note that this process of identity construction within a CME is apparently limited only by the imagination of an individual’s pastiche personality (Gergen 1991). Many consumers realize that in cyberspace, virtual cross dressing is easier than fiction and as in the case exhibited above; some of them play their fantasies to their heart’s content.

Further, we found that though not a taboo, such fantasy and role-play is still considered a social and behavioural deviation in Irish society, and consumers tend to guard it if not conceal it entirely. Very few of our informants (only after reaching a certain
level of trust and comfort) did reveal such ‘secrets’, adding to our repository of revelatory moments and information, but such revelations were neither guaranteed nor forthcoming in all cases. We still feel that there are certain gaps in our understanding of this mode of consumption and that many of our informants did have lives in the virtual world that we were not privy to.

At the other end we found that some consumers used CME as another platform for consumption, parallel to or in addition to the other platforms of consumption in their lives. For example our informant Sarah was an avid collector. She collected personal memorabilia all her adult life—postcards, letters, envelopes, newspaper clippings, calendar pictures, dried flowers etc. As a very active and social individual, she described herself as ‘a real world person’. Although her introduction to the world of CME was rather late, at 40 she was an avid computer user. She read her news on the screen, sent and received e-mails and E-cards. We found that she had recently upgraded her hard disk to accommodate the archive that she accumulates on a daily basis, and routinely made a CD to unload some of the stuff from her hard disk.

For Sarah, CME was just an extension of her physical world. She performed the same functions of clipping, saving and collecting on her computer like she did in her physical world. Among all our informants, she was found to possess the largest collections, in both tangible and virtual forms. With less than two years of computer usage, she had two hard-disks in her computer as well as a stack of backup CDs of her clippings and collections.

We also found that our respondents could identify real consumables in a mediated and simulated environment as well as their producers. For example all our respondents named Microsoft as the biggest producer of CME consumables. This is quite an interesting finding given that academic literature does not identify consumables in the CME as products per-se.

**Collections in the CME.** Physical possessions and collections—as tangible manifestations of one’s identity, as part of one’s physical environment—are sources of meanings and create a sense of the past (Belk 1990). We found that the intangible possessions and collections such as pictures, letters, songs and cards on hard disks or in cyberspace libraries also performed the similar function for consumers. The two type of collections, if seen independently, seem not to rival each other, but in our view they did appear to compete and vie for emotional attachment. Sarah, (whose case has been detailed previously) for example, narrated how she had recently ‘packed and stacked years of memories and emotions’ in boxes, a large portion of her collections, because she did not have enough time to attend to them on a daily basis. She however was also found to be a keen surfer and chatter, spending at least a couple of hours each evening in this activity. Where her time online had replaced her time in the real world, her virtual possessions and collections had overwhelmed some of her tangible. This too us is a major observation and raises a new question; How much of the tangible in a consumers’ life has been virtualized?

**Conclusion:** We found CME brimming with consumables. Where some are virtual ‘replacements’ of tangible or materially existent forms of products and services, others are entirely new products, services and functions that consumers use and experience on a daily basis. The broad based typology of consumables presented in this article can be a useful reference point towards understanding of consumption of such consumables in the CME.

The very notion that products exist in a mediated and simulated environment poses new questions for the application of some existing theories of consumption to the CME. Simulated products in mediated environments may not share many of the properties of the ‘tangible’ products of the physical world. Exploration in this dimension of consumption is needed to enhance our understanding of the ways in which consumption, collection, possession and disposal are being affected in the virtual world of CME.

**REFERENCES**


SPECIAL SESSION OVERVIEW

The central aim of this session was to ask if it is possible to recover a critical theoretical understanding of sub-cultures that has been systematically eroded by consumer research studies on marketplace based sub-cultures. Historically sub-cultural studies have emphasized the negotiation or rejection of dominant (middle class) ideologies. Locating sub-cultures within a liberatory consumption framework negates or overlooks how consumption practices, sub-cultural or otherwise, reproduce dominant capitalist and economic ideologies. Consumption is a site where power and ideology circulate (Denzin 2001). Consumers can be liberated and empowered but consumption can also ‘demean, disenfranchise… essentialize and stereotype’ (Denzin 2001, p.325).

The three papers in this special session explored in different ways the tension between oppositional practices and consumer culture. Goulding and Saren, explored the way that elements of Gothic culture have become commodified, packaged and marketed to the mainstream. Canniford, Newton and Shankar, continued with this theme in their analysis of surf culture and suggested that the ability to surf cannot be marketized, and still acts as site for the rejection of mainstream ideology. The final paper by Cherrier and Murray, examined how new social movements, like the voluntary simplicity movement, reject consumerist ideologies in favour of ‘less is more’.

The discussant, Richard Elliott, reminded us that the Birmingham School that spawned many of the most important sub-cultural studies in the 1960s and 1970s, had at its heart a critical emancipatory agenda that he felt was lacking from these papers.

References


“From Rebellion To Commodification: The Case of ‘Goth’”

Christina Goulding and Michael Saren

The traditional neo-Marxist frameworks for conceptualizing subcultures as the catalyst for counter-hegemonic strategies of resistance (Kellner, 1995; Hebdige, 1979/1997; Frith 1980/1997) has in recent years come under challenge. This is largely due to their lack of attention to the fragmented, multi-ethnic, multi-class, non-gendered, and transitory nature of what might be termed ‘postmodern’ subcultures (Bennett, 1999). It is now generally recognized that subcultures are also cultures of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Goulding, Shankar and Elliott 2002; Kates 2002; Kozinets 2001, 2002) that involve innovators and the creation of markets, products and services to meet the needs of these markets. Consequently groups that may appear marginal or deviant are worthy of examination as many undergo a process of commodification and ultimately diffusion into mainstream consumer society. This paper focuses on this process. We take as our basis for analysis the ‘Gothic’ subculture, a micro-community that emerged during the late 1970s and continues to flourish in a number of refashioned incarnations today. Goth is a subculture closely associated with the wearing of black, an interest in the ‘darker’ side of life and death, a musical aesthetic and with the cult of the vampire.

Data collection: The discussion will draw upon the findings of research conducted primarily at the bi-annual Whitby Goth festival. Our data collection consisted of participatory observation at two of the weeklong festivals, a series of open and structured interviews with participants and the collection of visual data through video recordings and photographs. Whilst our analysis, which was the product of a grounded theory process of inductive coding (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), identified a range of themes underpinning the experience, the changing nature of the material culture and the marketization or commodification of the subculture will form the basis for discussion in this special session. This centres largely around three distinct stages of development.

Stage 1: Rebellion: The Gothic subculture emerged out of the dying embers of Punk Rock in the early 1980s at a London nightclub called the ‘Bat Cave’. These pale faced, black-swathed, night dwellers saw themselves as outside of the mainstream but bound together by common passions, interests and mutually shared activities (Wenger, 1999). However, whilst regarded as outsiders, they welcomed this segregation and saw participation as a form of rebellion against the mundane. Goth, in the early days was an ordered whole, with each part of the subculture fitting together in a homological style (Wills, 1978) and at this stage in the development Goths displayed elements of conscious counter hegemonic strategies for rebelling (Kellner, 1995; Hebdige 1979/1997; Frith, 1996; Wills 1978, 1990). However, as in the case of so many other subcultures, there was a gradual adoption process by new members who did not necessarily share the original motives of the innovators (Goulding et al., 2002). According to Hebdige (1979/1997) this adoption process usually occurs when what was once considered deviant becomes familiar and marketable, giving rise to a process of recuperation which has two characteristic forms. The first is the commodity form where there is a conversion of sub-cultural signs such as music and clothes into mass produced objects. The second is the ideological form, or the labelling or redefinition of what was once considered deviant. Whilst this does not necessitate entry into the mainstream, it does open the doors for the second stage of development that is characterised by fragmentation.

Stage 2: Fragmentation: Fragmentation is a concept endemic to contemporary or postmodern consumer societies (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Brown, 1995). Fragmentation consists of a series of interrelated ideas, the breaking down of markets into smaller and smaller groups and correspondingly, the proliferation of a greater number of products to serve the increasing segments. This is true of Goth, which has evolved and fragmented in terms of music and fashion. At this stage the commodity becomes the key defining signifier of group membership and affiliation for the various factions within the subculture as consumers actively engage in a process of co-production as they define and shape the styles that give rise to the various internal identities. At some point, the equality and levelling process characteristic of the formative stage gives way to the development of hierarchies, based largely on the degree of subcultural capital possessed by the individual (Thornton, 1996) and the commodification of image. This is usually the catalyst for the final stage which is commodification and appropriation by the mainstream.

Stage 3: Commodification and appropriation by the mainstream: Today the Gothic subculture is well served by a burgeoning retail and leisure industry. It is a culture of consumption, which has
moved beyond individual creativity to a two-sided system of production and consumption (Lash, 1990). In essence the raw energy or the original life-force of the subculture is gradually being replaced by the reification of symbols and products (Bertens, 1995; Baudrillard, 1990) as the mainstream recognize the lucrative potential of what was once considered deviant and marginal. Today Goth has entered the mainstream The effect of this diffusion is accessibility and even respectability on the part of new entrants who bring with them their own preconceptions making the experience a two way process of appropriation. Entrepreneurs flourish and the marketing machine moves into action.

Contemporary subcultures are changing. It is no longer possible to define them simply on the basis of social class, age or gender. Nor can we understand them in terms of the oppressed using the only strategies of resistance open to them to strike a blow against the dominant hierarchies of control. As our analysis of Goth will attempt to show, these micro-communities may start off as rebellious collectives, but eventually evolve, fragment and grow. Values, beliefs and forms of expression change, as do the symbolic meanings and the nature of the commodities used to support and maintain the subculture. We also need to reconsider the nature of resistance and redefine it in the broader sense as an action that may have multiple layers. Moreover, Goth is now based on the commodity form and its influence has been far reaching in terms of music, style and dress. Our argument is that marketers can learn lessons from the creativity and innovation shown by these new communities and there is value in analyzing the progression from the ‘margins to the mainstream’.

References
Baudrillard, Jean. (1990), Cool Memories, London, Verso

“Over The Counter Culture?”
Robin Canniford, Tim Newton and Avi Shankar

It is a popular argument that we currently exist in a society in which identity, meaning making and status are largely mediated through purchasable goods and services. What kinds of social groups exist under these conditions? How has the market-oriented social world affected subjectivity? A variety of theoretical standpoint outcomes have been posed to address these questions. Sociologists and consumer researchers confer with notions of weakened social bonds, transience or ephemeral experience of identity as characterising culture (see Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; Bennett, 1999; Firat & Dholakia, 1998).

However, this paper argues that social forms may not be entirely reduced to a consumer-cultural logic. In many cases, subcultures draw on other, more traditional types of practice to create shared senses of meaning and identity (Irwin, 1973; Pearson, 1979; Kates, 2002). These correspond to the notions of subculture created by the Chicago School, The Birmingham School and more recent social theorists (Cohen, 1955; Willis, 1977; Hebdige, 1979; Thornton, 1995). There continue to exist specific enclaves of individuals who through their practice, rituals and mythologies are able to share identity and dispositions, exhibit strong and enduring social ties, and construct themselves as oppositional to other groups.

Through a historical and ethnographic examination of surf culture this paper recommends a treatment of the subcultural concept which acknowledges that subcultures:

- Create self-referential frameworks (see Bourdieu, 1984).
- Are experienced through enduring dispositions, ideologies, rituals and subcultural capital (see Thornton, 1995).
- Affect subjectivity.
- Establish a strong, axiomatic sense of meaning and identity (Kates, 2002; Irwin, 1973).
- Establish strong social ties (Kates, 2002; Willis, 1977).
- Are historical, networked processes (see Elias, 2000; Latour, 1996).
- May be constructed in opposition to a ‘dominant’ culture (Willis, 1977; Hebdige, 1979).
- Are negotiated at various interconnected levels: media, politics, sport, market.

However:

- They are not static or unified (Redhead, 1998; Martin, 2002). Politics and ideology are expressed as a function of subculture’s position with dominant society.
- Their practice and dispositional elements are not isolated to leisure time or leisure space.
- Neither are they necessarily isolated to any particular time or space.
• They are not isolated to specific demographics—class, age, gender, and race.

• There may be complex relationships between different types of capital and interests.

From these starting points we can begin to observe subcultures as dynamic rhetorical devices; stories imposed by observers in order to make sense of specific cultural actions (Pearson, 1979). As rhetorical devices, subcultures serve to distinguish practices, both for academics and members of scenes. The features of subcultures that serve this function largely depend on shared self-referential schemes (Bourdieu, 1984), primary frameworks (Goffman, 1969), subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995), rituals and practices. Individuals are able to use these to construct meaning, establish identity and negotiate status with one another.

Whilst this paper supports the continued use of the concept, some of the previous literature on subculture is criticised. Moreover their relationship with social time and space is more complex than has been recognised by many previous accounts. Subcultures are not isolated politically or historically from general social shifts or from natural actants (Latour, 1996). Subcultures are not isolated in time or space. Rather they are networked and historical processes subject to development and figurational negotiation with other powerful groups (see Elias, 2000).

This is not to say that the market has no influence on subcultures. Subcultural capital may be put up for sale within other cultures and this can have vigorous impact on the scene in question (Canniford & Layne, 2004). In the case of surfing, the marketisation of subcultural capital encouraged a change in the lifestyle, sporting, working and political positions of many surfers and created scenes within the sub-scene: sub-sub cultures. Surfing has been transformed from a playful, carnivale into a codified and civilised sport culture. In the course of this process, researchers should consider individual’s working lives, their consumption habits, ritualised elements and mythologies that can not be entirely regarded as consumables, as well as the status of the dominant culture. This being the case, subcultures could be viewed to some extent as continuous with other social forms rather than entirely discreet.

References:


"Subcultures, Neotribes, Countercultures or New Social Movements? The Case of Voluntary Simplicity"
Hélène Cherrier and Jeff B. Murray

The traditional view of a consumption subculture refers to a distinct subgroup of society that shares a common interest in and commitment to a particular product class, brand, or consumption activity (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). Consumption subcultures are characterized by hierarchical social structures and sets of shared beliefs, values, and modes of symbolic expression (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). On the one hand, these characteristics are clearly visible within voluntary simplicity communities, groups, and consumers. The cultural practice of voluntarily consuming less, or downsizing (Schor 1998), has its own language, rituals, conventions, associations, clubs, magazines, workshops, websites, and core participants, in fact, voluntary simplicity leaders are valorized as heroes or legends (e.g., Cecile Andrews, Duane Elgin, and David Shi).

On the other hand, critics of the concept “subculture” suggest that the term, by itself, is contested in that it fails to capture the rich diversity and conflict that characterizes consumption activities. Drawing on postmodern perspectives, these theorists argue that subcultures have fragmented to the point where there is no longer an identifiable subgroup sharing a common interest. This perspective shifts the focus to localized subject positions that have developed around fashion, lifestyle, and identity. Maffesoli (1996, Chapter 1) refers to these subject positions as neotribes or emotional communities. This implies that the term “subculture,” and the parent culture against which it is defined, are not coherent and homogeneous formations that can be clearly demarcated (Weinzierl and Muggleton 2003). Indeed, the phrase “voluntary simplicity” is an overarching label for a very diverse group (e.g., a search of “voluntary simplicity” on Yahoo results in over 229,000 hits).

A third concept that is related to these first two is “counterculture.” Advocates of this concept argue that “neotribes” describe such small fragmented groupings, everything becomes a neotribe. If this is the case, the concept does not draw attention to discrete phenomenae and therefore fails to generate new explanatory insights. In addition, both the concepts “subculture” and “neotribe” are purely descriptive concepts, lacking any type of critical dimension. The concept “counterculture” draws attention to a variety of lifestyle movements that resist mainstream consumption lifestyles. These movements all embrace a negative critique in the sense that they are positioned against something. The problem with this concept is that it does not draw attention to those movements that serve as a source of creativity and social change. Many consumer movements embrace a positive critique in the sense that they envision new consumption lifestyles and deepen the possibilities for expression by adding to the aesthetic resources of the culture.
Thus, we argue that the phrase “new social movement” may be the most generative when theorizing consumption lifestyles. A “generative” concept is one, which generates new ideas, insights, explanations, critiques, relationships, and research agendas. The qualifier “new” enables the concept to question the structural bases for subcultures, and the word “movement” allows for both a positive and negative critique. “Critique” in the sense of evaluative, public, multiactor, multiagenda, oriented to equality and heterogeneous well-being (Haraway 1997, p. 95). Johnson, Larana, and Gusfield (1994) recognize five generative characteristics of the concept new social movements: 1) ideological dimensions are characterized by pluralistic values and ideas with pragmatic orientations; 2) mobilizing factors tend to focus on cultural and symbolic issues that are linked with issues of identity rather than structural or economic concerns; 3) new social movements are “acted out” in individual actions rather than through or among mobilized groups; 4) unlike “social movements,” new social movements often involve day-to-day, personal, and intimate aspects of human life; and finally, 5) new social movements tend to be segmented, diffused, and decentralized. These characteristics are ideal for studying voluntary simplicity and other consumer movements discussed in this special session such as Goths and surfers.

References:
SESSION OVERVIEW

Branding is the subject of robust discussion among both practitioners and academics interested in marketing strategy. Yet little is known about how different groups of consumers co-create meanings for the same brand. For example, research that examines brand community tends to emphasize homogeneity of brand meaning within a particular subculture or subset of the consumers of interest. This session focuses on why and how specific brands acquire different meanings, or retain aspects of their meanings, across demographic, cultural, or communal groups. Thus, this research picks up where work on brand relationships and brand community leaves off. This session will broaden our understanding of the motivations for, and the mechanisms pertaining to, changes in brand meanings across developmental, cultural, and/or communal boundaries, rather than within groups assumed to create and share homogenous brand meanings. As such, it offers insights into a theoretically significant question—what accounts for divergences in the brand meanings promoted by marketers and those held by distinct groups of consumers?

“Brands in Transit: The Dynamics of Cross Cultural Brand Meanings and the British Royal Family Brand”

Eileen Fischer, York University
Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University
Cele Otnes, University of Illinois
Pia Segal Munther, York University

The British Royal Family (BRF) brand enables us to explore two key issues pertaining to the transfer of brand meaning: 1) how a brand can resonate simultaneously with distinct cultural myths in different cultures; and 2) how challenges to the cultural resonance of these myths impact brand meaning in these cultures. We collected and analyzed data in three cultural contexts where the BRF is assumed to be (or has been) a powerful brand: England, Northern Ireland, and English Canada. Interviews, observations, and examination of media enable us to identify the patterns of meaning of the BRF brand in each culture.

“The Development of Brand Meaning in Children and Adolescents”

Lan Nguyen Chaplin, University of Illinois
Deborah Roedder John, University of Minnesota

In a study with 54 children and adolescents ages 7-18, we examine how brands change meaning across age groups. Results indicate age differences in the overall meaning and image of brands. Specifically, 3rd/4th graders view brands more concretely, as a picture or word, compared to 7th/8th graders, who view brands more abstractly, as socially significant aspects of their environment. Differences of this nature were less clear between 7th/8th and 11th/12th graders, suggesting perhaps that most of the dramatic changes in children’s development of brand meaning and brand images occur by early adolescence.

“Look What They’ve Done to My Brand: Clashes of Brand Tribes”

Bernard Cova, ESCP-EAP
Stefano Pace, Bocconi University

The notion of “postmodern tribe” connotes micro-groups where individuals interact and pursue strong emotional links and shared passions. Rituals of (re)construction or (re)possession help tribes maintain cohesive identity. Yet recent research emphasizes the co-existence of multiple interpretive sub-tribes within the same tribal phenomenon. In the so-called inline skating tribe, factions find expression through internal rivalries. Fitness and stunt skaters belong to antagonizingly different worlds, and ascribe different meanings to the same cult-brand. Our investigation reveals how shades of meaning exist within the same brand tribe, and how these meanings take shape through the subversion and diversion of the product, logo, and other brand-related phenomena.
Could the Results of Consumer Research in the Case of Manufacturer’s Brand Extension be Transferred to the Brand Extension of Private Labels – An Exploratory Study

Bernhard Swoboda, University of Trier, Germany
Sara Samadi, University of Trier, Germany
Thomas Foscht, University of Graz, Austria

ABSTRACT
Marlboro jeans, Kellog’s cheese and Nivea hair colouring are products marketed under a brand name with only a limited connection to the company’s original products. The situation is similar with private labels. The two are comparable: A manufacturers’ brand extension or a private label brand extension is when a firm uses an established brand name to introduce a new product. In this respect we are tempted to ask whether the consumer behaviour-related findings of manufacturers’ brand extensions apply to private labels. It is the goal of this analysis to acquire the basic behavioural explanation for private label extension. First empirical results are presented.

INTRODUCTION
Manufacturers’ brand extensions are becoming more important. This can help avoid the difficulty of introducing new products to a market. In 1991, approximately 90% of 16,000 new products introduced in American supermarkets were based on brand extensions (Rangaswamy, Burke, and Oliva 1993). Particularly up to the mid-1990s, a large number of academic investigations were conducted within this research field. The many evaluations of success and impact factors usually refer to the characteristics of a parent or mother brand, a transfer product, and the relationship between parent and transfer product.

It is doubtful that those views can be applied to retailing private labels. The transferability of those factors that are based on the parent brand’s perceived quality is particularly debatable. It stands to reason that there are other criteria applicable to the extension of private labels, such as a low price or price-performance ratio, both of which are very important. This is a very interesting issue in terms of the importance of private labels. For example, the importance of private labels in Germany grew over the past twenty years to secure a market share of more than 30% for fast-moving consumer goods in 2004, compared with 12% in 1975. Investigations indicated that, at the same time, the image of private labels often turned out to be increasingly positive compared with that of manufacturer brands. Manufacturer brands are credited with a higher quality, a better reputation etc., whereas private labels dominate in terms of a positive price-performance ratio and are comparable in terms of confidence.

The objective of this analysis is to use an exploratory study to identify the product features that influence the perception or the success of private label extensions from a consumer’s point of view. In order to achieve this goal, literature on manufacturers’ and private label brand extensions is dealt with first of all. Then a framework is presented that provides the basis for an empirical analysis and which enables a scientific derivation of research hypotheses. The focus of this article is an empirical study, which examines the effects of the extension of two private labels and two manufacturer brands. The article concludes with a discussion.

A SHORT LITERATURE REVIEW
Keller (2003, 577), dealing with brand extensions, described this strategy as follows: “A brand extension is when a firm uses an established brand name to introduce a new product”. When applying this definition to retailer marketing, a brand extension can be seen as an extension of the retailer’s assortment or product line. Besides the widely-used term brand extension, other terms, such as brand leverage (“means using the initial brand platform to move into other opportunities”, see Court, Leiter, and Loch 1999, 103) or image transfer, are also used in this context (Kotler and Armstrong 2004). The latter points out that image components are transferred with the help of a brand’s name from an existing product to a new product.

All types of brand extensions have one aspect in common: They all contain opportunities as well as risks. Entrepreneurial opportunities provide advantages in marketing productivity and marketing efficiency (Erdem and Sun 2002, 418). Well-known brands improve PoS-presence, maintain a headstart in publicity and confidence, and induce greater acceptance and readiness by retailers to list the company’s products (Aaker 1990). The last argument reveals that the advantages and disadvantages of brand extensions were originally formulated in most cases for manufacturer brands. On a consumer level, the opportunities should refer to manufacturer brands as well as private labels. Well-known brand names offer consumers the advantage of hardly any information or search costs. Corresponding risks can be encountered either in combination with a transfer product or a parent brand.

Risks and opportunities involved in manufacturers’ and private label brand extensions show that making a decision for or against this strategy is a complex process. Due to the complexity and the ensuing insecurity, instruments are needed that can measure and anticipate the chances of success for brand extensions. The need to develop such instruments led to many research investigations being conducted in the mid-80s. These research activities were originally initiated by two investigations: Aaker and Keller (1990) and Boush et al. (1987). During the 1990s, several investigations followed concerning the detailed issue of manufacturers’ brand extensions (e.g., Park, Jun, and Shocker 1996; Rangaswamy, Burke and Oliva 1993; Sullivan 1992 etc.).

As far as the objective of our article is concerned, there are a great many specific issues concerning previous research that have to be discussed. As explained, previous research investigations relate to manufacturer brands, while private labels were not considered at all. This problem leads to another issue, which concerns the independent variable: Some of the investigations measure the success of manufacturers’ brand extensions by asking respondents to judge the quality of a transfer product (e.g., Dacin and Smith 1994). Private labels differ from their competitors in their pricing policy. It can therefore be assumed that assessment of the transfer product’s quality is not or not the only determinant of success in this case. Those hypotheses, which were proposed by several authors and explain the success of a manufacturers’ brand extension through the perceived quality of the parent brand or product (e.g., Bhat and Reddy 2001; Bottomley and Doyle 1996; Bottomley and Holden 2001; Rangaswamy, Burke and Oliva 1993; Sunde and Brodie 1993), are not sufficient arguments in the case of private labels. Neither the theoretical assumptions, nor the empirical results can be applied to private labels. This is especially relevant as the profiling aspects of manufacturer brands and private labels differ from each other.
FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR THE EXTENSION OF PRIVATE LABELS

In the literature, mainly three different theories can be found that explain how consumers transfer their associations with a parent brand to a transfer product. Generalization theory, for example, suggests that people tend to view individual items as being similar, no matter whether or not there are any features that would differentiate them (Kerby 1967; Roman 1969). Similarly, analogical reasoning explains the process of matching the overall attitude with the perception and judgement of those features that are exhibited by the transfer product only and not by the parent product (Kim 1991). Most of the hypotheses of impact studies, however, are formulated on the basis of the schema and categorisation theory. It is the objective of this theory to explain the transfer of associations from a parent product to a transfer product. According to this approach, the knowledge of an object is represented in the human memory by mental categories or schemata. In this way, a category is conceptualised as consisting of similar objects, while a schema contains those characteristics of a category that are perceived as being typical (Fiske and Pavelchak 1986; Fiske and Taylor 1984). The strength of a schema depends on e.g. the customer’s brand knowledge (Coupey and Jung 1996) and involvement.

The knowledge of retailing private labels may not be as distinctive as it is of manufacturer brands (Supphellen 2000; for the analysis of attitudes towards private labels Burton et al. 1998). At the same time, the customer’s involvement with regard to private labels is lower than it is for manufacturer brands because products which are sold primarily through their price presumably generate a lower emotional, but a stronger functional association. The functionality consists of superordinate product features, which, under certain circumstances, might be combined with any other brand of the same product category. Therefore they are not adequate to emphasise the uniqueness of a brand. Similarly, while Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000) and Ailawadi, Neslin and Gedenk (2001) talk about hedonic benefits that are provided by manufacturer brands, but to a lesser extent by private labels, Richardson, Dick and Jain (1994), as well as Bellizzi et al. (1981), point out that the attributes of private labels are rated lower than those of manufacturer brands in terms of attractiveness and appearance. Both aspects-knowledge and functional associations-suggest in connection with private labels that customers may not have structured brand schemata and that the volume of information about such products is quite small. A schema of private labels would therefore consist solely of price features, superordinate product class features, and possibly the retailer offering the brand, whereas a corresponding manufacturer brand schema would comprise more specific characteristics that are strongly linked to the brand (Ailawadi, Neslin and Gedenk 2001, Richardson, Dick and Jain 1994). Hypothesis H1, which is to be verified, reads as follows:

H1: Customers’ schemata of private labels consist solely of price and superordinate product category features, whereas the schemata of manufacturer brands include additional brand specific associations.

These considerations can now be connected with the results of the impact research. Some of the investigations were able to identify some influence from the strength and quality of a parent brand on the success of manufacturers’ brand extensions (e.g., Aaker and Keller 1990, 29). With an increasing amount of positive associations with the parent brand, there is an increasing possibility that, with a perceived similarity between the transfer product and the parent product, these positive associations will also be applied to the transfer product (Bhat and Reddy 2001; Bottomley and Doyle 1996; Lane and Jacobson 1995; Rangaswamy, Burke and Oliva 1993; Smith and Park 1992; Sunde and Brodie 1993). According to H1, private labels are neither associated with high quality, nor with superordinate unique associations, which is why they are not able to introduce successful products. Reality, however, reveals many examples which disprove this statement. Private labels, such as the German brands Balea, Mibell or Ja! Natürlich (Foscht and Sinha 2004), and their versatile product lines demonstrate that private label extensions can indeed be successful. However, according to previous research results, focus should be on the following hypothesis:

H2: The perceived quality of the parent product has an influence on the impact of a private label extension.

This also seems to be true for the hypothesis on the perceived difficulty of manufacture. Aaker and Keller (1990, 30) presume that there will be incongruity between the transfer product and the existing associations with the brand if customers consider manufacture of the transfer product to be trivial. Coherency between the perceived difficulty in manufacturing the transfer product and the attitude of the customer towards this transfer product is therefore positive (Aaker and Keller 1990; Nijssen, Uijl, and Jones 1995; Sunde and Brodie 1993). This is also explained by the schema and categorisation theory. As the product is considered easy to manufacture, it is not ascribed high quality. This argument can be applied to manufacturer brands, but not to brands that do not stand out because of their quality. Retailers private labels are not only ascribed a lower quality compared to manufacturer brands, but also less sophisticated packaging. Thus, when taking the difficulty of product manufacturing into consideration, less competence is ascribed to private label companies, whereas brand manufacturing companies tend to be credited with a more complicated manufacturing process. Thus, the likelihood of consumers purchasing private labels would decline. The hypothesis for private labels would hence be:

H3: If manufacture of a transfer product is perceived as being difficult, this will have a negative impact on the success of a private label extension.

Based on H1, we can assume that superordinate product class features have no impact on the success of a private label extension because they are part of every other brand’s schema of the same product class. In order to appeal to customers and have a positive influence on purchase decisions, it is conceivable, however, that association with a lower price is quite sufficient (Burt 2000; Burton et al. 1998). This is also supported by Sethuraman and Cole (1999): “A major selling point for private labels is their lower price in relation to national brands”. The price level perceived by the customer-combined with his perceived importance of a lower price-would constitute a success factor sui generis in the evaluation of private label extensions:

H4: A price level perceived as being low has a positive impact on the success of a private label extension.

The interrelationship is even clearer when applied to the price-performance ratio. Investigations mentioned at the beginning show that private labels are indeed ascribed a lower quality compared to manufacturer brands, but that they are associated with a better price-performance ratio. While, historically, private labels have only offered inferior quality at a low price, many retailers have now moved up the scale by providing a fair price-performance ratio.
(Verhoef, Nijssen and Sloot 2002). Association with a good price-performance ratio can suffice to have a positive influence on purchase decisions in favour of extended private labels (Richardson, Dick and Jain 1994, Burton et al. 1998). Like the perceived price level, the perceived price-performance ratio should not be examined in isolation. Instead, it should be investigated in combination with the individual degree of importance ascribed to a good price-performance ratio by the customer. H5 thus implies:

H5: A price-performance ratio which is perceived as being good has a positive impact on the success of a private label extension.

**EMPIRICAL STUDY AND RESULTS OF PRIVATE LABEL EXTENSIONS**

The main aim of the following analysis is to examine the hypotheses. Evaluation of manufacturers’ brand extensions is quite often based on quality perceptions of the transfer product. For our purposes, the problem with this aspect is that it involves an indirect measurement of success, which means that customers are assumed only to buy products when the perceived quality is high. The price relevance of a private label extension does not suggest this. Thus, the dependent variable is operationalised on a global level, yet close to behaviour patterns, in terms of likelihood of purchase or purchase intention, as indicated by the customers. It is measured on a seven-point scale, where 1 represents a very low and 7 a very high likelihood of purchase (of the transfer products). The independent variables were also operationalised with seven-point rating scales for the subjectively perceived quality, the subjectively perceived price level, and the subjectively perceived price-performance ratio.

When selecting the stimuli, the parent brands examined had to meet several criteria, as did the corresponding transfer products. At first, two private labels and two manufacturer brands were selected as parent brands in order to ensure a variance across the parent brands with regard to the characteristics of the different potential effect factors. Another objective of the selection was to integrate brands that are very well known into the random sample. In order to be able to reveal possible differences between product classes, different product categories were included in the survey. Those manufacturer brands and retailer private labels which met the criteria are the brand pairs Nivea and Balea (a well known private label marketed by the German drug store retailer chain “dm”) in the personal hygiene sector, as well as Landliebe and Mibell (a well-known private label marketed by the German food retailer “Edeka”). Besides searching for parent brands, it was also necessary to find suitable transfer products. By conducting qualitative pre-tests, three hypothetical transfer products were generated for each parent brand. The characteristics of those transfer products had to be different from each other in terms of the independent variable in order to ensure an adequate variance. On this basis, the transfer products “toilet paper”, “perfume” and “cleaning agents” were chosen for the parent product field “hygiene”, and “cereal bars”, “cornflakes” and “curd cheese” for the parent product field “food”.

The random sample consisted of 120 consumers (1,440 transfers per product evaluations on the likelihood of purchase), with an average age of 29.3 years, own household, and a monthly income of less than 1,000 Euro. Men and women are represented in equal measures. In order to test H1, respondents were asked to mention all associations that come to mind spontaneously in connection with the brands Nivea and Balea. A comparison of the number of associations with each brand shows that respondents offer more connections with the Nivea (436 associations) than with Balea (158 associations). Considering the number of people who had stated previously that they know the brand, this means that one person could connect an average of 3.6 associations with Nivea and 1.6 associations with Balea. Respondents with a higher brand involvement-meaning a dichotomy of periodic usage or rare/one-time usage-demonstrated more diverse associations.

The type of association with the two brands also differs. Most associations with Balea refer to the retailer dm and to lower price. The first association was mentioned by approximately 44% of all respondents knowing the brand, while the latter was mentioned by about 36%. All other associations refer to superordinate product class features. Amongst those associations, shower gel, body lotion, deodorant, shampoo, shaving, and showering were often mentioned.

This was different, however, for Nivea, where brand-specific elements clearly dominate. 81% of all respondents spontaneously associated Nivea with the colour combination blue and white. There were also associations with current TV commercials. These associations included such dominant features as young women, sun, summer, water, sports, and holidays. At least one of these attributes was mentioned by 43% of all respondents. Another 30% associated the aspect of care and 25% the blue and white tub of Nivea Crème with the brand. Positive characteristics, for example, pure, fresh, soft, gentle, and smooth were mentioned by 24% of those asked. Links with the brand owner Beiersdorf were made by 9%; 7% referred to the tradition of Nivea. Superordinate product class features were also mentioned with regard to this brand, forming some 37% of all associations. A similar structure of associations is conceivable for Landliebe and Mibell.

The results indicate support for H1. As was assumed, the manufacturer brand is mainly connected with brand-specific associations, while with private labels—apart from superordinate product class features—consumers tend to fall back on price-related associations. This should have consequences for the extension of private labels described above.

**Evaluated Characteristics of Brand Extensions-A Comparison of Mean Values**

The comparison of selected mean values suggests support for some of the hypotheses. Table 1 presents the mean values for each brand in terms of its perceived quality, its perceived price level, as well as its perceived price-performance ratio. A comparison of all brands, as well as a comparison of brands within one product category, these being Nivea and Balea, and Landliebe and Mibell, clearly shows that the perceptions of the manufacturer brand are associated with higher quality, higher price level and lower price-performance ratio. This relationship was expected. It is even more distinctive when comparing respondents who use the respective brand on a regular basis and, therefore, demonstrate higher involvement than those respondents who seldom use the respective brand (compare the results of the t-tests in Table 2).

When comparing these results with table 3, support is found for the assumption that it is not primarily the high quality, but rather the low price and a good price-performance ratio that determine the success of a private label: The table shows that the likelihood of purchase for each (transfer) product is higher for the retailing private label than for the manufacturer brand. The only exception relates to perfume. In this case, respondents prefer the Nivea brand to the Balea brand. When comparing this result with the right-hand column of Table 3, we can see that the mean value of perceived difficulty of manufacture is also relatively high for perfume. Whether there is a relationship between the likelihood of purchase and the perceived difficulty of manufacture will be discussed later.
### TABLE 1
Values of perceptions of quality, price level and price-performance ratio of (parent) brand-t-tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brands</th>
<th>Mean values</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Price level</th>
<th>Price-performance ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nivea</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.08**</td>
<td>5.16**</td>
<td>3.73**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balea</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>5.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landliebe</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.07**</td>
<td>5.82**</td>
<td>3.57*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mibell</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All manufacturer brands</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.05**</td>
<td>5.44**</td>
<td>3.64**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All private labels</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale values: 1=very low / very poor, 7=very high / very good.
The differences in mean values are significant on a level of * 0.05 / ** 0.001.

### TABLE 2
Values of perceptions of quality, price level and price-performance ratio of (parent) brands according to customer group-t-tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brands</th>
<th>Mean values</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Price level</th>
<th>Price-performance ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nivea</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balea</td>
<td>Infrequently</td>
<td>5.80*</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>3.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landliebe</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mibell</td>
<td>Infrequently</td>
<td>4.37**</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>4.86*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale values: 1=very low / very poor; 7=very high / very good.
The differences in mean values are significant on a level of * 0.05 / ** 0.001.

### TABLE 3
Values of the likelihood of purchase and the perceived difficulty of manufacture of (transfer) products-t-tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products</th>
<th>Mean values</th>
<th>Likelihood of purchase</th>
<th>Perceived value of the difficulty of manufacture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nivea toilet paper</td>
<td>2.35**</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balea toilet paper</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nivea perfume</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balea perfume</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nivea cleaning agents</td>
<td>2.56**</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balea cleaning agents</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landliebe cereal bars</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mibell cereal bars</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landliebe cornflakes</td>
<td>3.06**</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mibell cornflakes</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landliebe curd cheese</td>
<td>3.72**</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mibell curd cheese</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale values: 1=very poor; 7=very high.
The differences in mean values are significant on a level of * 0.05 / ** 0.001.
A comparison of mean values for all four brands and all six products, which is not shown here, provides a similar picture: The quality of manufacturer brands is generally perceived to be higher and the price-performance ratio is generally perceived to be poorer compared to private labels. The likelihood of purchase also seems to be higher for private labels. The corresponding t-tests show that the mean values differ from each other significantly regarding quality, price, price-performance ratio, and likelihood of purchase. Only the characteristics of the variable “difficulty of manufacture” vary very little for each type of brand. The t-test supports this statement by not revealing any significant differences for manufacturer brands and private labels for this variable.

The previous conclusions indicate the first proof for H4 and H5. Negative relationships between the perceived price level and the likelihood of purchase, as well as positive relationships between the perceived price-performance ratio and the likelihood of purchase, are expected. On the basis of these results, however, there does not seem to be a clear indication of any connection between the likelihood of purchase and the perceived quality of private labels (H2). The results of correlations between the variables will deliver further statistical proof for these assumptions.

**Evaluated Characteristics of Brand Extensions—Results of Correlations**

Bivariate correlations are based on pairs of values within our random sample of single evaluations of brands and products, respectively. Table 4 shows the correlations between the independent variables perceived, e.g. quality, price level, price-performance ratio and difficulty of manufacture, and the dependent variable of purchase likelihood for transfer products on the basis of the respondents’ assessments. Excursively, it becomes clear that the purchase intentions for transfer products are connected linearly, in particular to the price-performance ratio. Admittedly, the correlations can be described as semi-strong, but they do exhibit high significance over all product categories. The table also suggests that the perceived price level coheres with the likelihood of purchase, except for perfume. On the contrary, findings concerning the perceived quality of the parent brand are somewhat more inconsistent for those transfer products that belong to the ‘food’ product category.

These observations become even clearer when calculating on a level of individual judgements for the six transfer products of both private labels. Table 5 shows that it is mainly the perceived price-performance ratio that coheres closely with the likelihood of purchase, followed by the perceived price level, then the perceived quality and difficulty of manufacture. H4 and H5 can therefore be supported, even more so as there is a negative correlation between the perceived price level of the parent brand and the likelihood of purchase of the six transfer products within the group of private labels, as well as a positive relationship between the perceived price-performance ratio and the likelihood of purchase. H2 can also be sustained, although the relationship is not as distinctive in this case.

With reference to H3, Table 6 shows the results of a corresponding correlation between the variables ‘perceived difficulty of manufacture’ and ‘likelihood of purchase’, this time illustrating a comparison between private labels and manufacturer brands. In relation to the perceived difficulty of manufacture of private labels,
a significant correlation coefficient can indeed be detected, while the interrelationship turns out to be quite significantly positive for manufacturer brands. Therefore, the assumption that manufacturers of private labels are not ascribed sufficient competence could be confirmed. Due to this result, a hypothesis that has been tested before and which states that the success of a brand extension of a manufacturer brand sees a positive effect with increasing difficulty of manufacture is also supported to some extent.

Additional Results Specific to Product and Commodity Group

In addition to the results that have been extracted from verifying the hypothesis, even more findings can be highlighted. As is pointed out in Tables 3 and 4, perfume clearly differs from the rest of the products. For one thing, the difficulty in manufacturing this product is perceived to be very high, at a value of 5.18, while secondly, it is the only transfer product with greater likelihood of purchase in the case of a manufacturer brand. Furthermore, it seems that the price level, which is perceived to be rather low for private labels, has no effect on the likelihood of purchase of this product. On the other hand, previous results are amplified by the data from Table 5 merely on the basis of the products toilet paper, cleaning agents, cereal bars, cornflakes, and curd cheese. Relationships are strengthened when the product perfume is not included in the analysis. This is particularly true for the price level and the price-performance ratio.

A comparison of the mean value differences for the likelihood of purchase in Table 3 is also significant. The differences between Nivea and Balea transfer products—apart from the product perfume—are larger than between Landliebe and Mibell. On the contrary, the difference of perceived price level between the respective brands of one product category is, as shown in Table 1, roughly the same for the categories ‘food’ and ‘personal hygiene’. Table 4 confirms the assumption that the correlations between the perceived price level or the perceived price-performance ratio and the likelihood of purchase tend to be stronger when the data analysis only includes products from the hygiene category. These assumptions are supported by adequate correlations on a judgement level. If the Landliebe and Mibell products are isolated, the correlation coefficients of the variables ‘perceived price level’ and ‘perceived price-performance ratio’ increase. All in all, the strength of relationship between the perceived price level or price-performance ratio and the likelihood of purchase seems to depend on the type of product and product category.

**DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

In the past, investigations concerning brand extensions usually concentrated on manufacturer brands, while this paper has concentrated on presenting exploratory results in the context of private labels due to their increasing importance. Even though there are limitations on the study, such as the small (convenience) sample, few isolated indicators, etc., the empirical results appear interesting.

They document the relatively minor importance of perceived quality of the parent brand in the success of retail private label extensions and prove instead that perceived price level and perceived price-performance ratio are relatively important factors. For private label managers, this suggests that the quality of the parent brand should not be focused on as only one possible criterion when discussing brand extensions, but that more focus should be placed on the perceived price level or price-performance ratio. Results of previous research maintaining that the success of a transfer product (in the case of manufacturer brands) increases with a higher perceived quality only seems to have limited validity for private labels. Still, quality should not be neglected. It is, in fact, an integral part of a private label manager’s considerations in terms of comprehensive efficiency and effectiveness of private label extensions, possibly in terms of minimum quality level.

There is also an approach via the perceived difficulty of manufacture of a product. When consumers believe that a product is hard to produce, a private label extension appears to be more problematic because retailers are not ascribed a high degree of competence, but the need for urgent research is also evident: A fictitious marginal value, indicating that the assessment of difficulty of manufacture is responsible for consumers preferring a manufacturer brand to a private label, could not be ascertained by this study.

Furthermore, the study pointed out that the product category also plays an important role in the success of private label extensions. Thus, the criteria of a price level that is perceived to be low and a price-performance ratio that is perceived to be high do not seem to have as great an impact on products belonging to the food sector as on products belonging to the near-food sector (particularly hygiene). Managers of retail firms should, therefore, bear in mind that the impact of price level and price-performance ratio on the success of a private label extension is stronger for products in one product category, but less so in other categories. This study only compares two different product categories, so more research is needed in this field.

The fairly low correlations also indicate a need for further research. The mean correlation values suggest that there are other factors that influence the success of private label extensions besides quality, price level, price-performance ratio, and difficulty of manufacture (all perceived). Furthermore, these factors should be analysed on the basis of other variables.

Moreover, the extensions of private labels may be linked to manufacturer brands, which in many cases have served as a master copy. Balea, for example, can be interpreted as a ‘Me-Too’ product of Nivea, while Mibell is possibly an adopted product range of Landliebe. The question to be investigated now is the extent to

**TABLE 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Private label products</th>
<th>Manufacturer brand products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coefficients according to Pearson</td>
<td>-0.117*</td>
<td>0.135*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation is (2-sided) significant on a level of * 0.01.
which a private label can be successful with its transfer products if it is merely considered to be a replica of a manufacturer brand. Justified criticism, however, points out that many investigations concerning manufacturers’ or private label brand extensions, including this one, reflect an unreal environment. In a real decision situation, much more stimuli act upon a consumer, e.g. from PoS-characteristics, promotions, competing offers, etc., than the actual number of factors that can be taken into account when surveying respondents. Such variables as price level, price-performance ratio, quality, and difficulty of manufacture may gain or lose importance when evaluating products. Even though reconstruction of such a real environment involves a great deal of effort, it could enhance the validity of results. Therefore, researchers may describe hypothetical transfer products in the future with a variety of characteristics or even submit tangible prototypes to respondents for product evaluations. In addition, an analysis based on a subjective evaluation of parent brands and transfer products irrespective of actual purchase intentions or likelihood of purchase—would be of considerable interest. In the long run, this research field should also be substantiated on a wider, more fundamental, theoretical basis.

REFERENCES


Riezebos, Rik, Bas Kist and Gert Kootstra (2003), Brand Management-A theoretical and practical approach, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.


Dirt! An Interpretive Study of Negative Opinions about a Brand Extension
Henrik Sjödin, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

ABSTRACT
How can researchers and managers understand the notions and feelings behind unfavorable responses to a brand extension? Using a sociocultural perspective on purity and impurity (Douglas 1966), this paper explores the usefulness of thinking about negative opinions in terms of reactions to dirt. The metaphor informs an interpretation of negative comments in an internet discussion forum, on the introduction of a new car model from Porsche. Conceptions of dirt as disturbing and upsetting; risky and dangerous; and immoral and blameworthy, are employed to develop new insights into the intersection between brands, brand extensions, and consumers.

“Reflection on dirt involves reflection on the relation of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death.” (Douglas 1966, 6)

INTRODUCTION
Monstrosity, atrocity, disgusting, ugly bastard, abomination. What commercial object provokes such agitated descriptions by consumers? The answer: the introduction of a new car model from Porsche. How can researchers and managers understand the notions and feelings behind such unfavorable responses to a brand extension? This study draws upon sociocultural theory on purity and impurity (Douglas 1966), to explore the usefulness of thinking about such opinions in terms of reactions to dirt. Putting poor evaluations of brand extensions in a novel perspective can produce new insights into the requirements that contemporary consumers put on brands. Relating brand extensions to dirt introduces a viewpoint that gives richer meaning to low scores on the attitude scales used both in theoretical and applied research on brand extensions. Such a deeper understanding may be required to appreciate what is in the balance upon introducing brand extensions and to judge how brands can remain relevant to consumers over time (cf. Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry Jr. 2003; Holt 2002; Kates 2004).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Brand Extensions
Understanding consumer attitudes towards brand extensions is high on the agenda for many marketers. It has also been a popular research topic over the last decade and a half (e.g., Aaker and Keller 1990; Meyvis and Janiszewski 2004). Recent reviews are provided by Czellar (2003) and Grime, Diamantopoulos, and Smith (2002). One important goal has been to find out why some extensions get favorable evaluations from consumers, whereas others get unfavorable evaluations. The greater part of this research has been carried out with experimental approaches, grounded in cognitive psychology. A typical finding in these experiments is that extensions need to judge how brands can remain relevant to consumers over time (cf. Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry Jr. 2003; Holt 2002; Kates 2004).

However, as a research community, we do not have a very good understanding of what is behind the low scores on attitude scales that some extensions provoke. More interpretive efforts to appreciate the notions and feelings associated with unfavorable responses have been missing from the collective work. Indeed, as the reviews above reflect, qualitative methodologies in general are all but absent from the scholarly literature on the topic. Accordingly, Czellar (2003) argues that new approaches could prove fruitful. He urges researchers to offer original theoretical views to advance a more “holistic understanding of the relation between a consumer and a brand extension” (Czellar 2003, 112-3). This paper puts forward an interpretive analysis of consumers’ negative opinions about a brand extension, making one contribution towards such a rich understanding of the consumer-extension connection. The focus on negative responses allows reflection on challenges for brand management. Studying claims of brand disorder is a means of probing the significance of order for the welfare of brands and consumers.

A Sociocultural View on Purity and Impurity
The point of departure for the analysis is the work on pollution, rules of purity, and dirt by anthropologist Mary Douglas (Douglas 1966). In her writings, Douglas takes an interest in why some things are considered unclean in a given culture. Her basic argument is that dirt is disorder in relation to some system; nothing is dirty in itself:

“Shoes are not dirty in themselves, but it is dirty to place them on the dining-table; food is not dirty in itself, but it is dirty to leave cooking utensils in the bedroom, or food beshattered on clothing; similarly, bathroom equipment in the drawing room; clothing lying on chairs; out-door things in-doors; upstairs things downstairs; under-clothing appearing where over-clothing should be, and so on. In short, our pollution behaviour is the reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications.” (Douglas 1966, 37).

The quote highlights the link between symbolic systems and ideas of impurity. Defined as matter out of place, dirt is that which threatens the existence of a stable pattern in a system, be it in nature or in modern beliefs of what a particular brand is all about. It contradicts norms, rules, and harmony. In this light, dirt and impurity are the same. Consistent with this, Ger and Yenicioğlu (2004) report how people base notions of clean and dirty on both material and conceptual grounds. The latter refers to “abstract and ideological issues” such as purity or sacredness, exemplified by how “the purity of a newborn baby or unconditional love are regarded as ‘clean’, whereas disturbing the balance of the world [is] interpreted as being ‘dirty’” (Ger and Yenicioğlu 2004, 463). Thus, while dirt is “unclean matter that soils” (Concise Oxford dictionary of current English 1990), it is clear that this uncleanness and soiling can be conceptual (e.g., social, moral, or cultural) as well as material.

Following Douglas (1966), Belk, (2005) and Ger and Yenicioğlu (2004) note how meanings of clean and dirty hinge on boundaries between inside and outside, between the familiar and unfamiliar, and between the safe and the threatening. Making sense of, and reinforcing, the difference between clean and dirty engage cultural conceptions of what is right, good, and moral. Concern over boundaries serves to protect unity within a set of beliefs and help people create safe havens from disorder (Ger and Yenicioğlu 2004). In discussing “the horror of indetermination” associated with failure to neatly categorize something, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman explains a driving force behind this inclination: “At best, uncertainty is confusing and felt as discomforting. At worst, it carries a sense of danger.” (Bauman 1991, 56) He sees the effort to get rid of disquieting impurity as an integral activity in modern life: “to
suppress or eliminate everything that could not or would not be precisely defined” (Bauman 1991, 8). Accordingly, the literature connects dirt to sin, taboos, and rationalized notions of risk (Belk 2005; Lupton 1999).

The sociocultural perspective on purity and impurity has only recently attracted the attention of consumer researchers. Ger and Yenicioğlu (2004) indicate the significance of clean/dirty in daily consumption practices and consumer society at large. Belk (2005) discusses the relationship between purity and exchange taboos. These efforts suggest a potential for applying this perspective in research on the relationship between consumers and brands. In this paper, I explore its value in deepening the understanding of negative opinions towards brand extensions.

**METHOD**

To explore the value of the dirt metaphor in an empirical context, I studied negative opinions to a brand extension as they were expressed in an internet discussion forum (cf. Brown et al. 2003; Kozinets 2002). Investigating naturally occurring opinions allowed varied and vivid responses to be represented, which have been scarce in the literature on brand extensions (Czellar 2003). To obtain data for the analysis, the focal brand would have to inspire enough consumer involvement to actually allow negative opinions to be articulated. Getting ample data also seemed to require a brand extension that would generate discussion over an extended period of time. These considerations led me to Porsche and the introduction of the first sports utility vehicle (SUV) in their product portfolio: Porsche Cayenne.

The database consisted of messages posted in alt.autos.porsche, the main public newsgroup for discussions among internet users interested in Porsche. I searched this newsgroup for messages concerning the introduction of the Cayenne, posted in the time between June 1998, when the company first announced its plans, and December 2002, when the car was made available to the public. The negative opinions, which I concentrate on in this paper, were obtained by downloading and reviewing all the messages about the Cayenne, selecting all those that in any part expressed disapproval with the new car. This assessment was subjective but inclusive. In total, the data set consisted of 132 messages, from some 73 poster signatures. These numbers are interesting primarily as indicators of the possibility to explore a meaningful data set holding a range of negative responses. The aim for the data collection was to enable insights into negative opinions specifically, rather than representativeness in relation to the whole corpus of messages in the newsgroup or generalization across populations (cf. Kozinets 2002). The interpretation grew out of repeated readings of the messages and constant comparison with the ideas in the theoretical framework. Employing standard qualitative procedures (Spiggle 1994), I explored the emerging themes through multiple iterations until a coherent representation was achieved.

**FINDINGS**

As arguably the most classic brand of sports cars, Porsche is an icon in its combination of reputable history and exciting image. For decades, its high-performance cars have been successful both on racing circuits and with automotive enthusiasts. Unlike most small car manufacturers, Porsche has remained independent over the years, even though the company has at times collaborated with others. In 1998, Porsche announced that they would extend their product portfolio with the introduction of an SUV. As Porsche aimed to secure its survival through growth and less dependence on traditional sports cars, the existing 911 and Boxster model lines would be joined by an off-roader, developed in cooperation with Volkswagen (Porsche Press Release, 1998). The news set off a discussion among media commentators and brand followers that would continue for years. Below, I report on my observations regarding the negative opinions expressed in the alt.autos.porsche newsgroup, on the topic of Porsche Cayenne. The findings are organized into three interlinked themes, each expressing a different nuance of a common, underlying notion of dirt and impurity.

**Disturbing and Upsetting**

Well, let’s all email Porsche and tell them to provide some factory backing for their race cars and to drop that dam\*ed SUV nonsense. (posted by “Jim,” alt.autos.porsche, January 2000)

What hurts me about Porsche building an SUV (something other than a sportscar) is that as of now, Porsche is the last manufacturer that is independant and building great sportscars that evoke passion from their drivers. They also still actively campaign their cars on the racetrack (though we are currently seeing something of a heitaisa from Porsche.) I love Porsche because they don’t mass produce a vehicle to suit every need I may have. They build ONE type of car that satisfies my craving—a great sportscar to drive fast and race if I choose . . . I don’t need another car built by a company to serve the masses. Porsche recently had a marketing theme that said, “Porsche, not something to everyone, but everything to someone.” That is why they are great. If they lose the ability to separate their cars from all the other cars on the market, they essentially lose “Porsche.” (posted by “Barry,” alt.autos.porsche, July 2001)

Much like dirt, the Cayenne would obscure clarity and spoil an orderly arrangement of brand experiences. Consider this quote by “John,” who in fact accepts the idea of building an SUV as such, but still disapproves of the Cayenne explicitly because it destroys purity:

As every car maker on the planet including Land Rover turns their SUV into a grocery getting minivan/station wagon, Porsche could have come in with a Swiss Army knife on wheels, pure machine. The way their sports cars used to be pure. But Porsche has lost their way and will produce the most ridiculous creature imaginable. A 2 ton luxury SUV that thinks its a sports car. Why not make an offroading Carrera4 next with a 4" lift kit and Monster Mudder tires. Makes as much sense. (“John,” alt.autos.porsche, November 1999)

For “John” and others, Porsche Cayenne is disturbing in terms of the specific features of the car. A common grievance is the design
of the car, which many posters find unattractive or outright ugly. It is sometimes derogatorily called a station wagon or truck.

In contrast to “John,” some posters express quite strong negative opinions about SUVs in general. Complaints include that they are dangerous, have excessive fuel consumption, and that they are bought for their yuppie status rather than performance. For SUV skeptics, the Cayenne is a break with Porsche history that takes the company into a particularly offensive territory. The new car also represents trouble in terms of users and uses, compared to the traditional sports car. For instance, “Don C” states: “A sport utility is just about the furthest thing from what Porsche should be building. The last thing I want to see a Porsche doing is ferrying 4 kids to soccer practice and getting groceries. I may even shed a tear the first time I see one parked at the local grocery store.” (posted by “Don C,” alt.autos.porsche, June 2001)

The quotes suggest that Porsche Cayenne can be disturbing to both intellect and feelings. Many comments about the launch of the Cayenne feature a rather agitated language. Emotions abound. The new car is characterized as an “abomination”, a “joke”, a “catastrophe”, a “beast”, a “monstrosity”, “ugly and useless”; it “disgusts”, makes critics “sick”, inspires “rage”, and is “silly”, “foolish”, and “stupid” (see various postings to alt.autos.porsche). In sum, many reactions reflect the anxiety, contempt, frustration, and anger associated with dirt, as suggested by the literature review. The labels indicate that the responses to the introduction often go beyond mere cognitive disagreement, taking on considerable emotional load.

Dangerous and Risky
They might go bankrupt (like many a company before them) when they seek to move away from their core business. Who’s to know what will happen? Maybe it’ll be a runaway success and I’ll be proved totally wrong. But I see this whole venture as a huge risk. (posted by “Richard,” alt.autos.porsche, October 1999)

Because the introduction of Porsche Cayenne upsets the existing order of the brand, it becomes the Other, that which is different and strange. The Other is fraught with uncertainty and danger, in other words: risk (Lupton 1999). If things go bad, the polluting Other might bring irreparable harm, both to the brand and to the people who depend on it. Thus, the Cayenne might hurt the communal interests and puts the future of the company and the brand in jeopardy.

Immoral and Blameworthy
Personal liking and business merits are not the only bases for evaluating Porsche Cayenne. The frustration evoked by the car is also intertwined with moral judgments. It is clear that posters question the motives behind the launch of Porsche Cayenne. In line with the characterization of the new model as disparate in relation to the company’s history, critics refuse to see it as a natural or legitimate extension of the brand. Instead, a typical attribution is that the company is extending the brand to increase their profits.

As far as I know Porsche has been making money in the last couple of years but now they want to build SUV’s, not because they have any heritage of building trucks or probably any real interest in building trucks, but solely to maximize their profits. (posted by “Jim,” alt.autos.porsche, June 1998).

The important thing to realize is that this ambition is questioned on moral grounds: “What a sell out…Shame shame shame…” (posted by “Magic,” alt.autos.porsche, February 2002). In essence, critics blame management for being greedy. The Cayenne is not developed out of intrinsic interest. The moral assessment echoes of a quest for authenticity (Grayson and Martinec 2004; Holt 2002; Kozinets 2001).

There’s something about the sound of an air cooled Porsche winding out that is a joyous thing. The whine of the cam chains, the exaust so distinctive there’s no mistaking it. The direct feel of the steering, the balance and dynamic poise of a car made to handle. All these are part of the Porsche magic for me. Sometimes change is progress, sometimes change is loss. How much magic of the marque is lost watering down the name making a car to mine the sporty mall patrol market? Half a century focused on making two door cars. When they finally break down and make a four door it’s a STATION WAGON! I wonder how much money this is going to make them. It seems somehow like blasphemy to me. (posted by “Eric,” alt.autos.porsche, December 1998).

The pursuit of profit is thus put in opposition to keeping with Porsche principles, and a recurring question is what Ferry Porsche, the legendary leader of the company, would say about this move:

Do you really want the yuppie range rover crowd driving around in a big Volkswagen sport ute with a Porsche crest glued to the hood? Or even worse, a minivan??? That crest is a badge of honor. Let’s try to keep it that way. No Volkswagen built sport utility vehicle could ever possibly be worthy of wearing it. Ferry Porsche’s body isn’t even cold yet, and already, the bean counters are attempting to ruin what he worked for 50 years to build. Why are we fighting ourselves when we should be fighting to save ourselves? Will Porsche
become another Chevrolet? Could the 911 become a small island among a sea of Porsche built sedans, econoboxes, mini vans, and sport utes? If the accountants get their way, that’s what we are facing. (posted by “Roberts,” alt.autos.porsche, September 1998)

In the eyes of disapproving posters like “Roberts,” the new car puts the company and the brand at risk, and this is blameworthy. The Cayenne represents an illegitimate attempt to grow the business, because it defies core beliefs about what a car from Porsche should be and because it may appeal to the wrong customers. Thus, Porsche is letting faithful followers down, bringing shame to the family name. The introduction is a wrongdoing.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings demonstrate the usefulness of the dirt metaphor to understand negative opinions about brand extensions. One significant contribution is that it highlights how disorder, dislike, risk, and morality interact to inform consumer responses. The themes in the findings are interlinked, converging on an underlying metaphor of dirt.

The findings provide a record of how brand enthusiasts deal with threats of disorder in attempts to maintain a reality that they espouse. Designating a marketing initiative as dirty, provides some reassurance to established views of the self and others. This account provides a link to underlying complications of life in contemporary consumer society, with the importance it puts on symbols such as brands. In a fluid world, where “the meanings that are ascribed to commodities proliferate and change so rapidly [that] it may not be possible for consumers to control what their social actions communicate” (Ger and Yenicioğlu 2004, 466), consumers need ways to navigate marketplace disorder. The case of Porsche Cayenne illustrates how consumers’ notions of purity and impurity might inform their coping efforts (cf. Belk 2005; Ger and Yenicioğlu 2004).

The metaphor may also provide focused insights relating to the managerial practice of brand extension and brand management broadly, particularly in cases where consumers have some personal stake in the future of the brand.

To begin with, dirt is not an absolute, but can only exist in relation to some frame of reference. In a given situation, different frames could compete for attention and credibility. This observation is in agreement with the growing literature regarding brands as polysemic, which argues that brands harbor multiple meanings and can be interpreted differently by different observers and in different situations (Bengtsson 2002; Kates 2004; Kozinets 2001). Brand extension strategy is often described as being about identifying and selecting new products that fit with the existing order of the brand (cf. Keller 1998). However, the sociocultural perspective suggests that there may not be an existing order, but rather several possible orders. A key managerial challenge is then to provide a convincing frame of reference that makes room for the brand extension. The study clearly shows consumers’ urge to make sense of a brand extension. Consumers will make some sort of attribution for the new product introduction and if they do not have access to cues that allow a convincing frame to emerge, they may have no choice but to question company intentions and the authenticity of the brand (cf. Kozinets 2001). The findings also indicate that such an outcome may be more than a cognitive irritation, instead being a lot more emotional and engaging than recognized in the existing brand extension literature.

Offering a convincing frame at all times involves asking not only what product that would fit in a given brand order, but also how an order can be articulated to fit given products. This would acknowledge decision-making practice, where strategies partly emerge as a pattern of actions evolves over time (e.g., Mintzberg and Waters 1985). Although this view seems to allow considerable marketing creativity, it also requires empathic consumer insight. Rather than “just” selecting products that are similar to the existing brand offering, marketers are faced with the tougher job to understand which frames that could resonate across consumers:

“[O]bjects don’t shout out what class they belong in, properties don’t jump out and announce their similarities. The human agents who are inventing strong ordering processes for their lives are ordering themselves at the same time, and ordering their world.” (Douglas 1996, 148)

The quote implies that marketers must appreciate the worldviews of their consumers, finding out how their brands can serve as resources in consumers’ construction of identity (Holt 2002). The key “fit” may be not the one between the extending brand and the new product, but between the deeper meaning of the brand in consumers’ lives and the frame constructed to accommodate the product.

Traditionally, brand management is seen as a matter of creating a tight set of beliefs that appeal to consumers (e.g., Keller 1998). However, dirt becomes more visible the stricter the order is that serves as a background. This suggests a managerial dilemma: How can strong loyalty to a set of ideas be fostered while not encouraging undesirable purism? However, perhaps there is another side to the issue. Maybe brands sometime need a little dirt to thrive in the long-term. In the case of Porsche Cayenne, the findings reveal how the controversial status of the car gives opportunity for consumers to rehearse history, to reflect on brand heritage, and to reinforce meanings of the brand. Because the Cayenne triggers celebration of all the things that it is not, it serves to confirm the qualities of the Porsche brand that bind the negative posters together. So, provided that a new product can attract new customers, even a “dirty” brand extension can create a win-win situation, where both old and new forms of consumption get energized. Seen this way, a little dirt could help invigorate and develop the brand:

The quest for purity is pursued by rejection. It follows that when purity is not a symbol but something lived, it must be poor and barren. It is part of our condition that the purity for which we strive and sacrifice so much turns out to be hard and dead as a stone when we get it. . . . Purity is the enemy of change, of ambiguity and compromise. (Douglas 1966, 162-3)

Harnessing the creative dimension of dirt may be necessary to ensure the supply of fresh material for consumers’ identity projects (cf. Holt 2002). If brands are to remain relevant, marketers and consumers need a certain degree of tolerance for deviants and inconsistencies. If purity becomes a fixation, brands could lose the vigor that companies and consumers require.

**REFERENCES**


European Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 7) / 95
Dirt!–An Interpretive Study of Negative Opinions about a Brand Extension


Some Consequences of Category Ambiguity: A Comparison of Hybrid and Non-Hybrid Products
Kaj P.N. Morel, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT
This paper compares the categorization process of hybrid and non-hybrid products and explores the assumption that hybrid products are ambiguous, that is, that they have the potential for multiple interpretations of category membership. Two exploratory studies, one with a familiar and one with an unfamiliar non-hybrid/hybrid product pair, explore this assumption and several of its proposed consequences. Study 1 shows that the familiar hybrid television-video recorder is perceived as more ambiguous, requires greater cognitive effort and is odder than the familiar non-hybrid discman. Both products are classified equally accurate. Study 2 suggests that the effect of hybridness on categorization is insignificant when consumers are unfamiliar with the products they need to categorize.

INTRODUCTION
The creation of composite or hybrid products is a recent approach in product development. Two or more existing products or product functions are combined into a new multifunctional product. Examples are the combination of a PDA, mobile phone, and digital camera, the watch with digital camera, the refrigerator with internet facilities, the combination of CD, MP3, and photo-CD player, and the combination of a television and video recorder. Ries en Ries (2002) have labeled this phenomenon the ‘convergence hype’, which represents the idea that the future belongs to products that emerge from the fusion of industries and technologies. Jain and Ziamou (1995, p. 375) have stated that “hybrids are especially prolific in a high-technology and information technology context due to the presence of common technological platforms such as digital processors and operating systems, across a variety of products”. Multimedia appliances are good examples of this. The rationale behind the development of hybrid products is that combining existing products into new product combinations creates products with added value resulting from the interaction between the constituent products. This added value may range from space efficiency (one single product instead of two or more separate products) to new functionalities. Jain and Ziamou (1995) discriminate between parity hybrids and enhanced hybrids. In the case of parity hybrids the new combination does not render much added value to consumers. The television-video recorder is an example of a parity hybrid. The added value of combining a television and video recorder is limited to greater mobility and less loose components, cables and wires. Enhanced hybrids, in contrast, will create a value that goes beyond merging the individual components. Combining a digital camera with a mobile phone provides the new functionality of immediate, on-the-spot picture taking and transmission.

The central assumption of this paper is that hybrid products are ambiguous by nature, that is, they have the potential for multiple interpretations of category membership (Ha & Hoch 1989). For example, a television-video recorder can be classified both as television and video recorder. Investigating the plausibility of this assumption is the first aim of the research presented here. The second aim is to explore the potential consequences of a hybrid’s intrinsic ambiguity on its categorization and perception by consumers. A first consequence that is suggested here is that hybrid products are susceptible to ‘miscategorization’. This term is used to indicate that consumers may ‘misplace’ a hybrid product into the ‘wrong’ category (i.e., another category than the one intended by the manufacturer). The example of the PDA-mobile phone-digital camera combination may serve to illustrate this point. How will consumers perceive and comprehend this hybrid product? Will they classify it as a PDA with phone and picture taking capabilities, as a phone with computer and picture taking qualities, as a camera with computer and phone functionalities, or as a new product that forms a category of its own? Ideally, consumers’ perception of the PDA-mobile phone-digital camera combination will correspond to the categorization (positioning) that the manufacturer has chosen (e.g. a PDA-plus). However, consumers may decide that the PDA-plus is actually a mobile phone-plus or a digital camera-plus, depending on their perception of the main functionality of the device. When this happens, that is, when the positioning strategy for a hybrid product does not correspond with consumers’ perceptions hereon, adoption and diffusion are likely to be frustrated. Note that miscategorization is less likely to occur for non-hybrid products that have less potential for multiple interpretations of category membership. A second anticipated consequence of the ambiguity of hybrid products is that the information processing of such products is relatively complex and requires larger degrees of cognitive effort. Hybrid products are complex because consumers do not have cognitive schemas for the particular combination of these products (although they may be familiar with the individual source products). As a result, consumers will find it more difficult to comprehend hybrid than non-hybrid products. Finally, based on observations by (Bruner, Goodnow and Austin 1977), hybrid products are predicted to be perceived as funny or odd in comparison to non-hybrid products due to their ambiguity. The next section will explain our central assumption that hybrid products are ambiguous by nature and each of the proposed consequences of this ambiguity.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HYBRID AND NON-HYBRID PRODUCTS
Why are hybrid products intrinsically ambiguous and non-hybrid products not? According to Ha and Hoch (1989, p. 354), “ambiguity is most likely to arise when the consumer faces uncorrelated attributes”. Product attributes A and B are said to be uncorrelated if the presence of B is independent of the presence of A and vice versa. In the case of hybrid products, product attributes are typically uncorrelated because the set of attributes associated with one component normally does not co-occur with the set that constitutes the other component(s). Thus, in order to make sense of a hybrid product (e.g., television-video recorder), consumers need to integrate attributes (i.e., television and video recorder attributes) that cannot be expected (i.e., predicted) to occur together within a single product. The resulting ambiguity makes it difficult for consumers to decide to which product category a hybrid product belongs. In contrast to the attributes of hybrid products, the attributes of non-hybrid products are generally positively correlated. On the basis of a few of a non-hybrid’s attributes, one is usually able to ‘predict’ (many of) its other attributes. Therefore, consumers will not perceive a non-hybrid product to be ambiguous.

1The author would like to thank Jan Schoormans and Ad Pruyn for their helpful comments on a previous version of the paper.
If one accepts that hybrid products are more ambiguous than non-hybrid products, several consequences for the categorization of both types of products may be anticipated. Figure 1 depicts the categorization processes of hybrid and non-hybrid products. In this figure, non-hybrid products are indicated by the letter X, hybrid products are denoted by the letters AB, where A and B represent the two source products. The corresponding categories are X', A', B', and AB'. When consumers are confronted with either a non-hybrid product X or a hybrid product AB, a search in memory starts for a category to which X (AB) can be assigned (i.e., the target category).

In the case of both types of products may be anticipated. Figure 1 depicts the categorization processes of hybrid and non-hybrid products. In this figure, non-hybrid products are indicated by the letter X, hybrid products are denoted by the letters AB, where A and B represent the two source products. The corresponding categories are X', A', B', and AB'. When consumers are confronted with either a non-hybrid product X or a hybrid product AB, a search in memory starts for a category to which X (AB) can be assigned (i.e., the target category).

In the case of non-hybrid products, classification of X into X' happens (almost) automatically as there is only a single target category that fits the product. The corresponding target category X' is immediately activated and the correspondence between X and X', the so-called schema congruity (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989), is high. Straight fit occurs (Cherian and Jones 1991). There will be no doubt about category membership.

Whereas categorization of non-hybrid products can be seen as a relatively automatic assignment of a product to a category the moment a good fit is found, the categorization of hybrid products is more complex, because then there are multiple target categories for classification. If two or more target categories are salient, categorization per se becomes a focal problem, and a more deliberative comparative process is likely (Cohen and Basu 1987). The hybrid AB (e.g., television-video recorder) can be classified into target category A' (i.e., television), target category B' (i.e. video recorder), or into the hybrid category AB' (i.e., television-video recorder). Of these options, classification as either A' or B' is less likely to occur, since these target categories only partly match the hybrid AB (indicated in Figure 1 by the dotted arrows and dotted boxes). The hybrid will sooner be assigned to a category of its own (AB'). In other words, when the choice is between accommodating the hybrid product to either one of the source categories (to which it is partly congruent and partly incongruent) and assigning the hybrid product to the corresponding hybrid category (to which the hybrid is completely congruent), consumers will most likely opt for the latter. Nevertheless, consumers may end up assigning a hybrid product to one of its source categories, either because they fail to recognize its hybrid character (e.g., a television-video recorder looks very similar to a television), or because they believe that one of the source products dominates the hybrid to such an extent that it should be classified accordingly. When this happens, classification is erroneous in the sense that the hybrid product is classified as a non-hybrid.

In sum, it has been theorized thus far that hybrid products will be perceived by consumers as more ambiguous than non-hybrid products. As a result, the categorization of hybrid products is believed to involve greater cognitive effort than the categorization of non-hybrid products and the number of accurate classifications for hybrid products is proposed to be lower than the number of accurate classifications for non-hybrid products. A third consequence of category ambiguity that is proposed here, was suggested through research conducted by Goodnow (discussed in Bruner et al. 1977). In his study, subjects' reactions to a conflicting category cue (i.e. a piece of information that is in conflict with the activated category) were examined. Bruner et al. (1977, p. 207) report:

One notable characteristic of cue conflicts is their effect on the subject’s surety. When an instance exemplifies such a conflict, Goodnow’s subjects report that there is something ‘funny’ or ‘odd’ about it and they seem to be uncertain as to what to do. This is the case even though they may not be able to verbalize that the cues before them are ‘in conflict’ or ‘point in opposite directions’.

The psychoevolutionary model of surprise2 may help to explain why hybrid products, which exemplify a cue conflict, seem odd to consumers. Surprise is thought to be elicited

2The psychoevolutionary model of surprise posits that people need surprise in order to function properly: “Surprise is conceived of as an evolutionary old mechanism whose function it is to enable and motivate processes that serve to analyze the surprising event and, ultimately, to remove the input-schema discrepancy (…) Thus, the ultimate adaptive function of surprise is to ensure, by means of schema revision or knowledge updating, an effective prediction and control of the environment and, hence, successful individual-environment transactions” (Schützwohl 1998, p. 1183).
by unexpected events, with unexpected events being those that deviate from activated knowledge. It is exactly the unexpected combination of source products (i.e., the conflicting cues), the fact that their attribute sets are uncorrelated, that characterizes hybrid products and that makes them odd. This is not to say that non-hybrid products could not be odd. Still, given their ambiguous nature, hybrid products stand a greater chance of being perceived as odd than non-hybrid products. Therefore, it is proposed that hybrid products will be perceived as being odder than non-hybrid products.

**STUDY 1**

The purpose of the first study was to explore the propositions about the differences between hybrid and non-hybrid products regarding category ambiguity, categorization effort, categorization accuracy and oddity.

**Sample, Stimuli, and Procedure**

The research was administered individually. Participants were 23 men and 21 women recruited from a consumer household panel ranging in age from 18 to 65 (M=42.2). Participation was voluntary and participants received a small financial compensation. Participants received an A4-size product picture of either a non-hybrid (i.e. discman) or a hybrid product (i.e. television-video recorder), both from the same general product category (audio-visual equipment). A pretest showed that both products were equally familiar (mean familiarity scores of 4.91 for the television-video recorder and 5.36 for the discman on a seven-point scale, $t_{20}=1.08; p=.293$). Half of the participants received the picture of the discman ($n=23$), the other half received the picture of the television-video recorder ($n=21$). To control for age and gender effects, the two groups of participants were matched with regard to these variables.

**Measures**

After viewing the product picture, participants filled out a questionnaire containing the following measures. All measures were obtained using bipolar seven-point answering scales, unless noted otherwise.

A two-item *familiarity* scale was included as a control variable ($r=.91$). The items were: I do not know this product (1)-I know this product (7); This product does not seem familiar to me (1)-This product seems familiar to me (7).

*Ambiguity* was captured by a five-item-scale: How much confusion does the product evoke? (1=no confusion at all; 7=a lot of confusion); How certain are you that you know what the product is? (1=very certain; 7=not certain at all); How clear is this product to you? (1=not clear at all; 7=very clear); I need more information to be able to tell what the product is (1=not agree at all; 7=total agree); I need more information to be able to determine what the use of the product is (1=not agree at all; 7=total agree). The third item was reverse coded after which the scores on the five items were averaged to yield a mean ambiguity score (Cronbach alpha=.93).

*Cognitive effort* was scored on two items ($r=.73$): How difficult was it for you to determine what the product is? (1=very easy; 7=very difficult); How difficult was it for you to name the product? (1=very easy; 7=very difficult). The first question relates to the identification aspect of categorization, whereas the second taps into its linguistic aspect. The above questions constitute an indirect measure of cognitive effort, assuming that greater perceived difficulty indicates higher levels of classification effort.

The number of correct classifications, *classification accuracy*, was determined by asking participants what the product was. This response could be either correct or incorrect, with a correct answer implying that participants mentioned the specific category to which the product belonged (i.e., discman or television-video recorder).

Finally, participants’ mean perceptions of *product oddity* were measured using three statements (Cronbach alpha=.74): I think this product is common (1)-I think this product is uncommon (7). I think this product is usual (1)-I think this product is unusual (7), I think this product is odd (1)-I think this product is not odd (7).

**Results**

The television-video recorder ($M=5.31$) and discman ($M=6.11$) were perceived to be equally familiar ($t_{20}=1.56; p=.127$). The television-video recorder was rated as more ambiguous than the discman ($M=2.51$ vs. $M=1.68; F(1,42)=3.29, p<.05$). With regard to cognitive effort, participants reported that it was more difficult to categorize the television-video recorder ($M=3.14$) than it was to categorize the discman ($M=1.89; F(1, 42)=7.52, p<.01$). To explore whether the number of inaccurate classifications was higher for hybrids than for non-hybrids, a 2 x 2 cross table was calculated. Of the 23 classifications of the discman, 20 (87 percent) were correct. For the television-video recorder ($n=21$) the percentage of correct classifications was 86. The highly similar percentages make clear that there was no difference between the non-hybrid and hybrid condition with regard to the number of accurate classifications (Fisher’s exact test: one-sided $p=.662$). The percentage of accurate classifications was high in both cases. Finally, participants’ perceptions of product oddity were considered. The television-video recorder was judged as being significantly more odd than the discman ($M=3.54$ vs. $M=2.42; F(1,42)=11.27, p<.001$).

To test the proposition that the television-video recorder evoked greater cognitive effort and was perceived as odder due to its implicit ambiguity, a mediation analysis procedure as described by Campbell and Goodstein (2001) was followed. Specifically, the analyses of variance that demonstrated main effects of the experimental treatment variable (‘hybridness’) on ambiguity, cognitive effort and oddity, were repeated with ambiguity included as a covariate. Not only was ambiguity a significant covariate in both analyses (cognitive effort: $F(1, 41)=39.78, p<.001$; oddity: $F(1, 41)=6.93, p<.05$), but including it in the analyses weakened the effect of hybridness on cognitive effort ($F(1, 41)=5.25, p<.05$) and oddity ($F(1, 41)=7.57, p<.01$). According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the change in $F$-value from 7.52 (11.27) in the analysis without ambiguity to 5.25 (7.57) in the analysis including ambiguity suggests that ambiguity partially mediates the effects of hybridness on cognitive effort and oddity.

**Discussion**

The results of the first study showed that the assumption that consumers perceive hybrid products to be more ambiguous than non-hybrids holds for the hybrid/non-hybrid product pair that was investigated. Not only was the television-video recorder more ambiguous than the discman in participants’ eyes, it was also perceived as more odd than the discman and its categorization required greater cognitive effort. The observed differences between the television-video recorder and the discman cannot be attributed to a difference in familiarity between the two, since this difference was found to be non-significant. Mediation analysis demonstrated that, rather than familiarity, the television-video recorder’s ambiguity was at least partly responsible for the observed effects.

An unexpected finding was that the television-video recorder was as accurately classified as the discman. A potential explanation for this outcome is that the television-video recorder is a familiar hybrid product. A distinct category for the television-video recorder has developed since its introduction to the marketplace. As
a result, consumers experience little uncertainty regarding category membership for the television-video recorder, in spite of the fact that alternative classifications as television or video recorder may have been considered. In short, the effect of hybridness on classification accuracy may have been moderated by product familiarity. Study 2 will explore the potential moderating effect of familiarity on the relationship between hybridness and ambiguity, cognitive effort, classification accuracy and oddity by replicating study 1 with an unfamiliar hybrid/non-hybrid product pair.

**STUDY 2**

According to Mandler (1982, p. 26), “the common-sense notion of familiarity implies that there exists a representation (a schema) that ‘fits’ the encoded event”. Given Mandler’s description of familiarity, it makes sense that classification accuracy was equally high for the familiar hybrid and non-hybrid in study 1, whereas cognitive effort and oddity were higher for the hybrid than for the non-hybrid. After all, the existence of a fitting category for the hybrid provides the categorizer with a fully acceptable classification option, but it does not automatically decrease cognitive effort (the process to arrive at the accurate classification may still be relatively demanding) or oddity (a familiar product may still be perceived as odd).

How would the categorization of an unfamiliar non-hybrid and hybrid product develop? For an unfamiliar non-hybrid product no corresponding target category X’ (yet) exists (see figure 2). Although X may cause activity in memory, no specific product schema X’ that matches the instance will become available. Thus, the unfamiliar product X cannot be straightforwardly fitted or assimilated into an existing category. Instead, a new category will have to be formed.

For an unfamiliar hybrid product no corresponding target category AB’ exists either. Thus, new schema creation will generally be the most likely classification option. In this case, though, consumers have an alternative to make sense of the new instance. They may accommodate the unfamiliar hybrid into one of its familiar source categories, rather than creating a new one. The watch with digital camera, for instance, could be categorized into a subcategory within the watch category. The advantage of this option is that it requires much less cognitive effort than creating a new category does. Nevertheless, a scenario like this is unlikely to occur, because the integration of two source products makes the unfamiliar combination so different from both the familiar source categories that it cannot easily be incorporated into either one of them without violating their within-category similarity structure. Only when new schema creation is impossible (e.g., because consumers have no idea what the unfamiliar hybrid is) may consumers feel that they have no other option than to assign the hybrid to one of its source categories.

In conclusion, under conditions of unfamiliarity, it is difficult to predict how classification will take place. Both non-hybrid and hybrid products lack corresponding target categories. Under such conditions, ambiguity will generally be high because the unfamiliar product could belong to many different categories, irrespective of whether it is hybrid or not. As a result, consumers’ cognitive activities devoted to trying to make sense of the unfamiliar are likely to be elaborate both in the case of hybrid and non-hybrid products. Classification accuracy may be expected to be poor for both hybrids and non-hybrids since neither hybrid nor non-hybrid products can be easily categorized. In the case of hybrid products, the source categories make for potential target categories when the creation of a new hybrid category proves not to be feasible, but such a classification outcome would still qualify as inaccurate. Perceived oddity will only differ between unfamiliar hybrids and non-hybrids if consumers recognize the source products that constitute the unfamiliar hybrid and if they perceive this particular combination as unexpected. Taking everything into consideration, including the fact that testing null-hypotheses (i.e., no differences between hybrids and non-hybrids) is problematic (Frick 1995; 1996), no specific hypotheses will be tested in the forthcoming study. Instead, study 2 will explore the categorization process of an unfamiliar hybrid and non-hybrid product.

**Sample, Stimuli, Procedure and Measures**

Forty-five members (24 men and 21 women) of a consumer household panel voluntarily participated in the study (average age was 41.2 years). Participation was rewarded with a small financial compensation. Half of the participants received an A4-size product picture of a non-hybrid juice centrifuge (n=22). The other half viewed a picture of a hybrid hair dryer-iron combination (n=23). A pretest demonstrated that both products were equally unfamiliar (mean familiarity scores of 2.09 for the hair dryer iron and 2.27 for the juice centrifuge on a seven-point scale, t20=.527; p=.604). Again, the two groups of participants were matched with regard to age and gender. The procedure was identical to that of study 1 and so were the measures (familiarity: r=.39; ambiguity: Cronbach alpha=.91; cognitive effort: r=.58; product oddity: Cronbach alpha=.78).

**Results**

Participants were equally unfamiliar with the hair dryer-iron (M=1.91) and the juice centrifuge (M=2.32; t43=-.983; p=.331). No significant difference regarding ambiguity was found (t43=0.12; p=.990). The mean ambiguity was the same for the hair dryer-iron (M=5.12) and the juice centrifuge (M=5.13). A similar outcome appeared with respect to the degree of cognitive effort involved in the categorization process. Categorizing the hair dryer-iron required as much cognitive effort (M=4.91) as categorizing the juice centrifuge (M=5.07; t43=.388; p=.700). The number of accurate classifications was higher for the juice centrifuge than for the hair dryer-iron. A 2 x 2 cross table revealed that 7 out of 22 classifications of the juice centrifuge were correct (31.8 percent) against 2 out of 22 (9.1 percent) for the iron-hair dryer (the result of one subject was missing, therefore n=22). This difference was non-significant, though (Fisher’s exact test: p=.132). Finally, a significant difference was observed for perceived oddity (t43=3.18; p<.01). Participants indicated that the hair dryer-iron (M=5.13) was more odd than the juice centrifuge (M=3.96).

**Discussion**

The findings of the second study provide tentative support for the notion that product hybridness does not significantly affect ambiguity, classification accuracy and effort under conditions of unfamiliarity. This makes sense intuitively, as was argued earlier. If consumers do not know what a product is, ambiguity will be high per definition. The potential for multiple interpretations of category membership is practically unlimited; the unfamiliar (hybrid) product can be almost anything (some idea of what the unfamiliar product is not will usually be present in consumers’ minds). As a result, classification will require extensive cognitive elaboration and even then accurate classifications are unlikely to result due to the absence of an appropriate target category. In this light, it comes as no surprise that no significant differences were found between the hair dryer-iron and juice centrifuge with respect to category ambiguity, cognitive effort and classification accuracy.

Given these findings, the observed difference for perceived oddity is unexpected. Why would people find one product odder than another, if both products are equally unfamiliar to them?
Guessing for an answer to this question, the perceived difference in oddity between the juice centrifuge and the hair dryer-iron could be caused by the particular perceptual characteristics of the hair dryer-iron. The product just looks weird. This observation directs attention to an obvious limitation of the presented studies: the use of only two stimuli in each of them. I will address this and other limitations in the next section.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Merging existing products or functionalities into new product combinations has become common practice. The presented research addressed the question of how consumers categorize such hybrid products under different conditions of product familiarity. Hybrid products were proposed to possess an inherent ambiguity that distinguishes them from non-hybrid products. On the basis of a simple model, describing the product categorization process as a comparison process between a product instance and the product knowledge (product schema) available in consumer memory, the differences between the categorization of (familiar and unfamiliar) hybrid and non-hybrid products were explained. Since the categorization process of hybrid products is characterized by the presence of multiple potential target categories compared to a single target category for non-hybrid products, classifying familiar hybrid products was theorized to involve more cognitive effort and to lead to greater classification inaccuracy. Furthermore, the unanticipated combination of source products was proposed to make hybrid products more odd in the eyes of consumers than non-hybrids. An exploratory study with a familiar non-hybrid (discman)/hybrid product (television-video recorder) pair as stimuli yielded tentative support for all propositions except the one about classification accuracy. This unexpected result was attributed to the fact that participants were so familiar with the television-video recorder that its classification was as obvious and straightforward as that of the non-hybrid discman.

In a second exploratory study the moderating effect of familiarity on the categorization of a hybrid (hair dryer-iron) and non-hybrid product (juice centrifuge) was examined. The results of this study suggested that the effect of hybridness on categorization is insignificant when consumers are unfamiliar with the products they need to categorize.

An important limitation of the research reported in this paper concerns the generalizability of the results. Consumers’ judgments about just four stimuli were collected, each stimulus representing an entire class of products (i.e. familiar non-hybrids, familiar hybrids, unfamiliar non-hybrids and unfamiliar hybrids). For this reason, the outcomes of studies 1 and 2 do not justify strong conclusions and should be treated with care and reserve. Nor do they provide profound insight into hybrid products and their categorization and the role of familiarity in this process. Without attempting to trivialize the limited generalizability of the results, the main goal of this research was to provide a tentative account of the categorization process of hybrid in comparison to non-hybrid products and to collect a first set of data on this topic. Given the original objective of the research, and fully acknowledging that the presented investigation should be replicated with different stimuli to enhance generalizability, the remainder of this discussion will focus on some interesting findings of the two studies and raise some additional issues regarding consumers’ reactions to hybrid products.

In both studies, participants judged the hybrid product as being odder than the non-hybrid product. Whereas the greater oddity of the hair dryer-iron may be attributable to its strange appearance, no such explanation seems to hold for the television-video recorder. Apparently, the cue conflict activated by the presence of both television and video recorder cues in one and the same product materializes even when people are familiar with this product. This is a puzzling finding given the fact that surprise, according to the psychoevolutionary model of surprise, results from unexpected events. It is difficult to understand how combining a television and a video recorder would qualify as an unexpected event, if consumers are highly familiar with this particular event (i.e., the television-video recorder combination). If one accepts that cue conflict is not...
the factor that causes the greater oddity of the familiar hybrid, what is? This is an interesting question for future research (when this effect is demonstrated for other familiar hybrids than the television-video recorder, of course).

It was suggested that consumers who categorize an unfamiliar hybrid product that is completely new to them, may decide to assign it to one of the (familiar) source categories when they are unable to create a new category for the hybrid. Classifying the hybrid to one of its source categories may represent an ‘emergency’ solution: “I don’t have a clue what this thing is, but it looks like some kind of iron so that would be my best guess”. Inspection of the inaccurate classifications that participants made for the hair dryer-iron suggests that this might indeed be what is going on. Out of a total of 20 misclassifications 12 were false in the sense that the mentioned categories did not have anything to do with the hybrid or its source products (e.g. crumb sweeper, air freshener, and carpet cleaner). The remaining eight participants classified the iron-hair dryer as an iron. Nobody thought it was a hair dryer. The choice for the iron instead of the hair dryer source category makes sense, because a typical iron category cue is clearly perceptible (i.e., the soleplate) whereas no typical hair dryer category cues stand out.

To conclude this paper, some thoughts will be devoted to consumers’ evaluations of hybrid products. An important question is how consumers form their judgment of a hybrid product. For example, a consumer who considers buying a PDA-mobile phone-digital camera combination may assess the quality of each of the components separately (e.g., by comparing it to other PDAs, mobile phones, and digital cameras) and then determine the overall quality on the basis of the individual quality judgments. Alternatively, (s)he may judge the PDA-mobile phone-digital camera on its PDA performance only and take its phoning and picture-taking qualities for granted. Or (s)he may judge the PDA-mobile phone-digital camera as a whole on the basis of appearance or brand name. Naturally, the way consumers judge a new hybrid is closely related to the way they categorize it (i.e., as a single product or as multiple products). Theoretically, the above example illustrates the difference between analytic and holistic information processing (Creusen, Schoormans, and Snelders 1997). With analytical processing consumers go through a evaluation process in which they form separate evaluations of the (attributes of the) source products and then combine these according to a particular decision rule into an overall product judgment. The type of decision rule applied may vary from a compensatory to a non-compensatory one (Abelson and Levi 1985). According to the former type of rules, the attractiveness values for the different source products are traded off against one another to arrive at the overall judgment of the hybrid (option 1 in the example above). The latter type of decision rules represents rules according to which trade-offs between performances on the hybrid’s basic functionalities do not take place. Instead, the overall judgment of the hybrid is based on the performance of one of the source products only (option 2 in the example above). With holistic processing, consumers do not judge products as composites of separate components but as unitary entities (Creusen et al. 1997). Holistic product judgment was illustrated by the third option in the PDA-mobile phone-digital camera example. Future research could investigate the type of product judgment processes that take place when consumers evaluate hybrid products.

Apart from the question how consumers judge hybrid products, one may wonder what their judgments of new hybrid products will be. Will consumers appreciate new hybrid products? At least three issues appear to be relevant in this respect. First, the attractiveness of a new hybrid product will depend on its surplus value over that of its constituent products. Enhanced hybrids are therefore predicted to be more attractive than parity hybrids. Second, the inherent ambiguity of hybrid products makes them relatively complex. (Berlyne 1970) has argued that consumers generally do not like high-complex stimuli, because they evoke uncertainty, conflict, or disorientation. Consumers can therefore be expected to react with reservation to the introduction of hybrid products. Third, hybrid products may be perceived as risky purchases by consumers. Not only may consumers perceive the hybrid as an inferior combination of its constituent products (e.g., the car-boat that “drives like a boat, and floats like a car” Ries and Ries 2002), they may also anticipate the disposal of the complete hybrid due to a breakdown of one of the components. Taken together, the above issues suggest that new hybrid products are likely to be met with scepticism by consumers, making it harder for companies to turn them into a success.

REFERENCES


Differences and Similarities in Measuring Family Influences on Young Adult Consumers. An Integrative Analysis
Rafael Bravo, University of Zaragoza, Spain
Elena Fraj, University of Zaragoza, Spain
Eva Martínez, University of Zaragoza, Spain

ABSTRACT
There is still much to analyse in the process of lighting and passing the torch (Moore, Wilkie and Lutz, 2002). In this paper, we analyse the effect of family communication patterns, type of family and consumer expertise on the dimensions of family influences on young adults. Results show that the effects of these factors are different depending on the dimension of the family influence considered. In this work we analyse the effects on the informational and normative nature of the influence, and on the effects on consumer skills, preferences, attitudes and choice of a specific brand.

INTRODUCTION
Throughout the years, the literature on consumer behaviour has revealed the importance of family influence to explain the individual’s purchase decisions. In the case of young adults that leave family home, this influence is especially crucial since they have lack of experience in certain purchases, and family is considered as a reliable and close source of information.

Deepening into the process of family influences on the young adult, one promising area to study consists in the analysis of the factors that determine the influence. The main goal of this work is to analyse the effect of three factors: family communication patterns, type of product, and consumer expertise on the family influences on young adult consumer behaviour.

In order to analyse these effects, this paper study family influences from its different dimensions: firstly, from the informative or normative nature of the influence, and secondly from the consequences of the influence in terms of consumer skills, preferences, attitudes and choice of a specific brand. Thus, this new approach allows researchers to compare the differential effect of these factors on each dimension of family influence.

In the following section, we revise the literature on family influences and, in the light of previous results, we develop a series of hypotheses. Afterwards, we proceed to describe the method to contrast the hypotheses and we explain the results obtained. Finally, we discuss main conclusions and we propose future lines of research.

BACKGROUND
Due to the extension and the multidisciplinary character of the analysis of family influence on consumer behaviour, the division of the analysis in different lines of research has been necessary. Thus, family influences have been approached mainly from three different perspectives, these are consumer socialization, family decision making and intergenerational influence studies. Briefly, consumer socialization has been defined as “the processes by which young people acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to their functioning in the marketplace” (Ward 1974); in this line of research, family is considered as the main socialization agent in the consumer learning process. The study of family decision making analyses the power exerted by each family member in a joint purchase decision (Davis and Rigaux 1974, Lee and Beatty 2002). And finally, the study of intergenerational influence is defined as “the influence of one generation on another in terms of acquisition of skills, attitudes, preferences, values and behaviours in relation to the marketplace”. (Heckler, Childers and Arunachalam 1989, Moore, Wilkie and Lutz 2002, Shah and Mittal 1997).

In the case of the young adult who leaves his family of origin, the study of family influence is suitable in all the lines of research mentioned. Thus, the young adult faces situations of consumption where he will go through a learning process (analysis of consumer socialization); he still maintains close ties with his family, and his past and present participation in family decision making may determine the influence exerted by his parents once he leaves his family home (family decision making); moreover, he purchases his own products and he may act both as influencer and as influencee in the buying process of his family (analysis of intergenerational influences). These common areas are represented in figure 1, where we also highlight the contributions of different disciplines such as sociology, psychology and marketing.

In the recent years, few studies have integrated the shared areas of these lines of research. Shah and Mittal (1997) and Moschis (1988) point at the common aspects in the studies of socialization and intergenerational influences, and the work by Ekstrom, Tansuhaj and Foxman (1987) analyses the relation between the studies of socialization and family decision making. However, most studies have considered family influences in isolated areas.

Dimensions of family influences have been analysed from the three lines of research, and they have been analysed both from the nature and from the outcomes of the influence. From the nature, some authors have pointed at two dimensions of consumer susceptibility to influence: informational and normative influence (Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel 1989, Mascarenhas and Higby 1993). Informational influence occurs every time consumer wants to increase his information about a product, and then he observes or he asks for advice in order to obtain this information from a person perceived as knowledgeable about a product (Park and Lessig 1977, Shah and Mittal 1997). Normative influence refers to the individual sense of belonging and identification to a reference group (Bearden et al. 1989, Mascarenhas and Higby 1993). In the case of family influence, parents may be perceived by their young adult children as knowledgeable about certain products, and they may also be considered as a main reference group. From the consequences of the influence on consumer behaviour, as previously noted, definitions of consumer socialization and intergenerational influences point at its effects on skills, knowledge, attitudes, preferences, values and consumption related behaviours (Ward 1974, Heckler et al. 1989). Viswanathan, Childers and Moore (2000) develop an intergenerational influence scale that analyses three components relevant to marketplace transactions: consumer skills, consumption related preferences and consumer attitudes. Furthermore, there are studies that analyse the effects of the influence on the choice of a...
specific brand (Feltham 1998, Moore et al. 2002; Webster and Wright, 1999).

In conclusion, family influence is a multidimensional concept that should be studied both from the nature and from its consequences on consumer behaviour. Moreover, its study should be covered from the contributions of the lines of research of consumer socialization, family decision making and intergenerational influences.

**HYPOTHESES**

Regarding the determining factors of family influence on the consumer behaviour, a division in three groups can be considered. Thus, there are factors in relation to the type of family, factors in relation to the type of product, and factors related to the type of consumer.

In relation to the type of family, studies on consumer socialization points at the importance of family communication to determine family influences (Moore et al. 2002, Moschis 1985, Olsen 1993). One of the most frequent typologies of family communication in the literature is the one established by McLeod and Chaffee (1972), which classifies family communication according to two different orientations: concept-oriented communication and socio-oriented communication. Concept-oriented family communication fosters the development of the children’s own competences. In this type of communication, parents encourage the participation of their children in the family decision making. Conversely, in families characterized by socio-oriented communication, parents control their children to develop respect for others and to behave according to social norms.

Family influences on young consumers once they leave their family home are determined by the pattern of communication lived during childhood (Moore et al. 2002; Olsen 1993). Thus, in families characterised by a high degree of concept-orientation and a low degree of socio-orientation in family communication, children trust their parents’ opinions more than in families with other patterns of communication (McLeod and Chaffee 1972). This trust may persist once the child leaves his home, and it may result in the existence of family influences. These influences can be manifested in all its dimensions, both in its nature and its consequences on consumer behaviour.

**H1**: The degree of concept-oriented family communication is positively related to family influence.

The opposite is true for socio-oriented communication. Thus, in families characterised by a high degree of socio-oriented communication and a low degree of concept-oriented communication, children tend to rely less on the family and more on the outside-the-home agents of influence such as friends or the media than in families with other patterns of communication (McLeod and Chaffee 1972, Moschis 1985).

**H2**: The degree of socio-oriented family communication is negatively related to family influence.

Regarding the type of product, literature has proved the existence of differences in family influences between publicly and privately consumed products; thus, previous results evidenced that family influence is higher for privately consumed products than for publicly consumed products (Bearden and Etzel 1982, Childers and Rao 1992). The argument to support these findings is related to the risk inherent in the products. Thus, Shah and Mittal (1997) highlight that social risk is more attached to publicly consumed products, while functional or financial risk is more closely related to privately consumed ones. Therefore, in order to avoid social risk, in the case of publicly consumed products consumers tend to rely more on social agents such as peers and media than on the family. Conversely, in the case of privately consumed products, consumers tend to rely more on the family than on social agents of influence.

**H3**: Family influence is higher for privately consumed products than for publicly consumed products.

Finally, in relation to the type of consumer, we have considered the degree of expertise in relation to a product. Thus, consumer expertise is defined as “the ability to perform product-related tasks
successes scales developed by Viswanathan et al. (2000) to analyse the
outcomes of influence, we have used the intergenerational influ-
ence scales of informational and normative influence
family influence: in order to analyse the nature of the influence, we
have chosen the scales in relation to the analysis of the dimensions of
products and 124 to publicly consumed ones.

After the depuration process, we obtained 246 valid ques-
tions to analyse. Finally, parents and children had to
live in the same country so that they both had access to the same
brands. In this way, average extracted variance coefficients in every scale
were also higher than the minimum of 0.5 (Nunnally 1978).
Consequently, we conclude that all the scales are reliable.

In addition, scales in the analysis complied with the require-
ments of convergent and discriminant validity. Validation process
consisted of an initial exploratory factor analysis with varimax
rotation, and a subsequent confirmatory factor analysis through the
robust maximum likelihood estimation method. In the exploratory
analysis, items of the scales have to comply with two requirements:
firstly, factor loadings above 0.5 in a single factor; and secondly,
item to total correlations higher than 0.5 (Hair et al. 1999). In the
confirmatory analysis, two items were removed successively from
the original dimensions of informational and normative family influence
(IN3, NO6), and one item was removed from the dimension of family influence on consumer skills (SK1).

Finally, regarding discriminant validity, we have analysed the
correlation intervals for the correlations between factors. These
intervals do not encompass value 1 as to reject discriminant valid-
ity.

The validation processes revealed some differences in relation to
the dimensions of concept-oriented communication and con-
somer expertise. Thus, the concept-oriented communication scale
produced two different factors, a first factor was related to the
participation on purchase decisions that we have called “participa-
tion” (PARTICIP); this factor was composed by three items (CO1,
CO2, CO6). The second factor was more related to the encourage-
ment to develop individual’s own competences, that we have
denominated “encouragement” (ENCOURAG); this factor was
composed by three items (CO3, CO4, CO5). These results are in
line with those obtained by Carlson, Grossbart and Tripp (1990).

Moreover, with reference to the type of product, we have
considered food and cleaning products as representative of pri-
ately consumed products, and clothes and accessories as represent-
ative of publicly consumed ones. All of these categories of prod-
ucts have been frequently used in the previous literature of family
influences (Childers and Rao 1992, Keillor, Parker and Schaeffer
1996, Moore et al. 2002). Finally, we have chosen the scale of
consumer expertise by Kleiser and Mantel (1994) to measure
customer expertise on a product; this scale analyses the automatic-
ity, analysis, elaboration and memory in relation to the purchase of
a product. Composition of this scale can be seen in table 3.

All the scales have been commonly used in the literature, and
they were measured through seven-point Likert scales. The product
type has been measured through a dummy variable that took value
0 for privately consumed products and 1 for publicly consumed
goods.

RESULTS

The first stage of the analysis was the validation of the scales
in the context where our study is conducted. This process was
absolutely necessary since most of those scales have been exclu-
sively tested with American or Asian population samples.

In relation to the condition of reliability of the scales, we
analyse the coefficients of Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability
and average of extracted variance. Cronbach’s alpha and composite
reliability coefficients were above the critical value of 0.7. In the
same way, average extracted variance coefficients in every scale
were also higher than the minimum of 0.5 (Nunnally 1978).
Consequently, we conclude that all the scales are reliable.

In addition, scales in the analysis complied with the require-
ments of convergent and discriminant validity. Validation process
consisted of an initial exploratory factor analysis with varimax
rotation, and a subsequent confirmatory factor analysis through the
robust maximum likelihood estimation method. In the exploratory
analysis, items of the scales have to comply with two requirements:
firstly, factor loadings above 0.5 in a single factor; and secondly,
item to total correlations higher than 0.5 (Hair et al. 1999, Nurosis
1993). In this analysis five items were removed successively from
the dimension of normative influence (NO4, NO1, NO3, NO5,
NO2). This exploratory study was corroborated with a confirma-
tory factor analysis through the programme EQS 5.7b. Convergent
validity was based in the fulfillment of three conditions: statistical
significant factor loadings (λ>1.96), standarized factor loadings
above 0.5, and R-squared coefficients for item reliability higher
than 0.5 (Hair et al. 1999). In the confirmatory analysis, two items
were removed from the original dimensions of informational and
normative family influence (IN3, NO6), and one item was removed
from the dimension of family influence on consumer skills (SK1).
Finally, regarding discriminant validity, we have analysed the
correlation intervals for the correlations between factors. These
intervals do not encompass value 1 as to reject discriminant valid-
ity.

The validation processes revealed some differences in relation to
the dimensions of concept-oriented communication and con-
somer expertise. Thus, the concept-oriented communication scale
produced two different factors, a first factor was related to the
participation on purchase decisions that we have called “participa-
tion” (PARTICIP); this factor was composed by three items (CO1,
CO2, CO6). The second factor was more related to the encourage-
ment to develop individual’s own competences, that we have
denominated “encouragement” (ENCOURAG); this factor was
composed by three items (CO3, CO4, CO5). These results are in
line with those obtained by Carlson, Grossbart and Tripp (1990).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>Measures of family influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informational Influence (INFORMATIV)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN1</td>
<td>I often consult my parents to help choose the best alternative available from a product of X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN2</td>
<td>To make sure I buy the right brand or product of X, I often observe what my parents are buying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN3</td>
<td>If I have a little experience with a product of X, I often ask my parents about the product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN4</td>
<td>I frequently gather information from my parents about a product of X before I buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Normative Influence (NORMATIV)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO1</td>
<td>If I want to be like my parents, I often try to buy the same brands of X that they buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO2</td>
<td>It is important that my parents like the products of X I buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO3</td>
<td>I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles of X until I am sure my parents approve of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO4</td>
<td>I often identify with my parents by purchasing the same brands and products of X they purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO5</td>
<td>When buying products of X, I generally purchase those brands that I think my parents will approve of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO6</td>
<td>I like to know what brands and products of X make good impressions on my parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO7</td>
<td>If my parents can see me using a product of X, I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO8</td>
<td>I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same brands and products of X that my parents purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence on consumer skills (SKILLS)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK1</td>
<td>It’s advantageous to be good at money saving, planning future finances (...) regarding product X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK2</td>
<td>Their views on “how to choose between products and brands of X” while shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK3</td>
<td>Their views on “how to evaluate information related to a product of X, its price, adverts, stores (...)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK4</td>
<td>The best way to shop is to compare two or more brands of X carefully (...) and buy the one which gives you the best overall value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence on consumption-related preferences (PREFEREN)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR1</td>
<td>Why they buy the brands or products of X they purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR2</td>
<td>Their preferences for shopping products of X at different types of stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR3</td>
<td>Their preferences for different styles of products of X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR4</td>
<td>Their preferences for different companies and the products/brands of X made by these companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence on consumer attitudes (ATTITUDE)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT1</td>
<td>Their views about information of products of X provided by different types of advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT2</td>
<td>The role that advertising plays in purchase decisions of products of X (helps or hinders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT3</td>
<td>Their views on whether price should be used as an indicator of product quality in X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT4</td>
<td>Whether to rely upon salespeople to educate you when making a purchase decision in X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence on the choice of a brand (BRAND)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR1</td>
<td>I usually buy the same brands of X that my parents buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR2</td>
<td>When I have seen my parents being loyal to brands of X, I have kept buying those brands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR3</td>
<td>I buy the same brands I have seen at home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Informational and normative influence scales adapted from Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel (1989); scales of family influence on consumer skills, preferences and attitudes adapted from Viswanathan, Childers and Moore (2000).
## TABLE 2
Measures of family communication patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-oriented family communication (SOCIO)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SO1 Your parents said to you what things you should or you shouldn’t buy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO2 Your parents wanted to know what you did with your money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO3 Your parents complained when they didn’t like something you had bought for yourself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO4 Your parents said they knew what was best for you and you shouldn’t question them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO5 Your parents said that you shouldn’t ask questions about things teenagers do not usually buy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO6 Your parents said that you shouldn’t buy certain things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept-oriented family communication (CONCEPT)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO1 Your parents asked you to help them buy things for the family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2 Your parents asked what you thought about things they bought for themselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO3 Your parents said you should decide about things you should or you shouldn’t buy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO4 Your parents said that buying things you like is important even if others don’t like them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO5 Your parents said that you should decide yourself about how to spend your money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO6 Your parents asked you for advice about buying things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Adapted from Moschis and Moore (1979)

## TABLE 3
Measures of consumer expertise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Automaticity (EXPAUTO)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC1 I automatically know which brands of X to buy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC2 I am loyal to one brand of X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC3 At the place of purchase, I can visually detect my preferred brand of X without much effort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC4 I can immediately identify my preferred brand even if it is located with other brands of X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC5 When I purchase my preferred brand of X, I do not pay attention to the other brands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis (EXPANALY)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EA1 I enjoy learning about X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA2 I will search for the latest information on X before I purchase a brand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA3 I keep current on the most recent developments in X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elaboration (EXPELAB)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EE1 I consider myself knowledgeable on X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE2 My knowledge of X helps me to understand information about these products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE3 I use my knowledge on X to verify that advertising claims are in fact true</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memory (EXPMEMO)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EM1 I can recall lot of brands of X from memory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM2 I can recognize many brand names of X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM3 I can recall product-specific attributes of X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM4 I can recall brand-specific attributes of various brands of X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Adapted from Kleiser and Mantel (1994)
Furthermore, the scale of consumer expertise revealed the existence of three dimensions instead of the four in the original scale of Kleiser and Mantel (1994). Composition was similar to the original with the exception that the dimensions of information analysis and elaboration were grouped in a unique dimension.

The study of the relation between family influence dimensions and its determinants have been analysed through multivariate regression analysis. The choice of this methodological tool was motivated since this analysis enables to study the relationship between a dependent variable and a set of independent variables. In this case, we have conducted a series of regression analysis where the dependent variables are each of the dimensions of family influence (informational influence, normative influence, influence on consumer skills, influence on consumer preferences, influence on consumer attitudes and influence on the choice of a brand) and the independent variables are the determining factors of family influence considered in the analysis (participation, encouragement, socio-oriented family communication, type of product and the dimensions of consumer expertise).

Identical procedures were followed in all the cases. We conducted successive stepwise regression analyses, introducing in each regression the explanatory variable with higher correlation and gradually introducing new variables to see any improvement in the model. Then, we performed confirmatory regressions where all the independent variables with the exception of type of product were introduced together. Afterwards, we proceed to compare both models according to their adjusted R2 and the significance of the variables’ regression coefficients. Finally, we introduced the variable type of product since it was considered as a dummy variable, and we verified any improvement in the model according to the same criteria (Hair et al. 1999).

Table 4 show the final results of the regression analyses. The values of F-test allow us in all the cases to discard the hypothesis that the results may be attributed to chance. Fit values of R2 agree with those obtained in the literature on consumer behaviour (Lachance, Beaudoin, and Robitaille 2003, Shim, Snyder, and Gerth 1995, Webster and Wright 1999). Condition indexes show results below the limit of 30, tolerance statistical is above 0.1 and the variance inflation factor is below the limit of 10, which allow us to discard problems of multicollinearity (Hair et al. 1999, Nurosis 1993).

In the light of the results, we can contrast the hypotheses initially exposed. In hypothesis 1, we established the existence of a positive relation between concept-oriented family communication...
(in our analysis, this dimension has two factors: participation and encouragement) and the dimensions of family influences. This hypothesis was supported for the dimension of participation (PARTICIP) in all the dimensions of family influences, as we can observe in table 4, all the standardized parameters of regression (β) were positive and significant in the analysis. Hence, we may conclude that the more the child has participated in the family purchase decisions, the higher the family influence on the young adult child once he is away from home.

Conversely, the relationship between encouragement (ENCOURAG) and family influence measures revealed a negative effect on family influences on consumer skills (β=-0.18; p<0.01) and on consumer preferences (β=-0.16; p<0.05). The relations between encouragement and the rest of the dimensions of family influence were not significant. According to these results, we may say that children in families that foster the development of children’s own competences are less likely to develop skills and attitudes similar to their parents.

In hypothesis 2 we establish that socio-oriented family communication is reversely related to the dimensions of family influence. As it can be seen in table 4, only the relation between socio-oriented communication and family influence on consumer attitude was significant, and the results showed an opposite relationship to expectations. Thus, hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Regarding hypothesis 3, we propose higher levels of family influence on privately consumed products than on publicly consumed ones. This hypothesis was supported for informational influence (β=0.12; p<0.10), for influence on consumer preferences (β=0.25; p<0.01) and for influence on the choice of a brand (β=0.51; p<0.01). The negative sense of the regression coefficients revealed lower family influence on privately consumed goods, since privately consumed products acted as the reference category with value 0.

Finally, in hypothesis 4, negative relationships between the dimensions of consumer expertise (EXPAUTO, EXPANELA, EXPMEMO) and the dimensions of family influences were established. This hypothesis was supported for the relation between the dimension of memory (EXPMEMO) and two dimensions of family influence, concretely, the informational influence (INFORMAT) and the influence on the choice of a brand (BRAND). Thus, the values of the parameters showed a negative relationship in the dimensions of informative influence (β=-0.19; p<0.01) and in the influence on the choice of a brand (β=-0.16; p<0.05). That is, when young adults recognise or remember few brands due to the scarce experience with a product, they will tend to search for information in their parents and buy the same brands they do.

With respect to the dimensions of automaticity (EXPAUTO) and information analysis and elaboration (EXPANELA), the regression analyses showed positive relationships. Thus, the higher the degree of automaticity, analysis and elaboration, the higher the degree of family influence. A reason which may explain these results is that consumer expertise may be considered not only as a cause of influence but also as a consequence; that is, the young adult may acquire knowledge of the product because of the family influence received.

**CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

In conclusion, the integrative perspective of this work has enabled to study new relationships between variables analysed in different lines of research. Thus, we have studied family communication patterns, commonly used in socialization studies and in family decision making, together with other variables such as private vs. publicly consumed products or consumer expertise, considered in studies of intergenerational influences.

In the light of these results, we can state that family influence should be analysed in all its dimensions. Thus, we have seen that the effects of certain factors such as family communication patterns, type of product or consumer expertise vary depending on the dimension of family influence considered in the analysis. For that reason, it is necessary to be careful before making a generalisation or a comparative analysis between different works.

From a managerial perspective, these results show that in privately consumed products and in products where young consumers have a low degree of expertise, family influences are especially important to determine the behaviour in young consumers. For that reason, marketing actions aimed at fostering the intergenerational transfer of brand loyalty seem to be appropriate in this kind of products. Moreover, from a more theoretical perspective, we have seen that participation in family decision making is important to explain the family influence on the consumer once he leaves his home.

Regarding the limitations and future lines of research, first of all we should point at the multiplicity and complexity of factors and effects on the analysis of consumer behaviour. As a result of this limitation, another interesting approach for this goal would be the use of qualitative methods of analysis. This qualitative analysis, as a complementary method, would shed some light at the reasons why some of the hypotheses in this work were not supported. In the same way, a direct extension of this work would be the analysis of other facets of interest regarding the family influences as well as their relationship with other relevant variables in relation to the type of family, type of product or type of consumer. Furthermore, it would be of interest to propose a comparative analysis between the influence of the family and others agents of influence such as peers or the media (Childers and Rao 1992, Keillor et al. 1996, Moschis and Moore 1979).

The study of the young adult consumer behaviour is still very challenging for marketing; and aspects regarding the influence of external agents have an enormous interest from both the academic and the managerial perspectives. The study of family influences on the young adult’s consumer behaviour still offers many possibilities for researchers today, either to analyse the study from new perspectives or to delve into the existing ones.

**REFERENCES**


Nurosis, Marija J. (1993) SPSS Statistical data analysis SPSS Inc.
Rose, Gregory M. (1999), “Consumer socialization, parental style, and developmental timetables in the United States and Japan” Journal of Marketing, 63 (July), 105-119
INTRODUCTION

Having children today is more than ever an active choice, but still Belch and Willis (2002) characterise today’s (US) families as being “time poor”. The concept of “quality time”–little but good time together–in the sense of having intensive positive togetherness between the parent and the child was invented in the 70s making up for long hours of separation in child care institutions, school and work places. The “guilt factor”, as described by McNeal (1999), means that parents, because they use more time on their work, and less with their children, are more inclined to buy more presents and to do more with their children when they are together, and this plays a role for family consumption. This impacts the life conditions of children. From an earlier authoritative upbringing in Western Europe, upbringing has become more liberal, from a focus on obedience to a focus on independence and autonomy and families have become negotiation families (du Bois-Reymond et al. 2001). This plays a role for family decision-making where children to a higher extent are listened to and encouraged to voice their point of view.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse parents’ and children’s perception of the children’s degree of influence on the decision making process in the holiday context with a focus on children’s influencing strategies and parents’ perceptions of children’s influence: In what ways do Danish and German children influence their parents directly and indirectly when making decisions regarding the family holiday? And how much impact do Danish and German respondents (parents and children) estimate children have in the decision making process in the context of the family holiday?

LITERATURE REVIEW: CHILDREN’S INFLUENCE AND STRATEGIES IN FAMILY DECISION MAKING

Holiday decision-making has long been considered as a joint decision-making process between husband and wife (e.g. Davis and Rigaux 1974; Belch et al. 1985; Belch and Willis 2002). Several studies since recognise that also the child plays a part in family decision-making (e.g. Howard and Madrigal, 1990; Gram and Therkelsen 2003).

Roedder John (1999) finds that older children have more influence than younger children. Younger children influence indirectly by their mere presence and by their special needs, setting certain limits and demands to what the family can do (e.g. as described by Fodness 1992; Thornton et al. 1997). Older children have the most influence on shopping relevant for children (e.g. breakfast, toys and clothes), moderate influence on family activities (e.g. holidays and restaurants) and the least influence on durable consumer goods and expensive goods. Within the last product categories, children have the most influence in the early stages of the decision-making process (recognition of problem and information search) and less influence when the final decisions are made. Children influence purchases in the family, and parents are not deaf to what their children say. Within tourism, pleasing the child is an important motive for parents, mentioned by Ryan (1992) and Johns and Gyimothy (2002). The satisfaction of children is highly rated by parents and if the child does not wish to go to a site, the likeliness of getting satisfied children is poor (Thornton et al. 1997).

Children influence indirectly and in a passive way by indicating what they like and what they do not like (Roedder John 1999) and young children might use very direct approaches to influencing (Rust 1993). But pestering is only one strategy among many and children use more advanced techniques of influencing family purchases. Children might initiate the purchase, collect information about alternatives, suggest retail outlets, and have a say in the final decision (Roedder John 1999). As children grow older strategies such as bargaining, compromising and persuasion are employed, and asking for products with no argumentation turns into discussions and compromises between parents and children (Rust 1993). Lindstrom maintains that children’s indirect influence is very important as well (2003). The influence of children is not just a one-way unsophisticated process with a screaming child in a supermarket, but a two-way communicative and multi-faceted process between the child and—at least at times—an adult encouraging the child’s participation.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to get a nuanced view on children’s influence with regard to decision-making in the family in the holiday context, various empirical approaches are employed: qualitative interviews, focus groups, a phone survey and a questionnaire survey among children. By collecting both quantitative and qualitative data it is possible both to know about the level of perceived influence in the decision-making process and to go behind the numbers and understand the scenarios of influence and joint decision making to understand the complexity of the family as a decision making unit. Qualitative interviews give access to stories, impressions and feelings. In opposition to most other studies regarding family holidays, where often only one (adult) member of the family is surveyed, the family was interviewed together, and both parents and children are surveyed.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out in the spring of 2003 with 26 families (10 Danish and 16 German) with one or more children between 0 and 11 years of age (in three groups: families with six year olds and younger children, seven to 11 year olds, and families with children in both age groups) to cover the spectre of relevant issues. 27 German (14 girls and 13 boys) and 22 Danish (nine girls and 13 boys) children participated. Informants are from the middleclass in a broad sense as it is particularly this group who goes on holiday in Denmark. Different types of families with various types of educations and jobs were chosen. By selecting the families by knowledge of educational background, living area and family size a broad coverage of potential scenarios was obtained. The semi-structured interviews were based on an interview guide, lasted between one and two hours, resulting in 800 pages of transcripts, documenting around 35 hours of conversation.

The data was analysed through interview analysis (Kvale 1994) for different scenarios of children’s influence in the family decision-making. Categories were generated through open coding categorizing (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Relevant categories were generated both with a point of departure in existing literature but also from the material itself. All interview transcripts were scrutinized to assure that relevant categories were uncovered, and the extension and prevalence of each category were assessed. Three focus groups (with children, mothers and fathers) were carried out in Hamburg in the spring of 2004 and had as its primary task to test holiday images representing situations used in the marketing of holiday in Denmark, but decision-making processes were also discussed.
The phone survey was carried out also in the spring of 2004, where 800 Danes and 1200 Germans were asked about holiday content and decision making in the family holiday (Response rates were not gathered). The phone interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes. The sample was constituted of respondents from the middle class in a broad sense, primarily nuclear families but also some single parents families and some new families. To participate families needed to have at least one child, younger than 13, living at home, and they have to on holiday regularly. In Denmark the survey was carried out in the whole country, in Germany three northern “Länder”. The questionnaire concerned holiday content and a few questions regarding the decision making process.

The adults questioned in the phone survey were asked if they had a child between nine and 13, whether he or she would participate in the child-survey, and 200 German and 200 Danish questionnaires were received from children. The children’s questionnaire was simple, asking for desired holiday content and the child’s participation in the family decision-making process.

The remainder of the paper is arranged as follows: the qualitative data is analysed and a number of different influencing scenarios are presented. Statements from parents and children are analysed to illustrate the spectre of content and form of this influence. Finally, the results from the quantitative surveys from both the perspective of parents and children are discussed in relation to the qualitative findings.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: THE CASE OF FAMILY HOLIDAYS

The decision-making process with regard to family holidays is interesting to look at because family members are motivated by different dreams and wishes in the holiday, making decision making for family products such as holidays an interesting case study as conflicting interests render decision making complicated, not least because holiday is a high involvement product (Seaton and Tagg 1995).

Qualitative data: What kinds of influence do children have on family decision-making?

In the following a number of statements will be analysed. The statements have appeared through interviews and focus groups and reveal perceptions of children’s influence and attempts to influence and of parents’ expressions of how their children impact the decision-making processes. These statements have been categorised in various types of children’s influence, but also parents’ encouragements to make children take part. Whether or not this influence actually has a decisive impact on the holiday decision (destination or activity) is hard to assess, but an evaluation of this is made.

Pestering

The most direct kind of influence is pestering. How well this strategy works seems to depend on the product and the situation, and what parents think about the demand in question. A number of examples of this appeared through the interviews, not directed at the interviewer rather at the parents. In one case a very young girl, three and a half years, says during the interview “I want to go to Tenerife”. Her mother explains that this is because relatives of theirs have been to Tenerife and now the little girl wants to go there as well. This is an example of even a very young child voicing a specific holiday wish, even though it is followed by no argumentation, and the mother knows that the girl does not know what Tenerife is. Still the proposal might bring the issue on the agenda.

Another example stems from a German six year old stating several times during the interview that he wants to go to Legoland: “I want to go to Legoland, I want to go to Legoland, etc.” (six year old boy). This actually gives rise to a discussion of whether the family should go to the Danish Legoland or the German Legoland, which they have already visited.

The pestering technique is not just for young children: “I want to go to Lolland [Denmark], I want to go to Lolland, etc.” an 11 year old girl pesters on and off during the interview. After the interview, as the family walks the interviewer to the door, her father asks “Why do you want to go to Lolland?” and she replies that she wants to go there because at Lolland there is a huge water fun park and her friend has been there. This family do not like to spend their holiday in Denmark, and it does not seem that they would make immediate plans to go to Lolland. It would have been interesting to know where the family did go on holiday, but the data does not reveal this. These examples show simple begging or craving “I want to...” and the demand is repeated, with no further argumentation.

Blackmailing

As illustrated adolescents do not always stick to the reasoning forms of argumentation. A nine year-old Danish boy says: “We are going to Italy this summer because my sister [15 years] says that if we’re not going to Italy, she’s not coming.” This kind of strategy appears to be quite a powerful strategy (since the family went to Italy with three other families this summer). It must be said, though, that it is unknown how the parents felt about going to Italy, they have probably not been completely against it. But as one of parents’ main goals with the family holidays is to reconnect as a family then if one of the members refuse to take part in the holidays this goal cannot be attained. Whether this girl would really have had the power to refuse going, is not known either. But she might not have been the most happy travel companion when e.g. forced to spending summer in a holiday house in Denmark.

Bringing activities and destinations onto the agenda

Children can bring issues on the agenda. This can be through inspiration from friends who have had interesting experiences being abroad or to specific fun parks in their holidays. A Danish mother tells about her son’s input to holiday activities: “If it is something Mathias [boy, seven year old] comes home and have heard about [fun park] it is not always that it is all true what he is told. Then we have to go in [on the Internet] and see, what is it [...] But he brings in input via his network as well”. In another Danish family the children have brought Iceland onto the agenda as a holiday destination as several children in their school are from Iceland. Children meet children from other families, and hearing about their experiences and ideas is perceived as inspiration and possibly even a pressure for their own holiday planning. A German mother tells that when her son changed schools he started to want to fly on holiday. She says (partly to son, partly to interviewer): “there you started talking about it: that all of his school mates fly. And that we don’t”.

A Danish mother gives similar reasons for starting to go abroad. She explains that her daughters “wanted to see other places because most of their friends have been other places... And we felt that...we certainly agreed that it was a good idea to spend time somewhere else. So that is why we went abroad two years ago and last year as well”.

Roedler John (1999) notes that the older children are, the more their peers become the most significant influencers. As also found by Darian (1998) parents are aware of the importance of peer reactions.

“If the kids are happy, we’re happy”

A German mother in the focus groups agrees with most other women in the group that she decides in her family. She does the information search and when she proceeds to book the holiday her children tell her not to forget that there has to be a swimming pool.
And this, the mother claims, is taken into consideration. It seems to be a tacit compromise that the mother arranges and decides and she takes into account the preferences of husband and children.

A Danish family tells how they always go abroad with other couples with children and how they meet for dinner during winter to plan the summer holiday. Here the children are invited to check out the catalogues to see if the proposals suit them.

Parents seem to want to please children. The consumption of the family holiday happens in the family and as the ideal holiday is happy and good times that fly (Inglis 2000) the holiday must be arranged so that all members are, in the starting point, happy with the choice. A standard cliché in both Danish and German interviews (as also found by Johns and Gyimothy 2002) is that “if the kids are happy, we’re happy.”

Indirect influence: if the kids don’t like it, forget it

As shown in the literature study children influence by their mere presence and in this way form the holidays in various ways. A German mother tells: “Mostly [holiday is] about her [1 year old daughter] that she relaxes, and that we’re relatively stress-free”.

Travelling with a young child creates a number of limitations to the holiday. A Danish family were asked who takes the decisions in the family, and the mother answers “It’s the two of us [the parents]. Obviously it influences that…if we go to an art museum, neither Jimmy nor the kids are interested in that, so obviously this influences it. But we are the ones who decide”. The mother claims that the parents decide, but they do not use this power to push anything through, and the children indirectly influence the rejection of some attractions. This is supported by a number of other parents. For example one German father says: “If you do something, which the children don’t want to, well, that doesn’t exactly enhance the good atmosphere. [And about going to restaurants while on holiday] You are there with kids. They’re always messing about, and then…It is stressful for me then if I’m eating–have to look after that he is behaving well. I don’t know…that’s why we are actually avoiding it [going to fancy restaurants]”.

Parents know from experience that if children are not interested in the activity (as the art museum) or if there is no room for children (as in fancy restaurants) then going there is not going to be a pleasure for anyone and they will rather not go. On the contrary parents remember good experiences, as an example with a German family going to the North Sea museum (Danish aquarium) where the family much to their surprise ended up spending all day and the children kept talking about the experience long after it happened.

The experiences gathered by the parents and children underlie the coming decisions regarding holiday. Could the children be bothered? Were they enthused? The more the better. In this way children indirectly influence the decision making process. In many examples parents say that when they plan they consider that above all there has to be something for the children to do. Since interested and happy children are preferred travel companions, proposals are accepted by parents and compromises sought. A German mother of a 10 year-old daughter explains: “She actually brings up, quite often, really very creative and also possible proposals, and then we are most often grateful. And I mean, of course is it also so that when the proposal is made by her, then it is of course also easier to implement it and the enthusiasm is of course completely different than if we had forced her onto a holiday”.

Compromising

A seven year old German girl tells: “Well, we sometimes do so that, well, one day we do what we want and the next day what our parents want”, and another German mother says: “You have to make compromises”. Sometimes this compromising happens with a more or less outspoken level of manipulation by the parents (or mother). A Danish mother tells: “I would not say one person is deciding. But I will say that it is probably me who takes the initiative and order some of those brochures, and then I write down some ideas, and then I say ‘What do you think of this one?’” One German family actually cast lots about what to do when they cannot agree on which proposal to choose.

Overall, there is a very positive evaluation of letting children participate in the decision-making process. Forcing a holiday onto especially older children is not considered advisable by the parents in this sample. Compromise is a very significant word, coming to terms with differences in interests and wishes for the holiday. But among the parents in the sample most parents are better informed than the children and it seems that they are in a good position of explaining why one option is better than the other. Not least the price argument is used to rule out certain options. In the Danish family mentioned above the mother functions as a filtering mechanism and dominates the initiative and information search phase, picks out a number of options, and lets her husband and children be the jury.

Direct decision power

Parents want to avoid children sulking over decisions they do not agree with and seek to share responsibility with children. A few parents in the study have even let their children choose a holiday product directly. Two Danish brothers of 8 and 11 years were allowed to pick between two quite different destinations: whether the family should go skiing in Norway or to a Danish holiday resort. Here the boys got free hands within a limited number of options, which their parents had selected. In a German family a seven-year-old boy actually chose which car to rent. Apart from these examples it is the overall impression from the interview survey that children are more influential when it comes to choosing activities when at the destination e.g. choice of fun parks, ZOO’s, going to a swimming pool, etc.

Decision-making as a part of the upbringing

Letting the children take part in decision-making is not just about avoiding conflicts. It is also about upbringing and creating mature citizens—particularly among the German parents in the sample. A German mother tells: “Actually we ask her [five year old daughter], well, by certain things she can participate in the decision. So that when we go shopping for example. Or when she has to have clothes, there she is free to choose. …There we are giving her a lot of influence actually. I find that important too, that you can decide yourself, and that you in some way are a full member, and that you don’t decide over her head. I find that important”. Another German mother says: “She is old enough, well, to take part of the responsibility and so on, and lets say, that she knows that this is really too expensive, we can’t afford that this year […] and then she accepts it and says OK”. In this way involving her 10 year old daughter in what lies behind the purchase decision. A German father says: “It’s obvious that they [the children] are drawn into the planning,” and a Danish mother: “They [the children] are clearly involved in where we are going”. And if the children do not take part spontaneously they might be pushed to do so. A Danish stepmother tells: “She [teenage stepdaughter] takes part when we’re looking in those brochures [with proposals for leisure activities in the holiday areas]. Some times we have to push her a bit ‘What do you think?’”

For most families in the survey it is considered natural to ask children: for pedagogical and practical reasons. Wanting independent children demands making the child take part in decision-making and assures a more positive implementation of decisions made.
Quantitative data: Perceived influence of children in the holiday decision making

In the qualitative study children were thus found to be quite influential in the decision-making process regarding holidays. These findings were sought quantified in a phone survey the following year as part of a large study on holiday preferences. In the phone survey parents were asked how much influence members of their family have when it comes to holiday decision-making. Holiday decision-making was in the questionnaire split up in three phases: initiative taking, information search and final decision. Regarding the perception of which member in the family who takes the initiative results are shown in Table 1. The mother in the family is perceived as the most dominant person, followed by the father, with a gap down to the children, who are perceived as having some influence. Younger children are perceived as having less influence than older children. The Danish mother is perceived, by both Danish mothers and fathers, as even more dominant than the German mother. More Danish than German women are active on the labour market, which might explain this difference. Danish mothers are thus to a higher extent making their own money which might very well play a role for their influence on the family’s economy. Also the Danish family is less patriarchal and traditional than the German.

Regarding the question on information search (Table 2), again a picture emerges showing that the mother is perceived to be the most influential, followed by the father, but with an even more significant gap to the children. The children are not considered very active in the information search phase. German mothers are considered to be slightly more active in the information search process than Danish mothers.

Regarding the final decision-making (Table 3) it is again mothers who are perceived as being the most influential, again followed by fathers with a gap down to the children. Also–as the case is in all three phases–older children are perceived as more influential than younger children, and German children more than Danish.

In the questionnaire to children they were asked if they are allowed to participate in the decision-making process, regarding where the family is going on holiday. More German than Danish children declare that they are allowed to participate in the decision regarding where the family is going, while more Danish children answer that they have “a little” influence on this. Very few children–but more Danish than German–state that they are not allowed to take part in the decision-making. This fits the statements of parents regarding the influence of children showing that German children are perceived to have somewhat more influence than the Danish children. That German children seem to have more influence than Danish children might be explained from stronger German ideals of independence of children (Malpas and Lambert, 1993), and because German mothers often spend more time with their children, being less active on the labour market than Danish mothers, and thus might have a better feeling of children’s needs and wishes.

The statements of how much impact children are perceived to have appear insignificant compared to the degree of parental power. Comparing these quantitative figures with the results of the qualitative data is interesting. In the qualitative interviews it appears that children have a very large–particularly indirect–influence on which types of tourist destination and accommodation that are considered an option and how earlier good or bad experiences with children on attractions, restaurants and tourist destinations in general, become decisive for purchase of similar holiday experiences. The primary wishes of parents regarding the family holiday are that children have fun and that the family gets good experiences together (Gram og Therkelsen 2003), and these wishes can only be fulfilled if children’s needs and wants are taken into consideration. In some
If we’re not going to Italy, I’m not coming.

**TABLE 2**

Information Seeking

“If you were to distribute 10 points according to the level of influence each member of your family has when it comes to searching information for a holiday, how would you distribute these points?”

(Results in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-7 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 3**

Final Decision-Making

“If you were to distribute 10 points according to the level of influence each member of your family has when it comes to the final decision making for a holiday, how would you distribute these points?”

(Results in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-7 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Families in the qualitative interviews the parents claim that holiday decision-making is a decision between the spouses. During the interviews, even in these families, situations would pop up indicating that children do have influence, and that parents consider the children enormously when deciding, and that the children indirectly influence much. This is why children’s influence seems to be larger than reflected in the phone survey results. This could indicate that parents are not aware of how much impact their children actually have. Even though more developed questions in the phone survey might have generated a more nuanced picture, respondents hardly
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Children have entered the unit of decision making in the family and they are, not always but potentially, involved, particularly indirectly, and often also directly in family purchasing. When parents, in the phone survey, are asked directly how much impact their children have they answer that children have some impact. Children, on the contrary, think they have a high level of impact. Parents seem to have no doubt of who is in control in the family. They themselves have the decisive vote as they know what is possible money-wise and what is best for everyone, but in "the decisive vote" parents take children’s manifestations and prior experiences with the children very much into account. Children do have significant impact and probably an increasing impact as they become better informed and more experienced consumers than ever been before. Through a broad array of techniques, directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously, they influence. Parents want children to have fun in their holidays, and letting children participate in the decision-making process facilitates the implementation of plans in reality. In some ways it can be said that children impact because their parents let them and want them to take part in the decision-making process. On the one hand, in this specific context, this can be linked with ideals for upbringing. German and Danish ideals of bringing up independent and autonomous children are reflected in the data material. When the aim of the upbringing is to make independent and autonomous individuals and good citizens in a democracy, letting children participate in the democratic negotiation process in the family seems evident. On the other hand the participation in the decision-making process also happens because the needs of parents and children can differ and sometimes even be juxtaposed.

That German children are perceived as having more power than Danish children in the quantitative survey—by both children and adults—must be seen in connection with what was found in the qualitative study, where German parents to a higher extent than the Danish express that taking part in the decision-making process in the family is an exercise at becoming an independent person. The even higher estimation of—and explicitness of—ideals of independence in particular the former West Germany might be a key to understanding this difference. Also German mothers possibly have a closer contact with their children, because of more time with them, and a better knowledge of their priorities.

Families are time poor and having quality time is the primary aim in the holiday, which is supposed to be good times, and this rules out forcing decisions through on parental conditions only. The increasing level of children’s role in the family purchase decision making cannot only be explained by children becoming more and more demanding, shouting loader and loader to get what they want, but as this study shows, it is very much a two-way process, informed children versus supportive parents wanting to have quality time with their children, and with a wish to create children who participate in what is going on in an active and independent way. Finally parents also want peaceful and stressfree holiday time, without conflicts. An un-authoritative upbringing, focussing on the child’s autonomy and independency, and typical for the German and Danish context, leads middle-class parents to let children be heard, despite the fact that they still perceive themselves as main decision makers. Thus “having the decisive vote” rings a bit hollow, as this vote encompasses children’s needs and wishes to a high extent.

Children expect to be heard. Adults strive to have democratic families and want to have happy and independent children. The literature on children as decision makers tend to focus mostly on children’s techniques and strategies for pestering whereas parents’ encouragement to make children participate is less described (ex-
If We’re Not Going to Italy, I’m Not Coming

exceptions are Darian 1998; McNeal 1999; Lindstrom 2003). This study shows that the wish to have peaceful holidays and a pedagogical strive to make independent children are strong drivers in letting children be heard. Furthermore this study demonstrates the advantages of using qualitative techniques when complex issues such as relations between parents and children are at stake.

As the educational style of the parents in this study enhances children’s participation in decision-making it would be interesting to compare this study with other countries with more authoritarian traditions to know more about the interplay between parents and children, when deciding on family purchases.

REFERENCES:
Belch, Michael A. and Laura A. Willis (2002): “Family decision at the turn of the century: Has the changing structure of households impacted the family decision-making process?”, Journal of Consumer Behaviour, Dec, 2, 2, 111-124
Du Bois-Reymond, Manuela et al. (2001): Childhood in Europe, Berne: Peter Lang
Gram, Malene (2003): Grounds to Play. Ideals for Upbringing in France, Germany and the Netherlands, Peter Lang, Bern
Gram, Malene and Anette Therkelsen (2003): “Børnefamileferie”. (Family holiday, report about family holiday content, decision making processes and perceptions of Denmark as a holiday destination), Aalborg University
Lindstrom, Martin (2003): Brandchild, Kogan Page
McNeal, James U. (1999): The Kids market. Myths and realities, PMP
The Relative Influence of Consumer Socialization Agents on Children and Adolescents:
Examining the Past and Modeling the Future
Monali Hota, University of Western Sydney, Australia
Robyn McGuiggan, University of Western Sydney, Australia

ABSTRACT
This paper uses an integrated model of ‘relative influence’ to review three decades of consumer socialization research with respect to the relative influence of consumer socialization agents on children and adolescents. The review suggests that psychological developments and culture can be used as antecedents, to model and research ‘relative influence.’ Conceptual and research issues of the past such as (1) lack of conclusive empirical evidence and (2) methodological concerns are discussed later in the paper. Finally, recommendations for further research in the area are presented.

INTRODUCTION
Consumer behavior is almost always performed under the influence of others. Consumer socialization agents such as parents, peers and the mass media are external influences that initiate children and adolescents into their roles as consumers, by helping them acquire what Ward (1974) terms the skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the market place.

Parents, peers, mass media and cultural context together make up the social environment in which children learn to become consumers (John 1999). Research provides some evidence that interaction with one of these socialization agents affects the way children and adolescents interact with the others (Gunter and Furnham 1998). Hence, studying the relative influence of consumer socialization agents is likely to provide a richer understanding of the consumer socialization process. Moschis and Churchill (1978) suggest that a closer look at the relative influence of these agents firstly will help explain the processes through which young people develop the ability to evaluate commercial stimuli (e.g. cognitive development versus social learning), and secondly advance consumer socialization theory.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a critical review of past consumer socialization research with specific reference to the relative influence of consumer socialization agents on children and adolescents. The literature review will be organized by presenting a ‘relative influence’ model. Finally, a conceptual and methodological critique of past research will be presented followed by the revised model.

THE RELATIVE INFLUENCE MODEL–A BROAD OVERVIEW
Figure 1 presents a schematic representation of the relative influence of consumer socialization agents on children and adolescents. The model is not intended to be a comprehensive theoretical model of relative consumer socialization influence, but attempts to structure three decades of consumer socialization research. Consumer socialization agents (e.g. parents, peers and mass media) interact with children and adolescents through the consumer socialization process (Component 1), in two ways. Firstly, socialization occurs through the degree of influence that each socialization agent has (Component 2). Secondly, socialization occurs through the processes of influence used by each agent (Component 3). It is this variation in degrees and processes of influence that makes up the relative influence of consumer socialization agents on children and adolescents (Component 4). This process of relative consumer socialization ultimately leads to outcomes such as children’s acquisition of consumer skills and knowledge (Component 5). The following sections provide a detailed description of each component of the model.

COMPONENT DESCRIPTION AND RELATED EVIDENCE

Component 1: Consumer Socialization Process
The process of consumer socialization occurs when children and adolescents interact with consumer socialization agents to acquire consumer skills, knowledge and attitudes. This paper examines the relative consumer socialization process with respect to the three key agents—parents, peers and mass media. With respect to mass media, this paper will focus on examining the consumer socializing influence of television/advertising, as the primary mass medium children are exposed to.

Component 2: Degree of Influence
Parents
Parents are the primary influence on children and the most important and effective means of inculcating consumer beliefs and habits (Gunter and Furnham 1998; Ward, Wackman, and Wartella 1977). The importance of parental control over children’s consumerism is likely to diminish with increasing age, due to diminishing economic dependence of children on parents (Moschis 1987) and children’s increasing levels of psychosocial development. The level of psychosocial or emotional development in children decides the social conflicts they undergo, and hence the primary social agents involved in resolving these (Bachmann, John, and Rao 1993).

For example, adolescence is a phase when children deal with the conflict of ‘identity crisis.’ This is likely to make them seek the company of their peer group rather than parents. Research however, suggests that the declining degree of parental influence may simply be declining frequency of interaction (Moschis 1987), rather than decline in the nature of influence (Gunter and Furnham 1998; Moschis and Moore 1979a).

Television/Advertising
Television is considered a major influence on the consumer socialization of children, as it is the primary medium through which children are exposed to product advertising (Ward et al. 1977). The relative degree of such influence (compared to parents and peers) is a contentious one, however. Critics of advertising suggest that it has the primary socializing influence on youth—an influence so strong that it is both unfair (i.e. takes advantage of the lower levels of development in younger children) and undesirable (i.e. helps in acquiring irrational motives for consumption and a strong desire for brands and products) (John 1999; Moschis 1978). Others argue that parents and peers are the main sources of learning of consumer skills (Goldstein 1998; Moschis and Churchill 1978).

This can be further supported by the fact that youth fads (e.g. roller skates and men’s earrings) are perpetuated by word of mouth and imitation, rather than advertising. Advertising, in fact, often cashes in on what children and adolescents consider popular products and trends rather than creating such trends (Goldstein 1998). Research suggests however that the consumer socializing influence of television is strong enough for it to play a mediating role on the influence of other consumer socialization agents such as parents...
and peers (Churchill and Moschis 1979; Moschis 1978), though they may also in turn mediate advertising’s influence (Moschis 1978). While in the case of both children and adolescents, television provides opportunities for increased consumption-oriented interaction with their parents (Churchill and Moschis 1979; Moschis 1978); in the case of adolescents it may actually decrease such interaction with peers (Churchill and Moschis 1979).

Literature on television/advertising’s influence further suggests that the impact of television/advertising on children and adolescents seems limited by their developing cognitive abilities. It will have a differential impact on children in different stages of development (Uusitalo and Takala 1993; Ward et al. 1977) because, “as children mature, they make a transition from viewers who see advertising as purely informative, entertaining, and trustworthy to ones who view advertising in a more skeptical, analytical, and discerning fashion” (John 1999, p. 191).

Children are more perceptually bound in early childhood (Ward et al. 1977) and hence their learning from television commercials may be influenced primarily by perceptual characteristics. This implies that recall of advertising is poor among younger children and becomes complex, multi-dimensional and complete only as they grow older (Ward et al. 1977). Sanft (1986) found that children recall information that is peripheral to the product, and young children in particular, recall very little product relevant information.

Children towards the end of early childhood ‘play’ with the content of commercials rather than take them as providing serious product information. Those who are about to reach adolescence however have considerably developed cognitive skills and develop a slightly more critical attitude towards advertising, especially towards its “untruthful” rhetoric (Uusitalo and Takala 1993). Research has found that elementary school children cannot identify stores from their advertising slogans. Given young children’s frequent exposure to television, the only likely reason for this may be that the socializing influence of advertising does not extend to the kind of processing that would put brand names and advertising slogans in the long-term memory of young children (Reece 1984).

As in the case of children, cognitive development has a role to play in adolescents’ interactions with television. The increasingly complex content and structure of adolescents’ cognitive capabilities and mental models have been shown to precipitate “epistemic doubt” (as defined by Boyes and Chandler 1992), and hence adolescents may become extremely skeptical due to their own changing beliefs and the realization of the relativities of truth (Boush, Friestad, and Rose 1994). This cognitive dynamism of adolescence extends to beliefs and attitudes about consumer behavior (Boush et al. 1994), as evidenced by the fact that older adolescents have greater consumer affairs knowledge, are better able to differentiate product attribute information in advertisements, and have less favorable attitudes toward advertising than do younger adolescents (Churchill and Moschis 1979; Moschis and Moore 1979a). Cognitive development may predict the acquisition of cognitive defenses towards commercials in adolescents (Moschis 1978).

**Peer Group**

Peers, though under-researched as socialization agents (John 1999), are a significant source of influence when children’s consumer behavior. Such influence seems to begin at about mid-childhood (McNeal 1964) and increases with age to reach a high at adolescence (Campbell 1969). The greater peer-dependency of adolescents implies that they will spend more time away from family and home. This affects adolescents’ frequency of interaction with parents and peers (Gunter and Furnham 1998), with increasing age being associated negatively with frequency of communication about consumption with parents and positively with peers (Moschis and Churchill 1978).

While the frequency of communication with peers and parents changes, it is not clear whether the actual influence of these agents undergoes corresponding changes. Some studies have shown that parents are still the main influence affecting buying decisions in specific situations (Moschis and Moore 1979a). Adolescents’ frequency of interaction with peers about consumption matters adequately predicts their involvement in the early stages of household consumer decision making; but such influence declines as the household moves towards actual product purchase, suggesting parental mediation of the effects of peer influence (Moschis and Mitchell 1986). Such parental mediation in fact, seems to occur across cultural boundaries, as reported by Singaporean research (Mehta and Keng 1985).

Research suggests that psychological development (e.g., psychosocial development and the ability for social perspective taking) plays a strong role in determining the relative degree of peer group
influence (Bachmann et al. 1993). There will be differences in the extent to which children are capable of receiving and acting upon peer group influence depending upon their stage of development. Children under 5 years of age would seem to be the least susceptible to referent group influence, as they have greater difficulty in acknowledging and taking another person’s perspective. Children in the later part of early childhood and beginning of middle childhood are somewhat likely to be influenced by their peers. They may either dismiss peer influence altogether, or may simply believe that their friends’ opinions are somewhat important, no matter the type of product.

Children in the upper end of middle childhood appear more susceptible to reference group influence than their younger counterparts since they can anticipate other’s reactions to their opinions and behavior, and can consider their own preferences in conjunction with others’ opinions. But it is children twelve years of age and older who show the strongest susceptibility and most sophisticated sensitivity to reference group influence as they realize that psychological impressions can be formed on the basis of consumption preferences and choices (Bachmann et al. 1993).

Component 3: Processes of Influence

Parents

Parents do not consciously train younger children in the area of consumer behavior (Ward et al. 1977) but may purposely attempt to teach consumer skills to adolescents (Moschis 1978). Younger children learn such skills more through a relatively “direct” teaching process, while children approaching adolescence learn more indirectly through observation (Ward et al. 1977).

Consumer socialization processes adopted by parents are likely to have differential impact on children depending on their ages, and stages of cognitive development (Ward et al. 1977). Firstly, the role of parent-child interaction in supporting the child’s performance of various consumer skills decreases with age, such that for older children interaction is equally likely to facilitate or hinder the performance of these skills. (Ward et al. 1977) study indicated that mother-child interaction variables provide positive support for the kindergartner’s performance of consumer skills, but for third and sixth-graders the pattern of relationships was mixed. Frequent interaction with the mother about consumption is likely to teach younger children various consumer skills, which they can then perform on their own. Such gross kinds of interaction have little utility for older children, who begin to be impacted by more subtle aspects of parent-child interaction, such as family communication (see Moschis and colleagues in the 1980’s).

Secondly, there seems to be a decrease in the positive impact of mothers’ socialization goals on consumer skill performance of children, as they grow older. This may be attributed to the decreasing impact of parent-child interaction on children with age, as interaction is the primary way through which these goals are communicated to the child (Ward et al. 1977). Thirdly, as the child increases in age, the mother’s own consumer behavior plays an increasing role in supporting the child’s performance of various consumer skills. (Ward et al. 1977) found the mother’s own behaviors had a mixed impact on the kindergarteners’ performance of consumer skills, but clearly supported the third-graders and sixth-graders’ skill performance. The subtle and abstract consumer information-processing skills reflected in the mother’s own consumer behavior may not be understood by a younger child; but the older children not only understand her behavior but also integrate it with their own (Ward et al. 1977).

Finally, research provides evidence of a decrease of the positive impact of providing children with consumption opportunities, with increasing age. Providing a child with such opportunities facilitates consumer learning only when some level of supervision is maintained. The relatively less supervised consumer behavior of older children may make skill learning a matter of trial and error for them, with an almost equal likelihood of both failure and success (Ward et al. 1977).

Research suggests that parental socialization processes are also likely to have variable impact in different cultures (Rose 1999). Japanese mothers have been found to restrict their children’s consumption, allow less consumption autonomy and report high levels of child’s influence. American mothers on the other hand, have high levels of communication about consumption and allow their children more consumption autonomy than do Japanese mothers.

Television/Advertising

Children and adolescents appear to be influenced by vastly different socialization processes when it comes to consumer learning from television/advertising. Children are primarily affected by mere exposure to the medium, implying that increased levels of exposure will lead to increased skill levels. Adolescents are more affected by the use they make of television/advertising, much of which has been found to be social in nature (Moschis 1978).

Social processes such as communication with peers may condition adolescents’ perceptions and interest in goods and services, which in turn lead to their paying more attention to television programs and commercials to learn about the social uses of products (Bandura 1971; Moschis 1978). This implies a transactional model of communication effects (as proposed by McLeod and Becker 1974).

Peer Group

Peer group influence on consumer socialization is an underresearched topic and past research has primarily been conducted on adolescents (see Moschis and colleagues 1970’s and 1980’s). Hence, not much is known about the processes through which the peer group exerts influence, except for the fact that frequency/extent of adolescent communication with peer groups leads to the acquisition of consumer learning and mediates interaction with other agents.

Component 4: Relative Influence of Consumer Socialization Agents

Based on the number of studies examining the impact of parents and television and advertising compared to the few studies addressing peer group influence, it seems that consumer socialization literature attributes a higher degree of influence to some socialization agents versus others. (Ward et al. 1977) state that the family and mass media influences have been accorded this relatively important status based on findings of socialization research in other contexts such as political socialization. Research suggests that the key socialization agents such as parents, peers and mass media are likely to use different processes to socialize children versus adolescents (Ward et al. 1977).

The literature indicates that the likely antecedents of such ‘relative influence’ are psychological developments and culture. Cognitive and social developments have been strongly linked to the relative influence of individual consumer socialization agents (Bachmann et al. 1993) and individual socialization processes (Ward et al. 1977). Similarly, culture has been linked to the influence of one consumer socialization agent versus another (McNeal and Ji 1998; Mehta and Keng 1985), as well as the relative use of socialization processes (Rose 1999).

Component 5: Outcomes of Socialization

Consumer learning firstly includes the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes directly relevant to consumption behavior
and the transaction itself, and secondly, those that are indirectly relevant which motivate purchase or consumption (Ward 1974). The literature suggests that children are imparted the first type of learning by socialization agents, whereas adolescents learn the second level of skills, thus implying that even socialization outcomes can be relative, as children increase in age.

**Parents**

Adolescents learn different consumer skills than children due to parents’ purposive attempts to teach consumer skills to their teenagers (Moschis 1978). Parental consumer socialization of younger children seems to focus on direct consumer learning (Carlson and Grossbart 1988; Ward et al. 1977), while in the case of adolescents (Churchill and Moschis 1979; Moschis 1978), parents also influence indirect consumer learning, such as the learning of rational or economic motivations for consumption (Riesman and Roseborough 1955).

**Television/Advertising**

Television advertising acts as a source of new product information, providing children with some knowledge of the range of goods and services available, and the attributes and criteria that they can employ in evaluating various purchase alternatives. Research suggests that this may vary between American and non-American cultures. Retail stores are the primary source of new product information for American children (Ward et al. 1977) whereas television advertising is primary in the case of Chinese children (McNeal and Ji 1998).

Viewership of advertising may directly affect product choice by influencing the child to buy or request a particular product (Robertson and Rossiter 1977; Wartella, Wackman, and Ward 1978), or by influencing the child’s strategy for taking product decisions (i.e. suggesting certain brand attributes) (Wartella et al. 1978). Research suggests that children who watch a lot of television commercials have more favorable attitudes towards commercials (Atkin 1975; Rossiter and Robertson 1976), are more inclined to believe the advertising messages (Buijzen and Valkenburg 2000), and ask for advertised products more frequently than children who view little or no commercials (Buijzen and Valkenburg 2000; Gorn and Goldberg 1980; Robertson et al. 1989). The socializing influence of television may also play a mediating role on the influence of other agents, as it provides opportunities for consumption-oriented interaction between parents and children (Moschis 1978).

The influence of television/Advertising on adolescents extends into complex learning, both directly, through the frequency of viewing (Moschis 1978) and indirectly, by setting up the agenda for positive parent-child interaction (Riesman and Roseborough 1955). Television/Advertising impacts upon adolescents in three ways, through: (1) imparting favorable attitudes towards advertising and brands, (2) direct acquisition of “expressive” elements of consumption (i.e. social motives for consumption and materialistic attitudes) and (3) indirect influence on ‘goal directed’ elements of consumption (i.e. economic or rational motivations for consumption) (Moschis 1978).

**Peer Group**

Even at 5-10 years of age, children’s consumer related attitudes and values could be shaped by peer group influence (Gunter and Furnham 1998), through comments peers make about products or brands, and about the way they are advertised; which may modify the effectiveness of advertisements (Greenberg 1986).

In adolescence, peer group influence extends beyond acquisition of simple consumer skills to more complex and indirect consumer learning (Gunter and Furnham 1998; Moschis and Churchill 1978). Peers influence adolescents’ preferences for products and brands, both directly, and indirectly through taking consideration of their peer’s product preferences during product evaluation (Gunter and Furnham 1998). Interpersonal communication with peers influences other positive aspects of consumer behavior; via provision of consumer affairs knowledge, increasing cognitive defenses against advertising, and building the desire to explore more sources of information (Moschis 1978). Peers also influence more complex notions such as adolescents’ acquisition of the expressive elements of consumption as well as their materialistic attitudes (Moschis 1978).

**CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CRITIQUE**

Ward, Klees, and Wackman (1990) suggest that certain areas of research in consumer socialization still have ‘high marginal utility’ for additional research. (John 1999) reiterates that significant gaps still remain in the understanding of consumer socialization. The relative influence of consumer socialization agents on children and adolescents seems to be an area where significant conceptual and research gaps exist.

Much controversy surrounds the relative influence of socialization agents on children and adolescents’ learning of individual consumer skills (Moschis and Churchill 1978). The findings of research in the context of political socialization have accorded more importance to family and mass media (Ward et al. 1977) relative to other socializing agents. While critics of advertising suggest it is primarily advertising that influences youth, that too undesirably; others argue that parents and peers are the main sources of learning of consumer skills (Goldstein 1998). Finally, most child psychologists report the overriding, and possibly negative, influence of peer groups in certain age groups such as adolescence.

There is a dearth of empirical research on the topic of ‘relative influence’, with respect to the number of studies as well as issues examined. Most studies deal only with the impact of one socialization agent (Bachmann et al. 1993; Carlson and Grossbart 1988; Moschis and Moore 1979b). Even then, there is little emphasis on studying the relative impact of the socialization agent between children of different ages. Further, studies that deal with more than one socialization agent, have primarily been conducted among adolescents (Churchill and Moschis 1979; Moschis and Mitchell 1986) and only a single study provides some explanation of the ‘relative influence’ issue in case of young children (Ward et al. 1977).

Past research on the relative influence of consumer socialization agents also suffers from methodological issues, (Ward et al. 1977) who examined the influence of parents and television on children, collected data from children on their performance of consumer skills and linked this with data collected from mothers on consumer socialization processes used, thus not directly testing the issue. Moschis and Churchill (1978) tried measuring relative influence of consumer socialization agents on adolescents using multiple regression analysis, but suggest cautious interpretation of their results, due to possible inter-correlations between predicting variables.

**CONCLUSION**

Key consumer socialization agents have a relative impact upon children and adolescents that manifests itself through: (1) degree of influence, (2) processes used and (3) outcomes of socialization. This relative impact is not only between one socialization agent and another, but also between childhood and adolescence, and may be a function of internal psychological developments, such as cognitive and social (Bachmann et al. 1993; Ward et al. 1977). This is supported by the literature. John (1999) suggests that such
developments provide a backdrop for the growing sophistication children exhibit in understanding and performing in the consumer role (e.g. the ability to focus beyond perceptual characteristics, to think abstractly, to develop a deeper understanding of interpersonal situation, etc).

Further, culture also seems to determine the relative role of individual consumer socialization agents (McNeal and Ji 1998; Mehta and Keng 1985) and processes (Rose 1999) versus one another. This seems justified as culture is one of the variables that make up the social environment in which children learn to become consumers and understanding the differences between cultures may provide an opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the socialising influence of factors such as family structure or peer relationships (John 1999).

The review of the literature thus indicates that there is scope to build a theoretical model of ‘relative influence’ and conduct further research, as long as one takes care of the issues with past research. A schematic representation of the revised relative influence model is given in Figure 2, incorporating the antecedents suggested by the literature.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Firstly, future research on the ‘relative influence’ of consumer socialization agents should incorporate the use of a multi-theoretical perspective of psychological development, as no single socialization theory can accurately describe the complex picture of consumer behavior development and change (Moschis and Smith 1985). The impact of culture on the ‘relative influence’ of consumer socialization agents can be examined in two ways; through direct statistical measurement of cultural dimensions, or indirectly, by conducting cross-cultural research.

Research on the ‘relative influence’ of consumer socialization agents could also combine qualitative and quantitative methodologies to enrich the interpretative qualities of the data and to permit increased confidence in findings that are consistent across methods (Mangleburg 1990, in the context of research on children’s purchase influence). Finally, future research can consider directly measuring the impact of socialization agents and processes, across respondent age groups, even young children, as children themselves are competent, though different, providers of research data (Todd 2001).

REFERENCES


Moschis, George P. (1978), *Acquisition of the Consumer Role by Adolescents*. Atlanta: Pub. Services Division, College of Business Administration, Georgia State University.


Consumer Motivations to Participate in Marketing-Events: The Role of Predispositional Involvement
Markus Wohlfeil, Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland
Susan Whelan, Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland

ABSTRACT
Confronted with the decreasing effectiveness of classic marketing communications, event-marketing has become an increasingly popular alternative for marketers in dealing with a changing marketing environment. Event-marketing is defined as the creation of 3-dimensional, interactive brand-related hyperrealities for consumers by staging marketing-events, which would result in an emotional attachment to the brand. However, as a pull strategy within marketing communications, successful event-marketing strategies require a thorough understanding of why consumers are motivated to voluntarily participate in those marketing-events. To narrow this information gap, this research, based on a thorough literature review, has developed a conceptual model suggesting that consumers’ motivations to participate in marketing-events are determined by their predispositional involvement either in the event-object, the event-content, event-marketing or the expected social interaction at the event. Thus, the main contribution is to the involvement and experiential consumption literature.

INTRODUCTION
In recent years, marketers are confronted with the decreasing effectiveness of their classic marketing communications due to an increasing saturation and fragmentation of markets and the subsequent competition of communications. Indeed, because classic marketing communications are solely based on a push strategy where brand messages are forced on consumers through a variety of media, consumers respond to the increasing information overflow with low media involvement and actively engage in a variety of avoidance strategies (Rumbo 2002; Tse and Lee 2001). Thus, new marketing communication strategies are emerging with a communication structure that often differs significantly from those of established strategies by their tendency to offer interactive dialogues instead of monologues (Evans et al. 2004; Sistenich 1999).

As a consequence, event-marketing is becoming a popular alternative for marketers as a pull strategy within marketing communications (Drengner 2003; Zanger and Sistenich 1996). Event-marketing (in the context of this paper) is defined as the interactive communication of brand values by staging marketing-events as 3-dimensional brand-related hyperrealities in which consumers are actively involved on a behavioural level and which would result in their emotional attachment to the brand.

Previous research into event-marketing has proven that consumers show a high involvement because of their voluntary participation in marketing-events (Drengner 2003; Nufer 2002). In reference to advertising research, media involvement in combination with the motivation and ability to process brand-related information is seen as a crucial prerequisite in determining the effectiveness of any communication media in influencing brand images (Drengner 2003; Petty et al. 1983). Thus, an understanding of consumers’ motivations and experiential needs is a key factor in designing effective event-marketing strategies. However, while previous research into event-marketing has focused on determining and controlling the effectiveness of event-marketing, little attention has been paid to consumers’ motivations to attend marketing-events in the first place.

This now raises the interesting question: Why do consumers participate voluntarily in marketing-events that are specifically designed as communication platforms for the same commercial messages that they usually tend to avoid? In addressing this research question, the objective of this paper is to draw upon a comprehensive review of the literature and to explore whether, and to what degree, the predispositional involvement in one or more specific aspects of marketing-events is motivating consumers to participate voluntarily in marketing-events. As the main contribution is to the involvement and experiential consumption literature, this paper will first introduce briefly the idea of event-marketing and summarize the motivation and involvement constructs, before discussing the role of predispositional involvement in more detail. Based on the findings, a conceptual model has been developed to outline the forces that drive consumer motivations to participate in marketing-events and, subsequently, determine the success of event-marketing strategies.

EVENT-MARKETING
As the term event marketing has been used in the past to describe a multitude of phenomena in marketing practice (Cornwell 1995), the event-marketing concept in the context of this paper needs to be briefly introduced first. Event-marketing as an experiential marketing communication strategy first emerged in Germany in the late 1980s in response to significant changes in both the marketing environment and consumer behaviour (Wohlfeil and Whelan 2005). By communicating brand values as “real-lived” experiences, event-marketing is designed to take advantage of the shift from maintenance to experiential consumption in the societal value system of affluent societies (Weinberg and Gröppel 1989). Experiential consumption refers to obtaining enriching experiences through emotional benefits, by which consumers attempt to improve the quality of their lives right here and now (Opaschowski 1998). This romantic consumption ethic has not only led to an increasing orientation towards and active participation in leisure and recreation, entertainment and cultural neo-tribes (Cova and Cova 2002; Martin 2004; Mitchell 1988), but also outlined the need for experiential marketing communications to gain consumers’ attention.

The communicative innovation of event-marketing derives from its four constitutive features:

• **Experience-orientation:**
  As personal lived experiences tend to be stronger than “second-hand” media experiences in determining consumers’ notion of reality, consumers are encouraged to experience the brand reality as active participants rather than being passive recipients and, subsequently, are offered a contribution to their subjective quality of life (Weinberg and Nickel 1998).

• **Interactivity:**
  In difference to the monological provision of information in classic marketing communications, event-marketing offers a platform for interactive and personal dialogues between participants, spectators and brand representatives (Zanger and Sistenich 1996).
• **Self-initiation:**
  Event-marketing is aimed at influencing consumers emotionally by staging self-initiated marketing-events. Thus, the marketer is in full control of the way in which sensual brand experiences are anchored in the world of consumer feelings and experiences (Nufer 2002; Weinberg and Nickel 1998; Wohlfeil and Whelan 2004).

• **Dramaturgy:**
  In order for consumers to experience the brand hyperreality emotionally, it requires a unique and creative dramaturgy that, similar to a theatre play, brings the brand image to life and captures the imagination of the target audience. Therefore, the more the event-marketing strategy differs from consumers’ everyday life experiences the higher is the degree of activation among consumers (Sistenich 1999; Zanger and Sistenich 1996).

In contrast to sponsorship, event-marketing is aimed at positively influencing customers’ familiarity, image, attitude and emotional attachment to the brand by staging self-initiated marketing-events as 3-dimensional brand-related hyperrealities for consumers. The fact that consumers are encouraged to actively experience the brand by becoming part of this hyperreality is the major peculiarity of event-marketing in comparison to classic marketing communications, where consumers generally remain passive and distant recipients of brand messages (Wohlfeil and Whelan 2005). And while in advertising a contact remains rather accidental, consumers actively seek to engage with this communication strategy. However, in order to utilise its full potential, any event-marketing strategy must be designed in a way that consumers want to take part in a brand’s hyperreality. Thus, marketers must have an understanding of what needs consumers seek to satisfy by participating in marketing-events.

**MOTIVATIONS**

Motivations are a hypothetical construct to define the driving forces of human behaviour (Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg 2003) and explain why people do what they do instead of choosing an alternative option. In general, they result from the interaction of fundamental activation processes and various cognitive processes. Emotions and basic urges activate and direct behaviour, while cognitive processes determine the goal orientation and the intensity of the action by which the individual is willing to achieve this goal under given circumstances (Weinberg 1995). Consequently, causal relationships between activation and cognitive goal-orientation have a crucial effect on an individual’s motivation to consume, because the same activation process can lead to different motivations while different activation processes can result in the same motivation (Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg 2003).

Consumer behaviour is largely driven by the desire to satisfy specific needs, which in return can be divided into existential and experiential needs (Csikszentmihalyi 2000). According to Maslow (1987), human needs arrange themselves in a definite hierarchy based on the principle of relative potency. *Physiological needs*, i.e. food, water, air and sex, represent the bottom of the hierarchy, as they are crucial for an individual’s immediate survival. To ensure survival in the long-term, they are followed by *safety needs*, i.e. protection, certainty and the avoidance of pain or anxiety. After those basic needs follow the psychological needs that cover *social needs*, i.e. belongingness, affiliation and love, and *esteem needs* such as self-esteem, recognition and career (Buck 1988). Maslow (1987) proposed that all those needs are inborn and universal to all human beings. Furthermore, as deficit needs they put consumers under pressure to satisfy them on an ongoing basis. In contrast, *self-actualisation needs* are growth needs by which individuals fulfil their very unique potential (Maslow 1987).

The hierarchy’s general idea is that motivations are driven by consumers’ desire to consciously satisfy those needs in a similar order. Therefore, individuals experience lower needs always stronger than higher needs (Maslow 1987). Maslow originally even proposed that higher growth needs do not appear to consciousness until the deficit needs are met on a regular basis (Buck 1988). But despite its widespread acceptance in literature, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs also has its critics. Buck (1988) argued that most psychological needs are always present and never cease to affect consumer behaviour, while even during times of deprivation, when basic needs dominate, higher needs are still present to influence consumer behaviour. In addition, people tend to differ in judging the value of some needs as more important than others. For example, one individual may satisfy personal growth in a stressful working career at the cost of health and social relationships, while another one prefers love and family instead of a career (Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg 2003). In response, Maslow (1987) acknowledged at a later stage that people only need to be partially satisfied in their basic needs before higher needs emerge.

However, Csikszentmihalyi (2000) criticised in particular Maslow’s assumption that human behaviour is always driven by predictable, universal needs that allow for rational decision-making, while most consumer choices are actually made for a variety of other reasons. Indeed, with increasing affluence and being less concerned with existential needs, people often find themselves in an existential vacuum where they are not aware of a specific goal. Thus, Csikszentmihalyi (1988) proposed that people, especially in affluent societies, are not only driven by Maslow’s existential needs, but also by experiential needs. His concept is based on the assumption that it is part of human nature to keep consciousness in an organised state by focusing on some activity that requires attention. But once there is nothing to do, consumers’ attention turns inward and leads to a decline in self-esteem and the experienced quality of life, which may even result in depression and despair. Therefore, consumers have to engage their attention by activities that suggest specific goals in order to “keep their consciousness tuned” and to obtain pleasurable experiences (Csikszentmihalyi 2000).

Csikszentmihalyi’s experiential consumption concept not only provides valuable insights into the growing importance of leisure, entertainment and recreational activities in giving meaning to consumers’ lives, but also explains why shopping in affluent societies has become such a popular goal-directed leisure activity for consumers to improve their subjective quality of life. The purchase itself has turned into little more than a by-product, a mere means to an end (Opaschowski 1998). Experiential consumption, therefore, goes well beyond experiencing emotional benefits in the process of ownership transfer or product usage, as proposed by the hedonic consumption concept. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) defined hedonic consumption as those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one’s experience with products (p. 92). The idea is that consumers not only buy products for their utilitarian value in solving problems, but also often for their hedonic pleasure value and symbolic meanings that derive from using the product (Martin 2004). Experiential consumption, however, is primarily driven by the intrinsic pursuit of personal happiness where consumers engage in activities to experience excitement, challenges, personal accomplishment or fun for its own merits. Products are merely contributors to the overall emotional experience (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). This intrinsic pursuit of happiness and enjoyment of life right here and now not only has a strong impact on consumer behaviour in affluent
societies in general (Opaschowski 1998), but also on consumers’ motivations to participate in marketing-events in particular.

THE MODERATING ROLE OF INVOLVEMENT

As consumers’ motivations to engage in their favourite leisure activities are determined by their personal interests and desires (Mitchell 1988), consumers’ voluntary participation in marketing-events is seriously influenced by their personal involvement as well. Involvement is a hypothetical construct that reflects consumers’ cognitive engagement and the subsequent activation to devote themselves to a specific issue or activity (Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg 2003: 245). The higher consumers are involved in activities or issues the stronger is their tendency and willingness to engage with them and to process relevant information (Zaichkowsky 1985). Although the moderating role of involvement in processing brand messages is well known in marketing, most research focused primarily on the personal relevance that products (Coulter et al. 2003; Laurent and Kapferer 1985) or advertising messages (Pettty et al. 1983) have for consumers in forming reasoned buying decisions.

The assumption often was that consumers’ involvement with specific products would be determined by the products’ physical attributes and characteristics. In other words, TV sets, cars or other luxury items were regarded as high involvement products due to their high sign value and the high risk of a mispurchase (Laurent and Kapferer 1985). But in reality, a person, who could not care less about cars and might not even hold a driving licence, can be very low involved in this “high involvement product”, while other people, as determined collectors (Bloch and Bruce 1984), spend often more than half an hour picking the right Kinder chocolate-egg, a so-called “low involvement product”. Thus, involvement should not be viewed as a feature that is naturally attached to a specific product category, but rather as a personal trait of individual consumers that has a serious influence on their motivation to engage in certain behaviours (Nufer 2002). This means that an individual’s involvement with a product is solely dependent on the personal relevance this product has for the individual. Consequently, personal involvement is also a differentiating factor between people who enjoy a specific activity and those who, despite having identical skills and coming from the same socio-economic backgrounds, are bored by the same (Mitchell 1988). Subsequently, marketing-events must be designed to appeal to target audiences by being related to their personal leisure interests and experiential needs to ensure a high personal involvement.

Based on the timeframe of this personal cognitive engagement, the involvement construct can be further differentiated into situational and predispositional involvement (Drengner 2003; Richins and Bloch 1986). Situational involvement occurs when a specific object catches an individual’s interest for a limited period of time (Nufer 2002). This can either happen when a specific need presents itself to consciousness or the individual gets in contact with the object by chance, i.e., while browsing in a store. However, once the need has been fulfilled or the contact has ended, the situational involvement declines again and even disappears (Richins and Bloch 1986). For instance, a person who intends to move to a new accommodation would show a high situational involvement in the property market and actively seek information in the property supplements of newspapers and advice from estate agents. But once an appropriate accommodation has been found, the same person might no longer have any interest in the property market at all.

Predispositional involvement, on the other hand, refers to consumers’ long-lasting interest in engaging with an object based on their personal values and desires (Nufer 2002) and is often associated with enduring product involvement (Richins and Bloch 1986). An individual’s predispositional involvement activates interest and motivation to achieve a specific goal even without immediate need or direct contact with the object. Nevertheless, despite being relatively consistent, predispositional involvement can change over time as a result of altered personal values and desires (Drengner 2003). For instance, an individual has developed a romantic interest in ideal homes and properties. Subsequently, this person may continuously read the property supplements in the newspapers, subscribe to “better homes” magazines, visit homebuilder trade shows or watch TV programmes on celebrity homes even without the need or intention to buy a property for himself or herself.

While the situational involvement is relevant for processing brand messages presented by the media or sales representatives (Drengner 2003; Petty et al. 1983), consumers’ motivation to engage with the object, the content or the media in the first place is determined by their predispositional involvement (Bloch and Bruce 1984; Coulter et al. 2003). This means that the effectiveness of classic marketing communication strategies such as advertising, sales promotions or public relations is highly dependent on consumers’ situational involvement in either the brand or the media content, as a contact generally occurs rather accidentally than being actively sought. Event-marketing, on the other hand, is a pull strategy within marketing communications where consumers seek to participate in marketing-events depending on their predispositional and situational involvement.

CONSUMERS’ PREDISPOOTORAL INVOLVEMENT IN MARKETING-EVENTS

The motivation of consumers to participate in marketing-events is determined by their predispositional involvement in at least one aspect of the event-marketing strategy, Drengner (2003) suggested that there are three distinct predispositional involvement dimensions that play a major role in the attractiveness of marketing-events for individuals, but has not investigated them any further. Thus, this paper is developing this idea in greater conceptual detail while simultaneously contributing further by proposing an additional construct.

Event-marketing involvement refers to the professional or academic interest in this particular marketing communication strategy or marketing communications in general. For instance, a marketer attends the Red Bull Flugtag to get some inspiration for his/her own forthcoming marketing campaign. Although this area of predispositional involvement is not very common, individuals who have a personal interest in event-marketing are likely to participate in a marketing-event. Thus, the following research proposition is suggested:

P1: The higher the predispositional event-marketing involvement the stronger are consumers’ motivations to participate in the marketing-event.

Event-object involvement refers to an individual’s long-lasting interest in the brand or product category (Richins and Bloch 1986). For instance, some kids were motivated to participate in the Adidas Streetball Challenge to gather information about Adidas sports products and experience Adidas brand values interactively in an exciting atmosphere. But despite marketers’ wishful thinking that their particular brands play an important role in people’s lives, the predispositional event-object involvement is usually limited to those very few brands or product categories, which are linked to specific leisure activities (Bloch and Bruce 1984) or associated with hedonic consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). Nevertheless, the following research proposition is suggested:
Event-content involvement refers to an individual’s personal interest in the activity that is the central part of the event’s dramaturgy (Wohlfeil and Whelan 2004). For instance, many kids, who participated in the Adidas Streetball Challenge, had a keen interest in basketball and the associated hip-hop culture. Because predispositional event-content involvement is one of the most important motivators for voluntary participation, successful event-marketing strategies usually connected the brand with the leisure interests of their target audiences either directly or indirectly. For example, while there is a direct link between the Adidas brand and streetball, the building of your own homemade flying machine to be launched at the Red Bull Flugtag and the Red Bull energy drink are indirectly linked to its advertising slogan “Red Bull gives you wings!”

Csikszentmihalyi’s (1988) flow-theory, which is already well established in the field of leisure research (Drengner 2003), offers some explanations for consumers’ predispositional involvement in the event-content. He argued that people experience the highest level of happiness in the moment when their mind is stretched to the limit in a voluntary effort to accomplish challenging tasks. As the prototype of intrinsic motivation, optimal experience or “flow” occurs when all the contents of an individual’s consciousness are in harmony with each other and with the goals that define the consumer’s self (Csikszentmihalyi 1988). Although flow can be experienced in any kind of activity, most people find in their productive work neither enjoyment nor an adequate balance between their perceived skills and faced challenges (Mitchell 1988). Therefore, consumers tend to search in their leisure time for activities that compensate for the deficits of their everyday work experience. Consequently, consumers’ drive to experience flow in their intrinsic pursuit of happiness can be a motivating factor for the participation in marketing-events as well.

Further insights are offered by the role theory, which defines social roles as the society’s expectations on the occupier of a specific position (Sistench 1999). In everyday life, every individual occupies several different positions and, therefore, has to play a set of different roles with varying degrees of demands and freedoms that are attached to each respective role (Zanger and Sistench 1996). These demands and freedoms outline the limitations and opportunities of consumers to express their selves within their role play (Sistench 1999). However, work-related roles are usually very strict and narrowly defined, leaving little room for personal creativity and self-identification. Thus, most people perceive work as a necessary evil rather than a pleasurable experience (Mitchell 1988). In contrast, the demands and creative freedoms of leisure roles in form of both hobbies and entertainment are less rigid and more suited to personal skills and interests and have become a widespread means for consumers to break away from daily routine (Sistench 1999).

Event-marketing provides consumers with a 3-dimensional brand-related hyperreality that allows them for a moment in time “to be someone else” and experience roles that differ from their daily lives. The activation potential of marketing-events stems from the opportunity for consumers to be actively involved in areas of personal interest and in interaction processes that cannot be realised in everyday life (Sistench 1999). Marketing-events present consumers with a platform for experiencing fun, excitement, challenges and self-fulfilment. The more the event-marketing content and dramaturgy meets consumers’ role expectations the better will be the subsequent image transfer from this unique emotional experience to the brand (Zanger and Sistench 1996). Therefore, the following research proposition is suggested:

**P3:** The higher the predispositional event-content involvement the stronger are consumers’ motivations to participate in the marketing-event.

Furthermore, both participants and spectators are provided with a feeling of communitas, an emotionally rewarding closeness comparatively free from the constraints of social roles and responsibilities (Csikszentmihalyi 1988). Indeed, many people tend to attend cultural and sports events in order either to be among other people with similar interests or to be part of a particular aspirational reference group. For instance, joining a sports club and being involved in sports is often motivated by the desire for social interaction, recognition and acceptance as a member of a team or social group (Allen 2003). Thus, a fourth predispositional involvement dimension needs to be added to the previous three suggested by Drengner (2003):

**Social event involvement** refers to an individual’s desire in belonging to a particular social community or neo-tribe that is associated with either the brand (McAlexander et al. 2002) or the event-content (Cova and Cova 2002). Because marketing-events are designed to appeal to specified target audiences, consumers expect to find members of a particular social group or subculture and, subsequently, a certain atmosphere to be present, to which they want to belong (Allen 2003). For example, because the Adidas Streetball Challenge was designed to target the youth market by replicating the US streetball and street-culture with its “Adidas goes street”-concept, many kids participated with the view of interacting with like-minded members of the hip-hop and skaters neo-tribes. This bond of social solidarity may result in the development of loyal brand communities (McAlexander et al. 2002), where the brand becomes an essential element of a neo-tribe’s subculture (Cova and Cova 2002). Therefore, the following research proposition is suggested:

**P4:** The higher the predispositional social event involvement the stronger are consumers’ motivations to participate in the marketing-event.

All four dimensions of consumers’ predispositional involvement in marketing-events should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. In fact, consumers may have a high predispositional involvement in more than one dimension (Drengner 2003). Both participants and spectators at the Adidas Streetball Challenge had not only a personal interest in streetball and the hip-hop culture, but also took part in order to interact with other like-minded participants. As Adidas apparel became over time an integral element of sign within neo-tribes of the hip-hop culture, participants shared a predispositional involvement in the Adidas brand as well. Subsequently, the following research propositions are suggested:

**P5:** The more individual dimensions of the marketing-event consumers are predispositionally involved in the higher is their involvement in the marketing-event itself.

**P6:** The higher the involvement in the marketing-event itself the stronger are consumers’ motivations to participate in marketing-events.

**PROPOSITION OF THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

Based on the theoretical findings on these four predispositional involvement dimensions that derived from the literature, this research proposes the following conceptual model of consumers’
motivations to participate voluntarily in marketing-events. This conceptual model is basically a neo-behavioural S-O-R model. The S-O-R paradigm is a further development of the traditional behavioural “black-box” model, which takes the various internal, non-visible psychological processes as intervening variables between stimuli and responses into account (Drengner 2003; Nufer 2002). Those psychological processes that are of particular interest to this research are motivations and predispositional involvement.

The communication process in event-marketing, as proposed by this study, starts in the pre-event stage with the initial announcements of the marketing-event, delivered via classic marketing communications, as the first stimuli consumers are getting in contact with. Those announcements usually take the form of personal invitations or involve some form of competitive application procedures for potential participants. An individual’s motivation to participate is now highly dependent on his/her involvement in this particular marketing-event that has been aroused by the invitation or application process. Given their general disinterest in promotional messages, it is unlikely that consumers would attend a marketing-event if it does not have any utilitarian, hedonic or experiential relevance to them.

As previously discussed, a consumer’s involvement in the marketing-event is determined by the predispositional involvement either in the event-object, the event-content, event-marketing or the expected social interaction with relevant neo-tribes. Figure 1 shows in detail the interactive relationships between the involvement in the marketing-event and its four predispositional involvement dimensions in moderating an individual’s motivation to participate according to the research propositions. If a consumer’s involvement in the marketing-event is only caused by one specific predispositional involvement dimension, then this particular dimension equals the involvement in the marketing-event and determines the motivation to participate directly. However, if consumers are predispositionally involved in at least two predispositional involvement dimensions, then the involvement in the marketing-event that activates the motivation to participate reflects the accumulation and interaction of all relevant predispositional involvement dimensions.

However, a strong intrinsic or extrinsic motivation of consumers to participate need not necessarily translate into the actual participation. Indeed, even an individual who is highly motivated to participate for example in the Red Bull Flugtag must also be able to attend. The ability to participate can be influenced by several factors. Because marketing-events tend to be limited to specific locations, occasions or conditions, they are not always geographically or temporarily accessible. For instance, it is of little value for an interested individual living in Waterford or Gothenburg if the Red Bull Flugtag takes place in Miami. Furthermore, for organisational reasons most marketing-events are only open for a certain maximum number of participants and spectators. In addition, other
personal commitments of individuals might prevent their motivational intention from translating into actual participation. Nevertheless, a consumer’s visible response at the end of the predispositional phase can be observed as either the participation or non-participation in the marketing-event.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH**

Several implications for marketing practice can be drawn from the proposed framework. First, when employing an event-marketing strategy, marketers should consider more than just simply picking a popular theme based on a standardised “once-successful-always-successful” formula. Being a pull strategy within marketing communications, the success of event-marketing is highly dependent on consumers’ voluntary participation. Thus, marketers must have an understanding of consumers’ experiential needs and motivations before designing their marketing-events accordingly. The aim is to achieve a perceived fit between their brands, marketing-events and target audiences by appealing to consumers’ predispositional interests in the event-object, the event-content, event-marketing or the social interaction. As consumer behaviour in affluent societies is largely driven by the intrinsic pursuit of happiness and enjoyment of life right here and now (Opaschowski 1998) to compensate for the deficits in their everyday lives (Mitchell 1988), marketers should set up their marketing-events as stages for extraordinary brand experiences. The more consumers are able to experience flow, to play a set of roles, which differ from their everyday lives, and to interact with members of a social community associated with the brand or event-content, the stronger is their motivation to participate in the brand’s hyperreality and to process brand messages.

Second, the proposed model suggests that marketers should also consider not only to focus on one dimension when designing their marketing-events, but also to create a whole web of experiences meeting consumers’ predispositional involvement. As the personal interests of consumers are diverse, marketing-events that meet more than one dimension of consumers’ personal interests not only appeal to a broader target audience, but might also have a stronger pull effect. Finally, as the success of event-marketing depends on consumers’ participation, marketers need to regularly control the attractiveness of their marketing-events in relation to the experiential needs of their target audiences. The proposed model provides marketers with a helpful tool for benchmarking the appeal of their marketing-events in relation to the outlined four dimensions of consumers’ predispositional involvement and controlling their effectiveness in motivating consumers’ participation.

This paper has also set forward a number of research propositions that are suggested by the proposed model. However, the model and propositions are still in need of empirical validation. The biggest challenge in the empirical testing of these propositions will be in the measurement development of the predispositional involvement construct and the outlined four relevant areas in particular. Indeed, because involvement research often allows only for a “snapshot” of a particular moment in time, the predispositional and situational involvement constructs are often difficult to separate from each other (Richins and Bloch 1986). Thus, Zaichkowsky’s (1994) revised Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) offers a valid and reliable scale for measuring predispositional involvement. But the scale must be supported by additional control measures to reduce the impact of situational involvement factors.

As a consequence of its growing popularity in marketing practice, more research in the area of event-marketing is needed. While previous research in event-marketing tended to focus in detail on its communicative effectiveness (Drengner 2003; Nufer 2002), consumers’ predispositional involvement and their motivations to participate in marketing-events in the first place have been little addressed in marketing literature so far. In order to progress in this field of research, the model proposed by this paper represents a first step in the discussion of how event-marketing as a marketing communication strategy works from which to build on.

**REFERENCES**


Experience-Based Design: Some Concepts and Issues
Sayantani Mukherjee, University of California, Irvine, U.S.A.
Alladi Venkatesh, University of California, Irvine, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT
Recently, marketing scholars have emphasized the importance of orchestrating memorable consumer experiences. Product design is a central element of engineering compelling consumer experience. This has resulted in the emergence of experience design as a theoretically significant area of study in disciplines such as design theory. Within marketing there is inadequate research on building theoretical frameworks that explicitly focus on integrating experience design into product development. To address this gap, this paper proposes a conceptual model of new product development that is embedded in an experience-based design approach. The paper contributes by extending current understanding and highlighting future research directions in the domain of new product development.

INTRODUCTION
Recently, marketing scholars and practitioners (Dube and Mukherjee 2001; Joy and Sherry Jr. 2003; Pine and Gilmore 1999) have emphasized the importance of orchestrating memorable consumer experiences in differentiating a firm’s offering. Product design is increasingly been recognized as a central element of engineering consumer experience (Walton 1996). Firms such as IDEO are redefining best design practices across a diverse range of product categories and services by making customer experiences a primary mode of engagement (Nussbaum, 2004). Concurrently, in design theory, the emergence of experience design, which entails creating “elements that contribute to superior experiences” (Shedroff 2001, 3) appears to be a major development. However, within the marketing discipline the issue of linking product design with consumer experience has received little attention (for an exception see Schmitt 1999). Particularly, there is inadequate research in building theoretical frameworks that explicitly focus on the integration of consumer experience into product development.

To address this gap, this paper proposes a conceptual model of new product development that is informed by an experience-based design1 approach. The model provides the bases for a number of propositions that highlight key experience-based design issues, as they relate to product development. The conceptual model draws from extant literature in new product development, consumer behavior, human-computer interaction and design theory. The model is intended to extend our current understanding of product development within marketing.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: First, we describe the experience-based design approach. This is followed by a discussion of the conceptual model. Finally we conclude by highlighting future research directions.

EXPERIENCE-BASED DESIGN APPROACH
An experience-based design approach views products as mediums that enable compelling consumer experiences (Laurel 1991). A critical component of compelling experience is consumer’s engagement with a product (Shedroff 2001). Products engage consumers by absorbing consumer attention and appealing to their kinesthetic sensations (Berleant 1991). However, consumers do not perceive products as pure forms but as meanings (Krippendorff 1989). Consumer engagement is therefore, contingent on whether consumers can make sense of a product; i.e., whether they can identify the product and contexts in which the product can be used. Thus, products do not exist as separate entities; rather they “reveal, communicate or present themselves in the experiences of people” (Krippendorff 1989, 158).

In addition, consumers’ apprehension of perceptual features of a product such as color and form are not universal; rather product meanings are associated with particular configurations of perceptual features that are created through a shared consensus within a culture (Csikszentmihalyi 1991). Hence, consumer engagement is influenced by various factors such as “social institutions, belief systems and patterns of association and action” (Berleant 1991, 103) that shape the life of consumers.

The notion of experience-based design has three broad implications for product development. First, experience-based design expands the focus of product development from viewing new products as solutions of consumer problems to viewing them as an integral part of human experience (Laurel 1991). Second, experience-based design implies that user-oriented design (Mitchell 1993, Verryzer and DeMozoata 2005) is becoming a critical component of product development processes. User-oriented design encompasses design issues that are explicitly centered on the consumer. These include consideration of design factors such as usability as well as subjective product attributes such as product aesthetics. Third, experience-based design encourages product developers to integrate an explicit understanding of the domains within which new products may acquire meanings and the various levels on which a product engages a consumer.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF EXPERIENCE-BASED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
In this section, we integrate insights from extant literature and propose a conceptual model of product development (See Figure 1). The conceptual model addresses the research question: How is new product development informed by experience-based design? In subsequent sub-sections we discuss each component of the conceptual model.

Compelling Consumer Experience
Central to experience-based design is compelling consumer experience (See Figure 1). As discussed previously, there are two key elements that constitute compelling consumer experiences. These include a) consumer meanings and b) consumer engagement.

Consumer Meanings. There are three broad domains within which consumers assign meanings to new products. These are operational domain, socio-linguistic domain and ecological domain (Krippendorff 1989).

First, the operational domain encompasses product meanings that are associated with consumers’ interactions with a product. These interactions are delimited by product form which helps consumers in assigning meanings to products within existing definitions of product classes (Bloch 1995). Second, the sociolinguistic domain implies that products acquire meanings through consumer to consumer interactions. Products are employed by consumers as markers of differentiation as well as symbols of integration within a group. Products support playful interactions among consumers (Holt 1995) which enhances their social relationships. Third, the ecological domain suggests that product meanings are formed within a complex web of competing and complementary products.

1We borrow the term Experience-Based Design from Cain (1998).
A better understanding of these three domains and the effective integration of insights on these domains into the new product development process is a central feature of an experience-based product development process and therefore, leads us to the following propositions:

P1: Experience-based product development integrates consumers’ existing definitions of the product class.

P2: Experience-based product development integrates considerations of the social dynamics that may be initiated once a product is launched.

P3: Experience-based product development focuses on the entire complex within which new products are situated. Thus, new products are designed with an aim to facilitate their integration into a web of competing and complementary products.

Consumer Engagement. As indicated in Figure 1, new products may engage consumers on four levels. First, the functional level entails that products engage consumers by solving their practical and functional problems (Buchanan 1985). However, consumers are engaged on the functional level only when products are designed so that their functionality extends into the everyday life of consumers. Hence, product design entails encouraging consumers to actively participate in recognizing and thinking about the product function so that they are intellectually stimulated. Second, consumers are engaged with a product at the level of a brand. Brands persuade consumers into believing that a product has credibility in their lives. In addition, consumer-product engagement evokes strong emotions that results in compelling brand experiences (Stompeff 2003). Thus, experience-based product development often entails integrating brand values in formulating a product concept. Conversely, brand design strategies focus on style and structure of brand communication that include product design features as well as other elements such as product packaging (Schmitt and Simonson 1997). Third, products engage consumers on an emotional level or on the level of pathos (Buchanan 1985). Hence, the product concept incorporates consumer’s emotional expressions in daily life. Finally, consumer-product engagement is manifested at the social level. Products are used in a social context
and support co-experiences of consumers (Batterbee and Kurvinner 2003). To engage consumers at the social level, experience-based product development focuses on the design of products that facilitate mutual interactions between consumers.

**P4:** Experience-based product development integrates insights on the levels at which new products may engage consumers. Specifically, new products are designed in ways so that they engage consumers on functional, brand, emotional and social level.

**Development of Product Concepts**

As shown in Figure 1, product concepts are generated based on insights into the various domains within which consumers assign meanings to new products as well as insights based on the various levels on which a product may engage consumers. The model contends that experience-based design employs storytelling techniques to represent product ideas. Storytelling is an effective medium to represent complex ideas in simple form (Sametz and Maydoney 2003). Thus, product concepts tell stories about what the product means and promises to the consumers. Additionally these product concepts detail the product design elements that facilitate consumers to assign meanings to products and enhance consumer-product engagement.

**P5:** Experience-based product development employs storytelling in generating product concepts.

**Experiential Prototypes**

Following the generation of product concepts, prototypes of products are developed. Prototypes approximate the product along one or more dimensions of interest (Ulrich and Eppinger 2000). However, in experience-based product development, prototype design implies real or realistic prototypes that are based on consumption like experiences (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Experiential prototypes facilitate consumer evaluations of experiential attributes such as sensory and emotional aspects of products that are often evaluated by consumers on subjective terms (Jordan 2000). An example of experiential prototype is scenario based product prototype. These prototypes include scenarios that are constructed with the help of multimedia animations which demonstrate the actual working of new products (Wood 1996). In addition, other experiential prototypes include physical models and visual representations of products.

**P6:** Experience-based product development employs real or realistic prototypes that facilitate consumer feedback on experiential product attributes.

**Consumer Feedback**

Subsequent to development of experiential prototypes, consumers provide feedback on prototypes (See Figure 1). There are five major types of consumer feedback that are desired in experience-based product development. First, feedback includes consumers’ aesthetic responses to prototypes which include their perception of product features represented in the prototype. Second, consumers’ feedback also incorporates evaluation of the prototype in terms of consumers’ subjective feelings such as ‘cool’, ‘fun’ or ‘sexy’ (Bloch 1995, Jordan 2000). Third, consumers evaluate experiential prototypes on the extent to which prototypes engage multiple sensory modalities such as smell, touch, taste, sight and sound (Schmitt 1999). Fourth, consumer feedback involves the interplay between product aesthetics and product usability. Norman (2004) proposes that aesthetically pleasing products evoke positive emotions in consumers that in turn stimulate their creativity. Enhanced creativity extends consumers’ potential of discovering innovative solutions to problems that they may encounter while using the product. This enhances consumers’ product usability perceptions. Finally, consumers evaluate experiential prototypes on the extent to which products support collaboration in a group and enhance their interactions with others.

**P7:** In experience-based product development, prototypes are evaluated based on consumers’ aesthetic response, subjective feelings, multi-sensory engagement, interplay between usability perceptions and product aesthetics and the extent to which prototypes support social interactions.

**Product**

Once consumer’s evaluations on prototypes are obtained, the actual product is created. Consumers further develop these products in their daily lives through personalizing products and recontextualizing meanings that are assigned to new products by developers (McCarthy and Wright 2004). Insights into these processes are integrated into the next phase of product development. Therefore, experience-based product development does not reach closure once the actual product is developed. Rather, experience-based product development is a continuous process in which design problems are constantly redefined through consumers’ experiences with the product.

**FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

Integrating insights from consumer behavior, new product development, design theory and human-computer interaction, this paper proposes a conceptual model of product development that is informed by experience-based design. In addition, the paper provides a set of propositions that follow from the model. The model and propositions open up several promising research directions in the domain of new product development.

As the emphasis shifts from designing objects to designing experiences (Laurel 1991; Mitchell 1993), design has been redefined as a collection of dynamic processes centered on consumer experience (Mitchell 1993). Further research at the confluence of marketing and design is needed to understand how products and brands fit within these dynamic processes.

Future research can also examine the roles of existing product classes, social interactions, and competing and complementary products in influencing consumers’ interpretations of new products.

Another research issue that deserves further attention is the various levels at which a product engages consumers. Especially, future studies can explore how product and brand design can be effectively integrated in order to provide compelling experiences to consumers. Also required is an understanding of how storytelling can be effectively employed within new product development process.

Future research also needs to pay attention to the intersection between marketing and design functions of a firm. An effective integration of marketing and design facilitates successful incorporation of intangibles such as consumer experiences in all stages of product development.

To conclude, this paper discusses some key concepts and issues that characterize an experience-based design approach. By no means are these set of concepts and issues exhaustive. But it is hoped that illumination of such critical design aspects will orient
REFERENCES


McCarthy, John and Peter Wright (2004), Technology As Experience, MIT Press.


I Spy a Sponsor: The Effects of Sponsorship Level, Prominence, Relatedness and Cueing on Recall Accuracy

Kirk L. Wakefield, Baylor University, U.S.A.
Karen Becker-Olsen, Lehigh University, U.S.A.
T. Bettina Cornwell, University of Queensland, Australia

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that sponsorships provide value to sponsoring firms; however, that value is often contingent upon the firm’s relative commitment to reaching its objectives. Title or anchor level sponsorships tend to come with high price tags commensurate with superior visibility and high levels of integration with the event. Thus, depending on the specific objectives of the sponsorship program, various levels of corporate commitment are required. Intuitively, we expect that higher levels of sponsorship provide greater firm benefits, yet there is no empirical evidence that such a relationship exists.

In this study we provide a field test of sponsorship recall across three sponsorship levels that represent typical sponsorship packages. In a similar venue-based communication context we examine the effects of processing heuristics (prominence and relatedness) that individuals employ. Further, we compare the efficacy of using these heuristics for those who are cued to consider the level of sponsorship versus those who are not so cued.

Sponsorship Recall

Current research on sponsorship identifies four key factors that influence sponsorship recall:

1) Sponsor Relatedness (Crimmins and Horn 1996; Johar and Pham 1999; Rifon, Choi, Trimble and Li 2004; Speed and Thompson 2001). Accuracy of sponsor identification increases when there is a strong association between the event and the sponsor (Johar and Pham 1999). The underlying notion is that consumers invoke a relatedness heuristic. Participants at an event who see the relatedness of the sponsor to the event/organization are more likely to accurately identify the sponsor.

2) Sponsor prominence (Johar and Pham 1999; Pham and Johar 2001). Market prominence may bias sponsorship recall (Johar and Pham 1999). Consumers apparently use a prominence heuristic when attempting to recall sponsors, inferring that prominent brands in the marketplace are more likely to be sponsors. Consumers may rationalize that these easily-recognized brands, because of their prominent position, have more funds available for sponsorship programs.

3) Corporate exposure of the brand to individuals at events (Bennett 1999; McDaniel and Kinney 1998; Sandler and Shani 1998; Shannon and Turley 2000). Mere exposure can positively influence a consumer’s ability to recall a given stimuli and strengthen positive affective responses to a stimuli (Zajonc 1968). In fact, exposure below the conscious level has been shown to positively influence awareness and liking (Bornstein, Leone and Galley 1987; Janiszewski 1993; Kunst-Wilson and Zajonc 1980; Seamon, McKenna and Binder 1998). This incidental exposure is especially important in a sponsorship context because focused attention is often given to the game, concert or event while incidental attention is given to the advertising/sponsorship messages.

4) Individual exposure to sponsors due to individual involvement or identification with the sport and team (Dalakis and Kropp 2002; Gwinner and Swanson 2003; Madrigal 2000; Speed and Thompson 2001).

In contrast to corporate exposure, individual levels of exposure are a function of the number of events that the individual chooses to attend or the level of involvement with a given organization. As attendance and individual involvement with the group increases, one’s ability to accurately recall sponsors also increases (Bennett 1999; Dalakis and Kropp 2002; Gwinner and Swanson 2003; Madrigal 2000).

This work has been primarily constrained to the laboratory and thus we present four hypotheses we test in a field setting:

H1: The greater the sponsor’s relatedness to the event, the higher the sponsor recall.

H2: The greater the sponsor’s prominence, the higher the sponsor recall.

H3: The greater the sponsorship exposure level, the higher the sponsor recall.

H4: The greater the individual exposure, the higher the sponsor recall.

Cueing

The cues utilized to illicit response have been all but ignored in sponsorship research. It has been suggested that cued recall is less accurate than free recall (Padilla-Walker and Poole 2002). Hence, we expect that individuals prompted to consider the sponsorship level (i.e., anchor vs. lower tier sponsors) will be less accurate in correctly identifying sponsors. Further we expect this effect to be more pronounced for sponsors whose identity is less likely to be deeply embedded and easy to access from memory—that is, those sponsors who are not prominent and who are not strongly related to the event.

H5: Cueing sponsorship levels will result in less accurate sponsor recall than with direct (free) recall of sponsors. (Cueing main effect)

H6: Recall of small, unrelated sponsors will be relatively less accurate when cued as to sponsorship level than for prominent sponsors when cued. (Cueing X Sponsorship Level interaction).

Method

Respondents were solicited prior to admission of a baseball game during the last week of the season. As the primary task, 209 respondents were shown a list of brands, some of which were actual sponsors and some which were not (i.e., foils) and asked whether each one was an actual sponsor of the team.

To test the effects of cuing, half of the respondents were given information regarding the location and size of the sponsor signage. The other half were not provided any information as to sponsorship levels or location.
Results

Prominence/Relatedness Heuristics. Respondents were significantly (t = 3.95, p < 0.01) more likely to incorrectly identify prominent and related foils as actual sponsors.

Sponsorship levels. Sponsorship level did not significantly influence recall accuracy for less prominent and unrelated sponsors, as recall accuracy remains relatively low for both anchor sponsors (42%) and mid-tier sponsors (41%) and drops for the low-tier sponsors (37%).

Individual exposure. The level of individual exposure to sponsors in terms of games attended at the venue significantly influenced recall accuracy (Wilks’ Lambda F4 = 1.93 = 7.09, p < 0.01) for all actual sponsors (F1,196 = 7.43, p < 0.01), but had no significant influence on recall for all less prominent and unrelated sponsors (F1,196 = 1.92, n.s.).

Cueing. Cueing respondents as to sponsorship level generated the expected main effect on recall accuracy (Wilks’ Lambda F4, 196 = 6.05, p < 0.01) for all sponsors (F1,196 = 8.56, p < 0.01), and particularly on the less prominent and unrelated sponsors (F1,196 = 18.81, p < 0.01). Cueing produces lower recall accuracy for all sponsors, but does not significantly influence recall accuracy for prominent and unrelated sponsors (F1,196 = 1.11, n.s.) nor prominent and related sponsors (F1,196 = 1.92, ns).

Concluding Remarks

The higher recall accuracy for all sponsors via free recall (61.6%) versus cued recall (52.4%) indicates that individuals’ direct retrieval of sponsorship information is more accurate than when aided with additional sponsorship information. In this study, this additional information apparently requires reconstructive processes employing heuristics that may discount information stored in memory. This may imply that such information is stored as imagery in the right hemisphere of the brain (see Mittal 1987; Putrevu and Lord 1994) and that cueing summons the left brain to (dis)confirm the stored memory, at times producing false negatives. Putrevu’s (2001) recognition of differences in the development in brain lateralization among males and females may also account for the observed (albeit weak) pattern that younger males exhibited lower recall accuracy (than females or older males) for less prominent and unrelated sponsors in this study. This conjecture, of course, calls for more clinical or laboratory research.

Selected References


Putrevu and Lord 1994) and that cueing summons the left brain to (dis)confirm the stored memory, at times producing false negatives. Putrevu’s recognition of differences in the development in brain lateralization among males and females may also account for the observed (albeit weak) pattern that younger males exhibited lower recall accuracy (than females or older males) for less prominent and unrelated sponsors in this study. This conjecture, of course, calls for more clinical or laboratory research.

European Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 7) / 137
The Weight of the World: Consuming Traditional Masculine Ideologies
Andrew Dunne, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
Olivia Freeman, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
Roger Sherlock, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

ABSTRACT
This paper explores the relationship between the body, masculinity and the consumption of body-focussed activities. It examines the meaning and importance of strength training for men. Strength training is of interest because its increase in popularity is occurring at a particular point in time when a growing number of men are experiencing insecurities over their masculine identities as a result of recent socio-economic changes. This paper proposes that men today are facing a dilemma in terms of masculine identity. This dilemma hinges on the growing objectification of the male body in the media and its cultural messages regarding masculinity.

INTRODUCTION
Until recently, strength training was regarded as the exclusive province of professional bodybuilders and other athletes (SGMA, 2002). During the last decade, however, the number of males taking to the gym to exercise with weights has increased dramatically (SGMA, 2004; Mintel, 2003; Pope et al. 2000; Wiegars, 1998). The number of males engaging in strength training has risen by more than thirty percent since the start of the decade (Potter, 1997). But why has this become so? Put another way, why, at this historical juncture, are males, of all ages, and in unprecedented numbers, consuming strength training to a greater extent than ever before? The purpose of this paper is to offer some insights.

Drawing on recent scholarship on the body and masculinity (Kimmel, 2004; Holt and Thompson, 2004; Thompson and Holt, 2004; Pope et al. 2000; Mishkind et al. 1987), we propose that, in part, strength training’s appeal may, of course, coincide with general concerns about health and fitness, but more than that, we postulate that it also seems to be about gender (Kimmel, 2004). This paper attempts to question traditional ‘definitions of masculinity and femininity and provides some evidence for a shifting paradigm in which these spheres are less polarized’ (Gunderson, 2004: vi). It attempts to illuminate how the consumption of strength training ‘contributes to, and is affected by, the relational process of defining masculinity and femininity’ (Fischer and Gainer, 1994). By examining the symbolic meanings of strength training, we hope to gain a broader understanding of the relationship between men, masculinity, and the body. Ultimately, we hope to emphasize some significant issues confronting contemporary males ‘in relation to body image concerns, while providing links with the social construction of masculinity’ (Drummond, 2002: 79).

INCREASED ABSENCE OF TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES
Traditional definitions of masculinity were constructed through the image of the ‘provider’ who draws upon self-reliance, diligence, and hard work to earn a ‘wage in the public sphere and thereby breadwinning for a dependent nuclear family located in the domestic sphere’ (Willott and Griffin, 2004: 53). However, that world, according to Holt and Thompson (2004), among others, is now gone. The changing patterns of the working world no longer define masculinity quite so clearly (Thompson and Holt, 2004). Increased unemployment for growing numbers of males in high-paid sectors, the changing dynamics of the workplace (increased factory mechanization, increased bureaucratization of office work), and the extensive movement of women in the workforce and in other traditional male terrain has meant that women have increasingly approached equality with men in virtually all aspects of life (Kimmel and Kaufman, 1994). As Mishkind et al. (1987: 46) remark, ‘what were once considered exclusively male abilities and domains are decreasingly so. Whereas once a man could be assured of his masculinity by virtue of his occupation, interests, or certain personality characteristics, many women now opt for the same roles’. An indirect consequence of these changes appears to be a growing questioning of what it is to be a man (Thompson and Holt, 2004; Kimmel, 2004). To paraphrase, Potter (1997: 1), women nowadays run companies, compete in sport, and fly fighter planes—leaving males downright anxious about the meaning of masculinity.

Compensatory Consumption
Seemingly, males who have suffered feelings of emasculation in this new environment have attempted to reaffirm their status as real men through compensatory consumption (Thompson and Holt, 2004), namely that of body focused activities (Kimmel, 2004; Edwards, 1997; Firat, 1993), where they have greater ability to conceal themselves in the ‘symbolic cloaks of autonomy’ (Holt and Thompson, 2004: 426). As opportunities to prove one’s manhood have decreased (Willott and Griffin, 2004), males have increasingly begun to adopt the idea that one of the only remaining avenues left to cultivate their distinctiveness from women, and thus, construct their masculinities, is through their bodies (Kimmel, 2004; Pope et al. 2000).

Bodywork, such as strength training enables males to attain a muscular physique, thus, providing them with a unique opportunity to actively divide the genders (Pope et al. 2000). That is to say, whatever else it may be, strength training is a means for enhancing the size of one’s muscles (Gunderson, 2004; Mishkind et al. 1987), which a wealth of evidence demonstrates are customary signs of masculinity (Mosse, 1996; Dutton, 1995; Harlow, 1951). Strength training may provide males- ‘who have been described as emasculated by recent socioeconomic changes’ (Holt and Thompson, 2004: 425)- with a site, their bodies, ‘with which to redress personal anxieties through the pursuit of a muscular image that embodies normative masculinity’ (Wiegars, 1998: 148). As Pope et al. (2000: 50) remark, ‘muscles are one of the areas in which men can still clearly distinguish themselves from women or feel more powerful...One of the few attributes left, one of the few grounds on which women can never match men, is muscularity’. The body hormonal makeup of females, according to human performance and nutrition expert, Dr. John Berardi, is one that does not allow women to develop the same degree of masculinity as men (Culotte, 1995).

REVERSAL OF THIS PHENOMENON
Elaborating on this view, it may be reasonable to assume that the current emphasis on thinness for women (Wolf, 1991) represents the reversal of this phenomenon (Kimmel, 2004). That is, while women are concerned with breast size and weight, men are concerned with muscularity: ‘both are preoccupied with those aspects of the male and female body that suggest and exaggerate innate biological differences between the sexes’ (Kimmel, 2004: 233). As noted by Mishkind et al. (1987: 47), ‘the thin female body connotes such stereotypically feminine traits as smallness, weakness, and fragility, which are the mirror opposites of the strength
and power represented by the muscular male body...the male and female body ideals, which are physically and symbolically opposite extremes, may be a reaction against sexual equality, an expression of a wish to preserve some semblance of traditional male-female differences’. To further develop this notion, a wealth of evidence has demonstrated trends that clearly illustrate that the more equality exhibited between men and women in virtually all aspects of life, the greater the disparity that exists between the shape and size of ideal male and female beauty standards, as purveyed in the media; just as media standards of female thinness have increased in recent years (Wolf, 1991), so too have standards of male muscularity (Wienke, 1998).

**INCREASED STANDARDS OF MUSCULARITY**

Present day males who look at the major mass media are exposed to a standard of bodily attractiveness that has less body fat and more muscularity than that presented to males at any time throughout history (Olivardia et al. 2004). One just has to recall, for example, the physiques of Hollywood’s most masculine men of previous generations- think of John Wayne in the ‘40s, Burt Lancaster in the ‘50s, Steve McQueen in the ‘60s, Burt Reynolds in the ‘70s- these guys, according to Potter (1997), probably couldn’t even point out their deltoid or pectoral muscles, never mind sculpt them. Past ideals of male perfection look like wimps in comparison to contemporary cinema’s muscular action heroes (Pope et al. 2000). Similarly, recent empirical evidence shows that just as the centrefolds of women in Playboy magazine have depicted ever-slimmer women over recent years, the centrefolds of men in Playgirl magazine have also depicted men with lower percentages of body fat and greater muscularity (Pope et al. 2000). Another line of related evidence comes from a study conducted to measure trends over a period of thirty years in the musculature of male action figure toys, such as G.I. Joe and Batman. The researchers discovered that male action figures have grown far more muscular over the last thirty years in comparison to their original counterparts, with many modern figures displaying the physiques of elite bodybuilders and many display levels of muscularity far greater than the outer limits of actual human attainment (Pope et al. 1999). Of significance, this finding suggests that many young men have absorbed unrealistic standards of muscularity ‘long before they were old enough to stop and question whether these images were realistic or reasonable goals for a man’s body’ (Pope et al. 2000: 46).

In short, males are coming under increasing pressure to conform to an idealized standard of physical beauty, notably, a body that is both muscular and devoid of fat; images of men with chiselled pectorals, bulging biceps and a washboard flat stomach circulate consumer culture at an even greater rate. As a result, it appears that an ever-greater number of males have begun to accept hegemonic masculinity- the notion that muscularity is the defining characteristic of masculinity (Wienke, 1998). Unfortunately, the pursuit of this muscular idealization is damaging to the physical and emotional health of a growing number of males. The muscular ‘model’ of male perfection is unattainable by most men (Pope et al. 2000), and the over eager pursuit of it has been directly implicated in the virtual increase of exercise dependencies, eating disorders, and the use of muscle-growth enhancing drugs (Botta, 2003; Olivardia, 2000).

**EXCESSIVE EXERCISING**

Several studies have indicated that many males are making stringent exercise regimes the organizing discipline of their lives (Potter, 1997). Males are no longer engaging in strict exercise regimes to increase health, fitness and/or general well-being, but rather, in pursuit of the lean, muscular ideal (Hartley, 1998). For instance, in a recent study conducted to determine the primary reason for engaging in exercise among male fitness centre members in the Palm Beach area of Florida, researchers revealed that muscle toning was cited as the number one reason they exercise by eighty-five percent of male fitness centre members (Hartley, 1998). Incidentally, research has indicated that male solutions or remedies for their perceived inadequacy in terms of physical appearance go beyond excessive exercising.

**THE USE OF MUSCLE-GROWTH ENHANCING DRUGS**

Perhaps the most serious development or consequence of male body image dissatisfaction is the abuse of anabolic steroids, a class of muscle-growth enhancing drugs. Researchers investigating the use of anabolic steroids among males have reported marked elevations relative to a generation, with close to three million American males having used steroids at least once in their lifetime to boost muscle gain (Pope et al. 2000; Olivardia, 2000). Interestingly, similar findings were recently reported in Ireland. For instance, in May of this year, Irish health specialist, Kevin Dawson, who runs an advisory clinic specializing in performance-enhancing drugs, stated that the use of such drugs among Irish males ‘had “gone ballistic” in the past four months’ (cited in Keogh, 2005: 5). The use of muscle-growth enhancing drugs among males illustrates that they, similar to individuals with anorexia nervosa, engage in deadly practices to attain their goal with relatively little hesitation (Olivardia, 2001). The illicit use of anabolic steroids can cause numerous psychiatric and other adverse effects, such as liver problems, high blood pressure, heart failure, impotence, severe depression, brain damage, extreme aggression, and even death (Kimmel, 2004; Olivardia, 2000). Furthermore, research has shown that individuals who abuse steroids to boost gains in muscularity are far more likely to abuse heroin, morphine, and other opiate drugs at a later stage in their lives (Cromie, 2000).

**NOT JUST A FEMALE PROBLEM**

Clearly concern with one’s physical appearance is no longer a gendered phenomenon (Nolan, 2004; Grogan and Richards, 2002; Phillips and Castle, 2001). Males are no more immune to the same body dissatisfaction disorders women have long faced. For instance, eating disorders, which were once thought to be a problem affecting only women, appear to be affecting an ever-greater number of males (Nolan, 2004; Carlat et al. 1997; Rodin, 1992). Twenty years ago it was suggested that for every ten-to-fifteen women suffering from anorexia or bulimia, there was one man. In 2001, it was documented that for every four females with anorexia, there is one male, and for every eight-to-eleven females with bulimia, there is one male (Nolan, 2004). Although there are no figures available for eating disorders in Ireland, it is believed that approximately fifteen percent of Irish males are affected by an eating disorder (Nolan, 2004). In fact, psychotherapist Marie Campion (cited in Nolan, 2004: 6) of the Marino Therapy Clinic in Dublin- Ireland’s leading treatment clinic for body image problems- postulates that the true prevalence of males affected by body image problems may be dramatically higher than previously speculated. She suggests that doctors have traditionally been slow to diagnose the condition in male patients. Specifically, she posits that males find it extremely difficult or embarrassing to seek help for what was traditionally believed to be a “woman’s disease”. She states that ‘many (men) are too embarrassed to seek help so their pain goes on’ (2004: 6). In this context, it is reasonable to assume that modern-day males are clearly facing a dilemma in terms of masculine identity.
MEN'S BODY IMAGE DILEMMA

This dilemma hinges on western society’s growing objectification of the male body and its cultural messages regarding masculine identity (Tkarrde, 2003). Depictions of the male body in magazines, through male action figure toys, on television, and in the general media, have increasingly come to emphasize physical appearance as a key criterion for measuring masculine worth (Tkarrde, 2003; Edwards, 1997). Adding to this concern is the production of what appears to be an endless supply of exercise equipment, nutritional supplements, and other products designed to improve both the physical and symbolic value of men’s bodies (Wienie, 1998). This situation is no different, some may say, from the manner in which women have historically been compelled to conform to virtually unobtainable standards of beauty. But the problem gets compounded further (Pope et al. 2000). Men, unlike women, are inculcated in an environment that encourages men to be stoic (a person who suffers pain without showing his feelings). Media images of masculine perfection subtly pressure men to worry about body image, yet, because of masculine societal expectations they are prohibited from discussing the degree to which body image anxieties or insecurities impinge their lives on a daily basis (Olivardia et al. 2004; Tkarrde, 2003).

Boy Code

Within Western culture, there exist stereotypes or powerful codes of conduct that enshroud and dictate acceptable forms of masculine behaviour (Tkarrde, 2003; Pope et al. 2000; Seidler, 1994). Clinical psychologist Dr. William Pollack (1999) positions the predominant injunctions of masculinity under the umbrella term “Boy Code”, which equates masculine identity with being strong, stoic, stable, capable, reliable, and in control. The Boy Code ultimately seeks to instil in young men the notion that one’s masculinity is determined in direct proportion with the denial or repudiation of anything deemed to be feminine (Pollack, 1999; West, 1995). That is, within society, males are ‘expected to fulfill a male script: to act as males, not to act like girls’ (West, 1995: 6). Hence, males are not supposed to worry about something that “only women do”. Males are made to feel ‘embarrassed and ashamed of their appearance concerns, and keep them secret. They may feel it “wimpy” or “girlish” to worry about their looks’ (Pope et al. 2000: 193).

Big Boys Don’t Cry

Whereas females are expected to openly admit and display their feelings about their health and personal life, society teaches men to be emotionally repressive, that to be a man is to divulge little of their personal lives, to tackle affliction and hardship in stern silence (Seidler, 1994). As a result, when confronted with the bombardment of virtually unattainable body images and the feelings of inadequacy these images create, males are often deprived the emotional space to discuss their suffering (Rodin, 1992). To paraphrase Dr. Harrison Pope (2000: 5), a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, women, over the years, have gradually learned, at least to some degree, how to confront the media’s unrealistic ideals of beauty. ‘Many women can now recognize and voice their appearance concerns, speaking openly about their reactions to these ideals, rather than letting them fester inside’, whereas men, on the other hand, ‘still labor under a societal taboo against expressing such feelings. “Real” men aren’t supposed to whine about their looks; they’re not even supposed to worry about such things. And so this “feeling and talking taboo” adds insult to injury: to a degree unprecedented in history, men are being made to feel more and more inadequate about how they look—while simultaneously being prohibited from talking about it or even admitting it to themselves’.

Paradox of Silence

However, it has been documented that the suppression of emotions leads not to less, but too more emotional dependency (Kaufman, 1994). Silence only results in more isolation and internal suffering, increasing the likelihood of anger, depression and even suicidal tendencies (Tkarrde, 2003). When an individual does not acknowledge or openly discuss their emotions it is almost inevitable for these unmet needs not to disappear, but rather, to spill into one’s life at work and at home (Kaufman, 1994). The growing objectification of the muscular male body has thus produced a scenario in which those men who cannot conform to the masculine ideal of masculinity are at a greater risk for depression, low self-esteem, isolation, feelings of inadequacy, eating disorders, excessive exercising, and even drug use (Tkarrde, 2003). The silent aspect of this crisis should not be overlooked, as it is this part of the problem that most strikingly distinguishes issues concerning male body image from those that impinge women (Tkarrde, 2003).

Conveniently, the contemporary conception of masculine stoicism is thought to be beneficial to marketers and advertisers, who attempt to preserve the idea that those who do not conform to the images of physical perfection they see in the media are inherently inferior (Tkarrde, 2003). The male who suffers in silence is unaware that others may feel as he does, or are experiencing what he is, and therefore, he is “increasingly vulnerable to the advertising messages of the supplement industry and other body image industries eager to capitalize on their anxieties” (Pope et al. 2000: 193/4). As Hesse-Biber (1996: 99) suggests, ‘there is a huge financial potential in promoting body obsession and anxiety in men, and it is no wonder that within recent years the market for men’s body products has grown dramatically’. Advertisers and marketers are increasingly manipulating males.

GROWING OBJECTIFICATION OF THE MALE BODY

Male beauty image industries—purveyors of food supplements, diet aids, fitness programs and countless other products—now prey increasingly on men’s anxieties, just as analogous industries have preyed for decades on the appearance related insecurities of women (Pope et al. 2000). Today, for instance, it is not uncommon to see stereotypically good-looking men displayed in marketing and advertising campaigns in a manner conceivable only for women’s bodies a generation ago (Kimmel, 2004; Grogan and Richards, 2002; Mishkind et al. 1987). As eloquently put by Kacen (2000: 350), men’s magazines, ‘tout articles on “firm abs” and flaunt ads with half-naked men displaying perfect physiques in order to sell underwear, cologne, personal care products, electronic goods and athletic gear’. Advertisers have transformed men’s bodies into objects of the gaze (Edwards, 1997). Males have become ‘stimulated to look at themselves- and other men- as objects of desire’ (Patterson and Elliott, 2002: 235).

Exposure to highly attractive male models in advertising and the mass media makes men far more conscious and aware of their own appearances, encouraging them to ‘seek out models of physical beauty, but also more vulnerable to the allure of the consumer market’ (Wienie, 1998: 25). Simply put, the media reinforce the value that the road to happiness is achieved by way of physical beautification. As a result, males living in American and European culture are becoming high maintenance and are beginning to invest large sums of money in pursuit of becoming more aesthetically pleasing (Firat, 1993). Males are currently spending billions of
dollars on food supplements and diet aids, fitness programs, gym memberships, exercise equipment, beauty products, and cosmetic surgery (Pope et al. 2000). As Bocock (1993: 102) remarks, males are now as much a part of modern consumerism as females, ‘their construction of a sense of who they are is accomplished as much through style, clothing, body image and the right look as is women’s’. Or, as more bluntly put by Edwards (1997: 55), ‘masculinity is no longer simply an essence or an issue of what you do, it’s how you look’.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The consumption of strength training was examined within the broader context of daily life in an investigation of the motives underpinning this symbolic consumer behaviour. We offered some insights into why strength training has become such a popular consumption activity among males in recent years. We proposed that the recent increase in the popularity of strength training is not attributed to general concerns about health and fitness, but rather, that the appeal of strength training resides in its ability to enable males to alter their body and body images.

Method

Drawing on existing research in marketing and consumption (MacNevin, 1999; Thompson and Hirschman, 1995; Featherstone, 1993), the exploratory, qualitative study to be later conducted will examine the recent increase in the popularity of strength training by addressing a series of related questions pertaining to the expectations, experiences and meaning of male embodiment in Western society. It will explore the social and cultural conditions surrounding men’s increased consumption of strength training, as reported by a sample of males, and will consider, via a detailed examination of these accounts, the implications of ongoing participation for the maintenance or reconstruction of male identity. A number of factors highlight the pertinent nature of this study at the present time.

Rationale

Strength training, as a cultural phenomenon, has largely eluded social enquiry (Monaghan, 1999), and therefore, we lack an in-depth analysis of how it affects men’s body images and shapes their sense of masculinity (Wiegers, 1998). In addition, a study of strength training will highlight an area of sociological research that has, until recently, been somewhat disregarded, namely, the body (Wiegers, 1998). That is, research on consumption has been slow to deal with the subject area of embodiment, despite the fact that advertisers and marketers have been making large profits through the sale of body-beautification products and services, and by emphasizing contemporary body culture (Patterson and Elliott, 2002; Joy and Venkatesh, 1994). In particular, there has been a conspicuous lack of empirical research about the bodies of men (Olivardia et al. 2004; Wiegers, 1998). Most research on consumption associated with the body has focused on women, because for the most part, there was a general agreement that societal pressures on women to aspire to idealized standards of physical beauty were more pronounced than pressures on men (Grogan and Richards, 2002). Perhaps, because of this, we have neglected to study the central role that physical appearance and body image play for men (Mishkind et al. 1987).

That is to say, in contrast to the extensive literature on female body image, the literature on males is comprised of only a modest number of studies (Olivardia et al. 2004). Moreover, the majority of these studies are quantitative in nature, which, while providing standardized data, allows respondents very little opportunity, if any, to explain their responses or put them in context (Wienke, 1998). Findings from these positivist studies do not help us understand why a growing number of males, at this historical moment, are paying increased attention to their appearance (Grogan and Richards, 2002; Pope et al. 2000; Mishkind et al. 1987). Thus, exploratory work focusing on men’s experiences with their bodies, ‘and its relation to health-related behaviours such as exercise and diet, is timely’ (Grogan and Richards, 2002: 220). These facts, along with boys’ underachievement in school, men’s poorer health, and the ever increasing rates of suicide among males, indicate that a greater understanding of both the social construction of masculinity and the importance of body image to men’s sense of self is necessary.

In short, a good deal is known about the quantity of males engaging in body related practices, but far less is known about their reasons for such preoccupations, and therefore, studies exploring the ‘role of the body in men’s lives will be fundamental to our understanding of the male experience’ (Mishkind et al. 1987: 48). In summation, to paraphrase Patterson and Elliott (2002: 242), specific consideration of male embodiment within consumer research is required, not just because the representation of female bodies has received far greater attention, ‘but also because there is a distinct need to understand the role of consumption and the institutions of consumer culture in the construction of male identities and the buttressing of hegemonic masculinity…we need to understand just what it means to be a man in contemporary society’.

REFERENCES


PhD (Psychology) unpublished dissertation, Duke University, North Carolina


Tkarrde (2003), “Whose Body is This? Does Society Decide What You Should Look Like?” *Mind and Muscle*, 13 (June), 1-7


ABSTRACT

This paper investigates consumer responses to gay families portrayed in advertising, drawing on critical visual analysis, reader response analysis and queer theory. The results from twenty-five interviews showed that the ability to discover a family theme in ads is related to how consumers define ‘family;’ that attitude toward target ads influences attitude toward the advertiser, and that interpretive frame affects overall evaluation of advertising imagery. Several themes emerged from the interviews, including ‘straightening up’—reading apparently gay images as heterosexual, or straight, despite rather overt gay signals. Marketing communications work as representational systems and signifying practices that reflect, create and resolve cultural tensions of identity, sexuality and intersubjectivity, making representations of gay families in advertising crucial sites of negotiation in consumer culture.

INTRODUCTION

There is an ongoing debate about how certain groups are portrayed in ads, including women, homosexuals, and ethnic minorities (see Borgerson and Schroeder 2002). As the gay movement matures and same sex marriages, gay adoptions and assisted reproduction become more and more frequent, homosexual families will be an increasing target customer group (Johnson and Piore 2004). These new family constellations are still not accepted overall in society. How political development proceeds will determine the possibilities for forming gay and lesbian parented families and consequently the attractiveness of marketing towards them. Because of homosexual families’ relatively recent entrance as a target market, and because of the sensitive nature of the theme, the representation of homosexual families in advertisements remains limited. Homosexual consumers, in general, are not so widely represented in advertising, as many companies fear that they will alienate their heterosexual target market. Thus, advertisers have found ways to speak to homosexual consumers that may go unnoticed by straight consumers—gay “window dressing” or “gay vague” images include subtle cues aimed at particular market segments (e.g., Clark 2000; Kates 2002; Schroeder and Borgerson 2003, 2005; Schroeder and Zwick 2004).

Despite the importance of the family in marketing strategy, few studies specifically focus on how families are represented in marketing communication. This study investigated how homosexual families are portrayed in advertisements. Thus, we imply that there is something called a homosexual family. In the following sections, we discuss the definition of family and homosexual family in order to clarify these concepts. Then, we review previous research that has played an important role in conceptualizing the family and how it has been represented in marketing communications. We look at how homosexuals in general have been targeted by advertising, and address the subject of families in advertising, homosexual families in particular. We join recent research that looks at how “nontarget” consumers evaluate ads (e.g., Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier 2000; Elliott and Elliott 2004; Grier and Brumbaugh 1999), within the general context of gay advertising (Bhat, Leigh, and Wardlow 1998; Burnett 2000; Tsai 2004) and identity as a priming variable for advertising interpretation and evaluation (e.g., Forehand and Deshpandé 2001; Grier and Deshpandé 2001). Our contributions revolve around three interrelated concerns: how ‘gay’ marketing communications influence consumer perception and evaluation of ads and companies; how consumers think about gay themed advertisements; and how consumers own conceptions of families, in this case—influence, or “prime” their interpretation of family themed advertisements. Among the themes that emerged from our analysis is the phenomenon that we call straightening up—in which consumers read apparently gay ads as straight, by making awkward assumptions, through denial or refusal, or other means. Straightening up has important implications for consumer research into advertising response, market segmentation and polysemy.

Our interest in visual representation follows recent consumer research on visual consumption that acknowledges the roles that images play in building brand meaning (Borgerson and Schroeder 2005; Schroeder 2002). From a critical visual analysis perspective, pictures of families in ads “are not random collections of persons but deliberate constructions of the significant relationships among them” (Brilliant 1991, p. 92–3). Thus, marketing images of families offer insight into how consumers think about domestic groups, identities, and shifting cultural norms about families and their implications for marketing communication strategy.

TARGETING AND ADDRESSING FAMILIES IN MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Based on the assumption that the domestic group is an important target market, marketing management analyses and adapts their market communication to the family lifecycle, household decision making, consumer socialization (especially that of children), and gender roles in a domestic group, household, or family (e.g., Arnould, Price and Zinkhan 2004; Solomon, Bamossy, and Askegaard 2002). Depending on the results of segmentation analysis, the marketers direct their market communication to different people included in the domestic group. Therefore, advertising with the purpose of selling a product to a family or a domestic group has to attract the decision maker for the particular product category. However, we could find few studies that looked explicitly at the family as it is portrayed in marketing communication.

Sociologist Erving Goffman argued that families are “well adapted to the requirements of pictorial representation. All of the members of almost any actual family can be contained easily within the same close picture, and, properly positioned, a visual representation of the members can nicely serve as a symbolization of the family’s social structure” (Goffman 1979, p. 36). He suggested that the presence of at least one girl and one boy enables the symbolization of the full set of intra-family relations, including the presumed special bonds between the mother and the daughter as well as between the father and the son. Thus, Goffman’s advertising study suggests a quite traditional image of the family, consisting of a mother, father, and a boy and girl. Contemporary ads reveal a much more complex pictorial conception of the family.

What the beholder perceives as a family varies depending on her or his ideological and cultural background. We believe that leaving the decision making to the reader is a more appropriate way...
of approaching the term family, than to try to give a definition of a family that is generally applicable. On the other hand, the marketing definition is also relevant because it explains how marketers reason about families, which will be reflected in their marketing communication. If we turn to the field of consumer behavior, we find a functional definition with regard to the real diversity of family structure:

Domestic groups, families, and households differ. Families comprise individuals related by blood, marriage, adoption, and emotional commitment. However, we know from our own experience that family includes a broader range of people than the domestic group with whom we regularly reside, interact, and make consumption decisions. Households are another group, defined as co-resident, activity groups. Although the terms domestic group and household are closely related, they are not necessarily the same. Some domestic groups may not share a home yet share consumption decisions. Households are often made up of family members but also include fictive kin, individuals informally adopted into a household as family members, and nonkin. (Arnould, et al. 2004, p. 553, emphasis in original)

According to this definition, families consist of individuals related by blood, marriage, adoption, and emotional commitment—biological sex is not a prerequisite, nor even children are a necessity for forming a family. Therefore, the definition used in consumer behavior does not define various kinds of families such as the nuclear family, extended family or homosexual family—it includes them all. As we can see, the reality is obviously more diverse than the traditional family definition.

Due to the nature of our research method, it is important to keep the visual aspects of the family in mind. This perspective focuses on the visual codes, which imply that an image represents a family (e.g., Brilliant 1991). For example, the people in an advertisement may be chosen to look like and represent a family, although they are perfect strangers in real life. However, if the advertisement is created to make the reader associate to a family, the visual impression is more important than the real life of the people who are in the image. For example, several well-known companies feature homosexual families—such as images of two same-sex parents with a child—in their current marketing campaigns, which appear in mainstream media.

GAY REPRESENTATION IN MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Both the words gay and homosexual are used as a definition of someone who practices homosexuality; including a sexual or erotic attraction to persons of the same sex. Gay can also refer to homosexual men, as lesbian often refers to gay women. However, following how the term is used by our interview subjects, we occasionally employ the word gay to refer to the general category of homosexual people. In order lay the foreground for the understanding of how homosexual families are represented in advertisements, we find it useful to discuss how homosexuals in general are portrayed in marketing communications. There are many stereotyped images of homosexuals in advertising, and seeing why and how they are illustrated will add to the understanding of how gay families appear in the marketing pantheon.

There have been gay consumers as long as there have been commodities to consume; however it is not until recent years homosexual consumers have received attention from advertisers (Chasin 2000; Glockman and Reed 1997). There are still relatively few advertisements directed toward homosexuals within so-called mainstream media—as a result those companies targeting gays and lesbians enjoy a higher market visibility and are therefore likely to benefit from support from the gay community (Wardlow 1996). Another reason to target gay consumers revolves around politics; by targeting homosexual consumers companies may demonstrate moral agency and ethical business practices (Chasin 2000). This study is not focused on why there are homosexual families featured in marketing communications but on how they are represented. Though we found it interesting to briefly touch on the subject of if and why advertisers target homosexuals because it will ultimately relate to why advertisers are now targeting families with same sex couples.

If until recent years homosexuals were fairly invisible in mainstream media, currently they are quite visible, if represented most often by stereotypes and clichés (Dines and Humez 1994; Glockman and Reed 1997; Wardlow 1996). One stereotype that informs gay marketing representation consists of a highly educated, affluent, white gay professional (Dines and Humez 1994; Chasin 2000; Kates 1999; Wardlow 1996). For example, Lisa Peñaloza argues that the portrayal of gays and lesbians is a representation that is distorted, with the persistent images of white, upper-middle class, “straight looking” people (Peñaloza 1996). Furthermore, she states that this distorted representation comes at the expense of those distanced and threatening to the mainstream, such as poor, ethnic minorities, and butch lesbians. Steven Kates, who also challenges this stereotype, acknowledges that there are gay men with little formal education, gay men of color and lesbian women—all of which may be economically disadvantaged, pointing out that the stereotype of “gay spender” still persists and motivates marketers to exploit that market opportunity (Kates 1999).

During the last decade there have been a few companies that have illustrated homosexuals in their advertisements as “normal folks”. One example that some people have seen as a positive illustration of homosexuals is a 1994 television commercial run by IKEA, the huge Swedish household furnishing company. The US ad featured a gay couple shopping for a dining room table together—one of the first time gays featured in a mainstream media television spot and among the first to illustrate the emergent role of gays as affluent and style appreciating (Wardlow 1996). Even though some people think the ad—and others like it—portray a positive and normal image of homosexuals; others could interpret the ad as being quite stereotypical of gay men.

Generally, companies have been reluctant to market directly to gay consumers due to the fear of a backlash from homophobic elements in society, such as the radical right or religious movements (Dines, and Humez 1994; Glockman and Reed 1997; Wardlow 1996). One way for advertisers to reach the homosexual consumers without alienating their much larger heterosexual market involves the use of a dual marketing method also known as “gay window advertising”. The idea is that the advertisement is composed in a way that speaks to the homosexual consumer in a way that is not immediately noticeable to the straight consumer (Clark 2000; Rohlinger 2002; Schroeder and Borgerson 2003). Gay window advertising draws on what is called “gay vague”, which implies that the sexual preference of the person or persons in the advertisement is not clear. This means that the advertisements generally avoid explicit references to heterosexuality by only featuring one individual or individuals of the same sex. Furthermore, the model or models in the ad depict sexual ambiguity or an androgynous style (Schroeder 2002; Tsai 2004). Whether the advertisement can be determined as gay vague is in the eye of the beholder—a straight person might consider two guys in an ad as being just friends.
whereas a gay person might pick up on indirect codes and understand that the ad also is directed toward homosexual consumers (Kates 1998; Solomon, Bamossy, and Askegaard 2002).

A few companies—such as Diesel, IKEA, and Volvo—openly target homosexual consumers in mainstream media. For example, a recent Volvo campaign was created in response to research that showed that gay focus groups had a strong preference for messages targeted directly to them (Wilke 2003). They complained that when advertisers talk about families, gay people usually think it does not include their type of family. This campaign makes Volvo one of few car companies to create tailored gay market advertising (see figure 1).

A second advertisement is a 2002 print ad from IKEA Netherlands—one of 11 gay-themed ads from a campaign (figure 2). IKEA has been running gay-friendly ads for a decade and was one of the first major advertisers to feature a gay relationship. A third advertisement that we have analyzed is from G & L Internet Bank that appears to target lesbian consumers (see figure 3). This study looks at consumer response to fairly openly ‘gay’ advertising, by looking at how marketing representation of families—typical and homosexual—influence perceptions and evaluations of contemporary marketing campaigns that draw upon gay imagery.

**METHOD**

A total of 20 advertisements were collected from Swedish lifestyle magazines, international publications, such as Elle, and The Commercial Closet website which gathers gay-themed advertising from around the world. From these, five print advertisements from the Cyprus Tourist Bureau, G & L Bank, IKEA, and Volvo were chosen for stimulus material. These organizations generally target families, and each has featured families with same sex couples in their advertising. Although we work with a limited and Western sample, this selection represents large mainstream companies. Twenty interviews were conducted in two urban parks in Stockholm, Sweden, with an average length of 15-20 minutes. The age of the respondents ranged from early 20s to late 50s. Efforts were made to ask an equal number of women, men, mothers with strollers, fathers with strollers, elderly people and younger people. The sample was mostly Swedish, but also has a representation of non-Swedes, mainly from the United Kingdom. Three main questions drove the interview: (1) what signaled a ‘couple’ in ads? (2) what signaled a ‘family’?; and (3) what signaled ‘gay’? To understand how these concepts influenced interpretation and evaluation, subjects were asked about their attitude toward the ads, and how this affected their attitude toward the advertiser.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted through the use of a questionnaire composed of five main questions and three follow-up questions. The follow-up questions were only asked if they mentioned a certain key word: couple, family and gay/lesbian or homosexual. This method was chosen because we did not want to guide the respondents to give us any answers they did not detect themselves. However, our first question: “What is your spontaneous definition of a family?” could have primed the respondents following answers, by indicating the family theme of the study. Therefore, it may have influenced the respondents to look for any signs of a family. At the end of the interview, the content of the two final questions revealed that the theme was homosexual families in advertising.
We chose five images for the respondents to discuss. In order to avoid making the respondents directly aware of the dominant homosexual family theme of the study, we included two distracter ads: one image featuring a traditional family—that is one that showed a mom and dad with two kids—and one image of a man and a woman, along with three ads featuring gay couples and families with same sex couples (see figures 1, 2, and 3). In a few of the ads, the pictures were very small and sometimes had a visually unclear text. Concerning the text, this was partly intentional so that the gay theme of the ads would not be too obvious to the respondents. Furthermore, this would make clear if an image representing two people of the same sex simply would be enough for people to perceive them as a gay couple.

The Volvo advertisement contains six small pictures of people and two different car models. Each picture contains two adults of the same sex; all appear to be happy, given that everyone is smiling. All of the people in the pictures are either standing physically close to one another or touching each other in an affectionate way. In some instances they are standing a little too close to be considered friends, which gives the impression that the couples might have an intimate relationship. In one of the pictures one woman appears to be pregnant and in the other image the couple is lying on a bed. Another image shows two men and a baby. Yet another picture shows two men embracing a dog. Two pictures portray a female and male couple, where the female couple is sitting on a sofa touching each other and the male couple is standing close to each other, leaning their head against another. Most of the couples seem to be situated in homey backgrounds, such as sitting on a couch or lying on a bed.

The G and L Bank ad portrays two women and a child sitting at a table; one of the women is filling out papers. The women are presented in a casual way, wearing everyday clothes in classically female colors as red and purple. The women are presumably in their mid-thirties-forties, white and middle-class. The fact that all of them are females, even the child, may imply that women are the company’s target group. Since both the girl and the woman, standing to the left in the picture, have brown eyes it leads us to believe that the woman might be the girl’s mother. However, the way the girl is positioned to the other woman makes us consider that the girl could also have some kind of close bond or relationship to the other woman. When reading the text of the ad: “Joint income, Joint Ownership” and “Families with same gender partners deserve friendly, full-service
banking”, it gives an indication that the advertisement is for a gay
and lesbian bank. So, if we for instance were reading the text
simultaneously as looking at the image, we may realize that the two
women are supposed to portray a lesbian couple. However, if we
were only looking at the picture, without reading the print, it is not
certain we would identify the two women as a couple. The text,
therefore, helps to frame the meaning of the advertisement. We
believe that the strongest indication in the picture signifying that the
two women are a couple is that they are sitting very close to each
other, implying a close and intimate relationship.

The IKEA ad features a child in a mouse costume sitting on top
of a coffee table set with two men standing behind her and two vases
in the background. One of the men is kissing the other on his cheek.
The red background, the heart shaped white spot on the belly of
child’s mouse costume and the kiss creates a loving atmosphere.
But even though the men are kissing, they do not display too much
body contact neither with each other nor the child. It seem as if it is
just enough body contact to make clear that they are a couple and
not give too sexual associations. If this is the case, it might only be
to avoid associations to the stereotypic way gays have been por-
trayed before, for example as pornographers and pedophiles (Dines
and Humez 1994).

Even though it might seem somewhat obvious that the two
men are a couple, the text “My daddies are also a set” helps to further
frame the image by indicating that they together with the child are
a family. Therefore, the text limits the number of interpretations
likely to be made. Furthermore, that the text is in rather large print
and located at the top of the picture makes it more likely to be the
first thing the reader notices. Consequently this enhances the
likelihood of the message getting across to the reader.

We introduced the interviews by asking: “What is your sponta-
neous definition of a family?”. Thereafter, each respondent was
asked to answer questions relating to what the ads portrayed and
what the ads’ messages were. We did not in any way mention our
interest in homosexual families until the final two questions.
Further, we maintain the respondents anonymity throughout analy-
sis and data reporting. Interviews were transcribed and translated
into English, if necessary. Data analysis involved several steps.
First, each interview was reviewed and summarized. Second, the
interviews were scrutinized by the interviewers—two of this paper’s
authors—for themes and categories. In the third step, all four of the
researchers met to consider and refine the categories and codings,
and to assess the fit of the themes across the data. In the final stage,
higher order themes were proposed, and then checked with the interview data by the research team.

RESULTS

In evaluating the interviews, we found the readers’ response generating and applying dualistic categories to make sense of the images. Comparisons borne out in the visual interpretation of the advertisements gave meanings to the images that were then expressed throughout the interviews, such as traditional versus modern; gay versus straight; family values versus erotic connections; and so-called normal ways of being versus a more anything goes attitude. More straightforward physical signals also grounded reader response: body contact or closeness indicated some form intimacy; hair, eye, and skin color were referred to as evidence of blood relationship, or, on the contrary, lack of blood relation, and therefore possible romantic or erotic attraction within a grouping. The presence of children was read as indication of a family bond and a gesture to the future. Signs of emotion, especially smiles indicating happiness, were also commented upon frequently, and gave a general sense of the advertisement’s demonstration of depicted groups’ mood.

How people spontaneously define a family may affect the way they perceive an advertisement portraying some kind of family constellation. About a third of the respondents gave a definition that corresponds to the traditional heterosexual nuclear family—a mother, a father and at least one child. Moreover, about half of subjects (including the previous responses) defined a family as consisting of two adults and at least one child. In sum, most of the definitions required children to be considered a family. The responses show that a few believe that two adults are all that is needed to be a family or who are blood related. Other definitions of the family include people who are living together or who care about each other.

What Signaled A Family?

Considering that we had primed the interview, by beginning with the question “What is your spontaneous definition of a family”, intentionally giving a hint that the theme of the interview this research study was families. Even though we did this priming, a majority of the respondents did not pick up on the family theme, since they did not identify the people as families in most of the ads. In following section we will further explain how many respondents picked up on the family theme and clarify why they did so. One control was an ad for Cyprus tourist agency. A large majority of the respondents said that the advertisement showed a family on vacation. A few explicitly said that the ad portrayed a traditional or nuclear family. As one respondent reported: “It wants to say that you can go away, have a nice time. The dream of the ideal family is still alive, the traditional family, a young and beautiful family.” Most respondents had mentioned the word family and over half of these replied that the people in the ad were a family because they were holding hands or had close physical contact. A few mentioned that one could see that it was a family since the children had a resemblance to each other; and some replied that a mom, a dad and children together is usually what a family looks like.

In the Volvo advertisement nearly a quarter of the interviewed respondents identified the ad portrayed a family. The presence of physical contact and closeness was what generally made the respondents indicate that the people appeared to be families. Moreover, the texts mentioning of family was also primarily an indication that made the respondents identify the people as families. As one respondent stated:

“It portrays family happiness, though it is seen from the pictures, not the cars. Friendship, some could be families. The first picture is a family, the second is of friends because it looks like they are having a heart-to-heart conversation, the third could be brothers and the image of the dog looks familiar.”

The ‘family’ cues included closeness, children and other consumption themes: “I thought it was families because it looks like a photo album. Then, the text says it too. It illustrates adults with children and adults with dogs.”

A majority of respondents mentioned in the G & L Bank that the people portrayed a family. The most common answer was that the physical closeness signalled that women and child were a family. Another frequent answer from the respondents was that they were a family because they looked related through physical traits, such as the eyes and the red hair. An important fact to consider is that most of the respondents thought that the females were a family in the sense of three generations: grandmother, mother and child. Only a handful of respondents thought they were a family in that of two mothers and their child. Our interpretation of the G & L Bank ad concluded that the three females were a family mainly because the harmonious, symmetric, and close positioning as well as the similarities between the females. Another strong indication that made us believe that the females were a family was the text stating: “...Families with same gender partners deserve friendly, full-service banking”.

In the IKEA ad 1 in 5 of the respondents that mentioned that they thought the people in the ad were a family. The two most common things the respondents’ said indicated that the people were a family; was the kiss between the men and the content of text. Although, one response had a different view on why the two men were considered to be a family. The response indicated that they were father and son because of the kiss on the cheek, since for heterosexual Arabs it is considered normal for a father to kiss his son on the cheek. This response is the result of respondents having different cultural backgrounds. As we have clarified by the earlier argumentation, what the respondent perceives as a family varies depending on her or his ideological and cultural background (cf. Kates and Shaw-Garlock 1999). What made us believe that the people in the IKEA ad portrayed a family was the physical contact in the form of a kiss between the men and what further helped to support this belief was the child being present as well as the text indicating that they were a family.

The results from the analyses show that there are clearly families portrayed in this sample of advertisements. Respondents report two reasons why the family theme is clear: the advertisements’ text and the positioning of the people in the images. The respondents identify that when the people are positioned close to each other, the relationships are more intimate. Additionally, the age and the physical features of the people are relevant for the perception of a family. In the advertisement for G & L Bank, for example, the three women are sitting very close to each other. They also share common features such as skin, hair, and eye color, as well as the color of their clothes, which signal unity and familiarity.

In general, what respondents thought indicated a family included: text, physical contact, touching, a resemblance between the people, and visual distinctions between friends and family, including closeness. Even though all these signals seem clear enough to recognize a family the majority of respondents did not identify the homosexual couples with or without children as families. What could be the reasons for this? Why does it appear to be so difficult to detect a homosexual family? Could it be because the respondents were afraid of mentioning it or simply because the idea of the ads portraying homosexual families was just unthinkable for some of the respondents?
What Signaled Gay?

All of our three ads can be said to portray gay families, however we believe that this is done in more and less noticeable ways. Few respondents thought either the Volvo and G & L Bank ads portrayed gay people. However, the IKEA ad prompted most to indicate that the men were a gay couple: “they are a family because they have the same colors, are kissing and are holding each other” and “You see that they are a couple because of the text and the kiss, of course if they are from Turkey or India where it is usual for men to kiss each other”. Next, we will further explore what in the ads signaled that the people were homosexual and thereafter we will also look into why there were such a large number of observations made in the IKEA ad in contrary to the two other ads.

Starting with the Volvo advertisement, the results from the interviews show that there were only a handful of the respondents that identified the people in the Volvo ad as homosexuals. According to the responses, what signalled that the people were gay was physical contact, such as specifically touching heads, and that they looked affectionate of one another. The result from our ad analysis show that we thought the people were gay since each small image contains two adults of the same sex, standing very close or touching the each other in an affectionate way. This gave us the impression that the two adults had an intimate relationship.

The interview results from the G & L Bank ad showed that an overwhelming majority of the respondents did not notice that the ad portrayed a gay couple. Of the few that did notice, they mentioned that they identified the women as a lesbian couple because of how the text stated, “Joint income”. The reason why such a large number of respondents did not distinguish the women as lesbians will be discussed below.

There were a very large number of the respondents that had mentioned that the people in the IKEA ad were homosexual. The most common response to why the respondents believed that the people were homosexual was that the text saying “My daddies are also a set”. Furthermore, many respondents mentioned that it was also noticeable because of the kiss or the hug. Although to one respondent the kiss did not necessarily mean that they were gay, since the two men could have been from countries such as Turkey or India where it is usual for men to kiss each other. The results from our ad analysis show similar conclusions to that of majority of the respondents. We thought the kiss on the cheek signaled that the two men were gay and that text also helped to reinforce that assumption.

The reason why there were such a large number of respondents who noticed that people were gay in the IKEA ad compared to the Volvo ad might be due to the size and location of the text. In the IKEA ad the large size of the text and the texts location at the top of the ad could have caused the higher observation rate among the respondents. Furthermore, taking into the consideration that the text in the G & L Bank ad was sort of blurry, but also the text location at the bottom of the ad, might be reasons for why so many respondents did not pick up on the gay theme. The explanation why so few respondents identified the people in the Volvo ad as being homosexual could be because the pictures were very small and so many. There were a number of respondents who indicated that it was hard to focus on the ad since it contained so many images and therefore they thought the overall message became blurry. Therefore, it might have been easier for the respondents to focus on the two cars rather than what kind of relationship was being portrayed within each picture.

In evaluating the interviews, we found the readers’ response relied on dualistic categories to make sense of the images, generating and applying binary oppositions of traditional/modern, heterosexual/homosexual, family/not family, normal/not normal and so forth. More straightforward physical signals also grounded reader response: body contact or closeness indicated some form of intimacy; hair, eye, and skin color were referred to as evidence of blood relationship, or, on the contrary, lack of blood relation, and therefore possible romantic or erotic attachment within a grouping. The presence of children was read as indication of a family bond and a gesture to the future. Signs of emotion, especially smiles indicating happiness, were also commented upon frequently, and gave a general sense of the advertisement’s demonstration of depicted groups’ mood. A few of the respondents pointed out, without the text mentioning or hinting to homosexuality, the connection never would have been made. Yet, we believe that the intimate relationships portrayed in the ads are quite enough to open up to an interpretation of them as homosexual. The Volvo ad is for example filled with a bit “too much” body contact for heterosexual friends or siblings. Also, the kiss in the IKEA ad is too intimate for two male friends or family members in Sweden to be straight. Furthermore, we believe the entire interpretation of the G & L Bank ad indicates that they are a lesbian couple. They are sitting so closely, wearing the same colors, the same hair color, and are performing typically family tasks, such as fiddling with bank errands. Though, perhaps the text is more important when making spontaneous analysis on a short time basis as the people interviewed did, but we have to insist that the homosexual theme becomes quite visible without the text when making a deeper analysis.

Concluding each interview, we asked two follow up questions. We asked, “What do you think about advertisements that show families with same sex couples?” The answers were limited to a six-graded scale. The majority clearly answered neutral, whereas none answered very negative. The rest answered: very positive (24%), pretty positive (12%), pretty negative (4%), or I don’t know (4%). The final question was, “Do you think advertisements showing families with same sex couples will influence your attitude towards the company? If so, how?” This question examines the asked individual’s attitude at a deeper level making personal comments possible. The results show that almost half believed that their attitudes towards companies would not be affected by the use of advertisements showing families with same sex couples, while the slightly more than half believed they would. The people who answered that they would not be affected generally meant that they first and foremost focused on the product and its features. If the product is good and fulfills a purpose in an effective way, it does not matter what the advertisement portrays. However, aspects of answers suggest that consumers might be more affected than they believe.

The people who answered that they would be affected gave a slightly more diverse result. The majority believed that they would be positively affected by the use of advertisements showing families with same sex couples. The answers revealed that many considered it positive that companies use the theme of same sex families. The companies appear to be updated on the trends in society and seem to be recognizing and supporting new family constellations. However, there were a number of negative reactions among those who claimed to be affected. These responses represent skepticism towards the purpose of using the theme of the homosexual family. Some meant that it is only a populist technique to make the company seem trendy. The importance of being sensitive in how the homosexual families are portrayed is underlined: “If it is carried out in a good way, it is positive. … The cause and the idea are good, but it is strained and may get corny. But, that can also be the case for the nuclear family.” In the next section, we present a key theme in consumers response to ads aimed at a controversial, emergent target market.
Straightening Up: Heterosexualization of Homosexuals in Ads

Highlighting a tendency to read advertisements differently depending upon varying backgrounds and cultural and historical contexts, in several cases, interviews displayed a process of “straightening up” ads. Certain respondents refused to mention gay content or possibility in even the most straightforward of advertisements, including those with text that supported a homosexual presence. Straightening up appears in several forms. Some respondents claimed the ads made little sense. For example, upon viewing the Volvo ad, said: “It portrays people who care about each other. You do not really understand that it is an advertisement for Volvo... Volvo cars for the family. But the pictures do not show that.” Another was mystified by the G and L image:

I don’t know what it portrays. Maybe a mother and her two children, one of them being a bit older than the other. They look alike with the same colors. They belong together, but I don’t know how. Perhaps they are two sisters and the daughter of one of them. They are not really a family...The adults don’t belong together, just through the child.

Another fails to appreciate the IKEA ads: “The picture is overworked. It says nothing to me, cannot understand it. It would have passed me by without a trace since I do not understand it.”

Some consumers remain concerned with product attributes, avoiding image based meaning inherent in these ads. For example, despite the fact that little product or performance information is present in the Volvo image, one respondent reported: “This is a family car with room for everyone. Practical. The message is to sell that new car...It is good to pack things in.” Another focused on product benefits when looking at the G and L ad: “This is a mother (right) and a daughter (girl), but who is the third? They talk about money, to save money for the future, which is the child. The third women may be the mother and the one to right with the paper may be an official helping them.”

Another aspect of straightening up finds consumer focused on possible heterosexual family relations in lieu of gay family relationships:

“I portrays many generations: grandmother, mother and daughter. It is safety in all generations...It is grandmother and child because they seem to have a close relationship. Mother is fixing things and grandmother in the background. But still the age difference is slightly too small. It could be a lesbian couple, but I don’t think so.”

Other consumers invoke cultural norms and differences to accommodate apparent gay imagery: “They are father and son because of the kiss on the cheek. For heterosexual Arabs it is normal for a father to kiss the son on the cheek...in my country gays and lesbians are not okay, but in Sweden it is.” Another reveals a growing awareness and discomfort in interpreting the Volvo ad:

I see two cars for two different purposes--family and modern. It is tricky, not so clear. Two ladies with a baby, two ladies touching, a man, woman, and a baby, two men and a dog (are they gay?) two gay men. They are showing different sexualities with the cars. The sporty car is for the gay...the gay people are: the men with the dog, the people who are close or touching—are they ALL GAY?

His straightening up goes only so far in this gay ad, revealing the fragility of interpretive strategies and the malleable nature of representation.

DISCUSSION

One may ask why consumers applied traditional patterns of heterosexual roles on the apparent homosexual families in this set of images. Is it that power dynamics automatically fall into heterosexual stereotypes because those are the ones we are most familiar with? As a way to try to understand this, we can put the representation in relation to whom the advertisement is addressing. If the ad targets the heterosexual market, or both the heterosexual market and the homosexual market, then heterosexualization might be a way to avoid alienating heterosexual (or homophobic) consumers. Since the perception of a family is in the eye of the reader, the heterosexual family consumers might be more able to identify with a homosexual family if it succeeds in representing a heterosexual pattern of family gender roles. In this way, couplehood and the presence of a pet or child may ward off associations to gay promiscuity, HIV, or perversion and emphasize the shared humanity with heterosexuals, which may bridge the gap between two sexual camps (Kates 1999). We see examples of this in Volvo’s ad, where a gay couple caresses their dog as if it was a baby, a child appears in one of the other images in the same ad, as well as a pregnant woman. As we mentioned earlier, the advertisement from IKEA and G&L Bank includes children too. The combination of the homosexual theme and heterosexual connotations may inform a dual marketing approach, so called gay window dressing.

Queer deconstruction enables us to discover the various sexual and nonsexual interpretations ads may generate in order to explore “queer” or gay marketing communications (e.g., Kates 1999; Schroeder and Borgerson 2003; Stern 1993). This method has its roots in queer theory—a body of work that questions the coherence between biological sex, sexual desire, and gender identity (Butler 1990; Mor 1985). Queer theory does not automatically presume that a biological male or female will have heterosexual desire and a masculine or feminine gender identity; that is, “‘queer’ refers both to an identity (that of a non-heterosexual person, context, image, or
situation) and a positionality that opposes the normal” (Kates 1999, p. 27). Queer deconstruction can derive different meanings from ads via shifts in cultural codes and context.

Kates uses the method of queering to deconstruct an advertisement picturing a gay family of two men and their dogs that appeared in an Australian gay men’s media newspaper: “The product is not just a car and not simply the family car, for the poetic device of metonymy (i.e., the part represents the whole in continuous visual space) inscribes the car in a particular field of discourse—that of gay identity, gay families, and gay politics—implicating the car in a visual field” (Kates 1999, p. 30).

Kates views the binary family/not a family as the most dominant dualism in the advertisement, because of the text that is clearly implying that there is a family (“the family car”) and the advertisement’s placement in a gay men’s magazine. When a large car company like Toyota runs this kind of advertisement in a gay men’s magazine, the family binary is working as a strong symbol in a political imperative of legitimizing gay relationships. Kates implies that the binary of family/not a family expresses the tension between the gay rights movement and its enemies, and that it in turn is related to other binaries. He argues that, whereas the Christian Coalition links the heterosexual nuclear family to what is seen as normal, decent, clean, safe, beautiful, natural, Christian, legal, moral, spiritual, healthy, and chaste. The gay nonfamily becomes the oppositional dark other, representing what is abnormal, obscene, dirty, dangerous, ugly, unnatural, sacrilegious, illegal, immoral, profane, perverse, and promiscuous.

According to Kates, the particular kind of advertisement that he has analyzed is of a contradictory character. The first and “intended” meaning of the ad, which was derived from the structural analysis, is that Toyota Seca is the best car for gays and that the company is socially enlightened by acknowledging the right of gays (and lesbians) to form families. It positions Toyota Seca as the car for the gay family and thereby also implying that the gay family is just another family constellation. But at second glance, after a textual sex-change of the advertisement (that is, a queer deconstruction) it rather seems to say something like “we accept gays as long as they act straight in public”. Thus, the ad portrays the men as two healthy, good-looking, masculine, wholesome men. The couplehood helps promote monogamy, and evade notions of promiscuity. Furthermore, dogs symbolize gay men’s shared humanity with heterosexuals, bridging the gap between two sexual preferences. Kates questions why this kind of gay portrayal are seen upon as positive while images of gays with AIDS, leathermen, and so forth, are not, and argues that they illustrate the market sanitation of homosexuality (Kates 1999). Although some gays embrace these “positive” heterosexualized images of gays/gay families/couples, others protest this tendency to normalize gay relations.

Thus, it could be argued that all three ‘gay’ ads include strong influences of heterosexual norms of relations between gender and power. However, as the portrayals are inspired by heterosexual gender roles, they are infected by the fact that heterosexuality is not flawless at all. The images strive for imitating an idealistic vision of something that in reality is imperfect. Instead of portraying the homosexuals in a typical stereotypical way in these ads, they are portrayed using a division in heterosexual gender roles (whether they are traditional or reversed). Portrayed in a traditional way, they are just as stereotypical as the homosexual stereotypes. The result is that in trying to avoid homosexual stereotypes one uses other stereotypes, that is heterosexual ones. The thing is that the representations of homosexuals using heterosexual stereotypes are by some people considered as being more positive and “normal” than the ones using homosexual stereotypes. But, the same straight looking representations are also criticized by others. The perception is of course subjective since the interpretation is individual and based on the previous knowledge and opinions of the beholder.

CONCLUSION: THE PERCEPTION OF FAMILIES IN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

The purpose of this study was not to ask why gay families are represented in marketing communications, but to investigate how consumers respond to these representations, and what strategies they employ when viewing ideologically charged representations. We found evidence of an interpretive strategy of straightening up, in which consumers frame even fairly openly gay ads with heterosexual norms. The ability to discover the family theme in ads relates to what the reader personally perceives as a family generally, which further acts to influence, or prime, what the reader perceives. In advertising, visual aspects and codes are crucial for the perception of a family. According to the interview responses, the inclusion of children signals crucial aspects of family. Other important signs indicating family include the close positioning of the people, their similar features, and the text clearly expressing the family theme.

Consumers read ads with a host of psychological, social, and cultural frames, including defensive mechanisms, unconscious denial, conscious refusal, and tacit interpretation (e.g., Schroeder and Borgerson 2004). We add to the literature of consumer interpretation by introducing the concept of straightening up to capture a provocative interpretive frame that allows consumers to avoid potentially uncomfortable readings, in this case, normalizing what advertisers intend—and many consumers perceive—as gay imagery. Thus, this phenomenon is the reverse of queering imagery, in that apparently queer imagery appears “straight.” One might argue that this happens constantly in a normative heterosexual world, however, until recently, few advertisements drew upon overtly gay imagery. For advertisers, this finding shows how flexibly consumers read imagery, and may dampen fears of offending certain target markets by invoking gay themes. For researchers, it points to the complex perceptual mechanisms that underlie consumer response, including psychological and cultural frames that may preclude certain interpretations, and strengthens the advertising as representation research stream.

Future research may investigate the implications of consumer responses for companies using homosexual families in marketing communications. Do the advertisements have the desired effects or not? Is there an ideological or political reason for using the theme, such as showing acceptance of homosexual identities—a charged cultural issue? Political or not, the use of gay family themes in marketing communications positions companies and their products within the discourse of gay identities, practices, and families.

REFERENCES


Butler, Judith (1990), Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, New York: Routledge.


Depicting Romantic Couples in Advertising: The Roles of Gender and Race on Audience Perceptions

Michael Callow, Morgan State University, U.S.A.
Charles McMellon, Hofstra University, U.S.A.
Dawn Lerman, Fordham University, U.S.A.
David Luna, Baruch College, U.S.A.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Gender and race are frequently used as a means for segmenting audiences in advertising. Such segmentation makes sense given research suggesting that men and women process information differently (Meyers-Levy and Sternthal, 1991; Putrevu, 2001) and that consumers differ in the way they evaluate advertisements featuring models of either their own race or another race (Green, 1999). At the same time, however, there are a variety of media outlets that target audiences from different sexes and races and carry promotional material for products that are appealing across gender (Orth and Holancova, 2004) and race. It is therefore important for advertisers to take into account the differences in information processing strategies between sexes and races when developing advertisements for products that are of interest to both and are to be displayed in mainstream media. Unfortunately, most of the research in this area tends to focus either on gender or on race and does not consider the potential interplay between the two.

This paper examines the gender and race relationship by considering how audiences evaluate advertisements featuring male and female models interacting with one another in a romantic setting. The use of romance is a commonly used advertising appeal in mainstream media because each gender is represented in the ad and can therefore be of appeal to men and women alike. In particular, we compare how Black and White men and women evaluate print advertisements depicting same-race and interracial Black/White heterosexual couples. The selectivity hypothesis and the in-group bias theory are used to develop a conceptual model for explaining how the audience reacts to the advertisements.

Within the advertising literature, the selectivity hypothesis is often used as a model to explain how men and women employ different strategies to process message cues (Myers-Levy, 1989; Putrevu, 2001). Females are driven by a goal to maximize the comprehensiveness of processing, and attempt to assimilate all available cues within the message. Males, on the other hand, are driven by the need to process the information efficiently, resorting to various heuristics to streamline the processing of information and focus on a subset of available cues. Men are thus viewed as ‘selective processors’ whereas women are seen as ‘comprehensive processors’ (Putrevu, 2001). At the same time, certain environmental factors may trigger more elaborate processing strategies among both males and females (Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran, 1991). We propose that the perceived importance of race among an audience may mediate the type of processing strategy used, particularly among males.

In-group bias theory (Brewer, 1979) is often used to explain why people can relate more to a model of their own race. The theory posits that individuals tend to evaluate members of their own group (the “in-group”) more favorably than those not in their group (the “out-group”). According to the literature, in-group bias is particularly salient among minority groups (Operario and Fiske, 2001, McGuire, McGuire, Child, and Fujioka, 1978). Previous studies have found preferences among Blacks for advertisements depicting Black over White individuals (Schlinger and Plummer, 1972; Syzbillo, and Jacoby, 1974; Williams et al, 1995). At the same time, previous research suggests that Whites do not exhibit as strong a preference for advertisements with White models over Black models, which is probably due to the fact that in-group bias is less salient among the majority group when race is the group determiner (Whittler and DiMeo, 1991; Williams, Qualls, and Grier, 1995; Appiah, 2001). These results would suggest that Blacks are more sensitive to the racial makeup of the model(s) in the advertisement compared to Whites.

We propose that the perceived salience between the models’ race and gender and the audience’s race and gender will influence their ability to identify with the model. For example, we expect the racial composition of the male model to be more salient among Black male respondents than White male respondents. As such, White males are expected to identify with the male model no matter his race, whereas Black males are expected to identify only with the Black male model and not the White male model. We also propose that ability to identify with the model mediates the audience’s attitude towards the ad.

The hypotheses are tested using a 4 * 2 * 2 factorial design. A racial compilation of the couple (Black Man/Black Woman, Black Man/White Woman, White Man/Black Woman, White Man/White Woman) x race of respondent (Black vs. White) x gender of respondent (male vs. female) design was used. In order to test whether ability to identify with the model acts as a mediating variable for the audience’s attitude towards the advertisement, we ran a step-down analysis using MANOVA (Bagozzi and Yi, 1989; Nyer, 1997). The results suggest that the audience’s ability to identify with the model of the same gender in the advertisement has a significant mediating effect on attitude towards the advertisement. In line with the selectivity hypothesis (Levy-Myers, 1989), we found that the female respondents were likely to process the female model’s racial identity when determining whether they could identify with her. Among male respondents, however, there was a difference among Blacks and Whites in their ability to identify with the male models. Black respondents were more likely to identify with the Black model than the White model, whereas White respondents could identify with both the Black model in the interracial advertisement and the White model. Implications of these results for academics and practitioners are discussed.

REFERENCES


SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

Creating and Enacting Family through Consumption

Linda L. Price, University of Nebraska, U.S.A.
Amber M. Epp, University of Nebraska, U.S.A.

SPECIAL SESSION OVERVIEW

The family serves as a consuming, producing, distributing and socializing unit (Netting, Wilk and Arnould 1984). While family practices are historically and culturally located, they are at the same time fluid and elective, interacting with other practices and elements of society (Morgan 1996). Thus, families are at the center of how people learn to be consumers, the meanings ascribed to consumption activities, and consumption itself (Miller 1998; Moore, Wilke and Lutz 2002). As location, experience, kinship and ideology, the family has undergone dramatic transformation, and families in post-modernity are far more subject to re-evaluation, individualized and contingent than in past periods of history (Giddens 1992). Great diversity of experience of family life is now common and several sets of potential kin link a growing proportion of children and adults (Finch and Mason 2000). Despite these changes and the profound importance of families to consumers and consumption activities, consumer researchers to date have relied on narrow conceptualizations of the family as a consuming unit (Burns 1993; Commuri and Gentry 2000) and devoted relatively little attention to understanding them.

The papers presented in this session examined three consumption venues for enacting family to uncover the particulars of how individual and collective identities are created, negotiated, affirmed and reinterpreted (Epp and Price 2004). Collectively, the papers supported the emotional and ideological power of family, but provided fresh perspectives for examining how family identity is constructed at home and at play, between generations, with brands and consumption. The papers drew from a variety of disciplinary and methodological approaches that made the session lively and enlightening, providing impetus for future research on the enactment of family identity.

We began our exploration of family with a presentation by Amber Epp, co-authored with Linda Price, focused on how families enact their individual and collective identities through the bricolage of furnishings that make up their collective home. This paper highlighted how individual and family identities are negotiated, blended and partitioned in home furnishings and also how possession, care and arrangement of objects in the home reflect changing conceptions of family identity. The second presentation took us to the world of play. Stefania Borghini presented work with her co-authors Kozinetz, Sherry, McGrath, Diamond and Muniz that offered a fascinating account of how grandmothers, mothers and daughters create and reproduce family identity through the vehicle of the American Girl brand. The dolls and stories are used to create, extend and implant memories of themselves, their families and their heritage. The complex branded stories facilitate family differentiation as they become mythologized and blended with the families’ own stories. The third paper, presented by Tandy Chalmers, and co-authored by Kennedy and Kahle, moved us to the soccer field to further explore the dynamics of family identity, particularly the interplay of parents’ and children’s enactment. This research provided insights into how enactment in one domain interacts and even conflicts with enactment in other domains. Eric Arnold, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, served as discussion leader in the session. Drawing on his knowledge and research on families and households, Eric underlined the importance of this session in representing families as both self-reflective and active in managing paradoxical identity enactment processes.

“Reflecting Family: Home Furnishings as Consumption Symbols of Family Identity”
Amber Epp, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Linda Price, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Consumer researchers argue that individual identity is reflected and constructed through consumption (Belk 1988; Noble and Walker 1997; Schouten 1991), but these studies largely ignore family identity. Like individuals, families are likely to embrace objects as extensions of their core identities (Belk 1988) that may complement, conflict, or co-exist with the individual identities of family members. Understanding family identity aids researchers in exploring how a family’s “collective sense of itself” patterns its consumption preferences. As the home is central to a family’s sense of self, and is also linked to individual identity, it serves as a rich context for this study (McCracken 1989). Despite the centrality of the home to family consumption behavior, little research has sought to explore how this site is constructed and used by families.

Drawing on theories of symbolic interaction and impression management, we addressed the following research questions: 1) how are objects in the home selected and consumed by families to enact their collective, as compared to individual, identities? and 2) how do these consumption symbols, both individually and in relation to each other, relate to various forms (e.g. rituals, stories, and intergenerational transfers) of enactment? As homes represent a vast collection of objects, we focus attention primarily on the acquisition, modification, arrangement and use of furniture in the home. Our paper is based on depth interviews with family members in their homes. The data set consisted of 20 interviews, representing 10 intergenerational family dyads. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours in length. Individual family members were interviewed separately, and the transcriptions were grouped by family and compared during analysis. Children ranged in age from 8 to 22 years, and parents ranged in age from late 20s to early 60s. The interviews were designed to uncover and discriminate between aspects of self and family identity as enacted in the home.

Our findings uncovered the bricolage of objects imbued with self and family identity that constitute a collective home and helped to expose how differences among individual, relational, and family identities are negotiated, blended and partitioned in the enactment of each. Families in our study typically described at least one room in their homes as illustrative of the character of their families. Participants explained how they constructed and arranged spaces (frequently the living room or kitchen) in a manner conducive to family gathering and interaction, enabling family identity enactment. This was a strategy used to hold the family together by pulling family members into common spaces through strategic use of symbols and to combat the risks of division among family members associated with not constructing spaces where collective interaction could occur. Participants also described ways identities are partitioned within the household, creating spaces where different levels of identity are enacted.

In addition, our research revealed the morphology of family identity through adjustments in the possession, care and arrange-
ment of objects in the home. As compared with previous research that examines heirlooms (Curasi, Price and Arnould 2004) or household disposition behaviors (Lastovicka and Fernandez 2005), we focused on a broader array of objects and how modifications, arrangements, acquisitions, dispositions and use reflect changing conceptions of family identity. We documented mundane, myriad ways that modifications in furniture collections and arrangements reflect shifting conceptions of family often triggered by marked transitions such as birth of a child or grandchild, or an empty nest, but frequently reflecting more subtle shifts in family resolve to reassert or maintain identity elements (Epp and Price 2004). By examining family identity enactment as a process and adopting Kopytoff’s (1986) view that we can trace an object’s biography through time, we explored how the biography of an object intersects with the biography of a family. At a cross-section in time, families in our sample had some objects that were active in the process of family identity enactment and other objects that were inactive in everyday enactment.

Inactive objects tended to be less salient to everyday family identity enactment and demonstrated ambiguity in object meanings across family members. However, family members did acknowledge a shared sense of the importance of these objects, and the potential for inactive objects to become active in the everyday family identity enactment process was explicit and anticipated. A primary function of inactive objects was to ensure continuity of the family over time. As might be expected, among our participants, household furnishings linked family members to both past generations (e.g. a curio cabinet that houses treasures from a special relative) and future generations of family (e.g. saving a bedroom set to pass on to a future grandson).

For objects that were active in the process of family identity enactment, meanings varied, but were more often shared across the family. Also, objects that were actively involved in everyday family identity enactment tended to serve multiple functions and represented multiple levels of identity enactment. As a result, the malleability of objects for conveying both individual and family identity through differentiated forms of enactment was also explored. For instance, one informant inherited a large, solid-wood kitchen table from her mother that her family used while she was growing up. The table is meaningful to this informant partly because it functions as a symbol of the kind of mother she wants to be, but the table also serves as the place where her own family gathers to create memories that resemble the experiences she had as a child. This example demonstrated the polysemic quality of furnishings, representing both individual and family identity simultaneously, that emerged from our data. It also revealed the complex relationships among symbols and forms of enactment. In this case, the table acquired meanings through both intergenerational references and everyday family interaction. Finally, for active objects that are symbolic of the collectivity, family members resisted individual attempts to modify the function or symbolic properties of the object.

Our results help to distinguish both similarities and differences in the enactment of individual and family identity through the temporal unfolding of symbolic household objects with important implications for future research on family identity. For example, our research illustrates that families try on possible collective identities through their acquisition and arrangement of objects in the home and also partition public and private aspects of family identity in their arrangement of objects within the home.

“‘My Nana, My Mom and I Went to American Girl’: Brand Experience in the Construction of Family Mythology”
Robert V. Kozinets, University of Wisconsin-Madison
John F. Sherry, Jr., Northwestern University
MaryAnn McGrath, Loyola University Chicago
Stefania Borghini, Bocconi University
Nina Diamond, DePaul University
Al Muniz, DePaul University

This presentation explores consumers’ in-store and in-home use of the American Girl brand and its family of products to build and extend family life stories. Girls, mothers, and grandmothers use the brand (and the pilgrimage experience) to create, extend, and implant memories of themselves, their families, and their heritage.

American Girl Place (AGP) is the epicenter of an experiential brand-based project that can also be understood as a commercial reformation of family, cultural, and gender identities. AGP is designed to harness play in the service of learning, to interpret, transmute, and transmit traditional cultural and familial values to contemporary girls living in a plural postmodern society. How a template for successful socialization can be devised and delivered for (and internalized by) tweeners negotiating the broken terrain of girlhood in a multicultural milieu is one of the central problematics of our investigation. The performance and contestation of that template, manifested both on-site at AGP and in the homes of consumers, are the principal foci of our research. Our findings illuminate the powerful cultural role of brands and brand narratives in what may be the quintessential small social group: the family.

To date, our methodology has been principally ethnographic in nature. We have conducted extensive participant observation at American Girl Place, including some photography and videography. We have conducted numerous interviews both on- and off-site, with store management, consumers (purchasers, influencers and end-users) and other stakeholders. We have immersed ourselves in company literature (press kits, American Girl magazine, several book series and self-care/personal growth genres, direct mail catalogs and website pages) to understand the corporate archival presence of the brand. Our research team was assembled to ensure a deep and holistic account of the focal phenomena. The team is composed of males and females of disparate age, marital status and nest composition. Several nationalities and ethnicities are represented on the team. While the team is comprised principally of seasoned ethnographers, several disciplines (anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, semiotics and marketing) are represented as well.

We find that complex brand narratives are used by girls, their mothers and grandmothers as elements in the co-construction of personal mythologies, family mythologies, and cultural connections. Girls, mothers, and grandmothers play not only with dolls, but with the diverse and diversity-celebrating, deeply involving stories surrounding the American Girl brand. Families use them as the foundation to construct their own stories, and they synthesize new stories from the combination of commercial and personal tales. The customer domain, that of young girls who were enjoying their experience with a variety of dolls, led to a web of connections that reinforced their kinship with mothers, aunts and grandmothers, their shared experience with female friends and an idealized and controllable sense of themselves. Through their use of dolls, clothing, accessories and alternative historical contexts, we witnessed girls vacillating between imaginative play and preparation for their lives as adult women. The material accretions of domestication involve the arrangement, rearrangement and interplay of the objects that make up the contents of rooms, closets, and wardrobes. Girls
search also shows that participation in consumption activities can alter personal values (Gillespie, Leffler, and Lerner 2002) and can be important in the development of personal (Donnelly and Young 1988; Roberts 1997) as well as collective identity (e.g. Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Wheaton 2000).

Our research focuses on families’ participation in children’s soccer team activities. We use a combination of participant observation and depth interviews with parents and children from 22 Midwestern United States families to uncover links between individual and family values and participation in soccer team activities. We focus on children participating in both recreational and competitive soccer in order to uncover a range of involvements in the activity on the part of both parents and children. Narrative analysis serves as the methodological framework for linking values to soccer participation. Narrative analysis can be used to uncover how informants impose order and meaning on a flow of experience and use stories to fashion identity (Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992).

Consumer researchers have used this method to uncover elements of family identity related to consumption activities (Curasi, Price, and Arnould 2004; Moisio, Arnould, and Price 2004; Moore, Wilkie, and Lutz 2002; Wallendorf and Arnould 1991). Nevertheless, there is a paucity of research on how other important domains of consumption activity that engage the whole family are used to enact, reconstruct, or maintain values of that collectivity. Such research can contribute to an improved understanding of consumer socialization, as well as an improved understanding of how individual and collective values are enacted in a group activity.

Our research focuses on families’ participation in children’s soccer team activities. We use a combination of participant observation and depth interviews with parents and children from 22 Midwestern United States families to uncover links between individual and family values and participation in soccer team activities. We focus on children participating in both recreational and competitive soccer in order to uncover a range of involvements in the activity on the part of both parents and children. Narrative analysis serves as the methodological framework for linking values to soccer participation. Narrative analysis can be used to uncover how informants impose order and meaning on a flow of experience and use stories to fashion identity (Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992).

Consumer researchers have used this method to uncover elements of family identity related to consumption activities (Curasi, Price, and Arnould 2004). Interviews and field notes were transcribed and then coded, first using free coding, and then using QSR NVivo 1.2 using standard data analysis and interpretation procedures (e.g. Glaser and Strauss 1967; Thompson 1997). We employ three types of analyses to uncover important themes and tensions: across families, within families, and within individual informants (Curasi et al 2004).

We demonstrate parents and children link individual and family values to sports participation. In addition to a parallel between family values and sports participation, we uncover interplays between family values and sports participation that create and enhance family values and family identity through a perceived strengthening of family. Despite this perceived strengthening, narratives reveal several paradoxes relating to soccer activity. Specifically, a disjunction exists between parents’ normative glosses of soccer activity as play and parents’ and children’s narratives of soccer behavior as work. Also, how parents describe themselves as competitors versus how they describe other parents. Further, there is a disjunction between parents and children in describing decision making authority and decision influences. Narrative analysis also reveals a paradoxical relationship between soccer and the enact-
ment of family values, creating a situation in which soccer ‘tears apart’ the family while still strengthening it as a whole. A notable example is the tension between sports and family meals as time spent eating together is displaced by soccer (tears apart) yet the family asserts that they now spend more time together as a whole (strengthening). Furthermore, conflicts between sport participation and other weekend activities, church going in particular, are frequently noted. Soccer participation, however, is able to transcend the competing tensions created between traditional family activities and soccer participation as it manifests itself as a shared family activity that is perceived as ultimately strengthening family.

Thus, our research illustrates that participation shifts the prominence of articulated family values for both parents and children. Future longitudinal research in conjunction with a process orientation to isolate changes that occur within families as they increase (and decrease) involvement in a particular activity should be employed to further elaborate these findings. Future research should also focus on how family is actually enacted in comparison to the prevailing normative ideology.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

In retailing research, personal shopping orientations have received considerable attention, often in combination with motivation-based shopper taxonomies. Although shopping orientations and perceived shopping alternatives are often considered independent inputs into a consumer’s choice model, it is argued in this paper that shopping orientations influence the perception of retail store attributes as well as the attitude towards retail stores. An empirical study indicates that the effect of shopping orientations on attitude towards food retailers is stronger than the effect on the perception of specific food store attributes. The different level of abstraction and emotion is used to explain this difference.

INTRODUCTION

Shopping behaviour is generally guided by consumers’ perceptions, not by objective reality (Schiffman and Kanuk 2004). The objective reality, e.g. a retail store with its characteristics, is internally processed in the consumer’s mind. A series of psychological concepts can be considered as mediating variables on the relationship between the retail store characteristics and the actual behaviour (Hanna and Wozniak 2001).

Motivational forces are commonly accepted to have a key influencing role in the explanation of shopping behaviour (Jarratt 1996). Shopping orientations (or shopping motives), refer to a consumer’s needs and wants related to the choice of outlets (Moschis 1976; Sheth 1983). These orientations vary from consumer to consumer (Luomala 2003) and they represent rather “enduring characteristics of individuals” (Westbrook and Black 1985: 87).

The main objective of this paper is to analyse whether (and how) consumers’ shopping orientations influence central psychological constructs, which in turn are assumed to influence shopping behaviour. Two different relations are analysed: how shopping orientations influence the way the consumer perceives the retail store and how shopping orientations influence a consumer’s attitude towards the retailer.

The paper is structured as follows: After a short literature review, perception of store attributes and attitude towards food retailers are discussed and the potential influence of shopping orientations on these constructs. In an empirical study, consumer clusters, based on their shopping orientations, are derived. Mean differences of central perception dimensions and of attitude between clusters are compared in order to evaluate the influence of the shopping orientations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In consumer research, it is commonly accepted, that different individuals react differently to the same stimuli. Inter-individual heterogeneity on the basis of specific needs or requirements is implicitly accepted in most marketing studies (Howell and Rogers 1983). The study of shopping orientations represents “a fairly mature area of research” in retailing (Gröppel-Klein et al. 1999: 63). However, up to now there has been no commonly agreed upon catalogue of shopping orientations. Several empirical studies distinguish between functional shopping orientations (utilitarian shopping values) and non-functional needs (hedonic shopping values) (e.g. Luomala 2003; Sheth 1983), but many investigations use more differentiated catalogues of shopping orientations (see e.g. Westbrook and Black 1985).

Influence of Shopping Orientations. Dawson et al. (1990) showed the influence of different shopping orientations on store choice and preferences. Hallsworth (1991) shows that patrons of different food stores differ significantly in their shopping motives. Other studies emphasise the individual character of central perception dimensions, whose importance weightings may be different for different consumers due to their shopping orientations (see Birtwistle et al. 1999; Doyle and Fenwick 1974/75; Rich and Portis 1964).

In his integrative theory of patronage preference and behaviour Sheth (1983) considers this difference in importance people place on certain attributes. In his concept, shopping orientations and shopping options are used as independent influence factors of the preference building for shopping outlets.

On the other hand, some studies imply that shopping orientations also exert an direct influence on the perceived image of a store. This indicates that a relationship between shopping orientations and perception of store attributes as well as the overall judgement of the store might be assumed (Lumpkin 1985; Mason et al. 1983; Osman 1993). It is therefore likely that perception of alternatives is not independent of the orientations or motives of the consumers, but that both psychological constructs are closely interconnected (Hanna and Wozniak 2001).

Consumer Segments. It is common practice in marketing research to cluster or classify consumers. Such shopper taxonomies which are often based on shopping orientations have been developed by several researchers. For instance, Jarratt (1996) identified “have to” shoppers, “moderate” shoppers, “experiential” shoppers, “product-focused” shoppers, “service” shoppers, and “practical” shoppers based on the importance the shoppers put on certain store features. Comprehensive overviews of such investigations and their deduced shopper typologies are given by Osman (1993). Westbrook and Black (1985) summarised several studies by concluding that there seems to exist a more price-oriented shopper type, a more convenience-oriented shopper type, an apathetic shopper type (very low involvement and low motivation towards shopping across all dimensions) as well as a highly involved shopper type (who simultaneously follows several objectives in his shopping activity).

PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE

The “objective” reality of the retail environment, i.e. the retail store and its attributes, influences the shopping behaviour of consumers through certain internal, psychological variables. The first of those variables to be discussed here is the “filter” through which consumers see objective reality, that is the perception of those attributes of which the retail store consists from the perspective of the consumers.

Perception is the process by which an individual is exposed to, attends to, selects, organises, and interprets stimuli. Interpretation...
is the stage of this process in which people draw upon their experience, memory, and expectations in order to attach meaning to a stimulus (Mowen and Minor 2001; Schiffman and Kanuk 2004).

In the field of retailing research literature, consumers’ perception of a retailer can be seen as being closely related to the construct “store image”. To explain this statement we discuss this construct shortly. Early definitions of store image had a broad understanding of the construct. Definitions included the total knowledge and all beliefs that a consumer holds. For instance, Martineau (1958, 47), in an early and typical definition, characterises it as “the way in which a store is defined in the shopper’s mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes.” In his meta-study of store image investigations, Lindquist (1974/75) summarises that all authors see store image as complex and as built on a combination of components perceived by the consumer, which merge into an overall or total impression (see also Keaveney and Hunt 1992; Oxenfeldt 1974/75; Zimmer and Golden 1988).

However, even the studies that emphasise the configurational or composite character of store image operationalise it on an attribute-by-attribute-basis, following the assumption that consumers perceive stores on a number of different dimensions that—summed up—make up the store image (Keaveney and Hunt 1992). In this way, the chosen statements in the scales are predominantly measuring the cognitive, rational and isolated evaluation of certain attributes (Morschett 2001). This perception also tends to be short-term, i.e. changing the attribute (e.g., changing the store layout) quickly leads to a change in perception.

Doyle and Fenwick (1974/75) state that what is called store image is very often the shoppers’ perception of store attributes such as variety of goods sold, relative prices and store layout. They continue to explain (p. 40) that, “it is reasonable to view the customer as rationally evaluating the store on a multi-attribute utility function”. This view is also confirmed by the fact that many researchers refer to the work of Fisk (1961/62). He combined 30 items into six store image dimensions. But while he emphasised that those are only the “cognitive dimensions” of store image, most succeeding studies use his dimensions without referring to this restriction. Zimmer and Golden (1988, 265) define: “The image of a store consists of the way it is perceived by consumers.” Therefore, we would conclude that past image research has basically been research of perception (including interpretation and assessment) of store attributes in a modern understanding of this construct (Hanna and Wozniak 2001; Schiffman and Kanuk 2004) and has often neglected the long-enduring factors, which are more holistic and emotional.

As store image research has done a lot of work identifying the major facets of store image, this study will draw on those studies (see for example Birtwistle et al. 1999; Fisk 1961/62; Lindquist 1974/75; Mazursky and Jacoby 1986) to capture the perception of major store attributes.

**Influence of Shopping Orientations on Perception**

The relevance of shopping orientations for understanding consumer behaviour has been shown in many empirical investigations. Shopping orientations are expected to influence the cognitive assessment (among other effects ) of merchandise and other store attributes (Gröppel-Klein et al. 1999). One reason for this assumption is that perception is a selective process. Consumers only receive a small fraction of the stimuli to which they are exposed (Schiffman and Kanuk 2004). This selection is, for instance, influenced by a consumer’s involvement level, which influences the information to which he pays attention (Hanna and Wozniak 2001). The involvement level, in turn, is likely to be influenced by his orientations (Luomala 2003). Different shopping orientations might also result in the process of analysing different features of a store more elaborately. As motives influence how much time and effort a consumer spends on interpreting perceived information, different consumers are likely to have a different assessment of the same features, especially since stimuli in the retail environment are often ambiguous (Mowen and Minor 2001).

Together, selectivity and individual interpretations are the main reasons why the perceptual process is highly subjective (Hanna and Wozniak 2001). This subjective reality, the way consumers perceive a store, is (as has been shown) at least partly based on needs and orientations (Schiffman and Kanuk 2004).

Such an influence of shopping orientations on the perception of stores is assumed by many retail researchers (Birtwistle et al. 1999; Doyle and Fenwick 1974/75; Lumpkin 1985; Luomala 2003; Mason et al. 1983; Osman 1993), and empirically shown in a few studies (see e.g. Gröppel-Klein et al. 1999; Hirschman et al. 1978). Consequently it is proposed:

**H1:** Consumers’ shopping orientations influence their perception of store attributes.

The above mentioned functional store attributes are only a part of the “total picture” which consumers establish about a retail store (Keaveney and Hunt 1992: 167; Zimmer and Golden 1988). “Customers will not only hold factually based opinions about a store but will feel certain ways towards it” (Oxenfeldt 1974/75, 9). Martineau (1958) already pointed out that retail outlets also have “psychological attributes”, which represent a somewhat non-functional level of associations. There is a long-term attitude towards the store (that is likely to be influenced by the consumer’s perceptions of store attributes), which can be described as the store’s appeal to shoppers (Doyle and Fenwick 1974/75).

Keller (1993) classifies three different types of brand associations by their increasing levels of abstraction: attributes, benefits, and attitudes. The “store attributes” discussed above concentrate more on product-related information for stores. But other kinds of information are linked to a retail store and represent more abstract aspects of consumer knowledge, which is not directly related to the actual physical object (Keller 2003). Attitudes, i.e. summary judgements and overall evaluations, represent the most abstract and highest-level type of associations (Keller 1993).

According to most researchers, attitude refers to an affect or a general evaluative reaction (Schiffman and Kanuk 2004). It is stable and enduring (Hanna and Wozniak 2001). After an attitude has been formed, it often isolates itself from the underlying attributes, and even if those change (within a certain range), the long-term attitudes might remain stable (Keaveney and Hunt 1992).

**Influence of Shopping Orientations on Attitude towards the Store**

As attitudes are personal judgements, they depend on personal orientations (Hanna and Wozniak 2001). Attitude formation is driven by the shopping orientations since these reflect the needs that a retail store is supposed to satisfy. Since different retail stores provide the means to satisfy different shopping needs, they are likely to be judged differently by people with different orientations (Schiffman and Kanuk 2004). The discussion of potential reasons for the influence of shopping motives on attitude has been included in part in the paragraph on shopping orientations. Briefly, three reasons lead to the proposition that attitudes are influenced by shopping orientations:
1. Attitudes are formed, as has been shown above, based on perceptions. Reasons for the potential influence of shopping orientations on perception have been given in the previous section.

2. Attitudes are higher-order associations which are more abstract. Therefore, it is likely that the individual evaluation process is even more subjective than for associations of less abstraction. Emotions and affect are especially influenced by personal characteristics. For instance, Dawson et al. (1990) investigated and showed a relationship between shopping orientations and the emotions which consumers experience during a visit to a retail store. This in turn would most likely also result in the formation of different attitudes among those consumers.

3. Retail literature agrees on the fact that shoppers place differing degrees of value on certain store attributes (Osman 1993). It is also commonly accepted that shopping orientations influence the weight consumers attach to specific store attributes (Birtwistle et al. 1999; Doyle and Fenwick 1974/75; Howell and Rogers 1983; Rich and Portis 1964).

So consumers build on subjectively interpreted associations they hold of the store and weigh those inter-individually differently. It is therefore posited:

**H2:** Consumers’ shopping orientations influence their attitude towards a retailer.

Summarising, it is postulated that the objective and physical properties and features of a store are subjectively perceived and judged by consumers (Martineau 1958; Mazursky and Jacoby 1986) and that consumer characteristics, especially shopping orientations, play an important role in the analysis of the subjective interpretation of objective clues, for perceptions as well as for attitude formation.

**EMPIRICAL STUDY AND RESULTS**

An empirical study was conducted in a German city with oral interviews and 560 respondents, with a quota sampling taking into consideration age and gender distribution of food shoppers in Germany. Each respondent was asked about one specific retail store. Seven different stores were chosen as stimuli, i.e. 80 questionnaires were completed for each retail store. Respondents were asked about the same stores. Therefore, our “objective” stimuli are constant and the perception and attitudes of the consumers are heterogeneous only due to other factors. The selected store formats were superstores/hypermarkets (store A, store B), discounters (store C, store D, store E), a supermarket (store F) and the grocery department of a department store (store G).

**Measures**

After an extensive literature review, nine items were extracted as relevant shopping orientations for food shopping (see table 2). Closed-end statements were given to the respondents and they were asked to what degree they agreed with the statements in order to describe their shopping needs concerning food shopping.

Store attributes were operationalised in line with prior store image research and specific categorisations of retail marketing mix instruments. The focus was on the more cognitive elements of retail stores, as is usual in this type of research: selection, quality of products, freshness, price, one-stop shopping possibility, advertising, checkout lines, service, convenience, store design, customer relationship programmes, tidiness, and cleanliness.

To get a comprehensive view, the scale that was employed to measure consumers’ attitude towards the store in the study includes different facets of attitude. Following an extensive review of attitude literature and retailing research (see e.g. Dick and Basu 1994; Hanna and Wozniak 2001; Keller 1993; Keller 2003; Lassar et al. 1995; Mowen and Minor 2001; Schiffman and Kanuk 2004), a number of long-term and stable attitude components have been selected. The indicators employed in our study are sympathy, differentiation, trustworthiness, commitment and willingness to recommend. Since these items are considered to measure one latent construct, a reliability analysis was performed.

Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used for assessing reliability. Its value of .8213 exceeds the threshold of .7 and the adjusted item-to-total correlation is high for all items. The scale seems to have high internal consistency, the factor value of an exploratory factor analysis (KMO=.823; Chi2 of Bartlett’s test of sphericity=.942.5 (p=.000)) is used as the measure for attitude.

**Central Dimensions of Shopping Orientations and Consumer Segments**

To find the central dimensions of shopping orientations, an exploratory factor analysis was performed after the adequacy of the sample for this procedure was examined (KMO=.670, Chi2=.980.4 (p=.000)). This procedure, that is commonly used in this type of research (Hirschman et al. 1978; Gröppel-Klein et al. 1999), was applied to a randomly selected half of the sample.

Four dimensions of shopping orientations were extracted, together explaining 69.1% of total variance:

- Factor 1 corresponds to the motive to be able to buy from a large selection of goods and services at one shopping trip. It is labelled “scope orientation”.
- Factor 2 represents a quality orientation, i.e. demanding a high quality of the assortment in general, freshness and a pleasant store atmosphere.
- Factor 3 is characterised by the search for low prices during promotions and general price-value (“price orientation”).
- Factor 4 shows high importance given to quick shopping and is therefore labelled “time orientation”.

The reliability and validity of the scale and its dimensions were additionally evaluated on the basis of a confirmatory factor analysis that was applied to the four latent constructs identified in the exploratory factor analysis on the other half of the sample. Parameter estimation was done with the maximum likelihood method (Kline 1998). A GFI of .956, a AGFI of .912 and a RMR-value of .052 indicate a good fit of the measurement model to the empirical data. The fit of the local structures of the model was also examined. Indicator reliability, factor reliability and explained variance of the latent variables all imply a good model fit.

To identify homogeneous groups of consumers, a cluster analysis was applied with the four central dimensions of shopping motives as cluster criteria (before this step, the factors were extracted for the full sample). From table 3, the different clusters can be described as follows:

- Consumers in cluster 1 seek a comprehensive offer of goods and services, while their quality orientation is rather low. Price orientation is medium and time orientation low. It seems appropriate to label this cluster as “one-stop shoppers”.
- For consumers in cluster 2, scope and quality are not relevant motives. For them, however, it is important to do their food shopping quickly and—most importantly—to re-
TABLE 1
Reliability of the Attitude Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items (n=528)</th>
<th>Adjusted item-to-total-correlation</th>
<th>α when item deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td>.7433</td>
<td>.7450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>.6114</td>
<td>.7917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to recommend</td>
<td>.6068</td>
<td>.7883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>.6659</td>
<td>.7702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>.4728</td>
<td>.8275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s α</td>
<td>.8213</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2
Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Shopping Orientation Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rotated Component Matrix</th>
<th>Factor 1: scope orientation</th>
<th>Factor 2: quality orientation</th>
<th>Factor 3: price orientation</th>
<th>Factor 4: time orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Items (orientations) (n=280)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>.865</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-stop shopping</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>.543</td>
<td>.515</td>
<td>-.272</td>
<td>-.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General quality of assortment</td>
<td>.831</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshness</td>
<td>.464</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store atmosphere</td>
<td>-.186</td>
<td>.593</td>
<td>-.211</td>
<td>-.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price promotions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General price-value</td>
<td>-.112</td>
<td>-.327</td>
<td>.695</td>
<td>.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation towards quick shopping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Eigenvalue              | 1.981                         | 1.789                         | 1.400                        | 1.048                     |
| Cumulated % of expl. variance | 22.0%                      | 41.0%                         | 57.4%                        | 69.1%                     |

Factor loadings below .1 not shown.

Discriminant analysis with the cluster classification as the dependent, the factor values as the independent variables, was applied to assess validity. The three calculated discriminant functions show high explanatory power, all have eigenvalues above 1 and all significant to p=.000. Cumulated Wilk’s Lambda is .057 (p=.000).

Central Dimensions of Perception of Store Attributes

As described above, perception was initially measured with a comprehensive item battery. This was first extensively examined and adjusted. The items “tidiness” and “cleanliness” were highly correlated and measure similar facets of the perception of store orderliness, and were therefore combined. The items “quality products” and “freshness” are different facets of the quality of the assortment and they were also combined into one measure. Since Cronbach’s alpha was high or satisfactory for both pairs of items (.79 for orderliness, .64 for quality of assortment), an unweighted averaging was used for aggregation. The number of missing values for the item “advertising” was too high; 12.9 % of the consumers could give no answer to a respective statement. The limit for a useful interpretation of a variable is usually considered to be 10 % (Kline 1998: 72-3). The variable “customer relationship programmes” was negatively correlated to “price”. This was, however, as discussion with several consumers showed, a spurious correlation, since the most price-aggressive stores in the sample (discounters) did not receive their purchases for a low price. This cluster is labelled “time-pressed price shoppers”.

• In the third cluster, consumers look for quality, while price is of low importance. They do not need to do their shopping under one roof and are accepting to spend a lot of time on their shopping trip. This cluster might be called “dedicated quality shoppers”.

• Cluster 4 is characterised by high importance of a large scope and the opportunity to do all shopping in one outlet. They attach importance to the quality of the goods and services but are also seeking low prices. At the same time they are only satisfied when the shopping trip is finished quickly. This group of consumers finds all aspects of shopping important. It seems appropriate to label this cluster—following Darden and Ashton (1974/75)—“demanding shoppers”.

Discriminant analysis with the cluster classification as the dependent, the factor values as the independent variables, was applied to assess validity. The three calculated discriminant functions show high explanatory power, all have eigenvalues above 1 and all significant to p=.000. Cumulated Wilk’s Lambda is .057 (p=.000).
have any relationship programmes, so we did not consider this variable any further. The variable “checkout lines” was eliminated due to very low indicator reliability in the first calculation of a confirmatory factor analysis. The variable “convenience” did load highly, but not unambiguously, on two separate factors and was therefore not considered.

To establish meaningful groups of items, the reduced item battery was first analysed by exploratory factor analysis (for half of the sample). Theoretical considerations (drawn from store image literature) lead to the assumption that the underlying factors are probably not independent of each other. Instead of the usual orthogonal factor rotation, we therefore employed an oblique rotation, which allows for a correlation of the factors (KMO=.572; orthogonal factor rotation). A GFI of .962, an AGFI of .912, a RMR-value of .053, indicator reliabilities, factor reliabilities and explained variance of the three latent variables all imply a good model fit. All in all, the three-dimensional structure of store attribute perception finds strong support in the data. For the further analysis, the factor values of an exploratory factor analysis on the full sample were used as perception variables (KMO=.787; Chi2=244.6 (sign.=.000). The results of the factor analysis are shown in table 4.

Three factors were extracted, which can be interpreted as follows:

- The first factor can be interpreted as a comprehensively understood quality of performance.
- The second factor is basically made up of two items describing the scope of offers of a store.
- Only one item loads highly on the third factor, the price. This factor will be labelled “price level”.

This result confirms the results a study by Doyle and Fenwick (1974/75), who used multidimensional scaling to extract quality, selection and price as the central dimensions of food store perception, three variables which are very close to our findings.

To test this result further (and due to the rather heterogeneous results in prior store image research), again the other half of the sample was used for a confirmatory factor analysis. A GFI of .962, a AGFI of .912, a RMR-value of .053, indicator reliabilities, factor reliabilities and explained variance of the three latent variables all imply a good model fit. All in all, the three-dimensional structure of store attribute perception finds strong support in the data. For the further analysis, the factor values of an exploratory factor analysis on the full sample were used as perception variables (KMO=.787; Chi2=244.6 (sign.=.000), the three factors explain 73.3% of the total variance).

Test of Hypotheses

After assessment of the attitude scale reliability, clustering of respondents by their shopping orientations and extracting the central dimensions of perception, the hypotheses are examined. The level of analysis chosen were the differences between the different shopper segments. Since certain differences in perceptions and attitudes among groups might be dependent on the different dimensions, consideration of whether there is an even distribution of the seven retail stores in the four shopper clusters must be made. A cross-tabulation showed that this was not the case. As a consequence, a test of differences must be performed on the level of each of the seven retail stores examined.

Shopping Orientations and Perception. As a first step—to exemplify the analysis, the cluster means for the perception factors for a single store (store C) are compared (see table 5).

The factor values for factor 1 are all below average and show some differences among the different dimensions), consideration of whether there is an even distribution of the seven retail stores in the four shopper clusters must be made. A cross-tabulation showed that this was not the case. As a consequence, a test of differences must be performed on the level of each of the seven retail stores examined.

It would be too complex to perform this comparison for every store (three variables for four clusters for the perception, another six variables for four clusters for the attitude, both for seven retailers), so we continue the analysis on the level of the F-ratios of the ANOVA which indicate the heterogeneity of the results for each cluster and combine them in a single value. Table 6 shows the F-ratios for the perception variables for all seven stores (note: the last column in table 6 is equal to the F-Ratio column in table 5; the other figures in table 6 are the equivalent values for the other stores). Significant differences can be seen only in a number of cases:

- For quality of performance, there are significant differences in customer rating for stores A, B and E, which indicates an influence of shopping motives for them. The other four stores receive homogeneous ratings from each group.
- For scope of offers, the perception for stores C and E is heterogeneous among respondent groups; shopping orientations seem to influence the perception of this variable for those stores.
- For price level, perception is homogeneous for every store except store D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Cluster 1</th>
<th>Cluster 2</th>
<th>Cluster 3</th>
<th>Cluster 4</th>
<th>ANOVA Differences in means not sign. following Scheffé</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope orientation</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>-2.28</td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>F             p (2-tail) (p=.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality orientation</td>
<td>-.82</td>
<td>-.59</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>331.9 (.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price orientation</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>-.60</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>201.7 (.000) Clusters 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time orientation</td>
<td>-.50</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>101.2 (.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>80.7 (.000) Clusters 2 and 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Cluster Means

TABLE 3

Cluster Means

ANOVA

Differences in means not sign. following Scheffé

F             p (2-tail) (p=.05)
Summarising, it can be observed, that the majority of perception variables (15 out of 21) do not show any significant differences among the customer clusters. Perception is, all in all, differing from the expectation formulated in hypothesis 1, rather homogeneous and does not seem to be strongly influenced by the different shopping orientations of consumers. While this finding might partly be attributed to the small cluster size in some cases, it clearly shows, that inter-cluster differences are rather small.

Shopping Orientations and Attitude. Again, the potential influence of shopping orientations on the attitude is analysed for each store separately on the level of the F-ratios of the ANOVA. Concerning attitude and its indicators, table 7 shows that significant and highly significant differences between the consumer clusters are frequently found in the data (26 of 42 variables display heterogeneity among consumer groups): Sympathy is judged heterogeneously (for the same store) for four out of seven stores, trust for three, intention to recommend the store to friends for four, commitment for six and differentiation for four stores. Finally the attitude factor itself receives heterogeneous results for five stores. Overall, heterogeneous results dominate this table, showing that the shopping orientation differences between the four clusters might be contributing to a different attitude towards “objectively” identical stores. Attitude, as a long-term, emotional and rather subjective construct, seems to be influenced by the needs that consumers wish to satisfy with the store. Hypothesis 2 finds support in the empirical data. Attitude towards retail stores differs significantly across the shopping orientation clusters.

It is, however, interesting to see that again some stores (e.g. G, E and B) are judged very heterogeneously by different groups while others (C and D, two of the discounters) seem to appeal equally to all consumer groups. Differing results for the heterogeneity can be interpreted as a higher or lower degree of polarisation of a retail store. It might describe how closely a certain store’s features are customised to a certain customer group or appeal to the mass market.

CONCLUSION

There are three main contributions of this study. Central dimensions of shoppers’ perceptions concerning food shopping were extracted (quality of performance, scope of offers, price level), confirming the results of an earlier study (Doyle and Fenwick 1974/75).

Also, on the basis of four central dimensions of shopping orientations (scope orientation, quality orientation, price orientation and time orientation), four segments of shoppers differing significantly in the configuration of needs looked for to be satisfied by the shopping activity were identified: one-stop shoppers, time-pressed price shoppers, dedicated quality shoppers, demanding shoppers. This only partly mirrors previous taxonomies, which might imply that shopping orientations (and with them food shopper segments) have been changing over the last decades.

Finally, the investigation supports the hypothesis, that consumers differ in their attitude towards a food store according to their shopping orientations, i.e. their assessment of certain higher-order,
long-term store characteristics are strongly influenced by their shopping orientations. However, the hypothesis, that this is also the case for the perception of store attributes was not supported by the data. Future studies could use larger sample sizes to analyse this finding and also analyse more complex relations between the constructs orientations, perception, and attitude.

However, our results imply that the differences between the consumers segments for the perception factors are lower than those for the attitude. The lower differences among consumer segments in the perception of retail stores can be attributed to the fact that for perception, consumers can use rational, cognitively evaluable cues, which are less influenced by subjective interpretations. So, evaluation of these items is rather objective and shopping orientations do not exert a strong influence. Since subjectivity of attitude is much higher and the assessment more emotional, shopping orientations seem to have considerably stronger influence on attitude towards a store.

REFERENCES

Birtwistle, Grete, Ian Clarke, and Paul Freathy (1999), „Store image in the UK fashion sector: consumer versus retailer perceptions,” The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research, 9 (1), 1-16.


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The present study aims at verifying the existence of two high-order dimensions (i.e., hedonic and utilitarian meta-trait) over the Big Five factors of human personality, which can be extracted from the enduring individual differences in shopping motives indicated in the seminal work by Tauber (1972).

In 1996, Mooradian and Olver demonstrated a correlation between the 11 shopping motives of Tauber’s (1972) taxonomy (namely, Diversion, Sensory stimulation, Self-gratification, Learning about new trends, Physical activity, Social experiences outside the home, Communication with others having similar interest, Peer group attraction, Status and authority, Pleasure in bargaining, and Pleasure in bargains), and the Big Five factors of human personality (see Digman 1990, for a review). Though admitting that motives may be organized hierarchically by means of broad higher-order categories encompassing multiple specific motives, they did not verify on the field the existence of meta-trait higher than five, which would relate the specific individual differences to the essential broader outcomes pursued by people when shopping.

Indeed, a consistent stream of research in consumer literature indicates in the utilitarian and/or hedonic shopping value the final aims of shopping activities carried out by consumers. In accordance with this view, Babin, Darden and Griffin (1994) developed a scale for assessing the utilitarian (i.e., functional, task-related, and rational) and the hedonic (i.e., ludic, aesthetic, and epicurean) values of shopping experiences. From the findings of that study, it seems likely to hypothesize that these two basic dimensions (utilitarian vs. hedonic) can be considered as stable meta-trait to which it is possible to relate the individual differences traced by shopping motives.

To test empirically this hypothesis, two retailers were chosen, Carrefour and Ipercoop, whose respective hypermarkets were recently opened in the suburban area of Lecce, a medium town in Southern Italy. A main questionnaire, containing 63 close-ended questions on a seven-point Likert scale, was administered to a sample of 600 customers (300 per shopping center), to assess Tauber’s (1972) list of shopping motives, together with 19 new specific items from the Babin, Darden and Griffin’s (1994) scale and from the respondents’ answers to a pilot study.

Several factorial analyses were conducted, with the principal component method and Varimax rotation, and five- and two-factor solutions were considered, together with a 12-factor solution able to explain individual shopping motives. Following the Mooradian and Olver’s (1996) methodology, two correlation analyses were carried out between the 12-factor solution and the 5-factor solution, and between the 5-factor solution and the 2-factor solution. Results confirmed that the individual differences in shopping motives as indicated by Tauber (1972) can be related, with few exceptions, to the Big Five factors (cf. Digman 1990) and these, in turn, to the two main outcomes pursued with shopping—i.e., hedonic and utilitarian ones, as it was hypothesized.

Specifically, results showed that, Openness to Experience (r=.694, p<.000), Agreeableness (r=.535, p<.000), and Extraversion (r=.346, p<.000) traits are correlated to the hedonic shopping value; whereas, Emotional Stability (r=.897, p<.000), and Conscientiousness (r=.185, p<.000) traits are correlated to the utilitarian shopping value.

These findings confirm the existence of two high-order factors among the Big Fives, as maintained by Digman (1997) in his meta-analysis of social psychology studies, but it advances two aggregations which are different from those found in the field of “global” human personality (as opposed to the domain-specific level of shopping motives), because of the transfer of the Agreeableness factor from one meta-dimension to the other. These two meta-dimensions in the shopping field could be interpreted as the antecedents of shopping behaviors (conations), connected with, respectively, the rational motives behind logic cognitive processes, and the affective motives regarding the sphere of feelings and personal goals. This should urge firms to classify their key customers mainly on searched shopping goals, thus setting, in turn, satisfactory communication strategies able to influence customers’ perception of the shopping-center image and, in general, of their purchasing experience.

Beyond the marketing consequences of these findings, there are essentially remarkable theoretical implications which should prompt researchers to reconsider categories of shopping motives indicated by Tauber (1972)—which he never directly tested empirically—that result from the analysis carried out on 12 factors. In particular, there are three main differences with respect to past categories: the first difference is the dissolving of class A of motives (that is, shopping as a Diversion), which can be explained with the vagueness of item statements, given that the same subjects, in a different motivational status, could feel as a diversion either the search for excitement aroused by a shopping situation or a relaxing mood when shopping, according to their hedonic tone and level of stimulation (Apter 1989). The second difference with respect to the shopping motives originally indicated by Tauber (1972) is in the collapsing of Factor G (Communication with others having similar interests) and Factor F (Social experience outside the home) in one dimension (G/F) which represents Communication in general, coming from any shopping activity. Finally, the third difference comes from the proved existence of other classes of motives which prompt people to shop, two of them based on new items, added after the pilot study conducted by means of open-ended questions, and one of them based on the re-aggregation of past items. Apart from the External reasons class (Factor 12), due to events which are not dependent on the subject, it was possible to find a class of shopping motives, which we defined as Enjoying being on one’s own (Y), where all its items (There is no pressure to buy; I can mind my business; and I enjoy anonymity) characterize it and distinguish it from mere Self-gratification (C). Also the third new factor, constituted by items previously considered in association with other classes of motives, emphasizes the shoppers’ willingness to make their point of view prevail. Therefore, it was called Freedom to decide (X), to stress the fact that customers would like to make smart purchases, without the pressure put on them by salespeople, that they would rather prefer less intrusive, as consumers consider as their own right to be able to give a glance to the offerings without being forced to buy.

REFERENCES


The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Giampiero Pellegrino and Mariarosa Scardicchio in data collection and processing.


ABSTRACT

Although much research has been conducted on mood in relation to purchase behavior, relatively little has focused on the role of product-or-store-induced mood over time. This study examines the effects of product-or-store-induced mood on expected and experienced product value in the context of clothing. Results indicate that the product-or-store-induced mood has a moderate correlation with expected and experienced hedonic value. Hence, product-or-store-induced mood seems to influence both expected and experienced hedonic value, whereas the functional value seems to be perceived in a similar way, regardless of mood.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers’ mood at initial product evaluations has been shown to influence the nature of these evaluations. Generally, a positive mood has the most benevolent effects. It is thus important for the marketer to create a positive mood in consumers. If the product or brand does not create a positive mood, in the sense of positive feelings and hedonic value, strong relationships cannot be founded.

Previous operationalizations of consumer mood have in general been based on an artificial induction of positive or negative mood, so called context-induced mood, by letting respondents in a laboratory setting think about, or expose them to descriptions of, positive or negative events. After this initial manipulation they are asked to evaluate or choose between products.

This context-induced mood is not related to the actual purchase and is thus outside the marketer’s control in a real world purchase situation. On the other hand, it is quite possible for the marketer, both through the product or brand, and through the retail setting, to stimulate a positive, product-/brand-related mood at the point of purchase. More knowledge about such product-or-store-induced mood can give valuable insights for clothes producers and retailers, or indeed for any business selling a product that is rich in meaning.

Moreover, it is critical for marketers to know how a product-or-store-induced mood may affect consumer behavior over time (Aylesworth and MacKenzie 1998; Singh and Hitchon 1989). The big question is whether the consumer, in his/her subsequent re-evaluation of the product while being in a different kind of mood, is still affected by the initial impression. Greater understanding of the importance of how moods influence different parts of the consumer purchase process could lead to more accurate and less expensive advertising strategies, better insights in whether various changes in the product itself and in the retail setting in order to create a positive mood are worthwhile, among other things.

Most previous studies have been relatively short-sighted in scope. Here, on the other hand, consumers are studied across a period of six months.

In this study, we examine the effects of product-/brand-induced mood on the evaluation of expected and experienced product value in the context of clothing. It is argued that clothes primarily provide the consumer with functional and/or hedonic value, and that hedonic value is a specifically important contributor to the customer’s identification with the product, something we believe is vital for continuous use of the particular garment, as well as repurchase of the clothes brand in question.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON CONSUMER MOOD

Moods have been defined as mild, pervasive, and generalized affective states (Ison 1984) that are subjectively perceived by individuals (Gardner 1985). Gardner (1985) regards moods as a subcategory of feelings, differentiated from emotions by their transient nature and the fact that they are less intense, less attention-getting and less clearly tied to a specific behavior or cause. While different from emotions in these respects, mood as a feeling shares fundamental properties with emotions. Moods and emotions thus are similar constructs.

Two competing theories may explain the effect of mood on product evaluations: the congruence theory and the consistency theory. The congruence theory predicts that the consumer’s feelings cause certain environmental cues to become more salient and stand out, to stimulate his/her choice of brand (Bower and Cohen 1982). The consistency theory, on the other hand, predicts that a positive state of mind has more pronounced effects on purchase than a negative state of mind. Forgas and Bower (1987) found that joyful subjects made more purchases than did sad subjects. The congruence and consistency theories are by no means mutually exclusive.

However, empirical studies show contradictory results of mood on the consumer’s product evaluation. According to Batra and Stayman (1990), a positive mood is associated with less cognitive elaboration, more heuristic processing, and reduces the extent to which message evaluation affects brand identity. On the contrary, Moscardo and Pearce’s (1986) results reveal that enjoyment of visitors in entertainment centers is moderately but significantly and positively correlated with visitors’ mindfulness. That is, visitors in a positive mood are more attentive and aware of what they are doing.

As found by Kamings, Marks, and Skinner (1991), a joyful commercial viewed in the context of joyful program was evaluated more favourably then in the context of sad program, and conversely. In the same vein, Hornik (1992) found that positive and negative moods resulted in underestimation versus overestimation of the duration between the consumer’s temporal purchases.

Even more convincingly, Isen et al. (1978) confirmed the effects of positive mood on the cognitive processes of consumers: if the state of mind is positive (happy) in the purchase situation, this enhanced good mood improves consumer’s evaluations of the performance of product brands.

MOOD CONGRUENCY THEORY

According to the mood congruency theory, our present mood predisposes us to be more attentive of information that is congruent with this mood (Clark and Isen 1982). Specifically, people in a positive mood may attend more to favourable aspects of information, whereas people in a negative mood may attend more to unfavourable aspects (Adaval 1996).

In the context of marketing, studies have found support for the mood congruence theory. Consumers processing information in a positive mood are likely to have more positive feelings towards the product or brand. According to Batra and Stayman (1990), positive mood states have also been linked to higher levels of influence, mostly with regard to advertising claims. In another study, Goldberg and Gorn (1987) reported that viewers who watched pleasant TV-
programs or looked at nice pictures were more likely to provide positive cognitive responses and perceive the program or picture as more convincing than those who watched more depressing programs or pictures. This approach is perhaps realistic while watching commercials or newspaper ads, but not in a real consumption situation.

The congruence effects of positive moods have thus been substantiated in the literature, but the influence of consumer mood on product evaluation has been less examined. Attention to mood states and consumer behavior has reinforced the notion that the product evaluations and the processing of product-related information are considerably affected by the consumers’ mood state. In many articles, mood congruency theory accurately predicts the impact of positive and negative mood states upon salient consumer behavior variables. On the other hand, earlier research has focused on the impact of context-induced mood states on product choice, but has not cared for situations that contain repeat evaluations.

Srull (1987) showed congruent mood state effects on evaluations taken 48 hours after the product information was presented. In this study, subjects were initially asked to form an evaluation of the product while in a mood state. On the contrary, initial evaluations by consumers first instructed to simply assess the product information failed to exhibit a mood-congruent pattern, even though the consumers also experienced different mood states at indoctrination. The author investigated the impact of mood states on later evaluations when moods were induced at the time product evaluations were measured. The results may suggest that the mood states affect the consumers’ evaluations provided they are present when evaluations actually take place.

**PREVIOUS MANIPULATIONS OF CONSUMER MOOD**

As we have seen, it has previously been found that moods can influence how we evaluate people, objects, or issues, regardless of whether our mood is related to any of these phenomena (Petty et al. 1983). This is because our present mood predisposes us to be more attentive of information that is congruent with this mood (Clark and Isen 1982). Specifically, people in a positive mood may attend more to favourable aspects of information, whereas people in a negative mood may attend more to unfavourable aspects (Adaval 1996).

Perhaps it is therefore that research on consumer mood in general has examined the effects of an existing, or rather induced, mood on for example product evaluations or choice. Even though mood, according to the above definition, is supposed to be a pervasive state of mind, the mood manipulations generally used are relatively short-sighted. A few recent examples are Wallther and Grigoriadis (2004) who examined the effect of affective learning (through combining pairs of shoes with liked or disliked faces) on consumers who were already happy or sad; Cohen and Andrade (2004) induced a happy or sad affective state by letting people watch five minutes of the comedy Happy Gilmore contra the drama Life as a House, and then having them describe a real-life event which produced similar feelings (in order to study how respondents thereupon deliberately regulated their moods to handle different tasks); and Yeung and Wyer (2004) similarly induced mood by letting college students describe a happy or sad event in their lives (and then have them evaluate sports shoes or a salad dressing based on product attributes before or after they were exposed to pictures of the products).

In sum, considerable research has examined the effect of such context-induced moods on consumers’ information processing (e.g., Aylesworth and MacKenzie 1998; Batra and Stayman 1999; Batra and Stephens 1994; Goldberg and Gorn 1987).

In their research, these authors have systematically manipulated consumer’s moods and stressed the need to empirically investigate how the induced mood states influence product evaluation (Hadjimarcou and Barnes 1996). Hadjimarcou and Barnes (1996) found that an artificially induced mood had effects on initial, but not on repeated product evaluations. In fact, Singh and Hitchon (1989) cite research suggesting that prior effects thought to be due to manipulating, may in fact be partially changed when consumers use the product or brand. Perhaps this is one factor that could partially explain results of prior research. Some studies have found that positive moods (versus negative or neutral moods) stimulate purchase and may moreover be transferred to the post-purchase process (Aylesworth and MacKenzie 1998; Goldberg and Gorn 1987; Knowles et al. 1993; Mathur and Chattopadhyay 1991). Others have found that positive moods are associated with less information processing (Batra and Stephens, 1994; Batra and Stayman, 1990). Effects have then been found on initial, but not on subsequent global product evaluations. These subsequent product evaluations took place 48 hours after the initial ones and did not involve any product usage meanwhile. It is thus not clear what effects an initial positive mood at the point of purchase may have later on in the post-purchase process, when this is characterized by continuous product usage. Even still, Hadjimarcou and Barnes (1996) point out that the research on moods’ impact on judgement has till now mostly been focused on the effects of mood states on initial product judgements, while the moods’ influence on repeat judgement has been ignored. The consumers make their evaluation of a product depending of which mood they are in when getting the product presented for the first time. If the first time is through a TV commercial, the mood can be influenced by e.g. by putting the commercial into a happy or sad program.

Even though real-world consumers for various reasons find themselves in different moods before a purchase, a more neutral mood than that directly induced by instructions in a laboratory setting is probably quite common. This neutral or mildly positive mood is likely to be the normal state of mind also when using the product.

Moreover, the context-induced, but “product-independent” mood of the consumer is very hard for the marketer to manipulate, whereas there are possibilities to manipulate product-or-store-induced mood both at the point of purchase and during product usage (e.g., by means of product attributes or continuous advertising).

**PRODUCT-OR-STORE-INDUCED MOOD**

It is well-known that the purchase of certain products is associated with joy and happiness for many consumers. One such product is clothing. If you are looking forward to the purchase of a new garment, you are likely to be in a positive mood at the point of purchase. On the other hand, if the garment is a bare necessity, something you have to buy, but are not looking forward to, your mood is more likely to be neutral or even negative. Still, the product or retail setting may have effects on your current mood.

The effects from this type of product-or-store-induced mood may be different from the artificially induced mood mainly studied in previous research.

However, in stating our hypotheses, we depart from the assumption that the two mood types have similar effects on product evaluations.

As previously noted, Hadjimarcou and Barnes (1996) found that an artificially induced mood had effects on initial, but not on subsequent, repeated product evaluations. They examined cases where consumers in a positive or a negative mood received infor-
mation about an unfamiliar stimulus which they were afterwards asked to evaluate immediately after the presentation of the information as well as after two days. Departing from their study, we test similar hypotheses, though with a different type of mood (product- or store-induced, rather than context-induced), a different type of product (familiar, rather than unfamiliar) and a different time horizon (six months, rather than 48 hours):

**H1**: Product-or-store-induced mood is associated with initial, expected hedonic value at the point of purchase.

**H2**: Product-or-store-induced mood is associated with initial, expected functional value at the point of purchase.

**H3**: Product-or-store-induced mood is not related to subsequent, experienced hedonic value after six months’ ownership.

**H4**: Product-or-store-induced mood is not related to subsequent, experienced functional value after six months’ ownership.

**Mood and Customer-Product Identification**

In the context of clothes, some products or brands can indeed influence the consumers’ mood, and may lead them to attribute various human, mood-related traits to the product/brand in question. These mood-related traits can then be translated into hedonic value and thereby relate to the consumer identity process. That is, a consumer who feels happy when purchasing a garment may transfer this feeling of happiness to the garment and perceive that his/her happy self is represented by the garment. The consumer thus identifies with the garment.

Even though consumer product-related mood has (or does not have) effects on initial and subsequent estimations of product values, we argue that in the case of clothes, this is not enough to ensure continuous usage and possible repurchase. There should also be a link between product-or-store-induced mood and consumer-product identification.

Here, we depart from the assumption that most people want to be in a positive mood and view themselves as positive people. Therefore, we argue that the consumer’s mood at the point of purchase partly through the influence on perceived, and perhaps also experienced functional and hedonic value of the garment in question, can have an effect on the consumer’s identification with this garment or clothes brand. That the customer and product identities coincide is in turn important for the future usage and of the product and repurchase of the brand.

Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H5**: Product-or-store-induced mood is related to the identification between consumer and product.

**THE OVERALL MODEL**

To sum this up, we propose the conceptual model shown in Figure 1.

**STUDY AND MEASURES**

**The study in brief**

Because of the lack of information in this area, we used a survey to get more knowledge about how the consumer’s product-or-store-induced moods and subsequent evaluations of expected and experienced product values influence the identity congruence between consumer and product. A convenience sampling method was used. Consumers in three major clothes stores in central Stockholm were approached immediately after having completed a purchase and asked if they were willing to participate in a study of clothes brands. Six months later, they received a postal survey, asking similar questions, in order to study changes in these constructs over a prolonged period of ownership and usage. Five hundred and eighty-nine consumers participated in both surveys.

The empirical data thus comes from consumers who had purchased one specific garment just prior to the first collection of data and then were again asked similar questions about the same garment six months later. The consumers were asked about their mood in the purchase situation as well as while using the garment, expected functional and hedonic value of the garment at the point of purchase and experienced values during usage, and after six months they also responded to questions about their identification with the garment. Before the consumers answered the questionnaire...
items there they instructed to think about the specific garment brand they had purchased.

**Measures**

The measures included in the model are described below.

*Product-or-store-induced mood.* The consumer’s state of mind at the point of purchase was assessed with the question, “When you think about the garment you have just purchased, how do you feel?” followed by a semantic differential seven-point scale with the subsequent adjective pairs: happy—unhappy, pleased—annoyed, satisfied—unsatisfied, hopeful—despairing, relaxed—tense, calm—excited, stimulated—relaxed, calm—excited, jittery—dull, wide awake—sleepy. The pairs were adapted from Mehrabian and Russell’s Emotions: Dimensions of Emotions: PAD (1974), and represent the major parts of their pleasure and arousal dimensions. Even though this scale has previously been used in order to operationalize emotions, we here choose the word “mood”, to emphasize that as it is explicitly related to the product or store in question, and not to something unrelated (as in much previous research), it is of a less transient nature, and perhaps also less intense, than an emotion.

For sake of simplicity, they were all combined into an overall mood measure with a Cronbach’s alpha of .82. In order to be able to study the effects of a positive, neutral, or negative product-or-store-induced mood on subsequent product evaluations and customer-product identification, this measure was next parted in three thirds.

*Initial/Expected hedonic value at the point of purchase.* Expected hedonic value during usage was measured by the following three items: “I become in a good mood when thinking about using the garment”; “I feel comfortable when I think about using the garment”; and “I feel good when thinking about using the garment.” The data was collected at the point of purchase and measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale. An index of all three items had alpha .89.

*Initial/Expected functional value at the point of purchase.* Expected functional value at the point of purchase was measured by the respondent’s expectation of the garment’s usefulness, practicality, durability, functionality, and capability during usage. The data was collected in the same way as for expected hedonic value. Alpha was .86.

*Subsequent/Experienced hedonic value during usage.* Experienced hedonic value during usage was measured by the following three items: “I become in a good mood when using the garment”; “I felt comfortable using the garment”; and “I felt good when using the garment.” The data was collected six months after purchase. The alpha of the combined items was .95.

*Subsequent/Experienced functional value during usage.* Experienced functional value during usage was measured by the respondent’s assessment of the garment’s usefulness, practicality, durability, functionality, and capability during usage. As for experienced hedonic value, the data was collected six months after purchase. Alpha for the combined measure was .88.

*Customer-product identification.* Customer-product identification, that is, how well the garment signalled the customer’s own identity, was measured with the following items: “The garment expressed who I am”; “The garment explained who I am”; and “The garment was me.” This data was collected six months after purchase. Alpha for these three items was .89.

**RESULTS**

To get an overview, we begin with a correlation table of the studied measures (Table 1).

*European Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 7)*

We see that product-or-store-induced mood has a moderately high correlation with expected and experienced hedonic value. The correlations with the other measures are not very substantial, but nevertheless significant. It can thus be established that there is some kind of relation between the constructs, measured in this way.

Because mood was measured before evaluations of both expected (later in the questionnaire) and experienced (six months later) product values, we will also test whether there could be some kind of causal relation, by means of regression analysis.

Hypothesis 1 stated that product-or-store-induced mood would give a significant contribution to the expected hedonic value of the garment at the point of purchase. Regression analysis supports this ($\beta=6.2, \ R^2=0.24, \ p<.001$).

Hypothesis 2 stated that product-or-store-induced mood would give a significant contribution to the expected functional value of the garment at the point of purchase. Regression analysis weakly supports this ($\beta=13, \ R^2=0.01, \ p<.01$).

Next, hypothesis 3 stated that product-or-store-induced mood would not give a significant contribution to the experienced hedonic value of the garment during usage. On the contrary, there seems to be a small contribution of product-or-store-induced mood on experienced hedonic values ($\beta=4.7, \ R^2=0.10, \ p<.001$).

Hypothesis 4 then stated that product-or-store-induced mood would not give a significant contribution to the experienced functional value of the garment during usage. Hypothesis 4 is supported, as the regression is not significant.

Finally, hypothesis 5 stated that product-or-store-induced mood would significantly contribute to customer-product identification. This is supported ($\beta=33, \ R^2=0.04, \ p<.001$).

If we were to test these hypotheses through a mean comparison between groups with a negative, neutral, and positive product-or-store-induced mood, we would get the results shown in table 2.

According to this means comparisons analysis, hypotheses 1, 3, and 5 gain the strongest support, though there is perhaps not a linear relation with regards to hypothesis 5.

Product-or-store-induced mood seems to have significant effects on both expected and experienced hedonic value, whereas the functional value seems to be perceived in a similar way, regardless of mood. It is in this context also interesting to note that the experienced hedonic value is much lower than the expected value ($\Delta = 1.02$), while the experienced functional value is almost as high as the expected value ($\Delta = -.18$).

**DISCUSSION**

It has previously been shown that artificially induced consumer mood, for example by letting experimental respondents think about happy or sad life events, or watch comedy or drama, had effects on product evaluations. The initial evaluations were affected by this external mood, but not the subsequent.

A problem with these common operationalizations of consumer mood is that they are not very realistic and moreover difficult to manipulate in a real-world purchase situation. In this paper, we focus instead of product-or-store-induced mood, that is, the ability of the product and its purchase situation to put consumers in a positive mood. In contrast to context-induced mood, product-or-store-induced mood is possible to manipulate by the marketer.

It seems like this kind of mood has partly different effects. It seems to influence the evaluation of both expected (initial) and experienced (subsequent) hedonic product value, but not the evaluation of functional value at either point in time. The relation between product-or-store-induced mood and hedonic value is important, because they both contribute to the identification between customer and product, at least in the clothing category. And in the
clothing category, we believe that customer-product identification is particularly important for continued usage and potential repurchase. The functional value is on the other hand not strongly related to this identification.

The expected and experienced functional value is moreover more or less the same, while the expected emotional value is much higher than that later experienced. This can be interpreted as a natural development and an effect of the news value of the recently purchased garment, but it can also point to the importance of stimulating a positive mood at the point of purchase, because a positive mood is associated with expected emotional value, and because these two constructs are in turn both associated with customer-product identification.

Customer-product identification is important as long as it leads to a customer-brand identification. Due to changing fashion trends, a particular garment may become out of style, but if the customer identifies with its brand, further purchases of this brand become more likely. In further research, the relation between customer-product identification and customer-brand identification should thus be examined. In a consumer culture, identities and identifications are said to be temporary and changing. Is it then possible to create relations between brands and consumers that are stable and lasting over time?

It is a key challenge for marketers to enhance the consumer’s product or brand evaluation in an actual purchase environment, and also in repeated product re-evaluations. Product-or-store-induced mood plays an important role in shaping consumers’ total evaluations of products or brands as well as being a focal point for the meaning of actual product value in the context of clothes. To create strong relationships between consumers and products or brands marketers must look at consumers’ product-or-store-induced moods in the retail environment, because that influences their hedonic product evaluation and also the customer’s identification with the product or brand.

We need to be in a position to understand the impact of product-or-store-induced mood and its effects on consumers’ product evaluations. Because the product can influence the consumers’ mood state in their evaluation of product brands in the store, manufacturers and retailers have to stimulate a positive product-or-store-induced mood at the point of purchase to tie the consumers closer to a specific product or brand on the market.

**REFERENCES**


To Possess and to Be Possessed: The Sacred Facet of Gift Giving
Domen Bajde, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

He can only preserve his authority ... if he can prove he is haunted and favored both by the spirits and by good fortune, that he is possessed, and also possesses it. And he can only prove this good fortune by spending it and sharing it out....« Marcel Mauss (1990, 50)

ABSTRACT
Existing research on gift giving fails to a great extent to acknowledge the complexity and heterogeneity of gift giving, which transcends economy and exchange. This paper reflects on potential reasons for such neglect. What is more, drawing from philosophical and theological literature on pure gifts and sacrifice, it introduces different perspectives on gift giving. The temporally and culturally varied interpretations and conceptualizations of gift giving present themselves as a canvas upon which contemporary symbolic system(s) can be projected.

INTRODUCTION
Consumer research has recently shown increasing interest in the sacred, spiritual and religious aspects of consumer behavior (Brown 1999; Belk 2005). In spite of the influential invitation to consider the spiritual aspect of consumption (Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry 1989) existing research on gift giving to a great extent fails to acknowledge the sacred facet of gift giving which transcends economy and exchange (Belk and Coon 1993). This paper reflects on potential reasons for such neglect, while at the same time introducing a somewhat different perspective on giving that draws from philosophical and theological literature on giving and sacrifice. By exposing the sacred side of giving, and contrasting gifts to religious sacrifice, it attempts to reassess some of the hidden assumptions underlying predominant views on gifts.

GIFT GIVING IN CONSUMER RESEARCH
A review of consumer research literature on gift giving offers a compelling collage of different approaches to the study of gift giving behavior. The articles on gift giving published in the Journal of Consumer Research alone envelop anthropological (Sherry 1983), economic (Garner and Wagner 1991), psychological (Wooten 2000), sociological (Ruth, Onnes and Brunel 1999), phenomenological (Mick and Demoss 1990) and cultural perspectives of giving (Joy 2001). Consumer research has progressed a great deal owing to such richness and divergence of investigating gifts. The topic, nevertheless, still offers many opportunities to augment the understanding of consumer behavior. Sherry’s (1983) description of gift giving as universal, yet intriguing, behavior introduces the first of the many “paradoxes” inherent in gifts. The contradictions and inconsistencies giving life to these “paradoxes” can further our understanding of gift giving and consumer behavior.

In a recent article, Ruth and colleagues (1999) stress the ongoing impact of Sherry’s gift exchange model on the consumer behavior literature. Sherry’s anthropological perspective has profoundly influenced subsequent research on gift giving; hence, some additional considerations are in order. What are the unique characteristics of this perspective? How do they influence the way consumer researchers think about gift giving? This paper begins by addressing these issues and continues by considering the concept of sacrifice and its relevance to gift giving. The history and philosophy of sacrifice present a great opportunity to investigate the sacred facet of gifts.

THE LEGACY OF ANTHROPOLOGY
Returning to anthropology, it is impossible to refute that it is Mauss’ vision of the gift that dominates the field of anthropology (Sahlins 1974). Douglas (1990, X) describes this vision as “an organized onslaught on contemporary political theory, a plank in the platform against utilitarianism”. In a similar manner, Gregory (1982) depicts (Mauss’) anthropological theory of gift as a project originating from political economy. Whereas Gregory’s interpretation may tell us more about how gift giving is embedded in contemporary symbolic systems, than Mauss’ original conceptualizations, it is still important to note that Mauss’ The Gift (1990) is first and foremost a study of two different social and economic systems (i.e., the gift economy and the market economy). Mauss performs this analysis by drawing upon the “analytical category” of the gift. The latter has unfortunately often been mistaken for an empirical description of gift giving (Carrier 1995).

To put it differently, Mauss studied a system, which he described as the gift economy, not the gifts and their meaning as such (Laidlaw 2000, Godbout 2002). Nevertheless, by replacing the confines of utilitarianism with a more holistic consideration of the social, The Gift represents a tremendous advance in the understanding of gift giving. The latter particularly applies to the idea that gift giving behavior reflects the way people construe themselves, their physical and spiritual environment and their own place within it all (Carrier 1995). In spite of these insights Mauss’ followers generally subscribe to narrower depictions of gifts as balanced and harmonious social contracts (exchange) often disguised as disinterested generosity. Hence, gift exchange remains within economy, while at the same time it is opposed to market exchange, which is blunt, sterile, impersonal and cold, and consequently, a threat to the very fabric of society.

However, while taking the position of an objective observer who is investigating the evolution of exchange systems, Mauss nonetheless approaches gifts in a static manner (Olson 2002). Instead of openly delving into the complexity of the gift and its meaning, he starts from a very narrow outlook evidenced by the central question posed in his Programme: “What rule of legality and self-interest… compels the gift that has been received to be obligatorily reciprocated? What power resides in the object given that causes its recipient to pay it back?” (Mauss 1990, 4) Unfortunately, the author fails to provide sufficient reasoning to uphold his assumptions that there is such a rule of legality; that it does all boil down to the power of the object, and that self-interest and obligation indeed are all there is to giving.

What is the legacy of the Maussian gift exchange tradition to consumer research? Whereas the idea of a socially binding gift exchange dominates the field of anthropology (Laidlaw 2000) beyond any doubt, it also persists throughout the consumer research literature on gift giving. Originating with Belk (1976, 156), who concludes that: “…at present Mauss’ notion of obligatory exchange remains the most plausible explanation of the overall process of gift-giving”, and Sherry (1983), who equates gift giving with gift exchange, the gift as relationship enhancing exchange perspective can be found in the majority of consumer behavior literature dealing with gifts. Take, for example, Joy’s (2001, 239) definition of gift: “The gift is generally defined as the circulation of goods to promote ties and bonds between individuals”. Although very relevant, this definition does to some extent defy a common understanding of...
what a gift is (is not). People rarely perceive gift giving as circulation, nor do they necessarily attribute it solely to relationship engineering. A strong example of this can be found in charitable giving, which is rarely construed as strengthening ties or circulation/exchange. Rucker and colleagues (1991, 528) dispose of all this clutter, in an often practiced manner, by nonchalantly observing: “Although the folk definition of gift implies a voluntary contribution with no expectation of compensation, scholars from Mauss forward have acknowledged the reciprocal nature of gift exchange”. Whereas folk definitions may seem imaginary to some researchers, the effects these meanings produce are very real (Elliott and Ritson 1997).

THE PURE GIFT

Mauss’ work has provoked plenty of reaction within various disciplines of science. It became a mantra for anthropologists (Douglas 1990) and an intellectual plaything for philosophers and theologians (Olson 2002). The latter resulted in a variety of provocative materials that enrich our understanding of gifts by focusing on the so-called pure gift. The opposition between the Maussian gift and the pure gift is as much a conflict of thought as it is a conflict of ways of thinking. Whereas Mauss epitomizes objective positivistic rationalism, his counterparts generally adhere to postmodernism, phenomenology and interpretivism. What is more, the pure gift definition defines the gift in what at first seems a total contradiction to Mauss. Derrida (1992, 12), for example, explains: “For there to be a gift, there must be no reciprocity, return, exchange, counter gift or debt”. A pure gift is, therefore, by definition noneconomic and irreconcilable with exchange (Jarvis 2001).

In his seminal work titled *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, Derrida (1992) deconstructs the idea of the gift. He starts from what he believes are the three necessary conditions of the gift: the donor, the donee, and the gift (i.e., that which is given). He brings these three conditions and the initial idea of the noneconomic gift to their clatter, in an often practiced manner, by nonchalantly observing: “Although the folk definition of gift implies a voluntary contribution with no expectation of compensation, scholars from Mauss forward have acknowledged the reciprocal nature of gift exchange”. Whereas folk definitions may seem imaginary to some researchers, the effects these meanings produce are very real (Elliott and Ritson 1997).

Derrida (1992, 24) explicitly opposes Mauss’ definition of gifts by saying that: “Mauss’s The Gift speaks of everything but the gift: It deals with economy, exchange, contract (do ut des)...” Derrida, on the other hand, wants to think about gifts that are totally disinterested, unmotivated and spontaneous (Olson 2002). The philosopher is interested in the gift that transcends (i.e., is in excess of) cause and reason, a gift that Caille (2001) calls the gift without the subject. It is this subjectless, yet simultaneously personal, gift that Derrida’s deconstruction finds impossible (Champetier 2001). The proposed view of giving closely resembles Nietzsche’s view of morality. Nietzsche argues that traditional ideas of totally disinterested morality are illusory (Haaparanta 1988). In reality, it always pays to be moral, thus, one can never truly be moral (i.e., the psychological impossibility of disinterest). Both views eventually stumble upon disinterestedness, which ultimately enables the valorizing of both gift and morality. This destructive power presents itself in the form of the human inability to totally transcend the self (Ferreira 2001). A speck of self, a tiny consideration, or an ephemeral image suffices to expose the illusion of both gift and morality. However, not everybody subscribes to this categorization and omnipotence of disinterestedness.

When questioning the possibility of totally disinterested behavior Caille (2001) observes: “The schizophrenic split between egoism and altruism renders all response here almost impossible, and leads us to conclude that authentic disinterestedness would be accessible only from within the most extreme mystical passion”. Instead, he approaches the problem by distilling two modalities of interest: interest in (i.e., instrumental interest) and interest for (i.e., ultimate interest). The former refers to being interested in something as a means to achieve an alternative goal; while with the later (i.e., interest for) this something becomes an end. When allowing for both types of interest, it becomes evident that Derrida and Nietzsche’s disinterest is in fact the opposite of interest in, whereas the opposite of interest for is lack of interest. The author very eloquently explains “What makes us believe disinterestedness is impossible or vain is that we identify it with lack of interest, and that we never distinguish between the sacrifice of the interest in and the loss of the interest for. Once we learn to sidestep these obstacles, many mysteries will fade. The moment an economic interest or, more generally, an instrumental interest (an interest in and interestedness) is sacrificed, nothing is left to prevent us from believing in the existence of an authentic disinterestedness and in authentic generosity, or in the reality of the gift”. (Caille 2001, 35) In other words, it is instrumental interest that opposes the “rules” of the pure gift not interest per se.

Marion (in Jarvis 2001) comes to a somewhat similar conclusion when examining the phenomenology of the gift. He disagrees with Derrida, and suggests the gift is far from unthinkable; it is something that happens all the time. Marion claims none of the three conditions (donor, recipient and the “object” given) are really essential to the meaning of the gift. On the contrary, gifts that mean the most are often anonymously given to people who have done nothing to deserve them. Nor does the meaning of the gift reside in the object that is given, but is, instead, derived from the decision to donate. The later is not simply the donor’s decision to give, but more
importantly the gift’s decision to give itself (Jarvis 2001). How can the gift give itself? Marion’s idea of donation is constructed outside the economic metaphysical system. It resides outside reason and causality. According to Marion, to view the gift in terms of cause and effect is to view it from an economic perspective, which is unacceptable. The gift is purely immanent, and therefore subject to no natural or “economic” law. Vaughan’s (1997) feminist critique of capitalism comes to a similar conclusion, when it portrays gift giving as the most fundamental aspect of human understanding that precedes the logic of cause and effect.

While very popular with philosophers, the mainstream anthropological literature wholeheartedly refuses the idea of a pure gift. Douglas (1990, ix), for example, warns: “…the whole idea of a free gift is based on a misunderstanding. There should not be any free gifts. What is wrong with the so-called free gift is the donor’s intention to be exempt from return gifts coming from the recipient. Refusing requital puts the act of giving outside any mutual ties.” A misunderstanding is apparent, but it does not relate to the acceptan
tance or negation of mutual ties between donors and recipients. The pure gift does not oppose relationship and return gifts per se; it simply denies them the status of an end.

GIFT AND SACRIFICE

In “reality” there is no such thing as an empirically universal concept of the gift. The gift is always situated and interpreted within a particular symbolic system. The subsequent incommensurable interpretations and conceptualizations of gift giving, nevertheless, offer an opportunity to glimpse a reflection of the underlying symbolic systems. The presented pure gift perspective has been argued to relate solely to the Judeo-Christian religious heritage (i.e., the Christian apage). However, according to Caille (2001), there are some central ideas regarding pure gifts that can be attributed to most major religions and subsequently a broad array of cultures. Among these tenets, he mentions the spiritualization of love and giving, and the suspension of narcissism, egoism and calculative reasoning, which are an essential part of various religious doctrines. Needless to say, gift giving is a very important element of the religious.

Although the religious and the sacred do not always coincide (Belk et al. 1989), the connection between the gift and religion does point towards the sacred aspect of gift giving. Moreover, recognition of the heterogeneity of gift giving enables one to consider the relation between two inherently linked phenomena: gift giving and sacrifice. This connection opens a less traveled avenue of exploration, which can yield substantial insight into previously neglected facets of gift giving.

One of the more fruitful ways to achieve such an objective is to acknowledge that within certain symbolic systems gift giving at its very extreme of sacredness/religiousness often manifests itself as sacrifice. Sacrifice is here defined as a ritual movement towards the spiritual (Bataille 1997). It usually presents itself in a form of a material offering (gift) to spirits (God), but can also involve less material forms. There are many scholars who argue there is more to sacrifice than giving (Ashby 1988), while others similarly contest there is more to giving than sacrifice (Mau5 1990). Needless to say, they all agree on the substantial overlap between sacrifice and gift giving. Mauss (himself a detective of sacrifice; e.g., Hubert and Mauss 1964), for example, describes the importance that sacrificial giving played in the evolution of charitable giving to the poor (i.e., giving between men). Anthropology is again in the forefront of the few disciplines which have shown profound interest in both gift giving and sacrifice. Whereas the discipline offers many attempts to explore the language of sacrifice through the language of (Maussian) gifts (e.g., Bourdillon and Fortes 1980), the reverse approach seems to be far less practiced. The immeasurable wealth of texts describing sacrifice and its meaning from the very beginnings of civilization and the indisputable connection between sacrifice and gift giving offer much cause to change this practice.

Before proceeding with this line of inquiry let us note that the character of the pure gift conforms to a number of conditions defining sacred behavior (Belk et al. 1989). Communitas, commitment, contamination, and ritualism are an essential element of pure giving by the very definition of pure gifts (Belk 2005). A pure gift does not bind, it equates (communitas); it is a true expression of commitment; it is pure (as opposed to contaminated), and must be given in a proper manner (ritual). Later analysis will show that on close examination the list quickly grows even longer. Beyond doubt, gift giving is an extremely complex, heterogeneous form of symbolic behavior, which transcends the narrow confines of law and economy (Olson 2002). Similarly, all attempts to restrict giving to sacredness and religion are destined to fail. Nevertheless, at this point a single holistic stroke of genius, which could absorb all the complexity of gift giving seem a distant if at all sensible dream—an invisible hallucination. Whereas anthropology and consumer research thoroughly investigated the economic and contractual facet of gift giving, it now seems reasonable to also turn to the sacred and sacrificial facet of giving.

SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

Just as there is no single meaning to gift (Laidlaw 2001), there are also multiple meanings to sacrifice (Bourdillon and Fortes 1980). From an etymological perspective the word sacrifice traces back to sacrificere (Latin), a composite of sacer (sacred) and facere (to make). The latter far from provides a universal and conclusive meaning of sacrifice (e.g., making sacred), but does, nevertheless, point to some inherent characteristics of sacrifice such as doing, action, performance, drama, wholly, spiritual and otherworldly (Ashby 1988). A complete review of the various interpretations of the meaning of sacrifice goes beyond the purpose of this paper. Instead, attention is given to two antagonistic perspectives of sacrifice, which interestingly coincide with our previous discussion on gift giving. The proposed conceptualization of sacrifice and its relation to gift giving is embedded in contemporary understanding of both phenomena, rather than a universal representation that surpasses contextualization.

Before proceeding to the proposed themes, an important consideration is in order. The whole notion of sacrifice depends on a dichotomy between two worlds: the profane outward world, and the sacred world of spirits (Kierkegaard 1985). The ritual of sacrifice is performed to breach the “mystical curtain separating the profane from the sacred world” (Fortes 1980, xvii). Bataille (1997) in a similar attempt amasses the meaning of sacrifice by drawing a sharp distinction between the material world of things and the sacred world of spirits. In line with the proposed dichotomy of worlds, it is crucial to understand how this mystical curtain separating both worlds is removed. Sacrifice achieves this feat by propelling movement, which can either include the transportation of a person/thing up into the spiritual world or the invitation of spirits down to the world of things (Bataille 1997). The crucial process of purification and consecration enables such extraordinary movement. Objects of sacrifice need to be consecrated and purified of all profane before coming in contact with, or becoming possessed by spirits. Not surprisingly, the figure of movement is central to a number of works dealing with sacrifice (e.g., Kierkegaard 1985, Bataille 1997, Bourdillon and Fortes 1980).

The two perspectives or better yet themes concerning sacrifice are here called the possessive sacrifice and the possessed sacrifice.
The possessive sacrifice is a sacrifice performed in an attempt to communicate with the spirit world in order to achieve some favorable result for the person or the group performing the sacrifice (e.g., Thite 1975). It can be construed as thankful and submissive payment of tribute to the true owner(s) of all, or as repentance to disperse Gods’ anger (Ashby 1988). Central to such outlooks is the idea of filial dependence (i.e., people as children of God), which suggests sacrifice could be classified into the broader category of “defense rituals” (Fortes 1980). In other words, possessive sacrifice can be considered as a defense against the unforeseen, and the uncontrollable.

Hubert and Mauss (1964) propose a very common scheme of possessive sacrifice consisting of the sacrificer (the subject performing the sacrifice), the object of sacrifice (the victim), the recipient (the entity the sacrifice is made to), and the setting (the place of sacrifice). The proposed movement is achieved by sacrificing the object on the part of the sacrificer. However, not all sacrifice works this way. This scheme often succumbs to the ongoing process of spiritualization, wherein the object and the setting often become internalized (Daly 1978). For instance, at the extreme the sacrificer becomes both the object of sacrifice and the altar where the sacrifice is performed. Plato and his contemporaries have often ridiculed the “primitive” attempts to bribe the Gods and control what is by definition beyond all human control (Ashby 1988). They suggested all material things are a priori unworthy of sacrifice to a true God. Instead, it is the sacrificer her/himself who holds the capacity to reconnect with the divine (Thompson 1979). Plato refers to this capacity as the nous (eternal mind), a tool to be utilized in search of the divine light (Derrida 1995). Such trends of spiritualization and reinterpretation of sacrifice can be discerned from various religious texts dealing with the evolution of sacrifice. They are clearly present in the already mentioned Hellenic tradition (Thompson 1979), Hindu traditions (Thite 1975) and the Judeo-Christian traditions (Daly 1978), where defense and control are substituted by devotion and faith.

In this trend the possessive sacrifice is progressively being reintegrated into the possessed sacrifice. The sacrificer’s desire to “to separate himself from the world of things… [And get] back to the intimacy of the divine world, of the profound immanence of all that is” (Bataille 1997, 210) no longer aims to control the uncontrollable (i.e., Gods). As in the case of Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22), the ultimate Judeo-Christian-Islamic narrative of sacrifice, the possessed sacrifice leaves no room for ideas of control and calculation. They are replaced by a passionate inner attachment to the spiritual (i.e., God), by a craving for unity with the spiritual resulting in total submission and devotion (Gellman 2003). Sacrifice is still depicted as a movement—the movement of faith, the dance in between the two worlds, the leap that can only be done by means of true passion (Kierkegaard 1985). However, what becomes the operative word is faith. Abraham, who Kierkegaard eloquently calls a “Knight of Faith”, is characterized as one who dares to concentrate his whole existence into one singular move, someone who allows him/herself to be possessed and consumed by the infinite (spiritual); even to a point when upholding this unique intimacy requires transcending morality (i.e., the immoral killing of an innocent son). By appealing to devotion beyond reason, the possessed sacrifice goes beyond Plato’s nous and reinvents the otherworldly outside the nous and self (Derrida 1995).

As a result, such an ultimate sacred gift is necessarily secret (a mystery), as it can never be truly understood by interpreters residing outside this intimate relationship between self and the sacred (Kierkegaard 1985). Whereas the Platonic philosophy annihilates the orgiastic and materialistic possessive sacrifice by internalizing the external mystery of the spiritual (Derrida 1995), the possessive sacrifice, on the other hand, reallocates the divine to both fronts (i.e., the internal and the external). Hence, the spiritual transcends knowledge and understanding, while at the same time still remains within reach of the faithful. It is a paradox of being totally consumed and possessed by the infinite, while at the same time retaining the highest level of individuality and freedom (Kierkegaard 1985; Ferreira 2001). The rules and restrictions of Platonic logic no longer apply, as this logic by its very definition refers to the spoken, the stated, and disclosed (Heidegger 1958), whereas the possessed sacrifice dwells in secrecy and silence (Derrida 1995).

In light of the proposed view, Marion’s (in Jarvis 2001) suggestion that it is the gift that gives itself seems far from absurd. Caille (2001, 37), on a similar note explains: “What determines the worth of a gift… is that it symbolizes a dimension of donation, that it affirms participation in the universe of “without cause,” the unconditioned, of life itself”. Similarly, Levinas (in Ferreira 2001) proposes that our responsibility for the other resides outside the realm of justice, comparison and calculation. Such views are a clear indication of the tension between the Maussian gift and the pure gift tradition. This tension is often approached by resorting to alternate metaphysical systems wherein traditional dichotomies of active/passive, cause/effect, gift/debt, freedom/servitude no longer apply. Needless to say, the outlined tension gives no ground to dismiss the pure gift tradition. On the contrary, it is a potent reminder of the heterogeneity inherent to gift giving.

Not surprisingly, tendencies attributed to possessed sacrifice and pure gift giving can also be found in conceptions of agape love (Belk and Coon 1993), where ideas of obsession and unconditional devotion are essential. We do not decide to love, we fall in love, we are swept away by love, and we are madly in love. We do not possess love, love possess us. In a similar manner, Hyde (1983) interprets art by exposing the centrality of the artist’s gift (i.e., talent) and the gift-like acceptance of art by the audience. He describes this gift giving aspect of art as a silent mystery that can be witnessed and felt (eros), but not explained (logos). The possessed sacrifice, agape love and artistic gift underline the importance of the alternative pure gift approach of construing gift giving. Consider all the, at first sight, redundant facets of a perfect gift (Carrier 1995): (1) it is priceless and irreplaceable; (2) it is a spontaneous reflection and embodiment of sentiment; (3) it is unconstrained and unconstraining, and goes beyond all measure while expecting nothing in return. Similar to possessed sacrifice, the pure gift is also given in silence. It mirrors sentiment; it is a pure reflection, a revelation of sentiment parallel to hierophany (Belk et al. 1989). Just as the possessed sacrifice is more than mere sweet talk and obedience to the spirits, the pure gift is not a mere message conveyed from the donor. On the contrary, the gift reveals what cannot be said, yet is present, and needs to be heard.

The desire to escape and search for spiritual intimacy is a profound characteristic of human kind. It can be found in religion or in consumption related phenomena such as gift giving. We all take the necessary measures to retain the purity of our gifts by removing price tags and wrapping them in “ceremonial” paper (Belk 2005); we search for the magic that should reveal itself when a gift is received; we create myths and heroes who know how and what to give; we go out of our way to find that special gift for that irreplaceable person, and above all, we cannot imagine an intimate relationship where there is no giving. In a sense, even the most possessing among us occasionally desire to be possessed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There is a side to gift giving that has not received its deserved attention. This side has been called the sacred, the pure, and the illusory gift. In an unstoppable quest to understand reproduction
The notion of pure giving underlines a central aspect of how consumers construct reality. This construction entails complex issues such as the dialectics of self and other, subject and object, sacred and profane. Whereas donors do determine the gift, the latter to a great extent also determines them (Tyler 2002). This paper aimed not at prescribing the ultimate truth and/or ideal gift giving, but rather strove to illustrate a neglected aspect of gift giving: an aspect that bares immense significance to the postmodern consumer society starving for pure gifts (Vaughan 1997). Further research is needed to build upon these humble initial steps towards the sacred side of gift giving.

REFERENCES


Sacralising the Profane: Creating Meaning with Christmas Consumption in the UK
Caroline Tynan, Nottingham University Business School, United Kingdom
Sally McKechnie, Nottingham University Business School, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT
Although there is a substantial body of literature which has examined the celebration of Christmas from a variety of perspectives, relatively little attention has been paid in the consumer behaviour literature to understanding consumption meanings associated with this event. This study examines the extent to which the sacred and profane distinctions in consumption behaviour proposed by Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989) serve as a template for gaining insights into the sacred meanings which consumers in a highly secular society such as the UK attach to their secular consumption of what was once widely celebrated as a religious festival.

INTRODUCTION
Christmas is one of the few annual rituals which is widely celebrated around the world, even in countries which do not have a Christian tradition. Typically, it involves family gatherings and gift giving (Miller 1993). Christmas Day is celebrated in the UK along with the following day, Boxing Day, as a public holiday and as part of a “twin-peaked festival” (Millers 1993:6) comprising the Christmas and New Year celebrations, when a further public holiday is enjoyed.

To date, developing an understanding of consumer behaviour from a culture and consumption perspective has been a key concern (Cova and Cova 2002; Ritson and Elliott 1999; Lofman 1991; Belk 1989; McCracken 1988; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). In contemporary Western society there has been a change in consumers’ values and motivations from “consuming to live” into “living to consume” (Kilbourne, McDonagh and Prothero 1997:5), with the result that consumption meanings are no longer viewed as being driven solely by utilitarian values, but also by secular, sacred, hedonic and social sources of meaning (Arnould, Price and Zinkhan 2004).

This study examines the use of sacred and profane (Belk et al. 1989; Hirschman and LaBarbera 1989; Hirschman 1988) metaphors in the context of Christmas consumption in order to understand the special meanings ascribed to consumption activities. This issue is important because “Christmas is a social festival having both strong sacred aspects and secular aspects” (Hirschman 1991:41). Nevertheless, in the West, Christmas is described as “the distilled essence of contemporary consumption” (Belk and Bryce 1993:277) and therefore offers an ideal opportunity to study sacred meanings of the secular consumption choices of consumers today.

Although there has been some work on consumption rituals (Belk and Costa 1998; Gainer 1995; McCracken 1988; and Rook 1985), and on the meanings of the festivities generally (Caplow, Bahr, Chadwick and Williamson 1982) and for the annual celebrations of Hallowe’en (Levinson, Mack, Reinhardt, Suarez and Yeh 1992; Belk 1990), Thanksgiving (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991) and Christmas (Belk 1987, 1989; Hirschman and LaBarbera 1989; and Pollay 1986) in particular, these rituals and festivities have mainly been examined in the United States. There has been little consumer behaviour work on British Christmas consumption apart from recent studies by Miller (1993), who compared Christmas across a range of cultural contexts, Gurau and Tinson (2003), who examined attitudes towards Christmas commercial campaigns and McKechnie & Tynan (2006) who explored social meanings in Christmas consumption.

The findings of a qualitative study are used to demonstrate how an enhanced understanding of consumption meanings associated with the UK socio-cultural context can lead to new insights into how consumers create sacred meanings through their secular consumption of the Christmas celebration. The paper proceeds first by reviewing the literature on Christmas consumption. Next, the conceptual underpinning based on the binary opposition of sacred and profane consumption is discussed, and justified as a means of capturing the nature of special sacred meanings which imbue Christmas consumption. This is followed by an explanation of the research methodology adopted. After the results of the empirical analysis are presented, key findings are discussed, and conclusions are drawn.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
While the choice of the time to celebrate Christ’s birth may be traced back to the number of pagan winter festivals (Golby and Purdue 1986), the current view of a traditional Christmas is a relatively modern invention (Belk 1989). The rituals of the American Christmas, as they affect the family unit and culture at large, were first examined in Barnett’s (1954) seminal inquiry. However, it took another thirty years before researchers began to examine the impact of such rituals on consumer behaviour. First, Rook (1985) considered Christmas to be a clearly defined ritual, which was widely observed in Western culture associated with gift-giving rituals and ritual symbols such as coloured lights, mistletoe, wreaths, Santa Claus and food and drink. However, concerns were raised over ritual scripts and role uncertainty due to the decline in church attendance and rise of single-person households and multiple marriage families. Next, Hirschman and La Barbera (1989) identified the following common themes from their overview of limited prior research on Christmas: gift giving, sociability and family togetherness, commercialism and materialism, hedonism and sensuality, and religious tradition and spirituality. From their own investigation on the meaning of Christmas, they concluded that this meaning was multidimensional, possessing both a sacred/secular dimension and a positive/negative one, commenting that “Christmas is a study in contrasts, of many dialectics which we embrace as individuals and as a society” (Hirschman and La Barbera 1989:144). Then Belk (1989) conducted his first historical analysis of the development of Christmas meaning and symbolism. He examined Christmas in terms of being a largely secularised celebration of commercialisation, materialism and hedonism and proposed the use of sacred and profane metaphors to describe Christmas consumption. The ‘paradox of Christmas’, a term coined by Pimlott (1962) to describe the co-existence of religious and secular celebrations of Christmas, was redefined to reflect the opposition of sacred and profane values in the secular world. A second historical analysis of the changing meaning of the Christmas celebration was conducted by Belk and Bryce (1993) who compared the Christmas shopping experience portrayed in two films, one from 1947 and the other from 1991, to illustrate how consumption patterns had changed over this period.

1These contexts were the USA, Japan, Britain, Sweden and Trinidad.
2An unwritten script which guides the ritual role player and identifies appropriate behaviour and artefacts.
One argument for the importance of exploring sacred meanings of consumption associated with the UK Christmas is its degree of secularisation when compared to the well researched context of the USA. Miller (1993:5) argues for a re-evaluation of the parochial Anglo-American interpretation of contemporary Christmas. Kuper (1993) acknowledges Christmas as a secular holiday in England shaped by the nostalgia and sentimentalism of Charles Dickens’ (1843) book “A Christmas Carol”, and notes the attempts to recapture the secular public festival for religious purposes made by the English Protestant Churches after the First World War through the revival of the Nativity plays and carol singing, and the introduction of religious broadcasts. Today, in the increasingly secularised UK, religion has gone from being a part of everyday life to being a provider of services for special occasions like christenings, weddings and funerals, possibly before it finally fades from view according to Voas (2005). Another special occasion for a visit to church is the annual Christmas midnight service for those whom he describes as “Christmas tourists”, who like to mix a little religious ceremony into their Christmas festivities but are not regular churchgoers.

In the 2001 Census, 72% of the UK population said that their religion was Christian (Census 2001). However, a survey recently commissioned for the BBC programme “What the World Thinks of God”, which polled ten thousand people in ten countries from Africa, America, Asia and Europe in January 2004, concluded that “the UK is among the most secular nations in the world” (BBC 2004). It was found that the British exhibit the lowest levels of belief and religious activity with 67% expressing belief in God and only 21% regularly attending a religious service, compared to 91% and 54% of Americans respectively. This is important as one measure of secularisation is the reduction in religious belief and observance.

**CONCEPTUALISATION**

In Belk et al.’s (1989) broader examination of sacred and profane distinctions consumers make in their behaviours and uses of space, time and objects in the secular context of consumption, they presented the following properties of sacredness: hierophany or the act of manifestation of the sacred as something of a wholly different order; kratophany in which the sacred elicits both strong approach and avoidance reactions; the sacred as being in opposition to the profane, and having the power to contaminate through contact; sacrifice establishing communication with the sacred; the individual feeling a focused emotional commitment to the sacred; the sacred being concretised through representation in an object; ritual prescribing how the ordinary person should behave in the presence of the sacred; frequently repeated myths surrounding the sacred; the sacred being mysterious and unable to be understood logically; communitas freeing participants from their normal social roles and effecting status equality; and finally the ability of the sacred to produce ecstasy. The study involved establishing domains of sacred consumption, processes of sacralisation and ways of maintaining sacredness through consumption. While anything can potentially become sacred, the sacred consumer domains include places, times, tangible things, intangibles, persons and experiences. Within these domains there are a number of processes by which “consumers understand and preserve particular aspects of consumption as set apart, extraordinary and sacred” (Belk et al. 1989:12). Sacredness imbues certain aspects of consumption through seven different processes: ritual, pilgrimage, quintessence, gift giving, collecting, inheritance, and external sanction. In all but quintessence and external sanction consumers deliberately enact these sacralising consumption processes in order to create sacred meaning. Understandings from this influential work have already yielded much in the study of consumption (Holbrook and Schindler 2003; Gurau and Tinson 2003; Belk, Ger and Askegaard 2003; Price, Arnould and Curasi 2000; and Hirschman 1991, 1988), and so are utilised here to better comprehend the meaning of consumption associated with a sacred ritual in a secular country.

The specific focus of the present study is to gain a better understanding of meaning creation through consumption, by examining the ways in which consumers create sacred meanings through their secular consumption of the Christmas celebration. Consumption is much more than just the means consumers use to fulfil their everyday requirements. It can become an instrument of “transcendent experience” i.e. it exhibits certain aspects of the sacred. The understanding of ‘sacred and profane’ in the context of consumption can be understood in two different ways. Firstly, Belk et al.’s (1989) understandings were grounded in the fundamental distinction that what is set apart as extraordinary is regarded as special and sacred, whereas what is regarded as profane belongs to the ordinary or everyday. At another level the use of the language of the sacred and profane can be seen as a metaphor to aid our understanding. Metaphors have been widely used in marketing (Zaltman, Lemasters and Heffring 1982) although often employed uncritically (Van den Bulte 1994). They have both limitations and drawbacks which should be borne in mind by those who employ them as a communication device. They are pervasive in that they shape our thoughts, our view of the world and therefore our actions (Kendall and Kendall 1993). By portraying something which is less familiar, in terms of something of which we have a clear understanding, the dissimilarities and differences are illuminated and vivified while paradoxically the considerable similarities are also highlighted (Weaver 1967 cited in Kendall and Kendall 1993:150). However, the inherent contradiction of the metaphor is that the meaning drawn from the comparison is provided by the receiver and not by the author, so the resulting understandings are not always predictable.

**METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative methods were adopted as being appropriate for exploring people’s “lived experience” and focus on “naturally occurring ordinary events in natural settings” (Miles and Huberman 1994:10). A multi-method approach was adopted because of the limited time frame of the Christmas season for data collection, severe time constraints on participants, and the need to minimise participant recall loss (Cleveland, Babin, Laroche, Ward and Bergeron 2003).

Focus groups were used for the first stage of the primary research as they offer a way of gaining a meaningful understanding of phenomena “which emerge out of sharing and discussing issues, exchanging opinions, revising perceptions and highlighting differences” (Carson, Gilmore, Perry and Gronhaug 2001:115). From an initial pool of volunteers who responded to posters, a snowballing technique was used to identify female participants, who were purposively selected to increase the likelihood of gaining insights into a range of Christmas experiences by including those with and without children, under and over 40 years old, and with or without paid employment (see profile with pseudonyms in Table 1 below). As this work focuses on the sacralisation of Christmas consumption rather than observance of the sacred, no particular religious criteria were set. Two 75 minute focus groups were conducted in an informal environment with 10 and 7 female participants respectively, three to four weeks before Christmas. In order to maintain chronological flow (Miles and Huberman 1994), a processual approach was adopted, which addressed consumption in three phases: the anticipation of and preparation for Christmas; the experience of Christmas itself; and the clearing up after the festivities and subsequent reflection by the consumer on the whole.
extended process. The participants were not sensitised to the dichotomy of secular and sacred consumption choices by either direct questioning or prompting.

The second stage of the study consisted of depth interviews, which explored the themes and categories emerging from the focus group interviews as well capturing participants’ thoughts and feelings on their experience of and reflections upon the entire consumption festival of Christmas. These interviews were of between 65 and 135 minutes’ duration and were conducted four to six weeks after Christmas with six of the focus group participants. The style of questioning was informal for both stages and involved asking semi-structured questions around themes and processes, beginning with open-ended questions and gradually focusing on actual experiences rather than allowing discussion to remain at an experience-distant, abstract level as advised by Thompson and Haytko (1997). Each interview was audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim from the tape recordings. The text was analysed independently by the authors following the generalised sequence of steps including data reduction and transformation, data display and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles and Huberman 1994:10). The researchers individually noted the patterns and themes, which were similar across scripts. This approach allowed for earlier readings of the text to inform later readings, and more pertinently in this research, to allow for later readings of the transcripts from the depth interviews to explore patterns not noted on the initial analysis of the focus group data (Thompson and Haytko 1997).

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Secular and sacred aspects of consumption behaviour emerged from the data. Since this paper aims to highlight how consumers create sacred meanings through their secular consumption of the Christmas celebration, the properties of sacredness proposed by Belk et al. (1989), will now be used as a framework to examine the extent to which the participants’ consumption experience of the UK Christmas fits these properties.

Christmas is seen as a reality-suspending event confirming the property of hierophany. Judy’s children look forward to it but Pam sees it as a time of assumed insularity, where individuals create their own temporary, separate world which she likened to living in a ‘bubble’.

“The children were looking forward to it from the start and we had an absolutely wonderful time. Actually... it exceeded expectation, just because it was different you know.” Judy

“…you’re all just part of this visage that they put on really. It’s like bubble mansion isn’t it? This is my bubble and this is how the world is.” Pam

The celebratory season comprises two parts: the stressful preparation period filled with tasks and obligations and the relaxing, fulfilling and indulgent family time in which notions of ‘duty-bound, committed time’ and ‘my time’ emerged. Participants struggled to remind themselves that it is the time spent with their family, which holds the true meaning of Christmas, and not their attempts to create the ‘perfect Christmas’ through excessive consumption.

“It’s nice being together with family even though I’ve got to do this and I’ve got to do that...It’s the day where you sit down, catch up and you relax…just nice…you don’t have to worry about I have to be here or there…it’s a day when everyone is always with their family and you know that you’re going to see them.” Veronica

Separate rules of behaviour exist for the whole of the Christmas holiday period. Children, even in households with limited spending power, are spoiled with lots of presents, given much more freedom than normal and also enjoy more of their parents’ and adult family members’ time than usual. Even as an adult of 24 years, but
still living with her parents, Charlotte regressed to a childhood perspective on Christmas in order to fully enjoy it.

“The kids get away with murder at Christmas. You never ever chastise your child on Christmas Day, just because it’s Christmas, and you don’t do that, you know, and it’s like one YAHOO! on Christmas Eve till the New Year. It’s just non-stop.” Pam

“My brother and my husband were sitting there for a while, with him sort of building that (Lord of the Rings set) and then we played Cross Fire which is like a game with bullets, you fire at people with them. What else? We did play a board game, and then my eldest daughter played the piano and we were singing and messing about and dancing, and it was very good. (We) had a really good time.” Judy

Sacred objects elicit strong approach as well as strong avoidance reactions (kratophany). Consumers are strongly attracted by the sacred and the positive while simultaneously avoiding and being repulsed by the negative or evil sacred powers. The sacred is seen as good and desirable, and responses to it range from Charlotte being repulsed by the negative or evil sacred powers. The sacred is the sacred and the positive while simultaneously avoiding and differing expectations among different parts of a family. Nicola had occurred at Christmas. Much of the antipathy arose because of Christmas, ranging from mild ambivalence, through disappointment to avoid conflict.

“Sacred objects are attractive by the sacred and the positive while simultaneously avoiding and being repulsed by the negative or evil sacred powers. The sacred is seen as good and desirable, and responses to it range from Charlotte’s childlike enthusiasm to Marion’s more measured eagerness. The negative aspects of the sacred are associated with bereavement and family tensions.

“I was certainly looking forward to it because it’s been a while since I’ve had both boys home and attached girlfriends and in-laws and ‘outlaws’ and a bit of a gathering of the clan. So I was looking forward to it.” Marion

“I love the run up to Christmas, like the going out and the socialising part and I love Christmas Day, waking up, opening the presents, giving the presents and then spending the whole day with family.” Charlotte

Some participants showed a varying level of aversion to Christmas, ranging from mild ambivalence, through disappointment, to outright grief because of the historical family events which had occurred at Christmas. Much of the antipathy arose because of differing expectations among different parts of a family. Nicola acknowledged the impact of her husband’s ideal of a family Christmas to be spent with his own parents, on her close relationship with her stepfather with whom she was unable to spend time. To ensure a harmonious and conflict-free celebration, she adopted a façade of contentment, but privately dreaded Christmas. It is the importance of Christmas that makes these difficulties come to the surface and gives rise to the extreme efforts individuals will engage in to avoid conflict.

“I love Christmas now, because when I was little, my Dad was killed on 16th December and I always remember every Christmas my Mum and my Grandma crying and then, you know, that goes with you...So, it was always sad at Christmas.” Madge

“At the end of the day, you just have to keep on smiling...If...your family is important to you, and if my husband wants to see his family, well I don’t get the opportunity to see mine because of different circumstances...It’s no good making yourself upset, or worrying, or wittering (nagging), or causing arguments...I just put my smile on.” Nicola

A number of things stand out from the ordinary and profane at Christmas. These include the nature of the time spent with the family, also the ‘specialness’ conferred on Christmas related objects by displaying, wrapping and dressing them. Thus, differentiated from the profane, Christmas presents are symbols of love and stand apart as sacred.

“I think the main thing was just to spent time with family, friends, my boyfriend and to eat lots, drink lots and be merry. I don’t have very many expectations...that’s it, just a nice break from work and spend some quality time with the family.” Charlotte

“I either introduce a complementary colour to sparkle it (the tree) up a bit or I’ll leave things out so they are not there every year. Or I will arrange things slightly different(ly) because I like candles and things around with the foliage and this year I put like baubles on to make them like slightly different, and I put a bow round the candles.” Stella

The Christmas tree is a venerated icon of the sacred in many households; it acquires sacred meaning and has the power to contaminate through contact. It is a visible symbol to any visitors to the home and, as such, its dressing is too important to leave to the children. In spite of being reproached by her husband, Judy insisted that she alone dressed the main Christmas tree. She adopted the subterfuge of buying each of her three children a small tree for their own bedrooms, to reduce complaints and her feelings of guilt. Decorating part of the home with the ‘right’ kind of lights, fresh holly, mistletoe and candles produces a sacred area that is magical and special.

“I’d bought two new sets of lights and I’d got candles everywhere in the conservatory, very pretty...It did look quite magical.” Marion

There is a very strong commitment to the celebration of Christmas by these female participants as they establish communication with the sacred through sacrifice. The period of preparation is an intense time of planning, shopping, preparing gifts, food and the home, which takes place in addition to their normal work, family and household responsibilities. Although this sacrifice is taken for granted and not begrudged, there were wistful references to the fantasy of being away from home at Christmas and therefore “off duty”. However, it does produce worry and stress in many, and is seen as a hurdle to be overcome on the way to an enjoyable Christmas.

“I find, for me personally...I have to do everything at Christmas. I have to organise the food, the presents, the decorations, getting the Christmas tree, doing the whole bit and I have to get the presents for the whole family individually and for the children, their boyfriend or girlfriend if they’ve got one at the time, whereas the rest of the family just have to buy one present for each other...but they don’t have to worry about the food side, or the decorations side of it, or the Christmas card side of it...so there is always a lot to do...it is a very busy time.” Selma

“My ideal Christmas is not here but in another country, but having said that there is nothing I like better than to have the family round and to indulge them and go really ‘over the top’...to have food we don’t normally have ...to be ‘the
The choice of the sacralised object is extremely personal and participants readily admit that their choice would not be acceptable for some others, thereby providing evidence that *individuals feel a focused emotional attachment to sacred things*.

“My childhood memories of Christmas are the smell of paint and the smell of oranges because my dad worked all year round to sort of keep (the family) because I’ve told you how many are in the family (12 children). So, my Dad would be decorating on Christmas Eve and he would always bring home like a big tray of oranges. And it was the smell of the oranges and paint because my husband says ‘What you want painting?’ because Christmas is not Christmas unless you can smell paint somewhere in this house.” Pam

Performance or competence-oriented nostalgic bonding is evident in one participant’s account of her choice of contemporary and stylish fabric to update a cherished family heirloom, the Christmas tree fairy. Her account was not an excuse for boasting, but a demonstration of her handcraft skills to enhance the object and reinforce its ‘specialness’.

“My childhood memories of Christmas are the smell of paint and the smell of oranges because my dad worked all year round to sort of keep (the family) because I’ve told you how many are in the family (12 children). So, my Dad would be decorating on Christmas Eve and he would always bring home like a big tray of oranges. And it was the smell of the oranges and paint because my husband says ‘What you want painting?’ because Christmas is not Christmas unless you can smell paint somewhere in this house.” Pam

Relationships with family were reported as crucial with the significance of particular routines e.g. 6 am wake up call for Grandma and present opening in parents’ bedroom being an essential ritual for one younger participant. However, the difficulty of the present, when contrasted with the ideal of the past, evokes strong emotions.

“Over the last 10 or 14 years we’ve all got together but parents are getting older...makes it a bit stressful in that respect because its harder to get Joe’s mother out of the house. We get this ‘I’m not coming—I can’t come out the house’ and my Dad’s got dementia, so that is a bit upsetting for the children, grown up as they are. I’d like to turn the clock back and have everybody as they used to be.” Selma

*Tangible representations of the Christmas season can make the sacred concrete.* In Pam’s case this was her tree.

“I got the most beautiful sparkly twig tree that I bought from B&Q (store) and I stand that on the hearth and it looks absolutely beautiful and minimalist and anyone who walked into the house said how beautiful the tree was and that was my Christmas tree.” Pam

*Ritual surrounds the contact of ordinary persons with the sacred.* The annual nature of the Christmas celebration means that cultural meaning in the home has to be re-established through various rituals, such as cleaning, preparation of Christmas foods and decorating the house in a festive manner, as well as the exchange of gifts and cards. Unwrapping gifts and sharing the pleasure of opening sacks, stockings, boxes and pillowcases of presents has had its own sense of time and place for each family. *The frequently repeated myths* associated with Christmas, such as Father Christmas and his reindeer, *document the status of sacred things*, even though they are not always believed by the recipients of such communications. Furthermore, *sacred things cannot be understood logically but are mysterious*, as embodied by the conundrum of who gives the presents to children. Their mysterious arrival is explained at an early age as a gift from Father Christmas. However, as children grow older, more complicated explanations are given.

“I think we might have had a session of a carrot for the reindeer but it usually was something like a mince pie for Santa. And there would always be one left on side with a bite out of it because there was too many of them to eat, and it was proof that somebody had been here.” Pam

“…and you just have to say ‘look, you know, if every child got every single thing they wanted (from Father Christmas) it’s just not how it works’...you sort of say, ‘well if there is something big and expensive then mum and daddy will buy it if they can afford it. Then Father Christmas will buy you something; buy each child something, but not something ridiculous!’” Judy

*The spirit of communitas emerges between participants in sacred consumption.* Christmas is an inclusive celebration where even distant members of a family, and those with no family of their own nearby, are made welcome. Joining with other people for community events like carol singing and switching on the municipal Christmas lights are enjoyed.

“I fetched my Mother on Christmas Day because she is on her own and I can’t bear to think of someone on their own on Christmas Day.” Stella

“I like to go for carols by candlelight...that’s nice and I usually take one of the children.” Judy
Instead they were hardworking facilitators who took satisfaction in creating an enjoyable Christmas for all. Any great excitement or desire was felt by children looking forward to Christmas, which confirms that for a child “desire is palpable, and hope hangs as heavily as stuffed stockings on the fireplace mantle” (Belk et al., 2003:326). From Arnould et al.’s (2004) reading of Belk et al. (1989) sacred things cannot be bought and sold, The final message is that, for these participants, Christmas is something that can only be made and not bought. Only the trappings of Christmas can be bought; the real and essential meaning of Christmas has to be co-created.

“I think what I have done actually is, I have got a bit carried away. When you are setting the table you have got to have the perfect napkins and you go out and buy the candles and around the house and you’ve got to have the lights and everything has got to be just right and you’ve got to have fresh flowers. If I get it, okay, but it doesn’t actually make any difference to the enjoyment of it (Christmas). I think you have to be careful not to get too caught up in things being beautiful and perfectly presented. It is all about having a good time and relaxing, not having the perfect everything…They (the family) don’t remember what napkins you have got on the table.” Judy

CONCLUSION
The choices consumers make in the marketplace are determined by a variety of values and meanings. While utilitarian, hedonic and social meanings all yield useful insights into consumption meanings, an alternative approach is to examine sacred and secular sources of meaning. Although prior work specifically on Christmas consumption has used sacred and profane metaphors (Belk 1989; Hirschman and LaBarbera 1989; Hirschman 1988) to understand the special meanings ascribed to consumption activities, Belk et al.’s (1989) broader examination of the metaphorical juxtaposition of the sacred and profane, the special and ordinary, in the secular context of consumption served as a lens for gaining deeper insights into how UK consumers create sacred meanings in their secular celebration of Christmas. By exploring each of the properties of sacredness using unprompted data from the participants, the ‘specialness’ of the Christmas season was highlighted and “ways in which the profane consumption is made sacred” (Belk et al.1989:31) documented.

While the distinction between sacred and profane values in the secular world have challenged researchers thinking as indicated by the substantial number of citations Belk et al.’s (1989) work has received, there is little evidence of replication or extension outside of North America. The contribution of the present study is that the highly secular and multicultural context of the UK makes the stark paradox of the metaphor particularly fruitful, for although this country shares a common language and early history with the USA, there has been a significant reduction in religious observance. By focusing on the significance of sacred aspects of consumer behaviour against a backdrop where contemporary Christmas consumption is expressed through the purchase of an ever increasing constellation of products, services and seasonal merchandise, the findings illustrate how consumers sacralise their secular consumption of an event, which used to be widely celebrated as a religious festival. In response to Belk et al.’s (1989) recognition of the dearth of work on sacred and profane values, the findings offer examples of the sacralisation of consumption objects and experiences by consumers to create transcendent meaning in their lives, quite apart from marketers’ efforts and considerations of brands which are such an important part of the secular Christmas setting. Christmas with the family belongs to a different order of reality and is the crucial heart of the experience. Evidence that the sacred stands out from the profane was found in the gift-giving process by which ordinary objects were removed from the economic orbit and infused with significance through the process of selection, wrapping and display under the Christmas tree. Other aspects of sacralisation as established by Belk et al. (1989) were identified. However, in the UK context two issues emerged: a pronounced link with nostalgia emerged and a recognition by participants that Christmas is something which can only be made and not be bought. As a consumption fest, the purchase of a vast array of products is a mere backdrop. However, the nature and form of the Christmas consumption experience with its special foods, trees, decorations, cards, gifts and play was found to be family-specific. Through habituation each consumer learns and co-creates the ‘correct’ way to celebrate Christmas, with each family having its idiosyncratic routines. How the meaning changes over time suggests directions for further work.

REFERENCES
Dickens, Charles (1843), A Christmas Carol (Being a Ghost Story of Christmas) http://www.literature.org/authors/dickens-charles/christmas-carol/ as at 9th May 2005.


McCracken, G (1988), Culture and Consumption: New approaches to the symbolic character of consumer goods and activities, Bloomingtn, IN: Indiana University Press.


Dealing in Secondhand Goods: Creating Meaning and Value
Liz Parsons, University of Keele, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT
This paper attempts to unpack the ways in which dealers create and maintain meaning and value in relation to the secondhand goods they buy and sell. Discussion is based on interviews with 19 secondhand dealers operating in Glasgow, Scotland UK. Three themes emerged from the interviews as important in understanding the process of value creation: the social relations of the sale, the dealer’s knowledge of markets, and the rituals of divestment and re-enchantment dealers enact in relation to the goods themselves. In exploring these themes the importance of both ‘practice’ and ‘sensuousness’ in understanding the process of value creation are highlighted.

INTRODUCTION

‘A cynic is someone who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing’
Oscar Wilde

It could be argued that one of the vital distinctions between price and value is that while price is largely a component of economic life, value is largely a component of social life. The values we attach to our possessions are often very personalized and highly idiosyncratic but the creation and maintenance of these values is an inherently social process. Much research has explored the processes through which consumers make objects meaningful (Belk 1988, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981, Gabriel and Lang 1995, Lury 1996). However much of this work has tended to focus explicitly on the consumer, neglecting to explore fully the impact of other intermediaries on the process of value creation (although see Belk et al 1988, Sherry 1990a, 1990b). In response to this absence this paper attempts to unpack the ways in which dealers (acting as intermediaries) negotiate meaning in secondhand goods markets and thus play a significant role in the process of value creation.

There are several further arguments for the focus of this paper on dealers, as opposed to consumers, and on secondhand goods, as opposed to new goods. Secondhand goods own a number of distinctive properties which set them apart from goods in their first cycle of exchange. The distance of secondhand goods from the formal system of marketing and advertising makes them an important focus for study for consumer researchers. Such a distance opens up possibilities for a more creative interpretation of both use and value. Marketers and producers use a range of techniques in their attempts to fold meanings into objects. The techniques and technologies of advertising, branding and merchandising all encourage specific uses and appropriations of objects. See for example McCracken’s (1990) work which explores the way in which advertising acts as an ‘instrument of meaning transfer’ from the goods to the individual. Research within the marketing academy has also tended to focus on these technologies, exploring the ways in which price comparison, brand and store information create meanings for goals and thus influence the process of value creation (Dodds 1991, Erickson and Johanson 1985, Lai 1995).

Secondhand items are in their second, third, fourth etc cycle of use which means they have ‘sets of histories’ or ‘cultural biographies’ (Kopytoff, 1986) which may (or may not) add to their value. Such histories are negotiated in a number of ways by both buyers and sellers. For example, in the case of sellers the histories of goods may be manipulated to add value (i.e. provenance, nostalgia and retro). Equally the histories of secondhand items may be an unwanted feature and both sellers and purchasers may spend a significant amount of time attempting to eradicate such histories (for example through cleaning and repair) in order to re-imburse the goods with their own personal identity or render the goods more saleable. This is particularly the case with ‘intimate’ goods such as clothing.

The focus in this paper on dealers is important for two main reasons. First, they are involved in both the purchase and sale of objects. As such they act as intermediaries in markets, instrumental in channeling objects from one context to another (re)creating the meaning and value of objects in this process. Thus dealers represent one node in much more complex networks of the circulation of objects, or ‘systems of provision’ (Fine and Leopold 1993). They are also involved in the positioning of goods within markets; one might go as far as to say they are active in shaping markets themselves. Such a perspective has potential to destabilize divisions between production and consumption as well as integrating vertical (i.e. systems of provision) and horizontal (i.e. studies of identity) approaches to the study of consumption. Second, they are involved personally and intimately in the exchange process; and as such create and mediate the social conditions for the creation and maintenance of value. Dealers’ task is to attempt to realize or increase the value of the objects that pass through their hands. This can be achieved through an intricate knowledge of markets, by playing off differences between the price paid for an object and the price it can be potentially sold for.

A second means dealers use to realize value is through the work undertaken in relation to these objects. This realization is achieved through rituals of cleaning, restoration and display, and through this process both investing and divesting objects of their meanings and value. As such, dealers demonstrate intimate relations with the objects they buy and sell as they translate them from one context to another; for example from the private home or auction house, to the shop floor. As such dealers are involved in creating new lives for objects, as they die in one context, they are revived in another, thus becoming re-enchanted. One could argue that in the absence of ‘marketing technologies’ associated with mass produced new goods, dealers metaphorically step into the breach in re-enchancing objects, creating and maintaining illusions of desire and (particularly in the case of antiques) exclusivity. A third important ritual associated with the realization of value and negotiation of meaning is that of the sale itself (see Simmel’s 1978 assertion that exchange is the source of value and not vice versa). The social relations of the sale itself play a central role in the creation of meaning and value. In secondhand markets such transactions are often highly personalized. Antique dealers in particular demonstrate demonstrate in depth knowledge of, and close relationships with, their regular clients. However the value of an object is not created by the dealer but rather determined on a reciprocal basis with other dealers and customers.

MEANING AND VALUE
This paper takes a material culture approach to the study of consumption emphasizing the social and cultural construction of the meaning of objects (see Miller 1998). Of particular relevance for this study are (largely anthropological) debates surrounding the rituals of exchange and appropriation. Also of relevance is the
cross-disciplinary study of consumption with a specific emphasis on alternative and secondhand buying and selling.

The concept of value has consistently been studied in the context of exchange. Broadly speaking contrasts have been made between gift exchange and commodity exchange (Carrier 1995, Gregory 1982, Hyde 1979). Gift exchange has been conceptualized as common between people who have close social ties such as friends and relatives, whereas commodity exchange, it has been suggested, tends to occur where relationships are more distant (Hyde, 1979). In some accounts the two types of exchange are directly counter-posed, Gregory for example observes ‘the concept commodity, which presupposes reciprocal independence and alienability, is a mirror image of the concept gift, which presupposes reciprocal dependence and inalienability’ (1982: 24). It has since been observed that distinctions between gift exchange and commodity exchange and thus the distinction between gifts and commodities, cannot be easily drawn. Appadurai argues that things move in and out of the commodity state, positing that ‘the commodity situation in the social life of any “thing” be defined as the situation in which its exchangeability (past, present, or future) for some other thing is its socially relevant feature’ (1986: 13). Thus the distinction between gifts and commodities is primarily a matter of degree (see also Carrier 1995, Davis 1996, Graeber 2001, Komter 2001, Miller 1995a, 1995b). The concept of value has also been explored through a focus on the appropriation of goods. Authors have examined the relations between possessions, identity and ‘the self’ (Belk, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Gabriel and Lang 1995, Lury, 1996). Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981: 16) observe that for most people objects serve as containers for personal meaning and identity, ‘the material objects we use...constitute the framework of experience that gives order to our otherwise shapeless selves.’ These objects become containers for identity as we incorporate them into our lives through everyday use (see Lupton and Noble; Tranberg-Hansen 1999, 2002).

In his exploration of the ‘Use Of and Commitment To Goods’ Ilmonen draws from Heidegger in his observation that many everyday acts are about the care of goods (2004: 42). In this sense McCracken’s concepts of exchange, possession, grooming and divestment rituals are useful in that they begin to explore some of the (inter)active ways in which we care for, and create meanings for, objects. Of particular interest here are possession rituals and divestment rituals. Possession rituals include cleaning, discussing, comparing, reflecting, showing off, and photographing of possessions thus allowing the consumer to claim the possession as his or her own (1986: 79). Divestment rituals are employed to erase meanings associated with the previous owner either in order to re-inscribe the object with personalized meanings of the new owner, or when an individual is about to dispense with an object before giving it away or selling it. Although McCracken is less clear regarding the sorts of activities that constitute these divestment rituals.

Studies of meaning and value creation associated with second-hand goods have tended to focus on clothing (Clarke 2000, Gregson et al 2000, Gregson and Crewe 2001, 2003, McRobbie 1989, Tranberg-Hansen 1999, 2000). Gregson et al (2000) explore divestment rituals associated with secondhand clothes brought and sold in charity shops. One of the conclusions they reach is that the exchange and use value of these items of clothing is deeply affected by successful divestment of previous (largely bodily) traces of ownership and consumption. Similarly Tranberg-Hansen’s work (1999, 2000) which explores used clothing practices in Lusaka highlights the importance of practices of appropriation in investing objects with meaning. Here Tranberg-Hansen alerts us to the centrality of what people actually do with the items of clothing they buy in the process of meaning and value creation. Work by Herrmann (1997) in the context of the U.S. garage sale similarly explores these processes (see also Soiffer and Herrmann 1987). While these studies cover a broad base of perspectives and disciplines their common feature is that they all view value not as a component of economic life but of social life.

**METHODOLOGY**

This paper is based on findings from interviews with 19 secondhand dealers operating in Glasgow, Scotland, UK. The Glasgow Yellow Pages (telephone register of businesses) was used to explore the scope of businesses involved in the purchase and sale of secondhand goods in the Glasgow region. The 19 dealers interviewed included 3 antique dealers (furniture, antiques, art, jewellery), 3 dealers in secondhand and antique books, 3 dealers in secondhand and antique clothing, 3 dealers in collectors’ items (cigarette cards, sports memorabilia, stamps), 2 household clearers (furniture and white goods), 3 auctioneers (furniture, antiques, art, jewellery), 2 pawnbrokers (jewellery).

Interviews were conducted in naturalistic contexts typically on the shop or showroom floor. Discussions covered issues such as sourcing, valuing and pricing goods. The interviews were taped and subsequently transcribed. Interpretation and analysis of these transcriptions involved several iterations of coding and developing themes. In each iteration themes were returned to the data to verify and refine the them. The central issue which guided the development of themes was the illumination of the process of value creation. As such the intention was not to provide coverage of the myriad ways in which value is created and maintained by dealers, but rather to focus on a small set of issues which emerged as significant from a close analysis of interview discussions.

**UNDERSTANDING VALUE: DEALERS’ TALES**

Three themes emerged from the interviews as important in illuminating the process of value creation. These are discussed below and include the context and social relations of the sale, the role of market knowledge, and rituals of divestment and re-enchantment.

But before delving into the data it is useful to reflect on the notion of the ‘dealer’ that is used here. The participants interviewed demonstrated differing degrees of intimacy with, and commitment to, the objects they bought and sold. For example, many of the antique dealers and dealers in collector’s items were undoubtedly also enthusiasts or hobbyists in their specialised area. Divisions between work and leisure pursuits were often unclear for this group. Also, the boundaries between their inventory of stock to be sold and their private collections were often very blurred with objects moving in and out of their personal collections. These antique dealers tended to invest considerable time, effort and capital in building up and maintaining their inventories of stock. In contrast, house clearers, pawnbrokers and auctioneers demonstrated much less commitment to the goods that passed through their hands. Their role in channeling and re-distributing goods relatively rapidly meant that their relationship with objects was much more fleeting and therefore their entanglement with the objects they bought and sold less intense. Thus the arguments expressed here surrounding rituals of divestment and re-enchantment are certainly more salient in exploring relationships between antique dealers and their goods than other types of dealers. Equally debates surrounding knowledge of the market are likely to be most easily observed in the context of the auction room.

In addition it is helpful to reflect on the types of second-hand objects being considered here. While second-hand goods do possess some features in common, using ‘second-hand’ as a category
is also quite problematic. The types of goods considered embrace
an array of uses, symbolic meanings and identities. Most of the
objects could be understood as high involvement goods comprising
varying degrees of rarity, age and collectability (antique books,
furniture, clothing and jewellery). But non-antique furniture and
household goods were also considered, which embrace few, if any,
of these attributes. This has consequences for the applicability
of arguments particularly those surrounding the knowledge of mar-
kets and rituals of divestment and re-enchantment enacted in
relation to these goods.

THE SOCIAL RELATIONS OF THE SALE

As discussed above in secondhand markets transaction are
often highly personalized. Dealers often referred to their customers
as ‘friends’ these friendships were sometimes very longstanding,
demonstrating continuity over years. They were relationships which
not only resulted initially from the mechanism of exchange but that
were subsequently built up through this mechanism. For example
Cathy, who rents a vast warehouse to house her huge stock of
vintage clothes, shoes, accessories and linens, made the following
comment about her business:

‘I don’t think it’s anything to do with money, no. I think it’s just
a passion for the clothes, a passion for the people that are as
interested in it as myself’. (Cathy, vintage clothes)

Cathy expresses her love for the objects she buys and sells but
also the people she comes into contact with through this process.
She deliberately divorces herself from the economic aspects of the
exchange viewing her participation in the exchange process in
personal and emotional terms. Nancy, who trades in collectors
cards, displays similar sentiments about her customers. Customers
frequently visit Nancy’s shop to discuss their collections with both
Nancy and other customers.

‘and sometimes when some of my customers come in here,
they speak to me for about, och well over an hour. I mean that’s
why they come in here, to talk about their collections. They
buy and they stay.’ (Nancy, collectors cards)

Dealers often described the exchange process in clear moral
terms, a process in which honor, trust and personal integrity were
vital features. This ‘moral contract’ between buyer and seller
extends well beyond the moment of sale.

‘They want to deal with me. They know that they have my
word. I just fixed something the other day. I had to completely
restore it and everything else. And they said ‘how much will
that be?’ and I looked at them. ‘You bought it from me! In fact
I should be taking you out for lunch to apologise for it’. (Jeremy,
antique furniture, china, glassware and jewellery)

However, this ongoing moral contract between buyer and seller
appears to be limited to private customers. Dealers referred to
their relationships with other dealers in very different terms. As one
dealer commented, in relationships with other dealers “you are only
as good as your last sale”. In these relationships exchange is much
more impersonalized and mediated primarily by money as opposed
to sociality. In addition there are perceived differences between
dealers. There emerged a form of hierarchy amongst dealers relat-
ing to the degree of social embeddedness of their dealings. Some
dealers were viewed as motivated solely by money and there were
clear moral undertones to such criticisms. Interestingly these deal-
ers were viewed as uncaring not only in relation to their customers
but in relation to the goods themselves.

‘There are some dealers who have no sense of… basically they
weigh everything they buy and sell. I don’t want that. I can’t
live like that. I want a life, I love that it makes people happy.
I love it when they come back in with their jewellery on and
they are happy to have it on and that it empowers them, makes
them look good’. (Jeremy, antique furniture, china, glassware
and jewellery)

This extract is interesting because it begins to tease out some
of the ways in which the morality of the market is played out through
social relations. Dealers which avoid engaging in social relations
are seen by other dealers as uncaring and, at the extreme, as entirely
unethical.

KNOWING THE MARKET: PRACTICE AND
EXPERIENCE

One of dealers’ key resources in realizing value is their
knowledge of markets. This knowledge encompasses both sources
for items and conduits and likely trends for the sale of items. As such
dealers undertake a careful and continuous monitoring of what is in
fashion. As Anthony, an auctioneer, commented:

‘You’ve got to know who’s buying and who’s selling and
whether the dealers are selling the stuff to their clients.
Because if the dealers aren’t selling the stuff to their clients,
they’re not going to be buying it from you. So you’ve got to
know what the trade’s up to’. (Anthony, auctioneer)

Dealers often expressed the necessity of getting a feel for
things, when it comes to markets, what is selling well, and what
isn’t. However, dealers demonstrate both a knowledge of the
networks in which they deal but also very specific knowledges of
the items they offer for sale. Nearly all the dealers interviewed had
one specialism or another. For example, while Cathy, Sheila and
Lesley all deal in clothing, Cathy deals in clothing from the
Georgian period onwards, Sheila from the Victorian period and
Lesley specializes in 1960s and 1970s clothing. These object-
centred knowledges were typically couched in the realms of taste,
style and aesthetics, as Jeremy’s comment demonstrates:

‘I can put jewellery on you right now and you will walk out
10cms taller. ‘I can empower you by just putting jewellery on
you. Because I know how to do it and I know what looks good.
It is my opinion but it’s an opinion based on a very specific
narrow education over many many years. How do I know what
looks right? I know what looks right. I know the difference
between style and fashion. And I know what works on the hand
and what makes a woman feel…strong and different.’ (Jeremy,
antique furniture, china, glassware and jewellery)

Jeremy prides himself on his aesthetic sensibilities, for him
they play a central role in the process of value creation. He also
observes that these opinions stem from years of experience. Many
dealers expressed that the only way to learn about objects is through
the practice of buying and selling. While dealers do use books and
magazines to update their knowledge of objects, there was a strong
sense that much of the business can’t be learnt from books. As
Jeremy observes:
'I buy things obviously because I don’t believe in learning from books. You can get an idea from books but the only way to really learn the intricacies of a new subject is to buy something of it. You soon learn then’ (Jeremy, antique furniture, china, glassware and jewellery)

Knowledge of markets and of the objects themselves is vital for dealers because one key way in which they realize value is by exploiting the ignorance of others. They may simply rely on those they are buying from (such as other dealers or private individuals) having less knowledge in a particular area and thus not being aware of the price a particular object can achieve.

‘Because the business of antiques relies on ignorance, it operates on ignorance in the hope that you who have brought something from a house for ten pounds are quite happy to sell it to me for fifty pounds because that’s some profit you’re making. But I know that its worth a hundred pounds, so I sell it to the next dealer for a hundred pounds but he actually knows its worth three thousand pounds. Because he knows what the object actually is’ (Alex, antique furniture)

Just as dealers express that knowledge of the objects they buy and sell can only be built up through practice, knowledge of how to price items similarly has its basis in practice. Even for those who have been dealing for years, this aspect of their work still escapes them.

‘How do I price things? I don’t know. Now is that stupid? I don’t know. I mean I kind of know what things are, I kind of know what the market will stand as well. I don’t know how I do it though, I couldn’t honestly tell you what, there’s no formula. There is no formula. I just don’t know. It’s just something over the years that you do, and I don’t know.’ (Sheila, vintage clothing)

While Sheila’s comment highlights the inherently slippery nature of value she does hint at the two sets of knowledges she draws on, knowledge of the objects themselves and knowledge of the market or, in her words ‘knowing what the market will stand’.

RITUALS OF DIVESTMENT AND RE-ENCHANTMENT: SENSUOUSNESS, EMOTION AND INTIMACY

Dealers demonstrated a high degree of passion for and intimacy with objects they buy and sell. Cathy’s comment demonstrates this intimacy, she expresses her (almost physical) need to be surrounded by cloth:

‘I don’t like a place that hasn’t any cloth in it. It doesn’t matter how many vases and antiques there are… the whole place could be full of them, but if there is no cloth about the place, I don’t feel comfortable. If I don’t want to see any cloth, table coverings, things like that, I must be sick.’ (Cathy, vintage clothing)

Jeremy similarly demonstrates an intimate relationship with his stock observing that ‘the things I sell are things that I would have in my home’ (Jeremy, antiques) Dealers not only typically expressed a passion for the objects they buy and sell but also spent significant amounts of time cleaning, restoring and generally caring for them. For example part of Alex’s premises is given over to a workshop dedicated to the cleaning and restoration of furniture to make it ready for sale. Similarly Lesley, Cathy and Sheila (vintage clothing) spend significant amounts of their time washing, mending and altering items of clothing to render them more saleable.

As McCracken (1986) observes, the goals of these activities are the divestment of objects of meanings associated with their previous owners, making them ready for their new owners.

Sheila’s account of clothing donations highlights the ways in which the meanings associated with clothing in particular can be heavily emotionally laden. These meanings can be a burden for her, this is revealed when she says ‘you feel as though you’ve taken a lot of stuff from people’.

‘People very often tell you, if they’re wanting to sell things, they’ll tell you what it was and “I wore that when I was 20 to this and that”. It’s weird, and sometimes it gets, sometimes I find it quite difficult you know, cos you feel as though you’ve taken on a lot of stuff from people you know, if they’ve lost someone or whatever, and it can be quite tough.’ (Sheila, vintage clothing)

Sheila’s comments illuminate the ways in which objects can act as containers for memories and past experiences.

The relationship between emotion and the valuation of objects is an interesting one. Auctioneers in particular referred to the necessity of reaching an ‘objective value of an object’ one which is free from the taint of emotion. These dealers viewed the removal of emotion from the equation as central to their work as valuers. Anthony refers to an instance where he felt his emotion, or enthusiasm betrayed him and thus tainted the process of value creation.

‘It’s like a selling a stock or a share, are you going to get the right price for this thing? I think that’s what dominates you, have you got the right answer? not is it a beautiful work of art? The thing is, one’s first reaction is usually right that if you think it’s good it’s possible that two or three other people are going to think it’s good as well. But there have been cases when you’ve fallen in love with something and no-one else wants it, it’s not sold, and your own enthusiasm has betrayed you and the client.’ (Anthony, auctioneer)

This anecdote also lays bare some of the tensions between viewing objects solely in the light of commodity or of gift exchanges. Due largely to the type of exchange ritual that takes place at auctions, the commodity value of items are exemplified and thus emotions such as enthusiasm are viewed as having no place in the process of valuation.

While dealers make attempts to re-enchant or re-invest objects with meaning through the rituals of display and presentation, in some cases they also attempt to retain and manipulate the histories of objects to add value to them. This is most obvious in the context of the auction room where higher prices can often be obtained for objects with provenance or histories which can be traced. In this respect Trevor offers an enthralling story of the sale of a staff which was constructed from the spear which killed Captain Cook. The sale was a spectacle in itself generating significant media attention, and the staff finally sold for a much higher price than expected. Items which have proved past connections with royalty or famous individuals can achieve significantly higher prices than objects for which such histories can’t be demonstrated. In the antiques business both the origin and the authenticity of objects is central to the value creation process. As discussed above, this is where dealers’ knowledge really comes into play in many cases very specialised knowledges are required first to recognize the origin (or manufac-
fifty years older than the other? I said about all of that ways the drawers are constructed one they can kind of brick wall, where they know what they in the business, and you suddenly quite quickly run in to the same 45 years experience. I talked to other people, longstanding people and thus affect their valuation of objects. This sensuousness of the description or categorization. Third, dealers typically demonstrated key feature of these knowledges is that they have their basis in the objects themselves and the markets in which they operate. The setting value. These knowledges can be defined both in relation to and collectors markets) dealers commodity. As discussion has highlighted, exchange often reflects distinction between viewing the object of exchange as gift or personalised relationships at the point of exchange. Returning to arguments surrounding the nature of exchange the study blurs the distinction between viewing the object of exchange as gift or commodity. As discussion has highlighted, exchange often reflects the spirit of reciprocity and sociability typically associated with gift giving as well as the calculating, profit oriented spirit of commodity exchange. Second, in these specialized markets (such as antiques and collectors markets) dealers’ knowledge plays a vital role in setting value. These knowledges can be defined both in relation to the objects themselves and the markets in which they operate. The key feature of these knowledges is that they have their basis in practice; as such they are largely un-reflected upon and defy easy description or categorization. Third, dealers typically demonstrated an intimacy with the objects they sell which defies explanation using involvement terminology traditionally applied in marketing contexts. Intimacy might also be a more appropriate term than involvement as it points to the sensuous (particularly tactile) nature of this process.

Acknowledging the centrality of practice and sensuousness in the process of value creation requires a more in-depth exploration of what dealers (and other intermediaries) actually do when they buy and sells goods. Thus focusing on rituals enacted in related to the goods themselves (such as restoration and presentation) as well as a focus on the social relations of the sale. Such a focus acknowledges that the creation and maintenance of value (in any market, not just in secondhand markets) cannot be reduced to the moment of the economic transaction. Such a project would require research methodologies which prioritise modes of representation and means of interpretation in addition to the purely visual. There is no easy solution to this, but in depth, longitudinal, multi method ethnographies might be the place to start.

REFERENCES

CONCLUSIONS
This largely exploratory study of Glasgow dealers’ experiences has highlighted inconsistency as much as uniformity. Such inconsistency undoubtedly stems in part from the ‘mystique of the market’. However it has been possible to draw out some similarities between dealers’ relationships to the objects that pass through their hands. From these similarities stem three clear but inter-related findings which help to illuminate the process of value creation.

First this study exemplifies the subjectivity of the process of value creation. Secondhand buying and selling often involves very personalised relationships at the point of exchange. Returning to arguments surrounding the nature of exchange the study blurs the distinction between viewing the object of exchange as gift or commodity. As discussion has highlighted, exchange often reflects the spirit of reciprocity and sociability typically associated with gift giving as well as the calculating, profit oriented spirit of commodity exchange. Second, in these specialized markets (such as antiques and collectors markets) dealers’ knowledge plays a vital role in setting value. These knowledges can be defined both in relation to the objects themselves and the markets in which they operate. The key feature of these knowledges is that they have their basis in practice; as such they are largely un-reflected upon and defy easy description or categorization. Third, dealers typically demonstrated an intimacy with the objects they sell which defies explanation using involvement terminology traditionally applied in marketing.
McCracken, Grant (1986), Culture and Consumption, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
ABSTRACT

This study investigates nostalgia-proneness, the tendency of individuals to experience nostalgic sentiment, in Russia. The Index of Nostalgia Proneness, based upon a four-way classification of nostalgia experiences, was originally developed using U.S. respondents. A Russian version of the scale is tested for reliability and validity. Factor analysis supports the four hypothesized dimensions and identifies key scale items. The four factors are reconciled with open-ended nostalgia experiences authored by Russian respondents.

INTRODUCTION

Nostalgia, the bittersweet sentiment which is believed to serve as a coping mechanism as individuals face major life transitions, has been a research focus in consumer behavior and other social science disciplines for the past decade or more. Measurement of nostalgia-proneness, the tendency of an individual to experience nostalgic sentiment, would allow researchers to better identify emotionally based consumer market segments. This study examines a scale developed for U.S. respondents, the Index of Nostalgia Proneness (INP), using data from Russians.

BACKGROUND

Nostalgia—“a painful yearning to return home”—was first discussed in Johannes Hofer’s medical dissertation (1688) as the cause of medical conditions. “La Maladie du Pays” as the condition was known, was associated with illness among troops fighting in foreign lands. More recently, nostalgia has come to be known as a “bittersweet” feeling that helps individuals maintain their identities in the face of major life transitions (Davis 1979). Within the last several years, nostalgia has gained increasing attention from marketing and consumer behavior researchers, as the emotion became prevalent in advertising themes, leisure activities, and product development (e.g., Chrysler’s PT Cruiser).

Heterogeneity in Nostalgia Response

Despite the prevalence of nostalgic themes in advertising and product development (Havlena and Holak 1991, Rothenberg 1989), the study of the meaning of nostalgia by consumer researchers (Baker and Kennedy 1994, Holak and Havlena 1992, Stern 1992), nostalgia and age-related preferences (Schindler and Holbrook 2003), and analysis of the complex emotions associated with nostalgia (Holak and Havlena 1998), there have been few attempts to develop measures of nostalgia-proneness as an individual trait (Havlena and Holak 2000, Holbrook 1993). Valid measures of nostalgia-proneness are necessary both for the identification of nostalgic consumers for market segmentation and for the testing of hypotheses regarding the nature and determinants of the trait. Nostalgia-proneness scales may be useful to diverse fields of social science as well as to business.

In addition to individual differences, it is also reasonable that differences exist cross-culturally in terms of nostalgic response due to varied cultural forces and different life experiences. Holbrook (1994) suggested that future research attention at the cross-cultural level be devoted to the exploration of how nostalgia-related phenomen...
limited to communication from parents or grandparents. Rather, it is distinguished by its foundation in interpersonal communication grounded in the direct experience of others. This may produce elaborate memory traces incorporating accounts of others’ experiences as well as the individual’s direct experience with the source of nostalgic material. That is, a child’s interpersonal nostalgia may include the parent’s recollections as well as the child’s own memories of the parent and the retelling of the story. It is nostalgia once removed. Therefore, interpersonal nostalgia may evoke less intense feelings and may produce a less complex emotional profile with regard to the original stimulus than personal nostalgia.

Cultural nostalgia involves direct experience, but the memories encompass experiences that exhibit considerable commonality across members of the group. For example, Holak and Havlena (1992) discuss the presence of reminiscences of Woodstock in descriptions of nostalgic experience. The similarities across families in celebrations of Thanksgiving and Christmas in American culture (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991) may cause one person’s nostalgia to resemble that of others within his or her subcultural group.

Finally, the fourth class is the nostalgic equivalent of “virtual reality,” with nostalgia creating its own “virtual unreality” based upon fantasy and indirect experience. For example the members of re-enactment societies may display a sentiment similar to other classes of nostalgia for eras or locales with which they no direct experience or connection. Instead, virtual nostalgia may be based on books, video materials, or conversations with experts and scholars (who themselves have no direct experience with the object of the nostalgia).

Due to differences in their origins, the four classes of nostalgia may involve substantially different responses. Personal and cultural nostalgia are likely to be much richer, complex experiences than interpersonal or virtual nostalgia. On the other hand, cultural and virtual nostalgia, because of their collective emphasis, will probably be much more consistent across individuals than personal or interpersonal nostalgia. As a result, most business uses of nostalgia in advertising and product design emphasize subjects or contexts related to these classes of nostalgia.

Russia, Transition, and Nostalgia Proneness

Since the end of tsarist rule in 1917, Russia has experienced a succession of senior party leaders including Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Andropov. Beginning in 1983, Mikhail Gorbachev withstood a coup attempt and promoted his Glasnost and Perestroika revisions with a view to the West. These came as welcome programs to some and painful discontinuities to many, especially older Russians. Boris Yeltsin presided over a time when a handful of meteoric capitalists, “the oligarchs”, seized the opportunity to amass great fortunes during the mid-1990s. Many “everyday” Russians began to see economic changes including increased product availability. Yeltsin’s successor, current president Vladimir Putin, has tightened reforms.

Given the many recent changes in the fabric of Russian society, the country is potentially a fascinating venue for nostalgia research. In addition to the personal nostalgia that anyone may feel, especially during times of life transition, the discontinuities in the Russian political and economic arena have resulted in cultural nostalgia for the Soviet era, particularly among certain age groups. Since Stalin’s death in 2003, for example, inspired a groundswell of nostalgia for security and a time when Russia held a powerful position in the international scene (Kuzio 2003, Yurkovsky 2003).

The cultural nostalgia noted previously in the form of expressions of longing for the Soviet era and even the Stalin regime has been the subject of popular press articles in Russia. Many of these express themes of nostalgia for a bright future promised by the Communists in the 1970s. Economic changes have made retirement, one of the major life transitions discussed by Davis and others, even more profound as a discontinuity, possibly resulting in heightened nostalgic sentiments.

The cultural nostalgia noted previously in the form of expressions of longing for the Soviet era and even the Stalin regime has been the subject of popular press articles in Russia. Many of these express themes of nostalgia for a bright future promised by the Communists in the 1970s. Economic changes have made retirement, one of the major life transitions discussed by Davis and others, even more profound as a discontinuity, possibly resulting in heightened nostalgic sentiments.

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Experience</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Collective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Virtual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social Experience**

**Personal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Personal nostalgia</th>
<th>Cultural nostalgia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Collective**

**THE INDEX OF NOSTALGIA PRONENESS**

As noted previously, there have been few attempts in the consumer behavior literature to develop measures of nostalgia-proneness. The Holbrook (1993) Nostalgia Index contains items that reflect trends in commerce and society. It has been used to predict preferences for several product categories, both symbolic and utilitarian (Holbrook 1994, Schindler and Holbrook 1999).

The Index of Nostalgia Proneness was proposed as an alternative or complementary measure of individual nostalgia proneness with its more personal or feeling-based items. The INP, whose development is discussed fully in Havlena and Holak (2000), contains 31 Likert-type questions derived from the four classes of nostalgia noted in Table 1. The items in the scale were developed...
to measure the four classes of nostalgia discussed earlier. The scale statements reflect both the personal-collective and the direct-indirect dimensions of nostalgia. Each item is rated on a 9-point scale. Convergent validity for the Index of Nostalgia Proneness was examined with respect to Holbrook’s Nostalgia Index and other time-orientation scales (Havlena and Holak 2000) using responses from a U.S. sample.

**METHOD**

This research stream on nostalgia began several years ago when written descriptions of nostalgic experiences were collected from a judgment sample of respondents in the United States. Each individual was asked to provide descriptions of three experiences, related to objects, events, and persons. The respondents were instructed to include information about the subject matter of the experience and the emotions it elicited. This procedure provided a set of 164 descriptions that were content analyzed for recurring themes and emotions (Holak and Havlena 1992).

As noted previously, similar open-ended responses to nostalgia elicitation were collected from a judgment sample of Japanese subjects in two areas of the country. These resulted in a qualitative analysis of nostalgic experiences related to rituals—something quite distinct from the U.S. content.

The current study uses the same data collection procedure followed in the U.S. and Japan to gather data in Russia. Specifically, a judgment convenience sample of respondents was asked to provide written descriptions of nostalgic experiences related to objects, events, and persons. In addition, respondents were asked to complete two nostalgia-proneness scales: Holbrook’s (1993) Nostalgia Index and the Index of Nostalgia Proneness (Havlena and Holak 2000). Finally, demographic questions pertaining to gender, age, ethnicity, and religion were included in the survey. Back-translation method was used to develop a survey for data collection in Russia.

Data were collected from 80 respondents in five locations in Russia: the capital city of Moscow, the city of Tyumen, the city of Vladimir, the Smolensk region in the west bordering Belarus, and in the northern port city of Archangelsk. Just over 50% (41) respondents came from Moscow with the remainder from other areas. The respondents were recruited through university contacts in several locations. This variation should provide for the possibility of investigating differences in nostalgia experiences and levels of nostalgia-proneness between Muscovites who are usually better off socio-economically and those in outer regions. Seventy-three percent of the respondents were female, 27% were male. Ninety-one percent identified themselves as Russian with regard to ethnicity, with 6% classifying themselves as Ukrainian and 3% as other. Russian Orthodox was the primary religious affiliation, with 84% of the sample classifying themselves into this group; 14% claimed no religious affiliation and 2% other. In terms of age, respondent birthdates spanned from the 1930s to the 1980s with one male being born during the 1910s. The average age was 47 years.

**ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

Reliability of the overall scale of 31 items was good with $\alpha=.87$. Principal axis factor analysis using Promax rotation was run on the Russian responses to the Index of Nostalgia Proneness. In a Scree plot, a distinct secondary elbow is notable between the fourth and higher factors. The four-factor solution was used for all subsequent analysis. Variance explained was over 47%. The first factor explained a large percentage of variance (over 25%) with the next three explaining over 8.45%, 7.16%, and 6.57%, respectively.

In order to explore convergent validity of the Index of Nostalgia Proneness, scale ratings for the Russian respondents were correlated with Holbrook’s Nostalgia Index. The resulting correlation was .54, suggesting that the two measures are somewhat related, but certainly not duplicative.

Factor loadings along with the 31 scale items for the INP appear in Table 2. As noted, the Index of Nostalgia Proneness items are identified as to which of the four nostalgia classes they were designed to represent. Several items are reverse-scaled. Blank table entries indicate results lower than .400. There are eight scale items that did not relate to any of the four factors. The majority of reverse-scaled items were not highly correlated with any of the four factors, perhaps indicating that these items were poorly understood or difficult to rate. A majority of the items loaded on factors in a manner consistent with a priori hypothesized relationships. One unexpected result was the positive association of “Children’s toys are much better now” with the third factor together with other statements favoring the past.

The first and predominant factor in our analysis represents **Personal Nostalgia** from the four-way classification. It is intuitively appealing that this factor would account for a high percentage of variance explained given that direct personal experiences and the resulting vivid memories provide fertile experiences for nostalgia.

To further explore the Index of Nostalgia Proneness, an effort was made to reconcile the open-ended nostalgia experiences in response to elicitation about “objects,” “persons,” and “events” with the four-way nostalgia classification. Experiences authored by individuals who had high ratings on particular scale items were identified.

Many scale items are related to **personal nostalgia**. Specifically, we identified individuals who had high ratings on four items in particular that are strongly representative of personal nostalgia: “I often think back to scenes from my childhood”, “People and places from the past are especially meaningful to me”, “I often think about the past to cheer myself up when I am feeling sad,” and “I feel satisfied when I reminisce about the past.”

In response to an elicitation about objects, a woman from Tyumen born in the 1930s is moved to remember a special relative and past times due to a specific object as conveyed in the following passage:

> In our house in the village there was an ancient mirror. Probably, it came to us from my great-grandmother. I loved this mirror very much. It was very beautiful—in a frame with woodcarving. For as long as I can remember myself, it always was with us. And now it reminds me of my youth.

A woman from Smolensk born during the 1950s responds to an elicitation about a person by writing about an important mentor associated with the Communist period in Russia in this illustration of personal nostalgia:

> I always with great pleasure meet the former Director of the House of Pioneers, a woman with tireless energy, “eternally young,” indeﬁnitely sincere and cheerful. I worked for 10 years under her supervision. When a schoolgirl, I went to study in the House of Pioneers where I met this woman for the ﬁrst time. She helped me in life, in work, she truly became my “godmother”. She was my mentor, my guiding star.

With items like “The society in which I lived used to be better than it is now” and “I feel connected to others from my generation when I hear music or watch TV shows from the past” the second factor resembles Cultural Nostalgia. There seems to be a clear presence of media in the second factor with items like “Movies were better when I was younger” and “I enjoy the old television and radio shows more than the new ones.”
Individuals who selected an 8 or 9 on the scale items related to this factor were identified. Some particularly illustrative experiences authored by these “high” cultural nostalgia respondents are interesting to note. Two pertain to “collective” workgroups or reunions. A married woman from Moscow born during the 1930s wrote about events to which she looked forward:

*Upon completion of university, all of my fellow students moved apart and began working in various organizations. But time has passed and we have begun meeting again with those people with whom we shared interests in school. I have been preparing for these meetings. I look forward to them and always remember the best student times—the time of study and friendships.*

Another much younger woman from Moscow born during the 1970s writes about the loss of a similar type of collective reunion in the following passage:

*My schoolmate recently celebrated his thirtieth birthday. Four people from our class came. We all had a drink and relaxed. The four of us embraced in a circle and danced for a long time, remembering the school days, our adventures, the fun things we did for entertainment, and pranks. I had a very warm feeling of love for my schoolmates. We made fun of ourselves as children, as when we were in school. We even called each other by nicknames and maiden last names.*
from Vladimir, born during the 1950s, who had a high rating on this item wrote about once-forbidden books of an earlier time in Russia.

I am not sure it is possible to call the reading of a book an event? For me an event occurred when I read the novels, which were forbidden in our country, stories by Shmel'ev Ivan Sergeevich, the writer of both the pre-revolutionary and emigrant time. All breathes with autobiographical writings. It is our Russia with churches, monasteries. All breathes with cleanliness of open spaces, riches of the Russian nature, its gifts. And soul that of the person and angriness that the October revolution has brought. I quote from correspondence between Shmel'ev and Bunin: “A gang of malicious and dissolute creatures had come and, under the cover of expressing the will of people,’ has managed with deceit, fear, and connivance to the lowest level possible in human nature, to put on the people without leaders a shameful sin.” His story “Sun of the Dead” is impressive. I have looked at all events of history as though having lived through all this myself, having lost something from the “PRESENT”.

Although she had no direct experience of the episodes presented in these books, she was able to experience an emotional connection with the events and to experience the sense of loss consistent with nostalgic response.

Finally, the fourth factor with reverse-scaled items like “I would rather celebrate holidays with new friends than with family or friends from my past” and “I don’t like to hear stories about my parents’ and grandparents’ experiences” might be interpreted as Intergenerational Nostalgia. Individuals who scored low on these items include a man from Smolensk born during the 1950s who writes the following about her childhood and intergenerational experiences with her grandparents:

I experience nostalgia most often when I hold an album with old photos in my hands. The pictures, which have become yellow with time, vividly transfer me to the time of my childhood. A feeling of grief and loss of something very valuable comes up. My great-grandfather has lived a very bright and long life, built KV railroad, was at war, worked very hard, “ne pokladaya ruk” [not resting his hands], he was awarded with Georgiev Soldier’s Tsar Cross and with the Order of Lenin for hard work during the war of 1941-45, and there are only two gifts. And soul that of the person and angriness that the October revolution has brought. I quote from correspondence between Shmel’ev and Bunin: “A gang of malicious and dissolute creatures had come and, under the cover of expressing the will of people,’ has managed with deceit, fear, and connivance to the lowest level possible in human nature, to put on the people without leaders a shameful sin.” His story “Sun of the Dead” is impressive. I have looked at all events of history as though having lived through all this myself, having lost something from the “PRESENT”.

A woman from Vladimir born during the 1940s writes the following about her childhood and intergenerational experiences with her grandparents:

People in a Russian village heated their log houses with “psych” [a large burner stove]. Meals for the entire family were prepared in these stoves, and the meal stayed hot and tasty for an entire day. My “babushka” [grandmother] baked bread and “pirogies c tvorogom” [cheese-filled dumplings]. The top of the stove had a plank bed which was finished with ceramic tiles. The ceramic tiles heated up from the burning wood. One can warm up lying on the plank bed when it was cold, and to heal oneself from an illness. And so, during our childhood, we climbed the stove to join our grandfather there and listened to him tell stories about the old times, about “kulachnyh boyah” [boxing matches] in which he liked to take part, about riding trotters, having wrapped ourselves in fox fur coats. Scary stories with witches and sorcerers. And when I visit a village where a Russian stove is, I am tempted to climb it, to listen to the howling and crying wind in a stovepipe, to listen to the silence of a village, and to be a child again.

The smells and tastes of the woman’s childhood and memories of her grandfather form the basis for very intense personal nostalgia. At the same time, she remembers the content of her grandfather’s stories and his own nostalgia for his past, which creates an interpersonal nostalgic response and spans three generations. These complex responses are typical of many nostalgic experiences, which may reflect both a personal component and an interpersonal and/or cultural connection.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Our factor analysis results demonstrate that the four-way classification of nostalgia is applicable to the Russian experience. While personal nostalgia is, not surprisingly, the most predominant component of nostalgic experience, the other three forms can be identified in the factor analysis as well. In addition, the open-ended qualitative nostalgia experiences elicited in response to “object,” “person,” and “event” prompts can be reconciled with the quantitative scale results.

Russia is a particularly fascinating venue for research on nostalgia for many reasons. First, it, along with much of Eastern Europe, has to date received less research attention than Asian or Western European countries. As an emerging market, there are significant social and economic transitions occurring in this part of the world at a rapid rate.

Future research effort might be directed toward further refining the Index of Nostalgia Proneness in Russia and testing it in other countries. In contrast to the results obtained from a U.S. sample, the reverse-scored items correlated poorly with the positive scale items. Further investigation of the appropriateness of negatively worded scale items may be useful.

With respect to the Russian marketplace, it would be interesting given the current changes to revisit the nostalgia issue in a longitudinal framework as more citizens come of age in a post-Communist system. Although the sample was not selected to be representative of the population, it is interesting that the highest average nostalgia-proneness scores were seen among respondents under the age of 25 and over 55. As the Russian marketplace changes, the Index of Nostalgia Proneness in addition to studying nostalgia, in general, would be timely and fruitful.

In terms of very specific marketing implications, results from this study could potentially shed light on some interesting responses Russian consumers are having to Soviet-era brands still in existence and “retro” products with imagery associated with the Communist or even imperial times. A case in point is Zhigulyovskoye ice cream, Yubileynoye biscuits, and Provansal mayonnaise have existed since Soviet times. Some would say their advertising is based on nostalgia. As brands proliferate and brand management evolves over time, nostalgia will likely become more of a positioning strategy in Russia.

REFERENCES


European Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 7) / 199


In the Land of the Morning Calm: Exploring How Ex-American Soldiers Construct and Maintain Identity by Recycling Past Experiences

Charles A. McMellon, Hofstra University, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

Three methods are used to explore how consumers maintain and construct a part of their identity from past experiences as American soldiers in Korea. The author uses text analysis, photographic analysis, and introspection to identify and discuss emerging themes that help our understanding of how individuals reach into their past for material to feed their present identity and how this may relate to consumer behavior. Specific examples are presented suggesting that an individuals’ past experiences influence their present day consumer behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers construct and maintain their identities in many ways: in the clothes they wear (Solomon 1986), the cars they drive (White 2003), the possessions they acquire (Belk 1988), and the pets they own (Hirschman 1994). This paper examines another possible behavior in identity maintenance and construction and how it is linked to specific consumer behaviors. By reaching into our own past experiences to recycle events that may not have been salient then, but may be now we sometimes use the past to build who we are today. Barclay and DeCooke (1988) suggest that past experiences can reflect our past identities, reinforce our current identities, and aid in the construction of new identities. Many times we look to the experiences of our youth to communicate who we are today. This revisiting of the past is not the traditional nostalgia of “...a positively toned evocation of a lived past in the context of some negative feeling toward present or impending circumstance...” (Davis 1979, p 18), nor is it a just a fondness for the past (Holbrook 1993) or the more postmodern nostalgia of Brown, Kazinets, and Sherry Jr. (2003) that incorporates a sense of loss and yearning for the past, although there may be elements of these types in this revisiting of the past. It appears to be more than that.

The meaning of persons, places, things, and experiences can be shared or individualistic (Belk 1987). Early research by Belk (1987) had consumers sort 96 items as to importance. Of interest to this research is that Belk found that older people (28+) listed U.S. Armed Forces as an experience that was an important component of their self. The importance of self-concept has not been overlooked in marketing where researchers have focused on product image and it’s link to self-concept. In addition, consumer behavior researchers have focused on parsing self-concept into an ever growing list of dimensions which include actual self, real self, basic self, extant self, situational self, ideal self, social self, ideal social self, and a variety of other dimensions including the gestalt driven concept simple stated as the self. As Sirgy (1987) states: “There is an ambiguity and confusion...” in the literature as researchers examined an issue most agree is somewhat simple in its original conception. That is, the individual’s cognitive and affective reflection of themselves as an object (Rosenberg 1979).

Self-concept theory (Grubb and Grathwohl 1967) suggests that individuals will act to protect and enhance their self-concept. This paper adopts this notion using a specific past experience (i.e., U.S. Army service in Korea) and an individual’s memory of it. As we age, these place and experience memories that help define our self-concept, may fade. One question to consider is how consumers cope with a deterioration of their self-concept? Some, the focus this research, re-experience their past by a vicarious approach of discussing it with others who have been there, looking at photographs of past events, places and, people or, by pilgrimages to the sacred destinations of their past.

My own personal experiences in Korea in 1962-1963 form the impetus to examine this subject. Over the years, I have shown my collection of Korean photographs to my two sons. This was “dad’s” adventurous years. This was “dad” defending our country. “Dad” the tough guy. I tell others of my Korean experiences as a GI (Note: GI is slang for “Government Issue”). I used my MOS (i.e. military occupation specialty, aka my job), which was commonly called the “bomb squad,” to impress others of my courage. Over the years, my Korean experiences have become a part of me. I would not be who I am today were it not for those days in Anyang and Seoul, but my children grew up and others became less interested in my Korean adventures. I suspect part of my identity began to erode. While surfing the Internet last year looking for the Korean village where I was stationed, I found a site dedicated to the 83rd Ordinance Battalion in Korea, the unit I was attached to for 13 months. There were also links to personal web sites that contained hundreds of photographs of Korea in the 1960’s. It is the photographs and text of these Internet sites that are examined for identity construction and maintenance. In addition, I use introspection by reviewing my personal photograph collection that I took when stationed in Korea in 1963, then recording the “stream of consciousness” text that emerged.

The purpose of this exploratory research is to begin to examine the importance of the link of past experiences to self-concept and how it might influence consumer behavior today. I present the results of analyzing my own experiences and the behavior of other U.S soldiers who were stationed in Korea in the 1960’s by using the text and photographs from my own life and those of others found on Internet message boards and web sites.

INTROSPECTION NARRATIVE

I draw upon the introspection method (e.g., Holbrook 1987; Hirschman 1990; Gould 1991; Brown 1998) for examination of my experiential memory. In introspection, researchers examine their own experience and emotional state during a specific time period or event. Yet, the method used in this paper does not focus on past experiences or states of mind, but how they influence the author’s current behavior. This method is not without controversy. For example, Wallendorf and Brucks (1993) suggest a number of concerns. Perhaps the most important is that there has been no explanation of the method. Another concern is the reconstructive nature of long-term memory. To begin to overcome these method concerns, the introspective process will be detailed in a stream-of-consciousness narrative. To moderate the effect of memory loss, I use personal photographs to stimulate my thinking of those times. As Holbrook (1987) explains, this method might be called “autoautodriving.” Autodriving leads to a more enriched narrative by encouraging the viewer to explain their behavior depicted in the photographs (Heisley and Levy 1991). Nevertheless, because the events covered in the introspection narrative occurred 40 years ago, the reader should approach my personal narrative with caution. They are the author’s 2003 reconstructed memories of the events and places of 1962-1963. Interested readers should read Brown (1998) for a strong defense for the introspective method. As Brown (1998, p25) states: “Just because introspection fails to meet the
formal criteria for scientific acceptability, does not mean that the technique is uninsightful." In addition, this introspection narrative does not stand alone in this exploratory study. It is one of three methods used to triangulate emerging themes.

My “Stream of Conscious” Narrative

My 1960’s memory of Korea is that of a country recovering from war. Our army base had buildings with many bullet holes in the concrete walls. Most roads were dirt and badly rutted, telephone service was scarce, the Korean people were destitute, their country destroyed, and with the exception of the base PX (i.e., store), few American products were available, most on the black market. Yet, my memories are almost all positive. I stare at the “Gateway Bar” photograph titled “Korea, 1963” (Figure 1) and smile. Here are some of my thoughts.

“I ask myself why am I there? What was I doing? What do I remember? I try to remember posing for that photograph and it floods my mind with other memories. I look at myself, a 21 year old GI and I look at the young lady next to me. We both lean on the sign. The Johnny Walker scotch logo is between us. The same logo they use today. It is a symbol of the American way of life and how Koreans used it to attract American GI’s. I am still partial to that symbol today. Our world was made up of drinking, women, thinking about home, and being a soldier. We partied a lot in those days.”

I recently showed this picture to my sons, stating how I had continually tried to have sex with the young women and was never successful. I suspect I was reaffirming my masculinity, also suggesting that “you don’t always get what you want.” I was using this picture as a tutorial for my own children. Look at the photograph titled “Queen Beer Hall, 1962” (Figure 2) Here is some of what I see and remember.

“We are all smiling on this sunny late Sunday afternoon. We were at the Queen Beer Hall every Sunday. We drink Korean whiskey and Korean coke. Two awful tasting products that rumor had it, could make you blind if you drank out of the wrong bottle. My taste memory could easily remember that taste today. We were all comrades in a far away strange place. I see Tommy Kwan in the photo. He always wanted to come to the United States. To this day, I hope he made it. I see Jim Thompson. I last saw him in O’Hare airport after we had been discharged. He walked off into the night and I have not seen him since. I ask myself why I have these memories about an Asian civilian and a Black GI. I have “googled” both of their names but found nothing. There are women in the background. They are prostitutes and will soon start to flirt with us. I know I slept with one of them that night. We were young and that is what young people do.”

Is this a reconstructed consumption experience memory to support my decision to be a civil rights activist in the late 1960s? Or was it lost friendships that leave psychic scars on us? Some of those GIs in the picture were tough guys. They had been in the Korean war. This somehow made me a tough guy, because I socialized with them. I got drunk with them. I whored with them. I was a part of a group of guys back then, something I have never been since.

“The picture in Figure 3 is of the street near the entrance to our army base. There is a tailor shop to the left. Many GIs had their clothes tailored to fit. It was “cool” to have skin tight fatigues. A lone GI walks down the street. I think it is Jim Thompson. I know he is going off to meet with his “yobo” (i.e., honey) and spend the night in her “hooch.” return to my consciousness that have not been accessed in thirty years. Women, in those days, did what they had to do to survive, including prostitution. The Koreans are a strong resilient people. It comes as no surprise.”
to me that the Korea of today is as it is. I have walked this street many times in my dreams. I dream of the good times and the women I slept with. It reinforces my masculinity. I regret that my mother threw out my old army fatigues. I would wear them today. I still have my army boots and long-johns which I wear in the winter always telling my sons that they are forty-years old."

I also have a few sacred objects from those days which I keep in a special place. I displayed them in the past, but few are interested in looking at them. So they are just for me now. My dress uniform name badge, my Explosive Ordinance Disposal patch, my collection of photographs, the two Korean drums I purchased, the Japanese swords we dug up, and the Henry Miller books I smuggled back into the states. Every now and then, I take them out, I touch them, I remember, they are a part of who I am today.

Belk (1988) suggests that possessions are a part of who we constructed selves and that understanding our selves helps us understand our consumer behavior. We use our possessions for memories, but we also use them as teaching tools for children, socializa-
tions with others, and for aesthetic purposes (e.g., as furniture, wall hangings).

In summary, my introspective narrative can be analyzed by the reader as well as the author. I invite the reader to do so. The object of this narrative is not to identify exactly how I use my possessions to construct and maintain my self-concept, but that it is the process of introspection of past experiences that does this. This stream-of-consciousness writing suggests a few themes related to the maintenance and construction of my identity: my masculinity, my courage, my consumer attitudes, and my adventurous youth. It also suggests some current consumer behavior on my part. I always have a bottle of Johnny Walker scotch in my liquor cabinet. Every time I shop at our local grocery store, owned by a Korean, I thank him in Korean, which adds to my shopping satisfaction. I roll my socks and underwear. I sometimes use the army salute when I say hello to people. It is code to my fellow soldiers. I was in. I did my duty.

PHOTOGRAPH ANALYSIS

In this section, photographs posted on the Internet by ex-GI’s are examined. Photographic research is quite rich in other disciplines (see Heisley and Levy 1991 for a history of visual research) while in consumer behavior, researchers are just beginning to examine the possibilities (e.g., Holbrook 1987, Wallendorf and Arnould 1988, Heisley, McGrath, and Sherry, Jr. 1990, Anderson and Giovanna 1992).

Holbrook (1987) took photographs of his own jazz record collection as a method of autodriving himself. He used the photographs as a “vehicle for self-revelation.” Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) suggested that the objects in our lives are like benchmarks, reminding us of who we are and what we have done. These objects contribute to our self-concept. Using a structured analysis approach, Collier and Collier (1987) examined physical closeness to “favorite objects” in photographs finding that those people who had social or experiential attachments to the objects were closer than those who were not. A Tour of Duty (http://atourofduty.homestead.com/) contained personal stories, poems, links to other web sites, events, mystery words and photos with answers and, a large collection of photographs posted by ex-GIs. This site contained 172 photographs. The introduction to the “personal stories” and photograph pages helps us understand part of the motivation of why ex-GIs visit these pages and why they post the stories and photographs that they do.

“The Purpose of this page is quite simple. It’s a place for all of us to tell our tales of the village. Come on over now, we all spent time in a village somewhere. And I’m sure we all had an experience that we can talk about. Whether at a club, walking down the street, at a Tea House or in the back streets, somewhere, something happened that would qualify as a ‘Village Experience’. So send me your tales and I’ll put them here to share with all. Don’t be bashful, we were just a bunch of kids back then.”

“We all went there, for one reason or another, (mostly for one reason) and we all had our favorites. So what could be better than sharing our favorite haunt with others and seeing where we spent our leisure time (and hard earned dollars). Send me your village pictures and we’ll put them up for all to see. It doesn’t matter how many you send or what’s in them (you’d be surprised how many others roamed the same back streets as you). Club pictures, street scenes, the gals, shops, children, GI’s, signs and /or WHATEVER.”

These introductions state “it’s a place for all of us to tell our tales...” and that “...we were just a bunch of crazy kids back then.” "To tell our tales” suggests a level of importance and meaning to these past experiences. The pages speak of “sharing” and “seeing,” which suggests a need to reinforce these experiences. The use of “for us” and “we” suggest a sense of community. This web site also had reunion pages documenting the ex-GIs who met face-to-face after 30 or 40 years of civilian life. These pages had both photos and comments. Here is what one GI wrote after spending a weekend with four of his 1969 buddies from Korea.

“With every meeting, every letter and every photo we view, another small piece of a memory puzzle is added to our bank of knowledge. Things we may have forgotten or knew nothing about are brought to light and the time we spent as young soldiers in the ‘Land of The Morning Calm’ seems to have happened only yesterday. As I read letters and view photos that are sent to me. I for one, am not reading the words of an adult person living somewhere in the USA. These are the words of young soldiers, far from home, talking about things that were having a great impact on their lives. Soldiers who experienced......... Korea, A Tour of Duty”

As this GI states, “...things that were having a great impact on their lives.” These events aid in reconstructing an individual’s
“memory puzzle” to help maintain identity as we age. The third group of photographs analyzed, http://photos.groups.yahoo.com/group/83rdOrdBn/lst, were posted by a variety of individuals who all participate in a Yahoo bulletin board. This site contained 82 photographs. Similar patterns emerged.

To begin to understand the posting of these photographs, an inventory of the pictures was conducted. The photographs can be divided into two basic groups: indigenous Koreans civilians and American soldiers. There are many subcategories within each of these two groups. The most common for Koreans were street scenes, groups, cultural events, working, landmarks, comparison portraits of then and now, portraits, vistas, and Koreans and American’s together. The most common for American soldiers were present day reunions, comparison portraits of then and now, portraits now, groups, equipment and buildings, places where American’s gathered (e.g., local bars), and representations of American culture.

All three web sites contained many similar pictures. There are many photographs of ordinary street scenes, people waiting for busses or crossing the street. Koreans are also shown in various work situations either on farms or on the city streets. They also depict Korean culture such as folk dancing, a family eating dinner, a bedroom, and Buddhist statues and temples. In addition, there are a considerable number of self portraits of the photographers and of the young women they knew. There are store fronts with English titles appeared to be a favorite subject(e.g., New York Shoe Shop, Club Stereo). This suggests a search from some connection with where they were in Korea and the American homeland. There were also many Army scenes, which should be expected. These can be seen as a record (i.e., proof) of their presence in Korea and adds to the meaning of why they were there. There were photos of a soldier’s “hooch,” (i.e., where they slept in the village with their girlfriends), the vehicles, and doing the Army jobs. There were also many buildings, signs, and group photos. Lastly, some of the photographs reflected cultural stereotypes. These were photos of “papasans” and “mamasans,” farmers working rice paddies, walking women balancing goods on their heads, and “honey buckets” (i.e., human waste used as fertilizer).

In summary, most apparent is the “everydayness” of the photographs. These are not your typical vacation snapshots. They are the documented proof of a past experience. The content of these photos consist mainly of street and work scenes, of children playing, women walking, men working, trains moving, then and now photographs of places, buses, and farmers. Many are similar to the author’s own Korean experience photographs.

**TEXT ANALYSIS**

The third approach in this study exploring the construction and maintenance of the self was to examine a Yahoo web site for email text about American GI’s Korean experiences (i.e., http://groups.yahoo.com/group/83rdOrdBn/). Three hundred and twenty-six text messages from 27 members were examined. All writers had spent a tour of duty in Korea in the 1960s and early 1970s. All of these messages were sent in 2003. Analysis of the messages proceeded systematically using iterative processing (Spiggle 1994). That is, to repeatedly read each of the 326 messages, identifying all themes, until nothing new emerged. Because of space restrictions, two of the many themes that emerged will be discussed in detail.

**Contrasts: Past and Present**

Many of the ex-GI’s have a continuing interest in Korea. They have interests in such areas as the economy, military, sports events, and especially the physical changes that have taken place since they were in Korea in the 1960’s. Below are comments of a GI who reflects on the current images of Korea:

“...thank you for the posting of the photos. They are outstanding and mind boggling. I can’t believe the transition. Who ever thought that my yobo’s hut would now be the foundation of a high rise apartment building. Keep up the great work, your efforts are appreciated.”

This GI, like many, appear astounded by the economic recovery of Korea. It is “mind boggling,” especially the physical changes. Yet, note the reaffirmation of conflicting feeling by this GI when he says, “I always knew that the Korean people were hard working...” Some of the GI’s appear to be obsessed with changes.

“This morning I received a photo taken in Korea on 17 March 2003. The picture is looking north from the dirt road that went to the MSA. Mr. Sung-Nam Kim took the picture and generously provided me with the image. The photo was taken from a location very close to the place that I was standing when I photographed during August, 1968. The difference in the two images is striking. In Mr. Kim’s photo there are many 20+ story apartment buildings now standing where rice paddies are shown in my photo. I hope to have all of Mr. Ho-Shik Lee’s photos of Anyang City, and Mr. Sung Nam Kim’s photo posted by the end of this week.”

These GI’s have mixed emotions about what has happened in Korea. They are in awe of the changes while sometimes regretting that their memory places are no longer there. They appear to be obsessed with exact locations and what has changed. This may be that their ability to use of these memories to construct and maintain their past experience-based self-concept has been partially damaged by the construction of an apartment building in place of their old Army base. What they lived is gone. Their direct links to masculinity, courage, and duty are all gone. All they have left are the photographs and Internet bulletin boards.

**Pilgrimages**

The desire to return to Korea also appeared to be a strong feeling among many of the GI’s. This desire appeared similar to a pilgrimage, defined as a journey to a sacred place that leads to redemption and renewal (Mahoney 2003). This desire to return is tied into exact details of where they were, what has changed, and what they did while in Korea. This GI, in Korea, excitedly speaks of his pilgrimage back to some of the “sacred” sites of his youth.

“Greetings from Anyang!
What can I say about Suck su Dong? I did not recognize anything! Of course the train traveled on the same tracks that were adjacent to the compound but it was hard to tell where the compound was. All I can say is that there are MANY high rise apartment buildings in the area, and I believe that the compound now has apartment buildings covering the site. I hope to be able to make a more detailed examination of the Suck-su
Dong area within the next few days. I brought a number of 4x6 photographic prints of photos that I took in 68-69 that show the terrain of the area, so I hope to be able to identify the location of the compound. I also plan to view the MSA area and take photos, if possible, of the present day MSA site. I understand that the MSA is now occupied by the ROK Army.

“I am delighted that I have returned to Korea. I recommend that all of you old soldiers give some thought to returning and seeing present day Korea. We all had a small part to play in the development of modern Korea, and it is satisfying to see that the 13 months we spent in Korea was not for naught. I have been taking many photographs, and I have many more to take. I plan on posting the pics on my site so you can all see what changes have taken place over the past 30-40 years. GREETINGS FROM ANYANG to all the old troopers of the 83rd Ordnance Battalion. I will do all I can to represent you and America to the best of my ability!”

Again, this GI appears very interested in the physical places of his tour of duty. He hopes “to make a more detailed examination” using his old photographs. He recommends we all go back. That we were a part of this place and that we played a role in Korea’s development.

DISCUSSION

This exploratory paper is a first step in examining how consumers construct and maintain their self-concept by revisiting past experiences. Thus, one method to reinforce one’s identity is to recycle our past, not as nostalgia, but as identity nourishment.

There are many communities like the group in this study that appear to manifest the same identity maintenance strategy: veterans from Vietnam, WWII, and the Korean war, participants in Woodstock, those who came of age with 1950’s rock and roll, college fraternity and sorority members, and family or high school reunions. Other research areas, that might be examined using photographic, text, and interview analysis methods, include the themes from the current study that were not reported in this paper such as adventurous times, discussion of time elapsed, soldiers vs. Koreans, West(ric) vs. East (poor), soldiering vs. partying, soldiers as consumers, interest in history of place, relationships and reunions. In addition, Davis (1979) suggests gender differences exist.

This paper takes a first step by exploring the important topic of how past experiences are used in the construction and maintenance of self-concept. It suggests that individuals do use the past in this manner.

REFERENCES


Barclay, Craig. R. and Peggy A. DeCooke (1988), “Ordinary everyday memories: Some of the things of which selves are made,” In U. Neisser and E. Winograd (Eds.), Remembering reconsidered: Ecological and traditional approaches to memory (pp. 91-125), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press


**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

It is true that authenticity pervades everyday consumption in multiple ways: in art, museum artifacts, ethnic food and restaurants, old downtown renovations, collectibles, myriad of retro-objects (Brown 2001), and most emphatically, tourism experiences (Arnould and Price 1993; Belk and Costa 1998; Costa and Bamossy 2001). While relevant discussions thrive in anthropology, geography, and tourism, consumer researchers have only recently recognized authenticity’s potential to augment product value above and beyond its promising functional, aesthetic, or experiential significance.

Notwithstanding its potential value for consumption experiences, authenticity has been criticized as a “problematic concept” (Costa and Bamossy 2001). Academic work on authenticity remains vague both in terms of its definition and in its marketing relevance. As Bruner (1994) says, “The problem with the term authenticity, in the literature and in fieldwork, is that one never knows except by analysis of the context which meaning is salient in any given instance” (p. 401). On top of these limitations, existing literature on authenticity underscores managerial concerns at the expense of a consumer perspective. With few exceptions (Bagnall 1996; Belk and Costa 1998; McIntosh and Prentice 1999), the majority of the existing studies overemphasize management’s strategies and the steps taken to offer an authentic product, ignoring consumer perceptions of authenticity.

The present paper is focused on the concept of authenticity and its interplay with consumption in heritage sites. In this context, our study aims to provide a better understanding of what is meant by consumers when authenticity arises. The question raised, therefore, is, if authenticity is an important element of contemporary consumer culture as has been asserted, in what sense is it prevalent in the context of a heritage site? A major objective of this study is to examine in which ways authenticity plays out in a heritage site. This goal includes (a) the study of the meanings of authenticity for consumers, (b) how it is articulated, and (c) what is its relationship with the consumption outcome(s).

Ethnographic research conducted at Gettysburg—the place of the bloodiest battle during the American Civil War—provides insight into the diverse forms in which authenticity is brought up by visitors as a characteristic of the commercial site. Namely, our data reveal that five types of authenticity are seen by visitors as valuable product features: Object-related, factual, locational, personage, and environmental.

*Object-related authenticity* refers to the authenticity of various tangible objects. It may be objective or constructive. Original artifacts are objectively authentic, while imitations, reproductions, or replicas may be constructively authentic. While for some visitors a special value is bestowed upon original cannons from the time of the battle (1863), “authentic replicas” are not discredited from their value as signifiers of sacrifice and patriotism.

*Factual authenticity* refers to the historical accuracy of the past events presented by the site management. It is a general belief among visitors at Gettysburg, that to a large extent, the past that is presented to them is factually authentic. Their inference is based on a comparison between their existing familiarity with the epic battle narrative and the history that is presented at the site by the National Park Service and the private businesses.

*Locational authenticity* refers to the actual place or the exact location where a particular historical event took place. As opposed to various contrived presentations of the past that might seem superficial and be scoffed at, the actual location of the battlefield and the exact spot where someone fought are greatly valued. For most visitors, simply “being there” is valued as a significant experiential payoff.

*Personage authenticity* refers to actual people who have lived, acted, and died at a heritage site. These are the heroes of the Gettysburg campaign and the participants in a legendary war narrative of paramount national importance because of their sacrificial contribution.

*Environmental authenticity* refers to the appearance of the surrounding environment. It can be distinguished in references to (a) natural environment, (b) lack of intervention, and (c) lack of commercialization.

In this paper we distinguish between authenticity as a characteristic of a heritage site or, in other words, as a product feature, and authenticity as an experience. The most outstanding experiential outcome for a great number of visitors at Gettysburg was a temporary but profoundly intense imaginary flight in the past. As our data show, all five types of site-authenticity bequeath value to the heritage product offered at Gettysburg and they help visitors connect with the past.

**REFERENCES**


Self as a Source of Self-Positivity Bias

Parthasarathy Krishnamurthy, University of Houston, U.S.A.
Magdalena Cismaru, University of Regina, Canada

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

It has been found that people generally believe that they are less vulnerable than others in experiencing negative events such as getting AIDS or cancer (i.e., they experience a self-positivity bias). Although literature on the self-positivity bias has focused on documenting the phenomenon and discovering ways to reduce it, there has been little systematic investigation of the origins of self-positivity bias. The main purpose of this research is to investigate the origins of self-positivity bias.

Self-positivity bias, as defined in the literature, is a discrepancy between one’s estimate of personally experiencing an event (in this case, a health event) and one’s estimate of another person experiencing the same event. Since the discrepancy can arise from abnormally low self-risk estimates as well as from abnormally high other-risk estimates, or a combination thereof, it makes sense to think of it as a self-other discrepancy rather than as a self-positivity bias. This allows us to investigate at least two sources of the discrepancy: 1) sources pertaining to the self and 2) sources pertaining to others. In the present research we only focus on the self as a source of bias.

In regard to the self, the literature on information processing suggests special status to self-relevant information in that such information is encoded, processed, and retrieved differently than non-self information. Specifically, based on findings in the literature that risk estimates are the result of how risk-increasing and risk-decreasing factors are assessed, we argue that people are more apt to code, process, and retrieve risk information in a self-favoring manner, causing a reduction in self-risk estimates. Indeed, results from two studies described below support this assertion.

We begin our investigation with a baseline study, study 1, intended to establish two goals. First, the focus of study 1 is to replicate self-positivity bias in the context of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) and using a traditional manipulation of target person. Second, we want to investigate whether decision-makers recruit more positive (risk-decreasing) and less negative (risk-increasing) factors when generating self risk estimates in comparison with average student risk estimates. Study 1 employed a traditional 2 (target person) x 2 (order of elicitation) mixed design, with the target person manipulated within-subjects and the order of elicitation manipulated between-subjects. Self-positivity bias was assessed by asking participants to answer a series of questions pertaining to themselves and the average undergraduate student in respect to their chances of developing CFS. To control for anchoring effects, we used two orders of elicitation: in the self-first condition, for each measure, participants first responded to questions about themselves. In the average person-first condition, the order was reversed.

Results show that the principal goal of establishing a reliable self-positivity bias in the context of CFS was achieved. Moreover, results show that people base their estimates on different factors when the likelihood estimate is about the self in contrast to when the estimate is about somebody else. Specifically, participants recruited more positive factors for self-estimates than for average student-estimates, but they recruited the same number of negative factors for self-estimates as for the average student-estimates. Thus, the more favorable estimates for the self in comparison to another person seem to be the result of more positive information considered when constructing risk estimates for the self, in comparison to risk estimates for another, suggesting a “self-positivity” bias.

A caveat is in order. Our study focused only on the retrieved factors at the time of generating the risk estimates but did not control which factors were encoded originally. Hence, we do not know if people encode both positive and negative factors, but differ on what is recruited, or if people differ on what is encoded to begin with. This is the focus of study 2 in where we control the input and assess the effects on recall during risk estimation.

Study 2 focused on the role of selective recruitment of risk favoring information for the self relative to others, and is different from study 1 in the sense that study 2 examines the role of recall controlling for encoding whereas study 1 does not. Furthermore, study 2 extends the investigation to the effects of the self-favoring recruitment of information on imagery. Study 2 involves a between-subjects’ manipulation of target person because this study requires people to encode risk behaviors, and subsequently recall them.

Results indicate that the nature of the target person affects the extent of imagery associated with antecedent risk factors, induces marginal difference in the number of risk-decreasing factors retrieved at the time of risk estimates while not affecting the number of risk-increasing factors. Furthermore, study 2 results indicate that the extent of imagery and recall may mediate the relationship between target person and risk estimate, providing insight into self as a source of self-positivity bias. Specifically, as expected, decision-makers reported greater clarity visualizing themselves engaging in risk-decreasing behaviors than they can visualize themselves engaging in risk-increasing behaviors. Moreover, self-other differences in the clarity of imagery regarding risk behaviors significantly influenced self-other differences in the risk estimates. Participants in the self-focus condition indicated lower risk estimates, and retrieved more risk-decreasing behaviors compared with those in the other-focus conditions.

In short, these two studies confirmed a self-positivity bias in a CFS context and showed the impact of the self as a source of the discrepancy between estimates for the self and estimates for the ‘other’. They also, in part, explained the mechanism through which self constitutes a source of discrepancy between risk estimates for the self and risk estimates for some other.

REFERENCES


Problem-Oriented Anxiety and Consumer Behavior
Sonia Capelli, Lyon1 University and CERAG, France

ABSTRACT

The author develops a 23-item instrument for the assessment of problem-oriented anxiety as a multidimensional concept, breaking down the usual anxiety scales that measure a level of anxiety as a simple concept. Discussion of the conceptualization and operational functions used in constructing and refining the multiple-item scale to measure problem-oriented anxiety as a construct are described. Also presented is evidence that the scale has been validated through assessment of content validity, predictive validity, and construct validity.

The twentieth century has been labelled “the Age of Anxiety” (May 1977), as the threat of nuclear war, biological weapons, global warming and AIDS create significant concerns for large numbers of people. However, how respond to the question “Are you anxious?”. Some people may answer “certainly yes” or “certainly not” to this question, but the majority would answer “It depends”… On what does the answer to this simple question depend? The purpose of the present study is to answer to this question showing that a typology of anxieties may exist depending on the nature of the problem being considered and to emphasize the role of those anxieties in consumer behavior.

Carver (1989) offered two broad arguments in favor of multifaceted constructs in personality research. The first argument is that “individual facets of a construct should sometime predict dependent variables better than should the broader construct (i.e. the overall index)” (Carver 1989, 579). Indeed, one facet of the construct may be positively correlated with the variable explained whereas another may be negatively correlated. Lumping together items across dimensions in an index could misleadingly lead to a weighted average and obscure the differential contributions of the dimensions. The second argument is the fact that the whole (the construct) can be greater than the sum of its parts (the different facets of the construct). By this, Carver meant that “some multifaceted constructs seem to be based on the assumption that the several components interact with each other to produce the outcome effect of interest” (Carver 1989, 582).

Our study integrates those considerations and applies them to the concept of trait anxiety. Many studies have considered anxiety as a multifaceted construct, but the criteria delimiting those facets have always concerned the manifestations of anxiety (i.e. physical versus psychological manifestations). The main point of the present study is the investigation of anxiety as a personality trait, introducing the notion of several types of anxieties instead measuring the level of its various manifestations. Trait anxiety has long been considered a genetic characteristic (Eysenck 1970), which explains the focus on its manifestations in past research. However, the recent development of cognitive and interactionist theories explaining the formation and evolution of anxiety lead us to hypothesize there could be different types of anxieties dealing with the broad issues that people have to cope with during the course of their lives. That is why we develop the notion of problem-oriented anxiety and show, through building a measurement scale composed of six dimensions, that it may help explain buyer behavior. Therefore, a brief review of the literature is first presented (part 1) showing the need of a return to the basic field with a qualitative study (part 2) in order to develop a scale assessing the multiple facets of problem-oriented anxiety with an exploratory quantitative study (part 3).

Finally, the reliability and validity of the scale are investigated with a third collection of data treated with confirmatory factorial analysis (part 4).

WHY PROBLEM-ORIENTED ANXIETY?

Studying problem-oriented anxiety necessitates an investigation of the literature dealing with anxiety. First we present traditional research dealing with the level of anxiety showing the evolution toward a multidimensional conception of anxiety trait. Second we identify in the literature the potential nature of the different kinds of anxieties we hypothesize.

Anxiety versus anxieties

The field of anxiety research is wide and detailed in psychology. The first studies about anxiety deals with abnormal cases. Here we focus on anxiety of normal persons, because of our consumer concern, rapidly presenting the main distinctions and evolutions of this concept.

Diverse anxieties in psychology: Spielberger (1966, 1972) made a fundamental distinction between anxiety as a transitory state (state anxiety), and anxiety as a personality trait (trait anxiety), developing his two dimensional STAI anxiety scale. On one hand, state anxiety has been defined as an emotional reaction “consisting of unpleasant, consciously-perceived feelings of tension and apprehension with associated activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Spielberger 1972, 29). Trait anxiety, on the other hand, refers to one’s proneness to experience state anxiety. Anxiety-trait is defined as a measure of “anxiety-proneness-differences between individuals in the probability that anxiety states will be manifested under circumstances involving varying degrees of stress” (Spielberger 1966, 15). Thus, anxiety-trait is a normal anxiety whose role is to protect individuals from danger. That is why trait anxiety has long been measured as a one-dimensional concept within personality assessment, for example through the neuroticism dimension of the big five model (Costa and McCrae 1992) or the anxiety dimension of Eysenck’s Inventory (Eysenck 1970). We will focus on trait-anxiety because of its potential in studying consumer behavior. In particular, studying consumer traits and linking them to his buying behavior allows to target.

Anxiety-trait evolution: The first studies dealing with anxiety as a personality-trait investigated anxiety as a genetic heritage or physiological characteristic (Costa and McCrae 1992; Eysenck 1971). For instance, Eysenck and Prell (1951) found that 80% of individual differences in neuroticism are due to heredity when comparing monozygotic and dizygotic twins. These results, however, have never been replicated. Moreover, as stressed Eysenck (1992, 42), “The various inadequacies of the physiological approach to trait anxiety and neuroticism arise to a large extent because environmental influences and the role of learning are de-emphasised. As soon as one considers learning, then the importance of the cognitive system becomes obvious.”

More recently, cognitive approaches to trait anxiety have been proposed by Williams et al. (1988) and Eysenck (1992). These approaches have succeeded in establishing consistent differences in various cognitive biases between individuals high and low in trait anxiety helping to explain the evolution of anxiety over the life span. Indeed, high anxious individuals demonstrate a selective attentional bias (i.e., they allocate most of their attention to negative
stimuli), an interpretative bias (ie, when the stimuli is ambiguous, it is most likely interpreted as negative), and a negative memory bias (ie, they memorize better negative than positive stimuli). This approach emphasizes the role played by the stimuli and, more generally, by past feelings in building trait anxiety. Due to the various natures of those stimuli, the homogeneous conception of anxiety trait is questionable. That is why we suggest that the unidimensional view of trait anxiety is not able to resituate the variety of stimuli that can explain the evolution of trait anxiety.

Moreover, interactionist approaches of trait anxiety (Endler 1975; Endler et al. 1976) proposed a multidimensional approach, according to which the increase in state anxiety produced by a threatening environment will be greater among those high in trait anxiety only when there is congruence between the nature of the threat and the dimension or facet of trait anxiety possessed by the individual. This prediction has been confirmed several times when the dimensions of social evaluation and physical danger have been investigated, but most of the studies limited themselves to this single distinction, whereas several kinds of threats are isolated in the literature dealing with anxiety. That is the reason why we investigate the multidimensional concepts which are closed to anxiety.

Nature of the oriented anxiety dimensions

This study will attempt to develop a typology of anxieties depending on what they refer to, that is why it seems important to investigate situations that deal with the different kinds of threats. Therefore, two fields have been scanned: isolated research dealing with particular kinds of anxiety, and multidimensional concepts closed to anxiety.

Some particular oriented anxieties: As we have seen, anxiety is normally associated with death, but different isolated works in psychology and in marketing deal with other types of anxiety, reflecting the steps of the Terrors hierarchy. In this section, we will describe three types of anxieties: (a) death related anxiety, (b) social anxiety, and (c) anxiety associated with social issues. The first type of anxiety, the one developed in marketing, is death-related anxiety and its effects on consumer behavior. For example, Gentry et al. (1995) showed the influence of death anxiety on consumer behavior. More recently, Urien (2001) argued that death anxiety may explain part of the attachment with objects we buy, and more generally, compared several scales to measure death anxiety in order to show the use that could be done of those to explain consumer behavior. The second kind of anxiety derives from psychology research concerning social anxiety. Buss developed a measure of social anxiety, hypothesizing that people are anxious about the way they will be judged by their peers (Buss, 1980). The scale developed for the measurement of social anxiety is able to assess the unconscious part of social anxiety. Another approach of social anxiety has been developed by Leary who defined it as “anxiety resulting from the prospect or presence of interpersonal evaluation in real or imagined social settings” (Leary, 1982, 98). He distinguished state and trait social anxiety (social anxiousness) to develop a scale for the measurement of social anxiety. The unidimensionality of social anxiety concept has been discussed by Shelvin and Lewis (1999) who found there are in fact two dimensions compounding social anxiety measurement: the first factor could be described as measuring verbal performance difficulties and the second is defined by items relative to shyness that represents a more global construct of social anxiety.

The third kind of anxiety we retained is anxiety associated with social issues (Sego and Stout 1994). These authors developed a scale to measure anxiety related to two particular issues: AIDS-related anxiety and recycling related anxiety. They show that anxiety associated with one issue is different from the emotion generated by a stimulus related to the issue and explains more significantly the intent of behavior. Our research attempts to generalize those findings showing that several kinds of anxieties exist and may explain part of consumption.

Worries: For instance, Eysenck (1992, 101) stress the fact that worry is that the cognitive component of anxiety “occurs in response to the actual or the potential non-achievement of goals associated with major sources of life satisfaction” including the domestic, social and work area of life. Moreover, Hallam (1992) suggests that threat may be physical (centred on one’s health and welfare), social (centred on the threat of being rejected socially), psychological (centred on emotional well-being) or material (centred on material possessions) nature. This is the reason why we assume that anxiety-trait may be compounded by several facets reflecting those different kinds of threats.

Fears: However, comparing anxiety with fear often lead authors to affirm that anxiety has no causes. Thus, Spielberger, Diaz Guerrero, and Strelau (1976, 6) distinguish between fear and anxiety as follows: “Fear generally denotes an emotional reaction to the anticipation of injury or harm from some real, objective danger in the external environment… In contrast, anxiety is traditionally regarded as “objectless” emotional reaction because either the stimulus conditions that evoke it are unknown or the intensity of the emotional reaction is disproportionately greater than the magnitude of the objective danger”. But this complexity of causes does not mean that anxiety has no cause. As Hallam (1985) stress a network of interconnected fears exits in individual memory, that explains the over-reaction to a simple stimulus: the stimulus may only refer to on particular fear, but the interconnected other fear affect simultaneously individual presented to the stimulus. That is why we assume that trait-anxiety is compounded by several facets reflecting the various network of interacting fears.

Terrors: Different kinds of terrors may lead to the creation of different kinds of trait-anxieties. The hierarchy of terrors (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, and Solomon 1990), going from the fact that people actually don’t think about the existential dilemma develops the concept of a hierarchy of terrors, with fear for death at its top, being the manifestation of the willing of self-preservation. In the second level of the hierarchy, two means of self-preservation are distinguished. The first deals with direct means of self-preservation, i.e. food, water, warmth etc… The second deals with symbolic means of self-preservation, compounded by self-esteem and a cultural worldview. The hierarchy of terrors justifies the development of the problem-oriented anxiety concept because it is one of the only studies that reveal that, even if the anxiety is due to the perspective of our own death, other lower level manifestations of this existential dilemma can exist and affect behaviors strongly. The main hypothesis of this study is similar to ours, but it stays at a very conceptual level, looking at the implications for clinical applications without providing any tool to measure different kinds of problem-oriented anxiety.

Stress: An assumption made in our study concerning the different facets of anxiety is that a repeated stressor (chronic stress: Wheaton 1996) may induce a kind of anxiety, consistently with the cognitive approach of trait anxiety. In addition to the subjects
treated earlier, two kinds of stress are investigated in this study because they are consistent with in-depth interviews led concerning problem-oriented anxiety: professional stress and family stress.

Firstly, a wide literature has been developed in the field of psychology that finds applications in management to explain what may be done to reduce professional stress. Not all people face professional anxious, but this category exists, as shown by Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) in their typology of workers. They split workers into three categories depending upon the way they see their work: in terms of job, career, or calling. “Job” and “career” contained people that must potentially face a high level of the professional anxiety dimension.

Secondly, in the same way, family stress may, if repeated over the time, imply the formation of a particular kind of trait-anxiety. For example, some people who frequently fight at home become depressed and feel helpless with the situation with what they have to cope. That is why we hypothesize related to family anxiety may be one of the dimensions of problem-oriented anxiety. The different kinds of stress may interact to form anxiety, for example, Doby and Caplan (1995) found that stress at work has direct consequences on anxiety at work and indirect effects on anxiety at home.

The wide review of the literature presented here illustrates the fact that this research is an exploratory research. Many fields are investigated to generate various ideas about the different facets of anxiety. Nevertheless, the different levels and purposes of the studies presented here compounding the bases of this research prevent us from compiling it in an aggregated scale of measurement. That is the reason why this research is grounded in results coming from the field that give a homogeneous vision of the different facets of anxiety, and permit the possibility of comparison between dimensions. Such an approach is not possible based on the current literature. To conclude this review of the literature, problem-oriented anxiety is defined as the whole of different networks of interconnected fears that compound trait-anxiety. Those networks characterize each individual for a period of time and change over a long time because of their interaction with environment and physiological characteristics.

**STUDY Nº1 : GENERATING AN ITEM POOL**

Due to the diversity underlined in the previous part, it was not possible to generate items from the literature. On one hand, existing anxiety scales are not problem-oriented and so can not be used. On the other hand, scales developed for particular issues, for example dealing with AIDS or death, are too much detailed. Indeed they try to measure different nuances for a particular point that is hypothesized to be included in a wider dimension. That is why including all the items concerning isolated studies about particular issues was not feasible (too much items for too little information to fill our purpose) and possibly misguided because those item have been generated in different condition, and in different ways. Finally, we proceeded from the beginning of the scale building method (Nunnally 1978; Peter 1981) with in-depth interviews, in view to confirm the dimensions isolated from the literature.

A sample of 30 persons was asked to answer to the question “What are you anguished by in your life?”. The expression “in your life” had been adopted to avoid the confusion with temporary problems answerers could have to cope with. Even if anguish is supposed not to have any cause, people had no difficulties with answering, which ensured our feeling that there are several types of anguishes (or anxieties). The number of 30 has been fixed on application with the saturation principle. The collected data were analyzed with lexical analysis (TROPES software) and gave five main dimensions for problem-oriented anxiety: professional, spiritual (death, meaning of life...), physical (illness, accident...), social (relationships with friends), and family-related anxiety. Examining those interviews lead us to not to take account of the spiritual facet of trait-anxiety. Indeed, the particular status of spiritual anxiety has been stressed in most of the studies (Pyszczynski et al. 1990). The philosophical considerations of Kierkegaard (1844) explain this status of: death anxiety that is considered as the only anguish that subsumes all the others in a conscious or unconscious way. It seems that spiritual anxiety is the only reason of anxiety, and that it manifests in all the other kinds of anxieties found in this qualitative study. For instance, physical anxiety is the manifestation of the threat concerning this end of our one’s physical life, or professional concern may be considered as the manner to get our one’s life useful and let a trace on the earth, leading to the threat not to achieve this goal.

Two other dimensions have been included for generating the pool of items: financial anxiety, that appears only in one speech (due to a bias in the selection of respondents) and the macro-micro-social anxiety that was not taken into consideration by the software because of the diversity of vocabulary used to describe it (e.g. “war”, “pollution”, “bad alimentation” or “poverty in the world”). Finally, we generated a pool of 36 items for seven dimensions. The pretest of the scale shows that people understood well it deals with their anxieties, even if it was not mentioned. The questionnaire was generally well received by the respondents, thus supporting the face validity.

**STUDY Nº2 : ADMINISTRATION OF ITEMS TO A DEVELOPMENT SAMPLE**

**The sample**

The initial 33-items scale was administrated to a sample of 182 volunteers, who varied greatly in terms of age, sex, religion practice, profession and number of children. As a general rule of thumb there should be at least five cases for each observed variable (Tabachnick and Fidell 1989). In this case, a final sample of 182 was sufficient.

**Exploratory factor analysis**

Factor analysis was used to determine the number of dimensions in problem-oriented anxiety. The high KMO test (0.875) confirms the hypothesis that several dimensions constitute the concept of problem-oriented anxiety. In this case, oblimin rotation was used because the hypothesis of total independence between factors was impossible to assume since those dimensions are part of the same construct. For instance, we have stressed in the review of the literature professional and related to family anxieties to be correlated. This hypothesis of correlations between dimensions was confirmed by the significant scores in the correlation matrix between factors. The scree test was used to determine the optimal number of factors, since the criterion of eigenvalue more than 1 was not reliable in our case due to the fact it was situated in the plat part of the chart (Tabachnick and Fidell 1989). Results show differences with the dimensions founded on the base of lexical analysis of in-depth interviews, even if they confirm the number of six factors for the dimensions.

**Results:** The results of exploratory factor analysis using oblimin rotation yielded six factors that filled the criteria of scree test that explained 66.37% of the variance (see table 1). The results are read
in the pattern matrix, in a view to interpret differences amongst axes without correlations between those axes as advised by Tabachnick and Fidell (1989).

The first factor was labelled “physical anxiety”. This factor had 9 items, which included questions that dealt with all kinds of body degradations such as illness, handicap or aging. The second factor is a part of the dimension labelled “professional anxiety” at the end of depth interview analysis that is divided in two logical parts: unemployment and workload related anxiety. This result is consistent with the typology of workers (Wrzesniewski et al. 1997), as unemployment anxiety concerns people who see their work as a “job”, whereas workload anxiety concerns people who see their work as a “career”. Factor 2 is “unemployment anxiety”, compounded by items about the anguish with the need to change one’s job.

The third factor was labelled “micro-social anxiety”, in reference to Buss’s study (1980) and Leary’s study (1982) about anxiety about not being integrated in a community. The selected items are nearly the same than those of the second dimension found to meet the better social anxiety definition in Shelvin and Lewis (1999). The fourth factor was “macro-social anxiety”. Despite the wide diversity of topics that items dealt with, they all loaded with high scores with factor 4. On one hand, this result confirms the studies that focused on individual sensitivity with issues in society on a global level. That means they don’t consider only a particular issue that would concern them directly, but the level of macro-social anxiety is more a personality trait that underlines all the items which constitute factor 4. On the other hand, those items are particular since they are contextual, in temporal and geographical manners.

For example, the interpretation of the item about increasing of violence in society has changed since the beginning of our study, it has been a bone of contention during the French presidential campaign. All those contextual effects have to be taken account when this scale is used in an other context (temporal or spatial).

To conclude, a risk of social desirability bias exists mainly for factor 4, as respondents see very easily what is politically correct or not. For example, in France, it is mainly accepted that one must be concerned with the problem of pollution.

TABLE 1
Item-to-total correlations and factor loadings for problem-oriented anxiety scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Item-to-total correlation</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APH1</td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td>0.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APH2</td>
<td>0.585</td>
<td>0.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APH3</td>
<td>0.623</td>
<td>0.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APH4</td>
<td>0.681</td>
<td>0.809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APH5</td>
<td>0.758</td>
<td>0.851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APH6</td>
<td>0.741</td>
<td>0.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APH7</td>
<td>0.658</td>
<td>0.652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APH8</td>
<td>0.571</td>
<td>0.678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APH9</td>
<td>0.690</td>
<td>0.730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factor 1, physical anxiety (33, 24% variance explained)

Factor 2, unemployment anxiety (9.38% variance explained)

| AP3  | 0.599 | 0.644 |
| AP4  | 0.696 | 0.661 |
| AP5  | 0.617 | 0.632 |
| AP6  | 0.682 | 0.751 |

Factor 3, micro-social anxiety (6.19% variance explained)

| AS1  | 0.629 | 0.764 |
| AS2  | 0.577 | 0.633 |
| AS3  | 0.688 | 0.738 |
| AS4  | 0.617 | 0.532 |

Factor 4, macro-social anxiety (6.00% variance explained)

| AC2  | 0.703 | 0.802 |
| AC3  | 0.630 | 0.643 |
| AC4  | 0.648 | 0.644 |
| AC5  | 0.681 | 0.705 |
| AC6  | 0.586 | 0.702 |

Factor 5, workload anxiety (4.14% variance explained)

| AP1  | 0.571 | 0.630 |
| AP2  | 0.669 | 0.730 |
| AP7  | 0.752 | 0.845 |

Factor 6, financial anxiety (3.94% variance explained)

| AFA4 | 0.642 | 0.589 |
| AF1  | 0.725 | 0.831 |
| AF2  | 0.779 | 0.704 |
| AF3  | 0.648 | 0.742 |
The fifth factor was labelled “work load anxiety”: it represented the second part of professional anxiety founded on the basis of depth interviews. This represented anxiety due to an over load of work, or high professional responsibilities; it is the consequence of daily professional stress (for example, repeated conflicts at work). The sixth factor was labelled “financial anxiety”. It had four items, the lowest score concerning the item dealing with partner fidelity that was hypothesized to be a part of related to family anxiety founded with the depth interviews. This result was logical, because partner infidelity may result in the departure of the person and have for consequences many financial difficulties. Except this item, this factor is very homogeneous (no ambiguous item).

Discussion: We found that AIDS is not considered as a social issue, as in Stout and Sego’s works (1994), but as a personal problem related to the degradation of one’s body. This finding may imply modifications in the way public policies have to communicate about this issue. For instance, stressing the physical diseases and pains due to AIDS development in one’s body may have a greater effect on protection sexual behaviors, than communication about the epidemic aspect of the illness.

The hypothesized construct of family anxiety did not appear in these results. The first justification of this result come from Doby and Caplan (1995) stressing the correlations existing between professional and household stress. The second reason is due to the content of items that often make implicitly reference to family anxiety. For example, “physical anxiety” (through the item about becoming a burden for the family) “social anxiety” (since people with children may find more easily their life is meaningful) content this kind of anxiety, or very simply family may be only seen as a particular case of “micro-social anxiety”, as family is considered as an individual community.

Finally, the main hypothesis of this research concerning the multidimensionality of the problem-oriented anxiety can not be rejected after this second collection of data. That means that there is a kind of stability in the complexity of individual network of fear across respondents. We found six wide domains of threat delimitating different facets of trait-anxiety: physical, workload, unemployment, financial, social, and macro-social concerns. The consistence of those dimensions compounded the scale of measurement allowed to assess one’s profil of trait-anxiety. This finding may meet many applications in the field of consumer behavior, as expected by Carver (1989). For instance, it may explain part of the ambiguous results concerning memorisation and agreement to advertising persuasion (Eysenck 1997). The example of buying behavior as a coping behavior is developed in the third part. The second study permitted optimization of the length of the scale, that must be confirmed by a third collection of data to assess the validity of the results.

STUDY N°3 : CONSTRUCT VALIDITY AND CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

A third study has been conducted to confirm the results found in the exploratory analysis as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). This third study confirms the primary test and allows assessing reliability and validity of the problem-oriented anxiety scale.

Data collection and analysis

As for the second study, the variety of respondents was a priority, that is the reason why a convenience sample has been preferred to a student sample. The questionnaire was self-administered and took two shapes: the first one was a traditional written questionnaire, and the second was an internet questionnaire administrated with the SPHINX data collection system. Those two kinds of collections allowed getting in touch with a wider range of respondents than those of the second study. To lead the confirmatory analysis some of the items where modified, in particular, some items were reversed in order to avoid a halo effect. Those items have been chosen among the dimensions that had the better consistency and the higher number of items after the exploratory analysis. Finally, 333 respondents completed the questionnaire.

In order to test the structure of anxiety revealed by the exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis was used with the AMOS software. After having suppressed two reversed items and the item related to family anxiety, consistently with exploratory analysis, the test of the global model found a good fit (RMSEA=0,056) that confirms the six dimensions of problem-oriented anxiety. This study yields a scale with 20 items for six dimensions. In order to show that the different dimensions of problem-oriented anxiety explain part of the buying behavior at the particular level, a detailed study of predictive validity is presented below.

Reliability and validity

Reliability: The first precaution that must be taken when measuring a concept is to check whether the instrument really assesses what it is supposed to with the study of reliability. This reliability is observed using the Joreskog’s ρ coefficient (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). For the present study, all those coefficients are high (between 0.1 and 0.84) as the table shows, which means that each of them is better explained by the construct than by chance.

Convergent validity: The second precaution is the investigation of convergent validity that studies reliability at the level of the construct. Table 2 shows that all the standardized coefficients are significant (p<0.5% for all of them), which meets the condition for the weak form of convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Moreover, results given by the ρ assessing the strong form of convergent validity show that all the dimensions present a good convergent validity (p>0,5), except for the macro-social dimension (p=0,48) probably because of the variety of themes it includes (Bagozzi and Yi 1989).

Discriminant validity: In a view to assess discriminant validity, we compare trait anxiety level with our aggregated measurement of anxiety, considering that these two concepts are different, though narrow. For instance, trait anxiety level takes into account sexual anxiety whereas our measurement of problem-oriented anxiety does not. Correlation between the aggregated oriented anxiety and neuroticism (Costa and McCrae 1992) was -0,349. This coefficient is significant, but low enough to show that those two concepts are different, testifying of the good discriminant validity of our scale.

Predictive validity: To assess the predictive validity of problem-oriented anxiety scale, we measure behaviors that were hypothesized to be linked with some particular kinds of problem-oriented anxiety. Even if the purpose of this scale was not to develop a new variable for the explanation of many consumer behaviors but more to investigate moderator effects, we want to show that it can be predictive anyway. Consistently with the coping behavior theory, we assume that purchase may be seen as an adapted problem-oriented coping strategy (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). For instance, buying phosphate free washing powder is a good way for reducing pollution and so reducing the objective reason of macro-social anxiety. However, the expected results concerning the direct link between problem-oriented anxiety and buying behavior are not
very powerful because of two reasons. The first one is the complexity of the process that leads to the purchase. The second one is the possibility that one anxious person for a particular dimension of problem-oriented anxiety use an emotion-oriented coping strategy, that is not measured in this study. For example, so as to reduce the negative feelings induced by one’s micro-environmental anxiety, one may decide to watch a romantic movie or to read a book… Table 3 shows that the way we had to consider anxiety as a concept composed by several dimensions has a kind of predictability. Even though anxiety at the aggregate level doesn’t explain any behavior intent, some dimensions have a significant explaining power for individual behavior as proposed in Bagozzi and Heatherton (1994). For example, macro-social anxiety explains 14.8% of purchases of products from biological agriculture. We can stress that items concerning sparing behaviors are explained by most anxiety dimensions, all those effects playing in the same direction: the more anxious people are, the more they spare to cope with difficulties they expect. Opposite to those congruent effects, this study underlines the fact that different dimensions of problem-oriented anxiety can have opposite effects that do not appear at the aggregate level. For example, labels are important for macro-social anguished people, whereas financial anguished people tend to ignore labels because of the high prices they induce. Consequently, labels will have no effect for a person who is both macro-social and financial anguished. Those results indicate the potential for considering anxiety as a multidimensional problem-oriented concept in order to use it in consumer behavior research, and explain part of the weakness of the studies which used anxiety at an aggregate level.

CONCLUSION

The present study has shown both that problem-oriented anxiety can be a good way to investigate multifaceted anxiety and that the measurement instrument developed here has the properties asked in term of reliability and validity. To improve the reliability

| TABLE 2 | Loadings, reliability and convergent validity |
|-----------------------------------------------|
|                                | standardized coefficient | Joreskog’s ρ coefficient | ρ convergent validity |
| Physical anxiety               |                            |                          |                        |
| I dread becoming a burden to my family due to illness or an accident | 0.604*                     |                          |                        |
| I am afraid I may contract an incurable disease (cancer) some day    | 0.676*                     |                          |                        |
| I dread facing a situation involving chronic (or constant) pain       | 0.745*                     |                          |                        |
| I bear losing my physical independence in the future                  | 0.595*                     |                          |                        |
| Macro-social anxiety         | 0.63                      | 0.48                     |                        |
| I think that continuous environmental damage is a major problem        | 0.370*                     |                          |                        |
| I am terrified by the treat of war                                   | 0.681*                     |                          |                        |
| I worry about food safety issues                                     | 0.437*                     |                          |                        |
| Micro-social anxiety        | 0.60                      | 0.50                     |                        |
| It is difficult for me when I am not integrated into a group           | 0.576*                     |                          |                        |
| I dread the loss of my friendships                                   | 0.545*                     |                          |                        |
| I am so shy that I feel uncomfortable in groups                       | 0.370*                     |                          |                        |
| Unemployment anxiety        | 0.73                      | 0.60                     |                        |
| If I were fired, It would be hard for me to star over                 | 0.554*                     |                          |                        |
| I fear losing my job some day                                        | 0.622*                     |                          |                        |
| I dread changing jobs                                                | 0.630*                     |                          |                        |
| Financial anxiety          | 0.78                      | 0.64                     |                        |
| I worry about not making ends meet each month                         | 0.856*                     |                          |                        |
| It is unlikely that I will ever run out of funds                      | -0.553*                    |                          |                        |
| I do not save enough                                                 | 0.516*                     |                          |                        |
| Workload anxiety           | 0.65                      | 0.54                     |                        |
| My heavy workload makes it impossible for me to relax                  | 0.510*                     |                          |                        |
| My work responsibilities just do not go away                          | 0.441*                     |                          |                        |
| Daily work conflicts stress me greatly                               | 0.659*                     |                          |                        |

* indicates a reliable coefficient with a risk minor than 0.5%.
TABLE 3
Standardized regression coefficients and probability level of signification between problem-oriented anxiety and behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>behavior</th>
<th>physical anxiety</th>
<th>unemploy-ment anxiety</th>
<th>micro-social anxiety</th>
<th>macro-soci-al anxiety</th>
<th>workload anxiety</th>
<th>financial anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generally, I can buy what pleases me</td>
<td>-0.202 (0.002)</td>
<td>-0.223 (0.002)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.182 (0.011)</td>
<td>-0.176 (0.028)</td>
<td>-0.549 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I buy organic products</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.129 (0.092)</td>
<td>nc</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.134 (0.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality labels are important for me when I buy a product</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.346 (0)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.168 (0.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I save money to see my future quietly</td>
<td>0.212 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.285 (0)</td>
<td>0.188 (0.017)</td>
<td>0.121 (0.079)</td>
<td>0.140 (0.054)</td>
<td>nc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I buy diet products</td>
<td>0.111 (0.078)</td>
<td>0.158 (0.025)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.322 (0)</td>
<td>0.209 (0.002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I buy products from fair trade</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.256 (0)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recycle trash</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.197 (0.013)</td>
<td>0.322 (0)</td>
<td>-0.121 (0.095)</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I buy phosphate-free washing powder</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.144 (0.062)</td>
<td>0.358 (0)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I buy many clothes to be trendy</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.122 (0.078)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.253 (0.001)</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often buy products on sale</td>
<td>0.116 (0.067)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.148 (0.033)</td>
<td>0.163 (0.027)</td>
<td>0.220 (0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give money to charities</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.116 (0.013)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-0.139 (0.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I purchase dietary supplements</td>
<td>0.141 (0.026)</td>
<td>0.126 (0.07)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.204 (0.005)</td>
<td>0.197 (0.008)</td>
<td>0.189 (0.006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take insurance contracts with maximum coverage</td>
<td>0.200 (0.002)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.160 (0.023)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to travel with organized tours</td>
<td>0.151 (0.017)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.196 (0.013)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.125 (0.085)</td>
<td>nc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use cosmetics</td>
<td>0.205 (0.001)</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>0.191 (0.01)</td>
<td>0.184 (0.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer buying branded products</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number in parentheses represents the level of signification for each coefficient.
ns=non significant for a risk level of 10%. nc=no conclusion, because the model doesn't fit the data.
a cross temporal study has to be done, with a cross-cultural replication. Indeed, it is necessary to prove dimensions of problem-oriented anxiety present a kind of stability or coherence over one’s lifetime, as every personality-trait (Endler 1982) even if it can follow a trend due to the influence of the environment. Moreover, it could be interesting to investigate the stability of the dimensions over countries, particularly for the macro-social facet that is influenced greatly by the national context.

Several perspectives have to be considered for the further research. Indeed, most of the studies who integrated anxiety-trait for explaining part of consumer behavior may usefully integrated the different kinds of problem-oriented anxieties presented here. For example, the congruence between the stimulus and the profile of anxiety has to be investigated before leading any experimental inducing stress (Endler 1982). Thus, considering anxiety as multidimensional concept has a potential for explaining reaction to fear appeals in the field of advertising persuasion. More generally, implication in particular purchases may be explained by the level for a particular dimension of problem-oriented anxiety scale. For instance, people anxious about their physical degradation and not concerning financial issues, may be greatly involved in the purchase of cosmetics and not involved for buying insurance. Those short examples let see the potential of considering problem-oriented anxiety in the field of consumer behavior.

REFERENCES

Kierkegaard, Soeren (1844), Le concept de l’angoisse, Paris: Gallimard.
Motives for Deception in Consumer Word-of-Mouth Communication
Jennifer J. Argo, University of Alberta, Canada
Katherine White, University of Calgary, Canada
Darren W. Dahl, University of British Columbia, Canada

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Consumer word-of-mouth (WOM) communication involves the transmission of product information from one consumer to another. The majority of research in this area has focused on the impact of positive WOM on consumer judgments (Bone 1995), as well as precursors of (Richins 1983) and reactions to negative WOM (Laczniak, DeCarlo, and Ramaswami 2001). However, one facet of WOM communication that has been largely overlooked is the role of deception in consumer-to-consumer interactions.

Defined as “intentionally try to mislead someone” (DePaulo et al. 1996), lying is not an uncommon occurrence. DePaulo and colleagues (1996) discovered that lies were told regularly and were often told for self-benefit. However, we argue that in interpersonal communication one must balance various motives. This research extends previous investigations by studying several motives related to lying in consumption contexts.

Study 1 examined the role of impression-management in deceptive consumer communication. Research suggests that people will tell lies to present positive self-images in consumption contexts (Sengupta et al. 2002). Given that consumers like viewing themselves as smart shoppers (Schindler 1998), we expect they are motivated to present this image to others. We predicted that, under conditions where self-image is threatened, consumers will be motivated to deceive a relevant communication recipient (i.e., one that is familiar and important). Impression-management concerns should be prominent when interacting with relevant others because they often confer valued outcomes (e.g., Bohra and Pandy 1984) and will be involved in future interactions (e.g., Schneider 1969). Because an interaction with irrelevant others is often short-lived, consumers may not always be motivated to lie in service of impression-management. Consumers may lie to relevant others regardless of lie significance, but will be more likely to lie to irrelevant others when the significance of the lie is high rather than low.

A scenario depicting a recent car purchase was read by 105 participants. The participant was described as washing his/her new car when another person (a coworker/a stranger) asks about the car. The other person indicates that other cars of the same model and age initially cost $18,000. Unbeknownst to the other person, the participant originally purchased the car for $200 or $2,000 less. Thus, the scenario activates other-focused motives (i.e., to prevent the other person from looking like an inferior shopper). Participants then completed the lying items. As anticipated, participants were more likely to lie when the lie significance was high and the other person was relevant than in any of the other conditions.

Study 3 explored deceptive WOM communication when the participant is a seller. Unlike a buyer, a seller’s primary objective is profit maximization. Indeed, research suggests that people will lie to gain or protect material resources (Lippard, 1988). We predicted that, when consumers are presented with an opportunity to maximize their own return, they will lie to irrelevant others regardless of lie significance. When interacting with relevant others, consumers may only lie when the lie is not significant. When the lie is significant and the other person is relevant consumers may be motivated to not appear to be taking advantage of the other person and will avoid lying.

One hundred-seven undergraduates read a scenario in which the participant was selling his/her car and either a coworker/stranger was interested in purchasing it. The other person says that cars of the same model and age initially cost $18,000. Unbeknownst to the other person, the participant originally purchased the car for either $200 or $2,000 more. The other person then asks the participant how much s/he paid for his/her car. Participants completed the lying items and also indicated the price they would report. Participants were least likely to lie when the lie was highly significant and the other person was relevant to the self. In addition, the magnitude of the lie exceeded the actual cost in each condition except for the relevant other/ high significance condition.

Study 4 further examined consumer-consumer deception. As noted earlier, consumers have a pervasive desire to be viewed positively. However, when the consumer is a seller, an effort to manage impressions may not only involve a desire to be perceived as a smart-shopper, but also to not appear to be taking advantage of another person. A relevant communication recipient is someone the consumer knows, and the consumer has something to lose if the relationship dissolves (Kelley 1983). Thus, we expected that consumers will be less likely to lie while interacting with a relevant as opposed to irrelevant other.

The scenario from Study 3 was read by 100 undergraduates. The potential buyer indicates that other cars of the same model and age cost $18,000. In this scenario, the participant originally purchased the car for either $200 or $2,000 less. As predicted, participants were significantly more inclined to lie to the stranger than to a coworker.

In sum, we demonstrate that consumers’ motives for lying are highly dependent on situational factors such as relevance of the communication recipient, significance of the lie, and the communicators’ role in the interaction.

REFERENCES


Reconstructing Memory for Evaluations: The Role of Past Feelings, Past Behaviour, and Post-Experience Information
Elizabeth Cowley, University of Sydney, Australia

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Although some consumption experiences elicit deeply emotive affective reactions, the vast majority of consumption events are common occurrences which rarely elicit intense elation, delight or disgust. In the absence of highly accessible memories, how do consumers remember their affective reactions to these relatively innocuous experiences?

In marketing, overall evaluations have been assumed to be stored in memory as a piece of information available for use in future decision making. Although the accessibility of the evaluation may vary with time and the situation at retrieval, the evaluation does not change unless it is retrieved from memory and updated by the consumer. Research in cognitive psychology examining the retrieval of episodic memories suggests that the retrieval process is constructive. When recalling a past experience or an aspect of the event such as an evaluation, 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 constructing the past by combining information from many sources (Koriat, Goldsmith, & Pansky, 2000; Schacter 1995). The reconstructive process has been shown to include aspects of events experienced after the to-be-remembered event (Loftus, Feldman, and Dashiel (1995). It is proposed here that memory for past behavior, in this case an intention to behave, will be used in the reconstruction of an evaluation. It is also proposed that exposure to relevant post-experience information, such as advertising, critical reviews or word-of-mouth comments about an experience, can affect behavioral intention, thus distorting memory indirectly.

Study 1
Participants heard a positive consumption related comment from a confederate (the PEI) after evaluating a consumption experience either before or after reporting purchase intention. Later, participants were asked to remember their evaluation. The results reveal that purchase intention was higher in the PEI before condition, a positive comment influenced the behavioral intentions of the participants. There is memory distortion in the before condition, but not in the after condition. PEI distorts memory indirectly through behavior.

The results from study 1 provide strong evidence that the retrieval process is reconstructive. A decision, in this case purchase intention, influenced the reconstruction of an evaluation. Study 1 also reveals that PEI can influence behavioral intention, consequently distorting memory indirectly. It appears that memory distortion on the basis of PEI requires that the consumer does something with the information to incorporate it into experiential knowledge. This is an important condition necessary for post-experience information to affect memory for how much an experience was enjoyed.

Study 2
Participants were randomly assigned to one of three PEI conditions (immediate, delay, unrelated). In the immediate condition participants heard PEI immediately after reporting their evaluation. In the delay condition participants heard PEI just before the purchase intention measure. In the unrelated comment condition any PEI heard was unrelated to the film, this control condition will be used to test how accurate memory for evaluation in the absence of PEI.

The results replicate the study 1 finding that PEI affects behavior, which in turn affects memory. PEI only affects memory if it is heard before behavior. Purchase intention, though a significant factor in memory distortion for the entire sample, did not interact with the treatment condition. Memory distortion always varied with purchase intention, even in the control condition. PEI must be used in a decision to have a distorting effect on memory. It is asserted here that behavioral intention, not the PEI, is stored as an own experience fact node in memory, which can be used in reconstruction because “I decided to buy it,” provides an accessible self-related fact which can affect memory reconstruction.

Discussion
Why does behavior, or in this case behavioral intention, play such an important role in the reconstruction of the evaluation? It may be easier for consumers to reflect back on what they did, compared to recreating how they felt. In this case, the affect felt by the consumer was not the highly arousing type of affect that has been shown to be memorable (Bohannon and Symons, 1992). A decision, or reported behavioral intention, is stored as experiential knowledge in an own experience node associated to the event or object. PEI, in the form of a comment made by another consumer can be used as propositional knowledge potentially useful when updating an evaluation, especially if the person is perceived as an expert. But PEI on its own did not appear to result in distortion of memory for evaluation.

References
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumer testimonial solicitations represent a popular marketing practice, with applications in a wide variety of products and services. Interestingly, however, the consumer behavior literature is virtually silent on the topic of testimonial effects. We suggest in this research that consumer testimonials, like advertisements, can serve to enhance post-experience product evaluations. We also examine potential discounting effects whereby testimonial writers’ insincerity may mitigate product evaluations.

Braun (1999) tested the post-experience effects of advertising for a brand of orange juice formulated to be mediocre in quality and found that consumer evaluations of this product were more positive than what the actual product-usage experience should have warranted. Applying her research protocol to consumer testimonials, which we conceptualize as a form of self-generated advertisement, we expected that the act of writing testimonials would similarly enhance post-experience product evaluations due to a form of memory reconstruction. In the first of three studies, we found that testimonial writers did indeed have more positive evaluations of the sampled orange juice than a control group that engaged in a non-testimonial writing experience. Also, participants who framed their testimonials about the experimental brand, Orange Grove, in conjunction with a special person manifest more positive evaluations of this brand of orange juice than did testimonial-writing participants who simply framed their testimonials in terms of the product per se.

Study 2 further investigated how the form of relationship between testifier and testifiee influences post-experience evaluations of the product serving as the object of the testimony. Using for theoretical framing Sternberg’s (1986) theory of love and associate network theory of memory (Anderson 1983), we detected a tendency for participants writing testimonials about the product in conjunction with a romantically-related friend to judge the product more favorably than did those who wrote testimonials about the sampled brand of orange juice in context of a same-sex friend or relative. Cognitive dissonance theory provides a further theoretical rationale as to why testimonials about relatives lead to smaller effects than testimonials about the product in conjunction with lovers. We also determined via post-hoc testing that participants’ who self-reported having exaggerated their testimonials evaluated the product less positively than did those who were less inclined to exaggerate. Study 3 then was undertaken to systematically test the effect of testimonial exaggeration on product evaluations. It was found that participants who were invited to write anything that entered their minds about Orange Grove in conjunction with a special relative, whether they believed it or not, had less favorable post-experience evaluations of the brand than did a corresponding group of participants that was instructed their testimonials should not include anything they did not believe.

This work expands our understanding of post-experience marketing messages and demonstrates—in support of Braun’s (1999) reconstructive memory work in an advertising context and Braun and Loftus’ (1998) advertising misinformation effect research—that testimonial writing also serves to sway the writer’s memory in the direction of the written comments. However, the effects of testimonial writing are not salubrious if writers exagger-ate their commentary. This research also holds practical implications for brand managers in designing promotional contests that involve testimonial writing.

REFERENCES

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Early cognitive psychology theories describing human memory knowledge as a network of associated concepts have been recently complemented by methodological advances enabling the assessment of the strength of these pairs of associations at implicit levels. This research pursues the possibility of an association transitivity property for two seemingly unrelated concepts that share a brand name or attribute. Two experiments are described proposing that even incidental exposure to a proxy conceptually or perceptually similar to the common concept is a sufficient condition for this transitivity to occur.

Mere exposure research has shown that individuals often engage in learning without explicitly allocating cognitive resources for this purpose. Moreover, they often build positively valenced affective associations with incidentally or even subliminally encountered stimuli, phenomena conceptually captured within the mere exposure paradigm (Zajonc 1980). Although knowledge elaboration involves associating new information with knowledge already stored in memory (Greenwald and Leavitt 1984), consumers often assess the validity of advertising claims without much elaboration. Even when individuals are aware of the nondiagnosticity of this mere-exposure based strategy, they are still influenced by the fluency emanating from initial exposure (Jacoby et al. 1989).

Not only does mere exposure cause low-involvement learning, but also–more powerfully–mere exposure to a brand name or product package may produce more favorable attitudes toward the brand even when the consumer does not recollect the initial exposure. Janiszewski (1993) proposes that during incidental exposure “there is a feature analysis, memory access, implicit memory formation, and perceptual construction.” The author finds empirical evidence suggesting that the feature analysis may be automatic and independent of the operations associated with attentive processing (Janiszewski 1993). It is concluded that perceptual fluency created via exposure brings about familiarity and—in the absence of active recognition—this is sufficient to impact consumer attitudes.

Several arguments exist for maintaining the distinctiveness of explicit and implicit techniques as memory and association measures that capture relationships between knowledge structures. For example, research by Wagner, Gabrieli, and Verfaellie (1997) addresses the fact that dual-process theories of recognition posit that a perceptual familiarity process contributes to both explicit recognition and implicit perceptual memory. Moreover, in a consumer context, Holden and Vanhuele (1999) show that a single exposure to fictitious brand names is sufficient to create the impression— one day later—that these brands actually existed. The authors argue that measurement of explicit memory of marketing communications may underestimate their influence, and implicit measures are better equipped to capture it (Holden and Vanhuele 1999). The present research makes use of one specific implicit measure—the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald et al. 1998).

Are all individuals equally susceptible to the kind of priming necessary to build implicit associations? Musen, Szerlip, and Szerlip (1999) used an experimental paradigm wherein implicit memory was tested after priming subjects with words, novel shapes, non-words, and colors. New-association priming occurred between words and colors but not between abstract shapes and colors or between non-words and colors, suggesting that new-association priming occurs for familiar but not for unfamiliar stimuli (Musen et al. 1999). An immediate extension of this work to our case suggests that consumer familiarity with each of the to-be-associated concepts is necessary before novel implicit relationships are constructed.

Based on the previous theoretical accounts from both cognitive and consumer psychology, it was hypothesized that mere or incidental exposure is a sufficient source of fluency to produce the emergence of novel implicit associations of concepts, but only if individuals are familiar with the respective concept category. In the first case, a specific brand name was proposed as the concept that mediates the novel relationship, while in the second case the newly formed relationship involved brand name associations created via perceptually fluent concepts.

In Study 1, a concept was chosen that represented both the brand name of a “party”–related product and the mascot of a major American university. After incidental exposure to the brand name and logo, subsequent implicit associations of the specific university with the “party” concept (relative to a comparable other university) emerged among subjects familiar with both the university and brand categories. Furthermore, these post-priming implicit associations actually reversed the pattern of pre-priming explicit relative evaluations of the two colleges in terms of their reputation as party schools.

In Study 2, a brand name was chosen with perceptually similar concepts that could trigger different valence connotations depending on the context. After incidental exposure to these concepts under different perceptual priming valence, subsequent implicit associations of the brand name and the valence suggested by prime (“good” or “bad”) emerged among subjects familiar with the brand in question.

The present work contributes to our understanding of implicit cognition and attitude formation from a dual conceptual perspective. It shows that incidental exposure to brand names is powerful enough to produce novel implicit associations among individuals susceptible to such occurrence. It also suggests that incidental exposure to valenced concepts that are perceptually similar to brand names are sufficient to trigger implicit associations of brands with primed valence attributes. The current research also quantifies the above-mentioned priming power of conceptual priming, as the processes involved were shown to effectively change implicit associations from their original direction in the explicit measure to their reverse image in the implicit measure. The critical role of type of measurement becomes apparent, and this article adds to the growing body of cognitive and consumer research literature addressing issues of dissociation in terms of knowledge representation and assessment.

REFERENCES


McClelland, James L. and David E. Rumelhart (1986), Explorations in Parallel Distributed Processing, MIT Press.


Political consumerism can be defined as ethically, politically or ideologically motivated consumption, i.e. an act of consumption which is encouraged by the wish to reach a political goal (e.g. human rights, environmentalism, animal welfare etc.). Political consumerism has become increasingly important in Europe and in other parts of the world. In this exploratory roundtable session we discussed alternative ways to look at political consumerism and the political consumer. Dr. Frank Trentmann, programme director of the Cultures and Consumption research programme (ESRC-AHRB, UK) and a modern historian at Birkbeck College, University of London, introduced us to the water politics in Nineteenth-Century London. This case illustrated how users of a public good became a collective group of consumers defending their interests in the politics of water supply. Associate professor Lisa Penaloza at University of Colorado, Boulder, argued that multilevel ethnographic analysis is necessary in studies aiming to make sense of cultural difference in the marketplace - using the Latinos in the U.S.A. as a case of illustration. Researcher Kristin Strømsnes at Stein Rokkan Centre for Social Studies at the University of Bergen, Norway, presented data from Norway busting myths about who the political consumers are. Her findings indicate that political consumers come from different social strata, and gender. However, there is a slight urban and left-wing bias. Senior researcher Eivind Jacobsen at the National Institute for Consumer Research, Oslo, Norway, used the politics of food as a context to argue that the institutional framing of ethics varies substantially across national and cultural contexts. In their roles as editors of Consumption, Markets, and Culture, Professor A. Fuat Firat and Professor Alladi Venkatesh encouraged researchers to submit papers that ask provoking questions and make us see a phenomenon from a new perspective.

The roundtable topic obviously had appeal since more than thirty conference participants came to the session and contributed to a rich discussion. The format of the roundtable-starting with five short presentations from different academic positions proved to be fruitful. Associate professor Ingeborg Astrid Kleppe at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration chaired the session.
SESSION OVERVIEW
For most of the 20th century, religion was considered a taboo subject for scientific inquiry, as many scholars believed that secularization was an inevitable outgrowth of modernization. This belief has proven incorrect, as religion has maintained a firm foothold in the lives of many modern inhabitants of industrialized societies. For example, contemporary surveys show that 90% of Americans believe in God and 70% believe in the Devil. Moreover, the recent rise in the prevalence and divisiveness of religious-centered issues, such as global terrorism and debates on the separation of church and state, are indicative of the important role of religion in modern life. The objective of this special session was to shed light on the role of religiosity (i.e., the value placed on religion) upon consumer behavior. We sought to accomplish this goal by presenting three papers that focus on the nature and role of religiosity upon brand consumption. A brief summary of each paper follows.

“Religiosity and Social Risk”
Malcolm C. Smith, University of Manitoba
Lynn R. Kahle, University of Oregon
Kristina D. Frankenberger, Western Oregon University
Rajeev Batra, University of Michigan
There has been a call in the consumer behavior literature for study on the effects of religiosity or religious commitment on consumption. This study investigates the effects of religiosity on social risk associated with purchase situations. Using a causal model, Functionalist and Metaphoric Parallelist theories of religion are tested as explanations of the effect of religiosity on the social risk associated with purchasing. Findings indicate that the effect of religious commitment on the importance placed on social risk of a purchase is best explained by Functionalism. In addition, group affiliation was found to be a mediating variable.

“Among the Faithful: Religiosity in Brand Communities”
Albert M. Muñiz, Jr., DePaul University
Hope Jensen Schau, University of Arizona
This research explores scrupulously faithful brand consumers across multiple product categories and their use of religious motifs in brand-related discourse. Examining brand communities centered on Apple Newton, iPod, Cannon, Mini Cooper, Stri-Vectin, and Xena: Warrior Princess, we find that consumers practice strict devotion and engage in behaviors often reserved for sacred affiliations. These behaviors include: fervor and moral commitment toward the brand, evangelizing, and sharing tales of miraculous product performance. These behaviors invest the brand with powerful meanings and perpetuate the brand, the brand community, its values and its beliefs. The religious motifs also reflect and facilitate the many transformative and emancipatory aspects of consuming these brands. Findings reveal important properties of brand communities and, at a deeper level, speak to the communal nature of religion and the enduring human need for religious affiliation.

“Religious Fundamentalism and Brand Connections”
Aric Rindfleisch, University of Wisconsin-Madison
James E. Burroughs, University of Virginia
Nancy Wong, Georgia Institute of Technology
Recent research suggests that both self and communal brand connections can be understood from a religious lens. This research seeks to enrich and extend this work by examining the empirical relationship between religious fundamentalism and brand connection at both the individual and community level. Survey studies among 363 Americans and 300 Singaporeans reveal that religious fundamentalism is positively associated with both self and communal brand connections across multiple product categories. In addition, this data suggests that religious fundamentalism is actually a mediator (and brand community is an outcome) of consumers’ need for predictability in their lives.

This session was chaired by Aric Rindfleisch and the discussant was Craig Thompson (University of Wisconsin-Madison).
SESSION SUMMARY

The special session raised central issues in user involvement and participation in the product and service development process from the perspective of academic consumer research. User involvement research employs many methods and theoretical frameworks that are close to those used in consumer and marketing research, but also raises new issues that can contribute to current discussions in consumer research.

Recent consumer and welfare studies have indicated that as societies grow wealthier, materialistic values are replaced by more subjective concepts of well-being. Economic growth creates a consumer culture in which consumers are progressively freed from the everyday struggle for sustenance to pursue happiness in a variety of ways. Markets for mass products are gradually saturated. In most European areas there is a significant shift from production to fun creating economies. This is a serious challenge to product development.

In the effort to solve problems related to the embedding of innovations in the everyday of consumers, researchers with a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds have turned their attention to research that can be grouped under the heading of participatory design. It is a framework for systems design that allows end-users to communicate with systems developers. The Scandinavian participatory design tradition is based on the idea that technology is not neutral but purposeful. Participatory design has worked in the context of organizational systems’ design, but it has faced great challenges and obstacles when used in the innovation process of mass-produced products. Most of the challenges seems to link to the need to generalize “the user” when producing a mass-product. Use can be seen and studied in a number of ways. But who are the users and how can they participate in a constructive way in product and service development?

The special session provided material for discussion and further elaboration of the connections between consumer research and user involvement through three empirical papers. One (Heiskanen et al.) compared two case studies of user involvement focusing on user experiences vs. user expectations. Another reported experiences on the usefulness of user participation in sustainable innovation (Hoffmann). The third discussed how to involve different target groups (Isomursu et al.).
Users in Innovation: Potential, Problems and the Role of Experience

Eva Heiskanen, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland
Ilpo Koskinen, University of Art and Design, Finland
Petteri Repo, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland
Päivi Timonen, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland

ABSTRACT

There is a growing interest in involving users in early stages of product innovations. It is claimed that early user involvement will increase the quality of products and accordingly increase their commercial potential. Meeting user needs and managing market risks of novelty products are particularly important in emerging markets such as complex electronic transactions and mobile commerce. Yet there are many different approaches to user involvement, and also some critical reservations. Some claim that users cannot generate novel product ideas, that they are overcritical of novel concepts, or that users’ ideas are not realistic. This paper discusses two different cases of intensified user involvement. The first case is concerning mobile video viewing, a new service that could potentially be used in a number of different ways. The second case was an attempt to involve users along with other stakeholders in the development of sustainable online grocery services. These cases allow us to consider some of the problems in user involvement, and whether or not they can be surmounted by specific ways of organizing the user involvement process. In this context, we highlight the role of experience, and of different ways to introduce experience into the user involvement process.

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of understanding customers is foundational to marketing research. Surveys indicate that companies today believe that understanding the “voice of the customer” is central to new product development and to the successful introduction of product innovations. For example, failures in new product introductions are most usually attributed to a lacking understanding of customer needs (Hanna et. al 1995). In the wake of consumer and marketing research, a focus on users has recently also become topical in the product development and innovation management literatures. Thus, alongside traditional market research methods such as market surveys, focus groups and concept testing (e.g., Threlfall 1999), a number of new and interesting approaches have evolved to involve customers and users in the product development process.

Customers can be involved at different stages of the innovation process, which can be roughly divided into “variation” (discovery of new inventions) and “selection” (adoption by the market and society), following the concepts used in innovation economics (e.g., Nelson and Winter 1982). Involving users in the “selection” stage is fairly conventional, even though the methods are continually becoming more sophisticated (e.g., Malhotra 1999). Thus, large companies routinely run concept tests of their products before going forward in the product development process (Trott 2001; Morris et al. 2003). Such tests attempt to screen new product concepts for consumer acceptance, and weed out ideas that are not likely to attract customers.

Yet there is growing interest to involve customers and users at an earlier stage, which in innovation studies is called the “variation” stage. This has conventionally been the domain of engineers and designers, and has been based on new scientific and technical discoveries. Yet there are traditional examples of customers who invent new products for themselves, as in the case of tailor-made or make-to-order products. Decades ago, customers were discovered to be the primary source of innovation in many professional products (von Hippel 1988). Von Hippel and colleagues have extended the lead user approach to mass-produced consumer products. In this context, lead users are ones who face needs before the mass of the market, and who innovate in order to discover solutions to their own problems (von Hippel 1986; Lilien et al. 2002). This approach is used today in innovative online games communities (Jeppesen and Molin 2003) and sports communities (Shah 2005; Cova and Cova 2002; Kotro 2005). Motivated by these findings, producers are learning to seek out user-developed innovations as a source for new commercial products.

There is thus an interest in involving consumers (a) earlier and (b) more deeply. In consumer research, van Kleef et al. (2005) have classified research methods for different product development contexts. When the focus is on continuous, incremental product improvement, they recommend methods like category appraisal and conjoint analysis in the context of technical product development, and focus groups, laddering and free elicitation for marketing purposes. In these methods the focus is on a product and the methods elicit consumer wishes and hopes about new products that are relatively similar to those available in the market. Highly complex and radically new products present challenges to consumer research. For really new products, van Kleef et al. recommend using the lead user technique and information acceleration in the context of technical product development, while for marketing research, they recommend the use of empathic design and the metaphor elicitation technique. Confronting consumers with really new concepts may lead to a situation where consumers do not have past experience enabling them to express their ideas and opinions. Information acceleration is one example of a method that aims to address this problem by providing consumers with simulated product experience through websites, brochures, mock-up product test reports, etc.

In addition to conventional methods of concept testing and usability, product developers today employ field studies, participatory design, contextual design and user participation (Greenbaum and Kyng 1991; Beyer and Holtzblatt 1998; Kaulio 1998; Kelley 2000; Kankainen 2002). These methods involve intensified interaction between the world of designers and the world of users. Designers may go to visit the users at home or at their workplace, and use ethnographic observation to understand the users’ world. Users may join designers “at the drawing board”, for example by participating in “user groups” (Tomes and Armstrong 1997). But full-fledged field studies or participatory design are often time and resource consuming for consumer products. Workshops and various forms of idea-generating assignments for users provide a form of intermittent or quasi-participation (e.g., Magnusson 2003; Kristensson et al. 2004), while blogs, diaries and observing virtual communities offer designers a glimpse into the user context (e.g., Monk 2002). For products like computer games, “user toolkits” allow designers to actually outsource part of the software design to innovative users (von Hippel 2001; Jeppesen and Molin 2003).

One of the arguments for involving users relates to the fact that new users of technical devices are laypeople with little experience or expertise, and are thus very different from the designers (e.g., Norman 1998; Hyysalo 2004). If designers and users are so different, can they interchange roles just like that? In spite of the...
enthusiasm about user-driven innovation, there are also authors who bring up doubts and critical observations. Many doubt that consumers are capable of coming up with truly novel ideas (see Sethi 2001). Evidence from concept testing indicates that consumers are also overcritical of radical or ‘discontinuous’ concepts (Duke 1994; Trott 2001). Others have found that ordinary consumers’ product ideas are in fact original—so much so that they are unfeasible to implement (Magnusson et al. 2003). We ask whether innovating users exist, and how the users’ innovations could be put to use.

While these observations and reservations are somewhat confusing and even contradictory, it is obvious that merely “asking users” is an inadequate approach. One of the key issues related to these different reservations is the role of experience and expertise (cf. Mooy and Robben 2002; Shih and Venkatesh 2004). For example, it has been suggested that concept tests for radical innovations should be organized in stages (Duke 1994), employ “quasi-experts” (Trott 2001), allow consumers time to “live with the concept” (Morris et al. 2003) or use “information acceleration” (cf. van Kleef et al. 2005), thus enabling customers to learn about the product and its potential benefits. More fundamentally, experience can be understood as an evolving interaction between the user and the product—or even user communities, products and their environments (Koskinen et al. 2003; Battarbee 2004; Hyysalo 2004). Such experience can be introduced into the design process by stimulating prolonged interaction between users and products, or by promoting interaction between design experts (possessing experience with products) and users (possessing experience of the user context).

In the following, we discuss two different cases of intensified user involvement. The first is a case concerning mobile video viewing, a new service that could potentially be used in a number of different ways. It is a product in search of a use, and we consider how consumers can discover such new uses. The second case reports on an attempt to involve users along with other stakeholders in the development of environmentally and socially sustainable online grocery services. Although very different in content and purpose, these cases allow us to consider some of the problems in user involvement, and whether or not they can be surmounted by specific ways of organizing the user involvement process. In this context, we highlight the role of experience, and of different ways to introduce experience into the user involvement process.

2. INNOVATING USES FOR NEW MOBILE SERVICES

Mobile services are a new category of services used on a mobile phone. Popular mobile services include text messaging (SMS) and purchasing of ring tones and logos. Technological development and convergence have made viable the provision of a number of novel services on a mobile phone. Sophisticated information services such as context and location aware services have been envisioned to become widely used. More recently, it has been claimed that multimedia services such as digital television, visual radio and video streaming will become popular.

Nevertheless, the search for breakthrough services—or “killer applications” as they are called in the mobile industry—has not been particularly successful. The adoption of mobile services has taken place remarkably slowly from the perspective of the industry. This is particularly true for technologically sophisticated services. It seems that the more “value” a service adds for its user, the less it is adopted. The high expectations and the low realization of these expectations has originated a new field of research focusing on the design of new services. The involvement of users in the innovation process is a distinct feature of this line of research. In the following we look at this field of research and relate it to a case study of our own.

User involvement approaches stem from empirical research practices on the use of mobile phones. Contextual use has been monitored through the observation of small groups of users (Ito & Okabe 2005b, Kasesniemi 2003, Koskinen et al. 2002). A deeper understanding of text messaging, cameras on mobile phones and even conversational practices has been the result of systematic empirical observations. The everyday use of mobile phones becomes interesting this way (Okabe & Ito 2003).

Indeed, it seems that the adoption of new practices can be best understood through monitoring and testing. For instance, the collaborative use of mobile phones and services (Yoon 2003, Weilenmann & Larsson 2001, Repo et al. 2004) would be difficult to identify without doing trials in real circumstances. Of course, trials are not intended to be accurate portrayals of future use. Instead, they generate adequate feedback to support product development.

The literature supports the notion that the development of novel mobile services calls for more extensive user involvement than the development of established services (Magnusson 2003, Magnusson et al. 2003). Yet users sometimes express unexpected desires because they are not well acquainted with the feasibility of certain innovations (Magnusson, 2003). It would appear that involving users is a justified procedure, but the outcome is not always straightforward. Even when users are involved in a way that allows them to get acquainted with the innovation in question, they may come up with desires that are hard to fulfil.

The involvement of users is also likely to have other effects, which challenge established innovation processes (cf. Sethi 2000, Moorman & Miner 1998). These seem to be beneficial from the perspective of creativity, but their practical relevance for the developed product is more questionable. To sum up, user involvement per se is often considered to be beneficial although there are different views on how and to what extent it should be carried out (Magnusson, 2003; Kujala, 2003).

We carried out a trial on watching streaming mobile video at the National Consumer Research Centre in Finland together with mobile operator Radiolinja at the end of 2002. User experience was introduced into the product development process in order to make results more contextual and relevant. Users of different ages, gender and backgrounds were involved by giving them appropriate mobile phones and requesting them to watch mobile videos over the time period of one week. They were encouraged to watch videos in various different situations. Technically, the trial was carried out with Nokia 7650 phones running the Symbian operating system, RealOne Player and video streaming over a GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) connection at 22 kbps. (More details in Repo et al. 2003). The video supply consisted of 46 videos at Elisa.TV (wap.elisa.net/elisatv), Entertainment and karaoke accounted for the majority of the videos.

The users reported their experiences in a diary. In the diary, users described their routines and activities with the phone daily, including details of the physical and social context of use. The diary was designed so that it prescribed a task for each evaluation day. It also contained more specific instructions and one blank A4 sheet per day for reporting. In essence, experience and expertise was produced by prolonged interaction with a service prototype. Users de facto participated as experts although their expertise was of a limited kind.

The trial was a first look into a novel mobile multimedia service. It turned out that the test users became very familiar with the service and were well capable of articulating views based on
their experiences. There were two distinctly different contexts in which it was considered natural to view mobile video. Firstly, users were able to avoid boring situations by entertaining themselves. Secondly, mobile video made it possible to share experiences with other people.

Sharing involved singing karaoke together amongst peers and watching cartoons with children. Sharing experiences was the novel kind of use users came up with. It was not as frequent as the stereotypical solitary watching, but it was contextually very different, and it was the kind of use which was appreciated over a longer period of time. It was also information that was valued by the product developers we reported it to. Small-scale trials amongst industry professionals had not brought forward the issue, probably because professionals knew beforehand what they were to do with the service and they had not been encouraged to experiment.

The novelty value of mobile video and the possibility to be one of the selected few to try out the service made users initially less critical than expected. They were open-minded and even surprised that the service worked and that they managed to use it without particular effort. On the other hand, criticism arose once users had become familiar with the service. The novelty value eroded quickly and was replaced with a more critical stance. This criticism, nevertheless, was mostly directed toward technical product improvements. In others words, the criticism encouraged further development of the product, rather than resisted it. In this sense, user feedback turned out to be feasible from a product development point of view.

However, when asked about the future opportunities of mobile video, the participating users no longer could respond as analytically. They knew the experienced limitations of the service but were not able to distinguish other limitations. Yet they were confident when proposing supposedly novel meaningful uses and content for the video service. In this respect, their proposals could be termed unfeasible. Accordingly, it is important for researchers to distinguish the limits of the expertise of involved users. The expertise created in the trial did not extend beyond the experience created in the trial.

3. INVENTING THE SUSTAINABLE ONLINE GROCERY SHOP

Besides designers and users, there are today other groups with interests in new products and technologies. Especially in an environmental context, stimulating desirable forms of technological change has become an important goal for environmental authorities (e.g., Elzen et al. 2004). Against this background, the Finnish Ministry of Environment launched a programme called Sustainable Information Society, aiming to identify and promote synergies between information and communication technologies and environmental conservation. In the context of this programme, the National Consumer Research Centre carried out an exercise in “participatory and constructive technology assessment” focusing on online grocery shopping, and its potential for environmental and social sustainability (Heiskanen and Timonen 2003).

The study was based on the approach of constructive technology assessment (Schot 2001). In comparison to the user involvement methods outlined above, constructive technology assessment has broader, societal aims. The purpose of such interventions is to bring together relevant stakeholders to learn about the benefits and risks of new technologies and discover alternative, socially appropriate technology designs. The aim of the workshop was thus to get real-world technology and service developers, consumers, and environmental and social stakeholders together to analyse the current state of online grocery shopping, and try to come up with ideas for a better future in terms of incorporating environmental and social concerns.

The two-day workshop was preceded by the compilation of a booklet of background material summarizing the alternative electronic grocery systems available, and existing views on future developments, environmental potentials and problems in electronic grocery shopping, and a brief discussion on some of the social issues involved (privacy, exclusion, isolation, etc.). The workshop was attended by consumers, e-business developers and other stakeholders (NGOs and experts). At the workshop, they worked in small groups and plenary sessions, with mixed participation (representatives from different interests) using groupwork techniques to identify key problems on the first day, and then develop ideas for better future designs on the second day. The workshop was successful in the sense that it brought together a wide array of market players in a constructive manner (see Heiskanen et al. 2005; Heiskanen 2005). Yet it is interesting to consider the contribution of users in this process, and the way in which experience was constructed.

How was experience brought to or created at the workshop? Since the idea was to critique existing models of electronic grocery shopping and create new ones, we did not place a special emphasis on having users of existing online grocery services present. This was in a sense problematic, as consumers expended a lot of time and effort in understanding the basics of existing services—presented, e.g., in the background booklet. We did, however, attempt to involve existing service providers, as they would probably be central in realizing any better alternatives, as well as some small companies potentially interested in online grocery shopping as a new business venture. So there was a very variable level of experience and expertise present at the onset of the workshop, with the ‘ordinary’ consumers mainly having experience of ordinary ‘bricks-and-mortar’ shops, and the role of shopping, food and urban design in their everyday lives.

At the start of the workshop, most of the participants contributed questions. Many service providers were interested in the barriers to expanding online grocery shopping, e.g., “why don’t consumers value their time more?” Many consumers raised quite general questions or “can personal contacts be maintained over the web?” or “could the supply of organic food be increased?”. Environmental stakeholders raised broad and complex issues such as impacts on urban structure. So the groups started work with a broad range of seemingly unconnected topics. These were narrowed

---

1 Ten of the participants were business representatives, including three e-business developers from retail chains, two people from ICT service companies, two people from start-up companies, and one each from a delivery equipment provider, a venture capital company and an industry association. Six people were from applied research, including two people from technical research institutes involved in e-business development. Three authorities were present, e.g., an official from the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Five of the participants were from NGOs, including two environmental organizations, two consumer organizations and one organization for appropriate technology. Finally, six consumers were present, five from the National Consumer Research Centre’s Consumer Panel and one from a network of young environmentally oriented consumers. The final composition of participants was somewhat accidental, as it is difficult to find suitable times for a two-day workshop for such a large group. Altogether, 31 people participated out of the 68 who had originally registered for the conference (from a mailing-list of approximately 200 invitees).
down to a set of key issues and problems at the end of the first day—still including very divergent ones ranging from “how to?”—issues such as creating efficient deliveries to philosophical ones such as “an over-rationalistic view of human behaviour”. On the second day, however, the groups managed to create a set of ideas for improved service designs (or parts of the service) in a relatively consensual manner. This was done by combining ideas created by individual participants–often, with one person’s idea as the core, supplemented by supporting ideas from other group members.

The starting-point of the workshop was to find out whether working solutions could be found that could realize the environmental potential of online grocery shopping while fulfilling the needs of consumers and other interest groups. The participants came up with a variety of solutions to this problem:

1. “Internet-supported local corner shop”, The basic idea was that local shops could maintain a smaller regular stock of products (thus reducing costs), while offering a wide range of products that could be ordered over the Internet (thus improving service quality).
2. “Suburb delicatessen”, a simple discount shop with extra online service for specialties.
3. Combined deliveries, including groceries, pharmacueticals, postal delivery, alcohol, and reverse logistics (packaging take-back).
4. Shared logistics for different retail chains, using one centralized distribution warehouse. This would help reduce inner-city traffic.
5. Different kinds of user interfaces for electronic grocery shopping (e.g., a standardized user interface for all shops, mobile interfaces, youngsters in the family to do shopping).
6. Smart agents to search for goods meeting consumer’s criteria, “packages” ordering all foods needed for a recipe.
7. Needs-oriented services catering to the different kinds of needs of different consumers (e.g., variations in requirements for food quality and variety).
8. New places for offering Internet access and avoiding the need to have a PC at home (local kiosks, laundry rooms, municipal service centers, local shops).
9. Ideas on how to organize the provision of reliable environmental information over the Internet (ideas about the division of labour between companies and authorities).
10. Solutions for supporting local food production, including different kinds of favourites lists, text message alert services for local seasonal foods, specialized portals, etc.

While it is difficult to accurately trace the origins of each idea in such an interactive workshop, it is of course interesting to see whether ordinary consumers actually contributed core ideas. Of the core ideas presented as the outcome of the workshop, one was first mentioned by a consumer (a service for local foods) and four were first suggested by NGO representatives (consumer-driven service packages, combined deliveries, shared logistics and a standardized user interface concept). Five were first mentioned by business representatives. But it is important to note that all different interest groups contributed to the refinement and development of these ideas.

Were the ideas truly novel? Some of the ideas developed at the workshop were actually not totally unheard-of, such as the new user interfaces (such as mobile phones and kiosks), new delivery solutions (combined deliveries of goods from different suppliers) and new solutions for supporting local food production. Lack of experience may be one of the reasons why these ideas were “re-invented”. Other ideas were more novel, such as the “Internet-supported” local grocery shop and the “suburb delicatessen”. Most of the ideas, however, are still unconventional and some are difficult to implement due to legislative or institutional constraints—i.e., could be termed “unrealistic”. The fact that none of these ideas have been implemented as such, in spite of their appreciative reception by the companies, is one clear indication of their lack of realism.

Were consumers overcritical at the workshop? Many critical voices were indeed heard at the start of the workshop. These ranged from skepticism toward online grocery shopping to a very broad and general criticism of technological solutions to environmental and social issues. Most of the criticism came from the consumers and NGOs, while most retailers and service designers were enthusiastic about the potential for online grocery shopping. It would be too much to say that these different viewpoints converged totally during the two days, but one can point at a few signs of change.

Some people who were originally very critical toward technological development in general started to find good things that might be supported by the appropriate kind of technology (for more details, see Heiskanen 2005). The ideas developed also had general support as concepts, and the critical viewpoints voiced at the close of the workshop were more about details and implementation.

Expertise and experience were developed at the workshop in an interesting kind of interaction between experts (retailers, service providers) and laypeople (consumers, NGOs). The roles of the different interest groups converged and were interchanged. Thus, consumers, e.g., were concerned about the competitiveness of local shopkeepers, whereas the company representatives participated in the discussion from the perspective of their own role as consumers. Users started acting as experts of consumer behaviour while retailers and other service developers increasingly started referring to personal experiences from other spheres of consumption. The roles of consumers and experts merged—when developing solutions together, the participants were all consumer-experts. Thus, while the consumers gained some extra expertise in the interaction, one might also say that some of the experts shed some of their expertise in the naïve, discovery-oriented atmosphere.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The digital age is characterized by rapid product development cycles and users having little knowledge of novelty services. Incorporating the user—and in some cases a number of different kinds of users—is gradually becoming a customary part of product development. The people who are seen as “users” are active participants in the innovation process. While this process is still ongoing, there is an emerging body of literature emphasizing that whether or not users are involved is not the crucial issue, but rather how they are involved (Kaulio 1998; Alam 2002; Magnusson 2003). This paper contributes to this emerging body of literature by focusing on some of the problems that user involvement is believed to entail, and on the role of experience in the design of user involvement processes.

Our studies indicate that while the concerns raised about the limits of user involvement in product innovation are salient, they are perhaps not insurmountable. We can consider the extent to which the ideas generated by users were novel, overcritical of radical innovations, or lacking in realism (Table 1). In both cases, the users “invented” both novel and existing ideas: i.e., in the mobile service case, using mobile videos to alleviate boredom is quite conventional, whereas the socially shared use of mobile videos as collective entertainment was unexpected. A critical stance to novel technologies was visibly present at the beginning of
TABLE 1
Critical characteristics of user involvement in the two case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Innovating new mobile services</th>
<th>Inventing sustainable online grocery shopping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were novel concepts developed?</td>
<td>Both existing and novel ideas</td>
<td>Both existing and novel concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were users critical of radical innovations?</td>
<td>Initially there was little criticism, but as experience amounted, critical attitudes came to the fore.</td>
<td>Many were critical at the start, some critics later discovered ideas they liked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were the users’ concepts unrealistic?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Most were somewhat unrealistic (none have been implemented as such)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the workshop on sustainable online grocery shopping, but many critics “came around” during the two days and turned into (qualified) supporters of the technology.

The clearest different between the two cases is in the level of realism of the user-driven inventions. This feature is clearly a result of the difference in involvement design. The realistic context of actually experimenting with the product, employed in the mobile service case, led quite naturally to more realistic inventions. While there was some concern for realism in the online grocery workshops, the ideas generated were still fairly utopian, as evidenced in the fact that none have yet been implemented as such.

Experience with the product and using it in the natural user context seems to be an important strength of the mobile video experiment. It is difficult to imagine another way in which similar findings could have been obtained without short-term trials or long-term monitoring of early adopters. In the proactive approach users not only describe their needs but also try to innovate solutions, thus providing the producers with insights for their market orientation. Even so, the results of the trial contribute more to the continued development of the service rather than the implementation of a new innovation.

Experience was brought to the online grocery shopping workshop in the form of professionals working with e-business development. As was hoped for, experts and laypeople did interchange roles quite a lot, and the highly divergent starting-points narrowed down to a set of ideas for improved online grocery shopping solutions. From an implementation perspective, however, they did not perhaps narrow down enough. Long-term follow-up input from experienced service developers might have helped to select a few of the best ideas for further development. As they stand, the ideas developed are more a source of inspiration and critique of existing service models (cf. Magnusson 2003) than a realistic roadmap for developing new services.

Our study has implications for consumer and marketing research. While the methods for concept evaluation and marketing research have become increasingly sophisticated, they are also increasingly self-reliant and impervious to the worlds of users and designers. Consumer researchers might consider sometimes stepping back from their role as “middle man” to allow more direct interaction between users and innovators—or users and products. In fact, this is already occurring to some extent, for example, when customers are allowed to “sit in” and participate in user focus groups or users are allowed to take product concepts home and “live with them” (Morris et al. 2003). On the other hand, user involvement initiatives might benefit from the methodological sophistication and detailed use of psychological constructs that consumer researchers command (e.g. Duke 1994). Thus, user involvement situations can be analysed to provide more general insights apart from the immediate knowledge transferred in direct interaction. Also, all the information produced in interaction situations need not be taken at “face value”—psychological and interactionist constructs can be used to uncover “hidden layers” or meaning, which are not obvious to the participants themselves.

Product and service designers might also derive some implications from our study. User involvement has the potential to provide new input into the design process, serve as a learning tool and inspire “out-of-the-box” thinking, but it is important to consider the intended function of user involvement (Magnusson 2003). Our case studies, at least, did not indicate that the innovation process can be totally “outsourced” to users—this far-going approach seems to be limited to specific (software) products and highly-specialized, enthusiastic and semi-professional consumers (cf. Jeppesen and Molin 2003). Ordinary consumers can contribute meaningfully to the development of new product concepts, too, but they need help, experience and time. They need assignments that are meaningful and motivating, and which allow them to learn about the possibilities and potentials of the new technology. It is only when consumers have experience with the product that they can evaluate and reflect it in any degree of realism. In the final analysis, such experience-based reflection is what best informs product development.

REFERENCES


1. INTRODUCTION

Changing production and consumption patterns is a key challenge on the path towards sustainable development. Companies bear a great deal of the responsibility for reaching this goal and can contribute to it by altering their production processes as well as through product and service innovations. Consumers also share this responsibility for change, but up to now their role is mostly regarded as limited to their buying decisions or, in rare cases, to consumer boycotts. While management scholars as well as practitioners ascribe companies an active and constructive role, consumers are seen as rather passive and reactive. This perception, however, does not necessarily mirror the actual potential consumers have in changing production and consumption patterns. Involving consumers in product development could be an approach to foster a more constructive role of consumers.

In the following section, I will present boundary spanning activities in combination with concepts of organisational learning as the theoretical background for understanding the interaction between companies and consumers; and I will qualify preconditions for effective boundary spanning activities. In section 3, I will discuss the current role of consumers in product development and market research. Section 4 illustrates case studies on methods of user involvement and analyses if they are suitable to fulfill the requirements on boundary spanning activities. In section 5, I will describe INNOCOPE (Innovating through consumer-integrated product development), a method for involving consumer participants in product development, and discuss strengths and weaknesses of its appliance. The article concludes with a summary.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Confronted with increasing uncertainty organisations have to search for information about their environment. Boundary spanning activities or boundary spanning roles are one way to achieve this kind of information. The concept of boundary spanning roles has been developed by Thompson (Thompson 1962; 1967; Thompson and McEwen 1958). He describes boundary spanning roles as linking the organisation and environment through interaction between members and non-members (Thompson 1962). This mixture allows companies to get a grip on outside information. boundary spanning activities enable organisations to monitor, sense, and interact with environmental forces, and to transfer information across boundaries, and hence play an important role in maintaining organisational viability (Keller and Holland 1975; Keller et al. 1976).

The concept of boundary spanning focuses especially on the processes occurring at the boundary of an organisation. Yet, boundary spanning is only useful for the organisation if the organisation is capable to link it to internal processes of organisational learning. Referring to Huber (1991) and Nonaka (1994) processes of organisational learning can be divided in different phases: information acquisition, knowledge distribution, knowledge interpretation, evaluation of knowledge, use of knowledge, and storing of knowledge. In these phases different boundary spanning activities are relevant.

In the context of product development the communication to outside knowledge holders is important and can be accomplished by boundary spanning activities. It is especially crucial that companies get information about consumer wishes and needs. This could be reached through boundary spanning activities involving members of the company as well as current and potential users of their products. Pitta and Franzak (1996) recommend cross-functional teams that additionally involve consumers in order to reduce misunderstandings that arise in the different values found outside and inside the organisation. Users and companies do not only have different values, but also different knowledge bases, languages, and coding schemes. In order to enable efficient knowledge transfer between these groups, boundary spanning activities and joint knowledge interpretation processes are indispensable. The interpretation has to take place on both sides, user and company if an efficient knowledge transfer and combination shall be reached. Boundary spanning activities should be linked to organisational learning processes. Organisational learning is valuable to a firm’s customers because it focuses on understanding and satisfying their expressed and latent needs through new products and services (Slater and Narver 1995). Effective boundary spanning activities in the context of product development are supposed to fulfill different requirements. They should:

1. aim at directly linking the relevant organisational unit to external knowledge holders in order to tap tacit knowledge that can only be transferred by externalising it or by observing how somebody applies it (Nonaka 1994);
2. link the externally acquired information to the internal organisational learning process,
3. by involving non-members in interpretation processes in order to decrease the risk of misinterpretations, and
4. should be integrated in the product development process to make sure that the acquired knowledge feeds into the process.

3. THE ROLE OF USERS IN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Studies that analyse the impact of customer involvement in product development get to the result that it is positively linked to new product success (Cooper and Kleinschmidt 1995; Dwyer and Mellor 1991; Gruner and Homburg 1999; Maidique and Zirger 1984; Reichart 2002; Rothwell et al. 1974; Souder et al. 1997; Zahn et al. 1995). The body of literature on sources of innovation ideas assigns customers or direct contact with customers an important role for generating R&D ideas (Cooper and Kleinschmidt 1986; e.g. Hippel 1976; Hippel 1998; Kreuz and Förster 2003; Murphy and Kumar 1997). Technical improvements during the diffusion phase are often realised by user feedbacks or re-invention by users (Rogers 1995). Through learning by using (Rosenberg 1982), product users develop ideas for product improvements.

In the context of sustainable innovations, different scholars have pointed out the role of user involvement in product development (Heiskanen et al. 2004; Weller 2001). As sustainable innovations often claim changes in user behaviour, it is important to identify key factors facilitating and obstructing their adoption (Heiskanen et al. 2004). The cooperation with consumers allows to shape sustainable innovations according to market demands (Väyrynen et al. 2002), and thus to increase their chances on the market.

Through the involvement of consumers in product development a combination of different knowledge bases is reached. The contextual every-day knowledge of the product users, in combination with the technical knowledge of companies, may lead to mutual learning, technical innovations and changes in production and
consumption patterns. Consumers have crucial knowledge about environmental aspects of products during the decisive life-cycle stage of usage that are normally concealed to producers.

A motivation for users to participate in product development processes may be the possibility to shape products according to their wishes. Additionally, they might get an acknowledgement for their creativity and their ideas. Another important goal on the user side is the empowerment of users. The concept of empowerment may be transferred from participatory technology assessment: An improved reflexivity and communicative rationality within the construction of products means to enable a larger number of actors to bring in their interests in construction processes and to take part in deliberation (cf. Rohracher 1999). Users might learn about products, the environmental impacts of products and their usage, and might get ideas on how to influence corporate strategies. They might get motivated to engage in communication and co-operation with companies further on. Moreover, they might learn about environmental aspects of changes in consumer behaviour.

### The Role of Users in Market Research

Market research methods can be distinguished in verifying and creative techniques (Peters 1987). In market research, verifying methods are applied to a large extent (Peters 1987). Thus, market research is more about testing than about discovering new solutions (Hansen and Raabe 1987). Empirical surveys show that companies mostly involve customers to articulate their needs rather than giving them the role of innovators (Kreuz and Förster 2003).

Actually, most user integration attributes users a passive and reactive role (Hansen 1982; Hansen and Raabe 1987; Reinicke 2004). Users are considered as mere research objects. The communication flow is unidirectional from the users to the company. Users get no feedback on the results (Hansen and Raabe 1987) and are not able to correct misinterpretations. Moreover, users are not involved in decision-making or selection processes (Hansen and Raabe 1991; Raabe 1993; 1996).

Mostly present needs of consumers are analysed. Market research seems less capable of identifying latent or future needs (Geiger et al. 1998; Geschka 1987). It is not valuable for identifying innovations with a high degree of innovativeness (Geiger et al. 1998), since the often applied reactive methods do not give consumers enough freedom to develop and articulate needs or ideas. They are more focused on answering pre-defined questions. Moreover, market research is mostly concerned with concrete products and not with the needs behind these products; although, starting from the needs, it would be possible to develop and discuss different product ideas (Hansen and Raabe 1987).

Market research is often applied based on a model or prototype in a late product development phase. In these cases, changes in the product concept are not possible, but the research aims at identifying the acceptability of products resulting in smaller corrections. In a changed communication policy (Peters 1987, or in hints for improvements of the next generation of the product. Hence, the role of customer input remains restrained and consumer wishes–if identified at all–can, at this late point of time, only be considered in a small portion. The point of interest is rather the purchase decision and its influencing factors than the actual use of the product. Market research is mostly concerned with attitudes and opinions towards products. It is hardly aimed at creating ideas for new products. Consumers are hence considered as holders of values and perceptions, but not as relevant knowledge holders (cf. Reichart 2002).

Market research is often carried out by commissioned market research institutes. Crawford (1977) describes that market researchers are seldom directly involved in the product development process, resulting in several communication problems. This shows that boundary spanning activities may be hampered if intermediate institutions or departments are involved instead of directly linking the organisation or the relevant organisational unit to the non-members of interest.

Market research and marketing activities are essential tasks of the marketing department in a company. The interface between the marketing and research and development (R&D) or product development unit is often disturbed (Hutchings and Knox 1995) due to different working cultures and professional backgrounds (Bennmauer 1994) and to rivalries between the departments. The results of traditional market research methods carried out in the marketing department are often insufficient to the product development unit, since they may not contain the details needed (Engelbrektsson 2002; Griffin and Hauser 1993; Reinicke 2004). If market research activities are accomplished without the involvement of the R&D department different external and internal boundaries have to be crossed and interpretation processes occur at several interfaces, increasing the risk of misinterpretations.

### 4. CASE STUDIES ON METHODS FOR USER INVOLVEMENT

In the following, I will present three case studies on methods for user involvement. The case studies were based on literature research which was complemented by one to three expert interviews each, with companies or other experts applying these methods.

The examples studied are market research methods (product clinic, lead user method) and a participatory design method (script approach). In the following, the methods will be shortly presented. Considering the requirements for effective boundary spanning, they will be compared regarding the following aspects:

- whether they involve a direct (face-to-face and two-way) interaction between product developers and consumers
- whether users play an active or passive role as mere research object
- in which phase of the product development process their application is possible
- which phases of the organisational learning cycle are addressed
- additionally, I will assess whether they are suitable to address sustainability aspects

#### Product Clinics

Product clinics (Burmann 1987; Heß 1997; Nowak 1983; Schuh 1991) are based on consumer inquiry in the form of interviews and focus groups. Their goal is to assess a product concept’s or prototype’s acceptability and to get hints for the product design and market introduction strategy. They are applied for a great variety of products, but are most prominent in the automobile industry where they are broadly applied. Users are asked for their attitudes, preferences, and willingness to pay. The topics under discussion are predefined by the company.

#### Lead User Method

The lead user method has been developed in the context of industrial customers (Herstatt 1991; Herstatt and Hippel 1992; Herstatt et al. 2003; Hippel 1986; Urban and Hippel 1988), but first examples of their application in the context of consumer products exist (Lüthje 2000). The main goal of the lead user method is to identify current trends seen by lead-users, which will become a mass phenomenon in the future. Lead users show two characteristics: First, they face needs that will be common in a market place–long before the bulk of the market place encounters them; second,
they are positioned to benefit significantly from a solution to satisfy those needs (Urban and Hippel 1988). The lead user method involves lead users in product development processes by conducting workshops. It aims at ideas for the improvement of products or the development of new products. Its actual use in practice is hard to assess since companies often use the term lead users, but not always in the defined context.

**Script Approach**

The script approach is a participatory design method that has been developed and tested in the Netherlands (Jelsma 1999; Jelsma 2001; Kroode and Zee 2001). It has been applied in research projects in the context of redesigning energy-efficient domestic appliances. The main idea is to identify scripts of user behaviour by observing and interviewing users during the use of products. The method aims at technical improvements, which restrain users from non-energy-efficient use of products. Users are observed and might additionally be integrated in the assessment of the developed product concepts. However, they are not involved in idea and concept development.

Table 1 shows a comparison of the presented methods considering the questions raised above.

The methods are designed for different kind of users. While product clinics and script approach are especially designed for consumer involvement, the lead user method has been developed for the integration of industrial customers.

The comparison shows that direct interaction between a company (especially the R&D department) and consumers is rare. Only the lead user method realises a direct contact between product developers and customers; however, these are mostly industrial customers. The methods consist of one workshop, however with different durations: the focus groups of the product clinics usually last 1.5 to 3 hours, lead user workshops last between 1 and 3 days.

The lead user method gives users the most active role, involving them in idea development and assessment processes. The other methods assign users are rather passive role, regarding them as mere research objects.

The lead user method directly aims at the development of product ideas. The other methods seem less fitting for involving consumer participants in idea development processes and are more suitable for idea specification and later phases of the product development process. The script approach seems rather well-matched for the redesign of existing products.

All methods are suitable for involving consumers in the acquisition of information. Joint knowledge interpretation and the involvement of users in knowledge evaluation processes is only achieved in the lead user method. For the other methods, the link between boundary spanning and organisational learning is only partly reached.

Product clinics and the lead user method have no special focus on sustainability aspects. Concepts for the involvement of sustainable aspects in the lead user method exist (Fichter and Paech 2003; Springer et al. 2004), but have not been tested. The script approach has especially been adopted to ecological or energy-efficient aspects.

All in all, the requirements for effective boundary spanning are best fulfilled by the lead user method. However, this method has rarely been applied in the context of consumers, and has hitherto not been used with the goal of developing sustainable products. Lead users represent a certain user group and in some cases it might be recommendable to involve users with less product experience.

User involvement is strongly recommended for idea generation and product development. However, market research and even the discussed innovative methods for user involvement do not

### TABLE 1

Comparison of Different Participatory or User Involvement Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Type of Users</th>
<th>Direct Interaction</th>
<th>Active / Passive Role of Participants</th>
<th>Phase of Product Development</th>
<th>Phase of Organisational Learning Process</th>
<th>Suitable for Sustainable Product Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product Clinic</strong></td>
<td>Consumers</td>
<td>No (usually commissioned market research or marketing department)</td>
<td>Passive (observation and inquiry)</td>
<td>Different phases possible (idea specification, realisation, market introduction)</td>
<td>Information acquisition</td>
<td>No (dominated by design and price aspects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead User Method</strong></td>
<td>Mostly industrial customers, less experience with consumers</td>
<td>Yes (workshop)</td>
<td>Active (idea creation and discussion)</td>
<td>Different phases possible (idea development, realisation, and market introduction)</td>
<td>Information acquisition, knowledge interpretation, knowledge evaluation</td>
<td>Concepts for the involvement of sustainable aspects exist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Script Approach</strong></td>
<td>Consumers</td>
<td>No, eventually in a late phase for assessing ideas</td>
<td>Mainly passive (observation and inquiry)</td>
<td>Idea specification, redesign of products</td>
<td>Information acquisition</td>
<td>Ecological aspects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
completely fulfil the preconditions of effective boundary spanning activities, and do not tap the full potential of users. Thus, we developed a method for user involvement that is described in the following section.

5. THE INNOCOPE CONCEPT

Based on the experience of the presented and four other case studies, and considering the requirements for effective boundary spanning, we developed a method called INNOCOPE (INNOvating throug COConsumer-integrated Product deVelopment). The goals of INNOCOPE are mutual learning between consumers and companies, the empowerment of consumers, and the development of climate-friendly products. The learning processes in INNOCOPE should resonate in increased knowledge, changed values, and changes in potential behaviour. These should be reached by combining the technical expertise of a company with the users’ experiences from every day’s practical use of the considered product or similar products.

We developed a series of three workshops that is held with a company including members of the company and consumers from March to September 2005. This repeated interaction shall support and deepen the learning processes, since frequent contact aids in developing an understanding of each others’ assumptions and perspectives (Shrivastava 1983).

The products under study are so-called pedelecs: bicycles that are supported by an electric motor. Considering diverse selection criteria (diversity in socio-demographic backgounds, differences in the use of bicycles, different environmental attitudes) we randomly selected 20 consumers. The participating company members represent senior management, design, and product management.

During the workshops, the participants develop ideas for product innovations and improvements and are involved in assessing and ranking procedures. In the workshops, creative techniques like brainstorming, brain writing or story telling are applied in order to tap the every-day knowledge on product usage. Company members and consumers are directly interacting. This allows to negotiate and assess different opinions and values directly within the workshops. Between the workshops the company involved works on the developed ideas.

If bicycles with electric motor become attractive enough to substitute cars or motor-cycles for certain purposes this may lead to decreased emissions and thus to climate protection. In order to foster the goal of climate-friendly product development during the discussions and assessments in the workshops, we started the first workshop with a presentation on climate change and climate protection that also addressed the emissions from transportation as an important driver of climate change. The idea of this presentation was to sensitise the participants on the topic of climate change.

In the second workshop, we involved a simplified life-cycle analysis (LCA) software in order to support ecological comparisons especially during the small group sessions. The product presentation and testing stimulated discussion, but on the other hand the discussion was confined to the pedelecs that were presented and less broad than the discussion of bicycles that was conducted without showing concrete bicycles.

Thus, we started the second workshop on a more general level, asking the consumers to describe situations in which they would use a pedelec. These were discussed in three different groups (every-day mobility, leisure time mobility, and transport of goods or children) and pedelec concepts were developed adopted to these specific use situations. The company is currently working on a pedelec prototype and tries to involve the consumer wishes. This prototype will be presented and discussed in the third workshop.

The first workshop revealed some difficulties that called for changes in the following workshops:

Firstly, the company members were partly taking special roles within the discussions. It was difficult to directly involve them in idea generation processes since this could block the creativity of the other participants if they considered the company representatives as experts whose opinion was more relevant than their own. The company members partly felt insecure about how intensively they should engage in discussions. Thus, the role of the company members was cleared before the second the workshop: They should not take a too dominant role within the discussions. In idea development processes they should be rather passive and let consumers discuss from their own perspective. In assessment processes on the other hand, both participant groups should bring in their criteria and opinions in order to get a common result. In the second workshop the company members were more integrated in the group.

The consumers and the company members partly spoke different languages. While the company members used more technical terms for explaining the product features, the consumers discussed their experience with bicycles or their assumptions about pedelec use from a usage and every-day perspective. However, some of the consumers also used specified technical terms. Hence, some “translation processes” were necessary that were reached by asking for explanations.

Secondly, the topic of climate change was intensely discussed around the introduction lecture and met great interest. However, during the following workshop sessions, the topic of climate change was almost neglected. In the second workshop, we involved an LCA software in order to support ecological comparisons.
between different products and product usage. However, the participants had still difficulties to transfer the topic of climate change to bicycles that were considered as ecologically sound products. Thus, climate change was not discussed during the development of product concepts.

Important success factors that have been identified so far are an open attitude of the company, the use of creative techniques, the discussion in small groups, the translation between different languages (of consumers and company members) and a flexible moderation.

6. CONCLUSION

Boundary spanning activities are useful in the context of product development in order to reduce uncertainty about the market and consumer needs. Involving consumers in product development processes could be one possibility to reach this goal. However, boundary spanning activities should fulfill some requirements in order to be effective: Boundary spanning activities should be interactive with a direct face-to-face link to outsiders in order to tap tacit knowledge. Outsiders should play an active role and should be involved in several phases of the organisational learning process (information acquisition, knowledge interpretation, knowledge evaluation). Boundary spanning activities should be stretched over a certain period in order to allow mutual learning. They should be embedded in the R&D process.

As has been shown, market research methods are not suitable for fulfilling these requirements. The same is true for the analysed methods of user involvement. Of the different user involvement methods compared, the lead user method best met the requirements. However, is does not support interaction over a longer period within the product development process. Moreover, it is mostly applied with industrial customers and experience in the context of consumers is poor. In the same token, its transferability to sustainable product design has not been tested.

Thus, we developed a method called INNOCOPE, which is currently under study. The first results are promising and give hints for success factors of boundary spanning activities involving consumers. Relevant success factors that have been identified so far are an open attitude of the company, the use of creative techniques, the discussion in small groups, the translation between different languages, and a flexible moderation.

Acknowledgements

The research presented is part of the project “Social Learning and Sustainability”, which is located with the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg and the Institute for Ecological Economy Research. Funding for this project is provided by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung) within the research initiative of socio-ecological research. I am grateful to the whole project team for the excellent co-operation in developing and testing the INNOCOPE method. For the comparison of case studies I profited from the work of my colleagues Maria Hage, Wilfried Konrad and Karin Vogelpohl.

REFERENCES


Geiger, Werner, Dirk Meißner, Klaus Nührl, Klaus Stehle and Leonhard Weck (1998), Stars der Innovation-Die Agamus Consult Innovations-Studie, Starnberg, Agamus Consult GmbH.


Herstatt, Cornelius (1991), Anwender als Quellen für die Produktinnovation, Zürich: ADAG Administration & Druck.


Jelsma, Jaap (1999), Huishoudelijk energiegebruik: Beter gedrag door beter beter ontwerpen-een aanzet tot een integrale benadering. Enschede.


Raabe, Thorsten (1993), Konsumentenbeteiligung an der Produktinnovation, Frankfurt.


Schuh, Christoph (1991), Die Car Clinic als Marktforschungsinstrument einer konsumentenorientierten Produktentwicklung, Köln: Universität zu Köln.


ABSTRACT

We compare user involvement in the product innovation process of mobile applications for three very different target groups, namely horse aficionados at virtual stables, ice hockey fans, and the elderly. Our claim is that methods for user involvement need to be selected and tuned according to the specific characteristics of the user group in question. Different methods work best for different user groups. We present experiences from our three cases and discuss the aspects we have found important in method selection and tuning.

INTRODUCTION

When designing novel product concepts, the most difficult and crucial thing often is to find out which product characteristics best support the future users of the product. User involvement, or participation, has been used successfully for incorporating the “voice of the user” into the design process. By involving users in the process, the knowledge about actual and potential use can be communicated to the designers.

Mobile technology is evolving fast. New features and applications are constantly being taken into use. When designing a new mobile product it will most likely be used in situations that are not supported by the current technology. Therefore, the users’ experience with old products does not give much information about the possibilities of future products. The methodology used should somehow guide the users towards their (future) needs and not just focus on their earlier experiences.

This paper reports experiences about user involvement we have gained in different case studies. We have studied the first two groups in separate case studies, and have planned a study with the third group. In the case studies, we have used several different methods for involving our users in the design group, some more successfully than the others.

CASE 1: VIRTUAL STABLES

Our first case study aimed at creating a novel mobile terminal concept that was targeted to teenage girls. We studied the needs of our target group by concentrating on girls that maintain or participate in the operation of virtual stables in the Internet.

Virtual stables are virtual communities centered on the concept of a horse stable. They use the Web as their platform. The community members are pre-teen and teenage girls who create and maintain virtual stables by themselves. Each stable has an owner or co-owners who is the creator and maintainer of the Web site. The virtual stable and horses are fully imaginary, but they are required to bear a strong resemblance to their real-world counterparts. Hence, the activities of a virtual stable are identical to the activities taking place at a real stable. There are stable owners, veterinarians, competition judges, horseback riders and others that take care of virtual horses, attend virtual riding lessons or training, buy and sell virtual horses etc.

We started this case study by analyzing the content of virtual stable Web sites and continued with the analysis on certain aspects with interviews, observations and Web-based storywriting.

When conducting the observations and interviews, we soon found out, that it was very difficult to achieve a natural and relaxed atmosphere for interaction between the pre-teen girls and our adult researchers. Our research group consisted of both male and female researcher in the age group of 30 to 40, and our target group consisted of girls from 10 to 16 years only. Clearly, we were not part of the community. We followed the ten contextual inquiry techniques for observing children presented by Druin et al. (1999): we dressed informally, the interactors did not make notes, etc. Even then, the girls avoided eye contact, strictly forbade taking photographs and tried to escape the research situation as soon as possible. They were generally not willing to attend voluntarily.

In the interview sessions, it was problematic to get in-depth answers. One major challenge was that if the question included any speculation or required further thinking, the interviewee just quickly responded, “I don’t know” without even considering the question. Peer pressure was noted in groups, as our subjects did not want to be different from their friends and seemed to avoid stating strong opinions in the fear that someone would disagree. The most typical answer to any question was either “It’s ok” or “That would be nice” and both answers could mean practically anything.

Some of these challenges might be lessened with ample prior notification, moving away from group situations, using more time and effort for negotiation of new power structure and familiarizing our target group with our design goals. However, some challenges would likely still remain due to target group’s age. Therefore, we concluded that instead of face-to-face research methods, we could better succeed in using methods not requiring face-to-face interaction between the researchers and our research subjects.

As a solution, we adopted a web-based storywriting environment where our target group is encouraged to create usage scenarios of a mobile terminal that would support their activities in a virtual community. The writing happens in an environment that is very similar to the virtual stables. In this environment the girls felt very comfortable and clearly enjoyed participating in the design process. We received lots of valuable input from the girls both in their stories and in the messages they left in the public guest book at our storywriting web site. (Isomursu et al. 2004)

Figure 1 shows the translated home page of the storywriting web site. Originally, the site was in Finnish. As with all virtual stables, our Horsenuts’ Story Stable is also centered on the concept of a horse. We named the site to resemble a virtual stable, calling it “Horsenut’s Story Stable” (“Hepohöpö Tärinatalli” in Finnish). We generated a few typos in the pages to make them look more “unofficial”. When the virtual stable members were asked to name the most important thing in virtual stables, they unanimously replied “horses”. One of the members of our research group happened to have a young foal, called Nemmastiina, at home. We decided to make her the centerpiece of our storywriting arena, providing lots of pictures of her. During the first phase of our research, we also had found out that one of the most difficult tasks in setting up a virtual stable is to find pictures of horses to occupy the stable. Therefore, we thought we could attract virtual stable owners to our web site and reward them for helping us by providing them with horse pictures they could use at their virtual stable.
Our storywriting experiment was well received among the target group. In the stories that the girls sent they successfully created new usage patterns and functionalities for the device we were designing. (Ijäs et al. 2003)

CASE 2: ICE-HOCKEY FANS

Our second case study aimed at identifying needs for mobile services that could be useful in a sport event such as an ice-hockey game. We examined fans of Oulun Kärpät, one of the most successful ice-hockey teams in Finland. Located in Oulu in Northern Finland they have e.g. won the Finnish Championship in 2004 and 2005.

Ice-hockey fan communities are connected with a devoted support for a specific team. The community is a typical example of a ‘fan-based’ community that spring up around books, films, music and sports. The feeling of the community is established mainly in the ice-hockey game, when the supporters cheer their team. However, the community members use technology when supporting the communication taking place in the real world. Ice-hockey teams maintain their Web sites that provide versatile information about the games and the players in order to get more people to go to the games, and more commonly, to buy merchandise and services related to the ice-hockey team. The Web pages of the ice-hockey team are extremely effective in distributing information related to the team and the games. Even in the small city of Oulu (pop. 120 000) the hits per day on the Web site can reach 50 000. Not all the fans are citizens of the team’s hometown. Some of them may live around the country and even abroad. In spring 2004 the community site provider provided the community members with advanced mobile services allowing mobile access to versatile game and team related content, including video clips of ongoing games, game information, player information and statistics.

This user group is more heterogeneous than our first case study group. Although a vast majority of the ice-hockey fans are male, the age range is rather wide, and the percentage of female fans is significant.

We started this case study by analyzing the Web site of the ice-hockey team, and continued with contextual inquiry, where we attended an ice-hockey game and observed the fans. We complemented this by performing two separate questionnaires in the Web and personally discussing with some fans the possibilities of mobile technology.

As many ice hockey fans are communicative male adults that are not afraid of new technologies, traditional participatory methods were much more efficient with them than with horse aficionados. In addition, informal discussions on new ideas proved to be very fruitful, both when we were the ones to introduce new application ideas for them to comment and when they voluntarily told about new ideas they had in mind.

Observations proved to be rather difficult to arrange, as the ice hockey hall is crowded during the game, and the noise level is high. It is difficult to see what the users are doing during the game, and discussing is close to impossible. Additionally, the game requires lots of concentration from the audience, so discussions with the researcher were not what our target group members wished to do during the game. Pen-based diaries and other recording methods during the game also derived attention from the game, and the seating arrangements did not favor writing. Therefore, our success with the methods where data was collected during the game was weak. The best method proved to be pre-arranged observations where the researcher had bought a seat next to the observed person and briefly discussed with him also before and after the game.

Web-based storywriting was not as successful as in our first case study, probably because storywriting was not a part of the
normal activities in the ice hockey team’s Web site and the users were not used to it. The quality of the stories was much lower, even though the number of the stories was considerably higher due to the high number of fans visiting the Web site daily. Stories did not reveal much from the users.

The most successful method for this user group was a combined use diary and deep interview of long-term users. We recruited a group of users that attended the games regularly, and asked them to participate in our study for a period of six ice-hockey games. After the games, they were asked to fill in a structured diary that had pre-defined questions about their actions and wishes during the game. When the data was collected, our researcher also interviewed the users in order to get more detailed information to support the diary entries. (Still et al. 2004)

CASE 3: THE ELDERLY

Our third target group, i.e. the elderly, is a growing group both in total numbers and in technology use. It has been calculated that one in four Europeans will be over 65 by 2020. This makes wellcare a critical social and economic component of modern economics. Information systems and technologies are expected to play an important role in enabling the ageing to live well and independently in their own homes. It is important to get the elderly and their caretakers involved with the development process of new technology. In proportion to the importance of the topic, there are very few studies available of the successful involvement of the elderly.

It should be noted that the elderly are by no means just one homogeneous target group. Old people are even more diverse in their abilities than the younger population and this diversity exists even within individuals: an individual’s abilities can vary and fluctuate widely through time. (Gregor et al. 2002)

We are about to start a case study that examines the needs and possibilities of technology for supporting the elderly in their everyday life. In preparation for the study, we have conducted a literature survey on experiences and methodology in involving the elderly in the design process of new (technical) applications and services. We discuss our findings below.

In their paper, Eisma et al. (2003) introduce the concept of mutual inspiration. The cultural and experiential gap between the (typically young) designers and the target group is especially large when developing new technology for the elderly. To overcome this gap, Eisma et al. seek for the state of ‘Mutual inspiration’ where the designers inspire the elderly to give answers to questions they are not asking, and to ask the designers for solutions and functionality they had not thought of. This in turn would inspire the designers to develop innovative products that really can be used by the elderly and that would provide them high value. The prerequisites for Mutual inspiration include early involvement of all the stakeholders and that a common ground is established where both partners understand some of the other’s field, and where dialog can take place. To inspire the elderly, they suggest the following approaches:

- Introduction to new technologies in a variety of ways, including hands-on sessions,
- Discussing possibilities,
- Encouraging them to think about their current use of newer & older technology,
- Providing time for social interaction.

Hirsch et al. (2000) argue that the developers of eldercare technologies should not concentrate only on functionality but should also address social, emotional, and environmental factors. Assuming that the elderly will use an assistive technology simply because they need it is misguided: if a technical device fulfills a functional need but is socially or emotionally unacceptable, it may not be used even if it would be of great help. Furthermore, the elderly often lose confidence in their abilities but in the same time they refuse to use assistive technology because they feel ashamed.

Hirsch et al. (2000) also point out an important economical issue: products that are produced in small quantities for special markets tend to be expensive. If these products are specialty products and thus highlight the users’ disabilities and contribute to social stigma associated with disability, it hinders the adoption of them. Therefore, whenever possible, the device should be designed so that it would be acceptable also in a wider market. The design should emphasize the empowerment, and not the disabilities, of the user.

Oulasvirta et al. (2003) emphasize the importance of being physically present in the original (or similar) context during the design session. They call their method ‘Bodystorming’. Also Titta (2003) has captured knowledge from the elderly using the same method. Eisma et al. (2004) used in-home observations and interviews to allow designers and researchers become familiar with user context.

There are also studies of focus group method to discover users needs (Lines and Hone 2002; Oulasvirta 2004). Several studies (e.g. Lines and Hone 2004 and Eisma et al. 2004) report difficulties in keeping the focus group of elderly focused on the subject of discussion. In conclusion they noticed that the most functional focus group is when it comprises at most three elderly people (a number also recommended by Inglis et al. 2002) and is structured so that the elderly are able to pay attention on the main task while in-depth information is available.

Interviews and observations that are conducted in a relaxed setting at the homes of the elderly have been reported to be successful by Eisma et al. (2004), although they are clearly unfeasible in large-scale studies. Interviews done at homes also evoked storytelling that revealed lots of additional qualitative data about the use of technology in the everyday life of elderly people. Eisma et al. (2004) also report that most successful questionnaire surveys were done when the researchers aided the elderly in fulfilling the questionnaires, again presenting challenges for large-scale studies. They report that elderly have a high tendency of using “I don’t know” option of the questionnaire, and they need to have high threshold levels of certainty when they answer questionnaires.

Eisma et al. (2004) have also used a sort of technology helpdesk for collecting information about technology related problems of elderly people. The technique proved to be beneficial for both the elderly and the researchers: the user had her technical problem solved and the researcher got detailed knowledge about the problems the elderly have with technology. Again, this represents another method that requires lots of time, effort and resources from the researchers.
CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE WORK

Our case studies show that the involvement of the users early in the design process is highly recommended and valuable, as the designers seldom represent the user group themselves and they cannot thoroughly understand the needs and requirements of the future users. User involvement is needed for “hearing the voice of the user” through the design process. However, the fact that the designers often are not “inside members” of the user group often creates challenges in selecting the appropriate and feasible methods for user involvement. The method needs to support the overcoming of problems caused by language difference, power structure imbalance, difficulties in understanding each other’s attitudes and values, etc.

Our next case study will examine the needs of the elderly for mobile technology in wellcare. It will be conducted in the Kainuu province of Finland in late 2005-2006. Kainuu is in the center of mainland Finland. It is a sparsely inhabited large area (86,573 people in 24,452 km2) with two towns and eight municipalities. The unemployment rate is high, and the younger generations are migrating to find work elsewhere. The number of the elderly is increasing. To cope with the situation, there is a strong need to develop and find new supporting technologies for the existing services e.g. in health care, social and educational services as well as in culture and day care. As the area is sparsely inhabited and many of the elderly wish to live in their own homes as long as possible, mobile services and applications appear very promising.

Identifying the pros and cons of various methods in involving the elderly in the design process helps us get the most out of the knowledge and ideas of the elderly that are involved in our study. To overcome the cultural and experiential gap that Eisma et al. (2003) identify between the designers and the elderly we plan to include an elderly lady in our research team. She is from the Kainuu province where our target group lives, and is the mother of one of the PhD students in the project. Having her visit and interview elderly people at their homes should provide excellent ground for mutual inspiration. According to Eisma et al. (2004), the elderly who belong to different kinds of clubs are often active and innovative. Due to this fact, Eisma et al. have good experiences of using different elderly groups. Following their example, in our next case we will recruit volunteers from a senior citizens’ club in Ristijärvi (called Seniioripoliis).

Our studies have shown that younger people are more familiar and open-minded with new technology whereas the elderly do not know all the possibilities of and are not as amenable to new technologies. This can severely limit their willingness and ability to contribute actively to a discussion of their needs and requirements. To ease this problem, we believe that in our upcoming study we should focus on the active elderly, those who live independently at their home and the so-called seniors who are still at work but close to their retirement. Also, caregivers and relatives who closely follow the everyday life of the elderly have a lot of knowledge that is remarkable for the design process of the new applications and services.

Following the ideas of Hirsch et al. (2000) on the empowerment of the user and the expansion of the target group, any potential application or service that will be found should be considered for wider use than just for the elderly.

In all groups, being in context (i.e. in a horse-centered Web site, ice-hockey game or the homes of the elder) clearly helps the solicitation of information from and the involvement of the target group. It is important for the researcher to think how to lighten up the atmosphere (e.g. smalltalk and coffee or refreshments in the start of a session). This sets requirements not only on the academic competence of the researcher but also on her social skills as well.

Overall, in our upcoming study, a wide-enough palette of research methods should be used so that our case study would give both qualitative as well as quantitative insight to the needs of the elderly. We will take care that the following criteria for the new applications and services will be considered:

- **Effectiveness**: the technology should cause a clear improvement to current practice,
- **Efficiency**: the technology should be easy and fast to use,
- **Timing**: availability exactly when needed (where needed),
- **Security**: the need for trust is emphasized when the elderly are the user group,
- **Customer centered**: ease of use and social acceptability are some of these criteria,
- **Fairness**: the technology should be accessible to the disabled,
- **Generality**: (where applicable) the technology should be accessible also to others than the elderly,
- **Aesthetics**: the design should not emphasize the users’ possible disabilities.

Incorporating users in the early phases of the design process is valuable yet not simple. However, as technology will penetrate the life of very different users it is a process that needs to be understood better.

REFERENCES


Feeding Post-Modern Families: Food Preparation and Consumption Practices in New Family Structures
Simona Romani, University of Pisa, Italy

ABSTRACT
Building on a significant body of sociological and anthropological literature, the aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between post-modern families and food production and consumption practices in order to look for evidence of post-modern themes in this specific area of family life.

Using a combination of qualitative research techniques this paper illustrates that post-modernity does seem to have arrived in family food preparation and consumption. However, in some cases, post-modernity is not in isolation: it coexists with few modern and pre-modern themes.

INTRODUCTION
Research on domestic food preparation and consumption has traditionally focused on the classical modern nuclear family as an intact household unit composed of a male breadwinner, his homemaker wife and their dependent children.

Results of this research (among others, Luxton 1980; Edgell 1980; Murcott 1982, 1983; Charles and Kerr 1988; Devault 1991) reveal three main points:

- **Cooking is women’s work.** Cooking is a part of a wife’s family responsibility in the home corresponding to the husband’s obligation (to the family) in the workplace. The preparation of her husband’s dinner, waiting him on his return, fulfills the wife’s role in supporting him, while his is to earn the family income.

- **Women’s own tastes are subordinate first to their partner’s and then to their children’s.** Murcott (1982, 1983) and Charles and Kerr (1988) refer to women’s deference to their husband’s food preferences and assume that this reflects deference to his authority as the wage earner. He works, and so somehow earns the right to determine what she cooks for him. From a different perspective, DeVault (1991) associates the feeding of the family to the solving of a puzzle. There are particular requirements to prioritize stemming primarily from the husband’s and subsequently children’s tastes and preferences and relationships within the home. By the daily solving of this puzzle, women cooking for the family are constantly creating a part of actual household life while simultaneously constructing their own role as provider for others’ needs within the family.

- **Importance and centrality of family meals.** Parents identify the importance of family meals and acknowledge their doing more than providing sustenance; they are social events that unite the family. Such rituals provide a basis for establishing and maintaining family culture. Indeed, a “family” is not a naturally occurring collection of individuals; its existence is constructed on a daily basis through events like eating together. Therefore, producing meals has increasingly become an activity aimed at constructing and maintaining the kind of group life we regard as constituting a family.

These three issues in this field reflect some basic characteristics of the modern family, such as role differentiation, unilateral authority and togetherness.

Firstly, the modern belief in universal is mirrored in the rigid social roles that members of nuclear families are required to play. Within the nuclear family this role differentiation led to the defining of universal roles of the father as “breadwinner” and mother role as “homemaker”. In turn, children were regarded as “students”. Social scientists (Talcott Parsons being one of many advocates of the role differentiation theory in the 1950s) regarded these clear and universal social roles as the optimal culmination of the evolutionary progress of differentiation and specialization of functions.

In addition, to the extent that romantic love, one of the three sentiments that give the modern nuclear family its unique emotional tone (Shorter 1977), regards women as helpless and dependent on men’s guidance and financial support, means there is clearly unilateral authority between men and women.

Lastly, the modern family is characterized by the value of close relationships with between members and the importance of these bonds compared to individual needs; there is a clear commitment to family before self (Elkind 1995).

Over recent years profound shifts have altered society and reconfigured the family model. These changes—described as the movement from modernity to post-modernity—have caused the rapid disappearance of the modern nuclear family and replaced by a new structure—the post-modern family that mirrors the openness, complexity and diversity of our contemporary lifestyles (Elkind 1995; Coontz 1992, 1997; Stacey 1998; Oswald, 2003; Zanatta 2003).

The post-modern family involves many different relationship patterns. It is a veritable pastiche of kinship structures. Like post-modern society, contemporary western family arrangements are diverse, fluid and unresolved (Stacey 1996). Two-parent working families, single-mother families, single-father families, stepfamilies, multigenerational families, adoptive families, unmarried families, like-sex parent families—are all recognized ways of constructing a family. As suggested by Stacey (1998, 18), the post-modern family is not a new model of family life, not within an orderly progression of family history, but the stage when belief in logical progression of stages breaks down.

1The two other sentiments that characterize modern nuclear family are maternal love (parental ties to offspring) and domesticity (family ties to community).

2These family transformations have even characterized a very traditional country such as Italy where, as illustrated by the latest survey conducted by Istat (Italy’s National Statistical Institute), there is a large increase in the number of unmarried families, stepfamilies and single parent families. Nevertheless it is interesting to note the persistence of deep regional differences rooted in their various historical and social contexts. In particular, while in the northern and central regions there is a close similarity to European and even Scandinavian family models, in the south there is an alignment to those Mediterranean with a strong adherence to traditions and a strong resistance to changes regarding the classic family model. This research was carried out in Tuscany, a region in central Italy.
As the modern family is characterized by the aspects discussed above, post-modern families are based on role de-differentiation, mutual authority and autonomy (Elkind 1995).  

Whereas the modern adherence to universals contributed to the upholding of progressive role differentiation, the post-modern belief in human diversity and individuality has the opposite effect, namely, role de-differentiation. There has been a limited but significant de-differentiation of gender, occupational and family roles. In particular, the deconstruction of family roles has involved not only parents but also children. In some homes children participate in housework and many teenagers nowadays do much of the household shopping or have almost total responsibility for their younger siblings (Kaplan 1999).

The sentiments of the modern nuclear family were largely unilateral, whereas at present authority within the family is becoming more mutual: both partners contribute towards determining the rules that govern the relationship. Likewise, the concept of shared parenting, a typical post-modern family sentiment, is based on mutuality in that both parents cooperate, or share those responsibilities with outside providers. Furthermore, whilst modern parents often set limits and made decisions for their children that are now regarded as restrictive, post-modern parents are more likely to be overly mutual in their authority failing to set clear rules, allowing children to make decisions regarding their personal lives.

Lastly, whereas the modern family was characterized by the value of togetherness, the post-modern period has been marked by the fusion of various factors in forming the new family value of autonomy, resulting in the individual member’s empowerment to place their needs for self-realization and fulfillment before the needs of the family unit.

This thoroughly modern exposition has revealed some important contrasts between modern and post-modern families; however, despite the increasing significance of these new post-modern families in contemporary society, academics have paid them little attention, especially in terms of their organization in relation to food (see Valentine 1999, as an interesting exception).

To address this gap, the aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between post-modern families and food production and consumption practices. Has post-modernity arrived in this specific area of family life? And if so, what is its effect in how families organize their food related practices?

More specifically, are modern themes related to this field revealed by research available (cooking as a women’s work, centrality of family meals, etc.) still important or does something else characterize post-modern families in relation to food?

The purpose of the present paper is to provide answers to these questions.

THE RESEARCH: INFORMANTS AND METHODS

Informants

Seven families participated in this research. The families, in different phases of family life, were resident in two different areas of Tuscany. Six of them were two-parent working families with young children or adolescents and one was a single-mother family with two children; five of the couples were married and two were stepfamilies. With the exception of one family, where the husband was Tunisian, all were Italian.

Methods

The research used multi-method qualitative techniques: in depth interviews with each family (some conducted in group and others individually), autodriving (Heisley and Levy 1991) and participant observation.

Transcribed interviews, photos and written field notes were coded, read and re-read in detail and analysed using constant comparative analytical techniques (e.g., Glaser and Strauss 1967).

This project is ongoing, but the information collected to date is sufficient to discern thematic redundancy. These findings are discussed below.

Although it is not possible to generalize from these findings regarding other post-modern families, this research material is nonetheless important. If we investigate food related practices from the post-modern family viewpoint, challenging traditional concepts of food and family, we may be able to identify how post-modern families use these practices to express their new identity and roles.

MAIN RESULTS

The results illustrate the elicitation of issues in four areas: a) family roles, b) children’s agency, c) decline of the family meal and d) change in food habits with a shift from home to market.

Deconstruction of the classical family roles in food related practices

The modern idea of family role differentiation is extinct. In post-modern families mothers and fathers share most food related work within the home. In some cases fathers do much of the shopping and share of the cooking, abandoning the convenient commitment to modern role differentiation.

I: So you started sharing the housework when you got married.

A: Yes. Of course. For example, today she vacuumed and I mopped the floors, then I went shopping and this evening I’m cooking dinner; I’ve bought some things especially that I want for dinner, It’s totally natural for me … Not an obligation. Also, quite rightly, because she works; maybe if she didn’t, she would be able to do more herself, but, like me, she’s working, I think it’s right that I should help out in the house as well. (Antonio, male, age 35, married, two children)

It is interesting to note that men have begun to be involved in food related practices both as a contribution towards household labour

5This is a photoelicitation technique using visual recordings of informants (photos taken during their activities related to food, such as shopping, preparation and consumption) as projective devices for interviewing family members.
...and to express their appreciation of women’s efforts outside the home.

These changes in food preparation patterns within the home were foreseen by some researchers (Horrell 1994; Kemmer 2000) as a result of the erosion of strict gender roles. If a woman’s cooking for a man is a powerful symbol of gender and her appreciation of his identity as wage-earner, they therefore predicted that women’s deference would diminish as men ceased to be the sole providers, and that men would begin to actively participate in family tasks.

Evidence of men’s increasing involvement in the kitchen is also presented by Caraher et al. (2004) in their study in three schools in England and Wales on children’s views of cooking and food. Although the dominant figure in the home for cooking is still the mother and older sisters, children’s accounts of food and cooking in the domestic sphere report a large number of fathers preparing food in the home.6

Women greatly appreciate this help and don’t feel that their importance and indispensability in the family is threatened, as clearly illustrated by Patrizia.

P: I’m very busy because I work full time and I can’t do all the housework myself. I must say that without Stefano this family wouldn’t survive! He is very helpful! And I’m glad! I show him how to do something and now he is very good! He really does a great job!” (Patrizia, female, age 39, two times married, two children)

In contrast to Counihan’s (1988) description based on analysis of a traditional family in Florence during the ‘80s, there is no attempt to actively perpetuate male domestic incompetence in order to re-enforce the women’s position at home.

Role de-differentiation also extends to children. In some homes they do a share of the shopping and cooking and teenagers in single-parent families have responsibilities for their younger siblings that assume an almost parental role. However, as I examine below, children can perceive this situation differently.

Ermelinda explains her daughter’s important role at lunchtime during the week:

E: Giovanni comes home and waits for his sister who, when she arrives, starts preparing lunch. If there’s a ready-made sauce, she just warms it up and cooks the pasta, or else she sometimes helps me with ready made foods. She isn’t very good at cooking and can’t do much more than that! (Ermelinda, female, age 42, married, two children)

The daughter knows that she is helping towards the family coping with busy schedules, but she perceives this as an expectation that she feels obligated to do.

If she could determine the situation, she would prefer her mother to stay at home and cook for the family.

A: I was definitely happier when my mum was at home …. Now I have to do it. For example, it’s my job to make lunch for my brother and me. Otherwise he wouldn’t eat … or we’d have to ask someone else to help us. (Anna, female, age 16)

The situation is perceived differently in the case of Leonardo, the older son of a single working mother with two children. In addition to the daily contribution to the family in taking care of his younger brother, Leonardo uses food to demonstrate his appreciation of his mother’s care. Fiorella leaves home early and comes back very tired in the late afternoon. Leonardo sometimes wants to help his mother by cooking the family dinner.

L: I can make something simple for my mum, my little brother and me; I like it; it’s a special way to repay my mother for all the things she does for us. She’s so stressed sometimes and I help out. (Leonardo, male, age 16)

Unlike Anna, Leonardo does not consider the caring he gives an obligation and this has common characteristics with theories on gift exchange (Mauss 1967), reciprocity (Gouldner 1960) and compassion (Wuthnow 1991) also illustrated by Kaplan (1999).

In modernity the general assumption was that children’s duties were merely to be obedient and successful students (Arendell, 1997; Shorter, 1977). Nevertheless as this and other studies (e.g. Kaplan 1999) illustrate, young people can provide reciprocal care and services within their post-modern families with high levels of competence.

The importance of children’s agency in determining their own food consumption practices

Unlike the modern view of young people as passive and dependent (Shorter, 1977), this research reveals their strong will and participation in resisting family food consumption models and defining their own practices.

This resistance often relates to parents’ expectations around food. They often try to be disciplinary, cook and eat healthily and force children to eat more vegetables and main meals instead of snacks. However, typical young people’s food preferences consist of pizza, chips, crisps, sweets etc.7 The solution to this conflict usually consists of a family agreement on a combination of “proper meals” all together and alternative, separated meals for parents and children reflecting their tastes.

M: The girls have a certain freedom in what they eat; for example the breakfast biscuits or some dinners based on their favourite foods, like chips, pizza and focaccia bread, etc. They sometimes come to the supermarket with me or write directly on my shopping list …

L: So, they can choose the foods …?

M: Yes, they can; but they’re well aware of limits on junk food and also know they have to eat bread, pasta, vegetables, meat and cheese as well … all the things that kids normally dislike (Monica, female, age 38, married, two children)

The importance of children’s agency is amplified in Anna’s case. She is a very “strange” eater and dislikes almost everything

---

6This latter tendency was strongly linked in the research with “step dads” and authors speculate this indicates the use of food and its preparation as emotional labour in strengthening bonds with step children. The issue of interaction between children and parents by means of cooking in this research is discussed below.

7It’s worth noting that, as with other research (Chapman and Maclean 1993; Douglas 1998; Dixey et al. 2001, Ross 2002), even though children know that junk food is not “good” in health terms because of risks of weight and skin problems, they eat it for what it represents: freedom from parental restraint and a good time with friends.
from vegetables (except potatoes), fruit (except juices), to fish and cheese. She likes pasta only with particular sauces and meat. The parents have tried to force her to eat “proper meals” but she has strongly refused to eat anything she doesn’t like.8 Following many arguments the parents decided to give her what she wants. As a result, the family never eat the same meal.

E: In the evening we sometimes have dinner together, but we have different meals!! A real hassle!! For example, my husband and I like vegetable soup or spaghetti fish sauce, but they don’t!
I: Don’t the children eat pasta?
E: Only certain kinds of pasta, for example lasagne, and with particular sauces, as cream-cheese.
A: ... And tortellini with cream-cheese and ham
E: Yes ... they like that kind of stuff! Food that we don’t like much ... But we try to keep them happy. Yes, I end up cooking more than one meal ... because I’ve realized that it’s difficult to satisfy everyone if we don’t have the same tastes ...
I: And your son?
E: Sometimes he likes what we have, but not always
I: So, at times you cook one meal for you and your husband, another for your son and something else for your daughter?
E: Yes, of course. It happens a lot. For example, when there’s chicken breasts, Anna likes escalope, Giovanni fried cutlets Milan style (in egg and bread crumbs) and we prefer it grilled. And it’s not only with chicken breasts but many different foods! (Ermelinda, female, age 42, married, two children and daughter Anna, female, age 16)

Connecting the extension of role de-differentiation to young people discussed above with their power in defining food consumption practices, what this research depicts is notably distant from that by traditional research on food and family. This is particularly evident with Charles and Kerr (1988) and DeVault (1991) who both present young people as passive subjects, somewhat removed from the tasks and decisions associated with daily food preparation and with preferences subordinate to their parents’.

As various researchers observe (Elkind 1995; Grieshaber 1997; Valentine 1999; Murcott 2000; Dixon and Banwell 2004), important changes regarding the parent-child relationship appear to be a feature of this shift to post-modern families.

The decline of family meals

The shift of basic family values from modern togetherness to post-modern autonomy is evident at mealtimes. Whereas eating together was prioritized in the modern family, this is no longer so for the post-modern family.

For post-modern family members, lunch is usually consumed outside the home (at school for kids and at work for parents) or at home but in a personalised way, and work meetings, sports practice or a friends’ party have become legitimate reasons to miss the evening meal and its related conversation about the day’s events.

As Stefano reports, parents and children attribute great importance to family meals as a symbol of family cohesiveness, despite being increasingly arduous given the difficulties in organizing family schedules in today’s society. This reiterates the idea put forward by various authors (Martens and Warde 1997; Williams 1997; James 1997) who note that the family meal maintains its symbolic importance, regardless of frequency.

The solution proposed by families to compensate for the reduction of shared meals is to make use of the little time they have together in activities that make family meals an involving and pleasant experiences for all; much value is given to introducing children to cooking or the preparation of special dishes that are family favourites.

I: Do you sometimes let the children participate when you cook?
M: Last time we made biscuits, Sara did them ... let’s say I made the base mix and she added the chocolate chips, mixed it up a bit, rolled them out, and then put them on the baking tray, and I just put them in the oven ... She practically made them by herself!! My husband and I were preparing dinner. She really likes being in the kitchen with us ... In the end, it is a way like any other to be together when possible. (Mariagrazia, female, age 33, married, two children)
P: When we’re together and we have some time we often experiment with new recipes that everyone would like. Stefano’s in charge and the children and I collaborate with the preparation (Patrizia, female, age 39, two times married, two children)

As also illustrated by Caraher et al. (2004), in these excerpts there is a clear emphasis of the emotional aspects linked to food preparation and that parents may make use of these activities, when possible, in bonding with children.

Moreover, families recognize the importance of celebrating birthdays, Sundays and holidays, since these can become an opportunity for togetherness, compensating for the fact that they rarely share meals at other times. As observed by several authors (among others, Wallendorf and Arnould 1991 and Lupton 1996) celebrations and their related ritualized foods serve to reproduce and constitute ideals of the happy, united family.

The following excerpt illustrates this.

M: I’ve always given great importance to birthday parties ... their organization, in celebrating them in the best way possible.

---

8An individual interview with Anna revealed that her dislike of any food cooked in the family started from around the age of six/seven and represents, on a deeper level, resentment towards maternal authority, her mother being the only person responsible for food in that period. Anna’s rejection of her mother’s cooking was part of a power struggle between them which has greatly influenced her attitudes to food.
I usually make the cake … think up the party theme. In this photo we’re in the beach house and the theme was clowns, so the shape of the cake, the tablecloth and all the plates, cups, napkins, etc. In clown theme. It’s true that I really like organizing parties in general, it’s almost a hobby of mine, but I especially want birthdays to be celebrated, that they’re really special … particularly when the children are little. We’re can bring adults, children, relatives and friends together. … They’re an opportunity to get together or even get to know each other, for example when my nieces, nephews or cousins present their boy/girlfriends, etc. (Monica, female, age 38, married, two children)

As observed, it is evermore difficult to find time for family meals since children are involved in a greater number of extracurricular activities (English school, dance, theatre, sport, etc.) and parents strive to manage more complicated work schedules (for example, Antonio who works evening shifts in a restaurant or the single mother Fiorella all day in a local private hospital).

At the same time, an interesting issue this study reveals is that when parents make sacrifices in order to spend time with their children it is not necessarily to share a family meal but also for activities related to their children’s personal interests (going to the cinema together, participating in plays or sports, etc.).

As a result, the disappearance of daily family meals should not automatically be associated with the demise of the family as suggested by some (including, Fischler 1980; Mintz 1984, 1985), firstly because the meal’s symbolic power is maintained even if occurring on an every-other-day basis and secondly family cohesiveness can be derived from other activities.

Changing food habits: from the home to the market

Changes in the foodscape and lifestyles are gradually shifting the domestic work of food preparation and consumption from the home to the market.

As Counihan (1988) observes, although home-cooking is still practiced, eating is increasingly becoming part of the money economy. Compared to the past, women, or families in general, have less personal power in determining the symbolic meaning of food which as a result has ceased to represent the values of home, family and women and increasingly those of consumerism.

Many family members often eat lunch outside the home and families generally eat out more than in the modern era when going to a restaurant was considered a special outing.

This increase has to be considered along side an increased use of ready-made convenience foods that make food preparation at home quicker and easier.

Some families view this food as an “emergency meal” (Jerome 1981), but more often as an important solution for family members who have to cook for themselves and lack sufficient skills or time.

S: From time to time I use them, sometimes when we’re all late and there’s not enough time or we don’t want to prepare something fresh; I’ve bought the vegetable ‘Quattro saliti in padella’ (ready-made frozen meal) a few times but the problem is that one packet isn’t enough, we need quite a lot, and they’re expensive … (Sandra, female, age 54, two times married, four children)

I: Do you ever buy ready-made meals?

P: Yes, sometimes, because I put them in the freezer and my husband uses them when he has lunch alone because the children are out and I’m working and he doesn’t want to cook for himself. (Patrizia, female, age 39, two times married, two children)

It is also worth noting that women and the family in general do not perceive ready-made convenience foods in negative terms. This food is not viewed symbolically as a sign of “lack of care” as suggested by Gofton and Ness (1991), or as a threat to institutions such as family, cultural heritage and even sense of identity as reported by James (1993).

This is probably due to the successful attempts by companies to imbue processed foods with the character, traditions, and sense of “homemade” and facilitate consumer transformation of these products into “homemade” dishes (Arnould and Price 2001).

To ensure the success of these products in a country such as Italy, characterized by strong gastronomic traditions associated with a great love of food, it is not by chance that the main competitors (Sagit Findus and Nestlé Buotoni) have drawn accurately from the roots of national cuisine. Indeed, their range includes Pappardelle al Ragù di Cinghiale (pasta with boar meat sauce), Agnolotti al Ragù di Prosciutto (stuffed pasta with ham sauce) and Pasta e Fagioli (pasta and bean soup), that are, typical of traditional regional cuisine.

To this it is also necessary to add that all the ready-made meals nominated by the informants are “stir fry”; this preparation technique gives the impression of participating in the creation of the dish and the possibility of adding a personal touch (herbs and spices, other ingredients, etc.) and as a result has contributed towards bringing ready-made meals closer to the ritual of personal cooking.

Lastly, there is a further point explained by Monica; as well as solving problems, convenience food can sometimes also be a simple solution for a nice meal.

I: Do you ever buy ready-made foods? Like at the supermarket delicatessens, or dishes like ‘Quattro saliti in padella’?

M: Yes, I’ve got the ‘Quattro saliti in padella’ a few times .. I’ve tried the mushroom tagliatelle, and they’re good, the girls and I like them, ready without little effort. Occasionally we have the seafood risotto, they’re not bad, … we even buy them as a treat sometimes. (Monica, female, age 38, married, two children)

Monica implicitly recognizes a trade-off between the flavour of homemade and commercially produced food, but she is comfortable with this, especially considering that convenience food allows for eliminating many preparation stages. Plus, she isn’t worried about the trade-off because she likes these tagliatelle!

Like this, the ready-made meal becomes an alternative to personally prepared dishes combining quality, service aim and food traditions.

DISCUSSION

Post-modernity does seem to have arrived in family food preparation and consumption.

Classical modern models are now replaced by certain post-modern themes that characterize post-modern families in terms of food. Specifically, the deconstruction of the classical family roles regarding food related practices, importance of children’s agency in determining their own food consumption practices, decline of family meals and shift from home to the formal market sector of the economy for food preparation and consumption all provide clear evidence of “transfer” of the typical post-modern family’s characteristics in the food field.

However, in true post-modern fashion, that which can be labelled post-modern coexists alongside what is recognized as more generally modern (different week and weekend food habits) and pre-modern (the importance of rituals, such as birthdays). This is to be expected since post-modernity in its plurality is open to the
simultaneous continuance of both traditional and more post-modern practices.

The post-modern condition in which families live may mean that in some cases, the liberatory post-modern practices (Firat and Venkatesh 1995) co-occur with some more constraining modern or even pre-modern ones.

This paper is intended to report on the preliminary results of ongoing research; nonetheless the material collected so far appears to strongly challenge traditional literature on food and family in the domestic context.

REFERENCES


Charles, Nickie and Marion Kerr (1988), Women food and families, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Cooptz, Stephanie (1992), The way we never were: American families and the nostalgia trap, New York, Basic Books.

Coontz, Stephanie (1997), The way we really are: coming to terms with America’s changing families, New York, Basic Books.


DeVault, Marjorie L. (1991), Feeding the family. The social organization of caring as gendered work, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Dixey, Rachael, Pinki Sahota, Serbji Atwal and Alex Turner (2001), “Ha, ha, you’re fat, we’re strong”; a qualitative study of boys’ and girls’ perceptions of fatness, thinness, social pressures and health using focus group”, Health Education, 101, 5, 206-216.


Lucton, Meg (1980), More than a labour of love; three generations of women’s work in the home, Toronto: Woman Educational Press.


Stacey, Judith (1996), In the name of family, Rethinking family values in the postmodern age, Boston, Beacon Press.


Introduction and points of departure

There seems to be a lot of reasons why McDonald’s could not be “home” and why a meal at McDonald’s could not be equated with a family meal. Swedish ethnologist Anna Burstedt points to the simple fact that consumers want to experience something different when they choose going out to eat, as opposed to the everyday day meal eaten in the kitchen at home. In the restaurant one should be able to sit down without having to worry about dishes, preparation and screaming children (Burstedt, 2004). Besides, the food at McDonald’s is not home made, but industrially processed, and thus generally regarded as more complicated, non-natural and artificial (Fredriksson, 2000), and it is also branded. So dinner at McDonald’s is pure leisure time consumption, while dinner at home is much more connected to production. Not just the production of food, but of “the family”, both in terms of etiquette, manners, values and gender and generation, and also in terms of emotional bonds created by the community of eating together and by the food stuff as objectifying love (DeVault, 1991; Miller, 1998; Murcott, 1983).

That food is such an important medium for communicating moral and ethical values, not least to children, and that cooking is often regarded as an act of love, especially from mother to children, is a main reason why fast food regularly is referred to as a symbol of decline of cooking skills, families, and the community at the dinner table (Bell and Valentine, 1997; Jönsson 2004). From this point of view it seems certain that places like McDonald’s restaurants could never be regarded as home, and the meals eaten there could not be regarded as “proper” family meals.

Such views are furthered by theories on globalisation, the way the global is colonising the local, capturing individuals between the local rooms where they live their lives and the global arenas where they interact with other global citizens (Featherstone, 1995, Ritzer, 2004, Robertson, 1992, Tomlinson, 1999). Through processes of “displacement” and “deterriorization” distinct and meaningful local communities are replaced by “non-places” without a “distinctive content” (Ritzer, 2004:10). Mike Featherstone describes the way the sense of place gives way to the anonymity of “no place spaces” or simulated milieus where it is impossible to feel at home (1995:102). In the “global city” (Sassen, 1991) familiarity and intimacy is only reachable in fantasy using objects of nostalgia (Ritzer, 2004, Tomlinson, 1999) or in a new post-modern imagined community (Appadurai, 1990, 1996). It is easy to see how McDonald’s restaurants from this perspective could be described as “non-places”, where real familiarity and intimacy is not possible to reach, and where family members are not able to feel at home and perform family properly.

Doing ethnographic fieldwork at McDonald’s-restaurants in Sweden has however led me to another conclusion. As places invested with meaning, value, joy, and sociality McDonald’s restaurants are genuine and authentic local rooms, maybe even “homes” for many families (cf. Caldwell, 2004). Moreover, the routines and the materiality of the restaurant offer ways of up-holding family life, but also of creating family, everyday life, and home in new ways, that are in accordance with the demands and rhythms of today’s world. My argument is thus that McDonald’s restaurants can in fact be regarded as home and the meals eaten there as “proper” family meals for some families.

In my own discipline, Ethnology, a North- and Central European little sister to anthropology, the 1990’s brought the “linguistic turn”, characterising many disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences at this time. Culture, understood as an underlying grammar, was something to be read out of texts, objects, everyday conversations etc., sometimes resulting in more of an armchair ethnology than the traditional fieldwork. Methods like cultural analysis, that was set forth by professors Orvar Löfgren, Jonas Frykman and Billy Eh in books like Culture Builders (Frykman and Löfgren, 1987), On Holiday (Löfgren, 1999) and Magic, Culture and the New Economy (Löfgren and Willim, 2005), even rendered, and still is rendering, Swedish Ethnology an international reputation. Also discourse analysis, following Michel Foucault, and, concerning gender, Judith Butler, hold a high reputation among Swedish ethnologists.

In recent years, however, there has been somewhat of a turning back to materiality and ethnography. One inspiration is Material Culture Studies as advocated by for example British anthropologists Daniel Miller and Alison Clarke in books like Tupperware (Clarke, 1999) and Home Possessions (Miller, 2001), and journals like Journal of Material Culture and Home Cultures. A more recent inspiration is European versions of Science and Technology Studies (STS) like the French Actor- Network Theory (ANT) by Bruno Latour and Michel Callon, and the British counterpart Sociology of Translation, with John Law as a prominent predecessor. The accusation of too much armchair ethnology has led to a rising interest in ethnographic fieldwork inspired by George Marcus multi-sited fieldwork approach (Marcus, 1995).

Studying McDonald’s in Sweden

This interest has been guiding the topic of my study for the past three years; parents and children dining at McDonald’s. The restaurant seemed to me to be the perfect place to be, where I could have a coke or a cup of coffee while watching people coming and going, having dinners and conversations, celebrating birthday parties etc. The restaurant can also be regarded as a node in an almost worldwide network involving not only restaurants, customers and staff, but also for example food, package, transports, commercials and technology, a perfect place for doing multi-sited fieldwork, and pondering the agency of not only humans but also foodstuff and technologies etc. In this article I will, however, primarily stick to one particular restaurant, a Drive In situated in Göteborg, the second largest city in Sweden with about 500,000 inhabitants. In Sweden McDonald’s is not connected to poverty, rather it is a place where people from all social classes go once in a while, especially teenagers and parents with small children (Brembeck, 2003) . In particular the McDrives in suburbia have a middle class clientele. Poor people tend not to have cars, and to live in rented apartments in the city outskirts, and thus rather go to instore McDonald’s in shopping malls. In fact, people like young single mothers might not go there at all, maybe just to have a cup of coffee and to treat the
children to a rare Happy Meal. McDonald’s is too expensive if you are on a tight budget.

My study of McDonald’s is part of a larger research programme called **Commercial cultures in an ethnological and economical perspective** that is carried on at Center for Consumer Science at Göteborg University (www.cfk.gu.se). As part of my project I have assembled a lot of information observing restaurants, interviewing executives, staff, and customers, studying the homepage, and collecting promotional objects. During the spring of 2003 I had the opportunity to take part in several children’s birthday parties at this particular restaurant. I was video filming and taking photographs just like the rest of the adults/parents. I also took field notes using a diary, and had lots of small talk with the parents while they were waiting to bring there children home. Some of these parents I had met at several occasions at the restaurant, and I now decided to ask them to help me with my research, by documenting an “ordinary visit” to the restaurant with their children, using disposable cameras. 10 families agreed to partake and after having exposed the films, I decided to meet with each of the families on their next visit to the restaurant to watch and discuss the snapshots. I equipped myself with a tape recorder and some questions in case the conversation would run short. The ethnography in this article is mainly from this co-researching endeavour, but the concluding arguments are of course also based on the large amount of further data and impressions gathered during my fieldwork. But let’s first give voice to the Haglind family (the name is of course fictive), that I met at the restaurant on a beautiful summer’s eve in August of 2004.

**A part of everyday life**

“How does it actually happen when you decide to go to McDonald’s?” The Haglind’s, mother, father, son and daughter, turn silent and look confused. We have decided to meet at their restaurant, a Drive In close to a large shopping mall outside the city. They usually go there twice a month, which makes them fit the average for Swedish families (Brembeck, 2003). They live, like most of the customers this late summer’s eve, in the residential area of terraced houses nearby. They are on their way home, the parents have picked up the son from the handball training session, and the daughter from the after school recreation centre, and now they are sitting relaxed with their dinner at the table; salad for mother, Big Mac & Co for father and son, and a Happy meal for the six-year-old daughter; “with chicken nuggets, not hamburgers”, she states. We are crowding together at a table for four, and the son is fetching another chair. I have taken out my tape recorder, and suspended the little microphone on an empty Coca-Cola cup. The clock is close to six, the evening sun is shining trough the windows, and inside the restaurant a peaceful mood is spreading, in spite of a fairly high sound level. In a corner the TV set is on. This is one of the very last days of the Olympics in Athens 2004, and two wrestlers dressed in red and a blue garments are grappling together. The restaurant is more than half full. It is mostly families with children, like the Haglinds, that have chosen to have their dinner at McDonald’s, and the dinner conversation is going. I hear a dad at an adjacent table asking his son about his day, and questioning about the new pedagogues at the recreation centre. Haglind’s neighbours are seated a couple of tables away, and I have to wait for a while for my interview, while the two families are coordinating the ride to school for their youngest ones.

I have met with the Haglinds before, and they are a cheerful and talkative bunch, enjoying being in the centre of my interest. But now all four of them are silent and look at me in confusion. “Is it different?” I ask trying to help. I see them reflecting and looking at each other. “Maybe it is you children nagging?” I try again turning towards the children. But no, “not usually”, eleven-year old Calle tells me. Helpful as they are to me, who am trying to explore the place of McDonald’s in the everyday life of Swedish families, they start discussing with each other. “Is it maybe on weekends when everybody is at home? Or when they have done some errands, or on the way home from the handball training session like this time?” They all agree, however, that there are no discussions or conflicts about the visits to McDonald’s, and that it is not decided in advance before leaving home. It is something that simply happens when you start feeling hungry. This statement is something they have in common with the rest of the families I have met during my study. A visit to McDonald’s is nothing decided on beforehand, nothing you plan for, or long for, nothing you negotiate with the family members. It is something that simply happens. For sure, many parents agree that the children’s hunger is the trigger: “It is when the ‘hunger crisis’ occurs, and it always does after a couple of hours in town, that is when you end up at McDonald’s”, as Anna, a women I met the night before at the same restaurant expressed it. But also Anna agrees that it is nothing you plan in advance.

**Investigating the ordinary**

Thing that “just happen” is nothing new to me as an ethnologist. On the contrary, the investigation of the ordinary, the obvious, the unproblematic is somewhat of an ethnological speciality, as is showing how matters of course are built step by step, over longer periods of time, where ideas and actions are linked to the various prerequisites of every day life (Frykman and Löfgren, 1996). The families I have met at McDonald’s have not equipped themselves for a day in the city with their children by bringing a packed lunch or by fitting the visit in between two meals at home. They don’t need to, since they know where the restaurants are situated. And if they don’t, already the smallest child of three years of age, is able to recognise the “golden arches”, that most certainly will show along the shopping route of the ordinary family. Besides, there are Burger King, Pizza Hut and lots of other options. There is no need to plan in advance. Well inside you know exactly what to expect. You know what it looks like, you know the menu, you know the taste of a Big Mac before taking the first bite, you know exactly how to behave at the counter, and how to balance the order on the tray without overturning anything, you can feel the weight of a large Coke before lifting it to take a drop, you know how to manage the ketchup pump and the napkin stand and you are used to shoving the litter the right way into the recycling bin. There is no need for thinking, since you have done it so many times before, it has turned into unproblematic everyday knowledge, the way tying ones shoes or pouring the breakfast cereals has.

**Supporting assemblies of actants**

That habits, like slipping into McDonald’s, is not a passive activity, but always involve an active process of creating meaning is highlighted by Melissa Caldwell, studying the introduction of McDonald’s in Moscow. The ordinary Muscovite consumer has incorporated McDonald’s and its products as significant, and meaningful elements in their social life, she argues (Caldwell, 2004:6). From an ANT-perspective (Latour, 1999), the habit can be studied as an assembly or a small network of entities, or more precisely, an order of relations of certain entities or “actants”, a series, an ordered space or territory, a rhythm or a pulse that is repeated certain ways creating a tune that is easy to follow (Brown & Capdevila 1999). Since actants might be human as well as non-human, ideas as well as technologies, the rhythm of ordered relations at the Drive In restaurant include among other things the car, the restaurant, the hamburgers, the staff training courses, the child-friendly furnishing, the biological and cultural processes of hunger, discourses on children, parenthood and family, the capabil-
ity of the fluorescent lamp to bend in the shape of a “M”, the capability of the child to memorise visual symbols, the supermarket, the full time work of the parents, consumer society, the cupboards requesting to be filled, the work free Saturday, the long road to the nearest grocery store, the tiredness of the parents. Many different actants are co-working to generate the easiness by which the parents slip into the restaurant.

The feeling of meaning is generated when everything fits, when the habit and the special assemblage it involves solves problems, makes every day life easier, renders confirmation, happiness and satisfaction. Even if the parents have met have had a hard time recapitulating the process leading up to the visit to the restaurant, there is total agreement about the values the visit holds: it is easy, convenient, fast, and quite inexpensive for a large family. Moreover you always know what to expect, the children know what to expect, no unpleasant surprises are waiting inside. And there is something for everybody. The parents know that the children like the food, eat it and get satisfied. This is especially important for parents, where the evening meal at home often is turned into a daily fight. Besides, the food is considered tasty.

The adults often go there for lunches or buy meals for themselves from the Drive in, because they think McDonald’s food tastes nice, not every day of the week, but now and then.

For families with toddlers the bibs and the microwave ovens are effective actants. Shopping with a one-year-old and a three-year old child are extensive projects lasting for several hours, and many parents argue that these trips would be much more difficult to carry through without McDonald’s. Simply finding another restaurant where kids are as welcome and smoking is not allowed is difficult. At McDonald’s you never have to worry if your child is noisy and makes a mess at the table. There are really no good alternatives to McDonald’s, they argue.

**Foldings of time**

Processes of localisation and habit formation evolve over time, sometimes over quite a long period of time. In her studies of McDonald’s in Japan, Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (1997), shows how behaviour such as not touching food with one’s hands when eating, not standing while eating, not drinking directly from a bottle, not chewing with your mouth open, formerly considered as revolting, have needed one generation to become “normal” parts of every day snack culture (1997:161-182). The first McDonald’s restaurant in Sweden opened in 1973, so McDonald’s has been around for a lifetime for the young parents visiting the restaurants and definitely during the lifetime of their children. “Their” Drive In has generally been there for as long as they have lived in the neighbourhood. Somewhere during this time span, the visit to the restaurant has been there for as long as they have lived in the neighbourhood. McDonald’s food has been there for as long as they have lived in the neighbourhood.

Processes of localisation and habit formation evolve over time, sometimes over quite a long period of time. In her studies of McDonald’s in Japan, Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (1997), shows how behaviour such as not touching food with one’s hands when eating, not standing while eating, not drinking directly from a bottle, not chewing with your mouth open, formerly considered as revolting, have needed one generation to become “normal” parts of every day snack culture (1997:161-182). The first McDonald’s restaurant in Sweden opened in 1973, so McDonald’s has been around for a lifetime for the young parents visiting the restaurants and definitely during the lifetime of their children. “Their” Drive In has generally been there for as long as they have lived in the neighbourhood. Somewhere during this time span, the visit to the restaurant has turned into a habit, almost a routine. From an ANT-perspective also memories and experiences, both social and individual, are powerful actants in the creation of habits. Time folds around the present and memories act on equal terms with the elements of the present situation (Brown & Capdevila, 1999). Sidney Mintz argues that naturalisation involved interlinked processes of familiarisation, domestication and shared belonging happening over time (Mintz, 1985). Likewise, Swedish ethnologist Orvar Löfgren argues for a perspective focussing historical formations over time, starting with sacralisation, at the introduction of something new, followed by institutionalisation, cementation, routinisation and eventually trivialisation, implying that the phenomenon has turned into a self-evident part of every day life (Löfgren, 1996). Once was the first time. Once every thing was new and hade a special solemn aura. Many parents born in the late sixties or early seventies narrate how a visit at McDonald’s in their childhood happened only once a year, at the breaking-up day of school. They remember queuing in front of the counter together with their parents, their best dresses on, and the whole summer holiday waiting ahead. Likewise, many recount the thrill and high status of their first McDonald’s birthday party, when they were introduced in the 1980s.

In Caldwell’s studies from Moscow, Ohnuki-Tierney’s from Japan and in many others, the first meeting with McDonald’s appears as imbued with promises of modernity. The restaurants acted as carriers of modernity, and this was the reason for their special aura of solemnity. It was via the hamburgers, the modern interior design, the clean toilets, the informal way of eating, that people in Beijing, Tai Peh and Söul met western modernity, James L. Watson argues in “Golden Arches East” (1997). It was about eating modernity, Sidney Mintz reminds, in the after word of the book. This is also something I have met myself in Singapore, where the parents encouraged their children’s French fries appetite, as a way to break even with the traditional rice-based diet and to acquire a modern lifestyle, good grades and hopefully some day a well-paid office job in some high-rise building (Brembeck, 2002).

When McDonald’s was introduced in Sweden in 1973 modernity was already here and the food was not altogether new. The first hamburger showed in 1955 on a national housing exhibition, H 55, in Helsingborg in the shape of a patty of fried minced meat served between to pieces of toast and with onion. Already at the end of the fifties the modern housewife could shop deep frozen French fries in the grocery store and in the sixties she could supplement with deep frozen hamburgers (Eriksen, 2004). The hot-dog sellers experimented with hamburgers during all of the sixties in an attempt to keep the customers at the traditional hot-dog stand. During the seventies the hamburger was not only taken for granted in the hot-dog stand, but was increasingly served at home and more and more accompaniments could be bought in the grocery store. A competition among producers in 1973/74 resulted in the introduction of the hamburger dressing in it’s colourful plastic tube and in 1976 hamburger bread was produced in seven different sizes to suite all kinds of hamburgers an tastes. With good reason, one might argue that the hamburger was “institutionalised” (Löfgren, 1990) in Swedish homes already in the seventies. The basic ingredients, such as the hamburger, the bread, the dressing and some salad were easily accessible for everyone and the operations of making a hamburger were well practised. To continue referring to Löfgren, one might argue that the hamburger in the beginning of the new millennium has become “trivial”, it has become so quotidian and simple that you hardly reflect on it. The home made hamburger has lost it’s aura of progress, modernity and festivity for most people.

None of the parents I have talked to make their own hamburgers at home, they told me, apart from occasionally at some children’s birthday party, something that seems to be contradicted by the mountains of deep frozen French fries, huge packages of deep frozen hamburgers and giant bags of hamburger bread in the discount stores. The once so modern home made hamburger seems turned into a low price staple.

**Domesticating the hamburger**

“McDonald’s-s-food” is not the same as the home made burger meal, the families agree. McDonald’s hamburgers are much tastier and hold quite different values than a quickly fried burger from the home freezzer, squeezed into tasteless hamburger bread from the grocery store, they all agree on that. “McDonald’s-s-food” is something special. Home made burgers are too awkward, take too long time to make, and besides, they are neither tasty nor healthy. If you take your time to cook at home, the meal should be a ‘proper’ one, in Sweden including for example potatoes, meatballs, baked Falun sausage, spaghetti and mincemeat sauce, fried fish and a salad, that is proper home made food, and maybe some ice cream for dessert.
The way local interpretations of McDonald’s food is incorporated in everyday cooking is an important part of the process of domestication that Caldwell proposes as the best way to study the meeting between the global and the local. Her own example from Moscow is the “milk cocktail” (molochnyi kokteiļ), a home made version of milkshake with vanilla ice cream mixed with berries from the dacha, that had become popular among Muscovites after the introduction to Russia by McDonald’s in the early 1990s (Caldwell 2004:5-6). A Swedish example is Swedish made deep frozen hamburgers with Swedish made “American hamburger dressing” and Swedish made hamburger bread, eaten in the kitchen or in front of the TV on a Friday night. This combined with the amounts of McDonald’s food brought home from Drive Ins, and the various hamburger menus served at hot-dog stands and other food outlets, there is no doubt that the American hamburger—or if you like, the American version of the traditional Swedish “pannhuff”- has turned into a taken for granted and ‘normal’ ingredient of Swedish diet.

But the domestication process not only involves the incorporation of local versions of new food stuff at home, but also of new behaviour. Good examples are Ohnuki-Tierney’s from Japan (1997), where the introduction of McDonald’s has made earlier tabooed behaviour like eating while holding the food in your hands or eating with your mouth wide open, accepted and normal. Also in Sweden it is evident that the incorporation of McDonald’s to every day life has changed life and behaviours in different ways. The most obvious reason for going to a McDonald’s restaurant to have a meal for the parents I have been talking to was that it made every day life easier in a number of ways. It is a quick and easy way to solve the food-question in a way that is satisfying for the whole family. You are spared of whining, nagging, stress, uncertainty, and all the work that goes into shopping for food and preparing a meal. “Of course it is wonderful to be spared of cooking, if you can go to a place where you get cheap food and entertainment for the kids is included”, as one mother told me.

Making life easier

But also the rest of the day is influenced in a positive way by having a meal at McDonald’s, not least for the women, who were the one’s doing most of the housework in the families I interviewed. “It is really quite nice when you get home after having done a lot of errands that you have already eaten so that you don’t have to start by making dinner”, one woman told me. Her eleven-year old son agrees, and argues that it is a great difference if you get home and have already eaten at McDonald’s, because then you have more time and can start with your hobbies right away, instead of having to wait for the dinner. To be spared of the dreary intervening time, the waiting, the preparing, cooking, table laying and the stress of having hungry and whining family members wandering around means a lot. Having a meal at McDonald’s means a quicker way of reaching the goal of the family gathered around the dinner table eating in peace (hopefully). This might be considered a way of promoting ‘instant gratification’ (Bauman, 2002), that the morality of postponing pleasures, work before fun, of former days (Brembeck, 1992) is giving way for hedonistic pleasures. But it is also possible to interpret as a way to organise a life with many offers and a constant lack of time. To be spared of the dreary intervening time can be a rational way of handling a life of time pressure, abundance of offers and with possibilities to buy all kinds of service. And also a way of generating time for relaxation and interests of your own beside work or school and thus be better prepared to endure another days work. To answer the ‘hunger cries’ of the children by a visit at McDonald’s, was also for many parents, especially mothers, a way of expressing good motherhood. Parents wanted to give their children something they enjoyed, to please them in today’s world that is considered stressful not only for the parents themselves but also for their children. The visit to the restaurant was also partly seen as a compensation for the tough day at school or at the day-care institution, the long working days of the parents and their tiredness at home.

Just like at home

Few myths are harder to disturb than the one of the happy nuclear family: mother, father, and two rosy-cheeked children, gathered in the soft lamplight around the dinner table, intimately sharing both food, and the events of the day, and more hidden: the upholding of the gender- and generational order, where adults, especially fathers knows best, and mother is the expert on relations. For many families the McDonald’s meal was the easiest way to reach this ideal in its entirety. Few parents and children agreed that having a meal at McDonald’s was different from eating at home. The behaviour at the table was the same, as was the topics of conversation, and the time spend on eating, the family members withheld. Most of them hadn’t in fact reflected on the possibility that there should be such a difference. “It is just about as at home”, the informants argue. This is also in accordance with my own impressions from the restaurants. The atmosphere was generally calm, homely, and familiar. The families often knew each other, they were living in the same neighbourhood, and the children were friends from school or day care, and the mood ranged from that of the friendly local restaurant with fairly loud voices and cheeriness, to a sober and quiet murmuring. Few parents felt stressed by the high pace, and sound level at the restaurants, most in fact looked bewildered when I put the question, and they argued that the only time a visit at the restaurant was stressful was if there were no free tables available, and you had to wait with tired feet, an empty stomach, and dissatisfied children.

It was only in the longer interviews I made, where the parents were given more time for reflections, that some differences between eating at home and at McDonald’s appeared. Maybe there was less fuss at the restaurant, since there were so many other distractions, so many other things to look at for the children, and also less tiresome discussion about finishing the food e.g., the parents figured. At McDonald’s everybody is sitting calmly at the table eating. There are so many other things to look at, and so many other activities beside making fuss of the food, sulking, and bickering your brothers, and sisters. The restaurant is a place for food, and relaxation, where there is little room for family disputes. The actants of the McDonald’s restaurant are contributing to stabilising the every day life, helping the family to live up to the ideal of the happy family for a moment, the materiality of the restaurant is stabilising life. Without the chairs and the tables in their fixed positions, the food coming quickly to the table, the other customers, the TV in its corner, the children jumping in the ballroom, or passing by carrying interesting Happy Meal offers, this would have been much more difficult. The McDonald’s visit turns into a way to shape the family in consumer society.

Piling black-boxes

Most children also agree that the parents too are much like at home, neither stricter nor more kind-hearted, although there is of course no room for any obvious exercise of power in the public, normative space of the restaurant. But there were in fact a few examples of the opposite, the children using the invisible normative boundaries of how to behave, and not to behave as a parent, and the decree to act as a ‘good’, democratic Swedish family, into a power-
play with their parents. Carola, one of the mothers I interviewed, was one of the few parents, who did not like to go to McDonald’s. She liked the food, but felt that the atmosphere was stressful, and not very inviting. But she still went there at regular intervals because her daughters wanted to. Her own favourite was Burger King. She felt uncomfortable at McDonald’s, she told me. She felt stressed, and always finished the food in a hurry. This is not what she herself would choose. She liked the food, and often used the McDrive, but considered the atmosphere pressing, and not very nice. The children liked it though. Sofia, her eldest daughter, was stressing her mother by very, very slowly picking the fries one by one, and very slowly chewing them while looking untroubled, and relaxed, and now and then taking a quick look at her mother. Maybe that is why she is so uneasy, Carola says. She herself wants the meal to be quickly finished, but Sofia delays it. The visit at the restaurant is turned into a hidden power play, where Sofia is all the time stretching the limits of her self-determination, protected by the invisible conventions of not raising your voice too loud, and not using any physical means pertaining to the public space of the restaurant. For Sofia the pieces of French fries were acts in her attempts at challenging the parental authority, and creating a larger space for actions for herself. Family relations are renegotiated; maybe even a process of equal parental authority, and creating a larger space for actions for herself.

Another way of looking upon Sofia’s behaviour is how she is piling many ‘black boxes’ on her side. A ‘black box’ according to Latour contains agreements on how to understand reality, taken-for-granted ideas, not anymore open for questioning, that have been materialised in societal institutions; in ways to behave and to think, in institutions like the school, the family, the media, and physically, in buildings, furniture, clothes and the planning of a restaurant’s interior design (Latour, 1998). Sofiias ‘black boxes’ contain ideas of the democratic family with good relations between parents and children, values of not raising your voice too loud in public, the democratic potential of the relationship between time and food, but she is relieved from cooking and washing the dishes, and may spend time on her own interests when the family gets back home. And since the food is eaten with your fingers, this makes for a more equal relation between parents, and children, everybody is eating on equal terms, also really small children not only ‘want’ but ‘can do’. The democratic potential of eating with your fingers brings us ‘out of civilisation’ to a ‘becoming-human’ outside of the generational order (Wenzer 2004). It is thus quite possible to argue that a visit at McDonald’s is a part of everyday life, but also a way of changing it in different ways, that the restaurant is a way of up-holding family life, but also of creating ‘family’, and ‘home’ in new ways, that the visit to the restaurant is a way to create an every-day life in accordance with the demands and rhythm of today’s world.

REFERENCES


Elixir of Eternal Life or Libation to Ethnic Spirits: The Meanings of Tea in Japan

Yuko Minowa, Long Island University–Brooklyn Campus, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

The present paper explores the cultural meanings of Japanese tea and its consumption rite to Japanese consumers. Anthropologists contend meals serve as statements about society, issues, class, or other things that are considered significant in the culture. Nevertheless, relatively few studies in consumer research have investigated food and beverage as a metaphor of culture and self-identities of the social groups. Based on the interpretive study, we find that Japanese tea, analogous to rice, is considered irreplaceable in daily consumption ritual. Being perceived as an agent of catharsis by many, it serves as a metaphor for Japanese culture, collective self, and nature.

A monk sips morning tea,
It’s quiet, the chrysanthemum is flowering.

- Matsuo, Basho (1691)

It was an autumn day. The haiku poet Basho saw the monk’s very ordinary consumption ritual of having morning tea. His travelogue reveals that he was visiting the Zuishoji Temple in the remote town in Shiga Prefecture. Facing the Zen garden, the chief priest sat down on the tatami straw mattress and had a cup of tea. Unintended, his gaze met a flower of chrysanthemum. Instantly the world of quietude was filled with the monk’s personal visual and olfactory pleasure. The sip of tea consummated his sensual world of quietude was filled with the monk’s personal visual and olfactory pleasure. The sip of tea consummated his sensual pleasure while it united him with nature and the cosmos. In the moment of timelessness and nothingness, he intensely experienced that the self was merely part of the harmonious whole, through the consumption of tea. The observant poet, albeit unspoken, had an empathy with the monk’s experience; they shared the meaning of tea cult.

Today, drinking tea is, as it was in the time of Basho in the 17th century, an everyday consumption ritual of the Japanese. The debate on the origin of tea, whether it is indigenous to Japan (Kubokawa 1991) or originated in Yunnan China (Anderson 1991) and brought to Japan by repatriate envoys Kukai and Saicho from Tang Dynasty in the early ninth century, is in the stream of controversy. Regardless of the genesis and historicity, it is far apart from the daily life of Japanese consumers today. On the other hand, green tea brewed in a pot continues to be the preferred beverage of many. In this study, we are interested in investigating the symbolic meanings of such an ordinary staple beverage as tea.

TEA CONSUMPTION IN JAPAN TODAY

The most common type of tea is sen-cha, green tea, which is available in various forms and grades. It is a simple yet paradoxically complex beverage. Specialty tea shops and supermarkets carry a large variety of tea products. The grade of sen-cha ranges from high quality gyokuro (jeweled tea) to the rough, leafy bancha (coarse tea). Between these two extremes, there are varying grades of sencha. Deeply steamed fukamushicha sencha can taste reasonable with any type of water, or even with boiling water. Variations to the plain sencha green tea include hojicha (roasted tea) and genmaicha (a mixture of roasted whole rice and roasted bancha). Brownish in color, hojicha has a strong, sweet flavor. In recent years kukicha (stem tea) has gained special attention as it provides the same nutritional efficacy as leafy green tea without caffeine. Mugi-cha, or barley tea, is consumed cold and is a popular drink during the summer. Traditionally when preparing these green teas, a tea pot is used to brew the tea in each use occasion. In the last couple of decades, they have become available in canned and bottled.

Chinese teas, particularly oolong tea, are also popular in Japan. It first became popular as a diet drink in the 70’s as its efficacy for decomposing body fat was claimed in the media. Similar to barley tea, it is cooled and consumed during the summer. Canned and bottled oolong tea is widely available through vending machines as well. On the other hand, fermented pu-er teas gained popularity in more recent years. It was first positioned as authentic and gourmet Chinese tea from Yunnang province in the southwest of China. As Japanese consumers encountered “the age of satiation” (hoshoku no jidai) with abundant food choices during the height of the bubble economy, it became affordable for middle-class mass nouveau riche to become gourmet and connoisseurs of various things and matters including Chinese teas. After the burst of the bubble economy, its dietary benefits, superior to oolong, have been emphasized. Because of its strong taste, it is mixed with other teas when it is sold in bottled packages.

There are three criteria consumers use to evaluate the grades and quality of teas: taste, aroma, and color. Some are sweeter
consumption. In the following methodology section, we discuss the some insight into the setting as well as the situation of the tea individuals, and the results from the interviews in this study provide some insight into the setting as well as the situation of the tea consumption. In the following methodology section, we discuss the operationalization of the inquiry.

**METHODOLOGY**

The primary purpose of this study is to uncover and expose the meanings of tea and its consumption. In the post modern inquiry, social phenomena are interpreted holistically rather than linearly or epigenetically (Thompson et al. 1989). In this vain, our strategy is to glean multiple voices of consumers, and interpret multifaceted consumers’ feelings and opinions about the consumption. As such, the interpretive paradigm of research framework was considered appropriate for the methodology (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). It allows us to understand various aspects of an “elusive, allusive, and illusive whole” of Japanese consumers’ experiences with tea consumption. To implement this emic approach, we conducted structured and semi-structured personal and group interviews with six male and twenty-two female native Japanese consumers. These informants varied in age, ranging between 23 and 84, with the median age of 35. Seventy-five percent of them reside in the greater Metropolitan Tokyo area: The remainder lives in Kyushu Island and New York. Most of these people described themselves as regular tea drinkers, not heavy or light, although the definition of “regular tea drinker” seems to vary depending on the individual. Personal interview sessions were conducted in individual informants’ homes or the cafeteria of their workplace. Each in-depth interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. In order to elicit their olfactory and palate sensations, these informants were asked to have a cup of Japanese tea and drink it during the interview. Each session was videotaped, which was later transcribed and translated into English, and field notes were taken to record unspoken silent messages and body language that would not be easily decoded with the mechanical device. On the other hand, group interviews were conducted in a group of 2 to 3 informants, instead of a larger focus group that would typically consist of 6 to 12 informants. This was due to convenience. Two groups consisted of consumers of older age, over 70. One group consisted of consumers in their mid-30s. The remaining groups were comprised of white-collar office workers of a major Japanese automobile manufacturer. These informants were solicited to participate in the interview session on a volunteer basis. These interview sessions took place mostly during the lunch break in the conference room of the company. They were moderated by a Japanese correspondent who had been trained to administer the interview, moderate group discussions, and probe questions. Each session was audiotaped, which was transcribed and translated into English.

**THE MEANINGS OF JAPANESE TEAS**

Narratives of the informants revealed that a seemingly non-descriptive simple nondurable product, tea and its consumption possess intricate, multi-faceted dimensions. Several themes emerged from the narratives of our informants. These are: 1) tea consumption as a personal, daily ritual, 2) tea and commensality, 3) legitimate and illegitimate tea, 4) teas as selves and “others”, and 5) tea as a metaphor of nature and nostalgic past.

**Roles of Tea in Daily Consumption Ritual**

Despite its erroneous association with primitive and regressive behavior originated from anthropological studies with indigenous people in tribal societies (e.g., Turner 1969), ritual is conducted under diverse circumstances. Typically, rituals involve a state or condition characterized by the presence of established procedure or routine. Unlike habits, ritual behaviors involve positive and meaningful aspects of everyday and extraordinary human experience. Another aspect of ritual is that it consists of two dimensions: “the structure that characterizes ritual behavior and the qualitative components that distinguish ritual from similar behavior modes” (Rook 1985, p. 252). In this regard, drinking tea, not to mention all the other instances of food consumption, may manifest as a consumption ritual. Although drinking tea is a much simpler act of consumption than performing an age-honored, rigidly scripted tea ceremony, it can manifest as personally meaningful ritual experience well beyond a utilitarian mode of behavior: quenching one’s thirst to satisfy physiological need.

Japanese tea, for many, is an intimate, quasi staple dietary item. The universality of this sentiment in the aggregate level is reflected in the language: there is an idiomatic expression, *nichijou-sahanji*, which literally means daily tea-and-rice matters. The phrase should better translate as ordinary, daily routine, although the consumption of tea, like that of rice, is not an unconscious mindless daily routine, but an everyday recurring ritual. The universalistic consumption ideology is augmented with individuals’ particularistic valuation of the tea consumption. Informants in the present study discussed the meanings of tea by using an analogy and comparing it with rice: They described tea as part of life and deemed it irreplaceable. One male informant (75), who on average drinks two quarts of green tea a day, compared it with air and water, fundamental natural components of human survival. A female (37) claimed that she felt “incomplete” without tea. Not only is it a staple beverage, but it is also a beverage par excellence. Others noted that “green tea is closest beverage to [him], most intimate and most natural drink in [his] life” (male 31) and “tea is the king of all drinks” (male 48). Many agreed that tea is absolutely necessary in order to sustain the Japanese dietary culture. A female (40) noted that her family likes to complete (*shimera*) Japanese cuisine with tea. Others compared the experience of consuming tea with daily personal grooming routines such as washing their face in the morning and taking a deep breath.

Evidently, positive feelings and cultural meanings seem to be attached to the consumption of teas. Japanese tea, however, beyond its propinquity to the Japanese consumer’s dietary lives, occupies a more important part of their psyche: Teas are perceived to produce mystical efficacy, such as to cleanse one’s body, tone one’s mind, and regulate physiological system and psychological state. A female (73), for instance, believes that it supports her life. When consuming tea, she feels good and refreshed throughout her body, not only in her throat or organs, but also in every corner and tip of her body. She feels that it is her body that wants tea. Emic descriptions, including hers, make etymological reference to *miso*, the Shintoist purification rite, a ritual that exists in various religions. In this regard, consuming Japanese teas can be compared with ritual-based communal religion, rather than dogmatic individual faith, and teas with the artifact to carry out the religious rite, although in reality it is sake that plays such a role and is used as libation in Shintoism.
Another aspect of tea consumption analogous to religious ritual is the importance attached to the efficacy of ritual process rather than that of the object per se. In discussing ritual as one of the properties of sacredness, Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989, p. 7) postulate “rituals are often performed without deliberate thought to the rationale that guides them. They are functional through their performance, apart from their content.” In medieval times, samurai warriors set a time aside to make tea. It was considered to serve as a time of meditation to regulate their feelings. Our informants also mentioned that it is the entire process of making and consuming tea, rather than tea itself, that functions to regulate and tone their mind. For instance, one female (40) who noted that “tea occupies a very important part of daily life, both physically and mentally” explained that she felt relieved when going through the routine of brewing and drinking tea. Some other informants agreed that “it is the process, the simple mindless routine task” that calms them down and relaxes them. Some consumers called tea “a mood alternator,” “a punctuation mark in the temporal space.”

Tea and Commensality

Another ritualistic aspect of tea consumption is that it can be consumed with others and create shared consumption experiences. In all societies, sharing food (and drink) is a way of establishing propinquity, while, conversely, the refusal to share is one of the clearest marks of enmity (Farb and Armelagos 1980). Commensality, the action of eating and drinking together, is thus one of the most powerful operators of the social process. It has been of perennial interest among both anthropologists and psychologists (Miller, Fiske, and Rozin 1998), and both structural functionalists and structuralists have long pointed out its significance. In consumer research, commensality was studied in the context of holidays, parties, and other personal events which involve the sharing of food, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. For example, Wallendorf and Arnold’s (1991) study of Thanksgiving demonstrates that the interactive commensal process contributes to negotiating and renewing the consumer ideology and praxis of the ritual. Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1989) discuss the sacredness of commensality, a symbol of life, for families and friends at special holiday occasions. As in gift giving, symbolic consumption in participatory rituals is used to build and rebuild the self to oneself and others, and the relationship among participants (Sherry 1983; Gainer 1995). Some of our informants also mentioned tea time as an event to reify and strengthen family bonds.

On the other hand, interviews conducted for this study suggested that commensal events are registered in consumers’ memory with stronger impact than lone food occasions. When questioned about the most memorable tea consumption experience, informants’ episodes almost always included spending tea time with others. In these episodes, consumption of tea was often associated with their memory of pastime with family, the most basic unit of Japanese society. The collective self of family is constructed through the sharing of tea time. For example, a male (75), when asked to recall the most memorable experience related to tea consumption, described his childhood during the war: “I remember drinking tea during the war time. There were many people in the house I grew up...There were constantly visitors, some were neighbors and others were traveling merchants, such as medicine salesmen coming from Toyama Prefecture. We sat around a large table, rippling and laughing, creating discordant hullabaloos. And everybody had a cup of tea. I don’t remember what kind of tea we had during the war. I vaguely remember that the color of the tea was brown. So it was probably barley tea and not green tea. Maybe because of the air raid, when tea cups were taken from the cabinet, they were sometimes broken or chipped on the edge, and we used a cut bamboo tree to replace the ceramic tea cup.”

This male informant provided the most detailed episode from the long past. There was a general pattern in responses: Informants recalled the commensal event with nostalgia-laden memory of what is in void today: the traditional extended-family structure, the close-knit communal and inclusive human relationship, carefree childhood, deceased siblings and acquaintances, demolished structures and the lost nature, traveling peddlers from remote regions and deliverers from neighborhood businesses who spontaneously joined tea time, herbs and plants substituted in place of tea during the wartime, pickles that accompanied tea in place of confectionary during the poverty, and tea cups made from cut bamboo and other materials than ceramic or porcelain. Tea in fact seems to function as a metonym that evokes a bundle of meaning associated with the bygone, traditional communal occasions.

Honmonno and Jadou: Legitimate and Illegitimate Tea

The simplest form of contemporary tea culture is the canned and bottled beverage available in hot or cold from jidō hanbaiki (automatic vending machines) or konbini (convenience stores). Vending machines in Japan offer stupendous variety. According to Japan Vending Machine Manufacturers Association, in 2003, there were 5.5 million vending machines in the market place of which 2.6 million sold cans and bottles of beverage items, including coffee, black tea, Japanese tea, Chinese tea, herbal tea, fruit juice, mineral water, energy-boost drink, milk and flavored dairy drink, sake, and beer. Approximately 1 million machines exclusively carried products of Coca-Cola Japan which sold 8 brands of tea products. Only one out of those eight is traditional Japanese green tea, and others consisted of Western-style black tea, herbal tea, oolong tea, barley tea, and jasmine tea. For another instance, the tea specialty manufacturer Itoen sells various types and grades of Japanese tea in cans and bottles, including gyokuro, hoji-cha, genmai-cha, regular sen-cha, soba-cha (buckwheat tea), imo-cha (taro tea), oolong-cha, and jasmine tea. These modern, processed beverages are, because of their convenience, usually consumed while away from home. Consumers in general regard them as “soft drink.”

The modern invention caused sacrilege of authentic Japanese tea. Proliferation of processed tea products has begotten the sacred and profane duality in tea and tea consumption. The two consumption phenomena are not totally disparate and dichotomous but seem to exist somewhat ubiquitously with varying degree of sacredness depending on the level of individual consumers’ “commitment” to authentic Japanese tea. According to Durkheim (see Belk et al. 1989), the sacred would lose its nature when it is mixed with the profane, and its essential attributes are destroyed. Such a view was shared by our informants who valued Japanese traditions more preciously than others. For example, one female (60) angrily doomed modern tea products “jadou” (improper or illegitimate) and totally dismissed its worthiness as Japanese tea. These jadou tea products included flavored teas, such as mango-green tea and Japanese tea in the form of tea packs produced and marketed by non-Japanese companies.

Most of our informants, however, evaluated pros and cons of the innovation ambivalently. To them, the invention of canned and bottled Japanese tea signaled a destruction of the culture since tea symbolizes something traditional. Thus selling it canned from the vending machine indicated the deplorable modernization of the traditional culture. Nevertheless, the availability and easy-access to a sugar-free drink pleased many of them at the same time. The
benefit seemed to outweigh the detrimental aspect of the commercialization of Japanese culture. It matched the lifestyle and orientation of younger generations, as one female (34) said that “bottled tea allows [her] to play with [her] feeling, to be carefree and casual.” A male informant (43) likes to bring a bottled cold tea when he goes to wind surfing, as “it goes well with [his] leisurely feeling.” Or, simply, one female (48) considers it suitable for gulping to quench thirst. These consumers seem to be hedonic pleasure seekers who act on their feeling.

Consumers do not necessarily regard unauthentic Japanese tea and new-age fusion teas as evil or calamitous, but are in agreement in that innovative ideas for new product development add a variety in the marketplace. They clearly distinguish the symbolic meaning of such exotic teas from the authentic Japanese tea, as one female claimed “it can be used for certain occasions, such as when you have some sweets with friends… but it will not be part of my life, like authentic Japanese green tea is for me.” Another female (40) admitted that, “in this age of California rolls, we may lose tradition, but we can’t prevent the change… as traditions change throughout the history. We just have to accept that fact and embrace the creation of new traditions.”

Teas as Selves and “Others”

Japanese tea is a metaphor of the collective self of the Japanese. Ethnic identity helps enhance one’s self identity while it separates the collective self from “others.” The loss of Japanese tea would be troublesome because, as one of the informants said “[she] would not be [herself] without green tea”: Green tea is a fundamental core thing on which people rely for national identity. Belk (1988, p.152) posits that “the possessions central to self may be visualized in concentric layers around the core self… However, there is another sense in which the individual has a hierarchical arrangement of levels of self, because we exist not only as individuals, but also as collectivities. We often define family, group, subculture, nation, and human selves through various consumption objects.” In this sense, green tea serves to form nation extended-self.

The strength of group identity is inferred by our informants’ following contentions: “Japanese tea is the heart of Japanese”; “It’s the DNA of the Japanese”; “It’s the most representative beverage of the nation.” They consider that Japanese tea is the tea proper for their own consumption and regard non-Japanese tea as the tea to be consumed by “others.” A female (40) claimed that “because we are Japanese, it has to be Japanese tea, just like for English people, it has to be black tea” when asked whether black tea would be a substitute for Japanese tea. Another female (34) commented that Chinese teas and Japanese teas were as different as coffee and tea. One informant commented that she felt a pleasant aftertaste of green tea because she is Japanese, as Western people might experience the similar sensation with the aftertaste of coffee, which she believed was nasty. In her explanation, she earnestly (and naïvely) attributed the difference to nationality rather than physiological and cultural conditioning to the beverage.

Moreover, some informants’ perception of Japanese tea revealed a somewhat nationalistic tone of their ethnic identity. It became more apparent when they were asked to compare Japanese teas with Chinese teas. Some are ignorant about differences: One female (36) insisted that “Japanese is the only nation to drink non-fermented green tea …,” believing it is a uniquely Japanese way to processing tea leaves. Another female (40) compared Chinese and Japanese teas in the following way: “… I think Chinese and Japanese teas are a bit different. I wouldn’t think Japanese is better. I don’t mean to be patriotic … But I feel things Japanese are more delicate than Chinese… I feel that Japanese tea is more carefully processed than Chinese tea … It is my impression that Japanese tend to pay close attention to a small distinction between the best and good, and new and old. Japanese consider precision to be an important dimension of product quality.” Delicate things make consumers feel enriched and warm because they convey sincerity and earnestness of the maker.

Japanese consumers’ belief about tea as a totemic of the self extends to their perception of the role of Japanese tea in the international arena. They perceive that non-Japanese people consider Japanese tea, particularly green tea, as the typical, authentic, beverage of the nation, and they use tea as a cultural agent to unite and strengthen the intercultural personal relationship. For instance, a female consumer (60) serves her non-Japanese guests a cup of green tea because she believes that they expect her to do so. Moreover, she senses that many non-Japanese people think that tea means only green tea to Japanese. However, when I visited her home for the interview, she insisted that I try her, as she put it, “famous homemade cappuccino,” despite my counterproposal for green tea. On the other hand, she made a cup of green tea for herself. Only after I finished the cappuccino, she brought a cup of green tea for me, which was placed on the traditional wooden chatak (wooden coaster).

Tea as a Metaphor of Nature and Nostalgic Past

A critical dimension of tea symbolism is that tea leaves, trees, and plantation, along with rice paddies, collectively represent Japan’s nature, agriculture, land, and people. Despite today’s alluring image as a technologically advanced nation, the primary industry of Japan had always been rice farming agriculture throughout history. The mindset of the nation even today is agrarian and insular in principle, and it manifests, despite their struggle to be cosmopolitan, in their overt collectivistic and covert xenophobic attitudes and behaviors. Only after the Korean Conflict erupted in 1950, did the nation experience a drastic change in the industrial structure, in response to the demand for military goods and heavy industry products, giving a boost to the high economic growth. On the other hand, it induced a decline in its share of agricultural sector. Nevertheless, literature, art, religion, and other cultural infrastructures of Japan continue to be imbued by the perceived proximity of the people to nature.

An important aspect of nature is its seasonal changes. Nature changes in accordance with the temporal cycle of four seasons. Thus, to live in harmony with nature means to closely correspond in passing of time while appreciating the transient aspects of nature in each season. This spirit is best represented by Zen Buddhist monk Dogen (1200-1253) who wrote in his poem Innate Reality, “cherry blossoms in the spring, the cuckoo in the summer, the moon in the autumn, the snow in the winter,” to imply the unity of the self with the beauty of four seasons, the very essence of Japanese culture. This further relates to Japanese emphasis on culinary harmony with the seasons: Eat the things of the season. In this regard, shun, or food in season, is of highest importance in the Japanese dietary culture.

In case of tea, shin-cha, or freshly cropped new tea leaves, are thus the ideal kind of tea. In the present study, several informants emphasized whether or not the tea is shin-cha is the evaluative criterion for purchase decision making, but not the brand of tea. Indeed, none of them mentioned the brand name as important in selecting teas. As in Eliade’s (1959) notion of cosmogony, fresh tea leaves indicate the annual repetition of creation, the sacred time. Traditionally, farmers start picking tea leaves around May 2 or 3, on hachiju-hachi-ya or the Eighty Eighth Day (counting from the first day of the spring by the old calendar). On this sacred day, rice porridge or baked rice is offered to the god of rice in some regions.
New tea leaves thus become inviolably sacred, partly because of this sacralization through an annual farming ritual and external Shintoist sanction, and therefore brands become irrelevant (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). On the other hand, fusion tea and bottled soft-drink tea are deemed jadou and profane.

As the nature was destroyed and diminished in parallel to accelerating industrialization, it started to bloom in the collective memory of the nation as a remembrance of things past. The construct furusato or inaka, or old homestead or one’s home region, serves to unite nature (which is signified by tea) with nostalgic past, as the Japanese search for nature and the idealized homestead in the countryside. Local governments and the tourist industry have successfully attached a romanticized image to furusato and promoted a number of commercially appropriated furusato destinations. Postindustrial urbanite consumers seem to have a particularly strong attachment to furusato and inaka. Our informants whose inaka was a famous source of tea production, such as Shizuoka in the mainland and Yame in Kyushu Island, keenly indicated their strong loyalty and longing for teas from there. Consumers may seek for a compensation for the nostalgic past in tea. In this regard, tea and tea consumption play a role of providing a collective sense of past and aggregate sense of self to define the selves and give directions for the future (Belk 1991).

CONCLUSIONS

The present paper explores the multifaceted meanings of Japanese tea and its consumption rite to Japanese consumers. Based on the interpretive study of interviews with twenty-eight native Japanese consumers, we find that Japanese tea, a beverage par excellence, is considered indispensable and irreplaceable in their self and group identities, analogous to rice. Five emergent themes are: tea and daily consumption ritual, commensality, honmono and jadeu, selves and “others,” and a metaphor of nature and nostalgic past. Daily ritual of tea consumption is somewhat comparable to the Cha no yu-ritual that functions as an agent of catharsis. Tea and experiences associated with tea in the commensal event are precipitated more solidly into the memory of the consumer than those consumed alone. Natural Japanese teas are honmono, or authentic, and considered distinct from the rest. New green tea leaves are considered particularly valuable or sacred, as opposed to branded green and other fusion teas sold in cans and bottles, which are deemed illegitimate by some. As a metaphor of lost nature, tea also provides a sense of past to bridge the past and the present, and gives directions for the future in the collective national identity of Japanese consumers. Whether Japan’s future technological advancement could finally turn green tea into the elixir of eternal life is unfathomable, but tea will likely remain the libation to ethnic spirits.

REFERENCES

Repplier, Agnes (1932), To Think of Tea! Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.


ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge of the importance of interactivity in an Internet shop. Based on the knowledge of the Human-computer-interaction-research (HCI research), the emotional approach to environmental psychology, the research on constructivist learning and the flow research, the influence of interactivity in Internet shops will be analyzed in terms of affective, cognitive and intentional reactions of customers. In an empirical study, four versions of 3-dimensional Internet stores that offer different degrees of interactivity will be compared. Results suggest that the interactive online shop is superior to the less interactive stores for most of the variables analyzed in this study. However, some evaluations did not differ significantly. With regard to the variable “evaluation of the product as being high-quality”, the interactive online shop was inferior to the filmed walkthrough of the real store.

PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The analysis of interactivity features in online shops and their influence on customers is of critical importance for researchers and professionals engaged in online marketing. Interactive features that offer self-determined exploration and information gathering with regard to the product or the supplier can be considered as one important advantage of online shops in comparison to real stores. Some interactive features are solely available in online shops (compared to real stores) such as the choice of a personal avatar or the projection of new furniture into a picture of a customer’s own living room to mention a few.

Whereas interactivity in online shops seems to offer several advantages to the customer, some risks may occur as well. For instance, interactivity may require more cognitive efforts from the customer and he/she may become disoriented when clicking through the online shop. Conklin (1987) refers to this in the context of the Internet as the problem of “getting lost in hyperspace”.

There exist some (ambiguous) results on the consequences of interactivity on the consumer that stem mainly from research into interactive web advertising (e.g., Bezjian-Avery, Calder, and Iacobucci 1998; Gerpott and Wanke 2004; Ghose and Dou 1998; Jee and Lee 2002; Liu and Shrum 2002; Macias 2003; Pavlou and Stewart 2000). However, besides the fact that these results are far from consistent, little is known regarding the influence of interactivity on customer variables in online shops. To our knowledge, no empirical study has been carried out that put the focus on different degrees of interactivity in online shops. Therefore, we compare four online shops that differ in their degree of interactivity. We analyze the influence of the online shops on different affective, cognitive and intentional customer variables. We differentiate (a) arousal and (b) pleasure as affective variables, (c) Control, (d) information gain, (e) idea of how products look in reality and (f) evaluation of products as being high-quality as cognitive variables. (g) Flow is considered as being a variable with both affective and cognitive components. Finally, we designate (h) approach intention to the online shop and (i) intention to visit the real store as intentional variables. The choice of variables is based on a behavioral model for virtual stores by Diehl (2001). The measurement of the variables is printed in the appendix. Our study focuses on innovative 3-dimensional online shops.

INTERACTIVITY IN ONLINE SHOPS

Interactivity has been defined in many ways (see McMillan and Hwang 2002 for an overview of different definitions of interactivity). These different definitions can be classified by whether they focus on user-machine interaction, user-user interaction, or user-message interaction (Liu and Shrum 2001). Our study focuses on user-machine and user-message interaction.

In terms of a visit to an online shop, interactivity can be defined as the characteristics of the software that allow the customers a number of engagement and navigation possibilities. Interactivity is a gradual process and can vary from the simple interactivity form of a passive walk-through through an environment to the actual modification of this environment. Ideally, interactivity would be real time, with the computer calculations being so fast that no subjective impairing delays would be noticeable (Kiousis 2002).

Many contributions to the effects of interactivity stem from the Human-Computer-Interaction-Research (HCI-research). “Human-computer interaction is a discipline concerned with the design, evaluation and implementation of interactive computing systems for human use and with the study of major phenomena surrounding them” (Definition of SIGCHI [Special Interest Group of Computer Human Interaction], see Preece 1994, 7). A central goal of human-computer interaction is that the users obtain their desired information or that the computer carries out the desired actions with as little effort as possible. The HCI-research stresses the importance of the consideration of ergonomic-software standards such as consistency, clarity, ease of learning and remembrance of the system functions, the resistance of the system to errors, direct feedback on the user and the amount of control the user has over the system (Hewitt and Gilbert 1993; Shneiderman and Plaisant 2005). With regard to interactivity in online shops, the HCI-research provides us primarily with knowledge on how to design interactivity features in a system.

SELECTED RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF INTERACTIVITY

From the management perspective, sellers expect positive effects from interactivity possibilities in their online shops, such as, for example, a higher frequency of customers, a longer duration of visit or a more individualized use of the offered information by the customers. Usually, sellers aim at influencing the affective and cognitive processes of their customers in the desired manner in order to increase the profitability of online shops.

The existing studies about the effects of interactivity on the processes of customers and on profitability are not very consistent. The majority of these studies stem from research on interactive web advertising. Their results suggest that there are mostly positive effects of interactivity in web advertising on psychological customer variables and on customer behavior. Macias (2003), for example, has shown that interactivity exercises a positive influence on the perception and evaluation of products and brands. Ghose and Dou (1998) showed that a higher degree of interactivity leads to a
higher likelihood for a web site to be considered as a top site. Jee and Lee (2002) analyzed web sites and found that there exists a strong connection between perceived interactivity and attitude toward the web site. However, they also found non-uniform results regarding the connection between perceived interactivity and purchase intention. According to a study of press-title web sites by Gerpott and Wanke (2004), interactivity in web sites of newspapers is significantly related, but interactivity in web sites of magazines is not significantly related to site-usage frequency and intensity metrics. In summary, most results suggest positive effects of higher interactivity on affective, cognitive and intentional processes of customers, however, the results are not totally clear.

**THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE EFFECTS OF INTERACTIVITY IN ONLINE SHOPS**

In the following, different theoretical approaches are used to analyze the effects of interactivity in online shops on affective, cognitive and intentional customer variables. Theoretical bases for the analysis of the effects of interactivity on the customer variables are research on emotional environmental psychology (Mehrabian and Russell 1974), research on the construct of flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 1997, 2000) and research on constructivist learning.

**Emotional Approach to Environmental Psychology**

The emotional approach to environmental psychology assumes that the first reaction towards an environment is an affective form of action (Mehrabian and Russell 1974). Already, this affective reaction decides if the individual will further approach or avoid the environment (Mehrabian and Russell 1974). Emotional environmental psychology differentiates between three basic affective dimensions: pleasure, arousal and dominance.

According to emotional environmental psychology, the number of stimuli which exist in an environment determines the so-called information rate of the environment. A high information rate leads to high activation. In particular, new and complex stimuli increase the information rate and foster activation. Possibilities of interactivity offer the customer additional interference and navigation possibilities and demand activity from the customer. Because of this, they increase the information rate of an environment. Emotional environmental psychology therefore suggests the conclusion that an increase in the interactivity leads to an increase in the arousal of the customer.

Pleasure is closely linked to arousal. This connection is displayed, for example, by research regarding “sensation seeking,” in which individuals seek new stimulation (arousals) in their environment because it is in their benefit to do so (Zuckerman 1979). It can therefore be assumed that the offering of interaction possibilities which offer new stimulation will be judged positively. Interactivity may therefore exercise a positive influence on pleasure.

Dominance describes a subjective sensation of independence and freedom, which an individual in a given situation feels. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) consider dominance an emotional variable, however, we agree with Russell and Pratt (1980) who see dominance as a variable that contains strong cognitive components as well. Dominance in an online shop implies that the user feels control over the store, that he/she controls the situation. It can be assumed that interactivity possibilities raise the level of perceived control as they allow the customers to interact with the system in a desired manner. They offer for example, the possibility to obtain, at will, more information about a displayed object, or to change the amount and speed of the information given to the customer.

The existing knowledge of emotional environmental psychology shows, in summary, that interactivity possibilities tend to have a positive influence on arousal, pleasure and dominance.

According to emotional environmental psychology, positive evaluations of an environment on the dimensions arousal, pleasure and dominance lead to approach behavior toward the environment. Therefore we assume that interactivity possibilities exert a positive influence on approach behavior toward the online shop. We differentiate between approach intention to the online shop (i.e., longer anticipated duration of a visit, higher purchase intentions, exploration and search behavior) and intention to visit the real store on the basis of which the virtual online shops were construed.

**Flow**

The construct of flow stems from motivation psychology and has been researched by Csikszentmihalyi (e.g., 1975, 1997, 2000). Flow is a state in which a person is totally concentrated on a task, immersed in the handling of the task and is barely affected by distractions. The metaphor of the “flow” describes a very pleasant feeling of “effortless action” (Csikszentmihalyi 1997, 29). This is the emotional component of the flow construct. Furthermore, in the flow experience, time flies by and the person has a sure feeling of control over the situation (Csikszentmihalyi 1997). This is the cognitive component of the flow construct. Flow is a continuum, which can contain activities ranging from simple, repetitive, almost automatic actions (such as thoughtless scribbling) to complex activities that require the full physical and cognitive potential of a person (for example chess, mountain climbing or dancing).

With regard to online shops, it can be assumed that especially online shops that allow immersion of the user would be able to increase the feeling of flow. Due to the immersion, the individual would be surrounded by the VR-medium, so that the boundaries between the virtual world and the user are lifted. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1997), the interaction with computers (without immersion) already has a high potential for flow feelings. Flow can occur as well during communication via computer in the form of e-mails and during work with a computer (Trevino and Webster 1992; Webster, Trevino, and Ryan 1993). A study by Novak, Hoffman, and Yung (2000) has shown that three quarters of the respondents said that they have had a flow feeling while using the Internet.

The restricted stimulus field due to the computer screen allows the user to focus their attention without distractions. Therefore, it can be assumed that while visiting an online shop, a flow feeling can also occur.

The flow feeling sets in primarily during active rather than passive activities (Csikszentmihalyi 1997). Increasing possibilities of interactivity should therefore have the tendency to cause the setting-in of a flow feeling. Further on, possibilities of interactivity increase the degree of immersion and the user is more and more captivated by an online shop.

On the basis of the knowledge of the flow theory, we assume that the possibilities of interactivity with a larger number of active tasks for the customer will lead to an increase in flow.

**Constructivist Learning**

Following the fundamental view of constructivism, the environment perceived by the individual is construed on personal, subjective environmental impressions. There is no objective reality. “...each individual man formulates in his own way constructs through which he views the world of events” (Kelly 1963, 12). Therefore, knowledge cannot be easily transferred; rather it is personally constructed by each individual. Constructivist learning theories are based on the assumption that learning is an active construction process.
During a visit to an online shop, the seller seeks to inform the customer about the products offered (quality, price, availability, etc.). The seller wants the customer to learn this information, and thus, wants to initiate a learning process. Online shops offer the possibility to organize the information hierarchically, according to their importance, and according to the individual desires of the customer. Information does not have to be arranged linearly; rather it can be arranged through hypertext or hypermedia (Holley and Hunton 1996; Nelson 1987; Strain and Berry 1996). Hypertext- or hypermedia-systems are especially suitable to realize constructivist learning strategies (Driscoll 2000). The reason for this is seen in the fact that hypertext- or hypermedia-applications facilitate information processing because the network of information corresponds to the organization of the human memory as a semantic network (Jonassen 1989, 1991; Jonassen and Wang 1993; Nelson and Palumbo 1992). In summary, the knowledge from research on constructivist learning suggests that hypertext- or hypermedia-based applications facilitate learning. However, it should be noted that the quality of the hypertext or hypermedia systems plays an important role (Chen and Rada 1996).

When an individual uses hypertext or hypermedia systems, he/she interacts with the computer system, so the usage of hypertext or hypermedia is interactivity. Consequently, an online shop that offers a hypermedia system should generally support constructivist learning. Therefore we assume that interactivity in online shops tendentially has a positive influence on the cognitive customer variables information gain and control. An important requirement in online shops is that the products are presented in a manner in which the customer is able to imagine how the products look in reality and see that the products are of high quality. Today, in a virtual store, the customer can mainly experience the products by imagining how the products look in reality and see that the products are of high quality. Today, in a virtual store, the customer can mainly experience the products visually, but he is not able to touch or smell them. Therefore, we analyzed the two variables idea of how products look in reality and evaluation of products as being high-quality.

METHOD

In order to empirically test the possibilities of interactivity on the affective, cognitive and intentional evaluations of online shops, four versions of an online shop were created. The four versions varied in the extent of their possibilities for interactivity. In the following, the four versions will be shortly described. The online shop was designed with the 3D-CAD program Pytha version 15.0 from the firm PYTHA Lab, located in Aschaffenburg, Germany.

Version 1: Interactive Online Shop (IOS)
The interactive online shop is an innovative three-dimensional furniture store, through which customers can move in real time. The IOS offers the testers a large array of interactivity possibilities. The testers were given the following interactivity possibilities: They were able to

- walk through the store on their own
- change their overall viewing perspective, for instance, bird’s eye view, centralised view, worm’s eye view, etc.
- view the products from all sides
- move objects
- open drawers and cupboards doors
- change the colors and materials of the products (e.g., design of dishes), the walls (e.g., different wallpapers), the floor (e.g., parquet or tiles) and the carpets.
- obtain information about the products in written form as well as audibly
- select background music
- be verbally welcomed by a saleswoman integrated into the shop
- alter the decorations (e.g., exchange pictures on the wall)
- alter the store location. A park landscape was pre-selected. The users were able to choose the scenery of Lisbon, a Caribbean or Alpine landscape or the New York skyline. This way participants had the option of shopping in their favorite location.
- change the lighting

Figure 1 displays screenshots of the interactive online shop.

Version 2: Virtual Online Shop (VOS):
In this version, the participants could independently walk through the store illustrated in Figure 1, however, without the additional interactivity possibilities of version 1. Interactivity exists only in the form of allowing the customer to move through the store.

Version 3: Film of Virtual Online Shop (VF)
Here, the customer was shown a film tour of the virtual store. The Pytha program has a camera function, which makes it possible to create filmed walk-throughs through the store. In version 3, there were no other interactivity possibilities. The tour corresponds to the tour in the real store (Version 4) as well as to the tour in the introduction of the interactive online shop to the participants (see procedure in this paper).

Version 4: Film of the Real Store (RF)
In this version, the respondents were shown a film of the real store, which was used as the basis for the construction of the virtual one. The real film was made with a video-camera in a furniture store. In order to ensure comparability between the versions, the filmed tour through the real store corresponds to the tour through the online shop. With version 4, the test person can only watch the tour and has no other possibility for interactivity. Figure 2 shows pictures of the real store.

PROCEDURE

Altogether, 378 respondents evaluated the interactive online shop (version 1). Of the 378 participants, 124 additionally evaluated one of the other three versions (versions 2 to 4). Each version from 2 to 4 had between 40 to 42 test persons. The subjects that evaluated a second version and the order of the evaluations of the four versions were randomly selected.

At first, all respondents were shown an identical introductory tour of the virtual store. The interactivity possibilities available to them were explained. The interviewer was instructed to always show the same tour with the same store features to every respondent. After the characteristics of the store had been changed by the participants, the store was set back into its original form, so that every participant had the same initial view of the store.

RESULTS

Affective Variables
As the results in Table 1 show, the interactive online shop activates at a much higher rate than every other version of the online shop. All differences are highly significant. The second most activating version is the film of the real store. The difference between real film and virtual film is significant, while the other differences are not.

Concerning the variable pleasure, the interactive online shop shows the highest score, followed by the film of the real store, and
then by the virtual online shop and the film of the virtual store. The differences between the IOS and the other three versions are highly significant again. Likewise, the differences between the film of the real store and the other two virtual versions are significant. No significant differences were found between the virtual online shop and the film of the virtual store.

Cognitive Variables

The interactive online shop led to the strongest feeling of control of the situation, which was probably due to the possibility to explore the store on one’s own. However, the differences between it and the other versions (and also between all other versions) are not significant. The relatively high scores on the control variable indicate that the participants never had the feeling, in any version, to have lost control of the situation.

The evaluation of information gain is highest in the interactive online shop, with the differences to every other version being significant. There were no significant differences between the other three versions with regard to information gain.

Though the respondents could best imagine how the products would look in reality when using the interactive online shop, the differences from and between the other three versions are not significant. The participants could imagine how the products looked in reality in all four versions, as the relatively high mean values indicate (from 3.83 to 4.06 on a five point scale).

The products were judged to have the highest quality in the real film with a significant difference from the other three versions. A real picture of the product led in this case to a higher evaluation of a product’s quality than a virtual model in a virtual store. The second highest product evaluation was achieved in the interactive online shop. However, the difference is only significant in comparison to the virtual online shop. The virtual film and the interactive virtual store showed no significant differences.

Flow

The interactive virtual store displayed the highest flow feeling, with highly significant differences to the other versions. The differences in flow feeling, which customers acquired from the other versions, are not significant. This suggests, in conformity with the theory, that flow feeling is positively influenced by the presence of interactivity possibilities. Interaction facilitates the “immersion” of the individual into the online shop.

Intentional Variables

The approach intention to the online shop (composed of the intention to stay longer in the shop, higher purchase intention and stronger exploration and search behavior) was found to be strongest in the interactive online shop. All of the differences between the interactive online shop and the other versions are highly significant. No significant differences were found between the other versions.

Although the interactive online shop creates the largest amount of intention to visit the real store, only the differences between it and the other virtual stores (VOS and VF) are significant. The difference between the virtual online shop and the real film is
statistically negligible. It can be assumed that the real film version appeared more like a real store. There were no differences between the other versions.

**DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

In summary, the interactive online shop (IOS) is evaluated to be the best of the four versions for the majority of the variables analyzed in this study. In conformity with the theory, the interactive online shop achieved the highest evaluation regarding the affective variables arousal and pleasure. With regard to the cognitive variables in this study, the results were more ambiguous. Only for information gain was the IOS evaluated significantly higher than the other versions. No significant differences occurred for the variables control and idea of how products look in reality. The IOS was inferior to the real film concerning the evaluation of products as being high-quality. The IOS evoked the strongest flow feeling and led to the strongest approach intention, both to the virtual and the real store.

The second best evaluation occurred for the real film, though there were no interaction possibilities. This suggests that a true-to-reality design of online shop may be of high importance for the affective, cognitive and intentional customer variables as well. As expected, the virtual film was evaluated lowest, due to the lack of interactivity.

For Internet marketing, it can be concluded that an interactive online shop is most suited to emotionally address the customer, to evoke a feeling of flow and to convey information. Especially the triggering of a flow feeling is seen as important prerequisite to increase the attractiveness of online offers. Compared to real stores, many Internet users complain about the lack of emotional experiences when shopping or surfing in an online shop. Our results show that emotions can be evoked by integrating interaction possibilities.

Online sellers should therefore offer a broad array of interaction possibilities to their customers. As the film of the real store was evaluated second best, it is advisable to design the 3D-online shop as close to reality as possible. Through further development of virtual reality, it becomes possible to make products and store design even more realistic. As long as virtual presentation lacks realism, virtual stores should strive to integrate pictures of real objects into their programs.

A first improvement to a static virtual store would be the offering of a walk-through that should be complemented by further interaction possibilities. An online shop with a high degree of interactivity evokes the highest interest to visit the real store. With regard to Multi-Channel-Marketing, an interactive online shop stimulates the desire to visit the real store and can therefore generate more traffic for the real store.

We would like to point to some directions for further research. Subsequent studies should analyze what product categories or what kind of websites are most in need of interactivity. Another interesting research question would be to delve deeper into the personal traits that correspond to the positive or negative evaluations of interactivity features of online shops. Further research might also place a focus on the analysis of negative effects of interactivity.
## TABLE 1: Mean Values of Variables Dependent on Online Shop Version and Significances of Contrasts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean Value of Version</th>
<th>Significance of Contrasts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IOS</td>
<td>VOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affective Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arousal(^1)</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure(^1)</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>-0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information gain</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea of how products look in reality</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of products as being high-quality</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow(^1)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intentional Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach intention to online shop(^1)</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention to visit real store</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IOS=Interactive online-shop; VOS=Virtual online shop; VF=Filmed walk-through of virtual online shop; RF=Filmed walk-through of real store
\(^1\) values are factor scores

(such as the feeling of lost in hyperspace or a higher perceived effort). We think that most negative effects of interactivity can be avoided by not forcing the individual to use interactivity features. However, negative effects may also occur during the use of interactivity characteristics, and, for instance, it would be most interesting to analyze the kind of situations during which a shift from positive to negative effects of interactivity occurs.

REFERENCES

Measurement of Variables
The affective, cognitive and intentional customer reactions dependent on the four shop versions were measured as follows:

Affective Variables:

- **Arousal**: Please give us your spontaneous opinion regarding these statements about the store. The shop is (1) active; (2) arousing. Participants could answer on a 5-point rating scale from (1) highly disagree to (5) highly agree.

- **Pleasure**: Pleasure was tested through two questions, one regarding the overall impression of the store and one regarding the store atmosphere. The overall impression was tested by this question: If you had to describe the store according to the following scale, which picture would best suit your opinion? For an answer scale, the respondents were given a non verbal scale with five faces with different expressions (Kroeber-Riel and Weinberg 2003).

  The store atmosphere was tested using a verbal question. Please mark your first feeling, in regards to your opinion about the following statement regarding the store’s atmosphere: The store was very appealing. Respondents could answer again on a 5-point rating scale from (1) highly disagree to (5) highly agree.

Cognitive Variables

- **Control**: Please rate the following statement about your feelings in case you go into the online shop while surfing in the Internet: In this online shop, I have a feeling of control over the situation. Participants could answer on a 5-point rating scale from (1) highly disagree to (5) highly agree.

- **Information gain**: Did you have the feeling that you have gained information while visiting the online shop? Respondents could answer on a 5-point rating scale from (1) little information to (5) a lot of information.

- **Idea of how products look in reality**: I can easily picture how the products would look in reality. Respondents could answer on a 5-point rating scale from (1) highly disagree to (5) highly agree.

- **Evaluation of products as being high-quality**: I would value the products as … Respondents could answer on a 5-point rating scale from (1) not high-quality at all to (5) very high-quality.

- **Flow**: Flow was measured using three statements: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statements. (1) I feel immersed in this store. (2) Time flies in this online shop. (3) I feel captivated by the online shop. Respondents could answer on a 5-point rating scale from (1) highly disagree to (5) highly agree.

Intentional Variables

- **Approach intention**: Approach intention was measured using three indicators. The anticipated duration of the visit was measured in minutes. Please let us know, in minutes, how long you think you were usually in a store like the one presented? Purchase intention: The presentation of products makes me want to buy products that I have not thought of before. Respondents could answer on a 5-point rating scale from (1) highly disagree to (5) highly agree.

**Exploration and search behavior**: The presentation of products led me to wish to further explore the store. Respondents could answer on a 5-point rating scale from (1) highly disagree to (5) highly agree.

- **Intention to visit the real store**: The online shop made me want to visit the real store. Respondents could answer on a 5-point rating scale from (1) highly disagree to (5) highly agree.

---


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Purpose of study: In recent years, fast growth of business-to-consumer e-commerce has occurred. Within the area of grocery retailing consumer adoption rates have, however, been relatively slow and many online grocery shops are facing difficulties in reaching breakeven (Geuens et al., 2003; Ring and Tigert, 2001). While research has attempted to explain the low consumer adoption rates by referring to e.g., the presence of transaction obstacles, complex procedures, and security problems, knowledge about key decision-making variables of end-consumers online is still in its infancy (Odekerken-Schröder and Wetzelts, 2003). Reflecting such findings, we investigated the extent to which consumers’ perception of certain online grocery shopping characteristics will discriminate between three segments of online consumers: (1) consumers who have not searched for grocery-related information on the Internet yet; (2) consumers who have searched online for grocery-related information—but who have not yet bought groceries over the Internet; and (3) consumers who have bought groceries over the Internet. An understanding of possible discriminating factors between the three segments is highly relevant for online retailers seeking to attract new online customers and/or seeking to keep existing online customers. For example, if segment 3 consumers view certain factors more positively than segment 2 (and/or segment 1) consumers such a result may provide guidance to online retailers on what factors to stress in order to attract new online grocery customers. On the other hand, if no discrimination is found between segments this may suggest that other factors (e.g., differences in consumers’ personal characteristics) should be taken into account when seeking to understand consumer adoption of online grocery shopping.

Methodology: The data presented in this study were collected from an online (web-based) survey of US consumers using self-administered questionnaires. A total sample of 1516 consumers was collected in November 2002. The questionnaires were distributed to households by the use of an Internet-panel administered by a market research firm. Drawing mainly on the theory of adoption of innovations (Rogers, 1983), multiple item scales were developed for five constructs (perceived complexity, perceived compatibility, perceived relative advantage, perceived Internet grocery risk, and subjective norm), which may affect consumer acceptance of the Internet as a grocery-shopping channel. Confirmatory factor analysis and multiple discriminant analysis were applied.

Results: A large number of cases were deleted because of missing responses across the items at interest. This resulted in an investigation sample of n=791 (segment 1, n=385; segment 2, n=287; segment 3, n=119). Confirmatory factor analysis results suggested that the five constructs do exist and that they are tapped by the measures used. In the multiple discriminant analysis, only the first discriminant function (Wilks’ λ=0.855; χ²=122.94; df=10, p-value<0.001) was significant and explains 14.0% of the variance in the three segments. The first discriminant function, which accounts for 96.3% of the variance explained by the two functions, correctly classified 56.1% (55.4%, cross validation sample) of original grouped respondents. These hit ratios exceed the estimates of Cpro (39.1%) and Cmax (48.7%) suggesting that the classification of respondents in both samples is significantly better than chance. The results of the multiple discriminant analysis suggest that online grocery shopping adopters attach higher compatibility, higher relative advantage, more positive social norms, lower Internet grocery risk, and lower complexity to Internet grocery shopping when compared to (a) consumers who have never searched for online information concerning groceries and also when compared to (b) consumers who have searched online for grocery-related information but who have not yet bought groceries over the Internet.

Implications and limitations: Perceived compatibility was the primary discriminating construct between segments. Thus, online grocery retailing should be compatible with consumers’ existing grocery shopping patterns. Online grocery retailers should not expect consumers to compromise their existing shopping needs and habits in order to carry out online grocery shopping. Instead, online grocery retailers must adapt themselves to the daily life of consumers. The results also suggest that it is still important that online suppliers provide online consumers with ‘risk relievers’ (Van den Poel & Leunis, 1999) in relation to specific online buying events. Such risk relievers, which may help consumers to reduce their uncertainty when considering an online grocery buying, may include ‘complaint opportunities’, ‘security-guarantees’, ‘money-back-guarantees’, ‘privacy-guarantees’, and the like.

In the survey, perceived social norm was also found to discriminate between segment 3 and segment 1/segment 2. At least two possible explanations seem to apply in connection hereto. First, much relevant information concerning online grocery buying may be classified as ‘experience information’ (refer to Nelson, 1970). For example, for many grocery products there may be a reduced opportunity to inspect salient offline search attributes (e.g., odour, physical appearance of fresh fruits and vegetables and meat products) before buying the products on the Internet. From an economics of information perspective inexperienced online consumers may simply be imperfectly informed and may therefore keep an open mind towards possible guidance from friends and relatives. Second, many consumers are members of a household in which major decisions regarding grocery store patronage (off- or online) may not just be a matter for the individual household-member but a matter for the entire household. Thus, a consumer may put weight to normative guidance from close social surroundings when considering online grocery shopping. Consumers belonging to segment 3 also attach higher relative advantage (possibilities for saving time and money) to online grocery shopping than do other consumers. Online retail managers may therefore wish to market such benefits of online grocery shopping to the entire household and thereby facilitate a more positive family decision-making in relation to online grocery shopping. It also seems important that online retailers design simple and effective information and ordering procedures that are easy to understand and that do not require high online navigation skills and effort. This suggestion is derived from the result that perceived complexity (with a negative sign) substantially contributed to the discrimination between segment 3 and segment 1/segment 2.

This research used a single respondent as a household representative. Since grocery buying concerns the entire household, this procedure assumes that the selected respondent provides answers, which are representative of the household’s opinion. Future re-
search may wish to verify the proposed framework using multiple household representatives. Also, this research concentrated on analysing one product category (groceries). This could mean that the results may suffer from a lack of generalizability when other product categories are considered. A cross-section of product categories ought to be studied to improve the generalizability of the results.

REFERENCES
The Proof of the Pudding is in the Tasting—Or is It? Novice Consumers’ Trust in Providers of Online Advice

Peter de Vries, University of Twente, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Trust in the capabilities of a system, such as a route planner, is considered important for online interactions to run to completion. Little is known, however, about trust formation in the absence of outcome feedback. Such situations presumably cause users to rely on indirect consensus information and direct process information.

In two experiments it was examined how direct and indirect information interact to establish consumer trust towards a route planner. Experiment 1 showed that effectiveness of consensus information (cue) is moderated by mere process feedback. In the second experiment, users encountered route planners that provided either consistent or random process feedback. Results suggest that the former facilitated belief formation about the system’s functioning, causing trust to increase. In addition, consistency in process feedback influenced the effect of the cue on trust.

INTRODUCTION

In April 2003, visitors of online bookstore Amazon.com were greeted with the message that the retailer “…continues to show remarkably high levels of customer satisfaction. With a score of 88 (up 5 %) [American Customer Satisfaction Index] it is generating satisfaction at a level unheard of in the service industry…”. Information such as this is commonly used in the world of e-commerce to boost new customers’ trust. Online bookstores, for example, often provide the possibility to check other readers’ satisfaction, not only with the product itself, but also with the services provided by the affiliated bookshop to which customers are directed following a query. In addition, previous customers’ satisfaction levels with both book and affiliated bookshop are often summarised by displaying scores on 5-point scales. Thus, online bookstores try to reduce any uncertainty associated with engaging in a financial online transaction, increasing the likelihood that this first acquaintance is followed by a purchase.

First-time users do not have outcome information available to base trust on. In such initial relationships, McKnight (McKnight, Choudhury, and Kacmar 2002) argued, people may use whatever information is available; besides recommendations, initial trust can be influenced by a host of factors, such as perceived website quality, reputation, third party endorsements, e.g., by a professional medical association in case of a medical website, but also on an individual’s propensity to trust others (McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany 1998). In addition, Numan (1998; Arion, Numan, Pitariu, and Jorna 1994) argued that the experiences of others, in the form of recommendations, or reported interactions with a system may be taken into account. If such information yields sufficient initial trust, a first-time consumer may be persuaded to engage in a transaction (also see McKnight et al. 1998, in the context of organisational relationships). Once the consumer has engaged in an interaction, trust is assumed to become based on the consumers own, direct experiences. Such online interactions may yield positive outcomes, e.g., a book that is purchased online arrives on time and meets the consumer’s expectations, or a route that is planned turns out to be as quick as the online route planner promised, and this outcome is used to update the level of trust of the consumer (the so-called feedback loop, Luhmann, 1979), increasing the likelihood that the consumer will return to the same online vendor or information service. Negative outcomes may cause trust to decrease, which makes it less likely that the provider of goods or services is visited again. In fact, direct experiences are assumed to yield much more trust-relevant information than indirect experiences, causing the former to overrule the latter (McKnight, Choudhury, and Kacmar 2002; McKnight et al. 1998; also see Fazio and Zanna 1981).

Being deprived of such outcome information, however, does not necessarily mean initial trust is solely based on indirect information, such as recommendations. A fact that is usually overlooked is that novice consumers may have the opportunity to simply test-run the application, i.e., to gain direct experience without proceeding the interaction to the point where outcome feedback becomes available. Thus, consumers may try an online bookseller by entering a query for a particular book, adding the book to the shopping basket, acquiring information about shipping and handling costs, but stop the interaction before the deal is actually closed. Similarly, people seeking routing advice may try out the route planner by entering a few destinations and see what the system’s suggestions will be. Thus, they actually engage in direct interaction with the application but still do not have outcome information available to update their trust; outcome feedback, i.e. the route being either fast or not, will only become available after actually driving the suggested routes. The question central to this paper is whether such direct experience may influence consumers’ trust even if feedback on the outcomes is not available, or, in other words, whether consumers can appreciate the pudding before actually tasting it.

In a different field of research, namely that of trust of operators in industrial process controllers and decision aids, Woods, Roth, and Bennett (1987) found anecdotal evidence to suggest that there may indeed be more aspects of one’s own interactions with a system or application to yield trust-relevant information than mere feedback on the outcomes of the interaction. Their results show that technicians, working with a system designed to diagnose faults in an electromagnetic device and suggest repairs, sometimes simply judged themselves whether the system’s pending advice was likely to solve the problem, rather than implementing the suggested change and subsequently checking whether it provides the desired results. In other words, these technicians apparently did not wait until unequivocal right/wrong feedback became available to them to form a trust judgement, but rather followed their own judgements on the plausibility of the system’s “line of reasoning” as it was fed back to them. Apparently, people sometimes judge the quality of system advice on feedback regarding the process that led to that advice. Additionally, Lee and Moray (1992) proposed that “process” should also be considered as a trust component of direct experiences, denoting an understanding of the system’s underlying qualities or characteristics (cf. mental models, as representations that capture the workings of a device, Sebrechts, Marsh, and Furstenburg 1987; Carroll and Olson 1988).

Such understanding of how a system arrives at a solution to a problem presumably increases user trust. One aspect of such process feedback that may instil trust is consistency; users may conclude there is a reason for the system’s process feedback to show a particular recurrent pattern. For example, a user may request system advice on a number of different routes and subsequently find that the system persists in favouring routes that use a ring road over those that take a shortcut through the city centre (or vice versa). Despite an initial belief that suitable routes should more-or-less those that take a shortcut through the city centre (or vice versa). Being deprived of such outcome information, however, does not necessarily mean initial trust is solely based on indirect information, such as recommendations. A fact that is usually overlooked is that novice consumers may have the opportunity to simply test-run the application, i.e., to gain direct experience without proceeding the interaction to the point where outcome feedback becomes available. Thus, consumers may try an online bookseller by entering a query for a particular book, adding the book to the shopping basket, acquiring information about shipping and handling costs, but stop the interaction before the deal is actually closed. Similarly, people seeking routing advice may try out the route planner by entering a few destinations and see what the system’s suggestions will be. Thus, they actually engage in direct interaction with the application but still do not have outcome information available to update their trust; outcome feedback, i.e. the route being either fast or not, will only become available after actually driving the suggested routes. The question central to this paper is whether such direct experience may influence consumers’ trust even if feedback on the outcomes is not available, or, in other words, whether consumers can appreciate the pudding before actually tasting it.

In a different field of research, namely that of trust of operators in industrial process controllers and decision aids, Woods, Roth, and Bennett (1987) found anecdotal evidence to suggest that there may indeed be more aspects of one’s own interactions with a system or application to yield trust-relevant information than mere feedback on the outcomes of the interaction. Their results show that technicians, working with a system designed to diagnose faults in an electromagnetic device and suggest repairs, sometimes simply judged themselves whether the system’s pending advice was likely to solve the problem, rather than implementing the suggested change and subsequently checking whether it provides the desired results. In other words, these technicians apparently did not wait until unequivocal right/wrong feedback became available to them to form a trust judgement, but rather followed their own judgements on the plausibility of the system’s “line of reasoning” as it was fed back to them. Apparently, people sometimes judge the quality of system advice on feedback regarding the process that led to that advice. Additionally, Lee and Moray (1992) proposed that “process” should also be considered as a trust component of direct experiences, denoting an understanding of the system’s underlying qualities or characteristics (cf. mental models, as representations that capture the workings of a device, Sebrechts, Marsh, and Furstenburg 1987; Carroll and Olson 1988).

Such understanding of how a system arrives at a solution to a problem presumably increases user trust. One aspect of such process feedback that may instil trust is consistency; users may conclude there is a reason for the system’s process feedback to show a particular recurrent pattern. For example, a user may request system advice on a number of different routes and subsequently find that the system persists in favouring routes that use a ring road over those that take a shortcut through the city centre (or vice versa). Despite an initial belief that suitable routes should more-or-less those that take a shortcut through the city centre (or vice versa). Being deprived of such outcome information, however, does not necessarily mean initial trust is solely based on indirect information, such as recommendations. A fact that is usually overlooked is that novice consumers may have the opportunity to simply test-run the application, i.e., to gain direct experience without proceeding the interaction to the point where outcome feedback becomes available. Thus, consumers may try an online bookseller by entering a query for a particular book, adding the book to the shopping basket, acquiring information about shipping and handling costs, but stop the interaction before the deal is actually closed. Similarly, people seeking routing advice may try out the route planner by entering a few destinations and see what the system’s suggestions will be. Thus, they actually engage in direct interaction with the application but still do not have outcome information available to update their trust; outcome feedback, i.e. the route being either fast or not, will only become available after actually driving the suggested routes. The question central to this paper is whether such direct experience may influence consumers’ trust even if feedback on the outcomes is not available, or, in other words, whether consumers can appreciate the pudding before actually tasting it.
inaccurate after all. To the user, there must be a reason why this seemingly inaccurate route subsection is favoured, and he or she may start conjecturing what that reason might be. Eventually, the user may infer that although the shortcut through the centre seems faster, the system may discard it because it is prone to dense traffic. Although such explanations do not necessarily match the system’s actual procedures, they may facilitate the formation of beliefs about what is happening “inside the computer”. This more profound insight in the system’s inner working may reduce the user’s uncertainty even further, and, thus, lead to a greater willingness to rely on the system’s advice. Indeed, research by Dzindolet, Peterson, Pomranky, Pierce, and Beck (2003) has shown that participants working with a “contrast detector” to find camouflaged soldiers in terrain slides, trusted the system more, and were more likely to rely on its advice when they knew why the decision aid might err, compared to those who were ignorant of such causes. Dzindolet et al.’s studies provide empirical support for the idea that a sense of understanding is beneficial for trust. Yet, their participants did not obtain this information from their own direct experiences with the device, but rather received that information from the experimenter. As such, the assumption that users gain understanding by direct experiences in the absence of outcome feedback remains untested.

In the two experiments reported here, using a route planner as the focal system, the concepts of process and outcome feedback were disentangled. As opposed to outcome feedback, which in this particular case concerns the final right/wrong verdict on generated routing advice, process feedback entails the more subtle and oblique information that is obtained before receiving outcome feedback, from observing the system’s functioning, i.e., the route-generating process and the routes’ appearances. The first experiment was set up to establish whether direct experience influences trust even if feedback on the outcomes of the interaction is not available (this type of direct experience will henceforth be labelled “process feedback”), and to test the effect of recommendations (consensus information). Study 2 will deal with consistency as an aspect of process feedback, its influence on trust in the route planner, and its interaction with consensus information.

STUDY 1: CUE EFFECTIVENESS AND MERE PROCESS FEEDBACK

Participants were requested to interact with four supposedly different route planners, two with route-display in automatic mode, and two without. Prior to the interaction phase they were given high- and low-consensus cues. Trust measurements took place both before and after the actual route-planning phase (or interaction phase), in order to capture both the effect of the cue on trust, as well as a possible effect of the mere presence of Process Feedback. All participants had to complete the route-planning trials in automatic mode.

It was expected that, in the absence of direct information, participants would rely on consensus information to form trust. Specifically, participants who receive high consensus information (i.e. majority endorsement) will have more trust in the system. Contrarily, participants who receive low consensus information (i.e. minority endorsement) are expected to have less trust. Furthermore, it was expected that the influence of this cue on after-interaction trust measures would depend on the availability of other, concurrent information, i.e. whether or not Process Feedback was made available.

Design

Twenty-four undergraduate students participated in this study. The experiment had a 2 (Consensus: Minority Endorsement versus Majority Endorsement) * 2 (Process Feedback: Yes versus No) within-participants design.

Procedure

On arrival at the laboratory, participants were seated in separate cubicles, where the experiment was run at computers. They were told that they would participate in research concerning the way people deal with complex systems, in this case a number of different route planners capable of determining an optimal route by estimating the effects of a vast number of factors, ranging from simple ones, like obstructions and one-way roads, to more complex ones, such as (rush-hour) traffic patterns. During interaction with each of these route planners, they had to obtain five different route suggestions from the system, all of which had to be as fast as possible. The computer supposedly had a database at its disposal, containing route information based on the reported long-time city traffic experiences of ambulance personnel and policemen from that city. These experiences supposedly constituted a reliable set of optimal routes, against which the automatically planned routes could be compared and subsequently scored. Thus, the system’s route planning capability could be validated; each generated route could either be fast or slow, compared to the routing information logged in this database.

During the experiment, a map of London was shown on the screen (see figure 1). Using this map, participants were requested to perform a professional route dispatcher’s task by sending quickest possible routes to imaginary cars, the current location and destination of which were indicated on the screen. The route-planning phase consisted of 5 trials with each of the four route planners; by clicking the “Automatic”-button the route-generating process was started; by clicking “Accept” it was supposedly sent.

Before actually interacting with a route planner, high consensus participants learned that a majority (either “more than 83%” or “app. 88%”) of the students that had participated in a recent pre-test were extremely satisfied. In the low consensus condition, participants were told that this percentage was either “less than 17%” or “app. 12%”. The exact percentages within each condition were varied slightly and were administered in random order to reduce conspicuousness of the within-participants manipulations. Process feedback was manipulated during interaction with each of the route planners, i.e., during the respective route-planning stages. In the Process Feedback condition, the route planner could be observed to find a route by connecting crossings from start to finish. Thus, instead of presenting the system’s route solution in its entirety, each route was divided in small pieces, which were presented consecutively. This allowed participants to follow the actual route-generating process step-by-step, and, likely, made them more aware of the underlying rules. Contrarily, in the No Process Feedback this information was entirely absent; the only visual information that could be obtained were the start and end points of each route, indicated by squares and circles, respectively.

It was assumed that participants would be more committed to the task if a certain risk were to be associated with their choices. Thus, they were allotted ten credits per route-planning trial, which could be put at stake. Directly after a route was indicated on the map, participants were asked to enter any number of the allotted ten credits as stakes. When an automatically generated route, after comparison with the database with reported routes, was judged slower, participants lost the credits they had staked; a quicker route resulted in a doubling of the staked credits; the actual amount of money they would receive for their participation supposedly depended on the number of accumulated credits. To prevent it from influencing participants’ trust, however, this outcome feedback was not given until after completion of the entire experiment.
Both before and after planning routes with each of the route planners, participants were required to rate the extent to which they trusted the system (7-point scales, ranging from “1. very little” to “7. very much”).

Finally, participants were debriefed, thanked and paid. However, as the program gave only bogus feedback, all participants were rewarded equally with 3,- (approximately US$ 3.50).

Results

Before- and after-interaction trust measures

An ANOVA was run, in which both before- and after-interaction trust measures were inserted as a separate variable, Time. Results are shown in figure 2.

The overall main effect of Consensus turned out to be highly significant, $F(1, 23)=38.4; p<0.01$. Both Process Feedback and the interaction between Consensus and Process Feedback did not yield significant effects, $F's<1$. The relative timing of the trust measures did produce a marginally significant main effect, indicating that before-interaction measurements of trust were slightly higher than after-interaction measurements, $F(1, 23)=3.6; p<0.08$. However, the differences between both averages were very small, $M=4.2$ versus $M=4.0$. In addition, a significant interaction between Consensus and Time was found, $F(1, 23)=11.1; p<0.01$; the effect of the Consensus manipulation (Majority versus Minority Endorsement) was largest in the before-interaction measurements. In addition, a significant three-way interaction between Consensus, Process Feedback and Time was found, $F(1, 23)=6.0; p<0.03$ (see Figure 2). Compared to the before-interaction measurements, both in the Process Feedback and No Process Feedback conditions the after-interaction trust measurements tended to shift towards the centre of the scale, especially when a Majority Endorsement cue had been given. This effect was most pronounced in the No Process Feedback conditions.

In addition to a marginally significant main effect of Time, and a highly significant effect of Consensus, $F(1, 23)=3.8; p<0.07, F(1, 23)=25.7; p<0.01$, respectively, additional analyses revealed a highly significant interaction between Consensus and Time when Process Feedback was absent, $F(1, 23)=18.8; p<0.01$. Contrarily, when Process Feedback was given, only a significant effect of Consensus was found, $F(1, 23)=35.7; p<0.01$; no effects of Time or an interaction emerged, all $F's<1$. Apparently, the previously mentioned three-way interaction is accounted for by a significant interaction between Consensus and Time in the No Process Feedback condition.

Conclusions

The results of this experiment clearly show the effect of recommendations on system trust. When participants were led to
believe that only a minority of previous participants were satisfied with the system, they rated trust lower than when majority endorsement information was given.

It was expected that this cue-effect would at least be attenuated by the availability of process feedback, i.e. display of the calculated route. However, this expectation was not supported by the data, as no main effect of Process Feedback, nor a significant interaction was found. Instead, results were found that suggest that when no Process Feedback was given, the after-interaction trust measurements tended to shift towards the centre of the scale, compared to before-interaction measurements.

STUDY 2: CUE EFFECTIVENESS AND PROCESS FEEDBACK CONSISTENCY

This experiment was conducted to study the effects of consensus information in combination with consistent versus random route generation. It was expected that when a random process determines the displayed route, the effect of a consensus manipulation would show no signs of fading over time. Specifically, no differences between the before- or after-interaction trust measurements in terms of cue effectiveness were expected, as participants will constantly recall the consensus information from memory in order to be able to interpret the indefinite visual information, as was found in the previous study. However, as random process feedback may be interpreted as system inadequacy, it could reasonably be expected to find an additional decrease in trust ratings. Conversely, when Process Feedback is consistent, in that it displays routes with a distinct preference, say for arterial roads instead of routes through the centre, this may allow participants to generate a line of reasoning to explain the regularities. As such, consistent Process Feedback contains more information than random Process Feedback, and causes trust to increase, while overruling the influence of consensus information.

Design

Thirty-two undergraduate students participated in this study. The experiment had a 2 (Consensus: Minority Endorsement versus Majority Endorsement) * 2 (Process Feedback: Random versus Consistent) within-participants design.

Procedure

Except for manipulations of Process Feedback, and the addition of manipulation checks, the procedure followed in this experiment was similar to that Study 1. Again, trust was measured by before- and after-interaction measurements, as well as by logging the number off credits staked at the beginning of each trial. Furthermore, Process Feedback was manipulated by displaying routes that either favoured arterial roads (Consistent Process Feedback), or displayed routes that were randomly selected from a subset of alternatives (Random Process Feedback); manipulations of Consensus did not differ from Study 1. The manipulation checks targeted the extent to which participants could predict the generated routes, the generated routes matched the way they themselves would have planned them, they thought the generated routes displayed a certain pattern, and they thought that the generated routes were based on fixed rules.

Results

Manipulation checks

The manipulation of Process Feedback proved quite successful. Analyses of the manipulation checks indicated that consistent Process Feedback allowed participants to get an idea of how the
The Proof of the Pudding is in the Tasting—Or is It? Novice Consumers’ trust in Providers of Online Advice

system functioned. Firstly, participants clearly noted the consistency in the Process Feedback; in the Consistent condition, they rated the extent to which they thought the Process Feedback showed a certain pattern significantly higher than in the Random condition, $M=6.5$ versus $M=4.5$, $F(1, 31)=22.7; p<0.01$. Secondly, consistency enhanced participants’ ability to predict route generation, as indicated by higher predictability ratings in the Consistent condition compared to the Random condition, $M=6.9$ versus $M=5.4$, $F(1, 31)=44.3; p<0.01$. Finally, in the Consistent condition, they believed more strongly that fixed rules were the basis for the generated routes than in the Random condition, $M=6.9$ versus $M=5.5$, $F(1, 31)=15.3; p<0.01$.

In addition, participants rated a better match between the generated routes and the way they would have planned it themselves, when Consistent Process Feedback had been given, $M=5.6$ versus $M=4.6$, $F(1, 31)=8.3; p<0.01$, which may indicate that randomness in Process Feedback is interpreted negatively.

Before- and after-interaction trust measures

A repeated measures ANOVA was performed on the before-interaction trust measure (for both Consistent and Random Process Feedback). Means are displayed in Figure 3.

A highly significant effect of the Consensus manipulation on the before-interaction trust measure was found, indicating that trust was rated higher after a majority cue than after a minority cue, $F(1, 31)=73.8; p<0.01$.

The after-interaction trust measure showed a similar effect of Consensus, $F(1, 31)=5.1; p=0.03$; a Majority Endorsement message led to higher trust ratings than did Minority Endorsement. Furthermore, a significant main effect of Process Feedback was found, $F(1, 31)=7.8; p<0.01$, indicating that trust measures were higher after Consistent Process Feedback than after Random Process Feedback. Finally, no interaction between Consensus and Process Feedback was found, $F(1, 31)=2.3$, ns., suggesting that the effects of Consensus and Process Feedback were additive.

In sum, before-interaction trust measures proved to be affected by consensus information. After-interaction trust measures were affected additively by Consensus and Process Feedback.

Another repeated measures ANOVA revealed a significant three-way interaction between Consensus, Process Feedback and Time, $F(1, 31)=4.4; p=0.04$. Subsequently, the specific hypotheses were tested by performing two separate two-way repeated measures ANOVA’s with Consensus and Time (before, after), one for Random, and one for Consistent Process Feedback.

With regard to Random Process Feedback, the hypothesis stated that both before-interaction, as well as after-interaction trust would be influenced by Consensus information, and that, possibly, trust ratings would decrease over time, as Random Process Feedback was interpreted negatively. Indeed, both before- and after-interaction measures were affected by the Consensus manipulation; ratings were significantly higher following a majority endorsement message than they were after a minority endorsement, $F(1, 31)=25.7; p<0.01$. No interaction was found, $F(1, 23)=2.9, p=0.1$. Additionally, a significant main effect of Time was found: after-interaction measures were lower than before-interaction measures, $F(1, 31)=9.1; p<0.01$.

Concerning the effects of Consistent Process Feedback over time, two different hypotheses were generated. It was expected that Consistent Process Feedback would either have an additive effect on the after-interaction measurements, or would interact with Consensus. Again, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was
performed, revealing a main effect of Consensus, $F(1, 31) = 27.9, p < 0.01$, indicating that trust ratings were higher when a majority cue had been given, than they were after a minority cue. No main effect of Time was found, $F(1, 31) = 1$, ns. Moreover, a highly significant interaction was found, $F(1, 31) = 25.5, p < 0.01$, indicating that the Consensus manipulations only had an effect on the before-interaction trust measurement, but not on the after-interaction measurement.

Mediation analysis

To test whether the relation between process feedback and trust can be explained by the former influencing the user understanding system functioning, a mediation analysis was conducted. As direct measures of understanding were not obtained, ratings of the degree to which participants believed that fixed rules were the basis for the generated routes constituted the mediation variable instead. Figure 4 shows the results of this analysis.

Following the procedure recommended by Baron & Kenny (1986), the belief ratings were first regressed on Process Feedback; results showed that variations in Process Feedback significantly accounted for variations in the presumed mediator system trust, $t (127) = 4.3, p < 0.01$. Second, regressing trust ratings on Process Feedback showed the relation between these two variables to be significant as well, $t (127) = 2.5, p < 0.02$. Third, regressing trust on both Belief ratings and Process Feedback yielded marginally significant relations, $t (127) = 1.8, p < 0.08$, and $t (127) = 1.7, p = 0.09$, respectively. As illustrated by Figure 4, inserting the belief ratings in the regression effectively lowered Process Feedback regression coefficients from $B = 0.64$ ($p < 0.02$) to $B = 0.46$ ($p < 0.09$). Although this finding would support of at least partial mediation by beliefs about system functioning, the fact that the relation between the presumed mediator and the dependent variable was only marginally significant necessitates careful interpretation.

Conclusion

In sum, consensus information proved to have an effect on both before- and after-measures of trust. As in the previous experiment, majority endorsement provided participants with information that was subsequently used to build trust on. Furthermore, also Process Feedback provided participants with information that was used to judge the system in terms of trustworthiness, depending on the type of that information, i.e., random or consistent.

With regard to Random Process Feedback, these data show that the differences in trust between majority and minority endorsement treatments did not change over time, an indication that indeed participants needed the consensus information stored in memory to interpret the randomised information presented on the screen. Additionally, after-interaction measures of trust were lower than before-interaction measures in the random Process Feedback conditions; apparently, randomised Process Feedback was used to decrease trust, if not to form distrust on.

In the Consistent Process Feedback treatments a different pattern emerged. Although consensus information influenced participants to rate their initial levels of trust as either high (majority information) or low (minority information), this effect was absent in the after-interaction measure, which was in line with one of the two hypotheses.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The two reported studies provide support for the contention that direct experiences may influence trust even in the absence of outcome feedback, i.e., routes proving to be successful or unsuccessful. Experiment 1 shows that cue effectiveness can be moderated by process information. When process feedback was omitted, the influence of the cue, given beforehand, diminished over time; participants clearly rated their trust less extreme afterwards than they did beforehand: very low initial trust ratings increased somewhat, whereas high trust decreased with interaction. Presumably, because the elapsed time between the cue manipulations and the first trust measurement was much smaller than that between the cue manipulation and the second trust measurement, the latter could have caused participants’ recollection of the cue content to become less salient, resulting in less extreme trust ratings. On the other hand, if process feedback was present, trust ratings remained fairly stable over time. As the corresponding routes likely did not provide clues how fast they actually were, plausibly, they provided rather ambiguous information. Possibly, this necessitated participants to use the only other information available, i.e., the consensus manipulation, in order to decide whether a particular route should be classified as either slow or fast. In other words, the cue content was probably used to fill in the gaps that the visual information provided. As a result, the cue content would have to be recalled from memory with each new displayed route, thus decreasing the possibility that the memory of the cue content would fade.

Providing participants with process feedback with a random appearance resulted in a pattern of trust ratings similar to the first experiment. Presumably, random process feedback, too, provided
indefinite visual information that required cue content for interpretation. Hence, the effect of consensus information was present both before and after the interaction stage. Nevertheless, randomised routes also resulted in a general decrease of trust ratings. Presumably, randomness was taken as a sign of a system’s incompetence. Consistent process feedback, on the other hand, apparently did provide information on which trust judgements were subsequently based. The regularities that could be observed in the displayed routes, such as a preference for routes along arterial roads, led to higher levels of trust. In fact, its effects were strong enough to completely annihilate the effects of consensus information.

The finding that indirect information is overruled by direct experience seems to be consistent with the ideas put forward by a number of researchers (McKnight, Choudhury, and Kacmar 2002; McKnight et al. 1998; Fazio and Zanna 1981). In their view, indirect experiences simply yield less information than direct experiences. However, these results suggest that this is not entirely accurate. Whether or not direct experiences provide more information than indirect experiences depends in part on the nature of the former. If process feedback is consistent, a user may form expectations and beliefs about the system’s functioning, which may indeed overrule the less informational indirect information; the mediation analysis reported provides some support for the contention that such beliefs mediate the established relation between process feedback and trust. However, in the case of random feedback indirect information is actually necessary for interpretation; although this contention may be speculative, the data revealed that this particular combination of direct and indirect information resulted in persistence, rather than extinction of the effect of consensus information.

Although the importance of information from others seems to be acknowledged in the field of marketing, as the examples in the introduction illustrate, the research presented is the first to experimentally test its effects on consumer trust in a system. In these experiments, consensus information was used as indirect information, but naturally there are many other possibilities to study in regard to system trust, either alone or in concurrence with other types of information. Besides recommendations, one could, for example, also concentrate on the effects of applying humanlike aspects, such as speech and emotions, to system interfaces.

The concept of process feedback, and its possible beneficial effects on understanding has received only scant attention, since it has found its way into theories on system trust a few decades ago (e.g., see Lee and Moray 1992; Zuboff 1988). Although Dzindolet et al. (2003) quite recently tested the effects of understanding of a system’s processes on trust, the emergence of understanding from actually observing process feedback remained obscured. Therefore, these experiments are also the first to try and uncover how process feedback plays a role in the development of system trust, via understanding.

Needless to say that much work needs to be done to fully uncover all trust-relevant aspects of direct information. Since interactions with systems normally entail both outcome as well as process feedback, it seems important to study not only the former, which yields feedback in clear right/wrong verdicts, but also the latter, that may contain far subtler clues. For to fully understand users’ perceptions of, and interactions with systems, what matters is not just what these systems do, but also how they do it.

REFERENCES
The study examines collecting behaviour in the context of a commercial, mass-produced good-pre-recorded music. In-depth, qualitative interviews were carried out to explore the nature of music collecting. The evidence suggests that music collectors do not identify with the stereotype of a “collector” because they regard their consumption activity as more mainstream. Features of their collecting behaviour are influenced by the features of the product category such as changing formats, distribution and fashion. This sample’s music collections could principally be classified as conscious-horizontal-structured; a distinctive combination that is heavily influenced by the importance of the collection to self image and its representation of evolving self-identities.

ABSTRACT

The study examines collecting behaviour in the context of a commercial, mass-produced good-pre-recorded music. In-depth, qualitative interviews were carried out to explore the nature of music collecting. The evidence suggests that music collectors do not identify with the stereotype of a “collector” because they regard their consumption activity as more mainstream. Features of their collecting behaviour are influenced by the features of the product category such as changing formats, distribution and fashion. This sample’s music collections could principally be classified as conscious-horizontal-structured; a distinctive combination that is heavily influenced by the importance of the collection to self image and its representation of evolving self-identities.

INTRODUCTION

Collecting has long been recognised to provide valuable insights into the meanings that people attach to possessions (e.g. Veblen, 1899; Rigby and Rigby, 1944; Lewis, 1946). It is not a marginal activity, Bennett (1924) emphasises that it is a pervasive phenomenon: “Collecting is a world habit. Collectors practise it consciously and with a definite, recognized aim. The rest of us practise it more or less unconsciously”. Belk (1982) was responsible for drawing attention to collecting as an aspect of consumption. In his early work he highlighted the role of collecting as a medium for expressing cultural meaning and argued that the traditional assumptions about consumption were inadequate to account for collecting. Subsequent research demonstrated the salient role that collections play in consumers’ lives (Belk et al., 1988) and highlighted that they are often highly cathected into the extended Self (Belk, 1988). Despite widespread acknowledgement of collecting as an important consumer activity, there remains a dearth of empirical research to substantiate and develop a theoretical framework for collecting behaviour. Yet empirical evidence is much needed, particularly given the diversity of consumer collections and the more holistic view of consumption behaviour that they offer.

One type of collecting that has been notably neglected in the literature is collecting commercialised, mass-produced goods, which is a relatively mainstream activity although the extent to which it is a conscious process varies. The purpose of this article is to investigate collecting behaviour in this context by examining collections of pre-recorded music. It is based on the premise that understanding this type of collecting behaviour can contribute to our appreciation of consumer collecting, but also of consumption more widely as it offers a holistic view of consumption, providing insights into the ways in which consumers combine constellations of goods over time to construct, maintain and modify their self-identities.

The first section of the article reviews literature on collecting behaviour. In the second section we introduce music consumption, with respect to the forms it takes and its meaning for consumers. The research method adopted is then outlined. In the fourth section we present the findings of the research along with a discussion of these in relation to the extant literature on collecting. Finally conclusions are drawn, the limitation of the research outlined and suggestions for further research advanced.

COLLECTIONS AND COLLECTING

Rigby and Rigby (1944) hold that “rarely does a man arise upon a certain morning and announce abruptly, over his breakfast coffee, ‘Today I shall begin a collection!’” (p. 97). Rather it is more common to waken to the realisation that one has, without intent, already become a collector. Collecting has nevertheless been defined as “the process of actively, selectively and passionately acquiring and possessing things removed from ordinary use and perceived as part of a set of non-identical objects or experiences” (Belk, 1995: 67) highlighting that it is non-utilitarian and stressing the importance of its composition and structure. Belk et al. (1988) differentiate between collecting, accumulation, possession and hoarding; an accumulator is acquisitive but lacks selectivity, a mere possessor of items lacks the obsessiveness of a collector, and a hoarder is possessive but views the items possessed primarily as utilitarian commodities rather than extra-utilitarian, sacred items. Elsewhere, researchers have emphasised that the utilitarian value of objects is of secondary or no concern to collectors (McIntosh and Schmeichel, 2004; Stewart, 1994). Belk (1982) argued that traditional assumptions about consumer behaviour were inadequate to account for collecting, in that with each new item that enters a collection may come increasing returns as opposed to the traditionally assumed diminishing returns.

Classifications of collectors have been advanced based on the motives for collecting (Saari, 1997 cited in McIntosh and Schmeichel, 2004) and a collector’s level of commitment (Rigby and Rigby, 1944). Belk et al. (1988) suggested a number of further dimensions by which one can usefully classify collections. These include the conscious/unconscious dimension (i.e. the extent to which a recurrent theme is intentional as opposed to haphazard), the vertical/horizontal dimension (i.e. the degree to which a collection is housed in one centrally located area as opposed to being scattered throughout a space) and the structured/unstructured dimension (i.e. how strongly the collection demonstrates elements of order as opposed to disarray).

Motives for collecting have been widely examined (e.g. Formanek, 1991; Baker and Gentry, 1996; Long and Schiffman, 1997). Pearce (1992) identified seventeen motives for collecting (e.g. leisure, aesthetics, competition, risk, fantasy, a sense of community, prestige, achieving immortality) while Belk et al. (1991) hold that collecting is driven by two basic motivations: legitimisation and self extension. Belk (1988) identified collections as a special case in the extended self of consumers. Collections of items such as photographs, record albums or clothing are very expressive of the owner’s identity as they are often highly visible and representative of the owner’s judgement and taste (Belk et al., 1988). Furthermore, due to the time and energy spent gathering the collection, it is natural that it may be seen as more a part of one’s Self than are isolated consumption items (Belk, 1995). As collections are often highly cathected into the extended self, losing one’s collection is analogous to suffering a diminished sense of Self (McLeod, 1984). Collections do not necessarily require completion. Indeed many collectors fear the completion of their collection: “for if one is a collector and there is nothing left to collect, who is one then?” (Belk et al., 1988: p. 552). It is for this reason that on nearing completion of a collection, many collectors redefine the boundaries of the collection in order to avoid such an outcome (Belk et al., 1988). On the other hand Danet and Katriel (1989) note that where the scope of collectibles seems infinite or is unknown, collectors can concentrate on subsets to make collecting manageable.
An important motivation for collecting is the ability to exercise explicit control over one’s own “little world” (Belk, 1988) and it is gratifying to achieve the distinction that arises from possessing superior knowledge and being considered as an expert in a specific area (Rigby and Rigby, 1944). Collectors are often characterised as displaying some degree of competitiveness with respect to other collectors of the same objects (Veblen, 1899; Lewis, 1946; Long and Schiffman, 1997), with those possessing a collection that is more extensive, unique or complete than others’ often believed to have a raised level of “renown in the eyes of self, the public or other collectors” (p. 186). Belk (1995) remarked that collectors find their motivation for continuing to collect through the “thrill of the hunt”; i.e. the pleasure that they are able to experience through the act of searching out the next item to add to their collection.

Belk, Sherry and Wallendorf (1989) suggest that those items that consumers consider as “special” (Myers, 1985) are considered to be sacred by their owners. In the case of collections, owners arguably regard the collection as sacred and consequently sacrilise objects by entering them into the collection and desacrilise them by removing them (Belk et al, 1988).

Collecting is an important aspect of consumption in mass markets because it legitimises multiple purchases that might otherwise be seen as extravagant. Over the last decade, some research effort has been devoted to examining the foregoing issues in more commercialised areas. For instance, Long and Schiffman (1997) examined collecting of Swatch watches to elaborate on collecting theory and Slater (2001) examined how Coca Cola and Hallmark use collecting to increase brand loyalty. However, there remains a dearth of empirical research to validate and build collecting theory and, in particular, to investigate experiences of collectors in the context of commercialised, mass-market goods.

**“LET THE MUSIC PLAY”**1

Music has been described as “the vernacular of the human soul” (Geoffrey Latham, 1887-1980) (www.musicforthesoul.org/quotes), it means a great deal to a great many people and it is widely consumed. Despite its broad appeal and commercial relevance, research into its consumption is relatively sparse.

Music consumption was defined by Holbrook and Anand (1990) as the act of listening to a piece of music. Music is relatively unusual in that it may be sampled and consumed for free through such mediums as television and radio or at a nightclub (Lacher and Mizerski, 1994) and purchase is not necessarily a prerequisite to consumption. Nevertheless, in 2002 worldwide sales of music were estimated to exceed $32 billion (LeGrand, 2002) and a survey in the UK indicated that only 9% of the population believe that there is no point in buying music when they can listen to it freely on the radio (Mintel, 2003). Why? Because purchase or “active music consumption” (Shankar, 2000) gives the consumer active and temporal control (Lacher and Mizerski, 1994) but also because music serves a symbolic role. As with other meaningful possessions, music consumption contributes to the construction of identity or sense of Self, and in letting other people know who we are, or would like to be, what group(s) we belong to, or would like to belong to (Shankar, 2000).

The importance of music to the Self is particularly pertinent for young people. Youth markets frequently use music to resist authority at all levels, assert their personalities, develop peer relationships and romantic entanglements, and learn about things that their parents and schools aren’t telling them (Lull, 1992). Research has demonstrated that people develop preferences for popular musical styles during late adolescence or early adulthood, and these preferences prevail over other styles of music for the rest of their lives (Holbrook and Schindler, 1989). This explains the tendency for music purchase to occur most frequently during this age range, when musical preferences are formed, and to tail off slightly once this has occurred. During this time in a young adult’s life, it is also common to construct social bonds in the form of music-based subcultures (Lull, 1992) from which one is able to form a great deal of one’s perceptions of self-identity. Indeed, Frith (1996) states that “music seems to be key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective” (p. 110). He goes on to suggest that we can actually look at different musical genres in order to document the way in which music gives people different identities, thus placing them in different social subcultures. Thornton (1995) suggests that “just as books and paintings display cultural capital in the family home, so subcultural capital is objectified in the form of fashionable haircuts and well-assembled record collections (full of well-chosen, limited edition ‘white label’ twelve-inches and the like)” (p. 11).

This study will contribute to the extant literature by examining music possessions as collections. The principle objective is to examine how aspects of collecting documented in the extant literature are manifest in the mainstream and commercialised context of music collecting.

**RESEARCH APPROACH: “THIS IS HOW WE DO IT”**2

In-depth interviews were carried out to gain a rich and thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the meanings that consumers attach to their music collections and their collecting behaviour. The interviews were semi-structured, enabling the researchers to explore key themes regarding collecting behaviour and identity (Mick and Buhl, 1992; Schouten, 1991). The precise nature of the interviews evolved from the first through to the last as more knowledge was created on the subject and recurrent themes emerged. The interviews were conducted at the informant’s home, in view of their music collections (or the main part of their collections in those instances where parts of the collection were located elsewhere) in order to informants with recall of the content and nature of the collection. Each interview lasted between 60 and 100 minutes, was recorded and later transcribed.

The literature reviewed above claims that music is of greatest significance to the youth market (e.g. Lull, 1992). Commercially, young people are recognised to account for a greater proportion of music sales. A study by the Recording Industry Association of America in 1990 illustrated that in the US 69% of music was purchased by 15-34 year olds (Burnett, 1996). Therefore, a sample of 15-34 years olds was selected from respondents in a previous quantitative study who had indicated their willingness to become involved in this qualitative research. Ten in-depth interviews were conducted. A profile of the informants in terms of demographics and the number of key themes were identified through the on-going analysis conducted. A profile of the informants evolved with recall of the content and nature of the collection. Each interview lasted between 60 and 100 minutes, was recorded and later transcribed. The interview saturated between 60 and 100 minutes, was recorded and later transcribed.

An interpretative approach was taken to analyse the data. A number of key themes were identified through the on-going analysis that was concurrent with data collection. Once all of the data were collected and transcribed they were coded and categorised inductively into themes that represented general phenomenon within the context of the area of study (Spiggle, 1994; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Miles and Huberman, 1984).

1 “Let The Music Play”–Barry White (1975)

2 “This Is How We Do It”–Montell Jordan (1995)
RESULTS: “DEEPER AND DEEPER”\textsuperscript{3}

The themes discussed below relate to aspects of collecting within the context of music consumption: music collectors’ reluctance to be considered as collectors; search habits, obsessive, compulsive and addictive tendencies towards collecting and competitiveness; storage, location and ordering of collections; and finally attitudes towards the disposal and loss of collections.

MUSIC COLLECTORS AS COLLECTORS

Almost all of the participants seemed to attach some sort of negative stigma to the term “collection” and “collector”. Many informants articulated that collectors tend to be associated with socially frowned upon activities such as stamp collecting:

I don’t know whether I’d say that I collect them [CDs], because I don’t know, I don’t see CDs necessarily as a collection—collections sounds a little bit sad, it’s like stamps and stuff. Um, but it is the biggest collection of things that I have, so in that sense yeah it is a collection. (Naomi)

Rejection of the label “collector” reflects notions of negative self-image (cf. Banister and Hogg, 2001) and supports Belk’s (1995) remarks that collecting can result in alienation from other people. One distinctive feature of music collections is that they tend to predominantly comprise mass-produced items and the core of a typical music collection is not unique, but is widely owned. It was for this reason, as well as the view that music is commonly consumed, that participants did not feel that their collecting activity set them apart from peers, as a “geek” or an “anorak” with some peculiar interest. Rather a number of participants felt that they were opinion leader in a mainstream activity.

Search Habits

When Rigby and Rigby (1944) talk of “true” collectors they refer to people who collect Chinese Jade or rare manuscripts. Because music is mass-produced a lower level of search activity is required to compile a collection. However, as Taylor (1980: p.28) argued with respect to book collectors: “almost no collector is content merely to gather new books as they fall from the press” and many music collectors get their thrills from searching out more unique items. For example, Rob talked of one specific CD by his favourite childhood band 2 Unlimited, for which he had been actively searching since the age of 11 in order to complete his collection of that particular band:

I don’t actually have everything they’ve ever released because when I was at school someone borrowed their first ever single off me—“Get Ready For This”—and they never gave it back! And I’ve never been able to get it back so I’ve spent like the last 10 years looking for another copy of it! But I’ve never been able to find it. For years and years every time I went into a new record shop I’d be looking under “T” in the singles section to see if they happened to have it but I could never find it. … I’ve tried looking on the Internet and everything but as far as everyone else is concerned they were rubbish so nowhere has it. That’s the thing— it would mean absolutely nothing to anyone that does have it but if I found that single it would be the most exciting thing in the world! It would be like I’d be completing a 12-year mission! (Rob)

\textsuperscript{3}“Deeper And Deeper”—Madonna (1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No. CDs</th>
<th>No. tapes</th>
<th>No. vinyl records</th>
<th>No. mini discs</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Music collection most imp possession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rob (R)</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna (D)</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellie (E)</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian (I)</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin (M)</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naomi (N)</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James (J)</td>
<td>Marketer</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith (K)</td>
<td>Legal Assistant</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lousie (L)</td>
<td>Market Researcher</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam (S)</td>
<td>Financial Coordinator</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{TABLE 1}

Sample Profile

---

**European Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 7)** / 287
Such activities reflect Belk’s (1995: p.72) description of the collector’s shopping experience: “the sort of shopping that collectors do is as far as it possibly can be from being an onerous task. It is instead a treasure-hunt, an adventure, a quest, a delight.”

A characteristic common among many collectors is the simultaneous desire for and fear of completing a collection (Belk et al., 1988). However, this did was not an issue for our music collectors who emphasised that the definition of their collections were flexible and dynamic.

Search habits and modes of acquisition among music collectors have been quite heavily influenced in recent years by the changes in technology. Wainwright (2003) argues that it is teenagers who are increasingly the pirates while twenty- and thirty-somethings are responsible for shaping the album market. Lynskey (2003) emphasises that people still love to buy music and Wainwright (2003) suggests that many people who are currently illegally copying tracks from the Internet are “samplers” who are likely to go on to buy albums; an argument supported by some of our informants. The benefit of “sampling” was reiterated by participants in this study but it was also emphasised that downloading onto MP3s was not comparable to “having” the tangible object (CDs). This opinion was most prevalent amongst the older participants who also suggested that searching for music on the Internet, rather than shopping for it, takes the fun out of collecting. Older informants’ resistance to technological change in the form of the Internet was reflective of comparable attitudes towards changes in the past such as replacing vinyl with CDs. Technological developments will inevitably change the way in which music is collected in the future and will do so in ways that cannot as yet be predicted and further research will soon be needed to investigate the inevitable impacts.

Addictive Tendencies among Collectors

“What can’t be disputed is that record buying is addictive. The more CDs you buy and enjoy, the more new ones you seek out” (Lynskey, 2003).

Collectors who highly cathect their collections have been alluded to by some as approaching levels of addiction (Johnston and Beddow, 1986; Danet and Katriel, 1986) and this was similarly evident within the our sample. All but two of the participants made some reference within their interviews of “having to have” certain CDs, records or tapes, a collecting phenomenon cited by Belk (1995):

“I used to be really into Oasis and I bought all their singles ... I had all their singles and I needed, yeah I needed to have them really because of the B-Sides—more songs, and because I was so into them I wanted to hear more and more stuff and if there was something that I didn’t have I needed to have it. (Ian)

Informants also spoke of compulsive tendencies towards music consumption in general, irrespective of individual items that might be particularly desired, in a sense purchasing music in order to satisfy a craving:

“When I got back from holiday in Costa Rica, I hadn’t bought a CD for ages, I hadn’t been to a record shop in ages, and I just went in and had the urge to buy everything! I managed to limit it to 5! But yeah, I always buy whatever I want and then think about the money later, when the credit card bills turn up! (Naomi)

The sacredness of music collections was evident from the research, both of the older participants using religious metaphors with respect to their music collections and music consumption habits:

“I have this book called ‘The 1000 Best Albums’—my bible. I look through it all the time looking for ideas of what albums to buy next... My friend who I was talking about earlier—the room where he keeps his 10,000 CDs, he calls it his shrine. (Sam)

Holbrook (1986), in his autobiographical account of his music consumption experiences, similarly referred to his weekly “pilgrimages” to his “mecca” (local record store) when he was a teenager in the 1950’s. These religious references reflect how music possessions are valued as part of the extended self. It was not clear why these references were used by the older rather than younger participants in the study, but it may be that the sacralisation of and attachment to collections develops over time.

Competitiveness among Music Collectors

A knock-on effect of the obsessive predisposition of collectors is the tendency to display some degree of competitiveness with respect to other collectors of the same object or objects. Belk (1995: p. 68) suggests that “success in competition with others brings the collector heightened status (within his or her collecting sphere) and feelings of pride and accomplishment.” This was evident when informants compared their music collections to those of friends and acquaintances, expressing sentiments of pride in their own collections:

Yeah we’re definitely proud of it—and we’ve got quite a few. And it’s cool when people look through it—we want people to do that! You want people to admire it. (Louise)

Alternatively, informants conveyed their jealousy with respect to collections of others:

There is a bloke on my course called [friend’s name] and we went round his house to do a project one time and his parents were like really rich and he had the biggest CD collection I’d ever seen and he had like 800 CDs just like all along one wall. And like, so yeah—it’s not so much that I liked all the CDs in it; it was just impressive that he had so many. I’d love to have a CD collection like that one day; I don’t think it’ll ever happen but yeah... I was maybe jealous of the amount, but to have that many CDs that you actually like that’d be really cool. (Martin)

Music collectors appear to relish the prospect of standing out amongst other music collectors. Belk (1995) proposes that in order to achieve this distinction collectors often strive to own rare, valued, and unique possessions, and that collectors owning such items can be distinguished as the more bona fide collectors in comparison to the more casual collector who does not. Sam and Donna, the two interviewees in their 30’s, spoke more frequently of the desire to own rare and limited edition versions of certain records than other participants:

I remember I had the Original Quadrophenia LP with a black and white picture booklet that I’d spent years looking for. I’d searched high and low for it before picking it up at some dingy record shop. Then I lent it to a friend who left it by a window & it got condensation all over it which made the artwork all wet and so he put it next to the radiator to dry out and the record got warped. I was utterly devastated—you couldn’t get hold of another copy if you tried—I didn’t talk to my friend for weeks after that! (Sam)
However, there was recognition among some of the informants that limited edition music is often too mass-produced nowadays to hold any significant value, instead seeing them as something of a marketing ploy.

I own some limited edition but they’re so not limited edition! Everyone’s got them! Like limited edition Madonna CDs which everyone’s got. I would value them a lot more if they were more limited but I know lots of people that have got the same limited edition things that I’ve got and so they’re not so unique. Um, at the time of buying them I probably thought that they were unique and that’s why I bought them. (Keith)

Therefore, Keith looks elsewhere to find rare items, buying a lot of CDs imported from other countries. This raises the issue that consumer society can detract from the collecting experience or, at least forces people to be more creative if they truly want to create a distinctive collection.

LOCATION, STORAGE AND ORDERING OF COLLECTIONS

The location, storage and ordering of collections was highly dependent on the characteristics of the individual collector, especially their attitude towards organisation as well as their financial and spatial resources. While an individual may wish to house their collection together, meticulously arranged, if they do not have the space to do so, they will not be able to. While Sam’s “obsessive” music collector friend housed his entire music collection in one room “along each of the walls of the room”, every other participant suggested that their collection was somewhat more dispersed. Rob stated that in his current accommodation, where just over half of his collection is housed, his CDs are located in 10 different racks or piles around his bedroom. Participants’ descriptions of their dispersed music collections were resonant of Belk et al.’s (1988) vertical/horizontal dimension, defined as the extent to which a collection is housed in one centrally located array. Every one of the informants made reference to their music collections being housed in a variety of locations. Many of them kept their different formats separately. Louise suggested that tapes “don’t look pretty”, hence she keeps them out of sight in a box. A number of those interviewed were students and therefore kept some portion of their collections with them at their house in their university town with the remainder were students and therefore kept some portion of their collections she keeps them out of sight in a box. A number of those interviewed individual items to be embarrassing:

CDs (Belk et al., 1989):

My favourite CDs are in my CD rack. And then I’ve got my 2nd favourite CDs which are in like my CD container which is attached to my wall, and then I’ve got other ones which are just like under lock and key! Hidden. They’re, they are probably some of the very first singles and albums that I bought, um some tragic like stuff like, god I hate to think—the Rednex and Celine Dion, like Take That and stuff like that—and they’re just hidden because they’re so embarrassing, and because I don’t listen to them—they don’t seem to go with the rest of my collection, like I wouldn’t know where to put them. And I don’t want to have like a Rednex CD next to, say, a Bjork CD in my collection—it just doesn’t go! (Keith)

Keith seemed particularly adamant that his collection be ordered in a way that communicates a positive image about his musical taste, and hence his public musical Self, to others who come into contact with his music collection. Even within his music collection that is on public display, a sense of ranking and ordering is apparent:

I mean they’re all arranged by how credible they are really! Every time like I move back to uni or move back home or move house, like I have a kind of sorting of my CDs when I’m in my bedroom and–my CD rack, it takes probably an hour to put 40 CDs in a CD rack because I’m chopping and changing where each CD will go and which CD will look good next to another CD, and like which CDs should be higher up the CD rack and lower down–higher up’s better. (Keith)

This organisation and segregation of collections is noted by Stewart (1993: pp.154-5): “the spatial organization of the collection, left to right, front to back, behind and before, depends upon the creation of an individual perceiving and apprehending the collection with eye and hand. The collection’s space must move between the public and the private, between display and hiding.” Stewart (1993: p.155) goes on to suggest that “the collection is not constructed by its elements; rather, it comes to exist by means of its principle of organization.” Herein lies an essential element of collecting as yet under-researched in the literature; the expressive nature of a collector’s self identity through their collection is as much communicated by the content of the displayed collection as by what is omitted from the collection and hidden from view. As such, in order to understand the musical Self, one needs to delve into both the public and the private musical selves.

DISPOSAL AND LOSS

McCracken (1986) argued that cultural meaning works to constitute our world and that this is in a state of constant flux. Meanings that consumers instil in their possessions are also susceptible to change, and if for whatever reason they fall prey to neglect and disuse (LaBranche, 1973) or come to misrepresent images of current or future selves (Kleine, Kleine and Allen, 1995) they may end up being discarded (Roster, 2001). However, despite repeated references by participants to certain items within their collections which had certainly fallen into neglect and no longer represented images of any current or future Self, informants repeatedly stated their reluctance to dispose of any component parts of their music collections. When asked if he would ever pass on any of his collection onto anyone else, Rob reacted as follows:

Oh god no. I’d never do that! That’d be sacrilege! I mean even the really awful stuff I have I have to keep. I don’t know, even your really bad stuff it says so much about you and everything has memories doesn’t it, so if you get rid of it you’re getting rid of those memories aren’t you, no matter how bad they might be. (Rob)

Further, those informants who had disposed of part of their collection in the past expressed a degree of regret:
Between the ages of 16 and 17 I got heavily into the Thrash, Speed Metal scene and bought all sorts of obscure stuff from little known bands such as Kreator, Death Angel and such. After that particular scene I branched out into different stuff and gave a lot of the trashier stuff away as it wasn’t very challenging to me anymore. Years later I regretted that a little as it represented a period of my life. Even if it sounds a bit naff and dated now I wouldn’t mind hearing it again. I doubt I’ll find it though. So I won’t be giving anymore away. (Sam)

Rather than hoarding, in this instance it is the commodification of experiences and emotions that music collections represent and embody that acts as a barrier to any normal desire to dispose of possessions which no longer have any functional or aesthetic value. Following previous research on the involuntarily loss of possessions (Sayre and Horne, 1996; Rosenblatt, Walsh and Jackson, 1976; Maguire, 1980), informants were asked how they would feel if they were to lose their music collections.

I’d be gutted. My music collection is the main material thing I have. Ok I have plenty of books too but my music is a lot more personal. As for clothes and other possessions I’d not be so bothered if they went up in flames. My music collection is something I’ve had since I was about 13 so it’d be horrendous if I lost it. (Sam)

Keith spoke with an air of bewilderment at the prospect of losing his music collection:

Ah, distressed. In that, “what am I going to do with my life?” I just can’t. I don’t know, it’s cos it such a… it is a big part of my everyday life is listening to music and therefore if that huge chunk of what I’ve built up over like 10 years disappeared, I’d be like not very happy. Um, parts of it would be replaceable I suppose, but not as a CD collection, as a whole. But irrespective of the fact that a lot of CDs aren’t made anymore so you wouldn’t be able to get hold of them again, the time and effort that I’ve put into buying the CDs and certain CDs which were difficult to get hold of, and CDs that people have given me, it would be quite difficult to replace it, no it would be impossible. (Keith)

The extent to which individuals fear the loss of their music collections, or any valued possessions, might in fact be determined by the extent to which people consider themselves to be materialistic. Richins and Dawson (1992) suggested that people holding strong material values place possessions and their acquisition at the centre of their lives, valuing possessions as a means of achieving happiness. The level of cathexis of music collections and hence sentiments towards their loss may be directly affected by a person’s materialistic values (see Belk, 1985).

CONCLUSIONS

The paper set out to explore collecting in the context of commercial, mass-produced goods such as pre-recorded music. Music collectors display many of the characteristics of other collectors (e.g. competitiveness, addiction, sacrilisation), yet they rejected the negative collector stereotypes. They believed that the widespread consumption of music meant that they were not regarded as “geekish” by their peers. Rather their musical taste combined with their expertise was an important means for the expression of self-identity. Moreover, their collections enabled them to carefully craft this aspect of their Self through its specific organisation. Indeed, where music is highly cathected into the extended self, the centrality of music to self image is indicative of a ‘musical self’, which is open to constant change and adaptation and as well as frequently being selectively communicated to others through the existence of both a public and private musical self. Although the musical self is only one component of an individual’s total self image, there is variance in its dominance and the extent of its influence. Some people clearly allow music to guide behaviour in many aspects of their lives such as their work, clothing, holidays and even friends, while for others their musical self is more restricted. This variance might be conceptualised as a continuum along which people are positioned according to the level of influence of their musical self within to their total self. Aspects of collecting music are changing with technological developments, for example, for some download music on MP3s could not compare with the sentiments experienced through ownership of physical product such as a CD or vinyl record. Further, changes in business practices such that even limited editions are not, in fact, a rarity have forced collectors to innovate if they wish to distinguish themselves by ownership of scarce items. With regard to the classification advanced by Belk et al. (1988) (conscious/unconscious, structured/unstructured, vertical/horizontal), the predominant combination that emerged from this empirical study was of conscious-horizontal-structured collections. This distinctive combination of horizontal with the conscious-structured classifications was heavily influenced by the importance of the collection for self-image and its reflection of evolving self-identities. However, this profile of music collections is likely to be due, at least in part, to the nature of the sample and needs to be further examined through wider consumer research.

KEY REFERENCES


Multiple Realities, Multiple Meanings and a Mountain of Objects: Collectors in their Social World
Nia Hughes, Staffordshire University, U.K.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Interest in popular collecting has grown exponentially in the UK and US in recent years, yet we know very little about collecting in the context of families and coupledom. This paper explores the collecting literature, then examines the social world of collectors, focusing on those aspects of their collections and collecting that impact upon their partner, and the social settings in which they interact, as well as the subject-object relationships involved.

A new conceptual framework is outlined that drives this study. This framework, derived from the author’s prolonged contact in the field, suggests that the social world of the collector, and the meanings which collector-couples derive from collecting, may usefully be viewed by reference to three networks: the social network, the legitimising network, and the material culture network. The framework or model is derived from personal observations over many years, and attempts to capture significant relationships between individual collectors, their collected objects and their social interactions. The three major networks are conceptualised as follows:

- the satisfactions and experiences gained from group membership and/or family membership (the social network) i.e. being part of the collecting fraternity
- the satisfactions gained by transfer of meaning from the culturally constituted world to individual consumers, and the approval contained therein (the legitimising network);
- and finally, the subject-object relationships and the satisfactions gained from possessions and “having things” (the material culture network);

This study focuses on couples as collectors, with all interviews taking place in the collectors’ homes. As an researcher, I am seeking to describe and understand some of the realities that each collector expresses during the course of ethnographic interviewing (Holt, 1997). The aim is to provide sufficiently “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of individual cases, such that the reader will understand something of the micro picture. A methodology that includes participant observations, ethnographic interviews and subjective insights will offer micro-pictures of collecting couples and their social worlds as they map onto the conceptual framework. Although the discussion does not claim to go beyond the micro-level, it offers new insights for our understanding of collectors, of collecting couples and of consumption practices.

Couples were recruited through contacts established by means of my own participation in the collecting world and interviewed using the ethnographic interview style to get as close as possible to natural conversation and naturalistic approaches to enquiry. Interviews lasted on average two hours. Direct and indirect, but unscripted, questions were used to follow up those issues central to the meaning of possessions and relationships, as conceptualised in the Three Networks Model. Couples were interviewed as dyads, and at intervals, as individuals, with some return visits to gather additional information.

Interview data were transcribed, then each set of dyadic data was separately analysed and coded to identify recurring themes and issues within an interview. Then the data were regrouped to show how similarities and differences emerged across dyads (i.e across interviews with different dyads). Furthermore, these interpretations and similarities were then mapped onto the conceptual model to test the framework and to make some judgement regarding its validity, albeit in the context of qualitative enquiry. This process is consistent with the aim of identification of patterns across a small number of cases, and the abductive approach (Hanson, 1958) to theory generation.

Several themes emerged from interviews with the dyads. For one dyad, the constraints of a young family and family life leads to the couple reining back their collecting activity. They deliberately adopt avoidance behaviour with regard to the social world, in order to minimise the dissonance created by the fear of seeing an item that the collector desperately desires but cannot afford. For another dyad, all purchases have to be joint purchases and seeking joint approval acts as a regulator for each half of the couple. This dyad has negotiated with various members of their social world in order to disseminate the historical interest contained in the collection. Negotiating the demarcation of house space by focusing on selective (different) meanings is the solution for one dyad where one partner collects controversial items. Finally, one dyad used their collecting activity as a private mood-lifter as well as for public entertainment.

Common themes to emerge across dyads were:

- the encroachment of the collection into the home to the extent that disposition had to be considered and negotiated to preserve living space;
- the need for mutual approval and consent before purchasing, whether implicit (for smaller, cheaper items) or explicit (for more expensive items); and the role of the partner in actively and positively encouraging expenditure;
- the impact of one collector’s behaviour or mood on the other half of the couple;
- and the role of the objects in enhancing mutual consumption experience.

These emergent themes were mapped onto the conceptual framework in order to assess its relevance for further research in the context of collecting behaviour. To summarise, I have offered various insights into experiences and behaviours of collecting couples; their rituals of purchasing and possession; and the process and outcome of negotiations between couples who collect. The study also demonstrates how these collecting experiences can be understood as a process involving the three interlocking networks.

Hirschman claimed, in 1980, that researchers had not really considered how products are incorporated into interpersonal relationships or into the individual’s social ecology and this claim is certainly still true today with respect to our understanding of collections and collectors. There is very little known about the social behaviour and interactions between collectors, as individuals, as couples, or the impact of collecting within families. This study has therefore started the exploration of these dimensions and has begun the process of conceptualising the behaviours and the relationships that underpin them.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Traditionally consumer researchers have upheld an almost axiomatic distinction between buyer and seller. Where acquisition is seen as a uniquely independent aspect of consumption, selling has not been given its due share in terms of exploration. The closest consumer research comes to dealing with selling is either in terms of disposition or disposal.

Recently online auctions like Ubid, eBid and eBay have brought experimentation with diverse forms of consumption within everyone’s reach. Both buyers and sellers on such sites are individuals, consumers acting on both sides of a transaction. Millions of items are bought and sold every day, sometimes a buyer becomes a seller and the reverse at others—both roles are played interchangeably. Participation in online auctions has emerged as a major form of consumption in a Computer Mediated Environment (CME), and consumers are freely experimenting with a variety of roles—bidder, watcher, buyer and seller. In this paper we explore this widespread experimentation with forms of consumption in online auctions by focusing on the largest of such online auction sites–eBay. We explore eBay experience in totality, through watching, bidding, buying as well as selling.

The research is based on a year long immersive ethnographic study of eBay through observation and interaction with a stable group of consumers, as well as consumption of the eBay experience. The data were in the form of physical items bought and sold, field notes, e-mail exchanges with other members, phone call transcripts, sale-purchase records of transactions and member feedbacks.

The eBay experience. eBay is a contemporary means of lateral as well as vertical cycling of useable but unwanted possessions. It is perhaps a cyberspace rendition of the vestigial archaic bazaar. There are two broad dimensions of consumption through eBay. First is buying by the way of searching, following, bidding and competing for an item, and the second is by selling an item.

Consumption through Buying: Buying on eBay is a multi-layered activity sequentially comprising of searching, following, bidding and competing. Where watching and following auctions at times fuels the desire for the item and subsequent bidding, searching and bidding for prospective possessions on eBay are not merely preparation for future consumption—for some consumers the process is an end in itself. Bidding, on the other hand can be an emotionally charged competitive process, and involved consumers may derive extreme excitement from the act. Further, it was found that competitive bidding can be highly experiential in nature and has the propensity to be as addictive and emotionally charged as some other forms of consumption like betting and gambling. Where new bidders enjoy the ecstasy and thrill of competitive bidding, experienced bidders distinguish between the desire to win and actual winning of an item. However, for many consumers such emotional competitive bidding is an end as well as a mode of consumption in itself.

Consumption through Selling is the other dimension of eBay and has two variations: selling for disposal and selling as an act of entertainment or recreation.

Selling as disposal: Selling on eBay begins with selecting items to sell, followed by photographing and writing descriptions. Writing descriptions is a very involved process and we found that for some consumers emotional disposition takes centre stage, as they endeavour to pass on the meanings and emotions to the new owner. Submission of an item for auction can be a rite of passage in terms of disposal for many, as this is the time when the possession is emotionally discharged. Once the item is on auction, sometimes an emotional transference may take place whereby the process of auction itself may inherit emotional aspects of the possession.

In summary, the process of disposal of useable but unwanted possessions through eBay becomes a protracted act of consumption for many consumers. Where on one hand such disposition makes room for new consumables, at another level, the process becomes a much cherished and engrossing act of consumption in its own right.

Selling for recreation: This type of selling is distinguished from selling-for-disposal in terms of the nature of goods on sale. Recreational sale items are either useless, have no monetary value or are very creative and innovative. Although these sales may be purely recreation driven, most are transacted in the usual manner: buyers honour their bids by paying and sellers their commitment through delivery.

We found that acts of recreational selling are significant to the sellers as well as buyers, and both derive a certain pride from the act. Recreational selling is a creative mode of consumption for the seller, watcher, bidder and winner. For each such seller, there can be several bidders and hundreds of watchers and followers. Recreational selling on eBay can be viewed as an exemplary manifestation of fragmented self-articulations of the post-modern. Nothing sells like a good story, where the creative minded experiment with selling stories through the online auctions, bidders, watchers and followers join in to play their part in generation, enhancement and consumption of these narratives in the interactive fluid platform that is eBay.

Conclusion: Where auction houses like Christie’s are reserved for a very select few, online auction houses have become proletarian bidders’ paradise. Sites like eBay offer a wealth of opportunities to individuals to visit and spend time playing, competing, learning, buying and selling. For many visitors the uncertainty, doubts, passionate want and one-upmanship in competitive bidding transform the act of transaction into a sophisticated act of consumption in its own right.

We found a certain degree of malleability in the buyer-seller distinction in online auctions, where many bidders and buyers subsequently turn sellers. While for some eBay represents a convenient alternative platform for disposal compared to flea-markets or swap-meets, for others it is a platform for experimentation with selling as a mode of consumption. For this particular cohort of sellers, the activity of selling itself is an act of consumption.

Motives and commercial gain notwithstanding, individuals enjoy their time on eBay as they consume their acts, passions and fantasies; watching, bidding, winning, losing and selling. eBay has emerged as an alternate platform for consumption integrated both in the physical and hyperreal worlds, empowering consumers through new modes of acquisition, disposal and consumption. It dilutes the axiomatic distinction between the seller and buyer. No longer do the sellers and buyers exist in non overlapping spheres, one being served and the other serving. On eBay an individual may become a seller or a buyer, both serve and be-served, interact symbiotically and interchangeably in a global mutual act of consumption.
REFERENCES

Ariely, Dan and Itamar Simonson (2003), “Buying, Bidding, Playing, or Competing? Value Assessment and Decision Dynamics in Online Auctions”, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13, 1&2, pp. 113-123


Lombard M. and Theresa Ditton, (1997), “At the heart of it all: The Concept of Presence”, *Journal of Computer Mediated Communications*, 3(2), September


ABSTRACT

A general framework for interpreting behaviour as co-determined by attitudes and structural conditions, developed by Guagnano, Stern, and Dietz for the field of environmental psychology but with general applicability, is used to identify determinants of consumers’ recycling behaviour, more specifically the source separation of compostable kitchen waste. The investigation was carried out before and after the introduction of a system, facilitating such separation, in a Danish community. Hypotheses derived from the A-B-C model, predicting that changes over time in the correlation between attitude and behaviour would be influenced by (a) the introduction of the system, and (b) the pre-intervention structural conditions for different groups of households, were supported.

THEORETICAL POINT OF DEPARTURE: THE A-B-C MODEL

Among consumer activities with an environmental impact, waste handling is one of the most thoroughly researched behaviours. In many countries, waste handling practices have changed radically with recycling becoming an important goal of environmental policy. The extent of recycling in the household has been found to be very dependent on the community’s waste plan, especially with regard to which and how many fractions of the household waste are targeted for recycling purposes and the collection services offered (Thøgersen 1994).

Recycling, then, is a consumer behaviour much influenced by the structural conditions of the behavioural setting. In other words, extrinsic conditions, not least the increased convenience of recycling, may directly affect behaviour, and some research (e.g., Thøgersen 1997) has focused on identifying the best way to organize recycling facilities. Other researchers have however emphasized the role of attitudes toward the environment (e.g., McCarty and Shrum 1993; Taylor and Todd 1997) and of moral norms (e.g., Thøgersen 1996) as important or even necessary determinants of regular and sustained recycling.

As pointed out by Guagnano, Stern, and Dietz (1995) recycling offers an excellent example of the separation of traditions that focus on extrinsic or intrinsic influences on behaviour. To-day, however, most students of recycling—as an example of environment-friendly and prosocial behaviour—hold the view that it is co-determined by individual attitudes and the structural conditions of the behavioural setting (e.g., Derksen and Gartrell 1993; Guagnano et al. 1995; Humphrey, Bord, Hammond, and Mann 1977; Ølander and Thøgersen 1995; Vining and Ebere 1992).

Guagnano and colleagues (1995) offered what is perhaps the most general framework for interpreting the shaping of this type of behaviour: the A-B-C model. The model suggests that (relevant) attitudes (A) and behaviour (B) are most strongly correlated when behavioural facilitation by the structural conditions (C) is on an intermediate level, that is when the structural conditions make the behaviour possible, but do not further it to such an extent that even those with the least favourable attitudes would perform it. The A-B-C model thus reconciles two apparently contradictory empirical findings: (a) sometimes the attitude-behaviour relationship is stronger under more than under less facilitating conditions (e.g., Derksen and Gartrell 1993), and (b) sometimes the relationship is stronger under less than under more facilitating conditions (e.g., Guagnano et al. 1995). According to the A-B-C model, results such as these are to be expected if the less facilitating conditions in the latter group of studies are approximately as facilitating as the more facilitating conditions in the former group. When a group of people living under very restrictive conditions is compared with one living under fairly facilitating conditions, attitude should be a better predictor of behaviour in the latter than in the former group. However, when a group living under fairly facilitating conditions is compared with one living under very facilitating conditions, attitude should be a better predictor of behaviour in the former than in the latter group, according to the model.

An important weakness of previous research in this area is that it has been restricted to cross-sectional analyses of group differences. For example, Derksen and Gartrell as well as Guagnano et al. compared the importance of attitude as a determinant of recycling behaviour in communities where some households had access to a county-supplied bin whereas others had not. There is however a lack of studies evaluating whether policy interventions aiming at making the structural conditions for prosocial behaviour more facilitating actually produce the predicted effects. A proper test of the propositions derived from the A-B-C model requires an experimental and/or longitudinal approach investigating whether behaviour change—and the relationship between attitude and behaviour after the intervention—depends on how facilitating the conditions were for the desired behaviour before the intervention.

Notice that the structural conditions influencing behaviour are a heterogeneous set specific to the type of behaviour and often even to the type of situation. The structural characteristics most in focus in recycling research include the distance to the nearest collection point for recyclables (e.g., Kok and Siero 1985; Reid, Luyben, Rawers, and Bailey 1976; Schultz and Oskamp 1996), the collection frequency (e.g., Everett and Peirce 1993), and whether or not containers for recyclables are provided (e.g., Everett and Peirce 1993; Jacobs, Bailey, and Crews 1984). A common characteristic of this diverse set of structural factors is that they all influence the ease with which an individual can transform a positive attitude towards recycling into action (e.g., Thøgersen 1994).

In the study to be presented here, there was an opportunity to investigate the effect of a policy intervention, aimed at facilitating recycling, on the relative importance of attitude as a determinant of behaviour. In the setting of the study, the area of Herning in western Denmark, in 1999 all households received new storage equipment for various recyclables—paper, glass, compostable kitchen waste—to be collected biweekly from their premises.² Earlier, consumers who wanted to recycle paper and glass had either to bring it to the

¹This paper is the outcome of a research project carried out under the framework of Centre for Social Science Research on the Environment (CeSaM), a multidisciplinary centre based on collaboration among scholars from a number of Danish universities and other research institutions.

²Naturally, when implementing a new collection system such as this, the municipality also made an effort to inform citizens about the new system and how to use it, as well as it tried to encourage them to source-separate their waste. It is not possible to disentangle how much of the effects reported in the following is due to the physical equipment itself and how much is due to the accompanying information campaign. As far as we know, there were no other promotion activities for source separation and recycling in Herning in the analysed period. Hence, it is reasonable to attribute the reported effects to the implementation of the new system, including its accompanying information campaign.

Folke Ølander, Aarhus School of Business, Denmark
John Thøgersen, Aarhus School of Business, Denmark

The A-B-C of Recycling

297 European Advances in Consumer Research Volume 7, © 2006
recycling centres or to store them in own containers for monthly curbside pickup, and those who wanted to recycle compostable kitchen waste had to have a garden and to accept the nuisance and trouble of composting it themselves.

We were able to conduct a before-and-after study in this community, interviewing a random sample of consumers before the introduction of the facilitating system, and again one year later, after consumers had gathered experience with the new system. In this report, we focus on attitude and behaviour as regards the disposal of kitchen waste, the type of recycling for which the new system had the most dramatic facilitating effect when compared to the situation beforehand.

HYPOTHESES

Taking the A-B-C model as our point of departure, we derived two hypotheses. We posit that the pre-intervention situation, in which no external help was given for those who might want to recycle kitchen waste, can be characterized as a very restrictive condition. The post-intervention situation is less restrictive, but it does not make waste separation effortless and does not eliminate all nuisances connected with it; thus, it is not predicted that the degree of facilitation will have reached a point, where—according to the A-B-C model—the correlation between attitude and behaviour diminishes. Hence, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H1: Compared to a baseline situation with no collection of source-separated household waste for central processing and recycling, providing households with equipment for this purpose and with a collection service leads to structural conditions becoming relatively less important determinants, and attitude a relatively more important determinant, of source separation behaviour.

In practice, households living in a house with a garden have better opportunities to recycle kitchen waste than other households (because they can compost it in their own garden). In households without a garden, the intervention changes structural conditions for source separation from being very restrictive to being more facilitating. Hence, in these households we expect that the relationship between attitude and behaviour is weak or absent before, but is strengthened by, the intervention. In households with a garden, opportunities for performing this behaviour exist already before the intervention. Providing these households with the mentioned system makes their structural conditions somewhat more facilitating for source separation of kitchen waste. However, the change is much less radical than in the case for households without a garden.

H2: The impact on the relationship between attitude and behaviour of introducing a system for source separation and collection of kitchen waste depends on the opportunities for recycling of this type of waste before the intervention; thus, the change in the relationship between attitude and behaviour will be smaller in households with than in households without a garden.

METHOD

Subjects

A random sample of consumers from the mixed rural-urban municipality of Helsingør, Denmark, was contacted in November–December 1998, and again one year later, for a telephone interview.3 In contacted households the respondent was picked randomly among individuals 18 years old or older (next birthday method) for the first interview. In 58% of those cases where a contact with the right person was established, the person accepted to participate, resulting in a sample of 408 individuals. The sex distribution of the participants was 39% men / 61% women. The average age was 45 years and the age range 18 to 93 years. Sixty-nine percent were living with a partner and 72% had children. For 25% of the participants high school was the highest completed education; 32% had a college or university degree. Seventy-one percent lived in a house with a garden, 1 percent in a house without a garden, and the rest in an apartment.

When the first interview ended, we asked for permission to call back a year later, “should we need to do so.”4 Ninety-eight percent accepted. Hence, they were contacted again one year later. Since the interviews took about 30 minutes, on average, we decided to offer an incentive for participating a second time: the possibility to win one of ten prices worth approximately 100 Euro. Still, 11% rejected in the second wave and 15% could not be contacted after 35 trials. In some of the calculations reported in the following, the sample size is further reduced due to item non-response.

Variables

In both waves, answers were obtained to questions about source separation of compostable kitchen waste and about a number of psychological and background variables assumed to influence this behaviour, in that order. There were also questions about other issues not pertinent to the present report. Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour framework (Ajzen 1991), we are here concentrating on presenting the results for psychological variables related to that framework, i.e., attitude, subjective norm (social influence), and perceived control. In addition, we included a dummy variable registering whether the respondent lived in a house with a garden (yes=1, no=0) in some calculations.

Attitude

The attitude towards source-separating one’s compostable kitchen waste was measured on a three-item five-point semantic differential scale with the end-points meaningful-meaningless, right-wrong, and beneficial-harmful. In the following analyses, answers are coded so that a higher number indicates a more positive attitude. The composite reliability of the latent variable is 0.89 in Wave 1 and 0.85 in Wave 2.

Subjective Norm

The subjective norm as regards source-separating one’s compostable kitchen waste was measured by means of a single item: “I think that most of my acquaintances expect that I source-separate my compostable kitchen waste.” Answers were measured on a five-point scale with the end points “totally disagree” and “totally agree,” and in the following analyses they are coded so that a higher number indicates a stronger subjective norm.

Perceived Control

Perceived control as regards source-separating one’s compostable kitchen waste was measured by means of a single item: “It is difficult to figure out which green kitchen waste is compostable.” Answers were measured on a five-point scale with

---

3These interviews were carried out by Jysk Analyseinstitut, a professional marketing research company.

4It is mandatory in Denmark to obtain permission if a market research company wants to save a person’s personal information for re-contact. In order to minimize possible interviewer effects from such a request, we gave the impression that only a minor, random sample of those contacted in the first (and second) round would be contacted again.
the end points “totally disagree” and “totally agree,” and in the following analyses they are coded so that a higher number indicates a stronger perceived control.

**Behaviour**

Source separation of compostable kitchen waste was measured by means of a single item: “How often do you source-separate your green kitchen waste for composting (in the garden or at a central facility),” and using a five-point scale with the labels “never,” “rarely,” “half of the times,” “often,” and “always/every time.” In the following analyses, answers are coded so that a higher number indicates more frequent behaviour.

**Statistical Method**

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is used for the statistical analyses. At the construct level, SEM has the advantage that it is possible to explicitly account for measurement error when a latent variable of interest is represented by multiple manifest variables. In addition, SEM makes it possible to estimate complex models, consisting of several equations, simultaneously. Measures of how well the implied variance-covariance matrix, based on the parameter estimates, reflects the observed sample variance-covariance matrix can be used to determine whether the hypothesized model gives an acceptable representation of the analysed data. We used AMOS 5 (Arbuckle and Wothke 1999) for SEM in this study. AMOS is one of the first applications that offered Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) algorithm to deal with item non-response. Non-response (full as well as item) reduces statistical power and may lead to biased parameter estimates. Recent years’ extensive research into ways of dealing with missing data suggests that currently FIML is the most efficient method to deal with missingness due to item non-response and panel attrition, not only because it minimizes the loss of information and, hence, statistical power, but also because it leads to the most unbiased parameter estimates (Arbuckle 1996), and this even in the case of non-normal data (Enders 2001).

The usual assumptions about uncorrelated error terms and a simple structure factor pattern in the measurement model are applied. When there is only one item representing a latent construct, the measurement error cannot be estimated but has to be set to a fixed value. In these cases, we can only guess about the size of the measurement error. Probably, respondents can report with very little uncertainty whether or not they live in a house with a garden. Hence, in this case it seems reasonable to fix the error variance to zero. The other single-item constructs included in the following analysis—subjective norm, perceived control, and source separation behaviour—are much more error-prone, however. Therefore it is assumed that these measures contain about 20% error variance, which is “typical” for survey measures (Andrews 1984). Hence, in these cases the error variance is fixed to 0.2 times total item variance.

**RESULTS**

**Net Changes**

The development in the means of the analysed variables between the two measurements is displayed in table 1, separately for participants living in a house with garden and the rest. Only participants providing answers for the particular variable on both occasions are included in this analysis.

Notice first the substantial change in behaviour from before to after the intervention. After implementing the new system, the average source separation of compostable kitchen waste is above 4 on a 5-point scale for both groups. As expected, the increase is highest in households not living in a house with a garden. For households with a garden and only home composting as an option for source-separated kitchen waste (i.e., before the intervention), we find that the average source separation behaviour is below the scale’s midpoint. Hence, just having a garden seems not to be that facilitating for source separation of compostable kitchen waste. More surprising is the finding that some households not living in a house with a garden source-separated their kitchen waste in the before situation. Hence, not living in a house with a garden seems not to be as absolute a barrier to source separation as one might think.  

Attitude, subjective norm, and perceived control also became significantly more favourable between the two measurements, albeit less so than behaviour. Since the new system made source separation easier, it is no surprise that perceived control and the attitude towards source separation also became more positive. That subjective norms became more favourable towards source separation could be the outcome of the implicit message about society’s expectations that is signalled by the implementation of the new system. In addition, individual citizens obviously experienced that many more of their peers source-separated after the new system was implemented. The change in attitude and norm was independent of whether or not the person lived in a house with a garden. However, consistent with the expectation that external conditions before the intervention facilitated source separation more if the person lived in a house with a garden, perceived control increased more in the no-garden than in the garden group.

**Test of Hypothesis 1**

H1 posits that compared to a baseline situation with no collection of source-separated household waste for central processing and recycling, providing households with equipment for this purpose and with a collection service (i.e., the intervention analysed in this paper) leads to attitudes becoming relatively more important and structural conditions less important determinants of source separation behaviour. This hypothesis is tested by means of SEM performed on a panel model including the two measurements. Basically, the model assumes that behaviour at each measurement point is determined by a number of psychological and contextual factors measured at the same point in time. This procedure allows us to use standardized regression weights as indicators of the importance of the various determinants of behaviour before and after the intervention. The model includes stabilities linking the same behavioural antecedent at the two measurement points. Exogenous behavioural antecedents are allowed to correlate and so are equation errors of endogeneous behavioural antecedents. In order to obtain comparable regression weights, there is no path linking behaviour measured at the two points in time, but their equation errors are allowed to correlate.  

Regression weights and the most important fit indices are shown in table 2.  

The fit indices reported in table 2 show that there is an excellent fit between the model and the data. The regression

---

5 The most likely reason why there was after all source separation of compostable kitchen in a few cases in this situation is that some have a garden elsewhere, a not infrequent option for people living in apartments in smaller Danish towns. There is also the possibility that households in a block compost in the yard on a cooperative basis, but we have no information about such instances in this case.

6 In order to conserve space we have omitted the measurement model and other non-essential parts of the AMOS output in our report of this and the next calculation. The omitted parts can be obtained from the authors.
weights are consistent with H1. There is a very noticeable increase in the importance of attitude. This change is statistically significant as reflected in a worsening of the model fit to the data if the regression weights for the attitude are set equal in the before and after situations ($\Delta \chi^2 (1 \ df) = 6.188, p < .05$). Also, the subjective interpretation of external constraints, as reflected in the perceived control measure, becomes noticeably less important. The importance of the structural conditions (garden/no garden) is still there, but becomes relatively less important. The latter two differences are not statistically significant, however. H1 did not include any explicit reference to subjective norms (or perceived social pressure). According to the results, perceived social pressure is a factor both before and after the intervention, but in the post-intervention situation social pressure seems less important than before. The difference is not statistically significant, however.

Test of Hypothesis 2

According to H2, the impact on the relationship between attitude and behaviour of introducing a system for source separation and collection of kitchen waste depends on the opportunities for recycling of this type of waste before the intervention; thus, the change in the relationship between attitude and behaviour will be smaller in households with than in households without a garden. We test this hypothesis in the same way as Hypothesis 1 but this time the dummy variable for living in a house with a garden is used as a grouping variable instead of as a behavioural antecedent. Regression weights and the most important fit indices are shown in table 3.

Again, the fit indices show an excellent fit between the model and the data. The regression weights reported in table 3 support H2 since the change in the relative importance for attitude is much
bigger in the no-garden than in the garden group. The model fit to the data is significantly worsened if the regression weights for the attitude in the no-garden group are set equal in the before and after situations ($\Delta \chi^2 (1 \ df)=9.178, p<.01$), but not if the regression weights for the attitude in the garden group are set equal ($\Delta \chi^2 (1 \ df)=0.344, p=.56$). Further, the model fit to the data is significantly worsened if the regression weights for the attitude in the two groups are set equal in the before situations ($\Delta \chi^2 (1 \ df)=7.558, p<.01$), but not if they are set equal in the after situations ($\Delta \chi^2 (1 \ df)=0.863, p=.35$). The A-B-C framework predicts that the attitude becomes less important (in absolute terms) when facilitating conditions are further improved. That this fails to happen in the garden group must be interpreted as follows: The intervention has not produced a situation which is so greatly facilitating that attitudes become irrelevant. On the other hand, it seems that the new system is at least so facilitating that lack of perceived control is no longer a problem in any of the groups.

Although we did not formulate any hypotheses about the importance of social pressure before and after the intervention, it is interesting to notice that among those living in a house with a garden, perceived social pressure actually became a more important factor after the intervention. A possible interpretation is that among those with a garden, whether or not one wanted to produce compost out of kitchen waste was framed mostly as a private issue, but with the new system, the framing of source separation changed towards a public duty. That interpretation, however, is not supported by the finding that quite the opposite development is found in the no-garden group.

**DISCUSSION**

**Theoretical Implications**

The A-B-C model has proven its worth. We have been able to document that there is indeed an interaction effect in that the influence of attitude on behaviour is contingent on external conditions as posited by the model and in the way specified by our hypotheses emanating from the model. In contrast to earlier tests of the model, by linking our study to an intervention in the field, in which a new waste-handling system was introduced, we were able to find a predicted change in the attitude-behaviour relationship as the external conditions shifted in a facilitating direction. Furthermore, the size of the change depended on the households' pre-intervention situation.

At the same time, our results illustrate a limitation of the model. In spite of the fact that the change in the external conditions clearly facilitated the source separation of kitchen waste, it appears--in line with our prediction--that the increased degree of facilitation was not sufficient to call forth a decline in the correlation between attitude and behaviour. There are good reasons for this not to have happened, as detailed below. At the same time, it must be acknowledged, from a theoretical point of view, that the A-B-C model is indeterminate in the sense that while postulating an inflection in the amount of correlation between attitude and behaviour somewhere along the continuum stretching from external conditions not being facilitating at all to conditions being extremely facilitating, it cannot predict where this inflection point is situated. To judge from our results, even providing a separation and collection system which makes it considerably easier to separate and take care of kitchen waste is not sufficient to reach the point where attitude begins to play a less important role in determining whether the desired behaviour is evoked or not. In the Guagnano et al. model, the hypothesized inverted U-shaped curve, depicting the relationship between the degree of external facilitation and the attitude-behaviour correlation, is symmetrical. One could surmise that empirically this is often not the case, and that the degree of external facilitation has to be very high indeed before a decline in the attitude-behaviour correlation sets in. It may be that the decline perhaps only appears when the conditions are so very facilitating that the desired behaviour can be performed with a high degree of automaticity. Thus it may turn out that the appropriate curve oftentimes has a skewed or “tilted” inverted U-shape.

**Practical Implications**

It is obvious, from our results, that providing a convenient storage and collection system for kitchen waste substantially improves consumers’ willingness to help recycling such material. This holds true also for families living in a house with a garden where own composting had been a workable alternative prior to the...
new system. At the same time, not everybody made use of the new system, half a year after its introduction, and the consumer attitude towards source-separating kitchen waste was one of the determinants of whether and to what extent the system was used.

Our measure of “perceived control,” indicating the extent to which people found it difficult to figure out which kitchen waste is compostable, shows that this “ability” factor has become an unimportant barrier. However, earlier research regarding the perceived costs of kitchen waste separation, summarized in Ölander and Thogersen (1995), indicates that consumers also see other problems with such sorting, in particular lack of space for extra bins, bad smell from the stored waste, and the risk of attracting rats and other pests. These may be some of the factors influencing the attitude to kitchen waste separation in a negative direction. The presence or absence of a more general conservation stance (Thogersen and Ölander 2004) may also be a co-determinant of recycling attitudes and behaviour.

If one accepts the general notion inherent in the A-B-C model, which implications for public policy should be drawn? Well, certainly not that one should avoid making the conditions for prosocial behaviour too facilitating, this in order to maximize the influence of attitudes on behaviour! However, the options for social entrepreneurs obviously differ between settings characterized by different structural conditions. If the structural conditions are very restrictive, the only way to promote prosocial behaviour is to change the conditions to be more facilitating for the desired behaviour. If the desired behaviour is strongly favoured by the structural conditions, i.e., the conditions are very facilitating, practically everyone will perform it and, hence, social interventions to promote it will most likely not be considered. However, if the structural conditions are already fairly but not strongly facilitating, social entrepreneurs have a choice between (how much to emphasize) improving the structural conditions even further and improving individual attitudes towards performing the behaviour. For that choice, research based on the A-B-C model may have diagnostic value.

REFERENCES


Striving To Be Good: Moral Balance in Consumer Choice
Mariam Beruchashvili, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.
James W. Gentry, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.
Linda L. Price, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT
Consumers pursue higher-order goals, morality being one of the important motivational forces. Preserving a morally good sense of self is at the heart of these pursuits. When faced with consumption choices that evoke moral considerations, consumers may face a conflict between their long-term, higher order goals and short-term, lower-order preferences. Using an analogy to the mental accounting framework, it is proposed that when faced with such choices, consumers activate a moral choice calculus that enables them to maintain an overall positively balanced sense of a good self should they choose to deviate from the moral ideal.

INTRODUCTION
In consumer research, individual aspects of morality have been examined in such contexts as consumer desires (Belk, Ger, and Askegaard 2003), consumption of socially harmful products (Kwak, Zinkhan, and French 2001), or voluntary simplicity (Shaw and Newholm 2002). This work indicates that consumption is often rendered in essence a moral matter inevitably raising such issues as self versus group interests, or immediate versus delayed gratification (Wilk 2001).

In a classic philosophical conception, humans are moral beings (Kant 1797/1964), and morality “is the realm of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that have direct implications for the welfare or other human beings” (Staub 1993, p. 337). Consequently, the key issue in the discourse of human morality is the integration of the concern for self- interest with the concern for the moral values that are derived from abstract cultural norms about what is right and good, and from self-subjugation to something greater than self—whether the country, a collectivity, or the sacred (Rest 1984).

Research on consumer goals proposes that consumers pursue higher-order goals as “personal ideals of being” that often shape and give meaning to goals at lower levels (Huffman, Ratneshwar, and Mick 2000, p. 15). Moral values and standards as essential components of the ideal self (Blasi 1984) are closely integrated into higher-order goals and represent a common important source of action legitimation (Baumeister 1989).

Consumption situations where a choice requires sacrifice between a value important to the consumer’s moral identity (Aquino and Reed 2002) and a personal interest evokes moral conflict. For instance, buying a foreign-made car to fulfill the consumer’s personal values of status and quality may be in conflict with the value of supporting the American auto industry and its workers (Marks and Mayo 1991). Whether consumers will or will not make such choices has been examined in terms of their moral orientation or behavioral tendencies of impulsiveness/compulsiveness and materialism (Kwak et al. 2001; Marks and Mayo 1991). But consumption situations that have moral implications are likely to vary in severity along a good-bad continuum, and consumers who do not manifest the above tendencies are equally likely to either commit or avoid moral indiscretions. Although research indicates that choosing between equally valuable goals induces negative emotions (Luce 1998) and feelings of guilt (Marks and Mayo 1991), it is not clear how consumers elect to act against their deeply held moral principles or how the process by which they arrive at moral choices operates.

Literature on choice suggests that individuals tend to frame economic outcomes related to their decisions to minimize mental strain (Tversky and Kahneman 1981). Thus, mental accounting asserts that in ambiguous situations, consumers often choose to frame economic outcomes in ways that make them happiest (Thaler 1985). Such framing allows one to maintain an overall positive balance even in the face of painful losses. Based on this human tendency, we propose a framework for understanding how consumers deal with morally-laden choices in the face of conflicts between higher- and lower-level goals in a way that allows preserving a morally good sense of self even in the face of a moral indiscretion. Before we introduce the model, we first briefly review the philosophical tenets of moral theories to lay the grounds for why moral considerations in consumption can relate to conflict. Next, we outline key principles of mental accounting and link it to the model of moral balance. We conclude by drawing implications for future research.

CONCEPTIONS OF MORALITY
Morality has been the theme of philosophical discourse from ancient times. Conceptions of morality in antiquity equate it with Virtue, abstract Good, or absolute Right. Plato’s idealistic views of morality are found in The Republic (Plato 375 B.C./1988), where the reality of Good is confined to a world that forever transcends the crudely materialistic world of ordinary experience. In contrast, for Aristotle, the moral sphere is the everyday life of right conduct—right conduct in relation to other persons and in relation to one’s self. In The Nicomachean Ethics (Aristotle 325B.C./2000), Aristotle builds upon Socrates’ view of virtue as the knowledge of good and evil, and defines virtue as a state of deliberate moral purpose for every human action, the ultimate goal of which is its own good.

Despite the fact that morality has been at the heart of the philosophical discourse throughout the history of human thought development, the rationalistic ethic of Immanuel Kant has dominated the definition of moral tradition in the West (Lapsley 1996). Kant formulated the theory of morality in The Metaphysic of Morals (1797/1964, p. 57), the crux of which is the universal law of moral order: “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means.” The Kantian moral maxim is akin to the “Golden Rule” encoded in all dominant religious worldviews asserting that we, as humans, derive from our self-interest a generalized concern for all human beings (Lapsley 1996). The long history of philosophical examination of morality from the perspectives of moral thought and moral conduct converges on this key point of integration of the concern for the welfare of others into the formulation of moral human character (Damon and Hart 1992; Hart, Atkins, and Ford 1998). But at the same time, contemporary times have witnessed the revolutionized relationship between the self and morality (Baumeister 1989). Self has been transformed into a value base such that if morality used to be seen as opposed to and meant overcoming the self and the social function of morality was to place limits on it, now “self has become allied with morality to the point where self is an important basis for deciding what is right, good, and desirable” (Baumeister 1989, p. 146). Thus, the pursuit of self-interest can become the source of moral conflict when it
encounters equally legitimate concerns for the higher-order moral value.

**MORALITY AND CONSUMPTION**

Consumers’ higher-level goals incorporate life themes and values (Huffman et al. 2000). The moral value of being a good person is a globally positioned motivational goal (Emmons 1989) that functions on a regular basis. One proof for this is the cognitive dissonance that individuals experience when their actions are discrepant with the cognitions of being competent and sensible persons (Aronson 1992). Similarly, self-discrepancy theory assumes that individuals evaluate themselves by comparing the actual self with the normative “ought” self, and a discrepancy can arise when, in a given situation, a decision or a behavior causes conflict with these aspects of the self (Higgins 1987).

In the consumption domain, morality can become of concern when ordinary consumers acquire, use, and dispose of conventional consumer products (Holbrook 1994). Although research on how consumers strive to maintain “ethical space” (Cooper-Martin and Holbrook 1993) in their consumption decisions is scant, research recognizes that certain consumption choices do pose moral dilemmas when “one action may harm the actions, interests, values of others” (Marks and Mayo 1991, p. 720). Morality considerations in choices are most likely to be evoked in relation to consumption of socially undesirable products (alcohol, drugs, pornography, animal-tested products, etc.) associated with selfishness as opposed to selfless orientation, which have been identified as the two dimensions of morality in consumer choice (Cooper-Martin and Holbrook 1993).

Higher-level goals are not always in agreement with lower-level goals (Huffman et al. 2000). For instance, consumers can experience inconsistency between their long- and short-term preferences (Hoch and Loewenstein 1991). In a number of consumption contexts, consumers may have conflictual goals (e.g., saving money versus impulse spending) (Baumeister 2002). Selfish consumption choices that consumers associate with moral implications are likely to induce dissonance and negative feelings. Along with avoidance as one of the strategies to cope in such situations (Luce 1998), we hypothesize that consumers are likely to activate a leveraging mechanism that allows them to evaluate their prospective choices along the moral continuum of goodness to badness and choose in a way that minimizes the harm to the sense of a morally good self. We derive an analogy from the literature on mental accounting, which provides a framework for understanding how consumers manipulate fungible monetary resources between gain and loss accounts.

**MENTAL ACCOUNTING**

Consumers have implicit mental accounting systems that often influence decisions (e.g., Heath and Soll 1996; Prelec and Loewenstein 1998; Thaler 1985). The concept of mental accounting is based on the fact that money is often differently labeled and mentally placed in topically- and temporally-separated accounts. People compartmentalize money into discrete qualitative categories where money does not transfer easily from one mental account to another (McGraw, Tetlock, and Kristel 2003). Because of such compartmentalization, different mental accounts are treated differently; for instance, people try to keep the savings account intact as it preserves the resources for longer-term goals (e.g., retirement), and the money intended to be spent immediately is usually drawn from checking account (Thaler 1985). The underlying motivation for variably treating fungible monetary resources is that it allows maintaining a certain balance and protection in the face of uncertainty. For instance, in situations of sufficient ambiguity, individuals choose to code outcomes in the ways that make them feel happiest (Thaler 1985). This tendency relates to the overall inclination for framing of outcomes in the most preferable manner (Thaler 1980) that offers the individual highest expected value (Tversky and Kahneman 1981). In a sense, possession and maintenance of multiple mental accounts allows consumers to deal with not only the ambiguous choice situations but also with the consequences of such choices. In case of economic gains and losses, maneuvering among mental accounts serves the purpose of maintaining the bottom-line positive balance even in the face of the most painful losses. The main principles by which mental accounts operate call for segregating gains and integrating losses. Even when the gain is minuscule and the loss is substantially large, consumers prefer to account for them independently, by a principle of “silver lining” that helps the coping with the pain of the loss (Thaler 1985).

Mental accounting applies to a number of consumption situations. Establishing symbolic linkages between specific acts of consumption and specific payments is directly associated with the experience of pain or pleasure, depending on whether mental accounts are in debit or credit (Prelec and Loewenstein 1998). This is a common treatment of savings and debt whereby the increase in a debit account is associated with a higher experience of implicit pain than the increase in a credit account which consumers try to mitigate by rigidly controlling reduction in credits (Prelec and Loewenstein 1998). This kind of balancing of mental accounts is also very common in how consumers construct and maintain their mental budgets for expenses (Heath and Soll 1996). As money is spent, it is assigned to appropriate mental accounts and the money remaining in each account is periodically recomputed. Reduction in the budget allocated for a particular class of expenses causes consumers to underconsume in that particular account, or to overconsume if the budget is in surplus (Heath and Soll 1996). Such manipulations are effective inasmuch as they allow maintaining of an overall positive balance among mental accounts.

Moving or juggling the resources among mental accounts indicates the general tendency to maintain stability and consistency in the face of uncertainty about the choices to be made; it is also an effective way of handling unexpected outcomes and negative affective states associated with choices that may have brought the outcomes about. Overall, consumer use of mental accounting indicates that choices that consumers make are never clear-cut and easy in terms of their subjective and objective value, and that consumers strive to maintain balance between positive and negative characteristics associated with those choices.

**MORAL BALANCE IN CONSUMER CHOICE**

In the Western cultural viewpoint, morally good behavior is depicted as entailing conflict between desires to satisfy personal wants and a tendency toward personal restraint and consideration of others (Nisan 1990). The process of making morally good decisions consists of four components: moral sensitivity in interpreting the situation; identification of the moral course of action; a decision whether or not to behave in accordance with the moral ideal; and execution of the decision (Rest 1984). The main dilemma involved with moral decision-making is that judging an act as morally right does not guarantee that one will decide to act accordingly; also a decision to act in keeping with a moral judgment does not guarantee successful implementation of that choice (Nisan 1991). In the consumption context, morally-laden choices involve a conflict related to the decision to choose between two equally preferred courses of action (Marks and Mayo 1991), one associated with a higher-level moral value, and the other— with a lower-level, personal preference. Thus, when the moral or “ought” judgment has
been evoked in relation to a choice that conflicts with personal preference, consumers will engage in purposeful evaluation of their prospective consumption decisions. We apply Nisan’s (1985, 1990, 1991) model of moral balance to demonstrate how consumers arrive at a final choice to act in a situation that poses moral conflict.

Nisan’s thesis of moral balance builds on the idea that moral behavior is associated with a conflict between structural tendencies in personality (Nisan 1985). On the one hand, individuals have a tendency to pursue self-interest, while on the other hand, there is a tendency to behave in accordance with cultural norms and values internalized during the socialization process. So, within moral decision-making, two processes need to be differentiated: moral judgment and moral choice. Moral judgment is an impersonal judgment, or “ideal” as to whether the behavior at issue is right or wrong. It takes into account only “objective” circumstances, and disregards the actor who may have other personal motives for action that, from the ideal standpoint, are considered nonmoral. Moral choice refers to the decision whether to perform the behavior or not and as such is weighed within the individual’s moral history (Nisan 1990). Thus, the decision to act can be dictated by many considerations, moral judgment being only one of them, although a very important one.

Although individuals are capable of judging a choice in moral terms, they tend to appropriate for themselves the right to deviate to a certain extent from the moral ideal, or to make a morally loose choice (Nisan 1985, 1990; Nisan and Horenczyk 1990). This happens when an individual is faced with a decision whether to make a choice that is evaluated from two opposing viewpoints: a more impersonal moral ideal and a personal preference. In such a conflictual situation, even though a moral consideration invalidates the conflict from the outset and is perceived as taking priority over all others, a personal viewpoint may be considered as equally significant and a legitimate reason for action by the individual (Nisan 1991).

The resolution of moral conflict is suggested to represent a compromise anchored in the moral value. When faced with such a decision, individuals evaluate an action against the personal standard referred to as the “level of accepted morality” (Nisan 1985). The level of accepted morality is determined from the moral identity viewpoint. Since moral identity is a central component of one’s overall identity, moral behavior preserves and affirms it (Hart et al. 1998). When a person deliberately chooses to deviate from the moral choice in favor of a nonmoral one, one evaluates whether the action would cause irreversible damage to one’s moral identity. If an action lies within the accepted morality level deviation below which would be harmful to the sense of moral identity, deviation will be considered allowable (Nisan 1991).

Level of accepted morality represents a threshold of a moral balance that individuals calculate for themselves on the basis of all their morally relevant actions within the given time span (Nisan 1991). This balance is a weighing of morally relevant commissions and omissions that are accumulated based on the past deeds and reflective of the overall moral status in terms of moral credits and debits. When facing a decision of moral versus nonmoral choice, individuals activate their moral balance, and if moral credit is high, they allow themselves deviation (Nisan and Horenczyk 1990). But such behavior is not perceived as inherently right. It is registered in the moral balance as a debit and, in a sense, motivates the individual to undertake efforts to compensate for the deviation to improve his moral balance.

When consumers are faced with a consumption choice that evokes moral sensitivity and prescribes the appropriate behavior, which simultaneously contradicts a personal preference, consumers experience moral conflict. The conflict stems from the self-conception of moral identity organized around a set of moral traits (Aquino and Reed 2002) that are individually valued and that represent a link to personal attempts to see the world in terms of prescriptive implications of moral characteristics (Reed 2002). Given the motivation for self-consistency to preserve the morally right self (Aronson 1992), and the effort associated with implementation of a moral choice, it can be hypothesized that in consumption situations where consumers face a decision between moral versus nonmoral choices, they will consider the balance in their moral account to arrive at a decision. Deviation from the moral value seems to be mitigated by comparing the decision at hand against all moral “deeds” committed in the past to the point of decision. Consulting moral balance for allowance to deviate reflects a basic human tendency to be able to justify decisions as acceptable (Tetlock 1991).

Although consulting the state of moral balance may facilitate the decision to make a nonmoral choice, post-decision feelings of discomfort and uneasiness for consumers could be quite common. Cognitive dissonance occurs as a result of inconsistency among important cognitions and causes a negative intrapersonal state that motivates a person to alleviate this psychological position (Spangenberg et al. 2003). Since the preservation of a morally good sense of self represents one of the major personal strivings (Aronson 1992), it can be assumed that this motivation will be heightened following the decision in favor of a personal interest over an ideal moral alternative, and consumers will attempt to frame the nonmoral choice in a way that mitigates the magnitude of a moral omission. From the moral balance perspective, an individual will make every effort to compensate for the deviation to improve his balance. Thus, following the decision to deviate, consumers will be motivated to engage in a “good deed” that would help restore the sense of the morally good self. Thus, the motivation to reduce negative feelings of discomfort and improve the overall moral balance will increase the likelihood of a “good deed” following the nonmoral consumption choice. For instance, in a study where college students were made mindful of the discrepancy between their belief in practicing safe sex and not actually pursuing this behavior, students tried changing their behavior to bring it in line with their belief (Aronson 1992).

**DISCUSSION**

Although research on consumers’ concern for morality has mostly focused on the issues of environment and “green consumerism,” moral concerns can be evoked on a daily basis when consumers acquire, use, and dispose of products (Holbrook 1994). Certain consumption choices are more selfish than others (Cooper-Martin and Holbrook 1993) when evaluated from an ideal moral principle and pose a conflict between moral and personal-nonmoral interests that consumers strive to resolve (Marks and Mayo 1991). Striving for morally good consumption choices is effortful as personal interests may often conflict with morally proscribed behaviors derived from cultural norms and values internalized during socialization processes (Nisan 1985). The paper proposed the notion of moral balance adopted from Nisan’s (1985, 1990, 1991) work that shows that, when faced with a moral conflict, individuals consider the prospective decision of whether to make a moral choice or deviate from it based on their overall moral balance. Moral balance operates as a heuristic for arriving at a decision; relevant “good deeds” in the past are registered as credits, and allow individuals to deviate from a moral choice when the balance is high. At the same time, such deviations are registered as debits in the moral account and motivate improvement of the moral balance with subsequent
actions. In situations where consumers’ moral sensitivity is evoked but personal interests outweigh moral ones, consumers may activate their “moral calculus” to arrive at a decision.

It should be noted that consumers may have multiple moral accounts with latitude on how they label a particular act that deviates from a moral ideal. Some of these accounts are more sacred than others, and some “gamesmanship” may be involved in the categorization of issues into less sacred accounts, possibly helping to preserve one’s mental health. Analogous to how consumers treat “savings” accounts differently from “checking” accounts, there may be moral accounts that are considered more sacred than others. For instance, sneaking a dessert during a diet may be put into a minor morally deviant account, whereas defaulting on sending a Mother’s Day card may induce more intensive search across relevant moral deeds in order to maintain a positive balance in this more important account. The latter example might be more likely to be associated with a subsequent good deed. Another possible area where consumers might engage in moral accounting refers to whether moral accounts are entirely private or contain certain public elements. A public commitment to dieting and others’ awareness of the dessert being consumed may be more likely associated with a positive action such as exercise in order to maintain an overall positive balance or with making it more difficult to re-categorize the attractive dessert into a less sacred moral account.

CONCLUSION

Understanding how consumers handle consumption situations and experiences that they may view as posing a moral dilemma is important in extending the knowledge of how consumers strive to maintain the overall “mental health” that directly impacts their well-being. Future directions for our research will focus on determining the boundary conditions on situations where consumers are more likely to experience negative affect related to a compromise of a moral value and subsequent actions that help restore and maintain the overall positive balance.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Recent news concerning fraud by Enron, Worldcom, and Tyco had a devastating effect on the stock prices of the firms directly involved in these scandals. Interestingly, such news also seemed to have had much broader effects on the stocks of other companies that were not directly involved in the scandals. For instance, news that Tyco’s CEO resigned amidst charges of fraud was associated with a broad sell-off in domestic markets (McKay 2002), and Worldcom’s troubles precipitated a 4% drop in stock prices in Japanese, German, and French markets (Economist 2002). The current research examined the possibility that investment fraud has a negative impact on financial markets partly because it induces generalized suspicion among investors. We also investigated the information processing induced by such suspicions. Specifically, the evidence presented here shows that corporate fraud led to a generalized form of suspicion that caused investors to become wary of investment in the stock of unrelated, second-party firms. Furthermore, these judgments of suspicion are shown to be heuristic in the sense that they occurred automatically, without careful deliberation.

Due to the lack of research examining suspicion in an investment context, we relied on related theory and research in other areas of judgment for the purposes of making our predictions. The dual process model (Chaiken and Trope 1999) proposes that judgment occurs through two qualitatively different types of information processing: 1) heuristic processing, a relatively automatic form of judgment relying on simple heuristic cues, and 2) systematic processing, which involves careful thought and integration of information when making judgments, and requires greater cognitive capacity and motivation. Information processing can be motivated by a number of different goals, including accuracy and defense concerns (Chen and Chaiken 1999). Accuracy goals motivate individuals to make valid, correct, or objective judgments, whereas defense goals lead to judgments aimed at maintaining self-esteem or protecting one’s material interests.

Prior research in the trust literature (Rotter 1971) makes a distinction between specific trust/distrust based on past experiences with the same information source (e.g., distrust of Enron following revelation of the fraud this firm committed), and generalized trust/distrust based on experiences with other, similar sources of information (e.g., distrust of other firms on the basis of Enron’s misdeeds). Previous research (Petty et al. 1983) shows that specific trust can act as a simple agreement heuristic (e.g., “I should agree with the financial statements of firms that I already know and trust”), whereas specific distrust tends to increase the amount of systematic information processing that occurs, thereby improving the accuracy of judgment (Priester and Petty 1995). In contrast, generalized trust/suspicion tends to be schema-based or stereotyped, where judgments occur automatically in response to associations between the information source and trusted/distrusted groups or organizations (Kramer 1999). Consistent with this mechanism, prior research examining consumer reactions to false advertising shows that deception by one firm can automatically evoke the negative stereotype that no firms can be trusted, resulting in more negative attitudes towards unrelated second-party firms (Darke and Ritchie 2003).

Two experiments were conducted to examine the prediction that the fraudulent statements made by one firm would lead to more negative investment decisions towards a second, unrelated firm through generalized suspicion. The basic strategy in both studies was to expose participants to false financial statements made by one firm (deception manipulation), and then examine the implications this had for information processing, suspicion and investment decisions towards a second, unrelated firm. The findings of both studies generally supported our predictions by showing that corporate deception lowered investor confidence as well as the amount of money invested in the second firm. Process measures indicated that these effects occurred because the initial fraud led to greater distrust of the second firm. Moreover, these effects occurred automatically in the sense that they were not mediated by systematic processing. Additional evidence argued again the alternative possibility that prior deception might have led to more negative responses by inducing negative affect.

In addition, both of the experiments manipulated the level of specific trust relating to the prior reputation of the second-party firm. This manipulation was included to examine whether specific trust would be effective in reducing the negative effects of generalized suspicion. Accuracy-based views of trust/suspicion suggest it is reasonable to generalize suspicion from one source to another provided that more diagnostic information about the trustworthiness of the second source is unavailable (Rotter 1971). However, other evidence suggests that individuals are not always perfectly rational when it comes to the distrust they display towards others (Kramer 1998). Suspicions are often exaggerated, and can be maintained despite specific information suggesting a particular source is trustworthy. Consistent with the bias view of suspicion, the results of both experiments showed that specific trust did little to buffer the second-party firm from the effects of generalized suspicion. These findings fit best with the dual process view that suspicion can evoke a defensive bias in judgment, where investors who have been fooled once become more wary of additional financial claims in order to avoid being fooled again.

Overall, our research supports the idea that corporate fraud can undermine investor trust in a general sense. Furthermore, this generalized suspicion was capable of undermining both reputable and lesser known second-party firms. These findings underscore the need for all publically traded firms to be concerned about investment fraud, and more specifically the need to support current efforts to better regulate the accounting and finance industries to help reduce the possibility of similar events in the future. As suggested by Robert Shiller (2003), trust may be “[the market’s most valuable stock.”

REFERENCES


1This research was supported by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the School of Business at the University of Alberta.


ABSTRACT

Unlike traditional package research, this paper’s analytical framework regards consumption in general and packaging in particular as part of a broader cultural system of visual consumption.

This paper explores the intersection of package design, video games and consumption—the notion of boxart—by applying two analytical frameworks, visual analysis and consumer interviews. The study focuses on sport game covers, revealing three major conceptual themes in package design, ‘the hero myth’, ‘the lens’ and ‘virtual and real’. These three themes make reference to common notions in visual and video game consumption frameworks.

INTRODUCTION

Packages have to capture and visually communicate on a very limited space the essence of an entire product. As Franck Cochoy (2004) claims: “packaging is probably one of the most important and powerful mediators in the building of consumer choices.” (p. 205-206). Traditionally research on packaging has been pre-sales oriented focusing on how to design consumer packages that maximize positive consumer responses (e.g., Meyers and Gerstman 2005; Underwood, Klein and Burke 2001). This kind of research is based on a static and dichotomous sender-receiver model view of producer-consumer communication—the producer/sender encodes a message that is later decoded by the consumer. Consequently the primary focus is placed on designing a message that induces consumer purchases. This approach might be fruitful from a retailing or product-marketing point of view, but it does not address the broader cultural implications of its consumption. This paper’s analytical framework regards consumption in general and packaging in particular as part of a broader cultural system of visual consumption. Similar approaches are scarce, with Cochoy’s (2004) work on package design and Schroeder’s (2002) work on advertising as few exceptions.

This paper explores a particular subset of package consumption in a young and fairly unexplored industry—the video game industry, that has successfully grown from a esoteric garage hobby to a multibillion dollar industry in less than two decades, challenging the movie industry in terms of revenues and eclipsing even the biggest Hollywood openings (Becker 2004). Some consumer research has been done in the field of video and computer games, highlighting aspects such as experiences and enjoyment (Holbrook et al. 1984), technology consumption (Mick and Fournier 1998) and gender (Dobscha 2003). Computer gaming constitutes a new form of consumption due to the intrinsically unique characteristics of the medium. A classic approach to this consumption form, treating it as either product or service doesn’t fully reveal the dynamics of video game consumption and its interactive nature.

The intersection of package design, video games and consumption is largely unexplored by previous research. This paper focuses on the notion of boxart which in the video game industry refers to the decorations and illustrations found on the covers of game packages (Edge 2002). The study consequently touches upon the interconnection between two interesting fields of consumption: visual consumption (through package design) and video game consumption. By applying two corresponding analytical frameworks, a critical visual analysis and consumer interviews, we attempt to explore how game covers, and in particular sport game covers, allude to broader cultural frameworks in order to communicate gameplay experiences through visual representations. The study focuses on sport game covers, revealing three major conceptual themes in package design called ‘the hero myth’, ‘the lens’ and ‘virtual and real’. These three themes make reference to common notions in visual and video game consumption frameworks. By approaching package design from these two consumption perspectives we aim to elucidate a previously overlooked intersection of new forms of consumption and visual representations.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE GAME INDUSTRY

The game industry is a young industry—what is considered to be the first computer game ever (Kent 2001 p. 15) was created in 1962 by a MIT student called Steve Russell. The first commercial computer games were introduced during the 1970’s with arcade game hits like Pong, Pac-Man and Space Invaders. During the 1970’s the first computer game devices for the home, so-called game consoles, appeared on the market with the arrival of Magnavox Odyssey and Atari 2600. Several other game consoles were introduced until the market, and the game industry as a whole, crashed in the beginning of the 1980’s due to an oversupply of mediocre games and the introduction of the personal computer. In 1985 the game industry recovered and made its global breakthrough when a Japanese company called Nintendo introduced their game console called Famicom in Japan and NES (Nintendo Entertainment System) in the rest of the world. In a both positive and negative way Nintendo and its first console strongly shaped society’s image of the game industry and of electronic games as a mainstream phenomenon. Nintendo was long the undisputed ruler of the game industry, until Sega effectively challenged its position in the beginning of the 1990’s. Since then many companies have tried to conquer the temporary market leader. Some (Sega, Sony) have succeeded, while others (Sega, 3DO, Atari, Matsushita, Microsoft) have failed. In the middle of the 1990’s computer games stopped being just a niche and became a vital part of the strategy for the electronics industry. Just in 1992, Nintendo earned, on its console business, more than all the major US film studios, and more than Apple, IBM and Microsoft (Scheff 1999 p. 5). Today the industry has a market size of around $20 billion which is expected to reach $30 billion by 2007 (Roche 2004).

SPORT GAMES

Sport games are the largest game genre in the game industry and account for more than 22% of game sales revenues (Ratliff 2003). Sport games are the most popular game genre in terms of market share in the USA (Brown and Cooper 2002 p. 8-9) and in most other markets. It represents the most lucrative but also one of the most competitive segments of the game market. All major players in the industry depend on sport game hits since these are ‘cash cows’ with millions of games in sales. Game publishers are investing vast amounts into improving and updating games ahead of each new sport season in order to satisfy the increasing demands on realism of graphics, sounds and animations. 

Madden NFL, one of the most successful sport games of all times, published by Electronic Arts, has an annual development budget of $12 million (Ratliff 2003) which is approximately 3 to 4 times more than an
average development budget for a high quality console game. The marketing budget for the same game is $15 million (Ratliff 2003), which is several times larger than marketing budgets for high quality games in other game segments. This clearly shows the importance of the sport game genre for the game publishers and the game industry as a whole.

In the game industry sport games are primarily about one company, Electronic Arts (EA). EA is the world largest game publisher and basically invented and developed the sport game genre into its current state with global high profile franchises. They control 44% of the sport game market, which is almost 4 times more than the closest competitor Activision (Ratliff 2003). The enormous success of EA is in large part based on their sport division called EA Sports, which accounted for almost half of EA’s $1.5 billion in annual revenue in 2002. EA Sports is also one of the few successful publisher brands in the game industry. Most other game publishers haven’t succeeded in creating recognized brands. In this situation the EA Sports brand is really a unique exception, which again shows the strength and importance of sport games in this industry.

**METHOD**

**Package Analysis**

The visual analysis is inspired of Rose’s (2001) compositional interpretation as a part of a critical visual methodology that gives a detailed vocabulary for expressing the appearance of an image taking into account the social context of the image production. The method depends in part on what Rogoff (1998 p. 18) calls ‘the good eye’. While powerful, it does not rely on a explicit theoretical or methodological foundation, but rather a kind of visual connoisseurship (Rose 2001 p. 33), still creating a specific way of describing the visual object. Compositional features such as image content, color, and spatial organization play important roles in the structure. When used in conjunction with the formal method proposed by Schroeder (2002) that treats images not merely as “nonverbal” information that convey more or less the same message that text might impart, but rather that they constitute a system of representations—a visual language that is both engaging and deceptive—an interesting framework emerges that in a critical way engage with the image.

Together with the visual analysis, semiotics is a good tool for this kind of image analysis as it provides a framework for both the construction and decoding of meaning in images (cf. Schroeder 2002), as well as giving an understanding of the market drive towards general commodification (cf. Goldman and Papson 1996) as a common meaning structure is established. Semiotics centers around the sign, made up of the signifier, the perceptual component of the sign, and the signified, being the concept the signifier is relating to (Saussure and Bally 1966), or as put by Umberto Eco (1976 p. 6) “Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything that can be taken as significantly substituting for something else.” In the field of visual semiotics Barthes (1977) sets the stage with the analytical layers denotation, who and what are the (kinds of) people, places and things depicted, and connotation, what ideas and values do we associate with these depicted people, places and things (Leeuwven 2001). The first layer of analysis is focused on describing the image as it is presented, without making interpretations of the depicted. An important tool in this is categorization, e.g. groups vs. individuals, distancing, and surrounding text, that combined give the level of individuality or stereotypification in the image. The connotative layer is basically the interpretative analysis of the established ‘facts’ of the image, with the two image elements, pose and objects, being more important than others (Barthes 1977). Building upon this is Barthes’ myth structures (Barthes 1973), described as a “second-order semiological system” (p. 123), acknowledging that images have an impact on both a historical and ideological level.

The package analysis focused on two different sports game covers, Madden NFL 2003 (figure 1) and NFL Fever 2002 (figure 2). While only two exemplars of the large number of sports games, they are very much representative of the genre as a whole.

**Interviews**

In order to elicit information about the gamers consumption pattern of the boxart, narrative interviews (Burawoy 1998) were used. Six respondents, all male, ranging in age from 18 to 35, were interviewed separately between just under an hour to an hour and a half. The sample was by no means random but consisted of more or less active gamers who all played sports games. This selection could be claimed to be insignificantly narrow, but this study is similar to Holt’s (2002) that uses marginal groups to explore larger societal phenomenon. The interviews were semi-structured in order to cover both specifics about EA Sports game covers and the respondents’ general game consumption patterns and their relation to sports in other forms than in games.

**Package Themes**

There are studies about consumers reaction to package design up until the point-of-sales, mainly from a perceptual-psychological point of view, with the notion that “the primary role for product packaging at the shelf is to generate consumer attention by breaking through the competitive clutter” (Underwood et al. 2001 p. 403). While physical characteristics (and the ability to stand out on a cluttered shelf) are important, little is known about the actual consumption practices of packages and package design. This is especially true in the field of experience goods, such as movies, CDs, and in our case computer games. What values are imbued into the packaging, before and after the “actual” product is consumed for the first, and the thousand, time? Boxart is not merely a Mars bar wrapper (not to demean those in any way), tossed away directly after the purchase, but rather a companion for much longer, creating an intricate bond with the player. While package design is performing as aesthetic objects, in other words, style and fashion has created a aesthetesized consumption that has been called the art-culture system (Lury 1996), they are also part of a system of visual representation that creates meaning within the circuit of culture—beyond the intentions of the package creators, in much the same way as advertising (Schroeder 2002). Boxart is thus not only relating to the game it is portraying, but also to more general culture issues.

Mainstream package design research makes classical assumptions about product utility and its relation to consumption patterns; measuring how effectively this is conveyed by the packaging. This is fundamentally a product-oriented approach, not applicable to new types of consumption like computer games, or almost any kind of consumption in a hyperaffluent society, where visual consumption eclipse more traditional forms of consumption (Schroeder 2002 p. 7). Computer games differentiate themselves even further from seemingly similar goods like television and music, by demanding an active and participative consumption.

As an attempt to bridge the gap between new types of consumption, like computer games, and visual consumption through packaging (Cochoy 2004), this paper presents three discernable general themes elucidated by juxtaposing visual analysis and interviews with gamers.
The Hero Myth

While boxart of sports games play on different societal conventions, or myths, to gain consumers attention, the mythical hero is the most evident. Our society is, according to Barthes (1973), largely built around an expansive network of myths concerning most everyday activities. These, naturally, affect consumer culture as well, thus gaining the attention of much contemporary research (cf., Holt 2003; Thompson 2004), that taps into the interaction between societal anxieties (in part created by myths) and brands trying to relieve these. As myths are “second-order semiological systems” (Barthes 1973 p. 123) they represent cultural signifiers already loaded with meaning both portraying and reducing these socio-cultural tensions. One of the oldest and most prominent myths in our society is the hero. One could say that the earliest signs of civilization are born alongside the myths of heroes, deeply embedding it into culture (Campbell 1968).

Already in ancient Greece (and in earlier civilizations as well) the hero myth played an important part of society, with Homer’s Odyssey and the like, but all heroes are true to their time. While the hero has ‘always’ been there, their role or persona, has changed, “in
classical times heroes were god-men; in the Middle Ages they were God’s men; in the Renaissance universal men; in the eighteenth century enlightened gentlemen; in the nineteenth century self-made men. In our own time we are seeing the common man become heroic” (Fishwick 1954 p. 4). The common man hero cannot, however, stay common, but rather become “the athlete entertainer, ‘focused’, bold, stylish but above all glamorous, wealthy, admired and envied, the personification of success in the Age of Materialism, Media Make-Believe and Beautiful People” (Holt and Mangan 1996 p. 5). The creation (and consumption) of sports heroes is a rather new phenomenon, with a long history. The modern sports hero dates back not much earlier than late nineteenth century, with the birth of sports like cricket and soccer. There are of course many reasons why sports have become such a cornerstone in contemporary hero making. It might be that they exist in an “apolitical, amoral, even timeless, placeless quality of the athletic contest itself enabling the heroes of the contests to remain unchanged for decades” (Oriard 1982 p. 126).

While only the modern times has created the sports superstar it is not the first time sports has been cherished, but we have to go back to the Odyssean Greeks to find the same kind of apotheosis of athletic activity and the athlete we have today. The birth of the Olympic games marks the birth of the sportsman, as winners were hailed with the same zest as today’s David Beckhams, being able to live of their triumphs for the rest of their lives. But what is really remembered from this epoch, and creating the archetype for the modern view of athletes, are the statues of homage, illustrated in figure 3, immortalizing the athlete in action. The active stance and the sense of flowing motion of the Greek statues has become a de facto standard of portraying modern athletic performance and performers as well.

The cover of Madden NFL 2003 (MN in short) is an example of a typical ‘hero shot’, considering it portrays only one person, most probably a (black) male American football athlete in a dramatic and ‘positive’ way. MN’s cover presents the athlete in a dramatic, active and almost attacking pose. There are no other persons in this cover—the athlete is alone and the focus is only on his character.

The athlete’s image is active due to the general position of his body, arms and legs. His legs are stretched out to the left, his left arm is turned forward, his body is turned to the left while his head is turned to the right. All these elements signal activity. His legs are not in a ‘standing’ position, but rather as if he was running or jumping. The left arm is also in a position as though he was running. The turned body with the unnaturally large shoulders (due to the protection gear) enhances the effect of activity: the body has a diagonal composition that creates a perspective and is therefore more dynamic than a simple two-dimensional en face depiction.

The athlete seems to be attacking something. His eyes are firmly fixed on a target in the distance with his face turned in the same direction. His left arm is bent forward, protecting the rest of his body. His other arm strongly holds a characteristic (American) football in a very tight and protective manner. Generally the man is depicted in an attacking, powerful and almost aggressive way.

NFL Fever cover uses the same coloristics as MN, e.g. the main character, the player that throws the ball, is dressed in white. This color, again, is often associated with sports. He also wears some blue elements—similar to the athlete in NF. The title text (“NFL Fever 2002”) is written in a metallic colored font. Silver colored metal can be associated with hi-tech (many mobile phones and consumer electronics use silver to gain this effect), exclusive (it resembles precious metals), and rugged (industrial engines). All these are characteristics that are desirable in association with this game. Metal is also used on the edges in the title logo of MN.

The Lens

The most central issue, in this paper, is **how** the image of sports is perceived and viewed. Through the lens of a camera, we think, is the obvious answer. Or more precisely, through the lens of a TV camera—a sport broadcast. Lenses are nothing you see, but see through, and its development was largely influenced by the assumption that everything can be made visible—with the right lens
John Madden image found in the upper left corner—the famous American sports commentator (and former player) is trustworthy and identified with American football. A representation of his signature gives a personal touch as if John Madden personally approved it.

**Virtual and Real**

What are sports games really selling? Video and computer games, on a general level, are selling fun and play. Games are all about providing entertainment to their players. There are of course numerous ways, probably equally as many as there are games, to entertain players. General tendencies and types of games can be identified, resulting in different game genres such as action, sport, strategy, role player games among many others. Genres are ways of targeting different segments of the player audience. What all these genres and games have in common is, in our opinion, that they provide escapism, in similar ways as the Internet has proved to bestow (Turkle 1995). Games provide escapism through play and fun. Play becomes a method to escape reality by entering a new and computer generated reality. It’s not about simulating a different world but in a sense creating a new world with its own logic (Darley 2000). ‘Real world’ reality isn’t the aim of computer games, but rather to provide a reality consistent within the framework of this new logic. This logic shifts from genre to genre: some games, e.g. role games, have the explicit purpose to create an immersing parallel world where players live a character’s life, while other games, such as puzzle games, provide little of an ‘alternative’ world and instead create challenges that absorb the player’s mind in an interesting and entertaining way. Games are about immersing the players with different forms of entertainment that creates an escape from reality (McMahan 2003).

Sport games are somewhere between logical games and immersive games. Sport games don’t create an alternative world but instead let players enter a world that exists in reality (different sport series and leagues), mixing it with a fictitious and digital reality (Poole 1999). Sports have an important and influential position in society with many followers and a widespread image. Sport games are capitalizing on this by providing ways to get an even more immersive experience of the sport. Football games aren’t only about ‘playing’ football but rather providing an interactive and playable version of football’s image in society. Several sport games lacking ties with their ‘real world’ counterparts have failed in the market, the result being that most sports games today feature ‘real’ players and teams. The image of sport is thus not only about the sport activity in itself, but also the athletes, the teams, the series, the stadiums, the clothing, the sponsors, and many other surrounding aspects. As a result sport games have to recreate this image to achieve popularity and success. This is the essence of the allure created by sport games—the possibility to virtually play a ‘real world’ society phenomenon such as sports—a mix of virtual and real.

Considering the Madden image with its white background color being also the overall dominating color. It creates a contrast with the colorful (most probably) photograph of the athlete. This contrast puts the attention on the player. White can also be considered the color of sport since white clothing has been used by athletes ranging from Leni Riefenstahl’s propaganda films to Wimbledon tennis players as well as traditional badminton, squash and golf players. White is the color of the pure, innocent, neutral, peaceful, light, calm and clean—or more generally sportsmanship. The arcs in the background create a focus on the player. They have a ‘radiating’ effect—as if the athlete was radiating power and activity. The background, with the large and crowded stadium, creates a feeling of space. It’s fuzzy and only the players are in focus—
Consumer interviews

In addition to talking about gaming in general, and finer tactical aspects of different sports games, the respondents centered their narratives around three main themes interesting to this study. The six respondents can be classified into three categories based on how much they play. Of the six respondents, three are quoted here. Adam is a 24 year old college student, who owns several consoles and more than 20 games. He is defined as a heavy gamer, partly because his long engagement with console gaming, and partly because he plays roughly one hour every day. Bruce is 35 years old professional, owning one console and 31 games. Bruce is in this study considered an engaged gamer playing four to five hours a week. The third category is the casual gamer, represented by Charlie, a 27 year old mid-level manager, owning a console and seven games. He plays a couple hours a month.

Although the respondents had similar opinions regarding actual covers, the differences between gamer types appear in the approach to gaming and games. Whereas Adam has a long relationship with different types of consoles, the others are only familiar with their current console. Adam’s historical baggage results in a resistance against contemporary mainstream games. “I really don’t like EA games, I actually prefer the Sega Series [sport games],” when asked why, “Well I come from the Dreamcast [the now defunct Sega game console] and I really liked their games.” Adam, with his more intensive gaming style, has also formed special bonds to certain games and their packaging. “Sometimes I can just pick up a game [package] and look at it, remembering all the fun I had playing it.” The package does not only act as an agent or face for the game, and its consumption is not limited to the point-of-sales, but recurrent throughout the lifespan of the game.

Charlie does not have the same strong opinion about different game developers, but is still heavily influenced by the genre defining characteristics of EA when looking for a new title, recognizing not only the brand, but also the participating athlete. “Usually I check the game on the web, but I trust and recognize EA’s sport game with the guy and the logo.”

Sport stars in games

Athletes take a prominent place on most sports game covers, and the same is true in the consumers’ minds, or as illustrated by Bruce “I buy a lot of [sport] games, sometimes it is even hard to remember which star came which year.” There is an immediate relation between the star on the cover and the game itself, sometimes even stronger than the name of the game. The recognizable athlete does not only act as a face of the specific game s/he is on, but also as an enforcer of the sports game aesthetics.

None of the respondents had problems identifying either the different game covers or the name of the athlete. The role of the athlete differed between the respondents, where the casual gamers thought of them as a stamp of approval and a good way for knowing directly what kind of game it was, the heavy gamers had a more personal relation to the athletes, or as Adam puts it, “If Henry [famous French soccer player on the cover of EA FIFA 2004] is injured you have to change the entire team tactics.”

Gaming and television

All respondents watch live games on TV in addition to playing the sports game. The gaming experience is deeply connected to watching the same type of event on television. There is, however, a difference in focus between the three types of respondents. Charlie is only interested in the “fun” parts of sports with lots of action, “[Games] should be just like watching an exciting game on TV, but you control one of the teams.” While the responents who played more thought that the television perspective was important as well, they also had a more demanding view of the game. Perhaps cynical, they really wanted the most common television experience, according to Bruce, “Sometimes you play a boring nil-nil game just like on TV. It can’t all be fun with score opportunities all the time.” There is a tendency between the seductive action laden image of the boxart, and the striving to get something that by the casual gamer could be described as boring.

Realism in games

The reality of sports games made a lot of the respondents confused when talking about certain aspects of gaming. When talking about the different players, the difference between game and reality became blurred, as when Adam talks about Henry, there really is no difference between the representation of the player in the game and the player on television. The same is true with the statement of boring matches; playing in some sense gives enjoyment even though the actual match is boring—it is the escape into a world of extremely micromanaging coaches that gives the pleasure if not the actual gaming itself.

CONCLUSIONS

The widespread notion that packaging is only interesting in terms of protecting the innards from the environment during transportation and lure consumers to pick them off crammed shelves in supermarkets is far from true. Packaging can be seen as aesthetics objects deeply interrelated to cultural flows in the same way as other forms of cultural artifacts, such as art. The imaging communicates not only within the realm of packages, but also, as shown here, with disparate discourses as the centuries old hero myth and relatively new broadcast television. Alongside this “internal” interaction, the packaging is also an integral part of the consumption experience. This is especially true in the case of computer games and other similar experience-oriented goods that are consumed multiple times.

The aesthetics of sport games’ boxart is affected by the strong influence of broadcast television in the games. The boxart has to, in a simplified way, ‘represent’ the content inside, and sell the actual game. In order to capture the player not only at the point of purchase, but continue to engage over time, this image has to contain the entire game experience, consisting of hours of gameplay and thousands of images. Boxart is in that sense the essence of games, possibly a contributing factor in the relationship between gamer and boxart. When considering sport game covers, we have identified several common features across the genre. Almost all covers have a limited number of athletes, always portrayed actively performing the sport, as can be seen in the previously described case of American football game covers. The athletes are predominantly depictions of known profiles within the sport. Furthermore their pose expresses power, control and action, hence a traditional male heroic sports stereotype. There is also a connection to the broadcast characteristics of sport games in the EA Sports’ logo with its round ‘camera lens’ shape. One could argue that the EA Sports logo symbolizes the players’ gaze into the game through the lens of a television camera, while the second ‘lens’, in the background, breaks the conventional barrier between audience and athlete, thus creating a tension between well-known [TV] and dynamic unknown [gameplay] elements in sports games.

While the intersection of package design, video games and consumption is still very much open for further research, this analysis has shown that packaging play an important role in the
consumption experience. The approach to juxtapose visual analysis with game consumption has proven to be a fruitful inroad to further the understanding of game consumption and the area between virtual and real.

REFERENCES


Eco, Umberto (1976), A theory of semiotics, Bloomington: Indiana U.P.


Goldman, Robert and Stephen Papson (1996), Sign wars: The cluttered landscape of advertising, New York: Guilford Press.


Kent, Steven L. (2001), The ultimate history of video gaming, Roseville, California: Prima Publishing.


Scheff, David (1999), Game over: The maturing of mario: CyberActive Publishing.


Videography: New Kid on the Research Block or Significant Contribution to Consumer Research?
Shelagh Ferguson, University of Otago, New Zealand
Sarah Todd, University of Otago, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Videography may be the ‘new kid on the research block’ but what is the actual contribution to consumer research? This paper examines the value of videography as a method with which to enhance our understanding of consumer behaviour. It is compared and contrasted with other popular qualitative consumer behaviour research methods. Tools of analysis such as hermeneutics, discourse and thematic analysis are considered with regard to videography, including a look at the extent to which these tools require adaptation, while conceptual in orientation, a case study is presented in an attempt to develop some of the issues identified.

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to examine the value of videography as a method with which to enhance our understanding of consumer behaviour. It is compared and contrasted with other popular qualitative consumer behaviour research methods, particularly audio-taping. Tools of analysis such as hermeneutics, discourse and thematic analysis are considered with regard to videography, including a look at the extent to which these tools require adaptation, while conceptual in orientation, a case study is presented in an attempt to develop some of the issues identified.

Videography is the process of using video to conduct and present research, with the increasing diversity of consumer experience that is being researched. Calls have been made over time to holistically examine the complete consumption experience and move away from an information processing approach to embrace new and innovative tools (Belk 1987; Holbrook 1995; Mick 1986; Pettigrew 2000). Videography facilitates exactly that, it has also been compared most often with written ethnography (Belk 2001), due to its ability to create ‘rich’ and ‘thick’ consumer accounts of experiences that contribute significantly to a more holistic and intimate understanding. However, it can also create an immediacy and involvement that the written form could never have hoped to emulate.

Qualitative researchers strive to understand the personal and intimate aspects of their subjects. Traditionally consumer research has been based upon the written word, which presents a one-dimensional understanding of a topic. Multi sensory information can convey a more complete and complex understanding. This paper uses videography as a technique that combines visual images and sound, in addition to the written word to record the informants’ interviews, which gives a rich, full and thick description of the phenomena being investigated.

BACKGROUND

At a similar time to the formation of ACR in 1969 and JCR in 1974, a number of researchers moved away from a marketing management focus towards increased recognition of the value of ‘hearing the consumer’s voice’. Psychological perspectives dominated much of the early consumer research and borrowed research tools heavily from clinical, social and organisational psychology (Sheth et al. 1985). These ranged from the school of motivational research (focused group interviews and projective techniques) to laboratory experiments utilising physiological behavioural measure, such as pupil dilation and galvanic skin tests (Sheth et al. 1985).

Subsequently social science disciplines such as anthropology and sociology were turned to for their research tools and insights, such tools have been found to be particularly useful when exploring what Belk (1987) has termed a macro consumer experience, where the researcher seeks to explore the whole consumption experience in context. This more holistic approach to consumer research has risen in prominence recently (Pettigrew 2000). Central to its guiding paradigm is a more interpretive perspective and the use of qualitative tools, as researchers seek to understand rather than predict behaviour (Rubenstein 1981).

If two dominant perspectives of positivism and interpretive are accepted as being incommensurable because of their different philosophical assumptions, this emergent stream of consumer research fits within the interpretive view that no behaviour exists without context from which it derives meaning. As Denzin (1981) notes, from such a perspective there is not a single understanding, nor is it the end product of the research process, rather it is a step in the progression to reach even greater understanding. Objectives for interpretive research acknowledge that an understanding reflects a point in time and future interpretations will impact and modify that understanding. Understanding is thus dynamic and incomplete.

Another important component of this emergent interpretive perspective is the role of shared meaning. Wax (1967) uses the term Verstehen and defines it more fully as grasping the shared meanings within a culture of language, contexts, roles, rituals, gestures, arts and so on. Meaning is essential to understanding and is similarly dynamic and created through the process of living. According to Geertz (1973), valuable understanding of this context-dependent form of explanation should be characterised by “thick description”. The greater the detail, contextual or otherwise, that the research is able to include, the “thicker” the description becomes with a corresponding increase in validity. Acceptance of this paradigm could be indicated by Stern’s (1998) work on analysis of consumer voices derived from JCR publications from the period 1987 to 1995. She uses a broad range of thirty-four articles drawn from that period that embrace an interpretive paradigm and use introspective, ethnographic or phenomenological research methods. The use of such a data set provides significant support for the proposition that this paradigm has risen in popularity, as does the establishment of Qualitative Marketing Research journal.

INTERPRETIVE RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

What place does videography have in the context of an interpretive research design? Is it merely another tool to be selected as appropriate to the research question being addressed or does it have larger implications? Hudson and Ozanne (1988) identify that a typical interpretive research design is continually evolving, hence the actual research is an emergent process, as realities and contexts are questioned, an understanding gained and the research design is adapted. Sayre (2001) identifies four key stages in a qualitative research design, formulating a research objective, clarifying the research context, identifying appropriate collection techniques and tools and choosing who and where to research. With a more inductive research design the process of identifying objectives and clarifying the research context through appropriate literature may...
not follow sequentially. The literature should guide the research design and it is likely to be multi stage and multi method to facilitate the iterative development (Gummesson 2000). So the research objectives may be formulated and reformulated during the process, similarly a feedback loop exists at each stage of data collection. This allows the data to guide the research design, not follow a preordained plan (Strauss and Corbin 1990). This process is true, irrespective of the tools chosen, be it videography, written ethnography or grounded theory (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991; Filstead 1979; Gummesson 2000; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Marshall and Rossman 1995; Neuman 2000; Strauss and Corbin 1990).

Thus at the research design level under an interpretive paradigm, it is posited that videography is a methodology similar to others. The research question and the data gathered should drive the research process not the tools. A researcher enters their chosen research environment with some understanding and a general research plan, but is essentially open to the development of new avenues of enquiry based upon the information revealed. The research is designed and adapted, based upon the direction of the data interpretation (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

However it should be noted that an interpretive design that seeks to understand some aspect of consumer based research studied in its natural context, certain types of data collection tools will predominate. Sayre (2001) groups data collection tools into four categories, observation, field interviews, structures interviews and projective techniques. Each of these techniques requires contact with informants to gain understanding, usually face to face. The actual tools employed thus range from focus groups to long interviews to an ethnographic multi-method of documenting social interaction that can be researched in many forms (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). Research that focuses on the ‘consumer’s voice’ is often collected on audiotape, and can include field notes or actual consumer conversations. Most forms of research then require these to be transcribed to facilitate analysis. Consistent with the interpretivist’s paradigm, data should be collected in its natural setting (Taylor and Bogdan 1984), hence the common use of audio taping of conversation. Only a very experienced researcher is able to capture all the data in field notes, most combine field notes with audiotapes to obtain a thicker description (Belk et al. 1989).

**ANALYSIS**

The research process involves converting the gathered data into a research narrative for analysis and then further conversion for the purposes of representation. Spiggle (1998) identifies these three stages of transformation, namely reality into data, data into a conceptual frame then the researcher presents the consumer in a research narrative. If this process is viewed as progressive transformation, then Atkinson (1992) proposes that the longer the process becomes the thickness of the methodology and practical advice becomes proportional thinner. It could be argued that with the exception of videography, that research how ever rich and thick at collection is transformed into a much thinner textual version at the conclusion of the process. Dependant upon the research question, this is one of the most compelling arguments for the development of videography as a research tool, with the development of appropriate skills the research can be as thick at the narrative end as the recording of the original reality.

It has been argued that analysis tools such as hermeneutics give insight into the consumer’s perception of products in relation to themselves (Neuman 2000). This method of analysis closely links an informant’s sense of self identity to the meaning of events and actions, symbolic parallels are drawn that link to cultural, societal and historical processes (Thompson 1997). Traditionally this approach has been based on transcribed interviews and field notes, it is certainly feasible that videography could be combined with this process of analysis. Likewise thematic and discourse analysis, as both methods require skilful recognition of themes and appropriate coding. The same principles of consistency and theoretical development apply to both (Sayre 2001). Videography could be combined with any of these analysis tools, it is the symbolic and structural nature (Ball and Smith 1992) of the raw video data that differentiates it from textual field notes or transcribed interviews. The actual process of analysis or the construction of a conceptual frame involving sorting, reducing, manipulation and reconstitution, searching for patterns and co-occurring phenomena, is very similar whatever the form of the data set (Spiggle 1998). Currently a plethora of applications exist to assist in the analysis of the written word data set but none are widely available for a visual data set. This is currently a limitation for videography, researchers are using individually created analysis tools. For example, this researcher created a thematic analysis facilitated by basic film editing tools that is detailed later in this paper. This is an area with considerable potential for development as videography grows in popularity.

**REPORTING OR PRESENTING RESEARCH**

After analysis, the research must be presented to its intended audience. The format for this presentation can be as varied as the research itself, celebrating the multiple divergent representations of consumer phenomena (Arnould 1998). Traditionally the written word has predominated as the format for presenting consumer research, most journals and conferences require a significant proportion of the research to be in textual form, the collection and analysis of the data may use other forms but text predominates for presentation.

This is changing, ACR incorporates a film festival into its annual conference and a forthcoming special edition of Consumption, Markets and Culture is in DVD format. This paper supports the position that for certain types of consumer research videography provide superior reporting, retaining the “thickness” and “richness” of the original data through the transformative process of analysis (Belk 1998). However, irrespective of the superiority of this presentation form, the outlet for it must exist. This increase in available outlets for visual consumer research, reflect a wider consumer cultural change that actively embraces visual communication (Belk 2002). It is posited here that as consumer research seeks greater understanding of holistic consumer phenomena, the inclusion of a visual element that adds depth and complexity to an individual or event within the research will grow in popularity, as will the outlets for the presentation of such research.

Whilst a conceptual discussion of videography is valuable, the following case study reiterates the point that an inductive research design can lead to a research question that will significantly be benefited from the use of videography as a methodology. This research investigates how consumers tell stories about their experiences. These stories are rich in visual and non verbal expression thus making videography an obvious methodology.

**VIDEOGRAPHY: A CASE STUDY**

This research examines how consumers intend to tell their stories about their consumption experiences when removed from their home communities. The context is bungy jumping in Queenstown, New Zealand and the consumers are a broad cross section of travellers from around the globe. As this research was investigating how consumers used their ‘adventure stories’, the first stage was to observe consumers in their natural surroundings. The initial proposition was to investigate if consumers formed a com-
munity with other travellers that allowed meaningful narration of these adventure stories. The literature suggests that consumers of adventures bond tightly and form a subculture of consumption as defined by McAlexander and Schouten (1995), such as those found by Arnould and Price (1993) in the white water rafting fraternity or Celsi et al. (1993) in sky diving. They tell each other stories about their experiences post consumption. It is also recognised that these stories can have multiple purposes.

**PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**

The intention of this research is to examine story construction about consumption experiences away from home communities, utilising bungy jumping as the primary empirical focus.

**METHODOLOGY**

To meet the above objectives, and to complement previous work done from a psychological perspective, a sociological multi-method approach was adopted. The choice of methodology evolved during preliminary research and has been moulded by initial findings and continuous reference back to the relevant literature. This semi-inductive, iterative methodology matches both the perspective adopted and the exploratory nature of the research problem.

Consumers of adventure tourism experiences were observed in their backpacker’s hostel after a day of activity. Participant observation was an appropriate methodology for this initial stage and consistent with the inductive approach, allowing the researcher to be open to the data as it unfolded from the informants. Initial participant observation in line with Taylor and Bogdan (1984) in that, the researcher studied people in their natural context and viewed them holistically. When allowing informants to frame their own reality, the researcher must recognise her personal beliefs and biases and an effort was made to be aware of these limitations. This stage did confirm that ‘stories’ of adventure consumption experiences were told to members of this transitory backpacker community. However, these naturally occurring stories lacked the ‘richness’ and reliability that was being sought.

The initial proposition was further developed to investigate whether consumers of adventure tourism experiences created a closely bonded group who narrated their stories to one another and whether this allowed status to be acquired by the individual narrating in a meaningful way. Two communities were tested in greater depth, namely a ‘backpacker’ subculture interacting in the social areas of backpackers’ hostels and resort workers’ communities. Subsequent to the participant observation and bearing in mind the lack of rich detail, that emerged. In-depth, tape recorded informal interviews were selected as being more appropriate for both communities. These interviews probed the narration of their adventure stories, informants gave full accounts of their experiences who they told about them.

Through preliminary investigation it was found that the “backpacker” subculture exhibited strong social links and interaction on occasions but not on a regular, replicable or predictable basis and their stories of consumption events were reflected in that relationship. The informants did not really talk about their experiences to the other travellers that they encountered in backpackers’ hostels in a reliable and researchable way. Itinerant ski field workers in Queenstown, New Zealand were clearly defined as a community by employment and geography but, due to their shift work patterns, it was very difficult to gather group interaction information, if, how and when they told their stories to each other. They are sociable and located in proximity to many adventurous activities, giving them the opportunity to consume these experiences, but capturing the narration of consumption was too irregular and contrived. Despite these limitations in the research, data was collected through the interview method described above and the interviews were then transcribed and analysed. A thematic analysis was undertaken that identified recurrent and dominating themes arising from these informants’ transcripts.

The thematic analysis was based upon reviewing the transcripts several times to become familiar with the data and then reduced into manageable units and identifying any obvious discernable patterns. Using a naturalistic orientation (Lincoln and Guba 1985), the data was organised into general categories, that then yielded a range of behaviour. Care was taken to allow the data to direct the categories rather than researcher imposed categorisation. Six themes that emerged from these interviews and were used to formulate the subsequent step, true to the emergent research design.

As a result of this earlier research it became clear that consumers of such experiences primarily narrated to their home communities rather than these temporary communities in backpackers’ hostels or itinerant work communities, despite the significant distance and time differences. The home community had the strongest interest in the informant experiences and the informant wanted to narrate to them.

Therefore the investigation moved to focus on the construction of these consumption stories for the informants’ home communities. The most accurate investigation of these tales would be to follow each consumer back to their home communities after their travelling experience and observe their narration. Logistically this is not possible. A methodological compromise was to approach participants very shortly after consumption of their bungy jump and discuss how they would construct their ‘story’ and any modifications that may be made to their stories with regard to the particular audience. An additional area for discussion was how the imperative to narrate would develop or recede over time as they were physically separated from their home community.

It was at this point that videography was adopted as the research tool for data collection, to reflect the informant and their story holistically and more effectively capture the essence of the story than the written word. This research intends, at a future stage, to display these consumer stories to selected audiences and investigate their response. The decision to use videography was influenced by this presentation requirement, as the stories will be more immediate and accessible for the audience. This use of the visual data recognises that when informants tell their stories they will be doing so in a face to face situation and the holistic interpretive paradigm requires that the consumer experience be represented as fully as possible.

It became clear from these stories that all of the interviewed consumers intended to talk to someone from their home community within two hours of leaving the jump site. The primary focus of that communication was to talk about this experience. The participants were also asked to include the researcher on their e-mailing lists so that a copy of the narration would also be received in e-mail form. This provided a wider insight into the narrative and added greater depth to the stories told.

Initial concerns that these stories would be influenced by immediate post consumption euphoria were considered as a methodological issue. Would these narrations have richness and urgency about them that later retelling may not retain? The e-mail versions of the stories were generally very similar to the vocally narrated versions. However, they did lack the vitality and emotion of the initial vocal accounts. This could be attributed to the uni-dimensionality of the written word. This research is seeking to investigate the construction of these post consumption stories and the immediate post consumption vitality is a factor in the narration.
Over a period of two weeks, almost 100 informants were interviewed at A J Hackett’s Nevis Bungy jump site. This number of interviews represents informant redundancy through phrase saturation. The participants were approached post jump and requested to participate in a ‘direct to camera’ interview. Consent forms were completed and information sheets distributed as per the researcher’s University’s requirements for ethical research. A very high consent rate was gained, with less than ten refusals during the research period. Participants were asked to detail whom they would first tell their stories and what they would say. This was then developed to explore how they would modify and emphasise certain elements of the story for different audiences and why that was deemed necessary. As an essential part of the narrative, participants were asked to describe how they viewed this particular consumption experience and how their friends would view them in relation to this consumption in terms of whether it was ‘cool’ or not.

The video-recorded semi-structured interviews were then analysed with reference back to the literature to identify key emergent themes for further development using a similar thematic analysis process to that employed earlier. The practical difficulties encompassed in the analysis related to the editing process being used. The coding involved inserting titles into the visual data to represent the ‘code’ with start and stop edit marks identifying the relevant section of visual text. Different colours were used to represent different aspects, such as pink for a symbolic visual theme, blue for a verbal structural theme. The management of the visual data resulted in several ‘films’ being made, each related to a broad category and exhibiting the range of behaviour related to that theme. These short themed films allowed the data to be organised into a framework for each theme that is presently represented in textual form. However, the process is emergent and with this paper’s strong advocacy for visual representation, it would be hypocritical if the representation remained in that format. Currently the research is a work in process that will ultimately contain a significant visual element, as addressed in the section on future implications.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

More widely available and cheaper technology has enabled us, as researchers, to have more options when considering the format most appropriate to answering the research question being asked. Research that necessitates a more ethnographic approach can be substantially enriched by videography. Belk (1998) asserts that the visual form has become the key contemporary mode of mass media representation and consumption. He goes on to propose that this visual element may assist in a different type of understanding, capturing the unique human elements of the informants. This knowledge has been termed knowledge of an experience (opposed to knowledge about) (Langer 1963), emotional understanding (Denzin 1989) and experiential understanding (Belk 1989). Visual material provides the context that facilitates us understanding how this experience must feel for the informant. Being able to observe their face provides immediacy and insight that the written word cannot compare with.

Belk (1998) also suggests that multi media representations are more likely, but not exclusively, to be aligned with a non positivist or interpretive research paradigm due to its ability to make us as the audience to feel, think and reflect on the focus of the research. In this research the use of video imparts a message using more than visual representation but sound and emotion as well. Video as a form of communication embraces non-verbal communication that the written form lacks. Multi media representations can give the audience greater involvement and identification with the informants, as is posited within this research. The use of videography as the chosen multi media methodology for this research allows maximum representation of the informant’s story.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

As identified earlier, future research intends to examine responses to these stories, the choice of videography allows the audience to become more involved in these stories and respond in a more holistic way, in accordance with the interpretive paradigm adopted. It could be argued that this research question could be answered fully without using videography. However, it is posited that the question is answered in greater depth using videography than without it.

Even if many outlets for video graphic research existed, not all research questions would benefit from the methodology. It would difficult to envisage all elements of this paper being presented in the format of a film rather than text. The contribution is much greater with some topics than others. However, if this type of research is gaining popularity then perhaps modifications will have to be made to the critiquing process? Will academic review process for publication require modification and will audiences learn to be more critical in their visual understanding?

REFERENCES


**Researcher Reflexivity: A Personal Journey**

Helen Woodruffe-Burton, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom

The notion of researcher reflexivity, of presenting honest and self-searching accounts of the research process, is increasingly being seen as an important and integral part of qualitative research (e.g. Sherry and Schouten, 2002, Kleinassser, 2000). According to Gergen and Gergen (2000), reflexive researchers seek ways of demonstrating to their audiences their historical situatedness, their personal investments in the research, acknowledging various biases they may bring, revealing “their surprises and undoings in the process of the research endeavour.” (p.1027) As Mauthner and Doucet (1998) describe the role of reflexivity in data analysis:

“the best we can do then is to trace and document our data analysis processes, and the decisions we make, so that other researchers and interested parties can see for themselves some of what has been lost and what has been gained…we need to document these reflexive processes” (p.138)

The notion of the researcher as “bricoleur” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) is also important here, incorporating the idea that research is a process shaped by the individual history of the researcher and the individual characteristics of all the people in the research setting. The qualitative researcher “refuses to be limited” (Janesick, 2000, p.381), rather, the ‘researcher-as-bricoleur’ uses the tools of his or her methodological trade to provide solutions to problems (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998); “the choice of which tools to use, which research practices to employ, is not set in advance.” (p.3). According to Denzin and Lincoln, the ‘bricoleur’ develops diverse skills from interviewing to observing and interpreting, engages in intensive self-reflection and also explores the many interpretive paradigms that can be brought to any particular problem. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p.8) note: “Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.”

In my research, I studied compensatory consumption in relation to shopping behaviour—“retail therapy” (see e.g. Woodruffe 1997, Woodruffe-Burton, 2004) and I very quickly found from the 27 people (males and females) with whom I engaged (through interviews and other types of personal contact) during the research that this was frequently a highly personal and emotive subject. I tried to draw from a number of areas to develop a methodological approach which could best capture the individual’s point of view and secure rich descriptions whilst also showing empathy and, indeed, concern for them and their feelings and working from a position as researcher of not being ‘in control’ or holding ‘power’ over them. These ideas are explored here and a reflexive account of the research process and the design decisions which take place during the course of the research (how the research is done) is presented. This paper is not positioned as offering an alternate approach; nor is it suggested that new paradigm researchers lack reflexivity. On the contrary, it assumes that many (if not most) new paradigm researchers in consumer behaviour are engaging with reflexivity at various levels and it attempts to document some aspects of what being a reflexive researcher actually means in practice, from a personal perspective.

There is little point reiterating here the criticisms of traditional research methodologies discussed and documented extensively over the past fifteen years or so, especially given the now well established position of ‘new paradigm’ researchers within the academy as reflected in contemporary literature. However it is worth pointing out that positivistic approaches still form the basis of much teaching of consumer behaviour (especially in the USA) and marketing research today and represent the dominant paradigm in mainstream textbooks; thus, there exists still the ‘scientific’ voice in marketing which attests to the superiority of scientific method in marketing research (Gibson, 2000): “The descriptive survey has become the dominant technique of quantitative research…the controlled experiment is avoided, depriving marketing and marketing research of what is elsewhere regarded as the most valid, the highest form of scientific evidence”. (p.39)

Further criticism attaches to such experimental practices and procedures from feminist writers (e.g. Oleson, 2000, Hirschman, 1993) who contend that such a scientific approach places all the power in the researcher’s domain, with the research subjects in a subordinate role to be controlled and manipulated. As Hirschman’s (1993) revealing de-construction of published studies which utilised detached, distanced, objective methods reveals: “In virtually all of the laboratory experiments conducted, human subjects were characterized as entities to be ‘run’ or ‘processed’ through the various manipulations designed by the researcher. In doing so, persons became effectively reduced to objects that the experimenter uses to further his/her own purposes and are not recognized as equal, sentient human beings.” (Hirschman, 1993, p.546)

Additionally, due to individual factors such as the researcher’s (my) personality (Punch, 1998), (my) personal history (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998), (my) personal interest (Morse, 1998) and (my) personal desire to examine consumption independently of marketing management implications (Holbrook, 1987) from the consumer’s perspective (Hirschman, 1991), methodology has been of primary concern to me in my personal development as a researcher and has also, at times, proved a constant struggle; to undertake and (re)present interpretive research which stands up to evaluation (e.g. Spiggle, 1994, Arnold and Fischer, 1994) and is well supported (by reference to existing literature etc.) but which also confronts and examines issues and challenges relating to the role of the researcher and the nature of the research along the way.

Questions and challenges which I have confronted have been explicitly incorporated into the research process (e.g. Mauthner and Doucet, 1998) and subjected to critical reflection in line with the twin aims I have in my research; to develop understanding of the concept of this specific aspect of consumer behaviour but also to extend the discourse on methodology and the role of the researcher in a way which will further understanding and be useful to others. Hence I saw myself (and, indeed, still do see myself) clearly as a qualitative researcher (albeit a fledgling one!) and I tried my best to adhere to the best tenets of interpretive research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) adopting the existential phenomenological interview as the main tool for engaging with lived experience (Thomson et al., 1989). However, from a personal experience perspective, I soon found myself confronting certain challenges arising from the interview process. Instead of ignoring these difficulties or ‘brushing them under the carpet’ in the writing up process, I undertook self-reflexive reporting of the interview process (Reinharz, 1992) to present a critical assessment, from my perspective, of the design decisions and changes which took place.

One of these challenges was the sense of difficulty in the “bracketing” which Thompson et al (1989) hold is necessary for attaining an understanding of respondents’ lived experiences (p.140).
Hudson and Ozanne (1988) recognise this difficulty as a criticism of interpretivist approaches; “it is questionable whether researchers can really bracket their biases and socio-cultural backgrounds”. (p.516) Thompson, Locander and Pollio do make the assertion, however, that bracketing is not intended to imply a neutral view as researchers must always see and interpret the world from some perspective. Hirschman (1992) did not feel that the issue of bracketing was a problem in her study of drug addicts, even though she admitted at the time to being a recovering drug addict (p.161).

However, her description of what bracketing consists of is perhaps slightly more straightforward: “phenomenology brackets the external world to include only those aspects that are present in the consumers’ consciousness” (p.161). Certainly, within her description of the research methodology, Hirschman made no secret of her personal status; she identified herself as a recovering addict as well as researcher and noted that she believed some of the participants’ “willingness to serve as informants was based largely on their knowledge of my own addictive history”. (p.161) However, I sensed a real problem in this regard which stemmed from direct experience of, and involvement with, the subject of the study, unlike, for example, Eccles (2000) who notes that during her study of addicted shoppers, “the fact that the researcher had experience as a woman and as a researcher, but none as an addicted consumer prevented the imposition of preconceived notions”. (p.143, emphasis added) While Sue Eccles is not, by her own admission, addicted to shopping, I have a feeling that there is no-one in the world better qualified than me to undertake research into the particular area of consumer behaviour which has been the subject of my research for many years—frankly, what I don’t know about compensatory consumption and retail therapy in particular from personal history and experience isn’t worth knowing. It would be hard to state for certain, therefore, that bracketing was successful, especially when Arnould and Fischer’s (1994) definition of the sort of knowledge which would be classed as “[pre]-understanding or pre-judgement” (and thus which should be bracketed) is considered: “The [pre]-understanding of consumer researchers is found in two inter-related traditions—experience as a consumer and experience as a researcher”. (p.57)

Some writers have critiqued the lack of reflexivity in interpreting unstructured interviews: “common platitudes proclaim that the data speak for themselves, that the researcher is neutral, unbiased, invisible” (Fontana and Frey, 2000, p.661) and this view negates the value of the researcher and the “strong arguments for strongly reflexive accounts” (Oleson, 2000, p.229) about the researcher’s own part in the research. Indeed, as Fontana and Frey (2000) note, while traditional interview techniques have determinedly aimed to maintain neutrality and achieve objectivity, feminists are rebelling against this stance and seeking to use the interview in a more participatory way. Hirschman and Holbrook (1986) suggest that in humanistic enquiry researcher understanding arises from direct personal experience and the researcher serves as measuring instrument; there is no possibility of objective truth; “the researcher must place faith instead in his or her own sensitivity and empathic insightfulness when exposed to the thoughts, beliefs, values and realities constructed by others”. (p.242)

For me, the interview experience raised issues which led to further reflection and critical review, especially concerning the role of the researcher (i.e. my own role) in the research process and issues such as self-disclosure, where the interviewer offers their own personal experiences, feelings or views where appropriate (Reinharz, 1992). At this stage, these questions can probably be best described as reflecting conflict between, on the one hand, my desire to maintain rigour by adhering to a prescribed methodological protocol (i.e. existential phenomenology at this point) yet simultaneously, on the other hand, to start to be more critical; to engage in critical analysis of alternative approaches and to examine issues relating to my role in the research, particularly as a woman and as a feminist. This reflected my growing awareness of, and engagement with, the critical debate surrounding marketing and consumer research discussed previously as well as an increasing sense of the role of self as a researcher, as a woman and as a feminist. It is a dilemma recognised and questioned by feminist researchers who identify problems with “how we shift across the edges of our own personal lived experiences, our research explorations of others’ private lives and our transformation of these into the format of public knowledge.” (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998, p.203)

As stated, it was principally the notion of ‘bracketing’ which started to give rise to doubts in my mind as to the use of the existential phenomenological interview approach. As Schwandt (1998) states: “Whereas the individual-as-citizen legitimately has a practical (in a classic sense), pragmatic, interested attitude, the individual-turned-social-scientist brackets out that attitude and adopts the posture of objective, disinterested, empirical theorist.” (p.248) Because of this distancing of oneself as inquirer, Schwandt argues that interpretivists cannot engage in critical evaluation of the social reality they want to portray. Contrast this with feminist scholarship which emphasises identification, trust and empathy, which brings out a relationship between researcher and researched based on cooperation and collaboration (Punch, 1998). This describes much more aptly the situation I found was arising in the interviews and which, I felt, made a positive contribution to the successful outcome of those interviews in terms of generating rich, deeply personal accounts of the consumption experience. Acknowledging this was probably the starting point for my engagement with feminist research praxis.

My research can be termed ‘feminist’ from my self-identification as a feminist and from the inclusion (but not exclusivity) of methods drawn from feminist scholarship. It embodies feminism as a perspective (Reinharz, 1992) and embraces many of the issues raised by a number of writers (e.g. Bristor and Fischer, 1993) concerning consumer research in terms of acknowledging individual differences, for example, and opting for research which is not explicitly aligned to marketer interests (e.g. Olander, 1993). However, the literature does not offer a particular framework to show what feminist research should be like (Maynard, 1994), rather feminist researchers (e.g. Fonow and Cook, 1991, Skeggs, 1994) examine the research process from a viewpoint of the different elements feminist scholarship has to offer. A great deal is written, however, on the nature of the interview in feminist research (e.g. Reinharz, 1992), largely stemming from Oakley’s seminal 1981 paper “Interviewing women; a contradiction in terms” in which she challenges the traditional conventions of interviewing and the role of the interviewer, especially the characteristics of “proper” (p.38) interviews, such as objectivity, detachment, hierarchy and science and where she asserts that personal involvement is “the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives.” (p.58)

Oakley advocated a new model of feminist interviewing that strove for intimacy and included self-disclosure. Other key aspects of feminist interviewing relate to the issue of hierarchy and equality between the researcher and the researched (Oakley, 1981, Oleson, 2000); the notion of the interviewee being actively involved in constructing data about their lives, rather than passively manipulated (Graham, 1983); interviewee-guided interviews (Sandelsowksi and Pollock, 1986) where the interview becomes an interviewee-guided investigation of a lived experience that asks almost no prepared questions; self disclosure where interviews are modelled on a ‘true dialogue’ rather than an ‘interrogation’, where participants become ‘co-researchers’ (Bristow and Esper, 1988). Another important issue in feminist scholarship is that of ‘voice’; of allowing the different and
multiple voices within the research (including the researcher’s) to be heard and displayed equally, rather than subordinated or manipulated by the ‘scientifc’ researcher, of trying to understand and interpret the participants’ stories without imposing meanings (DeVault, 1990).

Thus, interviews were conducted in ways which embraced the above issues wherever appropriate. This does not mean, however, that the existential phenomenological approach was rejected completely; the thinking behind this approach remained influential throughout, particularly at the hermeneutic level within the iterative interpretation process to identify the interpretive themes (Thompson et al., 1990). I no longer tried to be as invisible as possible (Fontana and Frey, 2000) and made no attempt to retain a quasi-objective role through detachment, bracketing or any alternative techniques; instead emphasis was placed in the interview on exploring the participant’s experience of the specific aspect of consumer behaviour under study through the medium of shared knowledge; a dialogue which acknowledged my own personal experience of the phenomenon and which attempted, as far as possible, to build empathy and trust between the researcher and the researched.

Similarly, my stance did not allow for objective or neutral interpretation. Indeed, to attempt to do this would appear to negate the importance of gaining understanding through direct personal experience (Hirschman and Holbrook 1986) and the value of the researcher (Oleson, 2000). Rather, the personal characteristics of the researcher, the “cultural self” (Scheper-Hughes, 1992) that every researcher brings to his or her work should “no longer be seen as a troublesome element to be eradicated or controlled, but rather a set of resources” (Oleson, 2000, p.229) Hirschman and Holbrook (1986) emphasise the importance of becoming “as personally involved with the phenomenon as humanly possible” (p.238) in order to investigate and comprehend experiential consumption and suggest that this can be achieved through a two-level process of role taking and personal immersion. In role taking, Hirschman and Holbrook suggest, the researcher conducts science by means of personal, emotional involvement with other humans, typically via case study or participant observation methods. This needs support from the immersion of the investigator into the phenomenon under study. Empathy and intuition are suggested as a means to interpret the results.

Reflexivity, “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), the “human instrument” (Guba and Lincoln, 1981) is seen as important within the interpretive paradigm as well as by feminists. Lincoln and Guba (2000) make the case for self interrogation regarding the ways in which research efforts are shaped and staged around the complex circumstances of the researcher’s own life and they point out that the process of research itself leads to the researcher gaining self knowledge, furthermore, “each inquiry, each inquirer brings a unique perspective to our understanding.” (Lincoln and Guba, 2000, p.185) As Holland and Ramazanoglu (1994) state: “Feminists have had to accept that there is no technique of analysis or methodological logic that can neutralize the social nature of interpretation...feminist researchers can only try to explain the grounds on which selective interpretations have been made by making explicit the process of decision-making which produces the interpretation, and the logic of method on which these decisions are made.” (p.133)

Acknowledging the significance of the role of the (reflexive) researcher in the creation of the research, Mauthner and Doucet (1998) see the analysis and interpretation stage as being a point where “the voices and perspectives of the respondents are particularly vulnerable.” (p.38) They criticise writers such Reinharz (1992) who, they suggest, over-simplify the complex processes of representing the ‘voices’ of research respondents as though these voices speak on their own rather than acknowledging that their stories are communicated, in fact, through the researcher who has already made choices about how to interpret them and which quotes and interpretations to present as evidence. This is an issue I grappled with as I found that the process itself led me to examine my role in the gathering and reporting of data and this reflexivity (Wallendorf and Brucks, 1993) has, to some extent, led me to challenge my own right, as a researcher, to impose my interpretation (or analysis, or pseudo-analysis) on the stories told to me by the people (consumers) I engage with during the course of my research.

However, Reinharz’ view may not actually be over-simplification; she touches on the importance of including quotations from interviews in the “research product” so that the interviewees “speak for themselves” (p.267) and the reader is better able to understand. Nevertheless, the issue of which quotes to include and how to demonstrate an understanding of different concepts in consumer research through the (re)-presentation of what may be only tiny parts of lengthy transcripts has been a source of frustration for me in the past and it still often is a thorny topic; Marsden and Littler (1998, p.19) set down the basic principles of an holistic approach to consumer research, the first of which is: no part of consumer experience can be fully or meaningfully understood apart from its whole. However, due to various factors including, principally (in my experience), constraints on the length of published papers, articles and so on, this editing process means that we are only telling (or being told) half a story—i.e., a minute portion of the story in all probability. This is a key part of the “crisis in representation” discussed by Brown (1998), and Sherry and Schouten (2002) amongst others, I feel. It is accepted, however, that in order to present findings from our research the sifting and interpreting process will lead to the inclusion of selected quotations, as opposed to entire transcripts, due to the sheer scale of the transcripted materials gathered during the course of our studies. This issue is also discussed by Lincoln and Guba (2000) who see the ‘crisis in representation’, as being that which “serves to silence those whose lives we appropriate for our social sciences” alongside the ‘crisis in authority’ which ‘tells us the world is this way when perhaps it is some other way” (p.184).

Mauthner and Doucet’s (1998) response to these challenges is to: “think of the research process as involving a balancing act between three different and conflicting standpoints: (1) the multiple and varying voices and stories of each of the individuals we interview; (2) the voice(s) of the researcher(s); and (3) the voices and perspectives represented both within existing theories or frameworks in our research areas and which researchers bring to their studies” (p.140) This is the approach, which underpins my research and which I always attempt to integrate into the whole research design. Further issues central to feminist thinking are gender and gender-related language. Brisbor and Fischer (1993) contend that consumption activities can be said to be fundamentally gendered because gender is a pervasive filter through which individuals experience their social world. My research was originally conceived of as being a study of female consumers as the initial research question focused solely on women’s experience. However, this was more from a desire to engage in a women-centred approach (e.g. Eccles, 2000)—where issues of oppression and gender-based power should not form an overriding focus for the research—rather than a standpoint feminist approach (Harding, 1987) which takes up the feminist criticism of the absence of women from academic research (and thus, what constitutes knowledge).

Men have also been included in the research, however, for the simple reason that some men approached me and expressed a wish to be interviewed in response to appeals for volunteers. I had not explored the idea that men engaged in this particular aspect of consumer behaviour prior to this point (yet another surprise!) but the inclusion of male participants in the research produced some interest-
ing findings. So, again, this was not something which was pre-planned, which came about through a prescribed objective of examining gender for example, or from a liberal feminist perspective (Bristor and Fischer, 1993) of investigating sex difference empirically–rather it came about serendipitously, in response to the ‘situation at hand’ (Fonow and Cooke, 1994). However, my research still retains as its core focus individual experience of this aspect of consumption behaviour; that is to say, it does not attempt to make gendered comparisons, nor is the analysis predicated on assumptions concerning sex or gender.

As far as gender-related language goes, I attempt at all times consciously to avoid gendered language and to use language which is inclusive. Bristor and Fischer (1993) set out some guidelines for achieving heightened sensitivity in consumer research and particularly note the importance of avoiding gendered or otherwise biased language in research instruments. As my research does not employ instruments such as questionnaires, this difficulty has largely been avoided (as far as designing the research goes) but awareness of the nature of language in shaping what is viewed as knowledge, particularly in marketing where there are many instances of gendered language is of concern to me. Certainly, the importance of using unbiased language is not limited to the design of research instruments and, in my research, is extended, as far as possible, throughout—for example in not referring to the individuals with whom the researcher engaged during the research as ‘subjects’. One day, on setting out to write an article, I found myself writing the usual opening piece which went something like this:

“Emily, upon whom this article is based, is one of the subjects of the author’s current research. She has participated in an extensive and ongoing study into aspects of compensatory consumption behaviour currently being undertaken by the author.”

I found that I experienced a sudden jolt as I realised that even writing that down goes against the grain for me. Firstly, one of my personal objectives in undertaking research is to escape from the confines of the subject and object, the researcher and the researched. I found that this was one of the issues to which I had given little thought, following the language and convention I found generally in the discourse of my chosen (and beloved) discipline. However, on reflection, I found that what I really wanted to say was something more like this: “Emily is one of the people with whom I have interacted during the course of my research. Far from being merely a participant, engaging with Emily and others has helped me to shape both the research process and my own understanding.”

Using unconventional terms in place of traditional terms such as ‘subject’ is seen by some feminists as a signal that the researcher is operating within a feminist framework that includes the power to name or re-name (Eichler, 1980). A view which neatly encapsulates much of what has been discussed in this chapter is put forward by Reinharz (1992), who avers that “eschewing standardization in format allows the research question, not the method, to drive the project forward”. (p.22)

Whilst the foregoing sections already show the extent to which I was engaged in the research as the ‘human instrument’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1981), I had become personally immersed in the research and I had drawn widely on feminist scholarship to find ways of doing the research which allowed greater freedom to explore individual experience through empathy and intuition (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1986), a further step was taken in actively sharing my own experiences. This differed from the previous stage, where I did not attempt to hide behind a position of neutrality and acknowledged my own experience of the aspect of consumer behaviour under investigation, to a point where I actively shared my own story during the interview process, when it felt appropriate to do so. Arguably, this was not a great leap from the previous step but it did bring into the research aspects of what Wallendorf and Brucks (1993) term ‘interactive introspection’ in that I have shared my own experiences with others during the interview process with the aim of getting deeper insights from them.

This works well, I find, as I am encouraging people to speak freely about issues which are frequently emotive, embarrassing and/or confidential. Knowing that I understand how they feel or, at least, have shared similar experiences seems to enable people to ‘open up’ more. Some people have even told me things they say they wouldn’t admit to their partners. Feminist writers (Stanley, 1992, Birch, 1998) have talked about this idea in terms of ‘auto/biography’, not as narcissistic self exploration but, rather the “telling about yourself and your experiences” (Birch, 1998, p.178) as a tool in understanding and relating to others. As noted earlier, this may not seem very different from the nature of the feminist interviewing process described in the preceding section but inclusion of this discussion of my role as an extension of the research approach is really to highlight the fact that this was something which was given due consideration in the research process; it was something which occurred naturally, for me while in the interview situation, but, subsequently, in the reflexive process, I have attempted to situate this within the context of feminist and social sciences thinking.

In a sense, this paper represents my own ‘auto/biography’ of the research process which provides a “practical tool to bring the process of constructing research to the surface.” (Birch, 1998, p.174) This also responds to Mauthner and Doucet’s (1998) call for acknowledgement of the three ‘voices’ within research: the researcher’s ‘voice’, the ‘voices’ of the individuals interviewed and the ‘voices’ represented in existing theories or frameworks, which should be incorporated into the structure of the research.

REFERENCES
Children and Their Money
Barbro Johansson, Center for Consumer Science, Göteborg, Sweden

ABSTRACT
The topic of this article is children and money. The data is from a study of children as actors in consumer society, which I carried out during 2002. I interviewed 84 children aged 8-12 in groups of 2-4 about money, work, food, clothes and other consumer goods, advertising and global injustices. The children came from two schools in the south-west of Sweden. One of the schools was located in a village and the other one in the countryside. They lived in apartment blocks or in private houses and some of them on farms. Some children lived near the school, while some of the village children and most of the countryside children went to school by bus. Leisure activities were mainly located to the more densely populated areas and the children from the countryside were taken by car to their activities. The children’s parents worked in nursing and health care, small businesses, public services and in local industries in positions ranging from blue collar to management positions. Some parents had their own businesses, while others were students. Without having investigated the differences in income, I got the impression that variations between the extremes were rather big. At the same time there was a broad group between the extremes with their own money to save or to spend on things of their choosing.

The topic of this article is children and money. The data is from a study of children as actors in consumer society, which I carried out during 2002. I interviewed 84 children aged 8-12 in groups of 2-4 about money, work, food, clothes and other consumer goods, advertising and global injustices. The children came from two schools in the south-west of Sweden. One of the schools was located in a village and the other one in the countryside. They lived in apartment blocks or in private houses and some of them on farms. Some children lived near the school, while some of the village children and most of the countryside children went to school by bus. Leisure activities were mainly located to the more densely populated areas and the children from the countryside were taken by car to their activities. The children’s parents worked in nursing and health care, small businesses, public services and in local industries in positions ranging from blue collar to management positions. Some parents had their own businesses, while others were students. Without having investigated the differences in income, I got the impression that variations between the extremes were rather big. At the same time there was a broad group between the extremes with their own money to save or to spend on things of their choosing.

The aim of the article is to investigate and discuss the meanings of money and consumption in children’s lives, regarding different contexts in which children receive, keep and use money. Actor-network-theory and theories of generation and “generationing”, are used to study the different contexts or “assemblages” in which children’s agency as consumers is made possible. It is also important weather children are regarded “beings” or “becomings” in consumer society.

Money is the indispensable means of exchange, preserver of value and counting unit of consumer society. It is its most powerful symbol and most central artefact. Nowadays money comes into children’s lives early, when a bank account is opened for the newborn baby, with the christening gift in the shape of a savings box or with the child’s own first little sum, which the child can put on the counter of the sweet’s shop and get a desirable ice-cream or lollipop in exchange. As time goes children start to get pocket money, and by the age of 8 most children also have been entrusted with their own money to save or to spend on things of their choosing.

The topic of this article is children and money. The data is from a study of children as actors in consumer society, which I carried out during 2002. I interviewed 84 children aged 8-12 in groups of 2-4 about money, work, food, clothes and other consumer goods, advertising and global injustices. The children came from two schools in the south-west of Sweden. One of the schools was located in a village and the other one in the countryside. They lived in apartment blocks or in private houses and some of them on farms. Some children lived near the school, while some of the village children and most of the countryside children went to school by bus. Leisure activities were mainly located to the more densely populated areas and the children from the countryside were taken by car to their activities. The children’s parents worked in nursing and health care, small businesses, public services and in local industries in positions ranging from blue collar to management positions. Some parents had their own businesses, while others were students. Without having investigated the differences in income, I got the impression that variations between the extremes were rather big. At the same time there was a broad group between the extremes with their own money to save or to spend on things of their choosing.

The aim of the article is to investigate and discuss the meanings of money and consumption in children’s lives, regarding different contexts in which children receive, keep and use money. How and why do parents give money to their children? How is the distribution of money connected to generational orders? What is considered to be a good child consumer, and how is children’s economic agency made possible? Questions like these are interesting, not least because children today are addressed as economic actors and are offered possibilities to act as independent consumers to a much greater extent than earlier generations.

I will discuss these issues using Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Callon & Latour 1981, Latour 1993, Stalder 1997). According to ANT the individual is not essentially an actor or non-actor, instead agency is made possible within contexts. Latour and Callon call these contexts networks or assemblages. The assemblages are composed by entities, “actants”, which have no given characteris-

Kalle, 8: We don’t have pocket money. /.../ Because daddy is not so rich. ‘Cause he doesn’t get so much salary, even if he builds a lot of things.


327 European Advances in Consumer Research Volume 7, © 2006
Apart from the family’s element in the children’s responsibility s/he is offered. According to the webpage of a monthly pocket money becomes most common from 10 years. Pocket money is most common with the younger children, while a 12-year old 190 kronor, but there are great variations. Weekly Sweden is 100 kronor a month, for a 10-year old 130 kronor and for 2, www.foreningssparbanken.se 04-07-20.

Amount and the responsibility being related to age and maturity. The have the opportunity to buy things which he or she chooses, the amount of money to share between the members. All family

The idea behind distribution money is that the family has a certain amount of money to share among the members. All family members shall have the same living standard, and each one shall have the opportunity to buy things which he or she chooses, the amount and the responsibility being related to age and maturity. The idea can also include that family members share the common work that has to be done.

Gift money: If I want some extra money, then I ask. If I don’t get it, I nag a little, and if I still don’t get it, I get angry. (Angelica, 11)

Gift money is not something that the child can take for granted. If and how much depends on a lot of things: the actual situation, how much money the parent has got at the moment, what the money will be used for, the parent’s mood, the child’s behaviour etc.

Wage money: One can earn money by mowing the lawn, washing up the dishes or picking apples from the trees. (Kalle, 12).

Wage money is the money children earn by working, mostly in their own homes, but also at their relatives’ or neighbours’ homes or by selling magazines, flowers or berries to the public. Wage money gives a possibility to make the pocket money last longer and it is something that many children mention when asked what they would do if they needed more money.

Collective money: There lies money here and there at home. We have the money together. (Gabriella, 12).

Only one of the children mentioned this solution to the distribution of family money, which I have chosen to call collective money. Gabriella’s friends confirmed this arrangement and told me that her parents were kind and that it was always possible to borrow money from her.

Defining different monies in children’s lives makes it possible to see that the widely different meanings of money, depend on their belonging to different actor-networks or assemblages. Those assemblages are composed of such different phenomena as the notes and coins, the children, the parents, shops, goods, the market economy, political decisions and scientific theories of childhood. Which values that dominate the different monies depend on the character of the assemblages. Distribution money works within a discourse of justice and equality, where the purpose is that all family members shall have the same living standard. They belong to a network, which include traditional Swedish welfare policy, democratic ideals and the parts of the Convention on the rights of the child which stresses children’s rights to co-influence.

Gift money is a quite different kind of money. It presupposes the existence of two clearly defined roles, a giver and a recipient. One important element of the assemblage which gift money is linked to is a hierarchical generational order. The adult exerts control over the resources and decide how much the child shall be entrusted with. Furthermore, gift money is connected to gift giving rituals and explicit and implicit values, such as generosity, obligations and reciprocity (c.f. Mauss 1925, Belk 1993, 1996). Wage money has the most obvious connection to actants outside the family. The assemblage is composed of the labour market, wage politics, trade unions, other adults than the parents, such as employers and customers, and other places than the home. The different monies have concrete effects on how children and parents arrange and communicate economic matters. If, for example, the money is regarded as wage money the sum is open for negotiations which is not (at least morally) the case if it is defined as gift money. The question of justice will be differently dealt with depending on which of the different monies it is applied to. Every situation or event must be understood and interpreted from its specific preconditions. Here two girls, Emma, 10, and Andrés, 9, discuss money:

---

2100 Swedish kronor is around 11 Euro.
3www.foreningssparbanken.se 04-07-20.
thereby transformed (Latour 1993, Stalder 1997). Children
in which something move from an assemblage to another, and is
extent, have been
that the relations between family members, to a greater or lower
connections to other assemblages, such as the market economy, the
democratic society and generational orders. The presence of the
market economy in the family assemblage means that commercial
society gives a reason to the rise of the
generational orders. There are a lot of possibilities for people of all ages to usurp
power, or to neutralize power relations. One way of
empower oneself is to make comparisons to one’s own advantage:

Emma is taught to be a good adult, Andrés use money to socialize and discipline their children, but while
money is linked to the work, she gets her monthly wage
if she cleans the birds’ cage, while for Andréa the money is part of
the interaction between parent and child; she gets money when she is
“kind”. As the girls explain it, both Emma’s and Andréa’s
use money to socialize and discipline their children, but while
Emma is taught to be a good adult, Andréa learns to be a good child.

At the same time it might be relevant to take into account
the larger actor-network in which all the different kinds of money are
included. The family can be regarded as an assemblage, which has
connections to other assemblages, such as the market economy, the
democratic society and generational orders. The presence of the
market economy in the family assemblage means that commercial
goods and services are daily parts of the family
market economy
and buy sweets?
Barbro: What did you do with the money you got?
Benjamin: At a time Pokémon was popular. So I bought a lot
of Pokémon. And sweets.
Barbro: Did you use up the whole 1000-kronor note?
Benjamin: Yes.
Barbro: And bought sweets for the money that you- (laughs),
that you got for not eating sweets?
Benjamin: Mm.

As the quotation shows, I find it rather paradoxical that the efforts
of Benjamin’s parents to make him eat fewer sweets had this result.
But using the concept of translation Benjamin’s acting makes
sense. The gift money that he received for being a good and obedient
child is not the same as the 1000 kronor in his purse, which is his
own property and which he is able to use on the free market.

Both Emma and Andréa do tasks at home to get money, but they
place their work in different contexts and the money they receive
could be defined as respectively wage money and gift money. For
Emma the money is linked to the work, she gets her monthly wage
when she is “kind”. As the girls explain it, both Emma’s and Andréa’s
parents use money to socialize and discipline their children, but while
Emma is taught to be a good adult, Andréa learns to be a good child.

The children above show that receiving money and presents is a
moral issue. It is not eligible to nag or to be spoiled. The moral ideal
in the children advocate is to be grateful and satisfied with what you
get and to deserve the money by doing one’s share. It is the same
moral principle that is applied to as concerning charity. The
receivers of charity are not in the position to claim, their role is to
be thankful (Zelizer 1994). It presupposes a clear hierarchy be-
tween giver and receiver. But by positioning themselves as morally
participate in the children’s claims, the children can win some advantages. It is also
possible to switch the power relations from adults to children, for
example by playing off adults against each other, as 12 year old
Louise recalls:

There might be a little comment, such as: "Dad, can’t we go
and buy sweets?"  “No, I didn’t bring any money.” “But
please.” And then grandma says: “But here is some money, so
that you can buy yourself some sweets.” (happily): “Okey.”

Another common way of using one’s ‘childness’ for economic gain is to
save all money one gets and let the parents pay for all running
expenses:

Tony, 10: I may decide over the money I get. /.../ I have 1000
something. I’m saving to a Playstation 2. /.../ I don’t buy
presents. Only sometimes, I buy. Then I get money from my
mum. ‘Cause I don’t want to spend my money.

A variant of this strategy is to save time and energy and gain
financially by leaving the responsibility to the parents. I had
expected the children to prefer having their own money to decide
upon and to look forward to having more pocket money, greater
responsibility and economic autonomy. But as it turned out this was
not the case with all children.

Barbro: Well, what do you think is the best, to have pocket
money or to get money when you need?
Josefin, 10: To get money when you need. It’s a little like-
Sofie, 10: Irdepends. Pocket money, maybe that’s not so good,
since you-. If it runs out, then you can’t do anything more.
Then you just stand there: “No, I can’t join you, ‘cause I’ve no
money.”
The girls illustrate that it is not entirely favourable to be an economic “being”, in charge of one’s own money, but that they prefer an irresponsible “becoming”-position. They have experiences of money running out and they come to the conclusion that it is better if the parents take care of the money and portion out smaller sums according to need. In this case freedom does not imply to freely and without control dispose one’s money. Instead freedom means being spared the task of financial planning and freedom from disciplining oneself. I also learned that it could be economically advantageous to let the parents be responsible for the money, that the children actually got more money this way.

Children’s “childness” thus gives them more possible positions than what is available to adult consumers. Consequently consumer freedom can be understood in two quite different ways: as the freedom to choose, and the freedom to delegate. To delegate consumer decisions might be more and more interesting even for adult consumers, since the possibilities of choosing seems to increase exponentially, and we realise how much of our time and energy we devote to consumer decisions.

THE GOOD CHILD CONSUMER AS A “BECOMING”

In the quotations above we saw that children to a certain degree can choose the extent to which they take responsibility for their money. There are also moral implications to this, in that it might say something about the good child consumer. When I asked Johanna, 9, if she was allowed to buy what she wanted for her own money, she answered: “No, I have to ask mum first. Or dad. Otherwise I’ll buy something really expensive.” It shows that children can regard themselves more vulnerable and less knowing, compared to adults. Their purchases need to be approved by adults, and adults have the main responsibility for seeing to that the children get what they need. This view gives less economic agency to children, but can, as mentioned above, imply other advantages, for example to have time for other activities than purchasing and to avoid being held responsible for unwise purchases.

The view of children as more vulnerable and less economically competent than adults, together with the development and socialisation discourse, which says that children’s most important task is to prepare for the future, make saving a dominant part of children’s economic lives. Clear-cut differences between children as “becomings” and adults as “beings” are materially reflected here. While adults save money after having paid for necessary expenses, saving is the prioritized purpose for children’s money. This is especially true for larger sums of money and it is an opinion which children share with adults.

Madeleine, 9: My money, which I’ve got, it’s mostly in the bank, mum has put it there. Then perhaps I have a little money in my purse, but that’s not much. And mostly mum or dad buys, they are to pay, like, they treat me. But sometimes when I want something and mum and dad don’t want to buy it, then they say I have to buy it with my own money. But I don’t want to waste so much, I want to save up until I’m grown-up!

Johanna, 9: Me to. That’s why I put money in my piggy-bank.

The money that just is kept, in the bank, the purse, the piggy-bank or elsewhere, only represents a diffuse value, located somewhere in the future, and this money is no actor. Just as the collective money in Gabriella’s home, which just lay there, disposable for any family member, this saving money is rather neutral; the children do not do anything with it and the money does not do anything with the children. This lack of importance is reflected in the fact that some children do not care about keeping informed of how much money they have. When asked about her pocket money, Julia, 12, answers:

I don’t know. I get money every month or every week, I get some money, I don’t know how much. I just get money. I don’t care how much it is.

11 year old Angelica is not more interested in her money:

Barbro: Do you save for something? Angelica: I saved and had 800 something. Then it disappeared somewhere.

Barbro: Oh dear! And you didn’t know what happened to it? Angelica: No… Or perhaps I spent it, I don’t know.

One of the questions I asked the children was what they would do if they needed more money, and for some of the children this question was not even relevant: “It never happened to me, that I want more money, I’m satisfied with what I’ve got, said Cassandra, 10.

One way of understanding some children’s indifference of money is to place them in the assemblage named the Swedish welfare society. During the last 20 years the economic and social gaps have steadily grown in Sweden, and there were children in my study, who had to face the fact that it was not possible for them to travel as far and buy as many expensive things as some of their classmates’ families could afford. Still, most of the children live in families with high material standard, and furthermore, other studies show that even parents who live under economic restraint prioritize their children’s needs in their consumption (Hjort 2004). The children in my study do not struggle daily to make the money last. They are confident that their parents have enough money to buy what is necessary and even more. It simply has no practical meaning to them if they get 50 or 200 kronor in monthly pocket money or if 800 saved kronor suddenly are gone—they get their needs and wishes fulfilled anyway.

There is also reason to consider if those children’s indifference concerning money might have ideological reasons. An often expressed opinion is that children should be allowed to be children as long as possible, that they should be spared, when possible, from the tasks of problem-solving, decisions-making and other adult concerns, and instead live a safe and carefree life as long as possible. The wish and hope for a protected childhood might have become more explicit as the world outside, mainly through media, has found its way into homes and as family members spend their lives more and more outside the home. It is a stated fact that a development including rapid changes of society, e.g. new ways of communication, new technology, globalization and changes in work and family conditions produce a counter-reaction, a tendency of “cocooning”, a wish to retreat to a small, safe and well-known world, to history and traditional values (Giddens 1991, Hansen & Salomonsson 2001). I would suggest that “childhood” is in itself a cherished value in Western societies. It symbolizes the good and safe past (may it be the individual’s own childhood, or the childhood of humanity, 4It is worth noting that saving is a cultural ideal, which children do not share with adults in contemporary society, where the dominant request is to keep the wheels (of consumption) rolling. Instead we can find parallels to anthropomorphic animals in comics, such as the Disney squirrels Chip ‘n’ Dale who hoard acorns and nuts and of course Scrooge McDuck, whose identity is solely defined by his ability to accumulate money.
placed somewhere between stone-age and the old peasant society), when life was simple, natural and possible to comprehend, when people had time and a spirit of community. That kind of society is far-off today, but the actual children we have among us serve as symbols of it.5 We realize that we can not regress into childhood or to an earlier phase in history, but what we can do is to try to protect children from all the disadvantages of the modern world. Trying to keep children outside consumer society as long as possible is one expression of this effort.

THE GOOD CHILD CONSUMER AS A "BEING"

But today the good child consumer can also be described in quite contrary ways. The good child consumer is not necessarily a saver, preparing for the future, but can also be a “being”. One description of the good consumer, which the children referred to, is the rational and moderate consumer. The idea of this wise consumer is cherished in Sweden and it is firmly established within public authorities, organisations, media and people in general. It is a consumer who compares prices, is concerned with quality and sustainability and who do not buy any unnecessary things. The situation today, when children in many ways are part of the consumer society, clear the way for a view of children as both being competent consumers and having the rights to take part in consumption.

Johnny, 9: When I go to the marketplace, I don’t buy the first thing I want. I usually go and check around. If there’s something more I want. Then I choose.

The rational consumer keeps his/her eyes open for the possibility of advantageous purchases:

Tina, 11: There was a sale once, it was leg bandages for the horse, this long. And they were in cotton. Well, and then, they would cost 50 kronor for two. But I saved 80 kronor, ‘cause I bought four. They cost 10 kronor for two instead.

Social anthropologist Daniel Miller (1998) asserts that saving is the activity which, apart from bringing the goods home, is considered most important for the shopper, and that consumers like to depict successful narrations about their saving. However, it is rather a “sense of saving” than a question of actually spending less money. According to Miller, thrift should mainly be interpreted as part of the shopping experience. He demonstrates the cooperation between the seller and the costumer, aimed at giving the costumer a sense of saving. The shops offer extra prices, special offers and the possibility to buy larger quantities for a lower price per unit. In shopping situations where there is a personal relation, the customer might get the impression that he or she is offered a more favourable purchase than others, for example by the possibility of bargaining.

Thrift ideology is part of a common ideal of restraint. Talking about thrift experiences is also a way of placing oneself in a role, which includes moderation, respectability, modesty and a dislike of excesses (Miller 1998). From a child’s perspective it also means a positioning in relation to age. In a development context younger children are spontaneous and naïve and want instant satisfaction of needs. By comparing prices, planning one’s purchases and keeping one’s eyes open for bargains, the child places itself higher in an age hierarchy, where increased competence has its immediate eva-
phone, to tell her that I wanted them.
Harry: And then-
Barbro: But you did buy them after all?
Fredrik: Yes.

In this event a lot of actants interact and it is not so easy to decide who the actor is. Each of the actants tries to gain power by increasing their assemblages. Fredrik is one of the possible actors. He is the one who is buying sunglasses, and the actants in the assemblage that give him his agency power is the money in his purse, the commodity he buys, the salesman (who sells it to him), his friend Harry (who supports him), the marketplace (which is open for everybody regardless of age, and where he can find the item he wants), childhood discourses (which assign children with consumer competence) and the market economy (which make it possible for people to go and buy things at marketplaces). But it is also obvious that the salesman is an actor. He does not seem to consider that Fredrik is a child, who should be protected from commercial influence; on the contrary he does his best, and even possibly tries to deceive Fredrik, to persuade him to buy the sunglasses. The sunglasses could also be regarded as an actor, catching Fredrik’s attention, attracting his desire with the help of an appealing design, brands and advertising slogans.

The cell phone also plays an important role in the story. It serves as a means for Fredrik’s agency; thanks to the cell phone Fredrik can phone his mother and ask for advice and his mother can serve as a means for Fredrik catching Fredrik’s sunglasses. The sunglasses could also be regarded as an actor, possibly tries to deceive Fredrik, to persuade him to buy the commercial influence; on the contrary he does his best, and even possibly tries to deceive Fredrik, to persuade him to buy the sunglasses. The sunglasses could also be regarded as an actor, catching Fredrik’s attention, attracting his desire with the help of an appealing design, brands and advertising slogans.

The judicial system is thereby a powerful actor, which has a direct and dominating influence on the way in which shopping environments are organised, as well as the possibilities for companies to market and sell their commodities.

To understand the meanings of money in children’s lives and their possibilities to be economic actors, it is necessary to take into account generational orders and other power relations, together with the actual events that form assemblages in which children’s agency is performed. Sometimes children appear as vulnerable becomings in the need of protection and guidance and sometimes as competent beings with the capability to successfully navigate in consumer society. It all depends on the processes in which different actors connect and disconnect elements to assemblages, thereby changing social and economic relations as well as meanings and truths.

REFERENCES
Qvortrup, Jens (1987), The sociology of childhood,, Barndomsprojektet 2/87, University center of South Jutland.
Material Values, Valued Possessions, and Their Use: A Study of Schoolchildren Age Nine to Fifteen
Hanna Hjalmarsön, Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden

ABSTRACT
This paper reports a study of material values, other values, and possessions in young consumers. As in adults, according to definition, material values in schoolchildren are associated with valuing more, and more expensive things. High-materialism children also value publicly consumed and status-oriented things more than low-materialism children. However, in contrast to adults, high-materialism children do not value things associated with other people (e.g., photos) less than low-materialism children. In all, they value interpersonal relations as much, or more, than low-materialism children. In fact, many possessions high-materialism children value more can be used in interpersonal relations, and are perhaps therefore valued.

INTRODUCTION
Each and every year, we seem to buy more things. For example, between 1956 and 1995, retail sales in Sweden doubled, measured in the prices of 1995, and since then, it has increased with yet another 30 percent (Jacobsson 2003). Partly, this may be due to an increase of disposable income, but it can still be considered puzzling, as both popular wisdom (cf. Fournier and Richins 1991) and research findings (cf. Richins and Dawson 1992) tell us that more things (above a certain necessity level) do not make us happier. Why is it, then, that so many people still buy more and more?

An assumption held by many, which has also been tested empirically, is the idea that possessions say something about the owner’s personal values (cf. Belk 1988; Richins 1994; Rochberg-Halton 1984; Simmel 1978; Veblen [1899] 1953). When it comes to the number and nature of the possessions a person considers important, material values, often partly defined in terms of the assumption that more things make us happier (cf. Richins and Dawson 1992), ought to be especially interesting.

For an adult American sample, it has previously been found that people high in material values tend to value more expensive, prestigious, and publicly consumed possessions, that are moreover not explicitly related to significant others (Richins 1994). It has also been found that people high in material values consider interpersonal relations to be less important than those low in material values. Also, they put more weight on financial security (Richins and Dawson 1992).

In this paper, I try to tie these findings together for a sample of Swedish schoolchildren age nine to fifteen. The main reason for studying Swedish schoolchildren is practical—it happens to be my dissertation area—but there may be other things that make them an interesting group to study when it comes to material values, other values, and valued possessions. Swedish children have been found to be the richest children in the world, according to a Unicef study. In Sweden, only 2.6 percent of the families with children could be defined as poor. The corresponding share for US children was 20 percent (Aftonbladet, June 26 2000). Moreover, second only to British children, Swedish children receive the most money in Europe (Datamonitor 2004). The possible effect of this wealth on their material values is worth further study. Also, Swedish children of course differ from American adults not only by their cultural setting, but also by their age. Whereas adults are generally said to have developed an identity, where material possessions can be part of the extended self (cf. Belk 1988), children are still in the process of developing their identities. Actually, it appears that for children, the relations between material values, other values, and valued possessions are not the same as for adults (it should be noted that even though there were certain differences between children of different ages in my data, they will not be elaborated on in this paper, due to space limitations).

MATERIAL VALUES AND VALUED POSSESSIONS
Material values have been defined as the tendency to place possessions and their acquisition as central in one’s life, to view possessions as a means to happiness, and as an indicator of own and others’ success (Richins and Dawson 1992). People with strong material values are said to value things in themselves, more than as means to other goals (Mukerji 1983).

The possessions people perceive as important in their lives often reflect their personal values (Richins 1994). Given that values are guiding the attitudes, judgments, and actions of the individual (Rokeach 1973), the possessions he or she considers most important are also likely to reflect his or her most important values (Prentice 1987).

Richins (1994) discusses two types of meaning that people can attach to physical objects: public and private. As the labels suggest, public meanings are shared by society at large (e.g., a golden necklace is an expensive piece of jewelry), whereas private meanings are personal, although influenced by the public meanings, and also often connected to friends or family (e.g., my great grandmother’s golden necklace is invaluable to me). Richins proposes that high-materialism people place more importance on things that (1) are consumed publicly, and (2) have the public meaning of being expensive, thus denoting wealth and success (Fournier and Richins 1991; Richins 1994). Because material values and interpersonal values are often perceived as opposite dimensions (cf. Fromm 1976; Richins and Dawson 1992), that is, you either value things or you value people, low-materialism people are proposed to place more importance to things with private, personal meaning (Richins 1994).

In short, the hypotheses tested by Richins (1994) on an adult American sample were that consumers with different levels of materialism will value different types of possessions. Compared to the possessions valued by low-materialism consumers, high-materialism consumers will value publicly, rather than privately, consumed possessions; more expensive possessions; more status-oriented possessions; and possessions that are not connected to significant others. These are also the hypotheses I here intend to test on Swedish schoolchildren, partly in order to examine their generalizability over different age groups and cultures, and partly because I suspect there will be certain differences. The reasons for these differences are both culturally related and age-related. It is generally assumed (at least in Sweden) that the US is the capital of consumption and that many Americans consider consumption to be an important part of their lifestyle. In Sweden, we like to think that we value other things more, as shown for example by the negative associations many have to the word “consumer”. To quote from a recent debate article: “There is an elite and then, there are the bulk children. The latter will become consumers” (author’s translation;
Aftonbladet May 10, 2005). Because of these different views, differences in the associations between material values, other values, and valued possessions can be expected. On the other hand, as previously noted, Swedish children on average possess comparatively large amounts of money (Datamonitor 2004), which could also affect their material values and associated constructs. When it comes to age-related differences, children may have a different view of valued possessions than adults, because they have not yet learnt that society places value on the possessions per se, or identifies you with the things you own, tendencies which may of course vary between cultures/societies. In sum, this reasoning leads to the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Children with different levels of materialism will value different types of possessions. In comparison with the possessions valued by low-materialism children, high-materialism children will value...

H1a: Publicly, rather than privately, consumed possessions.

H1b: More expensive possessions.

H1c: More status-oriented possessions.

H1d: Possessions that are not connected to significant others.

**INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN MATERIAL VALUES AND OTHER VALUES**

According to Richins (1994, 523), “because low-materialism consumers care more strongly about interpersonal relationships than do other individuals, they are more likely to cultivate possession meanings that relate to interpersonal ties. High-materialism consumers, on the other hand, place a greater emphasis on financial security than do low materialism consumers (Richins and Dawson 1992); the private meaning of their possessions are likely to relate to financial worth.”

However, the interrelation between interpersonal values, financial security, and material values has to my knowledge not been tested on an interval, Likert-type scale, only with the ranking of the List of Values (Kahle 1983; Richins and Dawson 1992). Moreover, it has not been tested on a sample of schoolchildren (at least not Swedish schoolchildren).

I would here like to examine if there are any relations between material values, the value of interpersonal relationships and the value of financial security among the schoolchildren age nine to fifteen that I have studied. Thus, I also test the following hypotheses:

**H2:** In comparison with low-materialism children, high-materialism children put less weight on interpersonal relationships.

**H3:** In comparison with low-materialism children, high-materialism children put more weight on financial security.

**STUDY AND MEASURES**

**Data Collection**

The data come from a survey of a variety of consumer behaviors in Swedish schoolchildren age nine to fifteen. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher in a classroom setting, and the study took place in Degerfors, a rather small municipality of about 10,000 people in the middle of Sweden. This had practical reasons, but pretests were made in the Stockholm area, and results were similar, strengthening the belief in the representativeness of the sample. That is, there does not seem to be any huge differences between urban and small town Swedish children in these respects. So far, a total of 399 children and adolescents have responded. Filling in the questionnaire was voluntary and required parental consent. There were only two children who were not allowed to participate, and none of the others declined to do so. Thus, except for a few being ill or away on the day I was in their class, the response rate was near 100 percent.

**Materialism**

Materialism was measured with translated versions of Richins’ (1987) Materialism Measure, and Moschis and Churchill’s (1978) Materialistic Attitudes. Because the items were, after pretests, somewhat adapted to be better understood by a younger age group, they were not back-translated. The measures are thus not exactly comparable to Richins and Dawson’s (1992) Materialism Scale, used in Richins (1994), but as they are all validated measures of materialism listed in the Handbook of Marketing Scales, they ought to measure the same construct. All items were measured on five-point Likert-type scales where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. More specifically, they were: (1) Materialism Measure; “It is important to me to have really nice things,” “I would like to be rich enough to buy anything I want,” “I’d be happier if I could afford to buy more things,” “It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can’t afford to buy all the things I want.” “People place too much emphasis on material things” (reversed), and, “It’s really true that money can buy happiness” (α=.66, M=3.14); (2) Materialistic Attitudes; “It’s really true that money can buy happiness (this item is included in both measures),” “My dream in life is to be able to buy expensive things”, “People judge others by the things they own,” “I buy some things that I secretly hope will impress other people,” “Money is the most important thing to consider in choosing a job,” “I think others judge me as a person by the kinds of products and brands I use” (α=.69, M=2.70).

The correlation between the two measures was .655. For the purposes of this study, all 11 items were combined to an overall materialism measure, with an α of .78. There were no significant differences in the level of materialism between different age groups (though there were some differences when it comes to valued possessions). Thus, children in the whole age span are analyzed together.

In line with Richins (1994), I used the upper quartile to define the high-materialism group, and the lower quartile to define the low-materialism group. In the high-materialism group, there were 100 members (25.1%) and in the low-materialism group 114 members (28.6%), indicating a fairly balanced distribution of material values in the sample. With regard to demographic variables, in contrast to Richins (1994), who found no such differences between consumers high and low in materialism, in this sample, there were small, but significant gender differences between the groups: the high-materialism group included slightly more boys (59.0%).

**Valued Possessions**

The survey included the question: “If your home caught fire, which five things would you then consider most important to save?”

Richins (1994) let three independent judges who were blind to the level of materialism of the respondents code their valued possessions according to whether (1) it would normally be used in private, such as a photo album or bed, (2) it would be visible in areas of the home normally available to guests (e.g., living room, dining room, family room, kitchen), such as furniture or art objects; (3) it would be displayed publicly at times by wearing the object, such as clothes or jewelry), (4) it would be otherwise normally used in a public place, such as a car or golf clubs, or (5) its visibility could not be determined. The coders also estimated the objects’ financial...
values and categorized them in different categories. The category of interest here is sentimental values showing associations with important others (e.g., gifts, photo albums).

In my study, I first coded the things the respondents wanted to save from their burning homes in 25 categories on the physical object level. In a second step, I let four independent coders classify these categories in a similar way to Richins (1994). They were instructed to think as if they were being the same age as the respondents (coders from the original sample was not available at the time being). At first, the agreement between the coders was not perfect, but after discussion, in which they explained the reasons for their choices, they agreed on the classification showed in table one.

In order to test the set of hypotheses H1a–H1d, I counted the amount of public, expensive, status-oriented and people-oriented objects mentioned by each respondent.

Value of Interpersonal Relations

The participants in my study were also asked a number of questions about what they valued most in life. The answers were given on five-point Likert-type scales where 1=not at all important, and 5=very important. The meaning of each step in the scale was printed in the questionnaire in order to facilitate responding for the youngest participants. Four of those items were related to family and friends: (1) “How important is it for you to enjoy being at home and get along with your family?”, (2) “How important is it for you to be popular among your friends, to have many friends?”, (3) “How important is it for you to have a best friend?”, and (4) “How important is it for you to have a girlfriend or boyfriend?”

Value of Financial Security (ability to purchase things and save money)

I used three items to measure the value of financial security: (1) “How important is it for you to be able to buy everything you want?”, (2) “How important is it for you to have a lot of money?”, and (3) “How important is it for you to be able to save money?” It can be argued that this is rather a measure of the importance of the ability to purchase and save. However, financial security can be regarded as a prerequisite for this ability. The constructs are thus considered related.

I also asked a couple of questions about saving, which can also be considered related to financial security, because the more you save, the more money you have to make you feel financially secure.

### TABLE 1
Coders’ classification of possession types according to Richins’ (1994) categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possession type</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Expensive</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Sentimental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection items (stamps, magazines)</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuddly animals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important papers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memories (drawings, family heirlooms)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music equipment (CDs, stereo)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical instruments</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo albums</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports equipment</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things belonging to other family members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles (moped, cross, bike)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCR or DVD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallet (with credit cards)</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I asked the children if they save, how much they save regularly, how much they have saved in total, and how happy they are with their savings.

These questions were included because whether high-materialism consumers ought to save more or less than low-materialism consumers is not clear cut. On one hand, high-materialism consumers may save more, because they want to be able to buy more and more expensive things. On the other hand, their desires to buy things may overshadow their willingness to save.

**RESULTS**

Hypothesis 1 stated that children with different levels of materialism will value different types of possessions. A cross-tab analysis with Fisher’s exact test shows that there were significant differences in seven out of the 25 possession categories. Hypothesis 1 is thus partly confirmed. The possession types where there were differences and the percentage in each group mentioning them are listed in table two.

Interestingly, sports equipment was the only category where the low-materialism group was significantly more likely to save things than the high-materialism group. The reason for this is unclear. However, the actual difference is comparatively small.

Even though the respondents were asked to mention five things they wanted to save, some mentioned fewer than five, and some mentioned a few more. Therefore, it would be interesting to see if high-materialism children want to save not only different, but also more things. Even though this hypothesis is not listed above and even though Richins (1994) found no such differences, in this case, it turns out that they do. A mean comparison shows that schoolchildren with high material values on average want to save more things ($M=3.29$) than those with low material values ($M=2.19$) ($F=19.079, df=213, p=.000$).

In order to test hypotheses 1a through 1d, the number of objects mentioned by each individual and classified by the coders as public, expensive, status-oriented, and associated with other people (sentimental) was calculated. As we remember, hypothesis 1a was that high-materialism consumers will value publicly, rather than privately, consumed possessions compared to low-materialism consumers; hypothesis 1b was that high-materialism consumers will value more expensive possessions than low-materialism consumers; hypothesis 1c was that high-materialism consumers will value more status-oriented possessions than low-materialism consumers; and hypothesis 1d was that high-materialism consumers will value possessions that are not connected to significant others. A summary of the differences between high and low materialism groups is found in table three.

From the table, we see that hypotheses 1a–1c were supported, but not hypothesis 1d.

According to hypothesis 2, in comparison with low-materialism children, high-materialism children ought to put less weight on interpersonal relationships. A mean comparison between high and low materialism children is shown in table four.

Both groups value interpersonal relations highly, that is, thought they were rather or very important. We see that if anything, high-materialism consumers put greater weight on interpersonal relations with friends, though not necessarily on family relationships. Thus, hypothesis 2 was not supported. However, it is worth noting that the greater weight given to being popular and have a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possession type</th>
<th>High materialism</th>
<th>Low materialism</th>
<th>Fisher’s exact test (Exact sig. [2-sided])</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music equipment (CDs, stereo)</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports equipment</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles (moped, cross, bike)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possession type</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Expensive</th>
<th>Status-oriented</th>
<th>Sentimental value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High materialism</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low materialism</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possession type</th>
<th>High materialism</th>
<th>Low materialism</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expensive</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status-oriented</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentimental value</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
girlfriend or boyfriend by children that are high in materialism could be interpreted as if they value their interpersonal relationships more for their status-oriented or ownership qualities.

Finally, hypothesis 3 stated that in comparison with low-materialism consumers, high-materialism consumers put more weight on financial security. Mean differences for the values related to financial security are reported in table five.

According to the above results, children high in materialism put greater weight on financial security (purchase power and saving ability). Of course, the items are similar to the items of the materialism scales, but you might still say that hypothesis 3 was supported, measured in this way.

When it comes to actual saving behavior, however, it turns out that there are more high-materialism children that do not save at all (15.2%) than low-materialism children (6.4%), high-materialism children regularly save less (on average SEK 200 a month compared to SEK 243) and have managed to save less in total (on average SEK 2263 compared to SEK 3553), though none of these differences are significant. Moreover, there were insignificant differences in satisfaction with saving pointing to low-materialism children being more content than high-materialism children. So, even though hypothesis 3 was supported, the increased weight put on financial security by high-materialism children does not seem to be transferred to actual savings behavior.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings that high-materialism consumers to a greater extent value possessions that are publicly displayed, that is, visible to others, expensive, and status-oriented, have previously been confirmed for an American, adult sample, and are here also confirmed for a Swedish sample of younger consumers in the form of schoolchildren aged nine to fifteen.

However, it is interesting to note that high-materialism children in this study did not put lesser value than low-materialism children on possessions symbolic of interpersonal relations, such as photo albums or memories of different kinds.

This leads to a questioning of the popular assumption that people who put greater value on material things put lesser value on personal relations. A mean comparison of questions about the importance of interpersonal relations showed that high-materialism children value interpersonal relations just as much as, and in some ways perhaps even more than, low-materialism children.

These two results together point to that materialism and valuing interpersonal relations are not mutually exclusive personality traits. Rather, it seems that at least for young Swedish consumers, material values are not related to the importance you attach to interpersonal relations. Actually, most of the possessions that high-materialism children put greater value on are in fact used in interpersonal relations. The primary function of a cell-phone is of course interpersonal communication, which is also an important function of computers (e-mail, chat). Likewise, music equipment, TV and different kinds of vehicles are often enjoyed together with friends or family. Clothes are also important in a social context, not only as a status-conveyor, but as a discussion topic and spare time activity (i.e., clothes shopping). In sum, many of the possessions valued more by high-materialism children are used to facilitate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>High materialism</th>
<th>Low materialism</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How important is it for you to enjoy being at home and get along with your family?</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How important is it for you to be popular among your friends, to have many friends?</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How important is it for you to have a best friend?</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How important is it for you to have a girl-/boyfriend?</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>High materialism</th>
<th>Low materialism</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How important is it for you to be able to buy everything you want?</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How important is it for you to have a lot of money?</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How important is it for you to be able to save money?</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
interpersonal relations, even though they do not *per se* represent interpersonal relations.

Aside from defining materialism as the tendency to place possessions and their acquisition as central in one’s life, to view possessions as a means to happiness, and as an indicator of own and others’ success (Richins and Dawson 1992), which is also related to the tendency to perceive interpersonal relations as less important (Richins 1994), material values might, at least in Swedish schoolchildren, moreover represent an inclination to use possessions in your interpersonal relations.

A third result is that, as stated by Richins (1994), material values are correlated with putting greater weight on financial security. But, not necessarily on actual savings behavior, which in most cases is a prerequisite for financial security. High-materialism children were not as good at saving money as were low-materialism children. Neither were they as content with their savings (even if none of these differences were significant, they all pointed in the proposed direction). If material values in this way lead to opposite effects on attitudes and behavior when it comes to saving, this can be problematic and cause even more dissatisfaction in the high-materialism young consumer.

Both the relationships between material values and interpersonal relations and the relationships between material values and actual savings behavior should be examined more closely in further research.

According to this research, material values and interpersonal relations are perhaps not opposite ends of the scale. Instead, both low and high materialism children in this study valued interpersonal relations to a similar extent, though they differ in their view on the use of publicly visible, expensive and status-oriented things in managing successful interpersonal relations. Thus, it is not only the relation between the individual consumer and product or brand that is important, but also the relation between consumers through the product or brand. And if so, interpersonal relations should be stressed in marketing communication also for this type of products.

Whereas the view on products as facilitators of interpersonal relations would not be a great problem (as long as you can afford them), if material values widens the gap between the weight attached to financial security and actual saving, this could lead to customer dissatisfaction. Even though this is perhaps not a marketing problem (because the marketer would in most cases encourage purchases rather than saving), from a social marketing point-of-view, it could perhaps call for further investigation. If we want to promote a healthy and happy savings behavior in our young consumers, we should then perhaps encourage less material values.

REFERENCES


Fromm, Erich (1976), *To Have or to Be?* New York: Harper & Row.


An Exploration into Children’s Use of Brand Knowledge and Consumer Culture as a Social Resource: A Discourse Analytic Approach

Olivia Freeman, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

ABSTRACT

This paper explores children’s discourses surrounding consumer culture. It moves away from a top-down structural approach that sees adult institutions including marketing and advertising as ‘invading’ childhood and towards a bottom-up understanding of children as social agents; active constructors of their own worlds. It is based on focus group research conducted with urban Irish children aged between five and seven years. A discourse analytic method is used and findings suggest that while knowledge of branded commodities served as a social resource within talk this talk was also coloured by wider social discourses including a gender-based discourse.

INTRODUCTION

‘Consumer culture provides children with a shared repository of images, characters, plots and themes: it provides the basis for small-talk and play and it does this on a national, even global scale.’ (Seiter, 1993)

This paper addresses the ways children construct themselves within consumer culture, the discourses they draw on and the ways they utilise brand knowledge as a social resource. Much of the existing literature on the ‘child consumer’ focuses on children’s relationship with advertising (Macklin and Carlson, 1999). Questions and conflicts surrounding the exploitation versus the empowerment of children by advertisers and marketers are ongoing and this research tends to have a predominantly psychological focus (McNeal, 1992, Gunter and Furnham, 1998). While Ritson and Elliott (1999) have addressed teenagers use of advertising as a social resource, empirical investigation of children’s engagement with consumer culture is lacking.

This paper reports the findings of an exploratory study into children’s discourses surrounding consumer culture. This study is part of an ongoing research project. Employing a discourse analytic methodology it goes beyond the broad qualitative analysis framework and looks outside advertising to the wider realms of children as social agents; active constructors of their own worlds. It is based on focus group research conducted with urban Irish children aged between five and seven years in December 2003 and June 2004. A focus group setting was employed to generate discussion about consumer culture. Analysis of the discourse produced sheds light on the way that children utilise their knowledge of consumer culture as a social resource with which to construct identity. The broader study employs a two-pronged approach encompassing both conversation analysis [CA] (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998) and discourse analysis [DA] (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). CA is employed to look at a number of areas including interactional order, the moment by moment exchanges taking place within conversation, collaboration and conflict. DA is employed to look at the language in a broader social context and specifically the way children use interpretative repertoires to build subject position and construct identity. This paper will address the DA findings.

The first section will provide a brief review of literature on the child consumer and children’s consumer culture. The second section will outline the research objectives and the methodological framework employed. The final section will report initial findings and analysis.

THE CHILD CONSUMER

Marshall at the sixth European Advances in Consumer Research conference argued that there was ‘relatively little research into children as consumers’ (2003, 137). This struck him as odd given their indirect and direct purchasing power which is now widely acknowledged as massive. While increased attention has been given to children as purchasers (Lindstrom, 2003, Sutherland and Thompson, 2004) attempts to understand children as consumers that is as socially interacting members of a consumer society are still lacking within the discipline of consumer research. The following literature overview will address contemporary theories on the child and society, children’s consumer culture and representations within it and some previous empirical research on the child consumer.

Cook (2004) posits that there is something of a continuum in terms of views on the child consumer; a structural approach which tends to see advertising and marketing as invading and exploiting children’s lives and an agency approach that emphasises co-participation, empowerment and creativity. Cook seeks to challenge both ends of the continuum. He denies the separability of culture on the one hand and markets on the other arguing that markets arise within and are (in)formed by specific, historically embedded social relations which convey meaning to commercial activity’.

According to child sociologist Corsaro traditional theories on childhood namely socialisation theory still dominates the field of sociology (Corsaro, 1997). The same could be argued within the field of consumer research (See Roedder, 1999 for an overview of this literature). Gunter and Furnham (1998) look to socialisation theory, social learning and cognitive development theories in addressing the various stages children pass through on the road to becoming fully-fledged consumers. They describe children as resembling ‘all other consumers’ as ‘sophisticated shoppers’ and holders of ‘pragmatic attitudes’.

Corsaro sees the term socialisation as problematic because of its individualistic and forward-looking connotations and offers instead the term ‘interpretive reproduction’. Interpretive reproduction views children’s evolving membership in their cultures as reproductive not linear. Children don’t simply imitate or internalise the world around them, they strive to interpret, make sense of their culture and to participate in it. Language and cultural routines are central to this alternative perspective. (See also James, Jenks and Prout, 1998).

In a similar reaction to the dominant paradigm Hutchby and Moran-Ellis in their edited book ‘Children and Social Competence’ (1998) write of the twin dynamics that make up the new social studies of childhood (1) a dynamic of children’s social competence: children are viewed as active agents who possess and can assert complex social competencies in their own right and (2) a dynamic of social enactment and constraint: children’s competences are situated within concrete social contexts in which there may be differently structured and variably enforced efforts to constrain, as well as enable, the competences that children are allowed or encouraged to manifest. This perspective also suggests a picture of childhood which is not linear but rather involves struggles for power, contested meanings and negotiated relationships. Thus ‘childhood’ is defined not as a natural phenomenon or stage of life but a historically and culturally variable social construction. Social competence is a practical achievement.
Until recently, much of the research on peer relations and culture has focused on the outcomes (both positive and negative) of peer interaction for individual development. Corsaro defines children’s peer cultures as a stable set of activities or routines, artefacts, values and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers. The focus is on children’s place and participation in cultural production and reproduction rather than on children’s private internalisation of adult skills and knowledge. He calls for an analysis of routines rather than individuals arguing that ‘although studies of childhood consumer culture tell us a great deal about children’s preferences and their roles in consumer decisions they only rarely and very narrowly explore children’s actual use, refinement and transformation of symbolic and material goods within peer cultures’. (1997,114)

It appears to be the case that much attention given to children’s consumer culture has not come from consumer research but from communications studies and cultural and media studies.

CHILDREN’S CONSUMER CULTURE

Kline’s (1993) perspective on the child in contrast to that of Corsaro’s denies children any role in the production of their own culture. His formulation rests on what Henry Jenkins (1999) editor of ‘The Children’s Culture Reader’ calls the myth of the innocent and victimised child whom we must protect--the mute one whose voice we must assume. Kline essentially views consumer culture as a structural force which has shaped history, society and individual identities over the past two centuries.

Ellen Seiter(1993) communications researcher and author of ‘Sold Separately Parents and Children in Consumer Culture’ addresses the social contexts of consumption. Seiter argues that toys, commercials and animated programmes are the ‘lingua franca’ of young children. Consumer culture provides children with a ‘shared repository’ of images, characters, plots and themes providing them with the basis for small-talk and play and it does this on a global scale. She argues that knowledge of consumer culture can be felt by young children as power: something they know but of which adults are ridiculously ignorant. Seiter acknowledges the adult dominated production process behind much of children’s consumer culture but believes children create their own meanings and symbols of consumer culture. She suggests that middle-class intellectuals and many mothers view popular toys and children’s TV as an alien culture spurning children’s consumer culture as mass, TV based, commercial and plastic. They struggle to teach their children to like things that are “better-to-like”. However she argues that in wanting to have toys and see TV programmes children are expressing a desire for a shared culture with their schoolmates and friends and a strong imagination for community. What does concern Seiter however is the reproduction of familiar stereotypes, settings and plots evident within children’s TV programming, what she refers to as a store of words and images which are loaded with histories of oppression based on class, gender, race and ethnicity. These are the issues which in her mind merit critical discussion.

Steinberg and Kincheloe in their 1997 edited book ‘Kinder-Culture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood’ turn their attention to these very issues. They outline what they call a new era of childhood, a historical watershed shaped crucially by the explosion of J.T. Henry Giroux (1997) in a chapter entitled ‘Are Disney movies good for your kids?’ contends that with the omnipotence of Disney’s reach into diverse spheres of everyday life, the boundaries between entertainment, education and commercialisation collapse. Giroux makes the crucial point that animated blockbusters do not engender the critical analyses often rendered on adult films. By successfully connecting the rituals of consumption and movie-going, Disney’s animated films provide a ‘marketplace of culture’ a launching pad for an endless number of products and merchandising that include DVD’s, soundtracks, children’s clothing, stuffed toys and new rides at theme parks. Giroux questions the extent to which children critically [my emphasis] consume the products of consumer culture for example movies as they mediate the meanings produced. He addresses a number of sets of controversial messages that weave in and out of Disney’s animated films. The first set of messages concerns gender, specifically the portrayal of women and girls. He examines the role of Ariel in the Disney movie ‘The Little Mermaid’ to illustrate this argument ‘Modelled after a slightly anorexic Barbie doll, at first [she] appears to be engaged in a struggle against parental control, motivated by the desire to explore the human world and willing to take a risk in defining the subject and object of her desires.’ (Giroux 1997, 58) However, although children might be delighted by Ariel’s teenage rebelliousness, they are positioned to believe in the end that desire, choice and empowerment are closely linked to catching and loving handsome men. Ursula tells Ariel that taking away her voice is not that bad because men don’t like women who talk, this message is dramatised when the Prince attempts to bestow the kiss of true love on Ariel even though she has never spoken to him. Giroux questions that this ‘rigidly defined narrative’ achieves anything other than to reinforce negative stereotypes about women and girls.

CONSUMER CULTURE–A SOCIAL RESOURCE?

Langer (1999, 2002a) has written on childhood, consumer capitalism and the culture of consumption. Langer acknowledges that there is extensive research on gender stereotyping and violence in toys and video games but she poses questions about the general implications of consumer culture for childhood which, she believes has received limited exploration. She puts forward the view that what is often dismissively referred to as ‘peer group pressure’ can also be understood in positive terms that focus on children’s use of consumer culture as a social resource—a way of moving from ‘I’ to ‘We’. In a large-scale qualitative study Langer and Farrar (2002) used focus group interviews to explore what being Australian meant to school children. She addressed Australian children’s participation in global culture and found that ‘the taken-for-granted currency of social exchange’ revolved around branded consumer culture. The global culture of consumption was one of the most obvious sources of material available to Australian children for use in the ‘symbolic project’ of the self–including their understanding of what it means to be Australian. The reference points through which the children talked about themselves were not national, but were local and global. The TV programmes that the children watched were global or American but the experience of watching them is local—one of the things that defines ‘being at home’. The children’s ‘habitats of meaning’ don’t see global culture meet national culture but rather global cultures meets local culture family, school and neighbours both in terms of what they consume and the networks of significant and generalised others with whom they interact.

This paper explores the way children construct their own local social worlds and identities within a broader consumer culture. Children may be exploited, they may be empowered but how are either of these effects manifested. How do children negotiate the social resources and material artefacts of consumer culture?

CHILD DISCOURSE

Goodwin (1990) argues that talk brings together language, culture and social organisation in the production of situated human action. Talk accomplishes specific social tasks thus it’s important to look not just at talk but also at how actors are portrayed and constituted through their talk.
TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretative Repertoire</th>
<th>Subject Position</th>
<th>Ideological Dilemma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Expertise</td>
<td>(a) In the Know</td>
<td>Clash between (i) and (ii) resolved by (iv a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- knowledge-based discourse</td>
<td>(b) In the Groove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Derision of girl culture - gender-based discourse</td>
<td>Macho me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Girl Power</td>
<td>Go Girl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- gender-based discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Boys will be</td>
<td>(a) Entertainer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys - gender-based discourse</td>
<td>(b) Entertainer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cook-Gumperz and Kyratzis (2001) in their comprehensive overview of child discourse studies address the changes that have taken place in the field since Ervin Tripp and Mitchell-Kernan published the first book on Child Discourse in 1977. While early concentration on child language was on linguistic competence, more recent work has concentrated on the ways children use language to create their own norms in peer culture. They describe discourse analysis as focusing on the ways children give narrative sequencing to events, provide coherence to the actions in a story, attribute motives and provide emotional evaluations, ‘the child’s identity is not a social given not merely an expression of the social world into which he or she was born, rather it is realised through the interactive use of language’ (Cook-Gumperz and Kyratzis, 594).

The focus group setting proved very effective in generating discussion around consumer culture and included discussion of Christmas wish lists, toys, movies, popular music and television and a number of activities including a collage-based activity. The children were provided with a large range of branded stimulus material with which to make an identity-based collage. This was conveyed to the children by asking them to make a collage that might allow people to guess it was theirs without seeing their name. The focus group setting proved very effective in generating relaxed conversation. The children were in a familiar setting and enjoyed taking part and this was evidenced, as they didn’t want to return to their classrooms at the end of each interview! Employment of a digital video recorder greatly facilitated the transcribing procedure as the researcher could see as well as hear the participants. Without video it can prove quite difficult to distinguish between the children’s voices.

The Potter and Wetherell (1987) brand of DA has been employed to look at language in a broader social context. A key difference between discourse analysis and a more general thematic qualitative analysis is that variability rather than consensus, both between and within accounts is predicted and explored. As people engage in conversation they set up various accounts and versions of events, these accounts and versions often alter during the course of the social interaction. This study draws on a number of analytic concepts including subject positioning, interpretative repertoires and ideological dilemmas. Potter and Wetherell (1987) define an interpretative repertoire as a culturally familiar and habitual line of argument comprised of recognisable themes, common places and tropes. Repertoires position people socially hence to speak a repertoire is to speak from a subject position or to build a social identity. It has allowed me to focus on how children build social position through talk something which is central to their construction of social worlds.

This paper reports on two hypotheses:

H1- Children invoke a number of discourses as they construct themselves through talk around ‘branded’ social worlds.

H2- Brands are good to talk with but this talk is limited and prescribed.

Discourse analysis rejects ideas that view language/talk as a neutral transparent medium between the social actor and their social world a gateway to the underlying thoughts attitudes and feelings of the social actor (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) Rather talk is viewed as a cultural narrative. As children talk about consumer culture they are drawing on collective and often local interpretive resources. As they talk they construct identities for themselves by drawing on these resources but these identities are fluid and therefore variable throughout a passage of talk.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Four interpretative repertoires were identified as outlined in Table 1. Space constraints prevent a full exposition of each repertoire. However, it is hoped that the extracts and discussion below will provide a flavour of this ongoing study.

(i) ‘Expertise’—this repertoire draws from a knowledge-based discourse. This discourse is based on knowledge around commercial products and more specifically ‘kids stuff’, (ii) ‘Derision of girl culture’—this repertoire emerged primarily in the mixed gender focus groups, as it was employed mainly by the boys. It concerned the acknowledgement of toys and other cultural artefacts as gendered by both girls and boys (iii) ‘Girl power’—this repertoire was employed exclusively by girls and (iv) ‘Boys will be boys’—this repertoire is one that both genders subscribe to and it involves the employment of humorous linguistic strategies in the main by boys.

It is important to note that employment of the repertoires was not gender specific but rather the children spoke through different repertoires at different times. This is illustrated in Extracts A and B below. Variation is evident in Melissa’s turns and a number of...
subject positions are constructed from the available repertoires. The children were working on a collage activity and among the available resources were some images of ‘Care Bears’.

**EXTRACT A**

4125 Rory You have care be:ar ha ((dances))
4126 Melissa < No I don’t>
4127 Rory > Care Be:ar <
4128 Melissa <I DO NOT have Care Bear>

**EXTRACT B**

5046 Olivia And what about this one? ((Care Bears))
5047 Felicity I like those ‘cos I want to buy
5049 one but like I’m gonna get one
5050 for Christmas
5051 Olivia Oh right what do you think of Care Bears?
5052 The boys didn’t pick them. Did you not?
5053 Rory No,(.) Too Sweet ((poses angelic look))
5054 Olivia Too sweet?
5055 Matthew They’re too ballet-ish la la la la la la ((poses ballet dance))
5056 Melissa Stop:
5058 Olivia Do you like (.) lets move to Melissa (.)
5059 Rory Mummy ((high-pitched voice))
5060 Olivia Melissa picked one Care Bear
5061 Melissa Because I really want to get one
5062 and my Mum told me all about them and
5063 she told me that when she was little they
5064 were out as well
5065 Olivia Yeah and when I was little they were
5066 out as well

**NOTE:** Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants

Olivia is the moderator

Extract A sees Rory speak through the ‘Derision of girl culture’ repertoire constructing a ‘macho me’ subject position as he teases Melissa about ‘having a care bear’. This taunt may refer to her actually owning a care bear or it may refer to her choosing a care bear image for her collage. However, this is not important, what is significant is the way in which Melissa responds. She draws on the same repertoire and attempts to construct a ‘macho me’ position for herself with a repeated flat denial of Rory’s accusation. In doing this Melissa displays something of an agreement with Rory’s mockery of ‘girl’ culture.

Extract B which is taken from a much later part of the interview sees Rory build on his ‘macho me’ construction. This time he is joined by Matthew who speaks through the same repertoire and also constructs a ‘macho me’ position (line 5055) making an association between care bears and ballet both presumably symbolic of girls culture. However in this passage of talk Melissa draws on a different repertoire termed ‘girl power’. Following Matthew’s turn Melissa asks him to desist with the mockery (line 5057). In her following turn she provides something of a defence to her preference for care bears. She invites us into a world of girl culture. She shares a story about her Mum when she informs the group that Care Bears were ‘out’ when her Mum was a young girl. This story reinforces the ‘girl power’ construction. The moderator/author of this paper speaks through the same repertoire while also constructing a position of ‘girl power’ by telling her own story one she shares with Melissa’s mother.

The variation in Melissa’s turns in extract A and B illustrates the fluidity of the construction of subject positions within talk as different repertoires from a broader gender based discourse are drawn to achieve different social tasks, different social competencies. In this example the ‘Derision of girl culture’ repertoire which draws from a gendered discourse was employed and spoken through to construct a gendered identity. Rory and Matthew employed it to construct masculine identities which appeared to derive through a distancing of the self from that which is feminine. Melissa employed it in constructing a fluid identity which perhaps can take or leave ‘girl’ culture. In this way she perhaps displays a greater level of empowerment than the boys who appear restricted in terms of how they can construct themselves around the topic of ‘Care Bears’.

The second hypothesis posits that while branded artefacts from consumer culture including toys and movies provide an important source for phatic speech and communication, the content of the speech is limited and prescribed by the dominant ideology. So, ‘Care Bears’ are a branded artefact which appear to be good to talk with but they are clearly a female gendered toy and as a result of this, boys talk around them is restricted and prescribed in that it must encapsulate a degree of ridicule. Girls perhaps enjoy a greater level of freedom in their talk around care bears, however a degree of defence seems to surround exhibition of a preference for this artefact of ‘girl culture’. ‘Girl power’ becomes something of a misnomer perhaps as what is displayed is a quietly confident defence.

Extract C below illustrates the ‘boys will be boys’ repertoire and the ideological dilemma that this repertoire serves to solve. The topic of Bratz dolls has come up as a potential toy for the children’s Christmas wish lists. Incidentally Bratz dolls have overtaken Barbie as the top selling doll in the UK and the US, Bratz are younger, hipper teenage styled multi-ethnic fashion dolls. When the conversation moves to James he invokes a competing doll ‘Barbie’. He succeeds in maintaining the floor through telling a story about a ‘girl’s’ toy.

**EXTRACT C**

2010 Olivia So we’ve heard that Felicity wants a
2011 Bratz doll and James what would you
2012 like?
2013 James Em Em I got my sister a Barbie doll
2014 when I was about four (.) and then (.)
2015 Matthew [laughter]
2016 James She put it on her lamp and then she woke
2017 up the next day and the Barbie dolls head
2018 [hysterical laughter]
2019 (girls and boys)

2018 Matthew Oh yeah I knew that. That was so funny
2019 wasn’t it

The ‘boys will be boys’ repertoire involves the employment of humorous linguistic strategies in the main by boys and it sees the construction of two traditional subject positions. A strong subject position of ‘boy as entertainer/comic’ is established. The girls provide an audience for the boys and through a turn-by-turn process of boy tells joke, girl laughs; the girls support the construction of this subject position. In doing this the girls themselves construct a subject position of ‘girl as entertainee’. This ‘boys will be boys’ interpretative repertoire also serves to solve an ideological dilemma. This dilemma is the result of the clash between the first two discourses. The subject positions of ‘In the know’ and ‘macho me’

The variation in Melissa’s turns in extract A and B illustrates the fluidity of the construction of subject positions within talk as different repertoires from a broader gender based discourse are drawn to achieve different social tasks, different social competencies. In this example the ‘Derision of girl culture’ repertoire which draws from a gendered discourse was employed and spoken through to construct a gendered identity. Rory and Matthew employed it to construct masculine identities which appeared to derive through a distancing of the self from that which is feminine. Melissa employed it in constructing a fluid identity which perhaps can take or leave ‘girl’ culture. In this way she perhaps displays a greater level of empowerment than the boys who appear restricted in terms of how they can construct themselves around the topic of ‘Care Bears’.

The second hypothesis posits that while branded artefacts from consumer culture including toys and movies provide an important source for phatic speech and communication, the content of the speech is limited and prescribed by the dominant ideology. So, ‘Care Bears’ are a branded artefact which appear to be good to talk with but they are clearly a female gendered toy and as a result of this, boys talk around them is restricted and prescribed in that it must encapsulate a degree of ridicule. Girls perhaps enjoy a greater level of freedom in their talk around care bears, however a degree of defence seems to surround exhibition of a preference for this artefact of ‘girl culture’. ‘Girl power’ becomes something of a misnomer perhaps as what is displayed is a quietly confident defence.

Extract C below illustrates the ‘boys will be boys’ repertoire and the ideological dilemma that this repertoire serves to solve. The topic of Bratz dolls has come up as a potential toy for the children’s Christmas wish lists. Incidentally Bratz dolls have overtaken Barbie as the top selling doll in the UK and the US, Bratz are younger, hipper teenage styled multi-ethnic fashion dolls. When the conversation moves to James he invokes a competing doll ‘Barbie’. He succeeds in maintaining the floor through telling a story about a ‘girls’ toy.
may be at odds if the toy up for discussion is a ‘girls’ toy. How can a boy hold the floor in discussing ‘girls’ toys while maintaining the subject position of a ‘boy’s boy’ so to speak? How is it possible to account for possessing evaluative knowledge about girl’s toys if you represent yourself through a discourse which says that girls stuff is something which you should distance yourself from? The ‘boys will be boys’ repertoire solves this clash; the boys can account for their knowledge and commentary on girl’s toys through the employment of humour. Thus, it is ok to talk about girl’s toys as long as it takes place through the ‘boys will be boys’ repertoire.

CONCLUSIONS

Drawing on Corsaro’s theory of ‘interpretive reproduction’ and building towards a conceptualisation of children as competent social agents who achieve social ends through talk this paper set out to explore the ways children construct their own social worlds and identities through talk around consumer culture. This study builds on Langer’s argument that ‘global consumption culture’ provided the most obvious sources of material for Australian children’s ‘symbolic project’ of the self and draws also on Seiter’s assertion that the commodities of consumer culture form the ‘lingua franca’ of young children. The paper posits that children invoke a number of discourses as they construct themselves through talk around ‘branded’ worlds and that while brands are good to talk with, this talk is limiting and prescriptive.

A discourse analytic approach reveals that in making sense of their social worlds as consumers of commodity culture, children’s talk is coloured by the employment of broader cultural ideas or narratives. A number of interpretative repertoires were identified; these were drawn from knowledge-based discourses and gender-based discourses. As the children spoke through a chosen repertoire they positioned themselves socially through the construction of a number of different subject positions throughout the conversation. Thus brands are good to talk with but this talk can be limiting and prescriptive as a result of broader cultural narratives.

This study was exploratory and small-scale focussing on five to seven year olds and the author is aware of the large-scale limitations resulting. No suggestion is being made that the results discussed above can be generalised outside the groups studied. The long-term study will address a wider range of age-groups and may also explore differences across social class or race. It will address the question of the universality versus the particularity of brand knowledge. It will explore in greater depth the prescriptive and limiting aspects versus the creative and all-embracing elements of children’s consumer culture, the artefacts of which are largely produced by adults, negotiated, re-produced and consumed by children but rarely subjected to avid critique by either adults or children.

REFERENCES


Cyborg Consciousness: A Visual Culture Approach to the Technologised Body

Norah Campbell, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
Aidan O Driscoll, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
Michael Saren, University of Leicester, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

THE CYBORG—an imaginative body that unites elements of the organic and the technical—offers a powerful prism for understanding humanness in a postmodern, technological world. By exploring how expressions of the future body are imagined and coded in marketing communications, this research uncovers the social codes that are produced therein. Using a visual culture approach, twenty-one tropes are identified through which the technological body is coded. Three of these—liminality, embodiment, and the technological gaze—are examined in greater depth in the research, drawing on primary and intertextual visual advertising material. This paper shows how technology produces liminal zones around the body.

INTRODUCTION

It might be the height of technological folly to consider the body obsolete in form and function; yet it might be the highest of human realisations. For it is only when the body becomes aware of its present position that it can map its post-evolutionary strategies … THE BODY IS OBSOLATE. We are at the end of philosophy and human physiology. […] Evolution ends when technology invades the body.

(Stelarc 1998:560)

Technology is often perceived as an abstract ‘nothing’- it has a tendency to dissolve into the cultural background (Rutsky 1999). Consumer behaviour and marketing research often regard technology as an invisible, neutral ether that is unproblematically absorbed into the social conscious. Because of this perception, the aesthetic value of technology and its concomitant ideologies receive little inquiry. Technology, like any other epistemology, brokers its own relations of power, meaning and representation, which in turn determine and influence broader social and cultural forces. Research into the politics of technology and its signifying practices in marketing is therefore merited.

One way of approaching such an inquiry is to examine the symbiosis of the human body and the machine—the cyborg body—in contemporary marketing communications. The playing out of the dynamic relationship between body and technology has only been examined cursorily in marketing literature (Giesler et al. 2004, Venkatesh et al 2002, Toffoletti 2003, Dobers and Schroeder 2001). The technologised body is a strange ontological state. It is a ‘semiotic ghost’ (Sterling 1986), a body that does not exist in a physical sense, but one that has been conceived at the cutting edge of a cybernetic vision. From a visual culture perspective, one can argue that there is no difference between a body that exists as a physical reality and a fantastic, fictional body. This is because the vision of the human-machine crucially has an existence in the popular social imagination and has a decisive power in forming and conforming conceptions of the future body, excluding and including possibilities. It therefore has a social and political dimension.

The cyborg has become a symbol for the breakdown between what is nature and what is culture. This figure is evoked in imaginative fantasy, phobia and political aspiration. Cyborgs abound in film, theoretical discourse and popular fiction (Squires 1996). The meaning and implications of cyborg bodies in literature and film have become the objects of intense scrutiny.

… OF BODIES

The body is a complex blend of biological materiality and social discourse (Featherstone 1991, Grosz 1993). No articulation of the body, no gesture, no thought, does not betray the body’s ‘belongingness’ in a social world (Crossley 2001:5). In consumer society the body acts as an ‘infrasystem’ (Dobers and Schroeder 2001) which conveys ideas about identity in the world. In this way, the body is one of the most significant loci of symbolic power (Rodaway 1995).

Redesigning the body in different, imaginative visual forms can change the way we think and philosophise (Poster 2000). As such, a change in the material body will inevitably effect a change in the code of representation (Abbas 1999). The most recent and profound change in the constitution of the human form has been the impact of technology. An impact this dramatic and pervasive will have implications on how the body is presented in consumer culture (Kaufmann 1998, Lash 2001).

… AND MACHINES

The tendency to draw a line between the human and the technical in Western civilisation is overwhelming. According to Latour, there are huge social forces that allocate certain things to the side of nature and things to the side of culture (Latour 1991:10). Nature is not some pristine state removed from culture. Nature is, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries part of culture (Stone 1992, Baudrillard 1987, Haraway 1991). As O’Mahoney attests, when technologies become more integrated, the ‘human’ approaches a stage where differentiation between the natural and the synthesised will no longer be possible. Technology is in this way giving birth to an “almost/not quite ontology” (Thrift 1998 121-173).

Seltzer conceives of this increasingly intimate interaction between bodies and machines, the many ways in which human space is being technologised, as the ‘psychotopography of machine culture’ (Seltzer 1992:72). Baudrillard (1994) asserts that technology has evolved beyond its functionality and now responds to a more complex emotional place in the social psyche. The technologised inscribing of the body has been instrumental in transforming and confusing the taxonomies of human existence beyond anything ever possible in natural evolution. There is no purely ‘human’ identity anymore (Butler 1990). Balsamo (1999) is perhaps correct in viewing the human and machine as a relationship of extent, rather than dichotomy, and theorises that there are ‘degrees of cyborgism’. Such a view of the body is evidenced in lived social practices such as transsexuality (Stryker 1995), cosmetic surgery (Balsamo 1999), reproductive biotechnologies (Steinberg 2000, Haraway 1997, Sobchack 2000), the development of intelligent machines (Pepperell 2003), cryogenics (Scourlock 1992) and even the use of virtual reality to evade the aging of the body (Featherstone 1995, Gromola 1996). Other cyborg bodies constitute theoretical postulations of how the future body will be conceived as technology advances. Pursuits in Artificial Intelligence (Feynman 1959, Moravec 2003) and the deep future prophetic visions of Stelarc and Arthur and Marilouise Kroker all
influence social notions of human body image and identity. The concept of the cyborg is one means of visually representing identity that is both ontologically new and unresearched as a visual signifying practice.

POSTHUMANISM

Posthumanism views human evolution as inextricably bound with technology from the time of the industrial and agricultural revolutions. The Darwinian thesis of artificial selection (1859) is refuted by a more radical perspective which advocates that a quantum leap in evolution will come from sophisticated mechanical or electronic modification instead of a slow biological change (see Peperrell 2003).

In the technological age, humanity is sometimes viewed as a ‘failed project’ (Kroker and Kroker 1996). Extending this thought, Stone (1992) questions what in fact happens as human physical evolution falls further and further out of synchronisation with human cultural evolution. While traditional accounts of human physical and social evolution posit an incremental course of human evolution—that events must build upon events and developments upon developments, (Crossley 2001)—the notion of posthumanism implies a radical breaking off from, and reconceptualisation of, the state of being human.

The concerns raised by posthumanism have found their way into research in marketing. Venkatesh, Kabbarbara and Ger (2002) ask what it means to be human in technological times. The authors assert that although this field of research has been awarded only superficial attention in consumer behaviour studies, there is evidence to suggest that a model of posthuman consumption may explicate aspects of consumer behaviour today (cf. Giesler and Venkatesh 2005). Looking at the idea of an emerging technological perception, Venkatesh et al. (2002:446) argue that society is now witnessing “the emergence of a posthuman/cyborgian paradigm that views the intersection of human and machine as a postmodern possibility in contrast to the received view under modernist thinking which considers these two entities as distinctly separate.” This perspective implies that technology, which was once seen as something “out there”, is gradually being internalised and is forming an integral part of the human perception (cf. Latour 1993, Haraway 1991).

TECHNOLOGICAL SYMBOLISM IN ADVERTISING

Advertising imagery borrows from existing artifacts in art, literature, science and other cultural discourses to establish meaning (Schroeder 2002). While many studies have looked at the semiotics of issues such as art, literature or colonialism in advertising, little attention has been paid to the referent system of science. Technology apparently just ‘is’. It has no ideological or aesthetic value that can be deconstructed (cf. Wacjmann 1996). However, there are at least two ways that technology creates meaning in advertising. Firstly, technology is itself a semiotic system with an appertaining values and beliefs. How human bodies are reconstructed through technology in advertising, and how the concept of the ‘posthuman’ has been represented is a salient aspect of visual culture. This means that technology can function as a discourse, out of which “subjects” or bodies can be produced (Foucault 1982:115).

Secondly, as well as transmitting meaning, technology as a medium also creates it (Virilio 1990, Cubitt 1998). This is an area of inquiry that is neglected. As Martin Listner et al. point out, “the physical sciences, even of the applied variety, do not address such technologies as ‘media’ but only ever as an arrangement of electrical circuits, functions, transmitters, pattern and noise. It is as if what is foregrounded in the physical or natural sciences becomes background in the cultural or human sciences, and vice versa, thus maintaining a blind spot between nature and culture” (Listner et al. 2003:297).

In every historical period, certain aesthetic forms have become central to the episteme or historical vision of a given society (de Laurentis 1980). Discourses of science, technology and digital media are beginning to constitute the new aesthetics of the twenty-first century, and they are fundamental in forming intellectual thought (Stafford 1991). This process has led to a critical juncture in how the body is presented and represented in consumer culture.

ADVERTISING AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE FUTURE

A futurised body image has supplanted and expressed itself in visual culture, most markedly in advertising and marketing communications. Advertising often acts as a psychological barometer, measuring prevailing preoccupations and anxieties in a given society (Schroeder 2002). The appearance of cyborg imagery in contemporary visual texts can reveal ways in which society conceptualises and works out its relationship and feelings towards technology. Oehlert (1995), for example, has suggested that cyborg images can uncover psychological reactions to conceptions of humanity, death, and the nature of evil in a technological era. The proliferation of theory about the cyborg has introduced fresh perspectives on how to reconceptualise the human body and subjectivity (see, for example, Balsamo 1996 and Peperrell 2003).

Many representations of the technical body are projects for the future, yet these images have a powerful affect on how society perceives the validity of these projects.

Increasingly, the psychological projection of the mind and attitude towards the future in advertising has been accompanied by visual texts which clearly reside there. Many forms of advertising have become highly stylised, looking towards conspicuously future-orientated images of ‘high-technicity’ for their inspiration. The temporal discrepancy between the present world and what is represented as the future has grown, reaching a point where this visual extrapolation often bears no resemblance to the present state of things. Digital media technology is the tool used to graft this future, and the unlimited potential of technology acts as a muse that fuels the imagination of the creative designer. As Cubitt attests, in technology, “we find not only […] what is, but what might be” (Cubitt 1996: iv).

In this way, the ‘future’ is increasingly constructed in and informs the present; the future is presented. The future is shaped and influenced by the present more than ever before. The future is fetishised as an object of imaginative resources, and at the same time taken for granted as a tool through which all life is observed. More often than not, images of humans in advertising are not really human in the traditional senses of ‘natural’ or ‘organic’. They are subject, for example, to rigorous aesthetic technologisation, such as cropping and airbrushing (Schroeder and McDonagh 2004, forthcoming). Advertisements are becoming even more highly finished, excessively produced and artificialised aesthetic artefacts. In all instances the consumer effaces the distinction between reality and artificiality. Images of the ‘human’ in advertising often oscillate between these two points.

The physical and psychological proximity of the human body to the machine is increasingly depicted in the visual economy—a common device in advertising is the anthropomorphisation of technological devices, with technologisation at strategic sites of humanness in the body, such as the heart and eyes.

The ubiquitous anthropomorphisation of the technical and mechanicomorphism of the human conditions the viewer’s concept of humanism. Many images that appear to be ‘natural’ humans are
in fact digital composites of many different bodies. The American artist Chris Scarborough’s exhibition ‘Composite Monster’ (2004, Sarrat Gallery, Vanderbilt University) articulates this gap between the real and the technologically simulated. This exhibition displays photographs of ‘convicted criminals’. The photographs are in fact amalgamations of many different human features. The final image is no longer what could be termed ‘human’. The art is described as photorealism-revealing the irony that there is no reality in the image except a simulated one.

Visual representations evolve in complexity until the human–machine symbiotic is highly ambiguous and it is impossible to distinguish which part is human, and which part is machine. The image of the iconic news presenter Max Headroom (1987) exemplifies such a practice (Image 1). His body is a complex blend of digitalism, body and social discourse.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Knowledge is increasingly constructed visually. Martin Jay (1993) calls the growing centrality of the visual to contemporary Western life ‘ocularcentrism’. Visuality impinges on our ideas of how we construct reality. Jencks notes the increasing inseparability of vision and forms of knowledge; “We daily experience and perpetuate the conflation of the ‘seen’ with the ‘known’ in conversation through the commonplace linguistic appendage of ‘do you see?’ or ‘see what I mean?’” (1995:3).

This research adopts a critical visual culture approach to the image, informed by Barthean, Foucauldian and psychoanalytic theory. This research aimed to connect abstract theory with ‘lived aesthetic experience’ (Stafford 1997:45, see also Rose 2001). In this spirit, concepts of cyborgism and posthumanism that appeared in the theoretical literature reviewed were then explored through the image. Twenty-one tropes emerged that could potentially be used to theorise the future body.

Twenty-one tropes emerged that could potentially be used to theorise the future body. These were again grouped into clusters of similar overarching themes. Since the objective of the research is to examine the technologised body and its environment in marketing communications, a purposive sample is the most beneficial to the enquiry because it allows the selection of examples that best answer the research objectives (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003:170). Advertising databases where searched to look for advertisements that were set in the future. Three motion advertisements were analysed. Visual evidence of three of the tropes-liminality, embodiment and the technological gaze-were investigated in detail, and intertextual visual material was used to support the evidence in the primary examples. This paper discusses how technology can create liminal zones in and around the visual body.

BACKGROUND TO THE PRIMARY MATERIAL

In 2003 Nike commissioned fifteen filmmakers to create The Art of Speed campaign for the 2004 Summer Olympics. The brief asked the respective creative teams to interpret the idea of speed. Les Jumelles and Eye D are the contributions of KDLAB, a New York-based graphic design agency. Les Jumelles is a two-minute advertisement, launched in cinemas in June 2004 in the US, to mark the release of Nike’s Swift training suit and trainers. Eye D is an experimental companion piece to Les Jumelles, and speculatively promotes Nike’s prototype of the same name, a personal communications device that will not be available commercially until 2014.

In November 2003, ATTIK—a global branding and communications group in San Francisco-unrolled their marketing communications campaign for the launch of Scion—a new car model from Toyota. Ambience Entertainment, a Sydney-based visual effects and design company created Transformer.

FINDINGS: TECHNOLOGY AND LIMINALITY IN ADVERTISING

Liminality is a philosophy and set of practices that describe a state of transition between two or more boundaries. These boundaries exist on different ontological levels (social, physical, psychical), and liminality emerges as a critical theme in areas as diverse as philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari 1980), feminism (Kristeva 1982), social anthropology (Douglas 1996), consumer behaviour (Sherry 1990, Schroeder and Borgeson 2002), and architecture (Vattimo 1997).

This research reports that technology creates at least five liminal zones in visual representation; (a zone between) the virtual and the real, nature and culture, the social coding of the objectified female and the empowered female, the male and the female, and the mechanical and the visceral.
The Virtual and the Real:

Technology creates spaces where it is difficult to distinguish where concrete physicality ends and a virtual environment begins. The information screen in Les Jumelles visualises the invisible experience of a cyberspace. The screen is virtual information that meets the physical body in a *thirdspace* between virtuality and reality, allowing a tactile interfacing between these two states of being. (*Image 2*) The screen also opens up another point of liminality. Throughout the advertisement the information on the screen corresponds to the runner’s activity. Is the screen controlling the runner’s performance, or is the runner’s performance affecting what is happening on the screen? In such an instance it is impossible to tell the controller from the controlled. This same liminal agency is depicted in Eye D. Interestingly, this screen is appositely set at another liminal site--the inside of building (traditionally seen as culture) and the outside of the building (nature).\(^1\) Representations such as this urge the visual consumer to renegotiate the demarcation between a virtual world and a physical one.

Nature and Culture

Posthuman visual representations cut across the divide between what is considered an object of nature and what is a human-made construction. The fractal ceiling in Les Jumelles concretises such an experience. (*Image 3*) This object synergises elements of nature with technological materials. During the advertisement, this ceiling structure responds and adapts to its environment; it causes a corresponding sphere on the floor to ‘grow’. This fractal pattern of growth strongly resembles organic configurations present in nature and the fractal arrangements created by Mandelbrot patterns in chaos mathematics. On the other hand, it is clearly a constructed material and it also emits an electronic light. Further, a transcoding of biological evolution with technical evolution is evident in these texts. The visual trope of evolution is employed regularly in technological culture, problematising one of the most socially accepted essences of nature. Transformer heavily relies on the episteme of Darwinian evolution to generate its message. Darwinian evolution is simultaneously celebrated and undermined in many visual representations of the future.

In ‘Making Cyborgs: Making Humans’, Pyle notes that the presumed superiority of the ‘organic’ is upset at a moment in the text which reveals that the ‘organic’ *needs* the ‘mechanical’, or proves them to be inextricable (1993:125). This manifests itself visually in the increasing representation of liminal ‘quasi-objects’ (Serres 1987, cited by Latour 1993:55) in advertising- objects that do not emanate fully from technology nor from the organic world. The point is that we are encountering images where it is difficult to tell which of its parts connote the nature of the human (organic) and the culture of the technological.

The Sexually Empowered Female and the Sexually Objectified Female

The technologisation of the body also obscures traditional social codings of certain bodies in visual culture, especially of the female body. It is difficult to attribute a normalising social category to the technological woman based on how she is represented visually. The sleeping female in Les Jumelles is a mysterious and powerful figure (she is after all, the protagonist in control of the screen in EyeD), but the outline of her breasts is focussed on and fetishised. (*Image 4*) The tight-fitting ‘skin’ worn by the female runner emphasises her sexualised form, but this sexualisation is made ambiguous because the clothing in the ad connotes a post-organic, ‘post-body’ suit that is highly functional. In this way, the male gaze is ambiguous because the female sexual form is hygienicised and no longer strictly ‘of the body’.

Concomitantly, the futurised female form is represented in this manner in many other objects of visual culture. The bodies of the robot in Chris Cunningham’s installation “All is Full of Love” (*Image 5*), Tombraider’s Lara Croft, and many visual representa-

\(^1\) In fact, this advertisement seems to take advantage of other more traditional tropes of liminality- it is twilight, between day and night; the room mixes Renaissance architecture with hi-tech fittings, and so forth.
tions of Japanese cyberpunk fiction reproduce this same liminal portrayal of power through the siliconisation and digitalisation of the flesh. This leads to an intense debate surrounding the political status of the (technologised) female body. The findings argue that technology in fact reinscribes the female body’s social and cultural identity through the constitution of a liminal sexual form.

The Male and the Female
Technologies decorporealise the body to the extent that gender is opaque. The protagonist in Transformer is a typical example of this. (Image 6) It possesses ‘human’ qualities in the sense that it exhibits agency and an organic physical evolution, but the visible gender markers of the body are technologised and neutralised. Marketing communications has witnessed an increased prolifera-

tion of ‘neutral’ or liminal characters, which seem to connote ‘technicity’ rather than sexuality. The production of such bodies shifts visual attention away from a strict delineation of the male and female, because this border is relegated in importance to the technology that enables these particular bodies to exist in the first instance.

The Mechanical and the Visceral
Elements of each combine to produce what could be termed a mechanical viscerality. Transformer uses identifiable visual markers of bodily activity—the technological space surges with images reminiscent of bodily fluid-sweat and semen—in a world that is wholly technical. Mechanical processes take on the visceral fluidity that accompanies bodily processes in the creation of this liminal
zone. In “All Is Full of Love”, (Cunningham 2000), the camera alternates between the sterilised, bright environment of the laboratory, and the dark and damp pulsating activity of the cables underneath that seem to leak and even contaminate.

What is visually produced in these instances is a technology that seems to possess its own primitive instinct, and paradoxically, its own biology that is wholly technical.

DISCUSSION
Each of these zones of liminality which are brought into being by the various effects of technology could be described as ‘cyborgic’, as they represent places and (social) states with no fully closed meaning. In this way, the findings suggest that technology is implicated in *poststructural* acts of meaning-making. Liminality as a state involves the transgression of socially, naturally or morally
accepted boundaries of experience in the negotiation of another state of being. It is a dangerous and subversive activity because it disrupts careful social and metaphysical classifications. Mary Douglas argues that what really disturbs the cultural order is when things turn up in the wrong category; or when things fail to fit into any category (Douglas 1996[1970]: 121).

Such a practice is intrinsically linked to feminist notions of identity, as the creation of thirdspaces that emerge from binary narratives. Thus the proposition is that technology has an effect on forms of representation in a way that offers a visuality to new liminal identities and physical states.

CONCLUSION

Looking at imaging practices in Enlightenment art and science, Barbara Stafford (1993) argues that in order to move beyond the metaphors that were created by a modernist sensibility there should be an intellectual attempt to forge new ones. She notes that, “such revolutionary embodiments or incarnated thoughts would demonstrate the independence and individuality of different types of expression.” This research finds that technology functions as a truly poststructural force, because it crucially both subverts and upholds the status quo of the body. This means that the image of the technologised body produces considerable slippages of meaning; what it connotes is liberated from the authorial hand of its creator and the (supposed) ideology of its representation transmutes from one political camp to the other with considerable ease. Technology is able to achieve this feat because it can plausibly disintegrate established truths that have underpinned Western thought for millennia. It acts as a disintegrator in a number of ways. This paper concentrates on its creation of liminality, both on and in the body. Technology exposes naturalised orders to be constructed codes, such as the lines that separate the masculine and the feminine, the mechanical and visceral, and even the divide between nature and culture. In this process, it establishes new thirdspaces of knowledge, that are neither one thing nor another, or perhaps what Serres (cited by Latour 1993:55) would call, ‘quasi-objects’. The point is that these quasi-objects and quasi-discourses are not the sentinels of hegemony or the harbingers of a new, liberatory regime for the body. The aesthetics of contemporary technology is still finding its ideological feet. This research concludes that the radical terrain of technological expression and representation is yet to be truly appropriated by a political philosophy. Posthuman images produce paradoxi-cal social meaning. Marginal discourses such as feminism may be able to use these slippages of meaning to subvert traditional accounts of identity.

REFERENCES

Nike Les Jumelles <URL:http://www.80.com/nike.html>
Nike Eye D <URL:http://www.80.com/nike2.html>
Lash S (2001) “Technological Forms of Life” Theory Culture and Society Vol. 18 (1)


Sherry, F. Jnr. (1990) “Technology, Place and Representation” *Journal of Consumer Research* 27 (2) 272-278


ABSTRACT

This study presents a better understanding of the relevance and the meaning of human body parts, hands in this particular case, in contemporary advertising. To achieve this goal we will explain the importance of the visual aspect in advertising to then provide an in-depth analysis of two images, the Donna Karan perfume ad and the Nokia phone display picture, to then compare them to other images. In the discussion part we try to uncover the meaning of hands to finally indicate a suggestive application of hands in print ads. Our investigations reveal that hands can transfer several meanings, whereas six meanings were predominant: communication, connection, protection, intimacy, identification and status. By showing body parts of people (apart from faces), consumers maybe identify themselves more easily with an advertisement and are more likely influenced by the image.

INTRODUCTION

In today’s society advertising is ubiquitous. Especially photography in the form of print ads replaced many blank spaces around us. Walls and roofs of buildings, bus stops, metro stations, vehicles, as well as sides in magazines are covered with ads. Although we might only notice and reflect upon a part of the ads (Schroeder 2002, Kivinen 2004) they play an important role in our everyday life. Advertising mainly exists of and functions through images. Images serve as a stimulus and affect consumers’ cognition, interpretation and preference (Schroeder 2003).

Advertisements include all kinds of images: people, products, objects, nature or events and range from realistic and provocative to idealistic and harmonic. Depending on the product, ads are rather realistic or idealistic and present people in total or close-ups. Body parts are often shown in ads for beauty products, like perfume, cosmetics, designer clothing and accessories. Many studies emphasize the body or the face, while in this study we want to focus on the hands. Hands symbolize different things and communicate on different levels. Whereas sexuality often plays and important role, also other emotions and statements are transported by displaying hands, for example connection or protection.

This study aims at better understanding the meaning of hands in contemporary advertising. To achieve this goal, we will explain the importance of the visual aspect in advertising to then providing an in-depth analysis of hands in (print) advertisements. In the discussion part we try to uncover the meaning of hands to finally indicate a suggestive application of hands in ads.

THE VISUAL ASPECT

Besides text, images play an important role in print advertising. First and foremost, we consume advertisements visually, because an ad mostly exists of an image with or without text added to it. As John Berger (1972) remarks: “seeing comes before words, and can never be quite covered by them” (p.8). The consumption of images takes place consciously or unconsciously, that means because of the vast quantity of images in everyday life we can only pay attention to some images. This choice is influenced by our personal preferences but also by our culture (McCracken 1988, Hall 1997). People of different cultures have different consumption habits and consume different objects with regard to their culture and their social status. Therefore, also “visual images function within a cultural system of meaning influenced by advertising, consumption, marketing, and mass media” (Schroeder 2002, p.3) whereby “their interpretative meanings shift over time, across cultures and between consumers” (Schroeder 2003, p.1-2). This denotes that the image in a print ad could be influential at a certain point of time for a certain culture but at another time and for a different culture it could likely be inappropriate or meaningless. Meaning is constantly in transit, “produced and exchanges in every personal and social interaction in which we take part” (Hall 1997, p.3). Through this system of meaning, images are represented by a common ‘language’. This language does not necessarily have to be verbal but can also be visual or acoustic. This denotes that representation constructs things and is therefore “a critical concept for understanding how advertising produces meaning” (Schroeder and Borgerson 2003, p.68). Accordingly, consumers “buy products not just because of what they do, but because of what they mean” (Solomon 2003). A certain car, for instance, is not only bought because of its speed and space and to get the owner from a to b, but also because of its status (its meaning) that is connected to a certain brand and model.

Semiotics, the science of signs, helps us to better understand how meaning is encoded and decoded in advertising and society in general (van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001, Schroeder 2002, Baudrillard 1968, Ilstedt Hjelm 2002). A sign can be anything that stands for something else and it consists of two elements: The signifier and the signified (de Saussure [1916][1983]). The signifier is the component/the “thing” and the signified is the concept/the meaning to which the signifier points at (Schroeder 2002). Thus, also images, for example of hands and other body parts, do not just exist but also transport a specific meaning.

The information technology that provides most of the images in advertising is photography. Photography comprises still and motion pictures as well as digital images and enables advertising with its global power and omnipresence. Photographers can construct their pictures in a desired way. By making use of diverse techniques, for instance light, contrast, black & white, filters, etc. their motives are presented in a realistic or idealized way, depending on the photographer's intention. Therefore photographers' objects like celebrities and models often look impeccable and thus even more desirable.

Interpretations and even descriptions are always subjective. By describing several aspects in particular and referring to other aspects shortly or even leaving them apart, we bias an image, albeit it sometimes happens unintentionally. We try to explain how these images can mean something, at least for us, instead of claiming an irrevocable analysis of the images. According to Roland Barthes (1977) a text’s or, in this case, an image’s unity “lies not in its origin but in its destination.” Thus, we do not try to uncover the intention of the photographer nor the intention of the fashion company but focus on what we see in the images, while being influenced by our cultural background. That also implicated that our interpretation will not be complete, in the sense that it rather leads to another discussion and reflection.

In this study we will focus on still photography by analyzing the display of hands in two particular print ads and then comparing it with other images of hands. The first image under observation is a perfume advertisement by the fashion house Donna Karan. Some of the images for the comparison are also perfume or fashion ads. One image is a photograph of a famous photographer capturing a
well-known model and another is a commercial poster. Although not all of the images promote perfume, they all show a lot of skin of the people displayed. Mostly, the body parts shown (on which the hands are situated) are intimate. As the skin is the place on which a fragrance is applied on, it denotes an important connection between the different images. The second image that we analyze is a picture in Nokia mobile phones, which always occurs when every Nokia phone is switched on. The images that we compare this picture to are close-ups of the hands part of a well-known religious painting as well as a movie poster. All images have the same general positioning of two people’s hands in common.

THE PERFUME IMAGE

The scent of a perfume, mostly in the form of a light brown to transparent fluid, delivers no specific lifestyle; it is the designed world around the fragrance that creates the desired image. The different lifestyle that fragrances, as every other brand or product communicate, are created by advertising. It does it “by providing the product with an ‘image’” (Williamson 1994, p.24). First by the bottle, which serves as the direct package, for perfume nearly inseparable from the product, and as the objects of recognition in the store, as Thomas Hine (1997) claims that a “package is an indivisible unit of consumption” (p.17). Secondly by ads, which create a visualized world around the scent, whereas celebrities and models often act as endorsers for the products (see also McCracken 1989, Sudjic 1989). Expensive fragrances are offered by many fashion designers, which add perfume to their clothing and accessory collections.

Donna Karan, a successful fashion design company in New York, is one of these fashion, fragrance and accessories designers. For consumers, Donna Karan’s ads represent luxury, success, beauty, business life, and the big city. On the company’s webpage, www.donnakaran.com, the reader learns about Donna Karan products as “strong clothes” which call for “powerful accessories”.

A specific print ad, promoting the release of fragrances by Donna Karan, is the center of our first analysis (figure 1). We chose this particular ad because we consider it to be different from many other fragrance ads concerning theme, style and lightning. The reason is, while beauty ads for cosmetics or hair care products often display a beautiful (female) face smiling in the camera combined with a picture of the product in one corner of the ad, perfume ads offer a wider variety of ideas.

Even though perfume advertisers often use the standardized ad with celebrities as endorsers as well, most perfume ads try to create a special atmosphere in their ads. There exist ads where solely the bottle is displayed and covers the entire ad, as well as ads where the bottle, an important item for the recognition effect in the store, is not shown at all. If people are present, faces are pictured closer, scenes have an erotic or sexual tone, intimate body parts are unveiled, and sometimes body parts are photographed as close-ups.

Description of the “Donna Karan Perfume” Ad

The advertisement under investigation (figure 1) presents a picture of two undressed bodies, probably a female and a male. The bodies are most likely models but faces are neither shown nor any personal characteristics, like scars, tattoos, jewelry or the like. We see the upper body and the hands of a supposable female person. She is embraced by a male person sitting or standing behind her; judging from the hands and the visible hair on the arms, which are the only parts of that person’s body being displayed. The woman’s décolleté and breasts are partly shown, whereas the man’s arms cover the lower part of her breasts and her belly. The lower bodies starting from the wrists do not reside in the picture. Both persons’ hands, more precisely their left hands, dominate the image. They are situated in the center and the front of the close-up photograph. The woman’s hand rests on the man’s hands, all being neat and well manicured without any craggedness or dirt; even the male hands appear smooth. The gesture is intimate, pure, and protecting, whereby the overall display of body parts and the bare skin equally alludes to a sexual situation.

Although the picture is in black & white and the contrast of light & shadow is intense, the persons are probably Caucasian. Their skin looks very soft and without marks or wrinkles thus they are approximately between 20 and 40 years old. The bodies capture nearly the entire picture, thus there is not a lot of background shown, but we assume the picture was taken indoors, perhaps in a studio. Only the right margin offers us a snatch to the location, so that we can guess a wall and the floor.

The ad has nearly no text. There is no headline, no slogan, nor logo, only at the right bottom a text appears: “Introducing Donna Karan New York Parfum. Call 1-800-762-4646 to order this exclusive offering.” This ad promotes Donna Karan perfume in general. There exists maybe a scent for men and for women, however this is not explicitly stated.
It is interesting that there is no bottle shown, which makes it quite difficult for the consumer to recognize the perfume in the store. It does not give the consumer the possibility to connect the scent with a noticeable displayed package. Moreover, the ad does not use a celebrity to promote the scent, as already mentioned, something very common in beauty ads. There are not even beautiful faces shown. In addition to that, the presented parts of the model’s bodies are naked. First of all, Donna Karan produces fashion, thus it would be reasonable to combine the ad for the fragrance with the display of the company’s clothes. Nudity or naked bodies, however, appear much more three-dimensional and round than dressed bodies models, which often seem flat. Stern and Schroeder (1994) describe the ‘partial nudity’, which “reflects the powerful artistic taboo against depicting total male nudity, in contrast with the routine depiction of total female nudity in Western art” (p. 126). However in the images presented, we do not even see total female nudes, just parts of the bodies, mostly torsos, and in most cases the intimate parts are covered by hands and arms.

Comparison to Other Images

The subject, a designer fragrance ad, which depicts a naked (and probably) male and female couple in an embracement, is communicated in the form of a black & white photograph. The photograph is realized as a double-page spread ad and published in female lifestyle and fashion magazines. The style of the ad is very aesthetic, as it depicts a harmonic, intimate situation of two well-shaped, good-looking bodies holding each other. Thus the image generates an atmosphere of high-class photography. Comparing the ad with the celebrity pictures of the famous photographer Peter Lindbergh (figure 2), we can observe that they are composed in a similar smooth and contrasted way. Figure 2 shows a picture of the undressed body of the model Nadja Auermann. The photo exposes her body from her belly (below her breasts) to her thighs (above her knees). She holds a cigarette in her skinny left hand, while covering her intimate area with her crossed-over hands. The fact that she holds something with her hands, a cigarette, emphasizes the functional and active role of this body part. Although the background is blurred, she seems to stand on a beach.

Lindbergh’s pictures emphasize the beauty of a person while still being realistic, sometimes even in surreal situations. Often, the photographed people are focused and in the center of the picture, while the background (if there is one) vanishes by being out of focus. For his black & white images he employs diverse composition techniques like contrast and shadow & light. Again the model’s hands form the center of the picture. They are skinny, so that her veins and bones are visible. Although we might not tell from the displayed hands in this single photo that the model in the picture is Nadja Auermann, we may be able to personify these hands in the photo series of Lindbergh. The photographer wants to show a realistic but aesthetic scene, no matter if the model is a smoker or just holds the cigarette for this picture.

The Donna Karan ad fits into the genre of close-up shots; therefore in some aspects it is also comparable to the picture of a man holding a baby in his hands (figure 3). Although definitely having different attempts, these pictures show many similarities.

Figure 3 displays a black & white poster of a picture of a man holding a baby in his arms. Both people appear naked; the tiny and pale baby sleeps restfully in the man’s crossed-over arms. By lying with its head and shoulders in the one hand of the man and having the rest of the body protected by the other hand, the small creature seems to feel totally secure. It sleeps with its left forefinger on his mouth and its legs tightened up upright to its belly. Looking at the man, we only see his upper body, his hairy breast, his tanned crossed-over arms and his hands holding the child. The left palm
carries the baby’s head and shoulders and the right hand holds the lower body. The man’s face as well as his lower body remains invisible.

In our opinion, this poster presents several similarities to the Donna Karan ad. Most obvious are the hands. They seem to play an important part in both pictures because of their position and size. They are centered in the middle of each picture and they are captured closely enough that we can even see the nails, small wrinkles and some veins of the persons. The importance of the hands probably signifies the functional as well as the protection aspect in both images. The strong male hands and arms hold somebody, the woman or the child, thus these persons feel safe and protected. Moreover both images are captured in black & white, thus we do not see the real skin color of the people displayed, but we can still tell that all of the bodies are probably Caucasian. Furthermore, the shadow & light-technique is used. In the Donna Karan ad it is used to let the bodies look smooth, nearly without any wrinkles, thus they are more like to be considered as one than being separate. In the man with baby-poster the shadow & light-technique underlines both the strength of the man and the fragileness of the baby through presenting the man’s skin, especially his dark arms.

Instead of the woman, or more precisely her breast, in the first picture the child is displayed in the latter one. Both represent the weaker parts, whereas the women expresses more activity in her behavior than the passive child by also embracing the arms of the man instead of the sleeping baby, which has its hands on its belly and breast. Generally speaking, the Donna Karan picture is filled with more aesthetic meaning. Both pictures illustrate the intimate interaction between two people whereas in figure 1 the aspect of style and artistic value influenced the creation of the picture. Figure 2 appears much more natural and ‘raw’. In addition to that, the man and baby-picture is a poster and hence does not follow the purpose of selling or promoting a certain product with the image. Although the text in the Donna Karan ad provides just one line of written information in a small font, the poster has no letters at all. A feeling of protection and security can be read as the main common aspect of both images, but the “undertone” of the images is very different. Whereas sexuality is a second aspect of the Donna Karan ad, it is none of the man and baby-poster. Here naturalness and liability seem to play a more important role. The baby is displayed very natural: in total, being naked (the same manner when being born) and sleeping restfully. The man, who could be the father, is holding the baby carefully. He seems responsible for the baby, making sure that nobody and nothing harms it. Interpretation

Race and gender are important elements in today’s advertising. Gender is more about social relations than about differences (see Connell 2002, Goffman 1959). No matter if gender roles and race are approached critically, for example at the CK One ad investigated by Schroeder (2002), or supported, for example in the Donna Karan ad, the body and therefore even and even more hands are semiotic signifiers (see also Corrigan 1997). The print ads of the fashion company Benetton who tried to shock the consumers with their critical ads stand in significant contrast to the harmonic Donna Karan ad. Benetton plays with racial and gender roles (figure 4), by portraying a black woman holding a white baby in her hands while feeding it with her left breast. She only wears an unbuttoned, red cardigan so that the right breast is entirely visible to the observer. On the back of her right hand a round scar is visible. The composition of the picture is similar to the Donna Karan ad, pointing out the hands that are also centered in the middle of the photograph. But again the “undertone” of the images is totally different.

The Donna Karan ad’s main purpose is likely to attract attention for Donna Karan and the fact that they also release something stylish, perfume in general, rather than to promote a specific fragrance. Because of that, hands and the three-dimensional appearing naked bodies are displayed in large size and the text nearly vanishes. The observer really has to search for the brand and the item being advertised. The lack of the verbal part puts even more emphasis on the visual. Text “can proceed via congruity (consistency between verbal and pictorial elements) or incongruity (discrepancy between them)” (Stern and Schroeder 1994, p.114), but in this case the missing text makes the picture even more mysterious and un-decodable. The naked bodies, at least the female body, in the Donna Karan ad creates a sexual atmosphere. The man embracing the woman from behind indicates him protecting her in some way, which refers to the archaic gender positions of the strong man and the fragile woman. This image probably works very well, because there are likely to be many consumers adoring the illustrated situation and wanting to get something comparable.

In all of these figures, hands are displayed in the center. Hence they symbolize an important connection between these quite different images. However the pictures do not entirely show hands but mostly upper bodies without heads, where the hands are situated close to the bodies. In comparison to that, an advertising picture form the phone manufacturer Nokia presents two different hands only. Here the expressiveness of hands is made exceedingly evident.
The Symbolic Meaning of Body Parts in Images: The Case of Hands in Advertisement

THE MOBILE PHONE IMAGE

Over 1.3 billion people worldwide own and use a mobile phone,\(^1\) a technology that was just invented nearly 50 years ago. The competition in this business is huge, therefore advertising is an important part of the competition battle. As each phone holds mostly the same features, the suppliers try to distinguish themselves from each other by presenting a certain lifestyle and offering a wide range of phone designs. The slogan “Connecting People” of the Finnish company Nokia, the world leader in mobile communications, expresses the ability to bring people closer together by using their cell phones. Every time switching a Nokia phone on, a certain picture appears (figure 5 and 6).

Description of the Nokia Display Picture

The picture (figure 6) shows two hands reaching out for each other but not (yet) touching. On the left side of the picture we see an adult’s left hand, most likely a male person, who holds his palm downwards and his thumb forward, like an extension of his forearm. His forefinger points upwards, his palm is open, as he is just about to grab the other hand. In the right side of the picture there is a right hand, probably of a child, with its palm pointing upwards and its thumb bend up. We see more than just the hand of this person, as it is smaller than the man’s but covers the same amount of space in the image. Therefore, most of this person’s forearm but not the elbow are shown.

Both hands are light-skinned and without any personal characteristics or scars. Although it is difficult to determine the ages of the people, the adult’s age is probably between 20 and 50, as there are no characteristics of a senior adult, for example wrinkles or pigmented lesions. The child’s age is even more difficult to define.

It definitely is no baby but not yet an adult either, thus maybe between five and 15. The background seems unrealistic, but reminds of the sky with blue color emerging from the right upper corner and passing into white in the middle of the picture. One fifth of the image, the bottom part below the hands, is covered by the company’s name Nokia, written in royal-blue bold letters.

Comparison to Other Images

The Nokia Display picture alludes to a detail of the painting “The Creation of Adam” by Michelangelo Buonarroti (figure 7) that shows the image of the fully formed Adam created by God. The Creation of Adam itself belongs to the complete painting of the ceiling of the Sistine chapel in the Vatican, which started in 1508 and was finished in 1512.\(^2\) The detail we are referring to is the hands part, where God and Adam’s hands nearly meet (figure 8).

In the close-up of Michelangelo’s picture (figure 8) we see Adam’s hand and a part of the forearm on the left side, and God’s hand and forearm on the right side of the picture. Both hands take up the same amount of space within the image. Adam’s palm points downwards, his hands appears weak and passive, as his hand hangs limp on the wrist. Only the forefinger is bend from the other fingers towards God’s forefinger, almost touching it. Adam’s hand seems to be strong and muscular. God’s hand also appears strong and muscular, whereas it is more agile, as the hand is actively reaching for Adam’s. Especially the forefinger points out straightforward to make the connection, whereas his other fingers sag downwards. Both being light-skinned, the skin of God’s hand seems lighter than the one of Adam’s, although this could be caused by the light effect coming from the upper left corner of the picture (figure 7), as the

---

\(^1\) For more information visit http://www.cellular.co.za/stats/stats-main.htm.

\(^2\) For more information about the painting of the Sistine Chapel see Robin Richmond (1995) or visit www.michelangelo.com/buon/bio-index2.html.
positioning of the shadows tells. It could also be a cause of the time, as this painting is nearly 500 years old, and colors faded and changed over the years. Even though the background has a beige-brown color it could be considered as the sky, due to the fact that Adam is lying on a stone in the foreground and God is hovering on a shell or cloud-like cloth.

Comparing the Nokia picture with the hands detail of Michelangelo’s painting presents several similarities: the overall positioning of the hands, their near-touching, their skin color, the more active and the more passive hand, the opposed characters of the hands and the somehow artificial background. However, the two images have several differences: the exact way the hands are hold, the age and identity of the persons and the different color of the background.

In addition to that, a poster for the movie “Bruce Almighty” (figure 9) alluded to Michelangelo’s painting and therefore also to the Nokia display picture. The poster displays the image of the actor Jim Carrey lying (as far as we can see) naked on a cloud and looking up to the upper right corner of the picture. He is holding his left arm up, actively reaching out and almost touching another hand, which can be anticipated as the one of God. We can expect it to be God’s hand because it is exactly the same as in Michelangelo’s painting and the text in the poster “If you could be GOD for one week, what would you do?” also indicates this. However the actor Morgan Freeman, who plays God in the movie, has dark skin. The differences in the movie poster to the other images (figure 6 and 8) is that here the near-touching of the hands is overemphasized by a glow between them, as well as the entire body of the actor (as an allusion to Adam) is shown, thus he captures nearly the entire space in the image. God’s hand, without the forearm, just appears in the upper right corner of the poster.

**Interpretation**

All pictures emphasize a connection between two hands, if it is the bonding or exchange aspect between two people in the Nokia picture or the transferring aspect in the painting and the movie poster. There exist several hierarchical dualisms in the images: God and human as well as heaven and earth in the Michelangelo painting and the poster. The Dualism old and young in the Nokia picture, whereas the child’s hand could also be the petite hand of a women, hinting to the dualism of male and female, thus to gender roles. However, it could also symbolize the hand of an angel, therefore referring to the dualism heaven and earth again. In each picture one person is the weaker and passive one (Adam, child, female) and the other the more powerful and active one (God, adult, man). The accurate illustration of the hands in each image in comparison to the unrealistic backgrounds implies the real and fake-dualism.

Whereas the connection between two unequal people by their hands is the common ground of these pictures, they all have a different undertone/a different origin. The Nokia picture is an advertising element appearing every time you switch on the mobile phone. It communicates the connection aspect that Nokia want to establish. Having a Nokia phone means having a possibility to get (closer) connected to the people you care about and the people you work with. It enables the user to reach others easily and being reachable everywhere he or she is. In comparison to that, Michelangelo’s painting has a religious background, being painted on a ceiling of a Vatican church and narrating the lore of the bible. If it advertises something, than it would be the bible. Irrespectively of the painting, the movie poster clearly advertises a film, by using a well-known artwork to play with the analogy and intensifying the marketing effect.
THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF HANDS

The presented pictures in this study indicate that the usage of hands is manifold. We use our hands for nearly every action in everyday life. Seldom do we actually notice what our hands accomplish. One of these moments is when our hands or one of them hurts or gets injured (Wilson 1998). Our two human hands build a cooperative pair and a primary tool of self-expression. Thus hands cooperate with each other, with persons or objects.

Just as consumption, also the usage of hands is, of course, highly dependent on the culture of a person. Certain actions are welcome in one culture whereas they are taboo in another, like some gestures. There exist countries with a high involvement of hands, like Italy, and countries with much less involvement, like Japan. In this study we try to convey a more or less global meaning of hands and their actions, although it will be influenced by our personal Western European cultural background. Semiotics, the science of signs, can help to encode and decode the meaning of hands in advertisements and even in society. As the pictures presented demonstrate, hands (the signifier) can stand for several meanings (the signified), like communication, connection, protection, intimacy, identification and status.

Hands as Communication

We communicate with our hands in different ways. One important aspect is the action of hand shaking. It shows respect towards and interest in another person. Many times it is the premier physical contact of two people. Hand shaking is of importance in the corporate world as well as the private realm of people. Gestures, which are culturally influenced, can at least be globally interpreted as friendly or angry, as inviting or repelling. The Nokia Display (figure 6) and the hands in Michelangelo as communication, connection, protection, intimacy, identification and status.

Hands as Status

Our social status as well as our profession can be derived from our hands. People wear a ring on a specific finger as a symbol for partnership, yet this symbol is detachable. Notice that in all images of the paper no jewelry is shown, no wedding ring or any other ring. Apart from that, medical doctors, musicians, and athletes who are highly dependent on the trouble-free functioning of their hands insure several fingers or whole hands to secure their social status, even if they become unable to fulfill their profession for whatever reason.

However, this reflection on the meaning of hands is far from being complete and just the beginning of a typology of hands. There definitely exist more meanings of hands and even much more examples of the usage of hands. However, these six aspects of meaning can help us to better understand the significance of hands in advertising and to organize them.

CONCLUSION

Images of hands as the focus and dominant object in advertisements are not that common but fulfill a worthwhile purpose in the consumers’ construction of meaning. Hands can symbolize different meanings: communication, connection, protection, intimacy, identification, and status, thus by using hands as a key component in an image, it delivers a certain mood.

The analyzed perfume ad by the fashion company Donna Karan intentionally makes use of gender and race stereotypes by picturing an aesthetic moment. The mood in this ad can be perceived as secure as well as sexually loaded, which is adored by many consumers. Unlike other ads, for example the CK ONE and the Benetton ad (see Schroeder 2002), that attend to distance themselves from stereotypes while in the end just reinforcing them, Donna Karan actually emphasize these roles. Apart from that, the investigated cell phone display picture presents a connection be-
tween two hands by nearly touching each other. The mood in this image is rather one of connection and communication than of sexuality.

In all of the pictures, binary dualisms emerge. The dualisms comprise God versus human, heaven versus earth, old versus young, male versus female, black versus white, weak versus powerful, active versus passive, focused versus out of focus, and real versus fake. Still or especially because of that the images appear somehow mysterious. Who are the persons in the picture and what relationship do they have to each other? How do their faces look like? What happens in the picture exactly? What is it we do not see in the picture? By keeping the images that way a broader range of consumers can identify with the scenes. It cannot even be specified if the people are actually male and female, or if they are of an opposite or equal sex. Therefore, also homosexual oriented persons find themselves connect to the images (see also Stern and Schroeder 1994). Furthermore, by representing only body parts and no faces, the cultural problem of a specific celebrity endorsement is avoided (see McCracken 1989). By showing only parts of the body and no faces, we can identify ourselves more easily with the situation, and we are more likely influenced by the image.

REFERENCES


http://voyager.cbe.wwu.edu/fragrance/d_g/donnakaran/donnakaran/index.html


www.beneton.com: Breastfeeding ad
www.cellular.co.za/stats/stats-main.htm: Global mobile users
www.donnakaran.com: Information about the design company and the designer Donna Karan
www.nokia.com: Information about Nokia’s history and strategy
www.peterlindbergh.com: Nadja Auermann ad
www.sun-dancephotography.com/ jeannie_w.html: Man with Baby picture
Embodying Mortality: Exploring Women’s Perceptions of Mortal Embodiment in Shaping Ambivalence towards Cadaveric Organ Donation

Ai-Ling Lai, University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom
Janine Dermody, University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom
Stuart Hannmer-Lloyd, University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT
This paper explores how the notion of “mortal embodiment” shapes perceptions of cadaveric organ donation among potential female donors in the UK. We seek to contribute to the growing literature on embodiment and mortality within consumer research. Using a phenomenological approach, multiple active interviews have been conducted with 6 potential female donors, aged 21-30 who claim to harbour ambivalent perceptions towards organ donation. Our research aims to understand how their experience of embodying mortality shapes the way they negotiate, appropriate and resist the meanings of the “gift-of-life” inherent in the promotion of organ donation. The decision to become a cadaveric organ donor relies on individuals being able to come to terms with their “mortal body” and its meanings (Haddow 2000). The body is the means by which individuals can participate in the cultural world (Csordas 1994). In death, however, it occupies an ambivalent position as the body “sets the material limits of our experience and ultimately dictates that our lives must end” (Seale 1998:11). The “mortal body” presents the ultimate paradox as the source of life as well as death (Bauman 1992). Elsewhere Belk (1988; 1990) has set the agenda for an embodied approach within the context of organ donation in his theorization of the extended self.

This paper expands on Belk’s embodied approach. Existing studies on embodiment, for example Patterson and Elliot (2002), Goulding and Follett (2002), Thompson and Hirschman (1998; 1995) and Joy and Venkatesh (1994), have focused on the ‘lived body’ while theorization of the ‘mortal body’ is relatively unexplored. Similarly the literature on mortality within consumer research, for example Bonsu and Belk (2003), Gentry et al. (1995), Young and Wallendorf (1989), Turley (1997) and Hirschman (1990), has not sufficiently explored the body as the locus of experience, instead focussing on death-related consumption and possessions. This paper therefore seeks to contribute to the growing literature on embodiment and mortality within consumer research.

INTRODUCTION

“The urgent need for organs for transplant has forced society to make fundamental changes in its conception of life and death and even what it means to be a person.” (Thukral and Cummins, 1987: 159)

The decision to become an organ donor is situated within the shifting meanings of life and death—which transgress the boundaries between being embodied and disembodied, the individual and community as well as nature and culture (Ohnuki-Tierney 1994). Traditionally, members of a community were encouraged to become organ donors through the altruistic discourse of the “gift-of-life”. Such discourse is not value-free; rather it is imbued with cultural assumptions appropriated by the medical profession to naturalize and justify the support for organ donation (Sharp 1995). By conceptualizing the ‘disembodiment’ of one’s personhood upon death and by emphasizing the contribution for the social body (Sharp 1995), organ donation becomes conceivable (Lock 2002). In the UK, studies have shown that 90% of the population indicate a willingness to donate their organs after their death. However only 20% are registered on the NHS Organ Donor Register (BMA, May 2004). The hypothetical support potential donors show towards organ donation suggest that the idea of transplantation evokes

“many deeply personal, socially complex, and culturally ambiguous aspects of our humanity that superficial acceptance is simply impossible for the vast majority of those who seriously reflect upon it.” (O’Connell 1996: 20, 29)

This paper seeks to explore how the notion of “mortal embodiment” shapes perceptions of cadaveric organ donation among potential female ambivalent-donors in the UK. Through empirical research with these potential female donors, we seek to understand how their experience of embodying mortality shapes the way they negotiate, appropriate and resist the meanings of the “gift-of-life” inherent in the promotion of organ donation. The decision to become a cadaveric organ donor relies on individuals being able to come to terms with their “mortal body” and its meanings (Haddow 2000). The body is the means by which individuals can participate in the cultural world (Csordas 1994). In death, however, it occupies an ambivalent position as the body “sets the material limits of our experience and ultimately dictates that our lives must end” (Seale 1998:11). The “mortal body” presents the ultimate paradox as the source of life as well as death (Bauman 1992). Elsewhere Belk (1988; 1990) has set the agenda for an embodied approach within the context of organ donation in his theorization of the extended self.

This paper expands on Belk’s embodied approach. Existing studies on embodiment, for example Patterson and Elliot (2002), Goulding and Follett (2002), Thompson and Hirschman (1998; 1995) and Joy and Venkatesh (1994), have focused on the ‘lived body’ while theorization of the ‘mortal body’ is relatively unexplored. Similarly the literature on mortality within consumer research, for example Bonsu and Belk (2003), Gentry et al. (1995), Young and Wallendorf (1989), Turley (1997) and Hirschman (1990), has not sufficiently explored the body as the locus of experience, instead focussing on death-related consumption and possessions. This paper therefore seeks to contribute to the growing literature on embodiment and mortality within consumer research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A critical review of the literature pertaining to the assumptions attached to promoting organ donation as the “gift-of-life” will be presented. We will then briefly review the literature debating the role transplantation plays in the mastery over mortal embodiment and finally the cultural resistance to the ‘medicalized body’.

The Assumptions Attached to the Promotion of the “gift-of-life”

The dominance of the gift-of-life discourse has “remained intrinsic in the dynamics and meaning of transplantation” (Fox and Swazey 1992:31). The notion of the “gift-of-life” is derived from a long tradition of Judeo-Christian influence on Western culture (Ohnuki-Tierney 1994, Seale 1998). Inherent within this is the message about the nature of personhood, community and moral obligations to one another in the name of common humanity (Ohnuki-Tierney 1994). The marketing of the “gift-of-life” discourse is encoded at two levels of meanings.

On the one hand, Robbins (1996) argues that the “gift-of-life” metaphor is appropriated to conform to the rational and scientific biomedical explanatory model of illness. Thus, to conceive the body as gift, is to conceive the body and the self as being separated in the event of death, a body devoid of identity (Lock 2002). By conceptualizing the ‘disembodiment’ of one’s personhood upon death and by emphasizing the contribution for the social body (Sharp 1995), organ donation becomes thinkable (Haddow 2000; Belk 1990; Richardson 1996).

On another level of meaning, in order to appeal to bereaved next-of-kin, the “gift-of-life” metaphor implies the possibility of transcending bodily mortality through transplant technology, where the remnants of the deceased would ‘live on’ in the body of the
recipient (Lock 2002; Sharp 1995), thereby unwittingly acknowledging the embodied nature of transplantation.

Transplantation also relocates the body from the realms of the individual to that of society. Consequently, the body becomes the property of society in the event of death. The ecosystem metaphor, for example, envisages organ donation as eliminating waste through gifting (Belk 1990). Thus, “the body is part of the larger biomass and should therefore be at the disposal of wider public good” (Robbins 1996: 190). However, despite the attractiveness of the “gift-of-life” discourse, this notion has failed to appreciate the complexities of organ donation and instead reinforces the imperialism of the Western biomedical system over the body (Ohnuki-Tierney 1994).

Transplantation as Mastery over Mortal Embodiment

Armstrong (1987) argues that the internal organs of the physical body are increasingly being scrutinized to locate the cause of death. The medicalization of the body means that death has come to be defined biologically, with cultural definitions of death becoming marginalized. The medical professionals have become the ‘new masters of death’ and biomedical technology their weapon (Williams and Bendelow 1998:89). Transplant technology is one of many weapons the medical profession uses to postpone death (Johnson and Roberts 1997), and ultimately the conquest of nature that resides with the visceral dimension of the “mortal body” (Ohnuki-Tierney 1994).

Death occupies an ambivalent position within the field of organ transplant. In most cases, transplantable organs are taken from cadavers who suffer from brain stem death (BSD). These machine-ventilated cadavers are occasionally referred to as heart-beating cadavers or neomorts (Youngner 1990). The neomort is therefore born out of the cyborgic revolution of death whose, very identity problematizes the boundaries between human and machine. The neomort becomes the site of the ambivalent and lingering self, yet at the same time, being promoted as a “routine cyborg” to sustain the survival of the social body (Hogle 1995).

Brain stem death pre-supposes the brain as the master of the body, the seed of consciousness and rationality. Western culture deems consciousness and rationality as the essence of humanness, a view consistent with Cartesian philosophy (Jones 2002; Ohnuki-Tierney 1994). Thus, the body is seen to be useless when consciousness ceases, hence taking the ‘functioning’ parts of the body does not constitute diminishing the person who once resided in the body, for he is no more (Hallam et al. 1999; Burkitt 1999).

Cultural Resistance to the Medicalized Body

The futility of overcoming death in these modernist projects has incited criticism. Biomedical technology is seen to have social ramifications resulting in the emergence of countervailing discourses surrounding transplant (Helman 1988; Lock 2002). Transplantation, according to Helman (1988:15), implies the fragmentation of embodiment, where the body is reconceptualised as a “machine” (Johnson 1987), where exhausted “parts” or “pieces” of the body can be replaced by available “spares” and where its emotional and social property fall into oblivion (Lock 2002). Helman (1988) illustrates his argument with the embodiment of Dr. Frankenstein’s monster, who symbolizes the destructive potential of science, animated to life as a collage of dead bodies (society), who is later rejected by his creator and by society.

Research consistently documents the resistance by potential donors and donor’s families in accepting the diagnosis of BSD (Fulton et al. 1977; Moloney and Walker 2002; Richardson 1996). Most appear unable to come to terms with the lifelike appearance of the cadaver (Moloney and Walker 2002; Fulton et al. 1977). This is not surprising, since “…the point at which life ends, at which the living individual becomes the dead individual, at which the body becomes the corpse, has never been straightforward.” (Hallam et al. 1999: 64)

The dead body has been an object of great moral concern and social meaning (Murray 1996:11). It does not only signify the person who once was but is also the site where people express their sentiments of love and loss (Haddow 2000:14). Here biological death does not signify social death (Mulkay and Ernst 1991). The cultural meaning of death extends beyond the confinement of biological demise. Thus, the body of the deceased continues to have social significance and is often celebrated through mortuary rituals (Boddington 1998; Ohnuki-Tierney 1994). Consequently, the “mortal body” can be perceived as not just a sum of its physical parts (Robbins 1996) but also “the self” (Turner 1996; Belk 1990), and can therefore be considered as sacred (Belk 1988; 1990). The existence of multiple meanings attributed to the “mortal body” means that donating one’s organs can be read from various interpretative positions. Belk (1990) contends that only by approaching organ donation from an embodied perspective can researchers understand the ‘human dimensions’ involved. Belk also suggests that a phenomenological approach is an appropriate starting point to research organ donation.

**METHODOLOGY**

The aim of our study is to explore young women’s construction of self-narratives and hence their emic perspectives pertaining to “mortal embodiment” within the context of organ donation. As we sought to explore the converging and sometimes contradictory meanings surrounding organ donation, it was deemed that a phenomenological approach is more appropriate (O’Connell 1996; Belk 1990).

We adopted the active interviewing technique (Holstein and Gubrium 1995), a form of interpretive practice involving informants and the interviewer as a process of ongoing accomplishment. This is a particularly useful technique to explore areas such as organ donation, which are not casually topical, but socially relevant (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Multiple interviews have been conducted with 6 white British female, aged 21-30. As informants would be expected to discuss the way they relate to their bodies, it was deemed more appropriate to interview female informants as the interviewer (first author) is also female. Informants were purposively selected based on their claim of harbouring ambivalent perceptions towards organ donation, i.e. the experience of simultaneously pleasant and unpleasant feelings for the subject (O’Donohoe 2001).

The aim of the initial interview was to explore the key sources of ambivalence pertaining to organ donation and to understand how it fits into informants’ sense of “mortal embodiment”. This stage is largely conversational with minimal questioning from the interviewer to draw out the emic perspectives of the informants in an uninterrupted way. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were then sent to the informants for verification along with 3 promotional leaflets and a donor card distributed by UK Transplant. Key summaries of the transcript for

---

1Brain Stem Death should not be confused with Persistent Vegetative State (PVS), BSD refers to the irreversible damage of the brain stem and PVS refers to injury to the higher brain while the brain stem remains intact.
each informant were produced and were then presented to them in the follow up interviews, thereby enabling the interviewer to ascertain data validity.

Subsequent interviews with these informants were conducted based on the emerging themes arising from the initial interviews. The interviewer became more active in stimulating narratives by encouraging informants to challenge alternative points of view and to negotiate their perspectives (Holstein and Gabrium 1995). Promotional materials from the “gift-of-life” campaign were also used as stimuli to encourage the process of negotiations. The transcripts from all interviews were analysed using the NVivo software enabling finely detailed and interactive analysis of the data.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis uncovers the emergence of four broad themes which reveal the limitations of promoting organ donation as the “gift-of-life”. The emerging themes demonstrate that perceptions of organ donation are engraved along the passage of life trajectories (Lock 2002)–(1) from embodying the lived body through body project to (2) embodying the (liminal state of the) dying process, (3) embodying the dead body, to finally the (4) (dis)embodiment of the afterlife.

We first deal briefly with how our informants feel about the “gift-of-life” discourse. However, due to limitations of space, this paper concentrates on the second theme–informants’ perceptions of embodying the process of dying–and in particular (1) resisting transplant technology in prolonging life and (2) the finality of death. Due to the richness and complexity of the data, we will concentrate our discussions based on the narratives of four informants.

**Limitations of the “Gift-of-Life” Discourse**

Almost all informants support the “gift-of-life” theme inherent within the context of organ donation (Fox and Swazey 1992). This is mainly articulated in a ‘common sense’ and ‘distant manner’ (Moloney and Walker 2002) reflecting the hypothetical support they show towards organ donation. However, when informants were asked to reflect on their decision on a personal level, their intention to donate was quickly dented, as illustrated below:

“Again, me a few years back would have thought, “Oooo…No”. You know, let other people do it, it is very important but let other people do it, not me. But now, I think, well you know, isn’t life the best gift that you can give, you know? Gosh… and now I am saying all of these, and then I will probably say to myself, ‘Right OK, let’s go and get a donation card’. And then there will still be a part of me going, “Oh, well, now am I sure?”’ (Laugh). And I’d loved to be able to explain to you why.” (Carmen, Student, Age 21) [emphasis added]

Carmen’s response is typical of most responses in this study. Most informants agree that organ donation serves an altruistic purpose, yet their ambivalence quickly surfaces when considering alternative discourses. This is often introduced into the interview via conjunctions such as “but then”, “and then”, “but”. The simultaneous presence of countervailing discourses against the “gift-of-life” appears to lead to their feelings of ambivalence. The dominance of the “gift-of-life” discourse has also resulted in our informants feeling “guilty”, “hypocritical” and “selfish” when they justify their reluctance to become an organ donor, especially when they and their next-of-kin could benefit from the “gift-of-life” should the need arise:

“(On the) one side I am a bit hypocritical I suppose cause on the one side, if say my brother or my mum needed liver transplant say, I would like, really want them to find one. But then, I don’t want it to be donated by a person without knowing what it involves.” (Megan, Recent Graduate, Age 22) [emphasis added]

Most informants do not reject the “gift-of-life” discourse per se; rather they seek to negotiate the meaning of other countervailing discourses and to incorporate them into their sense of embodiment. Informant’s hypothetical support indicates that they are “not simply consumers who are duped by medical ideology” (Williams and Calnan 1996: 1612) and may not always decode the meanings of the “gift-of-life” as intended by the promoter (Hall 1981). Therefore becoming an organ donor is a highly complex decision and laced with ambivalence (Calnan and Williams 1996). Thus, the willingness to donate cannot be reduced to monolithic interpretations (O’Connell 1996), rather it can be understood from various interpretive positions which we will now turn to.

**Resisting Transplant Technology in Prolonging Life (The Case of Chloe)**

The medicalization of the body raises the hope of pushing back the frontier of death, thus increasing the appreciation for the sanctity of life (Illich 1976), which most informants in this study uphold–as exemplified by Megan below:

“I think it is really good. I think they should do a lot with modern technology. And like my cousin, she had like a mechanical valve in her heart and she had a pig’s one as well. She probably would have died if they hadn’t done that… It’s like that’s the whole point isn’t it, having to stay alive.” (Megan, Recent Graduate, Age 22)

Ironically, at the same time, changes in medical technology have also undermined the universal claim for the sanctity of life (Singer 1994; Baudrillard 1993). Singer (1994) argues that we are going through a transition period in our attitudes to the sanctity of human life, which has led to uncertainty and fragmentation. Recent debates surrounding euthanasia, suicide and abortion are all indicative of the complex meanings surrounding the sanctity of life.

Informants’ perceptions regarding the sanctity of life appear to be grounded in their life themes (Mick and Buhl 1992)–informed by their sociocultural and transformational experiences (e.g. Megan’s previous family medical history). Similarly, Chloe articulates her perceptions of organ donation as being an inappropriate means of prolonging life. Her perceptions are informed by what she perceives as her Christian beliefs:

“At the moment I am really not sure (about organ donation). I would be inclined to say that I don’t really believe in it a hell of a lot because… I think that obviously we were made to survive for so long, and by just keep tampering and putting somebody’s organs there to somebody else. You (are) just sort of prolonging something that wasn’t really… you know… you weren’t designed to live until however old, you know some people live till now… Obviously with a small child it is a lot more difficult. I mean people will go, “how can you say that? It is a small child. They hardly live their life”… But being as I am, religious… you know you are born with how you are born. You must be born with some kind of reasons as to why you have this heart defects or anything else that will require this transplant.” (Chloe, Receptionist, Age 24) [emphasis added]
body is God’s creation and in His design has pre-determined the life expectancy of the body. Therefore it is up to the body to exhaust itself. By prolonging life through transplantation, she believes one crosses over to the realm of the “unnatural”. Therefore, transplant technology epitomizes the ultimate interference of man, hence culture against nature:

“The medical side has gone a bit too far. It starts meddling in things that it shouldn’t really be meddling in. It is not up to us to decide who lives and who dies. I realize that. It was like I was saying earlier, like some operations succeed some don’t. It is just up to the body itself to decide whether it has enough, whether things fit in or stays on a bit longer.” (Chloe, Receptionist, Age 24)

Articulating her understanding of Darwinian evolutionary theory (Darwin 1963), Chloe agrees that transplant technology has a place in man’s ‘survival of the fittest’. She believes that God has permitted man the freedom to evolve in the quest for survival. However she criticizes man’s quest to conquer the natural order of the world, arguing this is rooted in selfishness, which manifests itself in recent developments such as face transplantation and organ cloning. She believes that such developments are man attempting to ‘play God’ and this is self-destructive. In the extract below, Chloe explains her resistance by weaving a personalize narrative, drawing from an amalgam of her Christian beliefs and the theory of evolution:

“I do think that God makes things and they sort of evolved and changed to sort of help them survive for longer… I think organ donation has a place in the evolution of humans. Basically with regards to the evolving… we can try things, if they work, you know, wonderful! Organ donation is one of the things they tried and it seems to have worked. I think man (has) just forgotten how things started and they are starting to ignore other things, and starting to get very selfish. It seemed to be engrossed on… a lot of them see it as making things better. I… I think that it is a sign of things going too far. Like the new transplant thing now, it is the thing about doing face transplant. That really freaks me out. That is really playing God. The whole thing just freaks me out. Again man being selfish, although realizing they can do all these things, it is going to lead in the end to self-destruction… I think it will come to a point where humans will just end up destroying the world for everybody and that will be the Judgement Day that they talk about.” (Chloe, Receptionist, Age 24)

Chloe further criticizes the ecosystem metaphor (Belk 1990). Though misguided, she feels uneasy with the way organs are being ‘recycled like glass’. Chloe’s personalized interpretations of the ecosystem metaphor have compounded her ambivalence towards organ donation. She does not perceive a strong body-self integrity, but feels that an organ’s lifespan is pre-determined by the divinity of God’s design and should not be “forced” to exceed its life expectancy. Unlike informants who engage in body projects, Chloe embraces mortality instead of fleeing from it:

“And it also gets to a point where you get the same organ being sort of recycled like glass or something like that. You know, it was originally donated to somebody who then perhaps may die earlier than expected due to totally different circumstances. And they’d said, ‘yes, you can have my organ donated’. …Well, you are forcing this organ to do a hell of a lot more really than it was originally designed to do. You know, perhaps it was designed to sort of survive for about 80 years, and … by this point (in the new owner’s body) it could have done about 160 years worth of work which it doesn’t really want to do.” (Chloe, Receptionist, Age 24)

Despite acknowledging the success of transplant technology in giving life, Chloe explains her conviction that organ donation is not part of the divine plan. She justifies this by explaining that in order to avoid rejection, the life of an organ recipient is enslaved to the transplanted organ(s):

“A lot of the problems now, is that they can’t find one to match, or to match the blood group or a lot of other things. In which case, even if it is done, the body can still reject this organ that they put in, which means it would be a waste anyway. They could spend the rest of their life on some kind of machine or something to keep the organs working for them... they are sort of like a slave to the kidney.” (Chloe, Receptionist, Age 24)

Chloe adds that such enslavement also extends to the entire family in the regime of prolonging the lifespan of the transplanted organ:

“And you are prolonging the pain of the person who (this) is happening to. I mean, (be)cause they must be able to see that, although it is bringing joy to the other people because you are … staying a little bit longer, it is also bringing them… Everyday they just know, ‘is that going to be the day or when is it (rejection) going to happen?’” (Chloe, Receptionist, Age 24)

Chloe has actively appropriated common medical knowledge (immunosuppressive rejection) into her personalize narrative to negotiate her way out of committing to becoming an organ donor (Hirschman and Thompson 1997). In criticizing the promotional material (documentary) from UK Transplant, Chloe maintains that the documentary:

“is very one-sided... it is all propaganda. It leaves me with more questions than answers. They haven’t told you whether anybody who has a transplant earlier on and what they are like now, whether they are on some kind of medication. The ‘gift-of-life’ slogan is a good slogan for what they are promoting but I wouldn’t say it is strictly true. It is all so peachy.” (Chloe, Receptionist, Age 24)

The finality of death and the right to life

Although none of the informants were aware of BSD, the anxiety about the finality of death persists. This is most prevalent in their narratives pertaining to the vegetative body. The use of a life support system means that dying is a process rather than an ‘instant’ occurrence (Fulton, Fulton and Simmons 1977). The dying process hence involves the decision of ‘turning off’ the life support machine which has caused anxiety among some of our informants:

“When you are dead you don’t really need it (the organs) I suppose. But as long as you really are dead, that’s the thing that worries me; it is the life support machine thing that worries me about organ donation… if it was me on life support machine and I was about to come round in like 5 minutes and they switch the machine off… not very nice really would it? It is a bit scary to be honest. It just makes you wonder, if they (next-of-kin) haven’t decide to donate organs, would they (transplant surgeon) be that keen to switch the machine off.” (Megan, Recent Graduate, Age 22)
Megan’s ambivalence towards organ donation does not reside within the concept itself; rather she questions the point at which the finality of death occurs. Such anxiety is informed largely through mediated experience—i.e. experience of events that are spatially and temporally distant from the practical everyday life (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998). Cultural meanings of death are circulated through the media depicting stories such as being buried alive, the sentient corpse, recovery from coma and out of body experiences (Richardson 1996). All these contribute to confusion on what constitutes the ‘moment of death’. These alternative representations of death also lead our informants to question the credibility of death diagnosed by the medical professionals:

“Or if there is a glimmer of hope, obviously from the things I have seen on the media, but as an example yeah, if someone can’t breathe on their own, and the life support machine is off then obviously they are going to die. But then it comes back again (to the question)...are the doctors definitely sure that they are dead (laugh).” (Imogen, Administrator, Age 28)

As mentioned above, the medicalization of death gives rise to the emergence of ‘natural death’ (Illich 1976)—a death which comes under medical care and finds us in good health and in old age—thereby supporting the sanctity of life. Switching off the machine is perceived as diminishing one’s right to life:

“I think that... erm... everyone has a right to life. And people... and obviously I am saying this... if someone is in a coma, but there is a chance of them coming around, then obviously we should wait.” (Imogen, Administrator, Age 28)

The informants’ perceptions about the quality of life for those on the ventilator is dependent on whether or not the vegetative identity is perceived to be embodied, i.e. can they be considered a living person? For informants in this study, there is general agreement that the vegetative identity should be classified as a living person whose life should be maintained, and therefore it is not justifiable to retrieve organs from these individuals:

“Unless they are actually dead dead, I don’t think that any organs should be taken. They are still alive. Even if they got brain damage, they are still alive; maybe they wouldn’t thank you for it. But they are still classed as alive so I wouldn’t think that anything should be taken, unless the family has made a decision to turn off the life support. I don’t think they should be touched.” (Imogen, Administrator, Age 28)

The informants’ lack of knowledge about BSD has also resulted in them questioning the feasibility of transplant from a non-heartbeating cadaver:

“...if I don’t need it (the heart) anymore, then, yeah why not give somebody else a chance of life with your heart. But see, when I think of that, I come back to the feeling that I have of, the heart has to be pumping for them to be transplanted. So how do they manage to do that? Do they actually let you die? Did your heart actually stop? Do they actually let your heart stop so you’re completely dead or do they like rip it out?” (Imogen, Administrator, Age 28)

Imogen confuses the traditional diagnosis of death (cardio-pulmonary) with BSD. This raises the question of whether the vitality of life is perceived to be located in the brain (Lock 2002), Is death the death of the brain stem? Or is death the death of the whole body? Imogen is not sure whether or not the heart would still be pumping for a while after death. She tries to assign meaning to the detached pumping heart. On the one hand she constructs the detached heart as merely a biological machine, devoid of emotion and personhood, with the pumping as biological reflexes, which separate biological death from the death of the self:

“I guess your heart is going to carry on pumping for a bit after you are dead anyway isn’t it? If that was the case, then that is fair enough. Yeah, if that was the case, and I would know that at a certain point that I would definitely be dead, but then my heart would still be beating, then that would be OK (to donate). So if my heart is still beating but I am dead, I am fine with it. As long as it is proven and tested, then yeah.” (Imogen, Administrator, Age 28)

On the other hand, she constructs the pumping heart as the embodiment of life and rejects the biological machine metaphor. Here she negotiates back and forth between what constitutes biological death and the death of the self. She is also trying to understand if the death of the self is necessarily embodied in the heart. Does life cease at the moment the heart is taken out? Or does life cease when the heart stops pumping?

“But then surely if your heart is beating anyway, why would you be dead? Do you know what I mean? If it is still beating, you are not going to be dead are you; you are still going to be alive. I don’t know what the circumstances are or what criteria (there) are for somebody to be pronounced dead. ...I don’t know (be)cause when you see it on... on the telly (laugh), you know you see the monitor come up don’t you. And when they die, obviously the straight line comes along, well surely that would mean that the heart stop pumping. But can they do something then to get the heart back up and going ready for transplant? I don’t know actually. I guess yeah. But then if that is the case, then can they sort of restart it can’t they? But then if you are dead and they can resuscitate your heart, why can’t they resuscitate you? (Laugh)” (Imogen, Administrator, Age 28)

The deliberate limited coverage of BSD in Western media and promotional materials (Lock 2002) has not impeded informants from questioning the definition of death. Instead, our findings indicate that the effort to play down BSD has left room for the production of imaginative discourse (Lock 2002: 192) and compounded the confusion surrounding death.

**CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The narratives constructed by young female potential donors in this study have illustrated that the meanings attributed to organ donation are multiple and complex (O’Connell 1996). By enacting various interpretive positions, our informants negotiate their ambivalent perceptions about organ donation by weaving them into a personalized narrative (Hirschman and Thompson 1997). This enables them to address the various paradoxes presented by the ‘mortal body’ (Bauman 1992) within the context of transplantation. Organ donation relies on individuals being able to come to terms with the consequences of embodying the “mortal body” and ultimately to consider giving it up as a social gift. While most of our informants qualify the “gift-of-life” discourse in an almost intuitive and distant manner, there exist simultaneously, alternative discourses which lay bare many deeply held existential concerns. The
decision to donate lies in the shifting definitions between life and death. It transgresses the boundaries between ‘natural death’ and ‘technological death’. Despite the effort to ‘normalize’ the “gift-of-life” discourse via mainstream media and marketing campaigns (Johnson 1990), reservations concerning the finality of death and the social ramifications of transplant technology remain persistent in the perceptions of our informants. By appropriating common understanding of medical knowledge (such as immunosuppressive rejection), our informants have demonstrated that they are far from passive negotiators of media messages.

As active consumers of cultural discourses, our informants show that a one-sided prescriptive representation of organ donation predicated on the “gift-of-life” discourse will not be sufficient to encourage ambivalent potential donors to agree to organ donation. This is because it fails to address the concerns potential donors have on a personal level and to appreciate the complexity engendered in the decision of organ donation.

Supporting Kerman and Domzal’s (1997) proposition for an open-ended form of marketing communication messages, we therefore argue for an interactive dialogue between the promoter (UK Transplant) and potential donors. The Meaning-Based model proposed by Mick and Buhl (1992) provides a comprehensive framework to encourage interaction between UK Transplant and potential donors. Further research is needed to identify relevant life themes that influence potential donors’ connotations when interpreting marketing messages pertaining to organ donation. There is also a need to consider potential donor’s ability to form intertextual reading from multiple media sources such as soap-operas, documentaries, medical dramas, etc. By representing the existential concerns potential donors express about organ transplant through mediated storylines in an open-ended way (as in soap-operas/dramas/films—especially family-orientated programme such as Emmerdale), our informants suggest that this may initiate discussion among family members. This should be followed by an invitation to encourage potential donors to find out more information about organ donation (such as websites and helplines). This may also help potential donors to construct a more “informed” and “accurate” narrative on organ donation—thereby reducing the uncertainty that contributes to their ambivalence. There is, therefore, a necessity for an integrated marketing communication approach for potential donors to form personalized meanings regarding organ donation (Williams and Calnan 1996). Ethnographic research is needed to explore potential donor’s interaction with different media sources and their effectiveness in encouraging reflexivity and in representing credibility. Ethnographic research will also be useful in identifying various situational factors during the viewing process (e.g. the social dimension of media viewing).

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The distinction between primary (core) and secondary product attributes is well recognized in product development (Kotler and Armstrong 2004), service marketing (Rust, Zahorik, and Keiningham 1996), and branding (Keller, 2003). However, the different impact of primary and secondary attributes on customer satisfaction has received little attention. Although, theories of relationship marketing (Butcher, Sparks, and O’Callaghan 2003) and attribute searchability (Mittal 2004) imply that secondary attributes, such as social regard and credentials, may sometimes be more important than core product benefits, we propose that primary attributes have a greater impact on customer satisfaction compared to secondary attributes. We also propose that the relationship between secondary attribute quality and customer satisfaction is moderated (i.e., increased) by primary attribute quality. We tested the two hypotheses regarding the impact of primary and secondary attributes on customer satisfaction, based on a survey of attribute quality and customer satisfaction with local public transport, and found support for both hypotheses.

The survey was conducted through phone interviews with a representative sample of the adult population (from 15 to 75 years of age) in the greater municipal area of Stavanger, Norway. In all 1038 (49.6 %) men and 1064 (50.4 %) women were interviewed during the period from November 2002 until January 2004. Of the total sample, 1834 (87.3 %) persons reported that they used local public transport more (i.e., daily or weekly: 26.6 %) or less (i.e., monthly or more seldom: 60.6 %) frequently. Participants answered questions related to quality of specific service attributes and overall customer satisfaction. The quality items were positive statements regarding specific service attributes, measured on five-point scales from “disagree completely” to “agree completely”. Overall customer satisfaction was measured on a five-point scale from “very dissatisfied” to “very satisfied”. A core service factor was constructed as the arithmetic mean of three items regarding routes, schedules, and value for money. Two secondary attribute factors, Hedonic aspects and Information quality, were constructed as the arithmetic mean of five (i.e., maintenance, cleanliness, driver kindness, comfort, and security) and three (i.e., information about schedules, changes, and delays) items respectively. All factors were internally consistent (Chronbach’s alpha>.69).

The hypothesis regarding the difference in impact of primary and secondary attributes was tested by comparing binary correlation coefficients and through a multiple regression analysis. Correlation between primary attributes and customer satisfaction was significantly (p<.001) larger than correlation between secondary attributes and customer satisfaction. The multiple regression analysis gave all significant (p<.001) regression coefficients, were the effect of primary attribute quality on customer satisfaction was larger than the combined effect of the secondary attributes. The hypothesis regarding the moderating effect of primary attribute quality on the relationship between secondary attribute quality and customer satisfaction was tested by means of hierarchical regression. The interaction was significant (p<.02) in both cases (core service x hedonic aspects and core service x information quality). Primary attribute quality increased the effect of secondary attribute quality on customer satisfaction.

Exploratory analyses of the data also indicated that the effect of secondary attribute quality on customer satisfaction is regressing, though the quadratic effects were only marginally significant (p ≤ .10). We found no such tendency in the relationship between primary attribute quality and customer satisfaction. We also found that secondary attribute quality had a significantly (p<.01) greater impact on customer satisfaction for frequent users of local public transport compared to non-frequent users. In contrast, the relationship between primary attribute quality and customer satisfaction was marginally (p=.09) smaller among frequent users compared to non-frequent users.

We conclude that primary attribute quality is more important than secondary attribute quality and discuss when secondary product attributes contribute to a larger extent to customer satisfaction. As implied by our second hypothesis, secondary attribute quality has a stronger impact on customer satisfaction when primary attribute quality is high, compared to when primary attribute quality is low. Further, the results of our exploratory non-linear analyses indicated that secondary attribute quality influences customer satisfaction more when secondary attribute quality is low, compared to when it is higher. Finally, the exploratory group comparison showed that secondary attribute quality contributes more to the satisfaction of frequent users than to that of non-frequent users. We discuss whether this last finding can be attributed to the fact that our secondary attributes can be characterized as experience attributes, whereas our primary attributes can be characterized as search attributes, following the distinction between search, experience, and credence attributes in theory of attribute searchability. We propose that product experience may increase the impact of quality on customer satisfaction, but not when attributes are evaluated by other means than through experience.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

In a study of the rapport between customers and retail banks, it has been validated the relationship of Satisfaction with Relationship Quality and Loyalty. It has been verified the influence of the bank service quality and the Relationship Perceived Benefits on the consumer satisfaction with these services, as well as a moderated but significant impact of the affective responses to it. The assigned components of the relationship quality have shown great influence with each other (Satisfaction on Trust and Commitment, Trust on Commitment). The commitment, herein suggested as the Attitudinal Loyalty dimension, has had the greatest influence on Loyalty (embedded dimension), followed by Trust and Satisfaction, whose main effect has been indirect on it.

INTRODUCTION

The models of relationship evaluation are traditionally applied to incorporate this aspect as constructs such as Trust (Sidershmukh et al., 2002) and their relationship with Loyalty behavior. Likewise, integrative models, such as that of Morgan & Hunt (1994) also insert the concept of Commitment into this context as a mediating variable between them. This construct and Trust, linked to Satisfaction, have been indicated as the formers of a second order concept, which is Relationship Quality (Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997). In this case, this construct is the degree of suitability of a relationship in meeting the needs of a consumer. Thus, it is relevant to integrate into one model the three components of Relationship Quality with Loyalty itself, as examined individually in a number of studies (Gruen et al., 2000).

Some authors have commented on the non-existence of a direct and linear connection between Satisfaction and Loyalty (Reichheld, 1996; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). In a theoretical model, Hennig-Thurau & Klee (1997) identified the possible measurement of the constructs of Commitment and Trust between the two aforementioned variables. These are important to the context of the relationship, and may be the key connection between those concepts.

Finally, most studies that evaluate Consumer Satisfaction in the context of the relationship deal with it summarily (Global Satisfaction) (Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997; Crosby & Stephens, 1987; Gwinner, Gremler & Bitner, 1998) and little importance has been given to the antecedent constructs. Reynolds & Beatty (1999) dealt with the interaction of perception of the Relationship Benefits on Satisfaction with it, but did not integrate it with Service Quality. Furthermore, despite the fact that academic studies have shown that relationships have relevant affective content (Fournier, 1998), and this representation has been greatly explored in personal relationships (Duck, 1991), there has only been the applications of Price, Tierney & Arnold (1995) and Barnes (1997), in a relationship context, which has sought to integrate the evaluation of the global Affective Responses to this as an antecedent of Satisfaction. Therefore, according to the reference chart proposed in this introduction, we see that there is still some academically unexplored space in the integration of the concepts of Relationship Consumer Satisfaction and its antecedents, with aspects that are intrinsic to Relationship Quality and Loyalty. This gap suggests the need to create a model that allows us to integrate these constructs in order to understand their interactions and, more widely, understand the evaluation process of an ongoing relationship of services not centered merely on each transaction carried out for suppliers.

THE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP EVALUATION PROCESS

The structural model proposed is shown in figure 1. The first part refers to the antecedents of Satisfaction (Oliver, 1981; Churchill & Suprenant, 1982), dealing with Perceived Quality, Perceived Relationship Benefits and Affective Responses related to a bank.

The first hypothesis hints at the fact that the Perception of Quality is one of the Satisfaction antecedents (Oliver, 1997). The latter is defined as global assessment by the consumer over time based on total consumer experience of the banking services and interactions with the provider of these services (Fornell et al., 1994) and this is the judgment of the consumer on the superiority or global excellence of a service (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). The relationship between these derives from the Disconfirmation Paradigm, which indicates that Perceived Quality is one of the forming variables of Satisfaction (Oliver, 1980, 1981, 1997). Treating this variable as the perception of performance, the relationship quoted was indicated as positive by Szymborski & Boume (1998). Crosby & Stephens (1987) assessed it from the operational viewpoint, with personal contact, information on the products/services, communication with the company and how problems are dealt with as the parameters of performance. Furthermore, Bendapudii & Berry (1997) evaluated the performance in a relationship, associating it with expertise, the degree of similarity and the frequency of contact between partners in the relationship, as well as negative aspects such as ambiguity of tasks performed and the costs of desisting. Therefore:

H1 Perceived Quality of Services has a positive correlation on Satisfaction with the Relationship

Gwinner, Gremler & Bitner (1998) dealt with the variable Perceived Relationship Benefits as advantages that users receive, as well as the basic service for maintaining the relationship in the long term, with four dimensions, associated to Social, Psychological, Economic and Customization Aspects. These could also be assessed in a sense of perceived performance, but now on a relationship perspective, fulfilling the vision of cognitive antecedents proposed by Dick & Basu (1994). Thus this construct must also have a positive influence on Relationship Satisfaction; the second hypothesis is now stated:

H2 The Perception of Benefits has a positive correlation in the Satisfaction with the relationship.

An additional element that must be considered in the model is the relationship between Perceived Quality and Perceived Relationship Benefits. As proposed by Reynolds & Beatty (1999), in a complementary analysis on the typology of Perceived Relationship...
Benefits, it can be inferred that the assessment of this construct must positively affect the perception of Service Quality since they are both based on a Service Provider performance from the viewpoint of customers. Nevertheless, the Benefits refer to the advantages offered throughout the relationship, and the perceived quality itself refers to more operational aspects of the Service. Thus the third hypothesis has been put together:

**H3 The Perception of Benefits has a positive correlation on the Perceived Quality in the Services Offered**

The fourth hypothesis integrates the Affective Responses in a relationship with their antecedents. This construct is defined in this article as the feelings that the user develops, both positive and negative, in situations of purchase, consumptions or others associated with the relationship (Oliver, 1997). According to the proposal of Oliver (1993) and Mano & Oliver (1993), based on the Cognitive Theory of Emotions (Frijda, 1986), the affective (secondary) response is the result of the evaluative processing centered on some fact relating to the consumer. The affective responses are based on the evaluation of Perceived Quality, and of Perceived Relationship Benefits with providers of financial services, which are characterized by a long-term relationship and routine consumption services by consumers. Therefore, positive evaluations on the Quality and Benefits must provoke more positive affective responses, and negative appraisal of these elements must yield negative affective responses. So the fourth hypothesis is:

**H4. The Perception of Benefits and Quality in Banking Services has a positive (negative) correlation in the positive (negative) Affective Response concerning the provider**

The fifth hypothesis is built on the affective cornerstones of Satisfaction, pointed out by Oliver (1997), and on the point of view of the relationship, as assessed by Price, Tierney & Arnould (1995). Dick & Basu (1994) propose that the affective antecedents must structure Satisfaction so as to complement the behavioral (retention rate) and cognitive (perception of performance) aspects. Therefore:

**H5 The Positive (Negative) Affective Responses have a positive (negative) correlation in the satisfaction with the relationship.**

Hypotheses 6, 7 and 8 refer to the relation between Relationship Satisfaction and Relationship Quality (Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997; Pick, 1999). These authors propose a relation between Satisfaction, Trust and Commitment concepts to be positive. For this article, Trust is defined as the belief of the user that his needs will be met in the future by the actions of the supplier (Anderson & Weitz, 1992). Commitment is defined here as the desire to develop a stable relationship, with a tendency to make sacrifices in the short term to maintain the relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In this light, Satisfaction may be considered as a formative element of the relationship and, since Commitment and Trust are elements resulting from time and resource investment on both sides, this pathway has to be positive and of great intensity (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Gruen, Summers & Acito, 2000). The Loyalty model proposed by Oliver (1999), in which loyalty is achieved by a longitudinal evaluation of the construction of several satisfactions, reinforce this idea. Hence:

**H6 Relationship Satisfaction has a positive relation with Trust in the Service Provider.**

**H7 Relationship Satisfaction has a positive relation with Commitment to the Service Provider.**

**H8 Relationship Satisfaction has a positive relation with Loyalty to the Service Provider.**
Among Trust and Commitment there is a widely researched positive relation (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Andaleeb, 1996; Anderson & Weitz, 1992). This relation is predicted as positive in the sense of Trust -> Commitment. Consequently the ninth hypothesis is formulated thus:

H9 Trust in a relationship partner has a positive relation to Commitment to the Service Provider

Several authors have studied the “Commitment-Loyalty” relationship (Pritchard, Havitz & Howard, 1999; Crosby, Evans & Cowles, 1990; Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997; Reynolds & Beatty, 1999). Loyalty is conceived here as the intention to maintain transactions in the same bank and the behaviors that result from this (Jacoby & Chesnut, 1978). In the studies quoted above, the desire for continuity, represented by the first construct, is interposed with an element defined in the loyalty behavior of clients. In a similar situation of application, Prado & Santos (2002) reported a strong correlation between these constructs, separating the cognitive and affective aspects of continuity grouped with Commitment and aspects of behavior or intention of continued Loyalty. For that reason hypothesis number ten is made up as follows:

H10 Commitment with Service Provider has a positive relation with Loyalty to this.

Added to this hypothesis, and considering the business relationship with banks, Trust is expected to have a direct influence on Loyalty. This is so because Commitment is meant to be mutual investment in the relationship for the establishment of Loyalty (Sidershmukh et al., 2002). Thus the direct correlation of Trust on Loyalty is to be considered, bringing us to the eleventh hypothesis:

H11 Trust in a Relationship Partner has a positive relation to Loyalty to the Service Provider.

METHOD

This research has been projected in three stages, outlined as follows. The development of the measurement model was based on the proposals of Churchill (1979) and Anderson & Gerbing (1988), applied to retail banks and collected in a major city in South of Brazil. It was decided that some data collection should be made in the preparatory stage to verify scales stability, widening the purification phase as suggested by Nunally & Bernstein (1994). Then, three preparatory collecting tasks were carried out for the development phases, and one end to the testing of the hypotheses proposed in this work in conformity with the delimitation performed as follows.

The aim of the first phase was better specification of the indicators for each construct, based on theoretical definitions and in the adaptation of items to the consumer and language characteristics and analyzed services. In this situation, the component items of each construct were adapted to the characteristics of the consumer of banking services in Brazil, taking their perception of each of them into consideration. Eleven current account holders were interviewed, by convenience sampling using criteria such as having access to an overdraft and when the overdraft was obtained. The interviewees were identified by telephone contact and then home interviews were arranged. The average length of these interviews was one and a half hours, with the data collection recorded in order to be submitted afterwards to a Content Analysis procedure as suggested by Bardin (1977).

The second phase had the purposes of purifying and item reduction as well as the reference to assessment of temporary stability. To allow for this verification, this has been divided into three different samples, collected from similar sources, plus three different moments (n=150; n=61; n=60). Once again, in this case the interviews were done at home following arrangements made beforehand by telephone. In this case, the sampling procedure used was non-probabilistic with an equally distributed share of the five main banks operating in the selected city (the banks were selected according to the number of clients), and how long the clients had had an account in these institutions. The results of this collection were submitted to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for each construct indicators in each sample followed by internal consistency assessment for their own dimension. They were then submitted to Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for validity verification (Hair et al, 1998; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). This method was developed by estimating the ERLS available on EQS 5.7 software.

The third phase included data collection with the objective of allowing the assessment of the validity of the constructs, as well as the verification of the relationships among them according to the proposed model (n=480). The indicators collected in this phase were submitted to CFA and a SOCFIA (Bagozzi et al., 1988), in accordance with configurations obtained in the previous phases as well as alternative configurations with the dimensions found in prior studies. The final option was carried out considering the one that offered a better global performance. The results of the CFA models are found in the last column of Table 1.

In order to express aspects of a settled relationship, the sampling was restricted to special account users with diverse transactions (current account statements, investments, loans, credit cards, etc.) for at least a year with their banks.

The average of the interviewees was around 41 years old, and there was a slight dominance of the male sex (54.0%). Most of them (around 54%) had completed high school education, followed by further education (around 24%), middle school (around 14%) and primary (8%). Most of them fell into the categories of employer (around 35%), employee (30%) and self-employed (20%). As for socio-economic group (Brazil criteria), about 15% were Class C (working class), B2 (lower middle class) around 36%, B1 (middle class) around 27%. Class A2 (upper middle class) accounted for around 20% of the sampling, and A1 (upper class) came in at around 2%.

DISCUSSION OF THE STRUCTURAL MODEL RESULTS

To assess the validation in the final sample, a CFA has been applied. The indicators of this phase were generated by means of the measurement aggregation models generated in the preparatory stages. This aggregation was made by calculating the average of each construct dimensions, as suggested by Anderson & Gerbing (1988). A CFA evaluated the discriminant and convergent structure of Satisfaction (Service Quality, Positive and Negative Affective Response, and Perceived Benefits as Antecedents of Satisfaction) and Trust, Commitment and Loyalty. Table 2 shows the results of item loadings in each latent variable, which are all statistically significant. The model fit can be considered good (c²=1345.3, 584 df; p<0.001; c²/df=2.30; NFI=.966; NNFI=.987; CFI=.981; IFI=.981; SRMR =.051; RMSEA=.053).

The correlation matrix between the constructs is in Table 3. By analyzing, we can see that the correlations were all significant, in the right directions, but not very high (above 0.90). Likewise by observing the average variance extracted results (AVE) of each
construct, it can be seen that they have never been higher than the squared number of the correlations that reach them. (Fornell & Larcher; 1982).

**TABLE 1**

**MEASUREMENT MODEL (N=270)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Results from CFA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>4 indicators, with 10 point scales as, a) Global Satisfaction; b) Global Disconfirmation; c) Distance from Ideal company and d) global affective response (Fornell et al, 1994; Garbarino &amp; Johnson, 1999)</td>
<td>$\chi^2$=8.01; 2 df; p&lt;0.001; $\chi^2$/df =4.21; NFI=.994; NNFI=.986; CFI=.995; IFI=.995; SRMR=.011; RMSEA=.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Quality</td>
<td>Performance assessment, with 31 items and 10 points, comprehending the dimensions of promptness, Infrastructure, Services Dependability and Access to Agencies, generated at the preparatory phases</td>
<td>$\chi^2$=1149.17; 428 df; p&lt;0.001; $\chi^2$/df =2.68; NFI =.948; NNFI =.971; CFI =.974; IFI =.974; SRMR =.071; RMSEA =.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of</td>
<td>Likert Scale, with 10 items and 10 points representing the dimensions a) Social, (b) Security, (c) Economic, e (d) Customization, suggested by Gwinner et al (1999) and adapted at the qualitative phase</td>
<td>$\chi^2$=203.5; 29 df; p&lt;0.001; $\chi^2$/df=7.01; NFI =.927; NNFI =.902; CFI =.937; IFI =.937; SRMR =.070; RMSEA =.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Intensity Scale in 20 items and 10 points, representing dimensions of positive affect (content, interest and enthusiasm) and negative (fear, anger, boredom, discouragement, guilt, shame.) developed by literature review (Izard 1977; Oliver 1993; Westbrook, 1984) and purified in the preparatory phases</td>
<td>Positive Affective Response: $\chi^2$=75.9;18 df; p&lt;0.001; $\chi^2$/df =4.21; NFI =.965; NNFI =.957; CFI =.972; IFI =.972; SRMR =.046; RMSEA =.084 Negative Affective Response: $\chi^2$=162.8; 67 df; p&lt;0.001; $\chi^2$/df =2.42; NFI =.967; NNFI =.973; CFI =.980; IFI =.980; SRMR =.046; RMSEA =.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Likert Scale, with 12 items in the dimensions: (a) competence/ credibility; (b) benevolence (benevolence); (c) integrity, generated at the preparatory phases and combined with scales developed by other studies (Sidgersmukh et al, 2002; Morgan &amp; Hunt, 1994; Garbarino &amp; Johnson, 1999)</td>
<td>$\chi^2$=239.9; 41 df; p&lt;0.001; $\chi^2$/df=5.85; NFI =.949; NNFI =.941; CFI =.956; IFI =.956; SRMR =.056; RMSEA =.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Likert Scale, with 16 items and 10 points with a) the Normative dimension, b) the Instrumental dimension, c) the Affective dimension.</td>
<td>$\chi^2$=593.3; 51 df; p&lt;0.001; $\chi^2$/df=11.6; NFI =.891; NNFI =.869; CFI =.899; IFI =.899; SRMR =.101; RMSEA =.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Likert Scale, with 16 items and 10 points with a) the Normative dimension, b) the Instrumental dimension, c) the Affective dimension.</td>
<td>$\chi^2$=81.0; 9 df; p&lt;0.001; $\chi^2$/df=4.21 NFI =.949; NFI =.924; CFI =.955; IFI =.955; SRMR =.044; RMSEA =.129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AVE=Average Variance Extracted (Fornell & Larcher, 1982)

CONF=Composite Reliability (Fornell & Larcher, 1982)

**Structural Model Analysis**

After the validity test in the summarized ratings, applied to the measurement model, this item discusses the test in the proposed
### TABLE 2
RESULTS OF CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS AMONG THE CONSTRUCTS—CORRELATION AMONG COMPONENTS OF THE STRUCTURAL MODEL (N=480)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perceived Quality</th>
<th>Negative Affective Response</th>
<th>Positive Affective Response</th>
<th>Benefits of Relationship</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality— Promptness</td>
<td>0.915**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality— Infrastructure</td>
<td>0.710*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality— Service Dependability</td>
<td>0.848*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality— Access to Agency</td>
<td>0.643*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customization Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Disconfirmation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from Ideal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Affective Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the applications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider to buy a new financial product</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue doing business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell to other people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer personal information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain the account</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Reliability (CONF)</td>
<td>0.873 0.808 0.792 0.942 0.915 0.872 0.771 0.904</td>
<td>63.5% 51.5% 58.3% 73.0% 73.0% 69.5% 64.0% 61.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</td>
<td>0.915**</td>
<td>0.710* 0.848* 0.643* 0.735** 0.820* 0.643* 0.658*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant coefficient to 0.01
** Coefficient fixed to 1 at specification
model by assessing the coefficients in the estimated structural model as well as the fit indexes. The results are in Figure 1. For the model evaluation, its general indicators have been observed ($X^2=1676.52;\ 419\ df;\ p<0.001;\ X^2/df=3.45;\ NFI=.950;\ NNFI=.959;\ CFI=.963;\ IFI=.963;\ SRMR=.085;\ RMSEA=.075$).

**Hypothesis Testing of Relationship Satisfaction and its Antecedents**

As proposed by Oliver (1980, 1997) the *first hypothesis* implies that the Perception of Service Quality is one of the forming variables of satisfaction ($b=0.345;\ p<0.001$). This result coincided with that referred to by Szmigin & Bourne (1998), Crosby & Stephens (1987), Dick & Basu (1994) and Bendapudi & Berry (1997). The relationship herein verified has a relatively low indicator reaching 0.345, which suggests that, besides this, other elements must be worked out by banks for the development of consumer Satisfaction.

According to the *second hypothesis*, the perceived relationship benefits also have a positive correlation on Relationship Satisfaction ($b=0.345;\ p<0.001$). The result of this hypothesis reinforced the conclusions of the research by Reynolds & Beatty (1999), applied to retail stores in which benefits of relationship directly influence satisfaction with salesclerks. On a higher perspective these benefits are assessed in an institutional relationship between the parties, where indicators reflect not only aspects of the interpersonal relationship, as proposed by these authors, but also aspects institutionalized by banks in their relationship with their customers. This issue has been widely examined in B2B Relationship Literature, when discussing shared values (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) that oftentimes result in norms and procedures established in the relation (Dwyer et al., 1987; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). When comparing the result of this coefficient to the Perceived Quality -> Satisfaction, they both similar intensity. The development of satisfaction takes place due to the equitant influence of both, which places one more relevant antecedent to the Disconfirmation Paradigm.

In the test of the *third hypothesis*, with a significant coefficient between these variables ($b=0.720;\ p<0.001$), it can be inferred that the evaluation of Benefits, when maintaining the relationship, was positively associated to the perception of the service quality since they are both based on the performance of the service provider under customer point of view. As discussed in the previous hypothesis, the benefits refer to the advantages offered in the relationship course and the service quality itself reflects more operational aspects. This correlation must also be forthcoming to the effect of the benefits offered to bank users with overdraft accounts on their satisfaction.

The *fourth hypothesis* has been split into four sub-hypothesis. The relation between Quality Perceived and Positive Affective Responses (H4a) has been verified. The coefficient between the variables was positive and significant ($b=0.253;\ p<0.01$), in conformity to the corresponding hypothesis. Despite being accepted, its significance has been higher than the others already discussed. Yet the relation between Benefits and Positive Affective Response (H4c) was not significant. In spite of the fact that the coefficient value was positive between those constructs, it was below the statistical limits of acceptance ($b=0.087;\ p=0.352$). For the relation between Perception of Quality and Negative Affective responses, the model indicated it as significant and as being in the right direction. The coefficient proved to exist in a negative relation, yet was significant among these ($b=-0.350;\ p<0.05$). The same results occurred in the evaluation of the relation between Perceived Benefits and Negative Affective Responses, with a significant and negative coefficient ($b=-0.170;\ p<0.01$).

Therefore the proposed H4 relation has been partially accepted. The acceptance of this hypothesis is directly related to the idea of the Appraisal Theory of Emotions (Frijda, 1986), in which the affective responses are the result of the appraisal in which the service is given. Two important dimensions of this appraisal are thus the Perceived Quality and the Perceived Benefits in the Relationship. As depicted by the discussions with regard to the factors that have an effect on the affective responses, Frijda (1998)

### TABLE 3

RESULTS OF CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS AMONG THE CONSTRUCTS-COMPONENTS OF THE COMPLETE STRUCTURAL MODEL (N=480)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Quality</th>
<th>Negative Affective Response</th>
<th>Positive Affective Response</th>
<th>Benefits of Relationship</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affective Response</td>
<td>-0.456*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Affective Response</td>
<td>0.378*</td>
<td>-0.158*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of Relationship</td>
<td>0.548*</td>
<td>-0.410*</td>
<td>0.245*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.742*</td>
<td>-0.599*</td>
<td>0.380*</td>
<td>0.268*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>0.715*</td>
<td>-0.532*</td>
<td>0.348*</td>
<td>0.240*</td>
<td>0.745*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>0.640*</td>
<td>-0.481*</td>
<td>0.374*</td>
<td>0.214*</td>
<td>0.735*</td>
<td>0.863*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>0.658*</td>
<td>-0.464*</td>
<td>0.400*</td>
<td>0.223*</td>
<td>0.689*</td>
<td>0.795*</td>
<td>0.811*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant correlation to 0.01
indicates that mood aspects (less intense but lasting affective responses) are important when retrieving information and the appraisal of specific situations. This way, the service provider has limited capacity of acting on this appraisal process, which makes the issue centered purely on functional quality debatable when referring to its results in the improvement of satisfaction (Grönroos, 2000). As this author argues, the processual dimension of service quality must also be contemplated in these kinds of programs, showing the necessity of developing procedures that also deal with interactions of consumers with the company, flexibility of front line personnel to make the service process adequate for specific consuming situations, and of issues related to the formation of customer expectation before and after the service is given.

The fifth hypothesis has been divided into two sub-hypotheses. Sub-hypothesis H5a, relating Positive Affective Responses and Satisfaction, was corroborated in the structural model. The outlined coefficient has been statistically significant (b=0.144; p<0.01). Also, for sub-hypothesis H5b, associating Negative Affective Responses and Satisfaction, the results indicated it to be statistically significant by model (b=-0.294; p<0.001). These two hypotheses can be considered as coming from the discussion over the affective characteristic of Satisfaction (Oliver, 1997). An important aspect is that the influence of Negative Affective Response is stronger than the one coming from Positive Affective Response. This asymmetry depicted by Seidtitz & Diener (1993) in situations of transactional exchanges and also perceived in a relational context. Again, the service nature as the continuous providing (Lovelock and Wright, 2000) can lead to this result when the promoted satisfaction would be closer to the Oliver (1989) dimension Joy, and problems in this process would be perceived by consumers more intensely than the resulting success when providing the right services.

Hypothesis Testing of Relationship Quality and Loyalty

The sixth hypothesis has been verified. Here, the coefficient has presented a positive and significant result, according to the proposed hypothesis (b=0.784; p<0.001). This result shows the first proposed relation of Relationship Quality according to Hennig-Thurau & Klee (1997). By the discussion of Singh & Sidershmukh (2000), the development of Trust between the consumer and their supplier goes through the perception of competence and its integrity. Therefore it is through accumulated appraisal of satisfactions that this verifies along the relationship. Its relative weight can be considered high if compared to Sidershmukh et al (2002) results, in which these authors found significant but lower magnitude (between 0.14 ± 0.17). Despite very similar measures, this model keeps closer to Perceived Quality, such as competence and benevolence, related not as an image dimension but rather an effective experience that they have towards their bank.

The seventh hypothesis, in which the outlined coefficient has yielded positive and significant weight according to the proposed model (b=0.282; p<0.01), has been validated. This concept is therefore considered Attitudinal Loyalty. According to a discussion by Prado & Santos (2003), this hypothesis showed that the formation of long-term relationships is initiated by means of relationship satisfaction, in what it says about perception that the supplier change would be costly (Instrumental Commitment) and identification developed between them (Affective Commitment). Despite this observation, and the significant relation among these constructs, the effect could be seen as indirect, as this coefficient has not assumed a high value, comparative to the other components of Relationship Quality.

The eighth hypothesis has also been verified in that the weight has shown positive and significant result according to the proposed model (b=0.194; p<0.01). In this case the coefficient has not assumed a high value, considering the comparison to other elements of the relationship quality. This fact could lead to a weaker direct effect, yet with a direct result heightened by means of the formation of Trust and Commitment.

The ninth hypothesis has been verified, where the coefficient presented positive and significant result according to the proposed hypothesis (b=0.612; p<0.01). This result is explained by the theory of social exchange (Kelley & Thibault, 1959), where the relationship in situations of vulnerability of one party towards the other leads to the need of primary trust between the parties and that they will be committed to each other. The evaluation of the relationship costs involved proposed by those authors as an indication of the relationship continuity is reinforced in this hypothesis, since the supplier change would take place out of the perception that the migration costs to alternative banks is lower than the costs of keeping the relationship. In this are logics that can be instrumental and/or affective. Therefore, for Commitment to the bank, there must basically be Trust between them, heightening the perception of outcome costs to users of service.

The tenth hypothesis has been verified, where the coefficient presented positive and significant results according to the proposed hypothesis (b=0.429; p<0.01). The proposed relation followed the results presented by Prado & Costa (2003), where a large convergence is perceived in a CFA between the two constructs at issue since these could represent different dimension of a wider loyalty concept (r=0.856; p<0.001). The option in this paper has been to keep them apart, following recommendations by Garbarino & Johnson (1998) and Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001), in a way of capturing the relation among them, and suggest that the behavioral perspective is preceded by attitudinal logics according to the traditional models of attitude (Engel et al, 1998).

The eleventh hypothesis has been verified, where the coefficient presented positive and significant result according to the proposed outline of hypothesis (b=0.257; p<0.01). Similarly to the previous hypothesis, this relation indicates the importance of Trust in the relationship continuity. The magnitude of this relation was between that of Commitment and Satisfaction, from which it gets a median significant influence on loyalty. Additional elements that have not been considered in this model could support in the heightening of indirect influence of trust on loyalty as the question of perceived relationship value discussed by Sidershmukh et al (2002). This variable is pointed out by these authors as mediating in the relation between them and relatively strong links to loyalty.

Explanatory Power of the model

By verifying the determination coefficients for satisfaction and its antecedents it can be perceived that the model composed by the evaluation of Perceived Service Quality, of Perceived Relationship Benefits and by the Affective Responses has large explanatory power over satisfaction with the relationship in the sample at issue (R²=75.0%). For Perceived Quality (R²=51.8%), it can be verified that, besides a high coefficient in its relation to perceived benefits, this has relatively high explanatory power on that. Therefore taking the coefficients of Perceived Benefits into consideration along with other model constructs, the relational programs proposed to customers must be concerns regarding operational aspects of Quality of Service, and also be centered on benefits to their customers as these positively influence the service evaluation as well as represent important impact on their satisfaction. This relation reflects the fact that both concepts, despite being theoretically and empirically different regard the service quality as a main element of aggregation among them. Finally, the relatively low explanatory power that the evaluation of service quality and perceived benefits have over positive affective responses (R²=10.3%) and Negative (R²=24.4%)
lead to another important aspect. Affective Responses show that the customers’ experiences with their banks are a fundamental builder. This shows that the relationship formation must also be an important hub in the process of service providing, in the personal clerk posture, in aspects linked to atmospherics, of contact points with customers and the detailed preparation of interaction with them (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

By analyzing the determination coefficients of Relationship Quality and Loyalty constructs we can perceive that the explanatory power of their precedents is high in the three cases. The Trust $R^2$ coefficient is relatively high (61.4%), if considering that its only antecedent specified has been Satisfaction with Relationship. It is also important to remind that this indicator could have reached such value from the indirect affects of the satisfaction antecedents, basically Perceived Quality and Benefits in the Relationship. The value of the explanatory power over commitment was likewise high (72.5%), with their antecedents of Satisfaction and Trust. This represents a very strong linked among these three central concepts in a relationship that must be worked adequately by a bank. The explanatory power of the specified Loyalty antecedents (Satisfaction, Trust, and Commitment) is also high (67.6%), considering the complexity of the phenomenon at issue. The model proposed by Dick & Basu (1994) has shown this complexity when indicated: besides cognitive, affective and intention components as antecedents to loyalty partially represented by the proposed antecedents in the proposed model, there are also social consumer interaction aspects that have not been explicitly considered.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The main result of this paper has been to test a model that permitted the validation of the relationships between Satisfaction and the relationship to some of its antecedents, by verifying the linkage between Relationship Satisfaction and some of its antecedents (Affective Response, Perceived Service Quality and Benefits), the constructs of Relationship Quality, focusing Trust and Commitment, and Loyalty towards a retail bank. This model has shown the possibility of combining the constructs discussed in the literature on Relationship Marketing, Consumer Satisfaction and Loyalty that, with some exceptions, are dealt with in an isolated fashion. In a more specific manner the first important issue referring to the combination of Service Quality with Perceived Relationship Benefits, dealt with separately, as antecedents in the proposed model. The discrimination among them, the significant relations found towards the other constructs and the increase of explanatory power of their consequence showed that monitoring cannot be restricted to transactional aspects of Service Quality, but it also must contemplate evaluation relationship benefits offered to bank customers. The Service Quality usually dealt with in transactional optics proved to be a key element for the formation of relationships, since its influence goes beyond immediate Affective Responses and Satisfaction and has a direct and significant impact on relation constructs such as Trust and Commitment. In addition, the Perceived Relationship Benefits were outstanding because of the great influence they have over the evaluation of Service Quality and over all constructs that compose the described relationship quality. It was even possible in the context of the financial market to verify that the established relations among the elements of Relationship Quality oftentimes tested in B2B businesses, they are also valid for these kinds of service; these have even shown great influence on Loyalty.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Several additional questions arise from the results obtained that indicate proposals for future research. The first is the interaction of the antecedents of Satisfaction with it. The first of them has been studied mainly in situations of dealing with complaints and recuperation of services but also offers important information in normal consumer situations, as shown by Oliver & Swan (1989). The sense of justice in the relationship may contribute to the widened scope of Satisfaction and Trust developed between the client and the financial institution, and may also complement the notion of benefits received from the business partner.

The notion of Perceived Value in the Relationship has also been studied a great deal in the literature, both from the transactional viewpoint and the relational. This element may be evaluated from a cumulative viewpoint, considering its mediating function between Satisfaction and the constructs of Relationship Quality, and also centered on the latest transactions, focusing on the notion of antecedent to Satisfaction.

Still on the subject of Satisfaction antecedents, the Affective Responses had their coefficients of determination with relatively low values. This is partly due to the fact that only two antecedents were considered (Perceived Quality and Relationship Benefits). The Affective Responses are strongly linked to the experience of consuming and service. Therefore, they are contaminated by the latest interactions that the user had with his bank. The proposed antecedents are related to the perspective of results and interactions, and the consuming process in itself was not adequately detected. Thus, an axis of the research that results from this analysis concerns deepening studies into Consumer Experience as a whole, according to the suggestions of Holbrook & Hirschman (1982).

**REFERENCES**


Retail Channel Portfolios: Channel-Attributes or Integration-Benefit – What Counts More?
Hanna Schramm-Klein, Saarland University, Germany
Dirk Morschett, Saarland University, Germany

ABSTRACT
It has been a common practice in retailing to maintain different retail channels in parallel. However, the establishment of retail channel portfolios or “multi-channel retailing” has gained relevance due to the availability of the internet. Even though the topic has high empirical relevance, the effects of channel portfolios on consumer behaviour have, to date, primarily been the subject of rather descriptive studies. The focus of this investigation is the consumers’ response to the integration of consumer-related functions and processes between different channels of a channel portfolio. It is tried to compare which is more important for consumer channel use and loyalty: integration-related benefit or channel-specific attributes.

INTRODUCTION
Retailing over multi-channel systems has been common practice for a long time. The increasing importance of new sales channels, particularly the internet, has given new relevance and topicality to issues regarding the impact of multi-channel systems. The term retail channel portfolio in this context refers to a retail distribution system using several distribution channels in parallel. A specific form of this is the multi-channel system which is characterised by various channels offering interrelated merchandise assortments or an overlapping mix (Tang and Xing 2001; Nicholson, Clarke, and Blakemore 2002; Schramm-Klein 2003). Quite apart from the issue of structure, i.e. the type and number of retail channels in a retail channel portfolio, retailers are confronted with the problem of to what extent and in which areas the alternative channels should be cross-integrated. Integration of this type, specifically in retail multi-channel systems, produces potential benefits for the consumer. This paper investigates the impact of retail channel portfolios on consumer behaviour. The analysis is focused on the combination of channels within a retail channel portfolio, concentrating on the relevance of consumer evaluation of retail channels and integration between those channels. The aim of the analysis is to examine which is more important for consumers’ use and loyalty to multi-channel systems: channel-specific attributes or benefits they can realise from channel integration. The study is limited to retail channel portfolios which have integrated the internet as a retail channel in order to take the special relevance and topicality of this specific retail form into account.

DEGREE OF INTEGRATION AND EVALUATION OF RETAIL CHANNEL PORTFOLIOS

Cross-Channel Integration of Functions
When retailers use several retail channels as part of their distribution policy, there is the basic choice of combining or separating the alternative retail channels (Chavez, Leiter, and Kiely 2000). The aim of separating channels is often to align the channels to certain target groups in a way that the targeted segments do not overlap and the channels do not cannibalise each other. The retail channels of this type are self-sufficient and interaction is avoided. The processes and functions will not appear to be cross-channel linked from the perspective of the consumer (although this does not exclude integration of back-end processes). The channels may belong to the same owner, but this is often not signalled (e.g. the channels are branded differently). In contrast, an integration strategy instead links channels. Integration aims to build a holistic, total system concept in the expectation that an integrated system will bring the consumer particular benefit (Gulati and Garino 2000). When an integration strategy is implemented, a uniform customer model is applied and there is close reconciliation between marketing mix instruments (Steinfeld, Adelaar, and Lai 2002). It is important that the processes and functions being integrated are consumer-orientated, since it is the customer’s perception of the way the system is structured which determines consumer behaviour. At issue is therefore not the degree of integration undertaken by a firm but rather the customer’s perception of the extent of integration.

Evaluation of Retail Channel Portfolios as a Dimension of Perception
When the focus is on the evaluation of a retail channel portfolio, there are two important dimensions to consider. Firstly, there is the isolated evaluation of all the specific channels in a retail channel system and secondly, there is the evaluation of the integration of the channels in the sense of a cross-channel relationship. The evaluation of retail channels includes the consumers’ assessment of the performance of each channel. The term evaluation in this study is used for partial evaluations (‘beliefs times evaluations’, Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). Besides the straightforward representation of the collected/stored information; cost and benefits or gratification are important to an evaluation of multi-channel systems (Mukherjee and Hoyer 2001). Approaches examining the way an assessment is formed are frequently based on exchange theories, cost/benefit models or uses and gratification approaches (Eighmey and McCord 1998). The evaluation processes for assessing alternative retail channels compare the expected total benefit of a retail channel, e.g. basic benefits (e.g. provision with goods), personal benefits (e.g. shopping experience) and social benefits (e.g. meeting the expectations of reference groups) to expected costs associated with a retail channel, that is monetary costs (e.g. product price, information, travel and transport costs) and non-monetary costs (e.g. time, physical and psychological effort).

Various dimensions have become apparent and various proposals have been made regarding the set of attributes which define the important characteristics of a retail channel and are used to form an evaluation. In the majority of studies into retail channel evaluation this is seen as the result of a multi-attribute model and a function of the (rated and weighted) salient features of a specific channel (e.g. Fisk 1961/62; Lindquist 1974/75; Palmer 2000; Odekerken-Schröder et al. 2001).

When considering the integrated set of channels, the primary concern is not individual retail channels and their specific characteristics but rather the opportunity presented to the customer to use the different retail channels in combination (in the sense of cross-use in the shopping process). Evaluation of the total portfolio has a cross-channel dimension, i.e. it involves a cross-channel perspective. The aspects relating to channel interaction are the main focus of interest. These are aspects relating to the consumers’ perception of the value-added benefit to an individual from a multi-channel retail system when there is cross-channel functioning. In the context of evaluating channel interaction in such a system, the compa-
Retail Channel Portfolios: Channel-Attributes or Integration-Benefit – What Counts More?

The ability of the integration, effectiveness of the integration or complementariness of the channels are aspects of consumer perception which are particularly important. Closely related to evaluation of channel interaction in multi-channel systems is consideration of consumer synergy created by the use of such systems. If consumers are aware that synergy effects can result from using the retail channels in combination, a positive evaluation of the integrated functions can be expected.

Retail channels may be seen as the bundle of retail options available for a consumer to use in specific shopping situations. Therefore, the better the channels complement one another and the better they integrate with one another, the better their combined functioning. Evaluation of their integrated functioning is therefore related to the actual smoothness of the combined use of the alternative channels. Consequently, cost/benefit analysis is important, i.e. how much effort is associated with the use of combined retail channels or how much effort is perceived to be involved by the consumer. Expended effort is therefore another factor affecting the feasibility of using retail channels in combination. How the consumer benefits from an alternative channel is also related to the response of alternative retail channels to different consumer situations and structures. Consumers benefit when a firm can offer an expanded benefit spectrum. The integrated or combined use of retail channel systems in multi-channel systems means the retail channels can be used in a more individual-based way than when the channels are used separately. As such, cross-channel use of multi-channel systems effectively offers more uses and new uses of retail channels than one-channel systems (Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon 2001).

Attitude Towards the Retail Channel Portfolio as Mediator

Attitude is an overall, subjective, emotional and cognitive judgement regarding an object. It is a form of predisposition, that is to say, an internal readiness to react either consistently positively or negatively to certain stimuli. Attitudes are acquired and modified through learning processes. They tend to remain stable over time (Dick and Basu 1994; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). Attitude in the context of this study is the attitude to the total retail channel portfolio provided by a retailer. It refers to enduring views that are stored in memory, unlike an evaluation, which is more short-term oriented.

Consumer Response

As the manifestation of the impact of multi-channel systems, this study examines the response variables consumer loyalty and usage behaviour (behaviour represented by the actual use of the channels and the buying behaviour of consumers when using those channels).

Loyalty. Loyalty is understood to be a long-term bond to a firm (Dick and Basu 1994). Approaches examining loyalty formation from an academic perspective are found in cognitive dissonance theory, learning theory and risk theory (Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995). Components or facets of customer loyalty are considered to be repurchase, recommendation and supplementary purchase (Mittal, Kumar, and Tsirou 1999). They are components which indirectly result in a positive attitude but which also exclude spontaneous or accidental repurchases being mistakenly regarded as loyalty (Riley et al. 1997). There are two separate dimensions to the construct loyalty, The dimension of behaviour (ex-post view), that is previous buying and recommendation behaviour, and the dimension of intention (ex-ante view), i.e. the re-purchase, supplementary purchase and recommendation intention of the consumer (Macintosh and Lockshin 1997). Loyalty in terms of the multi-channel system is also observed not merely in repurchase or re-use of a channel, recommendation and supplementary use in one single channel, but also in the use of other channels in that multi-channel system (as a specific dimension of supplementary purchase or use). When other channels are used, it means a customer is using the same retailer for additional purchases or in other need situations. Furthermore, loyalty may be shown by a consumer staying with a company during the shopping process and using a combination of retail channels, for example, to collect information from stationary outlets which is used later for online shopping (which also eliminates “free rider” behaviour).

Use of Retail Channel Portfolios. Use of a retailer’s channels comprises the customer’s visits of the retail channels and actual shopping acts by the consumer. Use is therefore the “execution” of a shopping outlet choice. Visiting a certain channel is defined as the actual presence in an outlet, “leafing” through a catalogue or accessing an internet shop. Use of the channel, in this sense, is therefore contact with a shopping channel in the context of the consumer buying decision process. Contact may take place for search for information, in the evaluation phase, during the phase of the actual transaction or post-purchase. Frequentation of alternative retail formats which merely involves contact with the retailer is separated from actual buying behaviour. Buying behaviour deals with actual purchasing via the channel. Frequency with which buying takes place over a channel and the percentage of buying or purchase in terms of the total expenditure of the consumer on a product group or retail channel (“share of wallet” or “share of customer”) are the components looked at (Duffy 1998).

Effect of Integration and the Evaluation of Channels in Multi-Channel Systems

Effect of Integration of Consumer-Related Functions and Processes

In multi-channel systems, the separate services of alternative business and operation types are aggregated. If these services are strictly separate, the benefit to the consumer is the sum of the spectrum of benefits resulting from the extended variety of options for the buying process within a retailer. However, if consumers are additionally able to combine certain areas of the individual buying processes, i.e. if they are aware that certain functions have been organised cross-channel by the retailer, the result is the opportunity to carry out the buying process over a variety of channels (i.e. the whole might be more than the sum of the parts). Cross-channel function integration is related to communication between the various channels. Integration may therefore avoid conflict between the channels or within the channels. When irritation and increasing complexity are avoided, this in turn is associated with a positive effect on consumer response. It is therefore assumed that functional integration has a positive influence on the use of the channels in multi-channel systems. As integration is associated with more use, by implication, consumer loyalty to the multi-channel system is also improved.

Integration of channels eases cross-channel movement of consumers in a multi-channel system. It can therefore be assumed that integration is correlated to greater use and results in reinforced repurchase and repeat use behaviour. The positive correlation is not likely to be a direct correlation but an indirect relationship. Therefore, a thorough cognitive understanding of perception of integration is required (Steenkamp 1990) in order to apply the benefits of channel integration. Therefore in this study, consumer attitude to a multi-channel system is included as a mediator variable, mediating between the perceived integration grade and the response of the consumer.
Consumer perception of channel integration is improved particularly by orientation information, integrated branding and integrated communication. Better consumer perception of channel integration has a positive effect on attitude as increased retailer visibility means the retailer is then recognised in alternative channel environments. This eases orientation and enhances trust (Davis, Buchanan-Oliver and Brodie 2000; Smith, Bailey and Brynjolfsson 2000). Consumer awareness that alternative shopping formats are integrated also leads to a positive consumer attitude as integration enables synergy effects to be created. Related to this, is the interplay between consumer perceptions of similarities between the alternative channels (Schramm-Klein 2003). If a retailer’s alternative shopping formats are similar, particularly regarding merchandise mix, price structuring, design and communication policy, then swapping between the channels in a multi-channel system is comparatively easy for an individual. It is therefore postulated that:

**H1:** Perception of the integration grade of the channels has a positive effect on the attitude of consumers towards the multi-channel system.

**Effect of the Evaluation**

As a dimension of perception, evaluation (positive/negative) is a factor which influences attitude. An evaluation eventually coheres to an equivalent attitude (positive or negative) towards the retail channel portfolio (de Ruyter, Wetzels and Kleijnen 2001). When an evaluation is positive, the utility and the benefits of a system to the consumer dominate and have a positive effect on attitude towards a retail channel system (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky and Vitale 2000). The greater the benefits are perceived to be, the greater the conviction that a multi-channel system is suited to their buying needs and the more pronounced the advantages of the system will be perceived to be (Eastlick and Lotz 1999). A positive attitude is associated with the realisation that a multi-channel system provides specific dimensions of use, which cannot be provided by a “one-channel system” (de Ruyter, Wetzels and Kleijnen 2001). Attitude to a multi-channel system is a construct which is more holistic and on a more abstract level than the evaluation of the multi-channel system and one which is affected by a large number of other factors (Steenkamp 1990). In addition to the effect of the evaluation of each individual channel, the evaluation of the interaction of the channels is particularly relevant. Consumer awareness of the spectrum of alternatives, the spectrum of uses and the resulting consumer synergy has a positive effect on their attitude to a multi-channel system. The effect direction of usage perception (which is strongly cognitive), leads to the assumption that evaluation has a positive effect on attitude. It is therefore postulated that:

**H2:** A positive evaluation of the multi-channel system has a positive effect on consumer attitude towards a multi-channel system.

**Effect on Response Variables**

If there is a positive attitude to a multi-channel system, it may be assumed that consumers are also taking a long-term positive orientation to that retail company. Dick and Basu (1994) emphasise the significance of a positive attitude in loyalty formation and understand it as an antecedent to or prerequisite for loyalty formation. A number of empirical studies have demonstrated that there is a relation between the positive attitude towards a retailer and loyalty to that retailer (e.g. Steenkamp and Wedel 1991; Macintosh and Lockshin 1997). The following is therefore assumed:

**H3:** The more positive the attitude towards a multi-channel system, the greater the extent of consumer loyalty.

A positive relation between attitude towards a retailer and choice of shopping outlet or buying behaviour in that shopping outlet has been empirically proved by a number of studies (e.g. Arons 1961; Stanley and Sewall 1976; Hildebrandt 1988). The positive effect of attitude on the use of a multi-channel system may be derived from the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour in which a positive cause-effect relationship between attitude and behaviour is assumed (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). Eastlick and Lotz (1999) transfer this model to an analysis of consumer usage of internet shops. They point to a positive correlation between attitude towards internet shops and the consumer usage of internet shops as a shopping format. It is therefore proposed that:

**H4:** The more positive the attitude towards a multi-channel system, the greater the consumer use of its channels.

**STUDY DESIGN**

The focus of this study is the analysis of internet-orientated retail channel portfolios. Only online buyers can be (potential) users of such systems. An empirical survey using an online consumer questionnaire was devised to target this particular group and carried out in Germany with a standardised questionnaire. Three types of multi-channel systems were included in the survey, internet shops combined with either outlets, or traditional catalogues, or with both. Eight German retailers with such channel portfolios were selected as questionnaire subjects, on the basis of the consumers recognition of their online shops and the market importance of the retailer (Jupiter MMXI). A variety of sectors were covered and care was taken to ensure that multi-channel systems with a range of differing characteristics were chosen so that a wide spectrum of multi-channel systems was represented. The total number of respondents was 2,271. Only a section of this overall sample was used for the study of the questions considered here. This analysis refers to multi-channel systems covering outlets, traditional catalogues and internet shops. It is only in these systems that the entire spectrum of the integration areas under review can be covered. After elimination of incomplete data records and adjustment according to the demographic distribution of online buyers or users of online shops in Germany (GfK-WebScope), 786 cases were used in the analysis below.

**MEASUREMENT**

**Operationalisation of the Variables**

**Integration Grade.** There are two different dimensions to the integration of the functions of multi-channel system channels. Firstly, there is the integration of goods processes (supply and return processes between retailer and the customer). This integration dimension relates to the coordination of physical goods processes between catalogue, internet shop and stationary outlet. Two indicators were used to measure this dimension. The second dimension is the integration dimension which relates to the integration of information and orientation processes. Three indicators were selected to measure this dimension.

**Evaluation.** The dimension of the evaluation of the individual channels of the retail channel portfolios and the dimension of the evaluation of the integration of the channels within the system were isolated and investigated separately. The dimensions of the retail marketing mix were listed in order to identify the salient features of
the shopping channels. Individual evaluations of each channel were gathered independently.

The complexity of the construct and the difficulty of collecting direct evaluations of the integration processes meant the evaluation of the integration of the channels was best operationalised using the adequacy importance model. The two-component perspective of this model (see figure 1) uses separate data measuring firstly the perception of inter-channel integration of functions within the channels of a multi-channel system (“beliefs”, value A_i) and secondly the importance of the integration of such functions (“importance”, weighting factor I_i). (Aggregated) evaluation of integration was given by the sum of the adequacy-importance product terms (Eastlick and Feinberg 1999).

**Attitude.** Attitude to a multi-channel system reflects the individual advantageousness to the consumer of that retail channel system in its entirety. It is a global judgment (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1988). This perspective is fundamental to the holistic, intercorrelated view (“gestalt view”). It looks at the global assessment of the multi-channel system by customers (Keaveney and Hunt 1992). Consumer’s sympathy was chosen as an indicator of the affective component of attitude (Dick and Basu 1994). The appraisal of a multi-channel system, i.e. the judgment, whether it serves to satisfy the consumer’s needs, was used to measure the cognitive component of attitude (Dick and Basu 1994; de Ruyter, Wetzel, Kleijnen and Kleijnen 2001; Tan and Thoen 2000/2001). The conative component of attitude was collected separately as behaviour intention data.

**Loyalty.** Consumer loyalty to the multi-channel system was recorded for the individual channels of a system. The data collected was based on the intentional behaviour of consumers so that non-intentional or coincidental repeat purchases were excluded from loyalty and overlap with usage behaviour was avoided. Intention to recommend a channel to others was used as the indicator of loyalty as it is considered the most reliable indicator of loyalty (Andreassen and Lanseng 1997).

**Use.** Use data was first collected for each individual channel in a multi-channel system. Use was not defined as the actual buying act, but the overall use of a system. Indicators measured were frequency of buying in a channel and frequency of visits independent of an actual purchase, i.e. visits to outlets, visits to internet shops and leafing through catalogues (Osman 1993). Use of the whole system was interpreted as the sum of uses over all alternative channels. In this concept, use of one channel represents partial use of the system (regarding both visiting and buying in the channels). When use of a channel is constant and at the same time there is improved utilisation of other channels, it results in the whole system being used more. The sum of uses for each channel gives the intensity of use. These circumstances lead to a compensatory model being explicitly adopted, i.e. one in which the greater use of one channel can compensate for the lower use of the others. A two stage procedure was selected to determine the total utilisation of a multi-channel system. The first stage established a value for the usage of the individual channels. This value was a factor value from an exploratory factor analysis (see table 1). In the second stage, these values were aggregated to form an overall index for the use of the whole multi-channel system. The total use index for the multi-channel system was formed from the mean of factor values for use of each of the system’s channels.

**Reliability Assessment**

The reliability of the measurements was then examined using Cronbach’s alpha value. All variables produced good Cronbach’s alpha values (see table 2) and therefore indicated that the scales were suitable.
In addition, a confirmatory factor analysis was undertaken. This analysed the variables evaluation of channels, integration grade, attitude and loyalty. Use and evaluation of integration were not included in the confirmatory factor analysis as they were only defined by one indicator (the index formed) as part of the structural equation model. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (GFI: .979; AGFI: .952; NFI: .983; CFI: .990; RMSEA: .045) showed a good overall fit for the measurement model (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). All parameter estimates are statistically significant (p ≤ .01). The local fit results (by which an evaluation of the power of individual sub-structures (indicators and factors) is possible (see table 3)) show that most of the variable values exceed the usual requirements for the local models (Bagozzi and Baumgartner 1994; Boomsma and Hoogland 2001). Only in the case of channel evaluation the SMC-values (SMC=squared multiple correlations) some of the indicators used to measure individual channel evaluation do not meet the recommended minimum-values. But as for all channels the same indicators for attribute evaluation should be used and the intention was to cover a broad and heterogeneous spectrum of channel attributes and at the same time the composite reliability (which is considered the most important indicator for local fit, Bagozzi and Baumgartner 1994; Bagozzi and Yi 1988) shows very good values.

**TABLE 1**
EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF CHANNEL USE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Outlet Use (α=.8306)</th>
<th>Catalogue Use (α=.7113)</th>
<th>Internet Shop Use (α=.7160)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting frequency</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>.881</td>
<td>.882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>.881</td>
<td>.882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue of the factor</td>
<td>1.709</td>
<td>1.551</td>
<td>1.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total variance explained</td>
<td>85.4 %</td>
<td>77.5 %</td>
<td>77.8 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2**
LATENT VARIABLE INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of outlets (α=.8539)</td>
<td>- selection, price/performance relationship, customer advice, information, design of shopping environment, services, accessibility, opening times, advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Catalogue (α=.8532)</td>
<td>- selection, price/performance relationship, customer advice, information, design of shopping environment, services, accessibility, opening times, advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of internet shop (α=.8531)</td>
<td>- selection, price/performance relationship, customer advice, information, design of shopping environment, services, accessibility, opening times, advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration goods processes (α=.9067)</td>
<td>- collection/return of goods from/to stationary outlets of goods ordered from a catalogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration information processes (α=.7223)</td>
<td>- product information about all channels in all channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude (α=.7248)</td>
<td>- sympathy for the retailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>- buying over each channel (outlets/catalogues/internet shops)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty (α=.8379)</td>
<td>- recommendation intention (outlets/catalogues/internet shops)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1The maximum likelihood method and the AMOS 5.0 programme were used for parameter estimation in confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis.
for all evaluation constructs and global model fit also is very good, the measurement model for channel evaluation was not modified. The discriminant validity of the variables was assessed based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Validity was found for all variables assessed.

**RESULTS**

The relations postulated between integration grade, evaluation, attitude and consumer reaction were analysed in a path analysis (see figure 2). The signs of the path coefficients correspond to the formulated hypotheses. All relationships are significant and therefore all of the postulated hypotheses are supported by the empirical results. The explanatory power of the models is comparatively high (represented by the share of variance explained by the model which is shown as SMC in figure 2), especially when it is taken into account that the model only formulates selected relationships and that attitude, use and loyalty are influenced by a large number of additional factors.

The analysis of the relationships confirms the high importance that linkage between channels has for a multi-channel system. Also relevant is channel evaluation. All dimensions of evaluation have a positive effect on consumer attitude. Comparing the impact of channel-specific attributes and integration-related factors, no precise statement is possible considering the relative importance of the influence factors. Both channel-specific and integration-related dimensions reveal to be highly significant influences. The differences between the path coefficients were assessed for their statistical significance by using chi-square difference test. The impact of evaluation is slightly higher than pure perception of cross-channel integration. In this context the impact of channel-specific evaluation is different regarding the alternative retail formats. Consumer attitude to the multi-channel system is influenced strongest by the evaluation of stationary outlets and least affected by consumers’ evaluations considering traditional mail-order catalogues. These findings do not only show the high importance of physical presence of stores, merchandise and sales people, but also reflect the empirical relevance of shopping modes. There is also a strong impact of the evaluation of the integration of channels on consumer attitude. This indicates that cognitive processes in the sense of realising what benefits channel integration offers to the consumer are of high importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs with Indicators</th>
<th>Standardised Factor Loadings</th>
<th>SMC (min. .2)*</th>
<th>Composite Reliability (min. .5)*</th>
<th>Average Variance Extracted (min. .5)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration goods processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalogue goods</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet goods</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration Info. Processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product information</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price information</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation information</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation outlet</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation catalogue</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation internet</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of channels</td>
<td>outlet catalogue shop</td>
<td>outlet catalogue shop</td>
<td>outlet catalogue shop</td>
<td>outlet catalogue shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price/performance relationship</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer advice</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of shopping environment</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening times</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Recommended minimum values depend on sample size and heterogeneity of constructs (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Bagozzi and Baumgartner 1994; Boomsma and Hoogland 2001).
importance. The impact of this cognitive dimension is slightly stronger than effects resulting from pure perception of cross-channel integration.

Summing up, the high positive impact of channel integration dimensions and the evaluation of the integration of channels indicates that integrated retail channel systems may be superior to separate systems or one channel systems—even though this was not empirically tested, the high importance of integration-related factors in attitude formation can be seen as an indication of this assumption.

IMPLICATIONS

The study results indicate that besides integration benefits also the attributes relating to the individual channels have a definitive effect on attitude. The reasons for this could be that use of multi-channel systems has been characterised so far by the channels being used separately by the customer, not to their full capacity and not to the full extent of the potential combination capacity. On the one hand, this results from the fact that although the internet is pivotal to all multi-channel systems in this study, it is still a comparatively “new” marketing channel. Not only consumers, but also retailers have only limited experience with the internet (in comparison to the experience they have with more traditional retail channels) and the full potential of system integration has not been reached. The number of integrated channel systems is therefore limited, they are relatively new and consumer use is still correspondingly low.

This signifies a need for retail practice action in a variety of areas, i.e. in the number of combined channels and in the quality of their integration regarding optimisation of transactions for the customer. It would therefore be advisable not simply to intensify the combination options of channels, but also to optimise the “smoothness” of crossover activities. In terms of communication policy, it would therefore be advisable to emphasise the potential use spectrum available to the consumer in a multi-channel system concept as a use and service package, rather than to concentrate on the benefits of separate channels use.

It ought to be borne in mind however, as a limitation of this study, that only multi-channel systems combining their internet shops with stationary outlets and traditional catalogues were ana-

The findings therefore relate to the specific importance of the observed channels and in particular to the specific importance of internet channels within the context of a combined application of alternative channels in retail. Potential generalisations of those results remain to be investigated.

REFERENCES


Fishbein, Martin and Icek Ajzen (1975), Belief, Attitude, Intention and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research, Reading: Addison-Wesley.


Schramm-Klein, Hanna (2003), Multi-Channel-Retailing, Wiesbaden: DUV.


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Sometimes marketers disclaim particular characteristics of their products in conjunction with asserting positive claims. The application of such two-sided argumentation in messages makes sense in difficult communication situations, particularly when consumers already hold negative beliefs or attitudes towards a brand, when they will be exposed to negative counterclaims about the brand by competitors or to unfavorable information by negative publicity. Sometimes marketers are also forced to make a negative disclosure (e.g., in cigarette advertisements). Previous research shows that two-sided messages are especially effective in terms of enhancing credibility but reveals inconsistent results for brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Two-sided messages can even lead to detrimental effects on brand attitudes and purchase intentions particularly when the negativity of the message is predominant. Hence, attention has to be given to the message structure and content of two-sided advertising in order to improve the impact on attitudes and intentions. One particular strategy of modifying two-sided messages is the use of humor in advertising. Humor may help to sell negative information without jeopardizing positive effects on attitudes toward a product. In this study we investigate the impact of humor in two-sided advertising for high and low involved consumers.

Cognitive and affective approaches have been applied to explain the persuasive impact of humor. The distraction hypothesis is a cognitive approach that is based on the insight that recipients who are able and willing to process a message generate cognitive responses according to the received message; if negative information is provided in an ad, consumers are likely to generate more counterarguments which leads to negative effects on attitudes. In case of humorous two-sided messages, a distraction effect can occur which counteracts to an extensive processing of message information and hence counterarguments may be reduced and attitudes may be enhanced.

In contrast, cognitive information processing models of advertising assume that humor provokes surprise and curiosity and by this increases attention and consequently also comprehension, efforts of message processing and attitude changes. In case of two-sided messages, negative information is processed more thoroughly which, in turn, leads to unfavorable attitudes. Since both cognitive mechanisms indicate different effects of humor for two-sided messages, we try to test empirically which of both explanations holds in case of two-sided messages.

The affective approach assumes that humor evokes positive effect that is transferred to the message and, by this, to the brand according to classical or operant conditioning. A more detailed explanation for affect transfer processes provides optimal arousal theory. Since humorous messages are surprising and pleasingly novel, they have a tendency to engender positive affect which increases the probability of favorable changes in attitude.

The appropriateness of both approaches, cognitive and affective, may depend on the ability and motivation to process message information. In accordance with the idea of dual-process theories of information processing, the cognitive models describe information processing under high involvement whereas the affective model applies to low involvement processing. Hence, humor increases attention or distraction for people who are able and motivated to process a message and it induces affect transfer if people process the message in a rather cognitive effortless manner.

In order to test those assumptions, an experimental study was performed. 200 graduate students were randomly assigned to one condition of a 2 (high vs. low involvement) x 2 (humorous vs. non-humorous advertisement) between-subjects factorial design. A humorous and a non-humorous version of a two-sided target advertisement for an insurance company providing retirement provisions were developed. Additionally, advertising message involvement was manipulated according to previous established procedures. Participants received the print advertisement and were allowed 60 seconds to look at the ad. After exposure to the advertisement, participants completed a questionnaire where they reported to several dependent variables and manipulation check measures.

Manipulation checks for involvement and humor were successful. Experimental data of the low involvement condition support the assumption of the affective model. The use of humor in two-sided messages increases significantly arousal, surprise perception, attention, and attitude toward the ad. A path analysis shows that the effects rather follow a mechanism according to optimal arousal theory.

ANOVA results for the high involvement condition are rather ambiguous and do not give clear support for one of both cognitive models. The path analysis tends to support the distraction model. However, a modified distraction model, where an additional path from distraction to attitude toward the ad is inserted, provides additional explanatory power. Apparently, distraction does not reduce the generation of negative cognitive responses but leads to less acceptance of the ad in a direct manner. It seems that people under high involvement can not be distracted from processing message content with negative disclosures. Rather, humor induced distraction causes more negative attitudinal effects than humorless two-sided ads.

The results of the study contribute to the body of research on humor and two-sided messages in advertising. They also provide a clear implication for marketers. In case of two-sided advertising marketers are well advised to use humor for low involved recipients. However, if recipients are high involved, negative persuasive effects can be expected from the use of humor in two-sided messages.

Further investigation should concentrate on the unexpected results of the cognitive approaches, particularly by focusing humor-product congruence that was probably rather low in the case of the insurance company advertising. High humor-product congruence may lead to the interpretation of humor as an additional argument for the advertised product; hence, intense message processing should not necessarily lead to negative effects in case of two-sided messages since the ratio between the amount of positive and negative arguments may shift more favorably towards the supporting arguments for the product (compared to humor-product incongruent messages). Further research is needed in order to explore if humor-product congruence determines the direction of the attitudinal effects of humorous two-sided messages under high involvement conditions.
REFERENCES


In Search of Moderators of the Effect of Message Framing on Persuasion
Sunghwan Yi, University of Guelph, Canada

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
In this manuscript, I propose a theoretical framework for explaining the effect of message framing on persuasion in order to resolve inconsistencies in previous studies. Unlike previous studies on message framing, the current framework acknowledges that either desirable or undesirable end-states can be used as the anchor in order to construct a positive frame and a negative frame. Specifically, a positive frame may emphasize either obtaining desirable end-states due to compliance (i.e., presence of gain: P/G) or avoiding undesirable end-states due to compliance (i.e., absence of loss: A/L). Likewise, a negative frame may emphasize either suffering undesirable end-states due to non-compliance (i.e., the presence of loss: P/L) or forgoing desirable end-states due to non-compliance (i.e., the absence of gain: A/G). A content analysis shows that previous empirical studies of message framing have used different combinations of positive vs. negative frames: P/G vs. A/G, A/L vs. P/L, etc.

The current framework proposes that the effect of message framing on persuasion is determined by the type of motivations that are salient during the processing of messages. Following the multi-motive Heuristic-Systematic Model (Giner-Sorolla and Chaiken 1997), it is likely that not only accuracy seeking motivation but also defense motivation may be salient when consumers process framed messages. The current framework argues that factually equivalent message frames may elicit different processing motives depending on the degree of issue relevance and the end-state used to anchor the message.

Furthermore, the present framework acknowledges that two motivationally distinct categories of target issues may be used to construct persuasive messages: advancement concerns and security concerns. According to regulatory focus theory (Higgins 1998), advancement concerns are better sustained by strategic eagerness, whereas security concerns are better sustained by strategic vigilance. Since the majority of previous studies of persuasive message framing used security concerns, only the security concern portion of the framework is presented in this manuscript. Based on this framework, I propose three main hypotheses.

First, when a persuasive message is anchored on desirable end-states (e.g., safety or survival), accuracy motivation is dominant among individuals with high issue involvement. This is likely because issue-involvement tends to increase the motivation to approach desirable end-states by engaging in even-handed, extensive processing. In contrast, defense motivation is likely to be minimal because the possibility of obtaining or forgoing future gains does not violate consumers’ vested interests. Because security concerns are better sustained by strategic vigilance than by strategic eagerness under accuracy motivation, I hypothesize that an A/G frame is more persuasive than a factually equivalent P/G frame.

Second, when a persuasive message is anchored on an undesirable end-state (e.g., danger or death), consumers may hold defense motivation as well as accuracy motivation. Defense motivation is likely to be highly salient in the presence of loss frame because its emphasis on suffering a negative end-state as a result of non-compliance is viewed as inconsistent with high issue-involved consumers’ vested interests and hence threatening. This leads to biased systematic processing, such as counter-argumentation and discounting of the validity of the negatively valenced message. In contrast, defense motivation is not likely to be highly salient in the

REFERENCES
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In civil society, social welfare is delivered not only by the government agencies but also through various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attempting to build a more humane society and coordinating those humanitarianism activities in the interest of deprived groups. Charitable donations have become vital financial sources for the ongoing development of civil society organizations. Thus, how to proficiently frame messages to draw peoples' attention for raising donations becomes an important arena in the marketing of NGOs.

Researchers suggest that an individual’s judgments and decisions could be influenced greatly by the way information is presented or framed (Levin and Gaeth, 1988). This phenomenon has shown to expand onto diversified promotion scenarios (e.g., health behaviours, products, public policy) (Ganzach and Karshai, 1995; Detweiler et al., 1999; Cox and Cox, 2001; Druckman, 2001). Nevertheless, the research stream regarding the persuasive effects using the positive or negative framing is yet inconclusive. Some unresolved issues in framing research on choice behaviours still remain (e.g., Donovan and Jalleh, 2000; Chang, 2003). This study attempts to apply framing concepts in the promotion of charitable campaigns to demonstrate that message framing might not be equally persuasive in all conditions, and could be moderated by two communication format factors: vividness effects (Rook, 1987; Keller and Block, 1997) and presentation of statistics with temporal framing (Gourville, 2003; Chandran and Menon, 2004). The research question is namely centred on: ‘Could different formats of information presentation in a charitable advertisement influence consumers’ evaluations and attitudes towards the promoted donation?’

A pressing social welfare issue in Taiwan and elsewhere—child poverty—was adopted in two experiments. Experiment 1 was designed to assess vividness effects on framing effectiveness: framed phrases and display of vivid pictorial images, and to optimize the communication effectiveness in a 2 (framed phrases: positive vs. negative) X 2 (vivid pictorial display: positive vs. negative) between-subjects experiment. Participants consisted of 160 students from a business course at a university in Taiwan. Each participant received one of four manipulated poster about promotion on a charitable donation. Results from Experiment 1 indicated a significant interaction effect between message frames and vividness effects on communication effectiveness (F(1, 159)=5.09, p<.01). The posters presented with verbal and visual congruency (e.g., a negative pictorial image with negatively framed phrases or a positive pictorial image with positively framed phrases) were more persuasive than those with mismatch.

Experiment 2 investigated the moderating role of vividness effects with a different manipulation and also explored how statistical formats might affect the relation between framing and persuasion in a 3 (message framing: positive vs. negative vs. control) X 3 (vividness effects: positive vs. negative case story vs. neutral statement) X 2 (statistical formats of increasing occurrence rate: long vs. short temporal frame) factorial design. Participants were assigned to one of the eighteen experimental conditions above. The participants consisted of 708 students from 10 part-time courses across diversified disciplines at four large universities in Taiwan. Part-time students yield better representative results than full-time student samples because they tend to possess more social experiences and are able to represent Taiwan’s population realistically. Participants read a three-part booklet containing a pre-manipulation survey on general attitudes and previous experiences with charitable organizations, a charitable advertisement (i.e., manipulated leaflets of child poverty donation), and a post-manipulation questionnaire on evaluations of the promoted donation information and behavioural intentions in volunteering and monetary donation. Ten participants had to be removed from the analysis because of incomplete questionnaires.

An initial set of analyses was conducted to determine whether any of the demographic or pre-manipulation variables moderated behavioural intention. All analyses are presented collapsed over these factors except for previous charity experiences. After reliability analyses and manipulations checks, an overall analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) controlling for previous charity experiences was performed, followed by post-hoc tests with Bonferroni adjustment to test the proposed hypotheses.

Framing effects were found contingent on vividness effects and statistical formats. First, results of ANCOVA suggested that a significant three-way interaction of message framing, statistical formats, and vividness effects was found on participants’ behavioural intention with F (4, 697)=6.48, p<.05. Then, a significant two-way interaction effect between vividness effects and message framing was found (F (2, 697)=7.21, p<.05). Vivid case story descriptions were found to facilitate framing effects (F (4, 697)=5.11, p<.05). One interesting finding revealed that framing effects were enhanced by vivid story display only when the case story was opposite to the framing style used. When the message was framed positively, a negative vivid case story was more likely to increase favourable attitudes towards the promoted donation than a positive one. On the contrary, when the message was framed negatively, a positive vivid case story was more persuasive than a negative one. A two-way interaction effect between statistical formats and message framing was not observed (F<1), but the main effects of message frames and temporal frames were significant. The increasing occurrence rate presented in a long temporal frame (i.e., 2,700 new cases annually) was far more persuasive than that in a short temporal frame (i.e., one new case every 90 minutes). The results support the general proposal that messages being framed differently could affect communication persuasion, and the sum of message effectiveness would depend on complicated interrelationships among framing effects, vividness effects and statistical formats with temporal frames.

This study provides new insights into information formats while presenting charitable donation messages to the public plus suggestions made to specific attributes associated with information formats commonly used in charitable communication. How information and statistics are expressed makes little factual and mathematical difference, but does create a psychological significance. The findings suggest that appropriately framed messages should be incorporated into an existing marketing program or media campaign to promote public endorsement leading to mounting donations for NGOs.
REFERENCES


ABSTRACT
The “baby boomers” are quickly becoming the largest age segment in the Western world. But who are they and what are their attitudes and behaviour in regard to food consumption? Does the meaning of food and eating change as the consumer turns “grey” (55+)? Central issues of interest are food consumption in relation to identity and relations, to ideas of “Family” and “home”, health and the body, values on ecological food and sustainable living, attitudes to new technology, grocery shopping and store design, products and brands.

SUMMARY
The roundtable was initiated by Helene Brembeck, MariAnne Karlsson, Eva Ossiansson, Helene Shanahan, Lena Jonsson and Kerstin Bergström (not present), an interdisciplinary group of researchers at the Center for Consumer Science in Göteborg, working with the project “The Multidimensional Food Consumer: Values and Behaviour among Consumers 55+”. It attracted researchers from Denmark, France, Italy, Ireland, the UK and the US. Several topics were discussed. A main topic was gender issues in relation to cooking and health. In the Swedish study the women had all been working and their husbands and children had been involved in the cooking. Could an even more gender neutral cooking be anticipated as the baby boomers retire from working life? Proofs seemed to amount from Denmark, France and Italy, and to some extent from the US. But in the UK this was not likely to happen. Although most women are working, men and children are disengaged from cooking in the household, and women recognise that if they do not take control of the cooking the family simply would not eat properly in the home. Convenience food is part of the coping strategy. In relation to health all agreed that women generally consider healthy food tasty, but for many men, especially of the older generations healthy food is not considered tasty, it is rather thought of as detracting from the quality of their eating, the taste and the enjoyment. There was, however a general agreement that the attitude to food, health and the body is rapidly changing among younger men, and a cross national study of men and food was advocated. Other topics concerned environmental and ethical issues. The importance of access to environmentally friendly stores with healthy products of a good quality also when you get older, eventually single, disabled and may not have a car was emphasised. The ethical and moral issues in relation to the closing down of small village and town stores, and to the urban “fruit deserts”, certain areas that are not attractive to food chains with high quality products because of the low income of the population, was raised. Representations of older people in ads were discussed, and the participants agreed that a great change was on its way. While older people not so many years ago were seen sparsely and only in ads for standard type products like laxatives, now older people are increasingly represented as good looking, healthy, and even sexy, thanks to the marketing of products like Levitra and Viagra. The baby boomers are becoming an increasingly interesting target group for marketers now that they realise that they have the spending power, and that they are innovative brand switchers and cooks also in their eighties and nineties, in fact as long as their health and income allows them. Finally we agreed that the boomers are certainly not “grey”, and not all the same. Rather they are a very diverse group of people with enormous amounts of contrasts in preferences and behaviour in regard to food and cooking, well worth studying.
NEW PERSPECTIVES ON COLLECTING—FOCUSED ON FABRIC, PAPER AND GLASS

Karin M. Ekström, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden

SUMMARY

Collecting is an area of research which has received increased interest in many different disciplines, such as consumer research (Belk 1995; Belk et al. 1988), cultural studies (Blom 2004), ethnology (Rogan 1998), history (Dilworth 2003) and museum studies (Martin 1999; Pearce 1995) over time. The purpose of this special session is to present new perspectives on collecting focusing on issues which have not been sufficiently dealt with previously. By doing this, we hope to increase the understanding of collecting as an activity which engage many consumers of today. The papers discuss collecting from a gender perspective, collecting on the net and collecting based on multi-sited ethnography. The focus in the three papers is on different kinds of material such as fabric, paper, and glass. Even though the emphasis is on the interdisciplinary field of collecting, relations between material culture (Attfield 2000; Miller 1987) and collecting as well as visual culture (Mirzoeff 2002; Schroeder 2002) and collecting are investigated in the papers. Relations between humans and objects as well as visual issues are necessary to consider when studying collecting.

In the first paper, collecting is studied from a gender perspective. The paper suggests that rather than invoke a masculine myth, many collectors instead see themselves as conduits of more intimate meanings linked to the lives of the object’s makers or prior owners. In this more feminine role, the collector takes on a vital role in a perceived community of caring. Examples are presented from Quilts by late 19th and early 20th century Korean women as well as American quilt owners and collectors. In the second paper, focus is on how digitalization, the Internet and related technologies affect collecting. The study which includes netnography, interviews and surveys of collections both online and offline in informants homes, singles out a community of collectors of papers models. The third paper is a study on collecting of glass based on multi-sited ethnography. It is of interest to try to understand different and multiple interpretations of glass collections and glass collecting encompassing not only the collector’s perceptions, but also glass designers, glass workers blowing, painting or engraving glass, marketers, retailers and auctioneers. By contrasting different perspectives on collecting in the three papers, also incorporating different material and contexts, we hope to increase the understanding of collecting.

REFERENCES


Remembrances of Things Past: Silent Voices in Collections
Russell Belk, University of Utah, U.S.A.

Prior work has found that collectors often counter the charge that they are materialistic and frivolous by invoking their mythical role as noble saviors of artistically, historically, or scientifically important objects neglected by larger society. This paper suggests in addition to those who invoke this romantic heroic myth, other collectors instead see themselves as conduits of more intimate meanings linked to the lives of the object’s makers or prior owners. In this more nurturing guardian capacity the collector takes on a vital role in a perceived community of caring.

Collecting has been described as consumption writ large (Belk 1995). It involves a perpetual pursuit of inessential luxuries, often procured in the marketplace. In order to justify their collecting activity, many collectors describe themselves as performing a valuable service for society. One informant who collected elephant replicas in a variety of forms from ceramics and brass to posters and product packages, espoused his belief that “History will one day stand in awe of what I have done.” Such justifications typically make a claim for the collected objects’ importance to art, science, or history. They also position the collector as the opposite of the shallow materialistic consumer. In this narrative, these objects are being collected not for self gratification but for the future generations who will stand in awe and appreciation. Furthermore, the collector is positioned as the heroic savior of otherwise neglected or unappreciated objects. For them the collection is worth any sacrifice and they are among the few with the insight, knowledge, taste, and skill to acquire and thereby rescue these things (Belk 1998a). But this heroic savior self-mythology ignores other, more intimate, collector motivations and mythologies.

Consider the case of collections of a certain type of antique Korean quilt. During the Choson dynasty (1392–1910) in Korea, gender inequality was severe and rigid. A national Code was in force that prohibited a middle class woman from appearing outside of her household without the permission of her husband. Even then she was to ride in a covered palanquin so as not to be seen by other men. Within the home she was further restricted to an inner room where she was not to see men other than immediate family members. She was required to cover her face and would receive no formal education (Sŏng-mi 2003). Her life was restricted to her duties as wife and mother. The primary creative outlet for a woman was to sew elaborate patchwork wrapping cloths called pojagi (Figure 1). Pojagi were made individually and not collectively as with quilts in other parts of the world (e.g., Kiracofe and Johnson 1993). They were used to wrap, carry, and cover a variety of things in everyday life and were used to cover any gift. They might also cover a table or altar, carry infants, store food, wrap sacred texts, and carry treasured objects from one place to another. A gift was wrapped in a Pojagi as a sign of respect for the recipient and it was thought that good luck and happiness could be preserved inside the cloths (Dong-hwa 2003). These Korean quilts wrapped precious objects, just as the middle class women of this 500+ year period can be seen as being wrapped by veils, layers of the house, and covered transportation (Hendry 1993).

Surviving Choson pojagi in private collections and museums are all made by nameless women. But despite their anonymity, these wrappings of happiness represent the love, caring, and creativity of the women who created them. Those who collect and treasure these fabrics are preserving the imagined stories of Choson women’s restricted lives and their links to others through giving gifts carefully wrapped in beautifully crafted pojagi. When we collect and preserve folk art and craft objects, we carry forward the silent expressions of meaningfulness, dignity, and caring imparted by their makers. Here too we find a justification for collecting that counters charges of materialistic acquisitive and possessive behavior. But rather than collector as performing heroic work on behalf of science, art, or history, the collector is instead positioned as caring, preserving, and nurturing intimate meanings, even if the specific stories of the women who sewed these fabrics are lost.

QUILTS AND THE FABRIC OF STORIES

If the specific stories of the women who made surviving Choson pojagi are lost, we might look to quilts and quilt collecting of other times and places in order to gain some appreciation of the stories conveyed by such objects and how these meanings are carried forward and communicated to others. If quilt makers or producers are the original story tellers, we should also recognize that the current consumers of old quilts are the inheritors, gift recipients, purchasers, and museum visitors who encounter these quilts, typically in another time, place, and context. In between producers and consumers there may also be various intermediaries, including dealers, museum curators, and historians who write about the original time, place, contexts, and quilt objects. Within the communication channels linking these producers, intermediaries, and consumers, there are potentially a number of storytellers, listeners, and retellers. We might well ask what the impact is on these stories as they are told and retold by the people who pass along not just the physical quilt, but the tales that give them added meaning.

The meanings of quilts to their makers are often quite personal and specific to the events occurring in their lives as the quilts were made. Consider the following account of Brenda Dial’s double wedding ring pattern quilt:

I had started the quilt while my grandmother was dying of cancer in the hospital. During the long days spent at her bedside, I passed the time by cutting the numerous tiny pieces needed for the quilt. Even though most of the time my grandmother didn’t know I was there, I stayed with her because it was important to me. During those same weeks I learned that I was pregnant with my third child. It was a bittersweet realization that my new child would never know the woman I was sitting with. My unborn daughter and I were sharing the few moments I had left with my grandmother, yet she would never hear her great grandmother’s laugh or listen as she told a story. I began sewing the pieces together about the same time that I felt my daughter move for the first time. My grandmother died soon thereafter, and the quilt was put away for a few months as other things took precedence—preparing for the new arrival, taking care of the two children I already had.

Later in the pregnancy, I took up the sewing project again. I began sewing on the top just before the C-section that delivered my baby. I was still working on it when we took the thousand-mile journey by car to visit my husband’s family to introduce them to the newborn.

The tiny pieces of fabric dropped between the seats or underfoot as I moved to stop arguments between my other two
small children, pass out drinks or snacks, and nurse our new baby. I had to cut more than a hundred extra pieces to make up for the losses from that trip.

Back at home, I quilted at night after the kids went to bed. It was a bit of sanity in the middle of my otherwise chaotic life. I bundled the quilt onto my lap during cold evenings as my husband worked nights. I snuggled a sleeping little one beside me when one of them woke up and I wanted to keep quilting. It became therapeutic to work on it when I became pregnant twice more and lost both babies.

It wasn’t until the quilt was almost finished that I found a massive hole all the way through it. I still cringe at the memory. My son had spilled some hydrogen peroxide on it and failed to tell me. He was afraid that I would be upset. My son was right: I was mad. The hydrogen peroxide had eaten through the top, batting, backing, and quilting stitches. I had to unstitch the adjoining pieces and insert replacement material. Then I had to re-quilt the area, trying to make everything match up. Now, as I look back, with so much time having passed, I chuckle to myself as I remember (Lamancusa 2002).

As can be seen in this story, the memories that inhere in this quilt derive from the life of its maker, the trials encountered in making it, and the key life events with which its creation became associated. For this quilt maker, it is as if the porous fabric of the quilt absorbed these meanings and held them there. (Figure 2).

But what of those who inherit or receive such quilts as gifts? How much of such a story is likely to be retained and what other meanings might the quilt take on. McCracken (1988) found that “Lois Roget” was worried that the stories she tried to convey to her children about the heirloom furnishings in their Canadian farm home would be lost forever as the children left home. Despite her efforts to rehearse these stories with them, she held only faint hope that they would welcome the objects in their future homes, much less accurately convey the meanings she attempted to impart to the next family generation. Modernity, mobility, divorce, and our increasingly disposable attitude toward our possessions all threaten this meaning transfer. But such losses are not inevitable. Consider the following tale of Naomi Rhode’s wedding quilt:

Anna Goodman was an Icelandic immigrant who had come to the U.S. at the age of 16 and married George, her sweetheart, also from Iceland. They settled on the plains of North Dakota in a sod house with one room downstairs and a loft up above. The winters were bitter cold, with the snow often blowing up over the few windows that exposed the world outside.

When their children went to bed in the loft, they could hear the spinning wheel whirring late into the night, along with the creaking of the lumber that supported the sod roof and walls. Anna was spinning yarn from the sheep they raised so that she could make clothing for her family of 13. Wool socks, mittens, sweaters, baby clothing—all made to insulate her loved ones from the drafty existence inside and the subzero temperatures outside. The soft carded wool was also used for the stuffing of quilts made from flour sacks and pieces of fabric that could be gleaned from old garments or bedding.

The one project that took most of Anna’s time and love was the wedding quilt. As each child left home to start his or her

FIGURE 1
A Chosôn pojagi
own family, Anna, or “Amma” as we called her (“Grandma” in Icelandic), would create a masterpiece. She would sacrifice wool that could have been used for stockings or sweaters to fill the wedding quilt.

My mother, Ellen Borg, the first girl to be born and live into adulthood, was also the first girl to receive her quilt when she left home to marry dark-haired Virgil Reed. Of course, the quilt was on their bed the first night—and every night of their marriage. It got ragged and needed new covers from time to time, but it was the “wedding blessing” over their bodies—and their marriage—meant to warm and comfort them.

When my father died suddenly at the age of 51, my mother was heartbroken. Their marriage had been a wonderful one, and in losing him, she had lost her very dearest friend. The quilt was quietly taken off the bed, folded up, and placed in a box. She could not bear to sleep under this precious treasure alone.

Years passed and it was time for my wedding to Jim Rhode. Knowing of my mother’s meager finances, I wondered what her wedding gift would be. I watched her face as I opened the box that she gave. When I saw what was inside, I was shocked and moved to tears. She had taken her wedding quilt, re-covered the precious wool, and given it to us. Her words were poignant and powerful.

“Naomi, dear, this is no longer ‘just a quilt.’ It has become a ‘comforter.’ It has lovingly warmed and comforted your dad and me through our entire married life. It has held our tears, and heard our laughter. It has shared the warmth of our love with you and your brother on those cold mornings when you hopped into bed with us. Even more than that, it has reminded us of the spirit that comes to us, resides within us, and comforts our journey with joy, hope, love, and peace. Sleep well, dear children, as your father and I did. May it always remind you of our love and comfort.”

It did. Every night we slept under the wedding comforter and knew of its blessings! It warmed us in the winter, and even cooled us in the summer, if that could possibly be true! We were blessed with three children, who snuggled with us and felt warmed under our special quilt through the year (Lamancusa 2002).

Here we see a tale colored by great emotion and nostalgically rendered in a way that celebrates the sacrifices of those who created and owned the quilt as well as sacralizes the quilt as having acquired the essence of those who lived with it, drawing on the power of contagion. Our family tales often carry such baggage and seek to ennoble the family’s heritage and give it purpose and meaning (Stone 1989).

But not all collected objects bear their meanings so fully or so well. This is especially likely when unrelated intermediaries acquire once personal possessions for their collections. This point was brought home to me when Ron Goves and I were doing research on art in a small Tiwi community on an island off the north of Australia (Belk and Goves 1999). The community has an art center where, among other productions, local artists carve wooden sculptures of the Dreaming figure, the first man, Purukupali. In the Dreaming story Purukupali’s wife, Bima, was having an on-going sexual affair during the day when she was ostensibly gathering food. She would put her infant son Djinini in the shade of a tree...
while she went off for her sexual assignation. But one day the lovers stayed too long, the shade moved off of Djinini, and the infant died. A totally disconsolate Purukupali took the dead child in his arms and walked out to his death in the sea. While the Ron Groves and I were having dinner with the doctor of the community and his wife we noticed one of the carved Purukupali statues on a book shelf (Figure 3). Since the art center was just across the road, we expected that they would be familiar with the Purukupali story. But when I asked the doctor’s wife what the statue meant to her she said, “I thought he kind of looked like Louis Armstrong. And when I put that cowboy hat on him I thought he was really cute.”

In another case the famous Australian Aboriginal art collector Robert Holmes à Court was asked if he had ever visited the Aboriginal communities that his art came from. He replied “No, but I don’t visit the factory that makes my BMW either.” In other words, rather than symbolism and personal meanings, the art for him was regarded purely as an abstract art form for the viewers to make of whatever they wish. Not only do changes of time, place, and culture threaten meaning transfer in collected objects, there is very often a difference between the emic meanings of things to informants and the etic interpretations of researchers. Family and personal meanings are thus often lost along the way. More often, there is an attempt by intermediaries to preserve meanings of objects (a good story after all enhances value). But the result often appears to leave out a great deal, as hinted by the following story:

Lydia Rowbury was born in England to Ann Bissell and William Erastus Rowbury, the oldest of 6 children. The family came to Utah when Lydia was 5 years old, settling in Sanpete County. Lydia was 10 years old when her mother died and she was sent to live with relatives. Her life with Jesse in Nephi began with a homestead known as Marsh Flat in Nephi County, located 5 miles from town, where yellow roses and tamarack still grow. Shortly after their marriage, Jesse’s sister Elizabeth Cole died, leaving 3 children, Ruby, Dave, and Emma. Ruby was sent to live with her grandmother Cole, and Lydia and Jesse became parents to the younger children.

That wasn’t always an easy task, especially when Dave would take little Emma to town with the horse and buggy, and Lydia would have to talk the 5 miles in search of them.

In 1915, after 13 years of marriage, Lydia and Jesse became parents to a daughter. They named her Anna. When she was 5-years old, her brother Jesse was born. By then Lydia was almost 40 years old.

Anna remembers that she never had a store-bought dress until she graduated from high school. Lydia was an excellent seamstress and quilter, earning 3 dollars to quilt for others during the Great Depression. Lydia had always told Anna that she would never cut new fabric to make a quilt top—that is, until she saw the Improved Nine-Patch pattern. Anna bought the “slip sheen” fabric for her mother, and Lydia set to work.

The pastel blue, pink, and yellow pieces are machine pieced and hand quilted in 8 even stitches to the inch. Lydia always did her own quilting, fearing that a group of quilters would make stitches “big enough to catch your toenails in.” Most of the quilting is done “in the ditch” (stitches quilted close to the seam rather than the customary quarter inch away), but there is also a petal design quilted in blue thread in each of the blue pieces. The edges are finished in a scallop to accentuate the shape of the sashing and border.

Lydia Rowbury Coulson died in 1950 at the age of 69. She left behind only 3 of her beautiful quilts: a purple Star, a Double Wedding Ring, and the Improved Nine-Patch (Covington 1997).

While there is an attempt here to preserve something of the original story, it seems somewhat empty and focused on facts rather than emotions and relationships. The attention to the technical quality of the quilt also overshadows more personal detail, likely because it was either unknown or seemed too unprofessional to the writer to include.

A detailed narrative analysis of these tales remains to be done. Such an analysis should pay attention to the genre of the narrative as well. For example, is this a historic or folkloric tale? Is it a tale that is best understood as memorial (e.g., the AIDS quilt), personal, familial, cultural (e.g., Harriet Powers’ quilts in the Smithsonian Museum—Lyons 1993) (Figure 4), or art historical? Is it a dramatic tale and is the subgenre comedy, tragedy, mystery, or treasure tale? Did the quilt convey hidden meanings like some allege for the role of quilts in the underground railroad to help slaves escape to the
North (Tobin and Dobard 1999)? If the quilt carries a family tale as a “narrative mnemonic life token” (Price, Arnould, and Curasi 2000), are these a largely fictitious set of meanings like family photo albums that show only happy smiles and open eyes in spotless houses with new possessions (Belk 1998b)?

But even when the tales conveyed by collected objects depart from the literal truth, they may still convey an essential truth. In one tale told by Black Elk (Black Elk and Neidhardt 2000), we learn the story of a magical gift to the Ogalala Sioux people from a white bison in considerable detail. At the end of the tale Black Elk admits that the events may not have happened as he described them. “But,” he adds, “if you think about it, you will see that it is true.” Likewise, the stories conveyed or projected onto quilts and pojagi may not be literally true. But that doesn’t mean they don’t convey broader truths.

An example is found in a pair of quilt stories from the 1847-1869 Monron pioneer diaries and journals studied by Belk (1992):

1. When the company camped one night, Lollie Anderson became so ill that her family and friends were deeply concerned. It was agreed that one of the young girls in the company should sleep with her in an attempt to keep her warm. Christiana Wicklund was chosen. In spite of the precaution Lollie did not survive, and the next morning Christina awoke to find Lollie frozen to death at her side. Her hair was frozen solid and an ax was used to free it from the ice. Lollie was buried on the plains as so many had been before her. Because of lack of space families of the deceased were not allowed to take the belongings of dead loved ones with them. Among the things which Lollie’s family were preparing to throw away were a quilt and a pair of scissors. These were both in better condition than those owned by the Wicklunds, so it was decided that they could be exchanged. The old quilt and scissors of Christina’s family were thrown away and replaced by the better ones. They now occupy a place of honor among the family pioneer relics and are brought out only upon the occasion of retelling the story of the death on the plains.

2. My husband’s wife Abby died with cholera and was buried without a coffin by the Platte River along with others. We had to go on in the morning never to see their graves again. The night that Abby was buried the wolves were howling. It was awful to hear the dirt being thrown on their bodies. A young lady and I were the only ones to wash and dress her with what we could find. Her underclothes and night-gown. We sewed her up in a sheet and quilt. That was all that could be done for her burial. All the women in camp were afraid to prepare the body for fear they would catch the cholera from her. This young girl and I were not afraid to take care of the body. We were only 16 years old but brave in that case.

For such pioneers the emotional meanings of quilts in general was to carry the project of civilization into the wilderness (Foy and Marling 1994, p. 9). The survival of these delicate objects in the face of the forces of nature was testimony to the fortitude of those who carried them in handcarts across the plains. But as these tales indicate, under tying times honoring life and death are more important than such a project. Instead their significance comes from bringing a different kind of dignity and respect to the lives of those left behind and the lives of those going on.

A similar focus on carrying forward the meanings of past lives can be found even among collectors of antique objects that now sell for hundreds of thousands of dollars (Freund 1993). Collectors not
only find increased economic value when the origin and provenance of an object is known, they also find increased symbolic meaning and sentimental value is such objects. But it is precisely this sentimental connection that has frequently caused collectors, especially women, with such motivations to be trivialized and marginalized by other, often male, collectors who believe that they are the ones pursuing serious collecting goals. Furthermore, given the frequent focus on handcrafted objects from the home sphere in collections that carry meanings of their makers and prior owners, those collectors who seek out these objects have been further disparaged as mere buyers of bibelots or as being caught up in “bricobracomania” (Saiselin 1984).

Based on fieldwork with collectors of a variety of objects laden with intimate meanings, this study offers an understanding of how these objects express values, preserve intimate histories that otherwise largely escape our grasp, and provide an accessible way to humanize our understandings of other people, places, and times. There is a danger here of reducing these meanings to stereotypes because the voices of those who first made and saved these objects are silent. But like artistic insight and skill, there is a trace of caring and connection that also inheres in these collected records of other lives. By recognizing this alternative motivation to the heroism previously attributed to collectors, we begin to better appreciate the non-utilitarian nature of collecting.

Like Black Elk, I do not know if the events in the stories I have told here happened as I have described them. But if you think about them, you will see that they are true.

REFERENCES


Covington, Kae (1997), Gathered in Time: Utah Quilts and Their Makers, Settlement to 1950, Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press.


INTRODUCTION

The potential of the Internet for collectors is obvious—rare artefacts can be tracked down in easily accessible catalogues and conveniently exchanged at e-bay auctions. Obscure and distant sources are readily available through numerous homepages and a lot of community activities is also to be found—e-zines, discussion groups, blogs and e-mail lists. In many ways the technology seems to be made for assisting an activity like collecting by its reach and the possibility to survey many and diverse sources of supply. The Net has made some kinds of collecting easier, like finding information and communicating with colleagues. There is also an interesting affinity between collecting and computers in that both promote taxonomic thinking, a simple and serial order that requires the user to put things in clear slots. On the other hand the logic of the web differs a great deal from common collecting procedures in its fickle materiality. Everything seems to be accessible, but only in the form of representations, data files without originals. The community of Internet modelers discussed in this paper combine the mobility and the infinite reproducibility of virtual data with the building and collecting of paper objects that are singular and carry the finger prints of their makers. It is a case of collectibles being translated back and forth between different forms of materiality: data files, monitor displays, e-mail attachments, digital photos and actual objects in paper.

Many collecting activities have moved onto the web and in this study of a network of paper modelers the development of a community album made up of photographs of artefacts produced by members is presented and discussed. “Members are encouraged to share their own, original model designs, links to favourite model sites, or just talk about our hobby”, that is how the opening page is addressing a new comer. Examples of modelling are conventional, mentioning cars, buses, aircraft and armoured vehicles. It is said that paper models sometimes are more elaborate than what can be found in plastic. Here a claim about quality is made, complicated things with more details are better—and also that the activity is existing in the shadow of plastic modelling which is more common and commercially dominant. In their conversations members are asked to avoid topics of religion, politics and ethnicity, since many different countries are represented. The group was founded by a Californian in 2001 and membership is by 2005 over 4000, although much fewer people participate actively.

What forms of collecting does the example represent and how does it relate to cultural categories like masculinity, community and masculinity? What forms of recognition and intimacy is created as the members add images of their individual diligence to the public display? Since most collections are tangible and occupy a certain place, Cyberspace is confusing this by offering place-less activities. On the other hand Internet is gradually institutionalizing itself and might provide new ways of defining place (Danet 2001). How can the computer technology simulate the concreteness and sense of place that seems to be an important part of the collecting experience? The visual solutions offered by the Paper Model Group in their community album is a main focus of this paper and I will not just discuss the objects displayed, but go into the backgrounds and surroundings that contextualise them. Here the viewer catches numerous glimpses of the workbenches and kitchen tables of the hobbyist collectors from Canada to Denmark or Taiwan. The objects of these collections sometimes melt into the environment and sometimes they are invading domestic space in an almost violent way. This theme will be approached as a question of gender and power relations, an always interesting aspect of collecting. Visual culture studies is an important source for the analysis (Sturken & Cartwright 2001, Schroeder 2002). Research in material culture and Internet communities provided inspiration (Attfield 1999, Hine 2000). The practices studied include hobbyist production (Gelber 1999) and collecting (Belk 1995). By exploring new software for design and display and developing their capabilities for playful ends the hobbyists take part in cyberplay, genres of visual creativity without utilitarian end that have appeared on the Internet (Danet 2001). The gender analysis applied in the paper is a mixture of critical men’s studies and post structuralism (Butler 1993, Connell 1995, Halberstam 1998). Data for the project has been assembled with both on line Netrography and 15 off line ethnographic interviews and participant observation—mainly in Germany where paper modelling has a tradition. The study is part of a larger ongoing effort to research commercial cultures in a cooperation between ethology and business administration at the Centre for Consumer Science at Göteborg University and it also includes the project on glass collecting that was part of this special session.

GENDER, HOBBYISM AND COLLECTING

Looking at different kinds of collecting, stamp collecting offers a prototype with clearly outlined artefacts of a series that are singled out and personalised for display by the collector who is also in juridical possession of the valued artefacts. By becoming part of a collection the anonymity of mass production and market exchange is overcome and this has often been cited as a reason for the increasing interest in collecting that has accompanied consumer society (Belk 1995). The collecting activity of the individual is private, yet highly social, structured and supported by a network of resources—in the case of stamp collecting: postal authorities, dealers and markets. Stamps collected are really there, making it possible to see them as personal possessions and however frail, they can be handled. In the present study of collecting on the Internet materiality is much weaker and diffuse and private property is difficult to define. There are many forms of collecting going on and it is doubtful whether the subjects themselves interpret all activities in these terms. Collectors of paper models that in fact call themselves creative without utilitarian end that have appeared on the Internet do exist—what they collect are models that have not yet been cut out from the printed page and still have a market value and are traded by commercial publishers like Dover in U.S.A. or Schreiber in Germany. Other forms of developing series of collectibles in this area are models of a certain kind, or models made by your own hand. The album to be discussed soon also forms a series and works like a collection, although there is no individual ownership. Rather the group creates itself by collectively displaying its work. Situated in cyberspace, the album is the necessary externalisation that makes the group possible to perceive and appreciate, also serving to enrol new members.

Publishing pictures of models in the community album makes the individual known and the modelling skills gets readily measured by making a contribution to the collective enterprise of the group. Most members are English speaking and live in the U.S.A. and they dominates the community linguistically. The form of hobbyist collecting to be discussed involves skills that are mastered to different extents by the individuals. The community is growing.
by the contributions that vary in terms of skills in: mastering the computer software necessary for design crafting the material objects in paper; taking and posting pictures on the site of the community for display; searching the web for useful links and making them accessible to the community; and finally developing social skills to make friends and collect comments in e-mail exchanges. This makes up a movement, a switch back and forth between paper and digital data that constitutes the particular hybrid materiality of these Internet collectors and hobbyists.

Mostly English-speaking white men of middle age take part in the paper model community and the activity of posting images of paper models they have made of a wide selection of artefacts like airplanes, cars and diverse tools of war. These models mainly belong to a material world not just defined as masculine, rather masculinity is performatively created by gendered acts—that typically include gestures towards these technologies (Butler 1993). According to R. W. Connell, a leading theorist in the field of critical men’s studies, masculinity is socially constructed in ongoing processes of conflict and definition (Connell 1995). Masculinity takes different forms, but most importantly it is pictured as discourses, actions and institutions that tries to secure the dominance of men over women—although many men occupy subordinate positions. The activities of men and the values of masculinity are diverse and changing, but in general valued higher than their feminine counterparts. For most individual men it is important to keep status by manifesting unproblematic heterosexuality and to distance themselves from femininity. Paper modelling is hardly what first comes to mind when you think of the power distribution between genders. By making up areas of male homosocial activity, hobbyisms contribute to gender segregation. The products of the hobby are not valued highly in society, rather they help bonding men in subordinate positions to some of the most powerful manifestations of society—the armed forces and aerospace high technology. The individual enjoys his hobby as a flight of fancy, but the favoured subject matter of paper modelling is hardly a coincidence. Later more dimensions will be added to the analysis, but is unavoidable to start here.

The models depict masculine interests, but the activity of forming minute and ephemeral things in paper, gluing and displaying the colourful artefacts in a domestic environment comes close to areas of feminine domestic decorative interests that developed during the Victorian era (Lippard 1995, Sparke 1995). In fact the techniques of construction and assembly of paper models are the same as women use for dolls houses and accessories, but these sectors are mostly carefully kept apart, for example by gender segregating the Internet communities. The search engines help refining this and in only a few sites on the web are both feminine and masculine coded hobbies present. Actually hobbyism serves not just as a mirror of conventional gender norms, there is more emphasis on difference concerning the topics treated, than in most other areas of society. Men emphasise masculinity through stereotypical references to power, energy and force, while domestic subjects and fashion fills the world of female hobbies. At the same time the material similarities of these creative forms seem obvious. The strong enforcement of conventional gender norms on the level of content may serve to compensate for the dangerous similarities between making and handling paper dolls and paper tanks in the same fragile material.

The hobby of paper modelling is not reducible to simple support for unproblematic masculinity, it also generates ambivalences and serves as an area of negotiating difficult normative borders. Here it is possible for men to test female coded interests of fragile and colourful materiality under cover of the masculine concerns of heavy technology. Masculinity is protected from being devalued by femininity through the use references to powerful technologies. Changes in men’s consumption after World War II offers a parallel (Osgerby 2001). There was a turn from work ethic towards consumerism, up to then a dangerously feminine area. In Osgerby’s narrative, Playboy Magazine assumes the important role of adapting feminine consumption to men-for instance by making cooking depend on equipment that was sophisticated, specialised and expensive. However femininity is not the only threat to masculinity. Miniatures of course always were a kind of toys and here the adult male comes too close to the child to be comfortable. Paper modelling celebrates a masculine material world, but simultaneously seems to put it at hazard. Before looking into the community album as a collection and a contemporary source of visual culture and gender, some more observations will be noted on the materiality and collectibility of these artefacts, as well as their position in the art-culture system.

INSTANT COLLECTIBLES

Paper models displayed and distributed on the Internet as images or data files is a re-invention of an old form for making flimsy and cheap replicas of real things in paper that first appeared during the 19th Century, brought along by lithographic printing, high tech at that time. The material characteristics of paper are exploited by folding and gluing forms where strength is greatly increased. Simple miniatures of vehicles, architecture and other kinds of artefacts made up a large part of the new mass market for toys. The models appeared as consumer goods, but they took some work to assemble and thus could aspire to a higher status than pure consumption. They represented a leisure pursuit that was in harmony with a virtuous work ethic. Paper was gradually displaced by plastic models and toys. Today plastic is giving away to computer simulations that are more exciting visually to a new generation of youth that is highly skilled in computers and games. Paradoxically paper modelling got new life at the same time as personal computers linked to the web and equipped with colour printers made it possible to print data files of models that can be downloaded anywhere from the Internet. A new area for collecting and hobby production was opened up. Collecting on the Internet follows different rules than off line counterparts. It is an acceleration of the process started by mass production that made it possible to turn out huge numbers of collectibles. With the Internet the numerical limitations are removed, the hobbyists can make as many copies as they like of the files.

How is value created in this type of hobbyist collecting? In paper modelling the answer is that the “original”—the data file—lacks in authenticity, but that there is value created when the collector-hobbyist assembles the model. It becomes personal by being an interpretation of the material that has been offered. There are variations and they are systematic in that some hobbyists develop their own style, but differences are also rather randomly induced by technology, the calibration of printers that seldom give the same colours. Everything that is free on the Internet is there to be used, but netiquette asks you to always show gratitude by displaying a link to the designer. Most negative in this world of paper objects is theft. If you take what others have offered for free and put it on auction on e-bay you certainly are not worth much.

The objects reproduced in the album of the paper model group shows an interest in shape and colour and curiosity in exploring paper as a material. By also involving computer software in design and printing the paper objects are imbued with a thrilling aura of high technology. Tips on how to use the material take up a lot of space in the letters that are posted on the forum, about twenty a day. Technical concerns are about printing the files and how to preserve and protect the surface with different kinds of lacquer. Here floor
polish is favoured which proves how close this activity is to home. Comments on the images in the album are encouraging with few negative words to make new comers comfortable. Experienced modellers are addressed as knowing craftsmen whose work is worth following from one model to the other since they make collectible stuff. If you lack in building skills there are other ways to take part, for instance by spending long hours searching the web for new links to models that have appeared, a Czech copy of a World War II airplane in a penny arcade or a schematic construction of a black whole in space provided by a certain physicist’s home page.

Models are representations or second order copies—not the real thing. Being miniatures they are well adapted to collecting since they don’t take up much shelf space and make even huge objects handy. Here models fit right into the activity of collecting, but there is also a less easily recognized point that should not be over looked. Lacking in use value miniatures always remain just signs and in contrast to ordinary utilitarian everyday objects they do not have to be abstracted from their normal environment and be recoded in order to appear as collectibles (Belk 1995). Models are readily turned into collectibles since they are alienated from practical use from the start. If miniatures form a favourite form of collectibles, the reason is never just a question of space.

MATERIALITY IN MINIATURES

Each model in the world of the Internet modellers exists in three different forms, as files of data or in analogue form, as printed pages or as an assembled model (apart from being photographed and talked about on the mail, two more medias used). In material form the model involves printing costs or the work of assembly, limiting factors, while the “spiritual” version of datafiles can be posted for anyone to download. Here the possibilities for building a reputation through gift giving is obvious, in much the same way as will be found in all forms of filesharing. The Internet has brought along a new version of the gift, where value is uncoupled from scarcity and appears to profit by repetition and proliferation. Just like in popular music or politics: the more a name get quoted, the more a tune is played, the higher its value. The Internet is self-consciously exploiting this quality as can be seen in the Open Source Movement where support is gained by freely giving away codes, not just to create users, but also to enroll them into contributing to the product by checking for fault and finding improvements (Bergquist 2003). In the Internet community there is a slight euphoria most of the time, caused by all these gifts that make the social environment stand out as friendly and generous. Collecting in this material environment is bound to take new forms, although, as stated by Russell Belk in his comments to this session, it is not an entirely new condition of collecting, as is proved by the existence of the treasures of oral literature that preceded writing and shared precisely this aspect of being immaterial and collectible at the same time.

Like plastic models for children of houses, airplanes, space ships or cars these paper models offer replicas of the material world that celebrate and valorise the originals. They are models, a somewhat ambivalent category of artefacts. Models are mostly small size, zooming in replicas of existing objects. Their purpose is widely varying, sometimes existing for the enjoyment of children, and also for decorative and non-utilitarian ends among adults, fragile and associated with leisure. However the ambivalence is strong in that models also are used for serious educational purposes or in the planning of large scale engineering efforts (Smith 2004). Here models appears as serious tools for negotiating the execution of giant projects like dams, city planning or futuristic space ships. Models usually fill important functions of visualisation in museums and they also figure prominently in advertising, like the car manufacturer that also keeps a line of toy cars. In the movies models abound, sometimes to fool us into thinking they are real, but often acting as props to add authority to a scene, like Hitler inspecting a replica of future Berlin or Fellini in an eccentric appearance before a large model of Cinecittà. Models have for a long time been a favoured form of commercial gift. They not just represent original artefacts, they also have a general nostalgic potential for adults by addressing youth or childhood themes, a time period, rather than the object depicted. The categories of play, education and planning are not entirely separate and it is arguable that models partially create fascination by belonging to different worlds and mixing them up—bringing out the child in the adult and vice versa. James Clifford’s discussion of the art-culture system seems to be highly applicable to models—they circulate and sometimes appear as everyday artefacts, sometimes as charged cultural symbols and even as works of art belonging to the canon (Clifford 1988). In post modern installations of art, miniature models are often used to check as in the work of Jake and Dinos Chapman or just to subvert the ordinary sense of scale. Other examples are photographers that appropriate children’s toys for new and confusing uses, like Arthur Tress or David Levinthal, the latter whom has worked with converting the entire production of toy company Marx’ plastic toys into art photography (Levinthal 1996, Tress 2000).

Models make up a diverse and complicated form of materiality where status and age categories get negotiated. By being three dimensional representations they also create intriguing effects through the relation of the material of the copy to the material of the original. In the paper model world, everything gets translated into the same stuff and the ephemeral and pedestrian qualities it holds adds expressivity especially when large and expensive objects are represented. In one of the interviews the respondent exploits this, joking about high rise buildings coming out highly realistic visually, but materially—just the opposite of what they are. As pointed out above, models help construct masculine gender, but not only by the choice of subject matter. Linguistically the concept itself is loaded by a hidden gendering. The models of girls, dolls, dolls houses and all the accessories of Barbie are counted out of the conceptual family, the same way that clothes are considered separate from the category technology, also for gender reasons. Talking about models always brings masculine concerns to mind—unless you are thinking of beautiful women in fashion.

What kind of body is formed as you look at endless numbers of miniature artefacts? How is their scale made visible? Miniaturisation means that the representations paradoxically zoom away when you come close. Shrinking size create objects that are handy, less threatening, but they also become more distant, even cold. As discussed by Susan Stewart, miniatures form a world that can only be appraised visually, they are difficult to interact with and inevitably turns you into a giant, a clumsy Gulliver (Stewart 1993). However, there is not just a change of size and distance. When made in small scale artefacts like buildings or ships get to look cute and newly manufactured. Traces of wear and dirt disappear and the objects appear a lot more idyllic than in reality. If models seem to celebrate large scale technologies and turn them into collectibles, there is also a trivialisation in miniaturisation that does not go well with emphasised forms of masculinity. Here modellers have enemies who try to make them look like fools and hurt feelings could be detected in some of the interviews made.

THE COMMUNITY ALBUM REVIEWED

At the site of the paper modellers group there are both large and small albums deposited by individual members of the community.
As is the case with many Internet communities a number of different resources are at the disposal of the members. Beside the album the most important item is a discussion list that is moderated and gets updated every day. The owner watches over his creation and tries to enforce a policy of no politics and no religion. A guarded attitude to so called adult material is present. Controversy has erupted at times by images and files of light clad \textit{manga}-type girls from Asia, collected by many members. Apart from the ongoing conversations in the list and the images of the album, there is also to be found a “vault” containing models to be downloaded. An authorised list of links serves the members to recommended sites all over the world. All online discussions of the group are stored on the site, which makes the list an interesting memory, while on the other hand the pictures take too much space to be preserved and the visual content is quietly being removed to oblivion as new material is added. Although the focus of the group is on the visual and the material, only words are saved for the future.

At any given time you will find about forty small individual albums, each holding 5-15 pictures, that together make up the large album of the community. When you click the icon there appears an overall view with the images of the individual album in low resolution format and clicking further, an enlargement of the picture opens in a window. The presence of many air planes, both civilian and military, echo the world of aviation technology and of conventional boyhood concerns. In fact, many of the American modellers seem to have a background as engineers in the aerospace industry. No words explain the pictures, the photographed object and its immediate visual environment is all that is offered for the curiosity of the viewer. On the day the new images were posted the member perhaps made some comments in the mail. Mostly the objects seem to carry on alone, without any words. Size and scale is varying with the subject matter. Biggest are spaceships that often lack any sense of definite size, they are simply suggested to be huge by lacking any details like windows or doors that could indicate proportions. Small objects are represented by household utensils or even hand guns, that appear in scale one to one or close. Someone posted the picture of a rolled up measuring tape, for instance. Complicated models with hundreds of parts show up, but most are relatively simple. In this forum there is an encouraging attitude to new comers, too difficult or controversial subject matters are avoided.

The style of the models is sometimes complex, but there is also a sincere ambition to avoid too much detail. The idea is to recruit new members for the hobby, not scare them off. Conversations on these matters clearly indicate that hobbyists often get highly competitive and aggressive. This is a style of masculinity that is not endorsed by the group, they like to see themselves as helping and supportive. Detailed historical knowledge is not in demand in the open atmosphere that is cultivated. Not so few contributions have humorous content, often originating from the endlessly experimenting popular culture of Japan. For example there has been imported a special form of 3D caricature, so called \textit{hakos}, cubic human figures with large heads that mostly seem to be celebrities or just funny figures, but sometimes represent self-portraits. If detailed historical knowledge is not in demand, there are still some other sources for quite impressive knowledge in popular culture. Fan art supplies many creations, images of space ships from \textit{Star Wars} and \textit{Star Trek} are frequently on display and are typical themes for collecting. Models of props abound that address well known action movies like vehicles or weapons of \textit{Aliens} or \textit{Blade Runner}. More realistic models of spaceships from the sixties are also in demand and a lot seems to be invested in knowledge about particular technological systems. Racing cars and motorcycles are common themes. A few examples of buildings also appear. Historically they were more important in paper modelling, often due to interests of collecting souvenirs, a genre largely made up of architectural subjects.

To sum up, the objects represented in the album mainly, but not exclusively, deal with masculine concerns. The buildings and the ordinary cars are perhaps more gender neutral, but there is a lack in pronounced feminine topics. A masculine space is defined with a strong present orientation and a few historic references. Most artefacts are contemporary transport vehicles like cars, motorcycles, airplanes and space ships. A large proportion of the objects have destructive capabilities like warplanes from the Word War II or futuristic spaceships of unknown scale. Power and movement seems to be the main theme. Very few objects are at rest or permanent-like a model of the Stone Henge that was carefully replicated. Masculine interests are promoted by the subject matter, but some women share them and contribute objects like cars or houses. The men mirror their identity by constantly repeating the same message about strength and speed or destructive capability. On the other hand some masculine preoccupations are avoided like too realistic war objects. Caricatures of tanks and fighter planes that make them look bulky and funny is a common sight. Somehow they subvert the violence of the original artefacts, while at the same time war gets to be more acceptable as visual enjoyment. Pornography is almost non-existent, though there are a few erotic images of young girls showing Japanese influence. Always a few paper dolls are represented, usually \textit{manga}-type girls with big eyes and sexy postures for the joys of the male gaze. One female designer of erotic automatons actually lost her membership a few years ago. She was very upset and wondered why guns and military technology was considered a more appropriate topic than sex. Today the community has settled for a compromise, links to adult material are accepted, but only with a warning added. The images have already been discussed regarding their manifest content. Next the analysis will focus on the background, how the artefacts are given a sense of place in Cyberspace.

\textbf{THE COLLECTOR’S BODY}

When lacking sensible references in both scale and function the models cry out for contextualisation, some framing that would add a reassuring sense of place. The paper airplane does not fly and its size is a violent contradiction of the real thing, as tiny as the original is big and out of place in any domestic setting. Miniatures are not at home anywhere–except in comparative displays: this is a Jumbo Jet and look, here is a Piper Cherokee, both in scale 1/300. In this relation there is offered the comfort of rationality and accessible insights into the world of flying. But models in themselves, belonging nowhere, can be put anywhere causing the same puzzlement or banality. The pictures in the virtual collection are of different kinds and create different sorts of space. Also there appears to be a sense of corporeality growing out of the pictures, certain bodies are implied by the viewing field that is opened up. Now the focus is shifted towards this implied body that grows out of watching the album and here it is possible to draw on work of gender and visual culture studies (Fuss & Sanders 1996, Sturken & Cartwright 2001).

Some objects are depicted against a plain white background and thus there is no way to telling size or whereabouts. A spectator might guess it is somewhere indoors because the light has an artificial feeling and no sky is visible. It is possible to deduce a location in domestic space, since professional work is seldom implied in the modelling activity of the group. You are at home somewhere, probably with a male person, although no clear clues
are offered of age or race. Sometimes women contribute to the album and in any single case there is no way to tell the sex of the maker by the models shown. The overall masculine profile of the community clearly makes it a male homo social group, but some women are border crossers who share the same interests and like to take part as friends and colleagues, not as feminine admirers of the men. Browsing the album, geographic provenience is also hard to guess in any single case. Models of Asian origin are often displayed by members living in the West. Polish models, which are numerous, often figure in the contributions of Americans. However most objects have some location references and indications of size. Scale is an important parameter in model building. To show the skill of the builder sometimes an object of known size is included for comparison, to call attention to the fact that it takes more talent to make something that is very small. Proving the diminutive size of a certain ship model will increase its value. A predictable selection of coins, wristwatches, matches and rulers are offered to the viewer as proof.

The camera seems to be directed in three different ways that create variations of interest in the visual field. Often the model is photographed on a self-sealing plastic cutting board, a common object of the craft whose presence makes the hobbyist collector appear tidy and conscientious. For measuring this view offers a background of squares in white in inches or centimetres, adding an air not only of order and exactness, but the glamour of productive labour. Although most models are assemblies of other peoples work, here you can make an allusion to the sweat in your own domestic paper factory. The more objects you are able to contribute, the more applause you will get for real diligence, not just the spending power of a consumer. Work ethic is emphatically included in this form of collecting. It is distancing itself from what is seen as the mere selection of most collectors. Collecting was always a mixture of work like and leisure like activities and here emphasis is clearly on the first (Belk 1995, Gelber 1999).

Another popular way of displaying models interestingly foregrounds the digital tools of the hobby and the computer skills necessary. Actually this seems to be the most common way of adding context to the contributions to the album-collection. The model is photographed directly in front of the computer back home. Here you can show both the size and origin of the model in a way that puts the viewer into the chair of the hobbyist. His name may be just a pseudonym and biographical data might lack, you are still invited to share his seat in front of the computer. What could be more intimate an experience than to visit all these busy corners in Taiphe, Chicago or Hamburg? The same monitors and computer hardware are everywhere, right behind the focus on the loving efforts, the artful paper motorcycle or antique fighter plane. Not much else is made visible, but this corner of domestic space is opened for a world wide, appreciating male gaze.

Finally, a third way of contextualising the objects also figures, although less common it still deserves attention as a variation of the theme. Now the main character, the model, is posed as invader of the domestic space. On the kitchen table you see a big grey robot, full of rivets to suggest realism, maybe two feet of paper staring angrily in front of itself. The father of the house is lending his eye to the spectator, this is his preferred view of his creation appearing in his most familiar setting. For how long will it remain there? Is he alone or is he right now collecting the admiring eyes of his wife and children? In another case a World War II U.S. Army glider is unloading a jeep—not in Normandy this time, but in a contemporary Polish kitchen against the background of a domestic clutter. Strangely appropriate is a calendar of a company selling hospital supplies. Bandages for the G.I.s? Mixing large and small, world history and everyday trivia a special kind of transcendent space is formed. Nothing seems to belong. Or differently, it is bravely asserted that anything goes together. In her study of masculinity and femininity in design, Penny Sparke argues that the decoration of interior space have been what men left to women when they concentrated on dominating public space (Sparke 1995). Here we see the men returning and look what they are dragging in-in triumph: war, space adventures and immense and powerful means of transportation. Home gets undomesticated, but it would be hasty to assert that this is the only thing you can tell from this move. Actually the interpretation somehow leans the other way too, by dragging their things into the home, men are also positively domesticating themselves, showing that they are prepared to settle down with the conventional heterosexual contract. Historically that was one of the reasons for promoting men’s hobbies in the 19th century, not just celebrating thrift and diligence, but also to bring the men home from public drinking to a responsible sharing of family life (Gelber 1999). Not all may be married, but heteronormativity is a powerful force among these men in that your hobby is valued an important contribution to the leisure activities of the family. The ideal is to be a family man, assuming as one of the duties of a father to make paper models for the children to introduce masculinity into their lives, to be an attractive and busy role-model.

Comparing the images with the words in the forum there is an interesting contrast. The reproduced artefacts are mostly suggesting strength and power-in denial of their small size and the material flimsiness of the paper. But in words everybody comes out much more gentle and helpful. Behind the awful space cruiser there is a soft spoken person eager to share tips about what floor polish to make surface shine in a fashion suggestive of might and power. The more you reflect on this contradiction, the more it seems plausible to see the struggle to make these small objects look powerful and threatening as a convenient pretext for the nice talk about the practicabilities of the craft. In representing powerful machines against all odds a special form of gentle masculinity is allowed to come forward. The hostile technologies serve as protective folds for care. This ambivalence is often noted in contemporary studies of masculinity. War movies provide perhaps the most accessible example, where men kill each other and appear their most violent, physical closeness is condoned-without heteronormative punishment. In the Band of Brother’s series about American soldiers in World War II there certainly was a lot of violence, but when masculinity is finally felt to be secure, the time is due to indulge in homo social relations of care.

CONCLUSIONS

The album on the paper modellers website has been discussed in some detail, a collection that is alive and constantly changing with new contributions. Many of the well known signs of the diligent collector are in evidence—like the thrilling hunt for new objects that makes the series develop, never standing still. Baudrillard in his chapter on collecting says that the final term of the collection is the collector’s own person (Baudrillard 1996). This is also hinted in the lay out of the paper modeller album. It is trivial to say that the hobbyist’s personality is objectified in the models. But there is something much more interesting happening as you browse through all these corners crammed with computers from Belgrade to Bogota. As already told, the view is from the working chair of your hobbyist friend. You take the place of his body. As you move on to more pictures of the same monitors and hard discs there comes to life a concrete corporeality of masculine heterosexual presence. Here is the general hobbyist’s body, having eyes and arms with hands with a gentle touch, showing off his skill, but also in some way insecure
about the value of his preoccupation. How is masculinity and its large scale public technologies of speed and energy to go with a fragile material like paper or the presence of the domestic setting?

In a book about toy soldiers and small wars H.G. Wells many years ago suggested that the only good wars were the small ones—that they ought to be kept as the only real one’s, in scale one to one. This could go for many of the more fearsome technologies copied by the hobbyists. You might say that diminishing them and turning them into paper is the best thing that could happen, a profound move of political radicalism even. It is interesting to explore the models that interrupt the domestic sphere of the hobbyists and the analysis can be worked out in different ways. Second wave feminism held this kind of masculinity to be the root of all evil. From a post structuralist point of view there emerges a more complex picture where masculinity can also be made by women (Butler 1993, Halberstam 1998). The excitements of powerful and violent technologies can be enjoyable for anyone. Who says you have to kill other people to feel some strength or thrill? Certainly it might be constructed as a trivial repetition of the role-model idea of masculinity, but isn’t it true that individuals of any gender could profit from contact with powerful technologies?

Repeating masculine interests a homosocial space is created by the images made available to the community studied in this paper, only women who share interests with the men join. Posting the pictures of the models in the collective album creates a collection that transcends the efforts of the individual contributions in a series that is updated regularly. This virtual collection is limited in time, but quite large in space by including material from hobbyists in a major part of the world. The time-space is obviously different in a virtual collection than off line. The images of immense rockets and fast racing cars in paper appearing in the living room represent an ambivalent move—either an invasion of the home, a domestication or an empowerment. The living room grows by appropriating the space program, rockets and capsules and all. Could this be more than meets the eye? Beyond the blatant manifestation of male preoccupations, perhaps there is a space opened for renegotiating gender.

REFERENCES


Collecting of Glass—A Multi-sited Ethnography
Karin M. Ekström, Center for Consumer Science (CFK), Sweden¹

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to understand different and multiple interpretations of Swedish glass collections and glass collecting encompassing not only the collector’s perceptions, but also glass designers, glass workers blowing, painting or engraving glass, marketers, retailers, and auctioneers. By contrasting different perceptions, and also incorporating different contexts, we may better understand the meanings of collections. Some preliminary findings are presented in this article.

INTRODUCTION

Collecting as a research area has over the years attracted many researchers’ attention (e.g., Belk 1995a; Belk et al. 1988; Pearce 1995; Rogan 1998). Studies have focused on contemporary collecting or historical aspects of collecting, often from the collector’s perspective. A collector’s motives to collect can be to conserve, assemble, preserve, or rescue things (Belk et al. 1991). The collector can be looked upon as reigning as an absolute sovereign among his/her collected objects (Belk et al. 1991). Possession of a collection can be a way to control the world (e.g., Belk et al. 1991). Also, “by focusing on collecting rather than the fads and fashions of the general consumer marketplace, the collector is opting out of the broader commodity and fashion rat race and instead finding meaning, knowledge, and self through the pursuit of collecting (Belk 1995b, p.486-487).”

Companies in a consumer culture mass-merchandise collectibles to consumers, thereby reinforcing the social and economic significance of collecting by pre-packaging the experience for consumers (Belk et al. 1991). Even though collecting is predominantly about consumers negotiating meanings, it is also of interest to understand the meanings predetermined by actors involved in designing, producing and marketing collectibles. This study focuses specifically on Swedish glass from the 20th and 21st century. The purpose is to view collecting of Swedish glass collections and glass collecting from a multi-sited field (Marcus 1995). Collectors, glass designers, glass workers blowing, painting or engraving glass, marketers, retailers and auctioneers have been interviewed. The study is inspired by literature on collecting, but also by literature on material culture (e.g., Attfield 2000; Miller 1987).

SWEDISH GLASS DESIGN

Glass is a material which often is perceived as magic. Zerwick (1990, p.111) writes: “In modern times, glass has retained its traditional fascination—its magical ability to capture and reflect light and its solid transparency, of being and not being at the same time. In Remembrance of Things Past, the French writer Marcel Proust said that glass is ‘real without being actual, ideal without being abstract’”. The paradox between the fragile and terminal nature of glass and the fact that it is still kept and saved by collectors is fascinating. The visual experience of glass is manifested among glass collectors in that their collections are displayed visible and seldom put away.

An understanding of how Swedish glass has been developed and perceived at different periods of time during the 20th century is expected to help us understand the relations people have to glass collections and collecting of glass. Des Chene (1997, p.79-80) writes: “It is by making historical connections between places that we can both make theoretical advances and better learn about the people and social phenomena we study.” The 20th century was a time period when Swedish glass industry flourished and received international recognition. Phillips (1987, p. 224) writes: “…when Swedish glass was shown to the world at the Paris Exhibition in 1925, it became clear to everyone that a new nation had entered the world of fine glassmaking.” Swedish glass also received recognition during the World exhibition in New York 1939 when the concept “Swedish Modern” was established (Huldt 1999). The Second World War was a difficult time period for the Swedish glass industry facing limited raw material and lack of export possibilities (Huldt 1999). Demand for Swedish glass increased significantly after the War and it was in particular during the 1950s when Swedish glass became an essential profile for Swedish design internationally. Sandon (1999, p.176) writes: “During the 1950s Swedish art glass spawned a new approach to glass throughout Scandinavia and also many other countries.” Sweden had a large number of glass factories during the 20th century, a majority of them situated in the southern province Småland. Examples of glass factories in Småland which are internationally well-known are Orrefors, Kosta, Boda and Åfors.

Glass collectors can through their collections express their identity. Possessions are not only part of the self, but can also be seen as instrumental for development of the self (Belk 1988). McCracken (1988, p.113) states: “Collectibles, unique or very rare, must be hunted down, brought out of hiding, won away from other collectors. When goods have this special elusiveness, they can once again become bridges. It is now possible for the individual to treat them as things to which certain displaced meanings adhere. They have the all-important quality of being beyond one’s grasp and can therefore serve as bridges to displaced meaning. The individual can now pretend that there is a distant location for his or her personal ideals and that these ideals will be realized when the bridge to them is obtained. In short, collectibles make it possible once again to dream.” Design is used by societies to express values (Forty 1986). Through their collections, collectors express values articulated by glass designers representing contemporary or times past. Zerwick (1990, p.111) writes: “In the era when glass is taking us to the very edge of outer space, it has become a medium for exploring inner space as well—as an art medium with which the artist may transform a personal vision into a statement of universal meaning expressed in terms of transparency and light. In the coming decades, glass may well reveal not only more about our world, but also, as art must, about ourselves.”

DESIGN AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

The meanings of glass as a material, glass collections and glass collecting are likely to differ for people having different relationship to glass. Marcus (1995) describes the emergence of multi-sited ethnography in anthropological research and discusses that it is used in particular in new spheres of interdisciplinary work, for example, various strands of cultural studies. He states (1995, p.97): “...such interdisciplinary arenas do not share a clearly bounded object of study, distinct disciplinary perspectives that participate in them tend to be challenged.” Collecting represents such a sphere of interdisciplinary work. There are different techniques for conducting multi-sited ethnography such as follow the people, follow the

¹School of Business, Economics and Law at Göteborg University.

The author wants to thank The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation for support of this research project.
things, follow the metaphor etc. (Marcus 1995). In this study, the focus is on following the thing, i.e. tracing circulation of glass collectibles in different contexts.

In-depth interviews (e.g., Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989) were conducted in order to understand the different actor’s relationships to and experience of glass objects and collecting as an activity. 24 glass collectors (23 men and one woman, middle aged or older) have been interviewed. A few of the men shared their collecting interest with their wives. In five of the interviews, the wives were also interviewed together with the men. In addition, 24 interviews have been conducted with glass designers, glass workers blowing, painting or engraving glass, marketers, retailers, and auctioneers. The interviews were semi-structured and each interview took approximately 1.5-2.5 hours. The interviews have been tape-recorded and transcribed. The analysis is based on reading and systematizing the transcripts. Some preliminary findings are presented in this article.

**FINDINGS**

The Glass collectors

The glass collectors interviewed expressed their passion for glass. Both the glass objects collected and the collector’s eyes shimmered when they talked about the glass. The collectors described the material’s beauty, its ability to change with light, its color, form and transparency. Transparency, which also is related to social interaction and psychological significance of collecting and mitigate some of society which meets regularly for lectures and visits to glass factories. The collectors interviewed collect mainly art glass. A few collectors do also collect glass for utilitarian purposes and over time this glass has become collectible. The meaning of possessions can change during life and things for everyday use become memorabilia, this glass has become collectible. The meaning of possessions can change during life and things for everyday use become memorabilia, this glass has become collectible. The glass collectors clearly have not seen for many years.

The interviews pointed to different motives for collecting. First of all, the collectors expressed interest, curiosity and willingness to learn more about glass. For example, one collector expressed that he will never become completely knowledgeable, because there is so much to learn. His knowledge has increased over time and he is more selective and quicker when searching for glass at antique fairs nowadays compared to when he started to collect glass about ten years ago. In general, it was emphasized during the interviews that a glass collector should have knowledge about how glass is produced. Some collectors explained that as their knowledge increases, it also results in that their requirements increase. For example, one man resembled collecting to climbing a pyramid; it gets narrower towards the top. It gets more difficult to find what you are looking for the longer you have been collecting.

Another motive for collecting appeared to be nostalgia and the glass collected symbolized links to a time which has past. Several of the collectors originate from Småland, where a majority of Swedish glass has been and still is produced. They talked about memories from their childhood when they had spent time in the glass factories. One man who collects glass from a glass factory where his father had worked stated explicitly that his collecting interest is about nostalgia. He emphasized also that his interest in glass is about self-realization, to get something unique that someone else does not have. This motive was noticeable among several of the collectors. Another collector explained that he buys drinking glasses for crayfish and Christmas parties which remind him of parties during his childhood growing up in Orrefors. He uses the drinking glasses for parties during holidays and tries to find old things from the same time period for decoration. To use the glass objects for holidays means for him joy and community, but also to pass on traditions to his children and grandchildren. It is important to use the glass pieces and it is not the end of the world if they break, but a reason to buy more.

The collectors expressed in general pride over the Swedish glass history, but also over their collections. Glass objects which a relative had produced had a particular place in the collectors’ hearts. A man who had worked in the glass industry his entire life collected things he had inherited, bought from the glass factory or received as presents from glass designers. He did not perceive himself as a collector, because he did not search for complete collections. His job had made him interested in glass. The most cherished possession was a letter press made by his father. Also, another collector emphasized that a pair of candle holders his father had made for his mother were the most precious collectibles.

Collectors help out to preserve Swedish glass history. It can be seen as something noble. The collector can by preserving things produce a valuable and lasting contribution to the world (Belk et al. 1991). A collector started his collecting after visiting a glass factory which was going to close down. He said his aim to arrange a private exhibition of drinking glasses from different glass factories was never realized, because of the difficulty to achieve a systematic collection.

Another motive for collecting was social interaction. One collector said: “you meet a lot of people at auctions who you maybe have not seen for many years.” Also, as mentioned above, a majority of the collectors belong to a glass society and they meet regularly to exchange experiences.

Collections have different values. Nearly all collectors said that they do not look upon their collections as an economical investment. A woman said that it is important that glass objects collected are beautiful, but emphasized also economic investment: “Instead of having the money in the bank, you have the objects in a cupboard and look at these items.” The affective value was emphasized by most of the collectors. One collector expressed: “...if you see something which you think is really beautiful, which gives you something, then it does not entail many seconds of reflections. It is a spontaneous feeling.” He had mainly made impulse purchases. To possess the objects was for him not as important as the excitement in purchasing and acquiring the objects. He said explicitly that his collecting is: “more an enjoyment than an investment.”

To know the glass object’s origin, provenance does often increase the value for collectors. The interviews indicated that it was essential to know where the glass objects were produced and by whom. Some collectors mentioned also the importance of having a good relationship with the glass designers they collect. A family mentioned their relation to an antique dealer who they had purchased a glass bowl from. Before selling the glass bowl to them, he had asked to see their entire home, in order to approve of the family as buyers.
Another collector emphasized that collecting involves *creativity*; “that you can do something new to what other people have done, by putting together the whole thing. It is about creating and learning. In collecting, there is also learning, you learn new things.” The family had recently built special shelves for the glass and carefully thought about the lighting. The man expressed: “Glass which is not lit, it dies, it disappears, you can not see it.” His wife said that they enjoy turning on the lights at night: “because we did not feel well when we did not have good lighting.” In general, it was noticeable that *lighting and placement* of the glass objects are important to the collectors interviewed. One collector emphasized the importance of enjoying the glass objects every day: “...I have never understood people who buy expensive paintings and put them in a vault where no one can see them. Such a collector is not a collector. It should not be more exclusive than that it is possible to have it visible, to look at. Every night when we sit watching TV, we can see straight into one of the glass cupboards and see all the nice objects....we switch the light on and off in the glass cupboard every day, the year around.”

Dusting was also important for the collectors in order to keep their glass objects shiny. One exception is a collector who has glass in his entire house and has converted six wardrobes to lit glass cupboards. He resists dusting, because he is afraid that the glass objects would break: “better with dust and whole objects than broken and clean objects.” Different degrees of order and structure were visible in the collector’s documentation and display of glass. Collections can be classified as vertical/horizontal, and structured/unstructured (Belk et al. 1988).

As might be expected, the collectors did not want their collections to be complete. A fear of completion of a collection can be avoided by upgrading the standards for the collection, branching into related areas of collecting, or by starting a completely new collection (Belk et al. 1991). Some of the collectors collect glass which is very rare, no one knows how many objects have been produced and the objects made are not signed. Their collections can never be complete. Also, a collector collects art glass from 1920 and onwards, a very wide definition with no risk for completion. Another collector who is interested in a particular glass designer says that he after writing a book or making an exhibition about the glass designer is ready to get rid of the objects and start another glass collecting project.

As mentioned above, the majority of the collectors interviewed were men. In some families, the wives also share their interest and participate by giving advice and making decisions. It appeared, however, as if the men are responsible for the purchases in the majority of the families. There might be several reasons. The wives might not be interested in the collection, have their own collection or other interests. Several of the men interviewed have their roots in Småland and may therefore have a personal interest in glass. Another reason could be that art glass often is costly. Men have historically had higher incomes than women and been able to afford expensive purchases. Most areas of adult collecting is still dominated by the economically advantaged and by males (Belk 1995b).

The glass designers

The interviews indicated that the glass designers in general did not think of collectors when designing glass. They emphasized the *creative process* of designing glass where the ideas originate from the designer him/herself. A designer expressed that his/her design of glass “originates from his/her soul without compromises.” Some designers mentioned that the miniatures they designed were sold as collectibles. Also, the designers discussed that limited editions were helpful in order to sell glass as collectibles. Nevertheless, it seemed to be primarily the marketers rather than the designers who focused on collectors.

The interviews with the designers also indicated that people buying glass can be categorized into different groups of consumers, consumers who after a while might become collectors. First, there are consumers who buy mass produced glass in shops. These consumers are in general not collectors, even though they might still feel a strong attachment to the objects purchased and to the designers. Second, there are consumers who visit the glass factories and the glass designers, looking for glass objects to buy. Some of these consumers are collectors. Third, there are consumers who buy very exclusive art glass at the galleries and this is where the very serious collectors buying exclusive glass can be found. The interviews with the designers also indicated that serious collectors apart from feeling strong attachment to the glass objects can also purchase for reasons such as investments and status. Some designers sell expensive art glass to collectors in galleries abroad, for example in the United States. These collectors are quite wealthy and relationships are sometimes established with the glass designers. Consumers sometimes shift upwards to the next group, for example consumers who have bought mass-produced glass in shops may decide to purchase unique art glass after some time.

A designer mentioned that a collector is someone who has a genuine interest in glass and not someone who purchases second quality cheap glass. Another designer mentioned that a collector is someone who purchases exclusive art glass to save for the next generation. A collector was, in other words, not seen as someone who has the kitchen cupboard filled with mass-produced glass.

Some glass designers meet consumers in shops selling mass-produced glass being aware that they are often not serious collectors. The designers sometimes meet collectors who visit the glass factories. In particular, *the galleries* play an important role for the relationships formed between collectors and designers. The staff at the galleries guides the collectors by giving them advice on potential purchases. The staff has sometimes more knowledge than the collector himself/herself. One glass designer mentioned that the galleries often talked about who had purchased a specific glass object to let other potential customers know about it. The influence of reference groups is hereby evident for exclusive art glass. Some designers had visited collector’s homes and seen the placement of their art glass.

It appeared as critical that the staff in the galleries is knowledgeable. A designer also emphasized that the staff in the ordinary glass shops need to be knowledgeable. The placement of glass in shops was also discussed. One designer expressed the opinion that an exclusive glass shop should not sell cheese cutters and dust-brushes, but focus on glass. Another designer pointed out that unique art glass should not be sold in shops selling mass-produced glass.

In general, several designers seemed aware of that in order to sell glass as collectibles, it is beneficial with *limited editions*. Also, some designers expressed the opinion that collectors are interested in stories about the glass objects, to hear about the glass objects’ provenance. This is also noticeable in the marketing of glass objects which often include stories. One designer emphasized that it is important that the stories are true. Another designer said that his/her creation process of designed glass is in itself a way to tell the story.

The prices were also discussed. One designer emphasized that prices over time must go up. You cannot set a price and then lower it. Also, for glass designers selling art glass on different markets, there is a need to balance the prices between buyers in Sweden and other countries.

The designers emphasized that it is important to get to know the glass material. One designer talked about “the glass material’s
soul” and emphasized that it is important to live close to the glass factories. Another designer mentioned the cooperation in the glass factories and said that good results required a symbiosis between the designer and the glass workers. The designers expressed that they respected the knowledge among the glass workers and emphasized that they are a team.

**Glass workers blowing, painting and engraving glass**

The craftsmanship to blow, engrave and paint glass takes very long time to learn. The glass workers talked also about working together with the glass designers in teams. The glass workers blowing, painting and engraving glass did not think of collectors when producing glass, but explained that they focused on making high-quality objects. Someone said that it had happened that he/she wondered where the glass he/she produced ended up. A few glass workers participate in exhibitions of art glass together with the glass designers and said that they really enjoy it. At these exhibitions they sometimes meet collectors. The joy of meeting consumers, collectors as well as non-collectors, visiting glass factories and being able to show how glass is produced was also emphasized during the interviews.

**Marketers and retailers**

The marketers discussed the significance of stories in marketing of glass objects. A marketer emphasized that all the successful products had originated from the designers, not from the marketers. The importance of educating shop assistants was mentioned by a marketer.

One glass shop arranged regularly exhibitions of exclusive art glass, which were attended by collectors. The importance of having knowledge of glass to share with collectors and potential collectors was confirmed. The development of relationships with collectors was also discussed. Another shop selling second hand glass indicated that collectors are interested in the origins of the glass. The shop owners’ knowledge is important in order to give information about the glass designer and the glass factory producing the glass. The shop owners emphasized the difficulty of finding quality glass objects to sell. A possible reason could be that people’s knowledge of antiques has increased over the last decades. Different trends were also discussed. For example, pressed glass was not in demand ten years ago, but is popular today. Both interviews with the glass shop owners pointed to the importance of lighting, placement and dusting of the glass objects for sale.

**Auctioneer**

An auctioneer emphasized that the demand for expensive glass among collectors has decreased in Sweden during the last years. The international market is becoming more important. Different trends are noticeable, for example classical engraved bowls are more difficult to sell today. The interview confirmed that buyers, collectors and potential collectors, have become more demanding over time, they only want to buy perfect glass and tolerate no flaw. The interview indicated that the auctioneer has high knowledge of glass and that he/she over the years has developed relationships with the collectors.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings indicate different motives for collecting glass. The visible experience of glass was important for all the collectors. The lighting, placement and dusting of the glass objects were emphasized by the collectors as well as the glass shop owners. Collecting involves different rituals (e.g., McCracken 1988) and grooming in particular is noticeable in this study. In general, the collectors were interested in learning more about glass. It was also stressed that a glass collector should have knowledge about the production process. Provenance, to know the glass object’s origin, where it was made and by whom, also increases the value for the collectors. The enjoyment of seeing glass produced and the importance of having good relationship with the glass designers whose object they collect were also mentioned. The collectors expressed pride over the history of Swedish glass and over their collections. Nostalgia was noticeable. The collections symbolized links to a bygone era. Several of the collectors originate from Småland where a majority of Swedish glass has been and still is produced.

The glass designers emphasized that they did not think of collectors when designing glass, but instead it was a creative process where the ideas originated from the designer him/herself. Collectors are, however, significant for selling unique art glass. Also, collectors are important for selling limited editions of glass as well as miniatures. It was in particular the designers selling unique art glass that met the serious collectors in the galleries and sometimes formed a relationship with them. Different categories of consumers purchasing glass were mentioned. Consumers purchasing mass-produced glass were also important for the glass industry’s future. These consumers might one day become collectors and purchase more expensive unique glass. Some designers were aware of the importance of stories for selling glass. If studying how glass objects are marketed, it is noticeable that they all have names and sometimes a story. Also, the designers are emphasized when marketing the objects.

The interviews with the marketers indicated that they are well aware of the importance of stories in marketing. The importance of knowledgeable staff in glass shops was also mentioned. The glass shops interviewed confirmed the importance of having knowledge of glass to be able to establish a relationship with the customers, collectors and potential collectors. The interview with the auctioneer also showed that he/she has high knowledge of glass and that he/she has developed relationship with collectors over the years.

The workers blowing, painting and engraving glass did not think of collectors when producing glass, but focused on making perfect objects. They enjoy meeting consumers in the glass factories and to show how they make the glass objects. A few glass workers had met collectors at galleries during exhibitions.

Even though provenance is of great importance to collectors, the individual glass workers are in general not mentioned in marketing of contemporary glass objects. However, antique glass objects are often marketed with information about both designers and glass workers, thereby emphasizing the teamwork performed.

**CONCLUSION**

Collectors expressed their passion for glass and are important for the future of Swedish glass industry. It is something glass designers, glass workers, marketers, retailers and auctioneers agree on. Collecting is dependent on a flourishing glass industry. In order to sell glass as collectibles, provenance and stories related to its origin are important. Swedish glass is part of the Swedish soul, people have great pride in the glass history which exists in Sweden; a history which collectors help to preserve and perform. The article has presented some preliminary findings from a multi-sited ethnographic approach to collecting. Continued analysis of the data material gathered is believed to contribute to our understanding of glass collections and collecting, how meanings differ, how meanings are created and how meanings are transformed among different categories of people.

**REFERENCES**


Forty, Adrian (1986), Objects of Desire; Design and Society Since 1750, New York: Thames and Hudson.


McCracken, Grant (1988), Culture and Consumption; New approaches to the symbolic character of consumer goods and activities, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.


Increasing Store Brand Purchase Intentions through Product Sampling
Terence A. Shimp, University of South Carolina, U.S.A.
David E. Sprott, Washington State University, U.S.A.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Store brands (SBs), also called private labels, are goods owned and merchandised by retailers. SBs have long been considered an important aspect of merchandising practice, both as a strategic tool for retailers and a unique source of competition for manufacturers. Retailers would benefit by increasing the purchase rates of their store brands (Batra and Sinha 2000). The difficulty with such an objective, however, is that any attempt to increase purchase rates must be weighed against the cost of achieving such a goal. Initiatives involving increased advertising or improving product inputs may not warrant serious consideration since these options likely would increase costs and reduce the attractiveness of SBs to price-conscious consumers (Ailawadi, Neslin, and Gedenk 2001).

In-store sampling of store brands provides a viable option and represents an appropriate promotional technique according to Chandon, Wansink, and Laurent’s (2000) insightful benefit-congruency framework. Because in-store sampling is designed primarily to trumpet a brand’s utilitarian benefits (taste, performance, etc.), for those brands purchased primarily due to their utilitarian (versus hedonic) benefits, in-store sampling is compatible with the promoted product and thus should be an effective means for enhancing brand equity.

In view of the private branding challenges that confront retailers, our research investigates in-store sampling as an operationally simple but theoretically justified approach to augmenting consumers’ quality judgments and increasing purchase intentions. An experiment tested this prospect by manipulating the stature of the sampled brand and participants’ opportunity to taste the product (orange juice) prior to reporting purchase intentions. Two between-participant factors were manipulated in a 3 x 3 design that consisted of a tasting opportunity condition (no tasting opportunity, tasting a low-quality version of orange juice, or tasting a high-quality sample) and a brand status factor (a store brand and two national brands).

Findings reveal that sampling enhanced purchase intentions for the store brand only when the brand was of high (versus low) quality. Specifically, contrast tests for the store brand, Safeway, indicate that given brand name and packaging information only (absent a tasting opportunity) participants rated the brand somewhat more favorably than did those who tasted a low-quality version of that brand. Likewise, participants who sampled a high-quality version of Safeway were more likely to buy it than their counterparts who tasted a low-quality variety. However, the most revealing finding is that participants who tasted a high-quality version of Safeway orange juice expressed significantly higher purchase intentions than those who simply rated the brand without the benefit of first having tasted it. Comparatively, a markedly different set of findings was manifest for the two national brands examined in this study.

Schema congruity theory provides a compelling explanation for the present results. The expected schema for store brands is that they are simultaneously lower priced and of inferior quality compared to national brands in the same category. It follows that for those participants who did not have an opportunity to sample the juice, their schema about private brands was congruent with the only salient information provided them, namely that the product was Safeway orange juice and thus of mediocre quality vis-à-vis category leading national brands. Comparatively, participants who tasted the store brand learned that the juice was of high quality. Hence, their store brand schema and learning experiences were moderately incongruent, thus generating more positive affect and stronger purchase intentions in comparison to participants who did not have an opportunity to learn firsthand how good the product was. Future research is warranted to provide process evidence of this explanation.

REFERENCES
ABSTRACT

Intents are often included in consumer behavior research, but researchers have paid little attention to a discussion in psychology and philosophy indicating that different intention constructs may exist. The findings in this study suggest that researchers should indeed pay close attention to how intentions are conceptualized and operationalized. More specifically, our analysis shows that three proposed intentions constructs (intentions-as-expectations, intentions-as-plans, and intentions-as-wants) produce a good fit with a three-factor conceptualization. Our analysis also shows that global evaluation variables (satisfaction, attitude, and delight) are not associated with the three intentions constructs with the same strength.

INTRODUCTION

One frequently employed variable in consumer research is labeled intentions. Typically, it is depicted as a final consequence in researchers’ models, but it may also be used as an intermediate variable in attempts to explain behavior. Please notice the use of the terminology here: it is mainly as a variable (i.e., a method-related entity) that intentions appear in the consumer literature. The presence of a variable is predicated on the existence of a theoretical construct, and therefore one would expect that there are also intentions constructs in existing literature. However, this is rarely the case: very few consumer researchers have included a conceptual discussion of intentions in their papers. Not even a one-sentence definition is offered in the typical study. The lack of information on what intentions are becomes particularly striking in the light of all conceptual efforts devoted to antecedents to intentions (e.g., attitude and satisfaction).

With few exceptions, the situation is the same in fields such as organization theory and (perhaps more surprisingly) psychology. Yet a handful of scholars in psychology (e.g., Sheppard, Hartwick, and Warshaw 1988; Warshaw and Davis 1985) and philosophy (e.g., Audi 1973; Kenny 1966) suggest that several different intentions constructs may exist. And some empirical research show that measures of what can be conceived of as different intentions constructs are not always strongly correlated with each other. These measures also produce different strength in associations with other variables (Fishbein and Stasson 1990; Norman and Smith 1995; Pickering 1984; Sheppard et al 1988; Söderlund 2002; Söderlund and Öhman 2003; Söderlund and Öhman 2005; Warshaw and Davis 1985). Studies of this type have yet to see wider diffusion, but they do suggest that the incautious selection of one intention variable over another may produce different results regarding intentions’ role as antecedents to intentions (e.g., attitude and satisfaction).

A tripartite view of intentions

We argue that three different intentions constructs can be distinguished, given the use of intentions in existing research: intentions-as-expectations, intentions-as-plans, and intentions-as-wants. The main reason why we refer to the three types of intentions as three different intention constructs, and not merely three different ways of operationalizing intent in some general sense, is that they appear to tap into distinct types of orientations towards the future.

One frequently used intention construct refers to the individual’s assessment of the probability that he or she will perform a particular behavior in the future. Typically, this is measured with questionnaire items such as “The likelihood that I will do A is…” “The probability that I will do B is…” “Rate the probability that you will do C,” and “How likely are you to do D?” Consequently, behavioral expectations are sometimes labeled self-predictions (Fishbein and Stasson 1990). We refer to intention of this type as intentions-as-expectations (IE). In consumer-related research, IE seems to be the most popular of the three constructs covered by the tripartite view. The core cognitive activity for this construct, we argue, has to do with prediction in terms of the estimation of probabilities of...
an outcome. In our view, then, intentions-as-expectations are outcome-oriented. From a pure conceptual point of view, such propositions may not contain any assessments of why the act needs to be carried out. Moreover, they do not necessarily signal anything about what stage the individual is in when it comes to how prepared he or she is to carry out the act.

Another intention construct is closely related to the dictionary notion of intention, and it refers to the individual’s plan to carry out a particular behavior in the future. It has been argued that intentions in this sense capture motivational factors that influence behavior; “they are indicators of how hard people are willing to try, of how much effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform the behavior” (Ajzen 1991, 181). Similarly, Bandura (1986) views intentions as “the determination to perform certain activities or to bring about a certain future state of affairs.” Moreover, intentions in this sense involve choosing or deciding to carry out the act (Conner et al 1999; Malle and Knobe 1997). In typical applications, measurement items are “I plan to……” “I intend to……” “Do you intend to……,” “I will choose……,” “I am going to choose……,” and “I will select……” Here, we refer to intention of this type as intentions-as-plans (IP). We argue that they tap into a preparedness-orientation, because they involve effort, determination, and choice. But intentions-as-plans do not necessarily comprise an assessments of outcomes—or assessments of why an outcome is desired.

An additional intention construct is a conceptualization in terms of wants. It has been referred to as an intention construct by Fishbein and Stasson (1990) and Norman and Smith (1995). This construct is found in several formal models of intentionality and in the folk concept of intentionality (Malle and Knobe 1997). Measures of this type of connection with the future usually consist of Likert-type statements such as “I want to…”, “I plan to……” “I intend to…….” “Do you intend to……,” “I will choose……,” “I am going to choose……,” and “I will select…….” Here, we refer to intention of this type as intentions-as-wants (IW). It can be noted that in relation to IE and IP, IW is the least frequently used intention construct in marketing-related research. Nevertheless, and given that wants serve to connect the individual with his/her future acts, we refer to them as an intentions construct in this paper. We argue that intentions-as-wants are problem-oriented in the sense that they involve perceptions of a gap between a current and a desire future state of mind. Yet these perceptions may not involve any probability estimates or assessments of action readiness. For example, impulse purchases can be seen as driven by intentions-as-wants, but for this particular act we expect that intentions-as-expectations and intentions-as-plans play only a minor role. Another situation in which we assume that intentions-as-wants dominate the individual’s connection with the future is when s/he is engaged in wishful thinking and daydreaming about an act that may never materialize (e.g., “I really, really want to live in Buckingham Palace”). Thus, in relation to some authors who suggest that wants are an antecedent to intentions in a planning sense (cf. Bagozzi and Edwards 1988), we assume that intentions-as-wants may exist independently of other types of intentions.

Thus, a main premise in this paper is that the three types of orientations co-exist in every individual, but also that they are accessed to a different extent with regard to one specific act. From a conceptual point of view, then, statements such as “It is very likely that I will have to teach in an additional course, but I have not prepared for my participation, and I certainly do not want to teach in this course” and “I really want a nice Mercedes, but I do not expect that I will ever own one” involve no contradictions. Taken together, existing evidence suggests that the three intention types can be conceived as three different constructs, and our aim in the present paper is to examine the issue in empirical terms. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

H1: Intentions-as-expectations, intentions-as-plans, and intentions-as-wants represent three different theoretical constructs

Intentions: a proper label?

Given the three proposed intentions constructs and our argument that they appear to tap into distinct types of orientations towards the future, one may question the use of intentions as a general label. We believe that another label may indeed be more informative (e.g., “propositions about future acts” or “prospective act-orientations”), but we use the label intentions here in order to make contact with previous research. Before an alternative label is to be established, however, we believe that it is necessary to examine the relationship between a proposition explicitly phrased in terms of intention (e.g., “I intend to buy a Mercedes”) and propositions phrased in terms of intentions-as-expectations, intentions-as-plans, and intentions-as-wants in the mind of the consumer. Very little, however, is known about the extent to which people actually refer to their own cognitive activities in terms of intentions, because empirical studies of this issue are in short supply. Yet this issue deserves attention, and we use the label intentions-as-intent to capture propositions in which the word intention is explicitly used to establish connections with the future. Given that the dictionary notion of intention (in which “plan” is usually stressed) is more closely related to intentions-as-plans as opposed to intentions-as-expectations and intentions-as-wants, the following is hypothesized:

H2: From the consumer’s point of view, intentions-as-intent are more closely related to intentions-as-plans compared to intentions-as-expectations and intentions-as-wants

The three types of intentions and the nomological net

Given that the three types of intentions represent different intentions constructs, we expect that they are affected by—and affect—other variables in their nomological net with different strength. Previous studies (e.g., Sheppard et al 1988) indicate that this is indeed the case, in the sense that self-prediction (intentions-as-expectations in our terminology) appear to predict behavior better than do intentions with a motivational component (intentions-as-plans in our terminology). Considerably less attention, however, has been devoted to the relationship between different intentions constructs and their antecedents, and this is the focus in the present paper.

Many different antecedents appear as the immediate cause of intentions in consumer behavior models, but the typical antecedent refers to a global evaluation such as satisfaction and attitude. One reason why we expect evaluation–intention links with different strength when different intention constructs are employed is that (a) evaluation constructs and (b) the three intentions constructs occupy different positions on a sense-of-ownership dimension (cf. Söderlund and Öhman 2003). It is assumed that an evaluative judgment is not only own (i.e., subjective) but also owned (i.e., perceived to be possessed). In other words, my attitude or my satisfaction can be mine in the same sense that my car or my clothes are mine. In fact, we expect that an evaluative judgment is almost invariable perceived to be mine to a larger extent than intentions (because intentions reference acts that are yet to take place, while an evaluative judgment is taking place when it does materialize). However, intentions can still be viewed in terms of sense of ownership, but we expect that the three types are subject to variation in this dimension.
few external restrictions. Indeed, Csikszentmihalyi and Graef (1980)
indicate that wanting to do something is an expression of being free.
To estimate probabilities and to assess action preparedness, how-
ever, are activities that require considerably more attention to
external factors (cf. Warshaw and Davis 1985). Our assumption is
also based on a view of sense-of-ownership of an object as deter-
mained by (1) perceived control of an object, (2) intimate knowledge
of an object, and (3) self-investment in the object (Pierce, Rubenfeld,
and Morgan 2001), and we assume that intentions-as-wants are
characterized by higher levels of each of these three determinants
compared to the two other intention constructs. The following,
then, is hypothesized:

\[ H3: \text{Global evaluative judgments explain more variance in}
\text{intentions-as-wants compared to the explained variance in}
\text{intentions-as-expectations and intentions-as-plans} \]

METHOD

Research design and sample
We selected one specific service consumption act, having
dinner at one particular restaurant, as the source of global evaluative
judgments and intentions responses. The data were collected with
a questionnaire. Each respondent was instructed to select one
particular restaurant that he or she had been visiting for dinner
during the past six months, and s/he was asked to answer the
subsequent questions with this particular restaurant in mind. We
included an open-ended item in the beginning of the questionnaire
to capture the name of the selected restaurant, and our examination
of the names revealed that few respondents selected the same
restaurant as any other respondent. Our approach, then, encouraged
stimulus heterogeneity. The respondents (N=103) were partici-
pants in seminars on customer satisfaction. Thus, we used a conve-
nience sampling procedure. We distributed the questionnaires to
the participants at the beginning of the seminar, we supervised the
completion task, and we controlled the environment in the sense
that no talking amongst participants was permitted.

Measures
We included measures of the following evaluative constructs
in this study: customer satisfaction with the restaurant, attitude to
revisiting the restaurant, and delight. The following question was
asked to measure customer satisfaction: “Think about your accu-
ulated experience during the past six months of the selected
restaurant. How would you summarize your impressions of the
restaurant?” It was followed by three satisfaction items used in
These were the items: “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with
the restaurant?” (1=very dissatisfied, 10=very satisfied), “To what
extent do you think it will meet your expectations?” (1=not at all, 10=totally),
and “Imagine a restaurant that is perfect in every respect. How near
or far from this ideal do you find the selected restaurant?” (1=very far
from, 10=can not get any closer). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was
.81.

Attitude, our second evaluative construct, was operationalized
in terms of the attitude to revisiting the restaurant, and it was
captured with a five-item scale with 10 points and with adjective
pairs common in marketing research. The question was worded as
follows: “What is your view of visiting the restaurant again during
the coming six months?” These adjective pairs were used to capture
the responses: bad–good, dislike it–like it, unpleasant–pleasant,
uninteresting–interesting, and negative impression–positive im-
pression. Alpha for this scale was .91.

Furthermore, some authors have suggested that “satisfaction
is not enough” (cf. Oliver, Rust, and Varki 1997) and thus that the
firm needs to make a stronger impact on the customer than merely
satisfying him/her. After all, the Latin root of the word satisfaction
(satis) means enough—and a perception that a supplier has pro-
duced enough is presumably connected to a state of mind with a
relatively low level of arousal and excitement. Therefore, delight
has been launched as an alternative construct that is (a) subject to a
relatively less skewed distribution than satisfaction and (b) able to
enhance consequences such as repatronage behavior to a larger
extent than satisfaction. We included the following three-item
measure of delight in our study: “The restaurant makes me de-
lighted,” “The restaurant makes me thrilled,” and “The restaurant
makes me excited.” Each item was scored on a 10-point scale (1=do
not agree at all, 10=agree completely). Alpha was .84.

The intentions items in the questionnaire were introduced to
the respondent with the following question: “Below are some
statements about your future relationship with the restaurant during
the coming six months. Please indicate for each statement how it
describes your relationship with the restaurant.” All responses were
scored on a 10-point scale. The following items were designed to
measure intentions-as-expectations: “I will have dinner at the
restaurant during the coming six months” (1=very unlikely, 10=very
likely), “The probability that I will have dinner at the restaurant
during the coming six months is…” (1=low, 10=high), “I am sure
I will have dinner at the restaurant during the coming six months”
(1=do not agree at all, 10=agree completely), and “It is likely that
I am going to have dinner at the restaurant during the coming six
months” (1=do not agree at all, 10=agree completely). The internal
consistency of this scale, in terms of Cronbach’s alpha, was .94.
Similar items, with an emphasis on probability/likelihood, have
been used by Boulding et al (1993) and Zeithaml, Berry, and
Parasuraman (1996). For intentions-as-plans, we used “I plan to
have dinner at the restaurant during the coming six months” (1=do
not agree at all, 10=agree completely), “I have decided to have
dinner at the restaurant during the coming six months” (1=do
not agree at all, 10=agree completely), and “My purpose is to have
dinner at the restaurant during the coming six months” (1=do
not agree at all, 10=agree completely). Alpha was .94. Intentions-as-
wants were measured with “I want to have dinner at the restaurant
during the coming six months” (1=do not agree at all, 10=agree
completely), “My will to have dinner at the restaurant during
the coming six months is…” (1=weak, 10=strong), and “I wish to have
dinner at the restaurant during the coming six months” (1=do
not agree at all, 10=agree completely). For this scale, alpha was .93.
Intention items with a specific want-content have been used by
Fishbein and Stasson (1990) and Norman and Smith (1995). We
also included a single-item measure of intent phrased explicitly in
terms of intention, namely “I intend to have dinner at the restaurant
during the coming six months” (1=do not agree at all, 10=agree
completely). This variable, intentions-as-intent, will be used as a
point of reference to obtain evidence of what it means to have an
intention for a consumer (cf. hypothesis 2).

In addition, we included a pairwise comparison task in the
final part of the questionnaire. In this part, one intentions statement
from each of the multi-item scales was used again (“It is likely that
I am going to have dinner at the restaurant during the coming six
months,” “I plan to have dinner at the restaurant during the coming
six months,” and “I want to have dinner at the restaurant during
the coming six months”), they were presented in a pairwise way, and
we asked the respondent to underline the intentions statement in
each pair that best captured his/her view of the future relationship
with the restaurant. We used this pairwise comparison task to
generate scores in the 0-2 range (thus reflecting the number of “wins”) for each of the three types of intentions. These scores, we argue, provide a complement to the scores derived from the rating scales (i.e., the multiple-item measures of intentions described above), and we used these scores as alternative intentions indicators in our assessments of the evaluation-intentions links.

**ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

In order to address hypothesis 1, that is, if the three intentions types represent three different constructs, confirmatory factor analysis was performed with AMOS V. The proposed model (i.e., a three-factor model) resulted in a good fit with the data ($\chi^2=93.12$, df=32, $p < .01$, CFI=.946, NFI=.921). An alternative one-factor model was also examined (i.e., the eleven indicators for the three proposed constructs were modeled as indicators of one single construct), but this model produced a considerably lower level of fit ($\chi^2=437.92$, df=35, $p < .01$, CFI=.643, NFI=.63). Moreover, the proposed three-factor model was significantly better than the one-factor model ($\chi^2=344.8$, delta df=3, $p < .01$). This way of assessing the dimensionality of a construct has been used by, for example, Russell, Norman, and Heckler (2004). Our results, then, provide support for hypothesis 1: the three intentions types appear to represent three different theoretical constructs.

Hypothesis 2 was examined with a regression analysis in which intentions-as-intent (measured with the item “I intend to have dinner at the restaurant during the coming six months”) was the dependent variable and IE, IP, and IW served as the independent variables. The result indicated that intentions-as-expectations did not contribute to the variation in intentions-as-intent ($b=.003$, $p=.96$). However, intentions-as-plans ($b=.065$, $p < .01$) and intentions-as-wants ($b=.35$, $p < .01$) had a significant impact on intentions-as-intent. Overall, the explained variance was quite high: $R^2=.81$, $F(3, 97)=146.25$, $p < .01$. The outcome thus suggests that the employment of intention-as-plans items seems to best capture intentions phrased explicitly in terms of intent. Hypothesis 2, then, was supported. The outcome also indicates that intentions-as-intent items may be included in an intentions-as-plans scale.

Turning to hypotheses 3, we first computed the zero-order correlation between each evaluative judgment variable and the three intentions variables derived from the multi-item rating scales. In total, then, nine correlation coefficients were computed. The outcome is presented in table 1.

It can be contended from table 1, and for each evaluation variable, that the evaluation–intention correlation was strongest when the intentions-as-wants variable was employed. Moreover, a set of tests of the strength of correlations (cf. Kleinbaum et al. 1998) revealed that the three correlations between intentions-as-wants and the three evaluation variables (i.e., .651, .648, and .541) were significantly stronger than were the correlations between (a) intentions-as-expectations and the three evaluation variables and (b) intentions-as-plans and the three evaluation variables ($p < .01$ for each comparison). The evaluation-intentions associations involving intentions-as-expectations and intentions-as-plans, however, were not significantly different from each other (i.e., .297 vs. .237, .451 vs. .414, and .179 vs. .263; $p > .01$ in each case). In a second step, the same correlation analyses were performed, but this time with the intentions data derived from the pairwise comparison task. The outcome is presented in table 2.

Table 2 shows that the same pattern was reproduced with this alternative assessment of intentions: intentions-as-wants were subject to stronger positive associations with the evaluative variables than were the other intention variables. This, then, means that hypothesis 3 cannot be rejected.

**DISCUSSION**

This study suggests that intentions are plural, given that a three-factor conceptualization captured the proposed tripartite view of intentions better than did a one-factor model. In addition, and as a further argument to support the distinctiveness of the three intentions constructs, we found that they were not associated to the same extent with theoretical antecedents in terms of global evaluation variables. In this study, intentions-as-wants stand out as a particularly distinct construct, and we believe that one main reason is that such intentions correspond better with evaluation variables in terms of an perceived ownership dimension.

One main implication is that the investigator who is examining the link between evaluative constructs and intentions should select intentions measures with care, because the link’s strength appears to be dependent on how intentions are measured. And the link’s strength, in turn, has important implications for decision making. For example, a weak correlation between a satisfaction measure and an intention indicator may be interpreted as a weak causal link. The logical decision in this case, given that customer loyalty is an important objective (and given that intention is equated with loyalty), would be to abandon activities designed to enhance customer satisfaction. This decision, however, may be premature given that other intentions measures produce a stronger association.

In fact, in order to avoid dependency on measures of one single intentions construct given the present state of knowledge about intentions, we believe that a multi-intention construct approach is viable. The main advantage, particularly for marketers who are interested in customer loyalty, is that it offers a more detailed picture of the customer’s view of his/her future. That is to say, differences in levels between different intentions in the mind of a customer (or in customer segments) may provide important information. Some customers, for example, may have strong wants but weak behavioral expectations, whereas other customers have strong expectations but weak wants. And segments defined in those terms are likely to call for different activities in order to create stronger intentions. In addition, given our assumption that different intentions constructs may co-exist in every individual, it may fruitful to allow for several intentions constructs in attempts to predict behavior.

Some limitations in our study, however, should be observed. First, we examined intentions only in one particular context: a dinner-at-a-restaurant context. This context is likely to be highly involving for many customers. Yet many decisions made by customers are characterized by a low level of involvement, and future research needs to address if the patterns obtained in this study would repeat themselves in such settings. Second, our focus was on one particular future act: repatronage behavior. Many other acts exist in the marketplace, and they are likely to be subject to intentions, too. For example, customers are in the position of forming intentions about such acts as collecting information about a product, trying a product for the first time, word-of-mouth, and complaining. Intentions vis-à-vis such acts need to be assessed before the final word is said about the existence of several distinct intentions constructs. Third, and perhaps more important, other types of intentions than those proposed in this study may exist. Given that an intention is a proposition that an individual makes about his/her own future acts, it is possible, for example, to regard such constructs as desires and needs in terms of intentions. Finally, future research is also needed to assess how various intentions constructs are associated with overt behavior in the marketplace. The issue was not addressed in our paper (but it is dealt with in Söderlund and Ohman 2005).
TABLE 1
Zero-order correlations between the evaluative judgments and the intentions variables (rating scale scores)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IE</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>IW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>.297***</td>
<td>.234**</td>
<td>.651***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to revisiting</td>
<td>.451***</td>
<td>.414***</td>
<td>.648***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delight</td>
<td>.179*</td>
<td>.263***</td>
<td>.541***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .10

TABLE 2
Zero-order correlations between the evaluative judgments and the intentions variables (pairwise comparison scores)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IE</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>IW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>-269***</td>
<td>-022</td>
<td>.236**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to revisiting</td>
<td>-210**</td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>.174*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delight</td>
<td>-341***</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.248**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .10

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

When contemplating departure from your loved one, you are faced with a myriad of considerations. What strategies will you use? Will you dump them with etiquette or take the easy option of never returning their call? Will it be short and sweet, or long and excruciating? In light of this diversity, it can be appreciated that the break up process is easy for some yet difficult for others. During our life, we begin many types of relationships which at some point in time may end. The dissolution of a relationship with a service provider forms the focus of this study.

The literature on service exits has examined causal determinants (Keaveney 1995, Coulter and Ligas 2000), switching costs (Jones, Mothersbaugh, and Beatty 2000; Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan 2003) and interpersonal relationship theories of dissolution (Fajer and Schouten 1995, Hocutt 1998). There has been a tendency to focus on why consumers break up with their service provider, but not on how they break up. More specifically, research has not investigated the strategies that consumers have used and considered using to action their break up.

Given this gap, this paper sets out to explore the way in which consumers contemplate and/or action their exit with a service provider. We develop a model of emotional conflict the extent to which, influences whether the strategies used in the break up process are simple or complex in nature. This paper builds on the work of Keaveney (1995) who defines simple switching as “involving one category or factor” and complex switching as “involving more than one category or factor”. Keaveney’s list of factors are causal determinants of why people switch service providers. In our study however, we find that it is the emotion attributed to the cause/situation and to the service provider which are more influential in determining switching behaviour. In consideration of this finding, Keaveney’s simple and complex labels are redefined in terms of the level of emotional conflict felt by the consumer.

In order to investigate the exit process, a phenomenological inquiry was conducted as it would allow for the subjective meaning of the consumers’ experiences to emerge uninhibited (Goulding 1998) and “unadulterated by preconceptions.” (Heron 1992, p.164). The data was collected by means of unstructured interviews (Crotty 1998). Three informants were selected as cases for this study (Fournier 1998). The nature of the relationship and the nature of the dissolution were investigated. For those who had not executed the break up, the contemplation of the break up was explored. The range of service providers examined here included an accountant, an architect and a solicitor. The interviews were taped, transcribed, coded, and analyzed using Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) recommended approach. In order to assess trustworthiness and establish conformability, triangulation across researchers was conducted (Wallendorf and Belk, 1989).

Based on the findings, a preliminary model was inducted. This model was founded on the concept of emotional conflict, a strong theme which was evident across all of the informants. It is proposed that emotional conflict is a measure of the discrepancy between the emotions a consumer attributes toward the service situation (e.g. angry at service failure) and the emotions a consumer attributes toward their service provider (e.g. liking and sympathy for accountant). More specifically, it is proposed that a low (high) degree of emotional conflict occurs when the emotions attributed to the situation and the emotions attributed towards the service provider are similar (dissimilar) in valence.

The findings presented the concept of emotional conflict and its relationship with the type of exit process in relation to the three case studies. The story of Thomas and his accountant Colin provided an example of a complex goodbye, defined by a high degree of emotional conflict. This was reflected by the moral struggle between Thomas’ dissatisfaction with the service situation and the empathy and sympathy he felt towards Colin “the old man”. Examples of the complexity were evidenced in Thomas’ goodbye strategies; his use of “time” as a strategic method of delay; his fling with another accountant; his consideration of the use of lying to alleviate the emotional burden, his prediction of what his accountant’s counter response would be to the lie, and his contemplation of using a future accountant to do his ‘dirty work’.

This story can be juxtaposed to the story of Stavros and David his solicitor. In this case, the emotions experienced were purely of a negative nature. The feelings Stavros felt about the situation, anger and frustration, were the same as those he felt towards the service provider. Hence, his emotions were not conflicting with each other. Based on this, his exit strategy was found to be relatively straightforward as he simply went into the office unannounced and demanded his papers back “and that was it”. This finding illustrated a simple exit process.

Finally, the story of Kate and Fabian provided further evidence of a complex break up. In this case, Kate was torn between salvaging a friendship and ending a professional relationship which had gone sour. Kate enjoyed Fabian’s company and their friendship was emotionally gratifying. On the other hand, Kate felt betrayed and disappointed in the professional relationship that they shared. Kate experienced a high degree of emotional conflict. Examples of the complexity were evidenced in Kate’s goodbye strategies; a long elaboration time, collecting and using the evidence as an ‘emotional shield’, strategizing a confrontation where Fabian could not refute her, suppressing her emotions during the planned confrontation and most importantly focusing on not jeopardizing the friendship.

The question is, how do you end a relationship with someone you feel sorry for or like? Someone who provides you with a service and who you are also close friends with? How do you deal with the emotions experienced? How do you say goodbye?

REFERENCES


**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

**Introduction.** The loyalty and customer loyalty concepts are interesting because they emphasize the long-term aspects of the relationships people have with other people and collective creations such as stores and brands. In personal relationships, loyalty equals solidarity, reliability, and faithfulness. Therefore, loyalty should imply more than the economic effects of the selling and buying relationship between the company and the customer (Davies & Chun, 2003).

The grocery store sector is an interesting area for a study of customer loyalty. From a consumer perspective, buying groceries is a fundamental activity. It is a recurrent activity in everyday life, whether the consumer likes it or not, and a large part of the family budget is spent on groceries. The companies in this sector have invested vast amounts of money on customer clubs to improve customer loyalty. However, few consumers buy all their groceries in one store (Mägi, 1999). Almost one of four Swedish consumers admits that s/he does not have a “main store” for groceries (Jansson, 2001). This could indicate that very few consumers choose to be loyal to only one grocery store.

Customer loyalty is mostly discussed from an external position. This notion of loyalty do not take into account the consumers’ view of experiencing loyalty or not. Few researchers have dared to question the benefit for consumers of forming loyal relationships with companies (but see Fournier, Dobscha & Mick 1998). The relationships are often asymmetric as the company’s benefits outweigh the consumers’ (Uusitalo 1998), and because consumers have a limited ability and/or wish to engage in all the relationships that companies offer to them. Therefore, the consumers’ view of what loyalty is, and their interest (or lack thereof) in being loyal, are matters worth studying.

The aim of this study is to offer a better insight into consumers’ way of understanding loyalty to grocery stores and the relevance of the concept for their actions.

**Conceptualization.** Customer loyalty has been discussed in the field of marketing since the 1920s. It is primarily an ethic construct and the majority of both definitions and descriptions of the loyal customer have in fact a business perspective. This means that certain thoughts and actions of consumers are labeled as loyalty and it is assumed that companies benefit from loyal customers (Dick & Basu, 1994; Reichheld & Teal, 1996). Some researchers define loyalty based on consumers’ actions (Kau & Ehrenberg, 1984; East et al 1998), while others claim that consumers’ thoughts and feelings must be considered as well (Day, 1969; Jacoby & Kyner, 1973, Dick & Basu, 1994). Yet another group of researchers (Olsen, 1995; Fournier & Yao, 1997; Fournier, 1998) stress that loyalty is something larger than an individual’s specific thoughts, feelings, and actions. To them, loyalty is about relationships (e.g. with brands), that is, something mutual, which must be understood in its context. They claim that, in order to understand what loyalty means, it is necessary to be acquainted with the consumer’s situation, and to study the specific relationship between the consumer and the brand in its context. Inspired by this third group of researchers, this study focuses on investigating what meaning consumers attach to “loyalty to grocery stores” and how relevant the concept is to them. It also relates this view of loyalty to the “traditional” perspective of loyalty, by measuring how loyal the consumers are and what factors the consumers’ perceived loyalty correlates to.

**Method.** Following O’Shaughnessy (1992), Bryman (1995), Foxall (1995), and Silverman (2001) this study combines different methods and techniques, to get a fuller picture of the subject, in this case understanding loyalty to grocery stores from a consumer perspective. The methods applied to understand how consumers perceive meaning and relevance of grocery store loyalty represents a more intimate consumer perspective than the methods used to estimate the level of loyalty and its correlations.

Thirty-five consumers were selected representing both sexes, different age groups, and different numbers of stores that they were patronizing. The consumers were recruited in different types of grocery stores: traditional supermarkets in down-town areas, discount stores in housing areas, hypermarkets/larger supermarkets in suburbs and stores in the provinces.

The empirical material consists of the informants’ statements given in extensive interviews (face-to-face and telephone interviews lasting about 45 minutes) and answers to questionnaires about their thoughts, feelings, actions, and relationships. The data from open-ended interview questions were analyzed by a content analysis. The text was categorized by means of descriptive codes, in a way similar to Kvale’s (1997) technique of categorization of meaning. The categories concerned facts (buying everything in one store) as well as underlying themes (consideration). The data from questionnaires and some structured interview questions were analyzed statistically. The analysis was used to describe the respondents in the study.

**Findings.** The most important concepts in consumers’ understanding of the meaning of being loyal to grocery stores are patronage, satisfaction, standing by one’s store, and having a close relationship with a store. Patronage dominates the definitions, way ahead of other “softer” constructs, indicating that consumers understand loyalty to grocery stores as action rather than thoughts, feelings or relationships. This view corresponds to retailers’ understanding of customer loyalty (Holmberg 2004) as well as traditional definitions of loyalty stating that repurchase is fundamental and a positive attitude is helpful (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973; Dick & Basu, 1994). In line with this finding, functional aspects of loyalty (utility of the store) dominate relational (knowing the personnel) and symbolic aspects (identifying with the store profile). In other words, consumers’ loyalty to grocery stores is more about personal gains (individualism) than about a sense of duty (collectivism). Following Davies and Chun (2003), these consumers’ reduce their store relationships to calculations of value, thereby leaving the fundamental idea of loyalty. Taken together these findings depict a distant (as opposed to intimate) store relationship.

The analysis of the external estimation of consumers’ level of loyalty and explanatory factors ended in a model with five factors. Consumers’ perceived level of loyalty to their grocery stores could be explained to a large part by their stress situation (negative effect), satisfaction (positive effect), frequency of purchase in the store (positive effect), and number of stores near home (negative effect). It is interesting to note that there is no need for a strong patronage, understood as a large share of purchase, for consumers to perceive themselves as loyal. Yet, this type of patronage is an important theme in consumers’ perceived meaning of loyalty to grocery stores. Instead, the most important factors to the perception of loyalty form a starting-point for building personal relationships. They are: no stress, strong satisfaction, frequent contacts and few competing relationships. Compared to the strong relationships (to
brands) illustrated in Fournier (1998), Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) and Schouten & McAlexander (1995), these findings (as expected) indicate a much more superficial binding between the consumers and their grocery stores.

REFERENCES


Categories of Loyalty. Toward Meaning-based Theory of Customer Loyalty
Heli Paavola, University of Tampere, Finland

ABSTRACT
The study utilizes social constructionism paradigm to critically examine, reposition, and extend the notion of customer loyalty. The data comprises of thirteen verbal loyalty narratives of loyal customers in the Finnish retailing context. The study provides an account of customer loyalty that is grounded in the social reality of consumers and informed by social constructionism paradigm that has had no prior influence on empirical or theoretical work in the loyalty field. Based on empirical results portraying consumers’ socially shared meanings of customer loyalty, theoretical loyalty framework comprising nine meaning-based categories of loyalty is presented. Categories are compulsion loyalty, routinized loyalty, reasoned loyalty, suspicious loyalty, loyalty as a game, inherited loyalty, social loyalty, image-based loyalty, and ethical/political loyalty. Categorization expands the field of theoretical discussion of loyalty, reveals multiplicity and variety of customer loyalty, and provides a basis for meaning-based loyalty theory that contradicts premises of traditional loyalty theory and presents customer loyalty as fundamentally social action embedded in the consumer culture.

INTRODUCTION
Customer loyalty lies at the heart of marketing science. Although loyalty research has a long tradition dating back to almost a hundred years (Copeland 1923), customer loyalty is still a very contemporary research topic. As marketing is redefined in relationship terms the need for understanding customer loyalty becomes paramount once again. The purpose of the marketing in a firm is to create and maintain valuable and profitable relationships to the customers. In the pursuit of this objective, the ability to understand and manage customer loyalties is essential. Loyal customers have become especially critical asset in a marketplace characterized by increasing unpredictability, diminishing product differentiation, and heightened competitive pressures.

Although loyalty research has evolved considerably since its inception, most of this research utilizes logical empiricist paradigm. Some contemporary accounts have tried to explain loyalty patterns by drawing upon theories of symbolic interactionism (Solomon 1986, 1995), cultural anthropology (McCracken 1993; Schouten and MacAlexander 1995), consumer socialization (Muniz and O’Guinn 1995; Olsen 1993, 1995), phenomenology and relationship theory (Fournier 1994, 1998; Fournier and Yao 1997) but these investigations are relatively rare. Explanations of loyalty formation have been drawn primarily from cognitive psychology, with theories of attitude formation guiding most of the work. This has contributed to the limitations to understanding that current theoretical frameworks impose and indicates a need for alternative theoretical perspectives that may potentially breath new life into loyalty research. The present study advances loyalty research by providing a categorization of customer loyalty that is grounded in the social reality of consumers in the Finnish retailing context and informed by social constructionism paradigm that has had no prior influence on empirical or theoretical work in the loyalty field. Categorization of loyalty expands the field of theoretical discussion of loyalty and portrays loyalty as multi-faceted phenomenon dividable into discrete loyalty types according to motives and characteristics of loyalty.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY
The research utilizes social constructionism that takes a critical stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world. Social constructionism is a research approach that especially focuses on shared meanings and on how they are produced. It is not a single theory or ideology, but comprised of a set of different theories emphasizing understanding, differences and subjectivism. It offers a social account of subjectivity by attending to the linguistic resources, which produce and reproduce the reality.

The current study utilizes the narrative interview and the phenomenological interview as research methods. Both interview-techniques emphasize interviewee’s role. Discourse analysis is used for the analysis of the data. Discourse analysis is a useful method for data analysis within social constructionism paradigm and can be viewed as an advance on hermeneutics and social semiotics. The fundamental assumption of discourse analysis is that language is a medium oriented towards action and function. People use language to construct versions of the social world and the variation of language shows the active process of this construction. Discourse analysis emphasises understanding, differences and subjectivism, and it is interested in studying how meanings are constructed in the interaction chain. Discourse analysis focuses, above all, on activities of justification, categorisation, making sense, and identifying.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH
The data for the study were collected in February 2004. The study explored consumers’ social meanings of customer loyalty among customer-owners of the S-Group. S-Group is the second largest retail group in Finland. The S-Group consists of the cooperative societies and SOK –company with their subsidiaries. Group businesses include food and groceries, specialty goods, hotels and restaurants, hardware and agriculture, and automobiles and service stations. The data consists of thirteen verbal loyalty narratives of loyal customers of the S-Group. The interviewees were selected in two phases. First a hundred customer-owner of cooperative society of Pirkanmaa were randomly selected. To those selected ones an announcement of the research was sent by mail. In the announcement those customer-owners, who defined themselves as “loyal customers of the S-Group” were asked to contact researcher by mail. All 13 respondents that answered to the announcement were selected to the interview, which took place in interviewees’ homes. Fieldnotes of the interview were made and analyzed as a part of reflexivity. Reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher (Guba and Lincoln 1985). This means a concern with the blinding potential of what is “taken for granted”. The length of the interviews varied between 30 and 100 minutes. Interviews were structured into two parts. First interviewees were asked to tell their life stories. Then they were asked to tell a story about a topic “Me and the S-Group”. No further instructions were given. During a story-telling-event researcher was silent, while the interviewees engaged in monologues. After the interviewee had ended her story, phenomenological interview was used to examine certain topics. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed word by word, including major pauses, laughs and major emphasizes of words or sentences. The interviews
yield over 130 single spaced, typed pages of transcripts. Phenomenological interview encouraged interviewees to speak with rich descriptive details for each experience they interpreted.

**RESEARCH RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Analysis process consisted of identifying themes, loyalty discourses and metadiscourses. A PC program called NVivo was used to annotate and organize qualitative data. Discourse is defined here as “the register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterise and evaluate actions and events” (Potter and Wetherell 1987, 138). Discourse is a social practice, a whole of meanings that portray certain perspective to customer loyalty. It represents a consistency that is not located at the level of an individual speaker, but that is culturally shared (Burr 1995, 117). Hence, discourses regard use of language as form of social practice rather than purely individual activity (Fairclough 1992, 4).

First, an inventory was made of the themes that appeared in the data. Identification of the themes was based on the differences and varieties identified in the dialogic stories. The themes were identified from the text so that they were inventoried and the pieces where the theme appears are taken from the stories (table 2). Then the transcribed text was divided into distinct thematic sections.

Second, loyalty discourses were constructed from the data. After inventorying the themes, discourses became more visible. Rising above the themes to understand what was done with language was an intuitive but systematic process. The analysis involved the development of tentative interpretations that were revised several times. At the first stages of the analysis, the interpretations were close to the empirical material and low in their level of abstraction. The interpretations were enhanced during the process of data analysis. At the final stage of data analysis, a critical self-reflection was needed on the elements of dominance in the interpretations of the researcher. Openness to alternative interpretations and conclusions was the final stage of the process and was done during the last stages of writing. The analysis resulted in the identification of 17 loyalty discourses that consist of 53 themes (table 1 and 2). Together these discourses portray the available discursive practices that can be used to construct customer loyalty. Discourses are all available alternatives which often even overlap because a discourse seldom exists as its pure self in the data.

Third, loyalty discourses were bundled into groups of metadiscourses according to their intertextual and thematic connections, and common characteristics (table 1). Metadiscourses are bundles of meanings that portray certain perspective to customer loyalty. Five metadiscourses were identified from the data and were termed loyalty as a prison, loyalty as a game, social loyalty, reasoned loyalty, and loyalty as a habit.

Based on empirical research results portraying consumers’ social meanings of customer loyalty nine meaning-based categories of loyalty were developed and termed compulsive loyalty, routined loyalty, reasoned loyalty, suspicious loyalty, loyalty as a game, inherited loyalty, social loyalty, image-based loyalty, and ethical/political loyalty. In order to develop categories from social meanings of loyalty some relevant adjustments was necessary to make (table 3) since the basis of organization is different in discourse analysis and categorization. Categories are based on consumers’ socially shared meanings of loyalty and reflect the reasons and characteristics of loyalty. Categorization is theoretical framework based on empirical data that reveals multiplicity of customer loyalty.

Compulsive loyalty category portrays absolut and compulsive customer loyalty that is based on blind trust and marital-like commitment. Loyalty is an obsession to the customer. Loyal customer sees no alternatives, and is not interested in them. “Cheating” causes loyal customer feelings of guilt and bad conscience. Theoretical connections can be seen between compulsive loyalty category and traditional loyalty theory (e.g., Copeland 1923; Oliver 1999), ultimate loyalty theories (e.g., McAlexander and Schouten 1995; Oliver 1999) and Oliver’s (1999) determined self-isolation loyalty strategy.

“R: It has become an obsession to me, it hasn’t been a day, that I haven’t done my groceries there, not a single day for a long time—I don’t see other stores’ advertisements anymore, it’s like I’ve become blind to them_—.

I: Is it like you must go there, that you can’t go anywhere else? R: Yes, it’s like that to me, it really is, it has become like that during the years…”

Routined loyalty category presents loyalty as routined repeat buying behavior sustained by familiarity of the stores, shopping routines, habits, and old preferences that may have lost their importance or basis in the reality. Loyalty is a routine, a habit that makes everyday shopping tasks easier and faster for the customer. Theoretical connections can be drawn between routined loyalty and behavioural loyalty theory (e.g., Cunningham 1956, 1961; Reynolds, Darden, and Martin 1974–75; Tucker 1964) and store location theory (e.g., Bell, Ho, and Tang 1998; Laaksonen 1993).

“R: What kind of consumers are loyal customers? R: Hmm..well, people who buy everything from Stockmann, because they are so stucked in old routines (laughs), so used to shop there…”

“.it can be (=the reason of loyalty) the routines, habits (laughs) when you get used to shop somewhere, it makes the shopping easier, more convenient, faster, as today everybody’s in the hurry, I’ve heard…”

Reasoned loyalty category portrays customer loyalty that is intentionally chosen and based on comparisons between alternatives. Loyal customer has made comparisons and tests. Loyalty is for the customer a reasoned choice based on knowledge and prior experiences. Once made comparisons between alternatives and prior experiences create trust and free consumer from uncertainty. Based on prior knowledge, loyal customer sees the object of loyalty as the best alternative and feels no need to make more comparisons or to be disloyal. Theoretical connections can be seen between reasoned loyalty category and discretionary loyalty theory and customer satisfaction and perceived quality theories.

“I:..do you shop around, compare,..? R: Well, I’ve done my tests—and I’ve came to a conclusion that it’s a good choice, a good store, it has quality assortment, I haven’t had any bad experiences there, somewhere else I’ve had and it stops there. I have done my comparisons, my tests, and I know that it’s a good choice, so I rarely go shopping elsewhere or even read other store’s advertisements”

Suspicious loyalty category presents customer loyalty based on constant uncertainty and experience of risk of loosing as a result of ever-expanding supply and fragmentation of postmodern markets. Loyal customer makes constantly comparisons between alternatives. Knowledge and prior experiences don’t create trust, and loyal customer remains uncertain and sceptical about whether the object of loyalty is the best alternative. Theoretical connections can be drawn between suspicious loyalty and consumer perceived risk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metadiscourses</th>
<th>Discourses</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty as a prison</td>
<td>Marriage discourse</td>
<td>Must</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Absolut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty as a norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind loyalty discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Price doesn’t matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty as a chain discourse</td>
<td>Loyalty guides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty restricts possibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty binds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherited loyalty discourse</td>
<td>Loyalty as a heritage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty as a political choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty as a habit</td>
<td>Habitual loyalty discourse</td>
<td>Habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Familiarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Getting stuck in routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locational loyalty discourse</td>
<td>Location determining loyalty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty exceeding locational barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-store experiences discourse</td>
<td>Easiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a goal discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not a goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not intentional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No purposeful concentrating of shoppings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoned loyalty</td>
<td>Reasoned loyalty discourse</td>
<td>Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring of prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chosen loyalty discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not must</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not a marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not a relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom of choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical loyalty discourse</td>
<td>Possibility to loose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loyal store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Price matters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
theory (e.g., Bauer 1967; Cunningham 1967; Stone and Gronhaug 1993) and postmodern consumer theories.

“I’m a critical customer, I know if you buy everything blind from the same store without comparing prices in other stores you eventually pay extra”

Loyalty as a game portrays purposeful, intentional, opportunistic, and goal-oriented loyalty. Loyalty offers loyal customer a possibility to win, save money, and gain benefits in the game of everyday consumer life. As a game loyalty provides benefits that exceed utilitarian meanings of loyalty, such as excitement, joy of winning, and smart shopper feelings. Loyal customer tries opportunistically to optimize monetary benefits provided by loyalty card programs by using different strategies of everyday consumption choices and enjoys the game of loyalty itself. Theoretical connections can be seen between loyalty as a game category and research studying smart shopper feeling (e.g., Schindler 1989).

“Inherited loyalty portrays customer loyalty that has been inherited in the customers’ family. Loyalty is based on consumer socialization. Consumer has been raised up to be a loyal customer. Loyalty is for loyal customer obvious and given. Sustained preferences may be inherited in a family from a generation to another. Loyalty is an intergenerational legacy, generational heritage. Theoretical connections can be seen with theory of lineage factor in brand loyalty (Olsen 1993, 1995) and consumer socialization.

“I: what this customer loyalty to the S-Group means in your life?
R: well, it provides a possibility to win—because in all cases I have to buy it somewhere, so why wouldn’t I buy it there where the prices are reasonable and I get bonuses too, few cents free money.”

Social loyalty category portrays customer loyalty as a social phenomenon based on feelings of togetherness and community. Loyalty is a manifestation of feeling of membership. Loyal customer is a part of consumer community and experiences feelings of togetherness. Loyalty makes everyday shopping experiences socially meaningful, and enlarges world of social relations of everyday consumer life. Theoretical connections can be drawn between
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Examples of phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Must</td>
<td>“… it’s not like I must go there, that I must be loyal, that I can’t do my shopping anywhere else, I can buy something from another store too. being loyal is not must to me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>“I have no relationship to the S-group…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>“…I’m not married to a retail group, it’s not like I have to be loyal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolut</td>
<td>“…something small, special offers, discounts, I can buy elsewhere”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty as a norm</td>
<td>“…it’s not illegal to cheat, to be unloyal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>“…one (=loyal customer) trusts that the choice is right.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comparison</td>
<td>“…loyal customer doesn’t shop anywhere else---doesn’t compare between alternatives, doesn’t shop around”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blindness</td>
<td>“…I don’t see other stores’ advertisements anymore, it’s like I’ve become blind to them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price doesn’t matter</td>
<td>“I actually don’t care about the prices, they don’t matter to me, because I have to buy in all cases, it doesn’t matter how much it costs…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty guides</td>
<td>“customer loyalty guides my choices, it’s like I always go there and when I go, I usually buy what I’m looking for, yeah, it’s like that…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty restricts possibilities</td>
<td>“it (=loyalty) restricts your choices, if you have to go there, if you can’t go elsewhere…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty binds</td>
<td>“…sometimes it (=loyalty) binds.. it makes me go to the S-store, even though it would be more convenient to shop elsewhere”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty as a heritage</td>
<td>“…I think that when the loyalty has been inherited in the family for generations, then it’s obvious, you don’t question it, you don’t even think about it, it’s obvious.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty as a political choice</td>
<td>“…of course there are customers for whom customer loyalty has been a political choice”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habits</td>
<td>“I: what customer loyalty means in your life? R: it’s a habit, routine”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>“shopping is more easier and faster when you’re familiar with the store”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting stuck in routines</td>
<td>“they (=loyal customers) are so stuck in old routines (laughs)...so used to shop there…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location determining loyalty</td>
<td>“…it’s when you live in a certain location, you get used to shopping in certain stores in convenient locations”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty exceeding locational barriers</td>
<td>“there are other stores nearer to my apartment, but I still walk a longer way, pass them by on my way to the S-store. I prefer to shop there, so I don’t mind the extra effort”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easiness</td>
<td>“it can be the routines, habits (laughs) when you get used to shop somewhere, it makes the shopping easier, more convenient, faster, as today everybody’s in the hurry, I’ve heard…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a goal</td>
<td>“it (=customer loyalty) is not the goal of my life”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not intentional</td>
<td>“I: Why are you a loyal customer? R: Why I’m loyal...well, I guess, although it’s not intentional…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No purposeful concentrating of shoppings</td>
<td>“it’s not intentional that I would purposefully prefer some store or particular stores, that I would try to concentrate my shoppings…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests</td>
<td>“I: do you shop around, compare..? R: Well, I’ve done my tests—and I’ve came to a conclusion that it’s a good choice, a good store, it has quality assortment, I haven’t had any bad experiences there, somewhere else I’ve had and it stops there. I have done my comparisons, my tests, and I know that it’s a good choice, so I rarely go shopping elsewhere or even read other store’s advertisements”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparisons</td>
<td>“I plan my shopping and do very much comparisons…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring of prices</td>
<td>“I look carefully, compare, and then I realize that prices have risen elsewhere too and more than in my store…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Examples of phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not must</td>
<td>“it’s not like I must go there, but in some degree it is.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a marriage</td>
<td>“...I’m not married to a retail group, it’s not like I must be loyal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a relationship</td>
<td>“I have no relationship to the S-group.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of choice</td>
<td>“I have freedom of choice, I can decide where I shop.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility to loose</td>
<td>“I’m a critical customer, I know if you buy everything blind from the same store without comparing prices in other stores you eventually pay extra”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal store</td>
<td>“I’m not into customer loyalty too much. I think that stores should be loyal to their customers, not customers to the store”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price matters</td>
<td>“price matters to me, I always look the price”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility to win</td>
<td>“I: what this customer loyalty to the S-Group means in your life? R: well, it provides a possibility to winN -because in all cases I have to buy it somewhere, so why wouldn’t I buy it there where the prices are reasonable and I get bonuses too, few cents free money.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility to gain benefits</td>
<td>“I really think being loyal is beneficial to me and if I would be disloyal I would only harm myself by loosing those benefits”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility to save money</td>
<td>“I: what this customer loyalty to the S-Group means in your life? R: (silence)...well, it means saving, painless, easy way of saving money...money, that you can eventually spend as if it would be extra money (laughs)...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A goal</td>
<td>“well, I have been disloyal, but I try to be loyal”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentrating shoppings</td>
<td>“...when I do big groceries for the weekend, when I buy a lot...during the week I might shop elsewhere and then I but only little, but when I’m going to buy a lot I’ll concentrate my shoppings there”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting bonuses</td>
<td>“...of course I tried to collect the bonuses”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game</td>
<td>“it’s a sort of game, this collecting of bonuses.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing cards</td>
<td>“it’s a part of lifestyle, it’s like of course you have loyalty cards, they provide a possibility to save money in many places...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunism</td>
<td>“...more cards you have, more possibilities you have to save money”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of community</td>
<td>“I feel community, feeling of togetherness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>“it has it’s own image, high quality status, people go there shopping and want to be seen, they want to feel richer, better than other people...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>“by now I recognize faces and people. I know the regular customers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>“for me the S-Group represents solidarity, being loyal customer is an act of supporting it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer power</td>
<td>“…consumption is a way of making a difference---people vote by being a customer, by being loyal customer in many ways...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer-ownership</td>
<td>“…joining in was a very easy and comfortable decision, while we knew how this retail group operates----it’s owned by it’s customers and there is a kind of principal of social responsibility and it makes the stores somehow more attractive to me, it’s more pleasant to shop there than in other stores...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty card schemes as a medium of monitoring consumption</td>
<td>“they feel that the information they gather with these cards, it’s a sort of monitoring and controlling”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebellism</td>
<td>“Some consumers rebel against these customer loyalty schemes, don’t want to be a member of them...they feel that the information they gather with these cards, it’s a sort of monitoring and controlling”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty card schemes as a medium of controlling consumption</td>
<td>“they feel that the information they gather with these cards, it’s a sort of monitoring and controlling”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsive loyalty</td>
<td>Must</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Absolut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty as a norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Price doesn´t matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty restricts possibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty binds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherited loyalty</td>
<td>Loyalty as a heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political loyalty</td>
<td>Loyalty as a political choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routined loyalty</td>
<td>Habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Familiarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting stucked in routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location determining loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty exceeding locational barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not a goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not intentional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No purposeful concentrating of shoppings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoned loyalty</td>
<td>Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring of prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not must</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not a marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not a relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom of choice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)
CATEGORIES, DISCOURSES, AND THEMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Discourses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious loyalty</td>
<td>Possibility to lose</td>
<td>Critical loyalty discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyal store</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Price matters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty as a game</td>
<td>Possibility to win</td>
<td>Loyalty as a possibility discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Possibility to gain benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Possibility to save money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A goal</td>
<td>Loyalty as a goal discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concentrating shopings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collecting bonuses</td>
<td>Opportunistic loyalty discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing cards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social loyalty</td>
<td>Feeling of community</td>
<td>Social loyalty discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image-based loyalty</td>
<td>Image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical loyalty</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Ethical loyalty discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer-ownership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty card schemes as a medium of monitoring consumption</td>
<td>Societal loyalty discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rebellism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty card schemes as a medium of controlling consumption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social loyalty and theories of brand community (e.g., Muniz and O’Guinn 2001) and consumption community.

“...I feel this kind of community, feeling of togetherness... there is this kind of sociality behind it, I mean it’s more than the benefits, it’s like I feel that I belong there, I’m part of the community— I feel togetherness—I feel more like home here... it’s like I think I’m with my people... I feel like it’s my home, of course, I recognize the faces, notice that there are the same people there shopping regularly... there’s the small difference, it’s nice to go there”

Image-based loyalty presents customer loyalty as based on identification and perceived correspondence between retail image and consumer’s preferred self-image or lifestyle. Loyal customer identifies oneself with the store or brand one prefers. Loyalty is directed to the store’s or retail group’s image and it is based on image’s perceived ability to evoke feelings of identification. Shopping in the retail store or buying a certain brand is for a loyal customer a part of construction of preferred self-image or lifestyle.

Theoretical connections can be drawn between image-based loyalty and store image theories (e.g., Bloemer and de Ruyter 1998).

“We have talked about this at home, it has it’s own image, this high quality image— people go there and they want to be seen there, they buy 50 grams of expensive sausage and want other customers to see them— shopping there makes them feel better, richer, more successful people than others...”

Ethical/political loyalty category presents customer loyalty as a social act, a way of espousal, and of making a difference. Ethical/political loyalty is based on acknowledged power of everyday consumption choices. Customer loyalty is an economical support given intentionally and purposively. Consumer is a loyal customer in order to support the system or the company one prefers for ethical or political reasons. Theoretical connections can be drawn to theories of ethical consumption and ethical consumer (e.g., Björner, Hansen, and Russell 2003; Carrigan and Attalla 2001; Cooper-Martin and Holbrook 1993; Dagnoli 1991; Shaw and Clarke 1999; Shaw and Shiu 2002, 2003).
Categorization of loyalty provides a basis for meaning-based loyalty theory that contradicts premises of traditional loyalty theory. Meaning-based loyalty theory emphasizes non-hierarchal, non-deterministic character of customer loyalty. Loyalty is not seen divisible into discrete development phases nor through division between repeat buying behaviour and attitude. Instead, loyalty is seen as a multi-faceted, social phenomenon based on consumers’ socially shared meanings. Customer loyalty is presented as fundamentally social action embedded in the consumer culture.

The paper aims to advance theoretical discussion of customer loyalty by revealing multiplicity and variety of customer loyalty. Research results reveal the need to broaden definition of loyalty and loyalty models to match social reality of consumers. Categorization reveals important differences between different types of loyalty that should be taken into account in managerial implementations revealing multiplicity and variety of customer loyalty. Categorization also provides new, meaning-based perspective for future loyalty research. It can be used for example for developing typology of loyal customers or for studying profitability or shopper-characteristics of different loyalty types.

REFERENCES


Meeting Old Friends in New Places: Consumers and Their Home-Country Brands in a Host-Country
A. M. Kaleel Rahman, University of Sydney, Australia

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
The study of global brands has become an important area of research in marketing (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). Although there is substantial research relating to consumers’ reactions to the globalization of brands (Echhardt and Houston, 2002; Holt et al., 2004), almost all this research generally focuses on consumers in the host country. Understanding how consumers react to their brands in a foreign country is important because there are a large number of brands that are being ‘glocalized’ (Svensson, 2001); there are a large numbers of students who move to foreign countries for their higher education (Michael et al., 2003), and a large number of short-term immigrants are moving across countries (Thompson and Tamyah, 1999).

The present paper, specifically in the context of the consumers being in a new country, examines the emotions they feel towards the brands they had back home and the brands they encounter in the host country. To address this question, a phenomenological in-depth interview approach was undertaken.

Thus in-depth case study interviews were conducted in Australia with five selected participants: Zhao, a 24-year-old doctoral student in Finance coming from Vietnam (Ms V); Shelly, a 23-year-old Masters student in Marketing coming from England (Ms E); Gordon, a 26-year-old Masters student in Sociology coming from Canada (Mr C); Heidi, a 25-year-old doctoral student in Sociology coming from France (Ms F) and Shaima, a 32-year-old doctoral student in Economics coming from Bangladesh. These participants had been in Australia for an average of six months and each had a student visa.

The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim into pages of text. The transcripts were coded based on Straus and Corbin’s (1998) grounded theory method, including open, axial and selective coding, and theoretical sampling techniques. Accordingly, the first interview was coded and analyzed before conducting the second interview. Based on this approach, an attempt was made to identify emerging themes, and to map relationships between these themes from the interviews. The data collection process was extended until no new themes emerged from the interview data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Straus and Corbin, 1998).

The grounded theory analysis of the interviews based on concepts, properties and dimensions (Straus and Corbin, 1998) resulted in a meaningful framework which comprises three broader domains of themes. The “sentiments” domain emerged as participants expressed their emotions in terms of experiential tension of being in a new culture, feelings of patriotism and nostalgic reactions. The “brandscape” domain emerged as they narrated their brand stories referring to global brands, brands with which they had had close relationships, brands available and unavailable in the host country, and brands that they were unable to find in the host country. The “assimilation” domain emerged as they reported the way they adjusted to their new environment, in terms both of their life in general and of brands in particular.

For example, one theme that emerged under “sentiments” domain was consumer experiential tension. Experiential tension is a milder form of cultural shock, usually resulting from differences in culture, consumption situation and product unavailability. All five participants expressed some form of experiential tension relating to their own experiences. For example the informant from Canada says “I come into a place where I know no one, I have no friends, I have no family!”, and the informant from Vietnam found strange that her next door neighbor did not want to know her.

Furthermore, another theme emerged under “brandscape” domain was global brands. The participants were very familiar with the global brands, considered them as ‘convenience’ (Berry et al., 2004) products and some of the comments suggested that global brands are almost synonymous with objects. That is, encountering objects such as pencil, a toothbrush or shoes should evoke no surprise from anyone from any part of the globe. Similarly, as the participants hinted, encountering brands such as Visa, Coca Cola and McDonald’s in a new country should surprise no one. Another emergent theme regarding brandscape was ethno brands. Ethno brands refer to brands for which consumers have strongly developed feelings (Roberts, 2004; Schmitt, 1999) from their home country, and the brand is also available in the host country. The participants expressed their strong feelings towards such brands both verbally and nonverbally while narrating their stories.

The last theme (and domain) that emerged was assimilation, where consumers find ways to adjust their feelings regarding their life in general and brands in particular. While finding alternative brands in place of their regular brands, the participants eventually fell in love with some Australian brands. The participant from Canada, extremely conscious of his spending, reported that he was addicted to a new apple juice called “Australian Fresh” although it was almost double the price of other brands of fresh apple juice. The participants from France and England were delighted to report not only that they regularly bought Australian Tim Tam biscuits but also that they would take a lot of them home.

Several implications can be drawn from the findings. As a larger number of people than ever before travel to other countries to study and work, and as a large number of brands are being ‘glocalized’, it is important to understand how these people feel about their brands in the new country. The findings of this study suggest that, if marketed successfully across countries, brands can achieve the status of objects where they may become some standard of international comparison. For example, the presence or absence of McDonald’s in a country may provide two different images of that country. The study also suggests that consumers take special pride in identifying with brands specific to their own country, and brands serve as a form of national pride. The study also implies that relationships with and feelings towards brands left at home become even stronger and enduring as consumers recollect such brands with nostalgia. However, at times, certain brands are forced to be positioned differently in different countries. This difference seemed to cause some surprise to the participants. They also found it surprising to encounter their brands with very different tastes.

REFERENCES
Consumption in Transnational Social Spaces: A Study of Turkish Transmigrants
Mine Üçok, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
Dannie Kjeldgaard, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

ABSTRACT
This paper reports findings from a study on the consumption practices of transmigrant consumers whose numbers are increasing in the marketplace. It claims that the study of immigrants in the consumer research field needs to be expanded by going beyond the boundaries of nation-states by focusing on transnational social spaces. This multi-sited ethnography studies Turkish immigrants in Denmark as an example of transmigrant consumers who continue to live their lives moving back and forth between localities.

RESEARCH PURPOSE
This paper aims to provide a better understanding of the consumption practices of transmigrant consumers whose numbers are increasing in the marketplace. It claims that the study of immigrants in the consumer research field needs to be expanded by going beyond the boundaries of nation-states and by focusing on transnational social spaces. This allows us to investigate how some consumer identities are becoming transnational. This “multi-sited ethnography” (Marcus 1995) studies Turkish immigrants in Denmark as an example of transmigrant consumers who continue to live their lives moving back and forth between multiple localities.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
A Brief Review and Critique of Research on Immigrants’ Consumer Behavior
The relatively large number of immigrant-related consumption studies in the late 1980s until the mid-1990s were focused mainly on acculturation and assimilation processes. These were later followed by post-acculturationist research that negated a linear assimilation model and introduced contextual nuances to existing conceptualizations.

The majority of these studies on assimilation and acculturation processes deals with Asian and Hispanic immigrants in North America leaving the European context, which differs historically and demographically, highly under-studied. Acculturation and assimilation studies aim to identify the ways in which immigrants adapt to their new market environments as they supposedly leave another one behind. In these studies, immigrants are assumed to be a group of people that took part in a one-time, unidirectional movement. The focus of investigation is mainly on the changes in the behavioral and attitudinal patterns that take place as a result of contact with a new culture.

Even though the concepts of assimilation and acculturation are often used interchangeably, they do have different meanings. While assimilation suggests an immersion in the culture of settlement by means of moving away from the culture of origin, acculturation does not assume a loss in the values and norms of the original culture in the process of learning new ones and thus refers to a cultural pluralism. Peñaloza (1989) adapts the acculturation concept to consumer research, in which consumer acculturation is described as

“the acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to engaging in consumer behavior in one culture by members of another culture” (p. 110). The study of consumer acculturation primarily focuses on cultural adaptation as manifest in the marketplace and examines the cultural bases of consumption behavior and the processes of consumer learning that are affected by the interactions of two or more cultures (ibid.).

One common finding of the consumer acculturation/assimilation studies is the understanding that, however labeled, the process that immigrants experience in their host cultures is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon with more than a simple linear progression. This claim has been supported by several pieces of research (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983; Reilly and Wallendorf 1984; Jun et al. 1994) that attempt to test the validity of the traditional assimilation model which postulates that, over time the individual’s behavior patterns will become less like those of the culture of origin and more like those of the culture of residence. Peñaloza (1994) acknowledges that “immigrants may have two conflicting sets of consumer acculturation agents: one corresponding to their culture of origin and one corresponding to the existing culture” (p. 35).

A critique and extension of the post-assimilationist studies suggest that in addition to the suggested adaptation/assimilation processes such as ‘rejection’ and ‘integration’, other strategies such as one that resembles an “oscillating pendulum” between home and host cultures are adopted by immigrants (Askegaard, Arnould and Kjeldgaard 2005). It is argued that, in addition to the influences of home and host cultures on consumption patterns, a third factor, that of transnational consumer culture, also affects immigrants’ identity constructs.

Consumption and possessions play an important role in the construction of immigrant identities since possessions can allow immigrants to “transport” previous identities to new places and cultural contexts (Mehta and Belk 1991) and the acquisition of new possessions may allow for consumer integration or assimilation (Peñaloza 1994). However, the culture of origin is renegotiated and expressed in consumption behaviour and practices (Mehta and Belk 1991; Ger and Østergaard 1998). Oswald (1999) suggests that not only are immigrant identity formation processes not linear, but they are also fluid. According to Oswald (1999), immigrant consumers may “culture swap” as they use goods to move between their varied cultural identities and negotiate relations between home and host cultures. This fluidity is not without costs in terms of feelings of individual identity and feelings of belonging, as is pointed out by Askegaard, Arnould and Kjeldgaard (2005).

The intensified global connections and interactions of a global cultural economy have made it possible for immigrants to keep stronger ties with their countries of origin. Migration has long been studied as a unidirectional change in location and particular attention has been given to its economic, political, and social impacts on the countries of settlement. In order to make sense of the emerging phenomenon of transnational consumers, one needs to look at the transnational social spaces which these consumers occupy and constitute. Hence, the traditional mono-sited focus on nation states does not enable an analysis of transnational aspects of migrants’ consumption practices. We propose that, by applying theoretical insights from the emerging field of transmigrant studies, a more comprehensive account is possible which overcomes some of the limitations of previous research.
Transmigrants and Transnational Social Spaces

A new anthropology of migration has emerged which labels some international migrants as “transmigrants” (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994). According to the advocates of this argument, “transnational migration is the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (ibid., p. 7). It is pointed out that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders and that “[a]n essential element of transnationalism is the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies” (ibid.).

The construct of nation-state assumes one social space occupying a precise geographic space. Gupta and Ferguson (1997) argue that both in ethnological and national discourses, the association between the people and places have been taken as solid, commonsensical, and agreed upon, when they are in fact in flux, uncertain, and contested. In support of this argument, Pries (2001) claims that the ties between the social and geographical spaces are weakening as “transnational social spaces” emerge. “[I]n recent centuries the nation-state has increasingly been projected and accepted as the mutual embeddedness of geographic space and social space: in one geographic space (the state) there exists one single social space (the nation), and each social space (nation) has and needs just one geographic space (state)” (Pries 2001, p. 4, emphasis in original).

Despite the fact that most economic and political relations take place between nation-states, with the rise of micro-nationalism and globalization, the relations between social and geographic spaces are being contested and new social spaces that expand over several geographic spaces are coming into being (Appadurai 1990), thus challenging the idea of a one-to-one correspondence between social spaces and geographic spaces. For example, the rise of transnational migration, international organisations (e.g. European Union), and transnational enterprises necessitate our looking beyond the limiting notion of the borders of nation-states when analyzing the consumption practices of those operating in the newly created transnational social spaces.

However, having said that, it must be noted that there is nothing new about challenging the idea of mutual embeddedness of social and geographic spaces. Jurgens (2001) claims that “transnational settings can generate numerous-though probably not historically novel-ways to re-imagine the relationship between identity and territory” (p. 100). In fact, the two thousand year history of the Catholic Church is a good example of social spaces spanning across multiple geographic spaces. What is new, Pries (2001) argues, is that at the start of the present century, transnational social spaces are “no longer a marginal characteristic of a few very special people and groups” (p. 6) but are becoming a common phenomenon as current transnational social relations have reached a critical mass.

Transnational social spaces are geographically pluri-locally situated constructs that are composed of material artifacts and social practices of everyday life as well as systems of symbolic representations that are structured by, and structure human life (Pries 2001, p. 8). Studying consumption practices among transmigrants is an important way to provide an insight into the emerging transnational character of social life and hence of consumer culture.

As transmigrants travel back and forth, both literally and mentally, between their countries of origin and of settlement, they also travel between different national, social and cultural contexts, which results in their having multiple identities and social statuses. Consumption in these transnational social spaces acts towards the construction, negotiation and maintenance of these changing attributes. It is often the case that migrants have different social statuses and belong to different social classes within the countries of origin and of settlement. This study thus shifts the focus away from the country of settlement to the transnational social spaces that exist beyond and between countries of origin and of settlement.

RESEARCH FIELD BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The empirical focus of this study is Turkish immigrants in Denmark and the transnational aspects of their consumption practices. Similar to other Western European nations, Denmark witnessed rapid economic growth and industrialization at the end of the 1950s, which created a great need for labor. The first Turkish immigrants who came to Denmark to satisfy this need arrived in the late 1960s, mainly as guest workers. Despite the tightening laws and the migration freeze in 1973, the number of immigrants from Turkey continued to rise, as they were soon joined by their family members. Today, Turks are one of the largest minority groups in Europe and the largest in Denmark (Diken 1998). There are close to 54,000 immigrants from Turkey living in Denmark, which itself has a total population of 5.4 million (Statistical Yearbook 2004).

This study is a “multi-sited ethnography” (Marcus 1995) that follows the immigrants from their country of settlement back to their country of origin in line with Marcus’s research strategy of “following the people” and applying insights from “ethnoconsumerism” (Venkatesh 1995). Ethnoconsumerism suggests that the theoretical categories of a given culture should be developed emically, and from there, study consumption from the point of view of the social or cultural group that is the subject of study. Semi-structured, in-depth interviewing, participant observation, and photography were used as the main techniques to collect data from a variety of informants in Denmark and Turkey. Purposeful sampling was used so that informants represented variety in terms of age, education level, occupation, ethnic and religious affiliation, area of residence in host country and area of origin in home country. The fieldwork stretched over a period of one year, which included preliminary data collection in Denmark, followed by more data collection in Turkey with the immigrant families and their communities in multiple sites. Formal and informal interviews were made with 12 Turkish immigrant families in both countries. Other informants included individual Turkish immigrants living in Denmark, immigrants’ families and locals living in Turkey. Observations, supported by photography, were made at social events such as weddings and other gatherings in multiple localities. Print and broadcast media in both Turkish and Danish were used as additional data.

Research Findings

The lives of our informants in multiple localities were characterized by a feeling of liminality that resulted in changes in consumption patterns over generations, over time and across social contexts. Even though there are certain cultural characteristics that bind Turkish immigrants together as a community, different demographic characteristics have significant outcomes on their consumption patterns.

In the following, we provide a brief historical background of Turkish migrants in Denmark and an overview of our informants’ consumption practices. Our data analyses discuss changes in consumption practices evoked by the experience of liminality and the resulting identity strategies – ‘myth of return’ and ‘myth of settlement’.
As is reported in other research (Abadan-Unat 2002), first-generation Turkish immigrants arrived in Denmark and other parts of Europe with the intention of saving money for their return to Turkey after only a few years. That dream in most cases was never realized. Rather than returning to Turkey, they started bringing their families and settling down, living in close clusters with fellow Turkish immigrants. As the main reason for their stay was to save money, they limited their consumption to the barest minimum. Chief among their investment practices are buying land and property in Turkey, depositing money in Turkish bank accounts, buying gold jewelry and becoming shareholders in Turkish companies.

Accordingly, the findings of this research also suggest that, in general a group of immigrants that are mainly first generation chose to live in such immigrant neighbourhoods. These immigrants tend to have a lower level of formal education, are unskilled labourers, have a desire to return to Turkey, and therefore allocate most of their income for consumption in Turkey.

In marked contrast, another group who are mostly descendants, tend to live outside the immigrant neighbourhoods. Additionally, they tend to be better educated, have more highly skilled occupations of greater status, and do not desire to return to Turkey, but rather hope to improve their standard of living in Denmark.

Next, we provide a discussion of the specific identity constructions of transmigrants that constantly negotiate and navigate between socio-cultural and national contexts in an attempt to attain a division between those with national identities and as markers of social status in different social contexts within their home and host nations.

1. The myth of return. The first Turkish immigrants that migrated to Denmark almost four decades ago came from rural parts of Turkey and were mainly peasants and farmers in their towns and villages, if they had a job, or else were unemployed. They had low social status in their country of origin, both within their local communities as well as within the broader Turkish society. Arriving in Denmark as guest workers, they tended to hold low status jobs, mainly in factories, and thus also had a low social status in the Danish society. Their main aim was to return back to their towns and villages as wealthier people with an elevated social status. Years later, they came back to the villages from which they left, now as landowners.

To many of our informants, living with the myth of return means while living frugal lifestyles in Denmark, having extravagant lifestyles, characterised by "conspicuous consumption" (Veblen 1899/1975) in Turkey. The following comment by Erdem, a 40-year-old Turkish immigrant, on how the lifestyles of these immigrants change from one community to another depicts the situation very well:

"You know what this man does? In fact there are many who live like him. For example he goes and buys a house or an apartment in Sivas [city of origin in Turkey]. He is quite well off in relation to his neighborhood. When you go to Turkey and exchange your foreign currency it pays well. But he receives social benefits here [in Denmark]. He saves money here and buys a car in Turkey. Because he is going to drive it only one month when he goes there. The car waits for him in the garage. He decorates his house nicely. This is like fasting. I mean in order to drive a car for one month you live poorly here for so many months." (personal interview 2002).

The constant back and forth traveling of transmigrants whose lives span across their home and host nations results in them entering into different social positioning in different social contexts. The following social contexts are the most prominent ones for the Turkish transmigrants: i) immigrant community in Denmark, ii) Danish national society, iii) local community in the town of origin in Turkey, iv) Turkish national society.

As Erdem’s wife, Sevgi, critically comments in the following paragraph, while physically existing in Denmark, many immigrants are mentally living in Turkey, at least living for a life in Turkey.

"Turkey is in the minds of eighty percent of the Turks living in Brabrand [an immigrant neighbourhood]. They only live in
Every step they take here [Denmark], when they are buying a glass they think that I’ll buy it if I can take it back to Turkey or else I won’t buy it. That’s why many of them do not speak Danish. Because they are still running after a dream that won’t happen” (personal interview 2002).

As the years passed, frugality became a lifestyle among this group of immigrants. Never intending to stay too long in Denmark, and always living with the “myth of return”, their integration into the Danish society and culture was limited. For them, it was their local community back in Turkey that mattered. That was where they wanted to improve their social status, where economic wealth is the main source of high social status (Jurgens 2001). Furthermore, the economic capital they can bring into play has a higher value in the Turkish social field as compared to the Danish social field. In the 1970s, the heyday of migration, it was common to see convoys of Turkish immigrants driving from Europe with their Mercedeses or BMWs full of European goods which were not available in Turkey at the time. They bought mainly electrical appliances such as VCRs, colour TVs, which were considered as items of prestige and status symbols among the immigrants and the local Turks. They brought these appliances to villages which often had no electricity at the time, only to stack them up in rooms waiting for the electricity to be connected (Abadan-Unat 2002). Thus, the same person who wore second-hand clothing in Denmark was often found giving relatively expensive gifts to his or her relatives in Turkey.

This multi-local belongingness and the discrepancy in the lifestyles between home and host nations are well depicted in Figure 1 which shows a Turkish immigrant’s dwellings in Denmark and Turkey.

A Turkish immigrant who lives in an apartment in social housing (photo on the left) within a lower-income, immigrant neighbourhood in Denmark, in contrast to that, owns an apartment building (photo on the right) in his hometown in Turkey. His frugal, working-class, immigrant lifestyle in Denmark is compensated by the elevated social status that this economizing affords him in Turkey. Conspicuous consumption can be observed with the immigrants who give a higher degree of importance to own property and spend their money in Turkey rather than in their host country. The prestige of owning a Mercedes Benz car in Turkey, even though it might only be used for a few months each year, is worth the money-saving bus rides in Denmark for the rest of the year.

2. The myth of settling. The mentality of saving in Denmark for a better life in Turkey has changed over time and across generations, most noticeably among the better-educated, second-generation immigrants who show different consumption patterns from those of their parents. Erdem illustrates this change in mentality by observing that:

"the new generations say "what shall I do with them [houses in Turkey]? Why did you buy them? I wish you bought a Mercedes here so we can drive it"… things have changed. The new generations, the second-generation does not want to invest in Turkey anymore, they do not want to go and bury money in the mountains of Sivas and Çorum” (personal interview 2002).

Perhaps the arena for consuming conspicuously has shifted toward the host society for those immigrants who wish to settle in Denmark where they strive to improve their social status. Yet the status symbols remain the same as in the example of the second-generation’s wish for a Mercedes Benz to be driven in Denmark.

Sevgi, a 39-year-old social worker who came to Denmark as Erdem’s wife when she was 16, describes the changes in their lifestyle as they moved out of the apartment that they shared for four years with Erdem’s parents, brother and sister-in-law. She says it was a conscious decision of theirs to move into a non-immigrant neighbourhood, where their two daughters could go to school with Danish children. Her family members distinguish themselves from other “traditional” Turkish immigrants. They no longer save in Denmark to buy a house in Turkey. They send their teenage daughter to school trips abroad and one year sacrificed going on vacation to Turkey in order to buy her a personal computer. She describes the change in her family over time by saying:
“We didn’t have any social life. For example we never used to go out to the theatre, to the cinema, or to eat. We used to work only to save. Slowly, slowly our mentality started to change. We started to divert our attention to other things. For example we started to buy newspapers, give importance to other things, read more books, go out more to dine. Then our kids grew up and we felt obliged to do other social activities. …our main aim was to save money and buy a house in Turkey. But we didn’t have any preference about how to decorate our home, what style of clothes to wear. It was not important at the time, we used to wear whatever we found in the sales. We didn’t care whether our furniture matched or not. But now, if I like something, I buy it whether it is expensive or not. Because now I am thinking since I live here I want to live according to my taste and wants. But I didn’t used to think that way before” (personal interview 2002).

For these immigrants the changes in the consumption practices have been taking place in an effort to “integrate” better into the Danish society which has become the chosen point of reference. However, as much as the immigrants wish to associate with a certain community, it is also necessary that they are accepted by that community or society at large. Next we discuss the discrepancy between the desired and ascribed social status of these transmigrants which result from the differences in their economic and cultural and social capital.

**DISCUSSION: THE CONTEXTUALITY OF SOCIAL STATUS**

Migration does not only allow one to move from one society to another, but it also allows one to make a change in one’s social class and status. The consumption practices of Turkish immigrants in Denmark change across time, generations, and communities in an effort to improve their social status. Differences are observed in this group in terms of the social context in which they strive to improve their social status; those who live with the “myth of return” and those who settle down. These differences manifest themselves in their consumption patterns.

Material possessions not only construct immigrant identities but also serve as symbols of social class and status. In a community in which economic wealth is a source of high social status, material goods are used to achieve the desired social status. Yet, in other communities where one’s family background, education level, and occupation act as more pertinent indicators of higher social status, having only economic wealth fails to achieve the desired social recognition. For the first-generation Turkish immigrants, migration has provided an improvement in their economic conditions, but without a commensurate improvement in their education levels. The improved social status from this economic gain has been, for the most part, restricted to their local communities in Turkey. And yet, among the upper middle class Turks, they are disparagingly regarded as nouveau riches or Almancı³ because of their high economic, but low cultural capital. At the same time, their social status remains low in the Danish society due to their low status occupations and low education levels. Even the better-educated ones have not achieved the high social status they would like in the Danish or the Turkish societies due to their low social and cultural capital.

Whether yearning for a better life in their country of origin or to attain a better social status in their country of settlement, transmigrants continue their liminal existence in transnational social spaces. Despite their attempts at belonging to the country of origin or of settlement, they are regarded as the “other” in both places.

**CONCLUSION**

This study contributes to the existing literature on consumption practices of immigrants by bringing attention to the phenomenon of transmigrants, who continue to forge and sustain their lives across national communities and also by providing empirical data collected in a non-North American context.

It is not credible to deny the importance of global forces which shape the consumption practices that take place in particular localities. Thus, this study puts forward the importance of these connections and how data collected in one locality gives illuminating insights to studying consumption in another part of the world. This research takes the global interconnectedness into consideration and studies how different socio-cultural contexts have effects on consumption practices. More specifically, we utilize multi-sited ethnography to capture the transnational aspects of a specific group of consumers.

This research sensitizes itself to an emerging transnational sociality by concretely following how consumers’ identities are stretched across nation-states and cultures. In this specific research project, the transnational identity of the consumers in question is characterized by liminality and sometimes by alienation. The identities of the transmigrants studied here stand in stark contrast to the suggested cosmopolitan identities of consumers with higher degrees of various forms of capital (cf. Thompson and Tambiah 1999). The transmigrants that live in a state of liminality constitute a lumpen-version of the cosmopolitan lifestyles akin to the tourist-vagabond dichotomy evoked by Bauman (1998). Consumer research that deals with global consumer culture often looks at how a supposedly global culture influences the everyday lives of consumers living in specific localities. However, with this research, we try to investigate how consumers’ culture is also “globalized”. Further research is needed into other types of transnational consumer identities in order to begin to more fully grasp the globality of contemporary consumer culture.

**REFERENCES**


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Asia is fast becoming a major economic center. The success of brands such as Giordano, Banyan Tree and Acer all testify to the dynamism of brands in the Asian region. Yet there is little academic writing to guide or even understand the expansion of Asian brands in Asia. Past studies have focused on the “Asianization” of Western brands, emphasizing their ability to adapt to Asian cultural contexts (e.g. Watson 1997) but few studies have examined the development of Asian brands tailored for Asian audiences. Studying the development of Asian brands becomes particularly relevant because many Asian companies are now beginning to recognize brand building as a core business function, and to invest significant resources toward this.

We take Asia as the context of our study and focus on regional branding activities. By regional branding, we mean the set of firm practices designed to increase a brand’s equity in the region. These practices can be contrasted to local (Ger 1999) and global branding practices (Yip 1995) that researchers have previously focused on. Understanding regional branding strategies is an important managerial concern because so much of the global economy is actually regional (Rugman and Verbeke 2004). Also, the international business literature stresses the difficulties of dealing with similar cultures. O’Grady and Lane (1996) have alerted companies that operations in psychically close countries are not necessarily easy to manage. They argue that familiarity may breed carelessness and advise managers to treat culturally close countries as foreign markets. Because of these difficulties, researchers have emphasized the importance of what Mitra and Golder (2002) call near-market knowledge, i.e. knowledge about culturally similar markets. We contribute to this stream of research by explaining how managers develop their cultural maps of the Asian context.

To understand how companies develop regional branding strategies, we took an interpretive approach, and conducted depth interviews with 22 managers, all participating in regional marketing activities in Asia in a wide variety of product categories. We focused on two brands in particular: Tiger Beer and Zuji. Tiger Beer is a Singaporean brand trying to appeal to Asians on a platform of urban modernity, and Zuji is a travel portal launched by a conglomerate of airlines operating in Asia. These brands are examples of what we call Asian brands without borders, either because their home market is too small to fuel their expansion (e.g. Tiger) or because they were created to be regional (e.g. Zuji).

Overall, this study is expected to contribute to international business theory and practice in the following ways. First, our study helps rework international marketing frameworks that focus on nation-states and equate culture with national character. In contrast, we direct attention to the deterritorialized dimension of cultural phenomena in the global marketplace. Tomlinson (1999) contends that the most significant characteristic of contemporary globalization is deterritorialization — the disembodying of social activity from geographic location. The spread of transnational media and cultural industries has given rise to new forms of connections between people, which transcend national boundaries: Sikh taxi drivers and their counterparts in Amritsar listening to the same music, Korean and Taiwanese youth identifying with the Japanese heroes of Tokyo Love Story. In this new era, space is not irrelevant but it does not conform anymore to the models that have prevailed until now. New forms of connection have emerged that transcend nation-states. We study regional Asian brands as they attempt to build upon some of these transnational connections.

Second we show how managers’ implicit theories about culture impact the way they manage brands. In most studies of international business, culture is approached “from the outside,” (Bouchet 1995, p. 69), as an exogenous variable, without attention to the way managers perceive and construct cultural difference. Adding an emic perspective helps us compare the theoretical frameworks dominant in the international marketing literature with managers’ understanding of cultural difference.

Finally, we extend previous work on the globalization of marketing activities by looking at an intermediary level, the regional, situated between the global and the local. We specifically identify the opportunities and challenges associated with a regional positioning. Regional branding activities must encompass both global and local directives and input, making this task arguably the hardest of the global marketing tasks. Understanding how marketers negotiate and integrate these directives and inputs is important in advancing international business research.

REFERENCES


Finding Home in Hotels: Home as Order—An Alternative Perspective to Study Consumption of Servicescapes

Fleura Bardhi, Northeastern University, U.S.A.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This study investigates the ways that consumers’ orientations towards place, and more specifically their notions of home, influence consumption experiences and behaviors. Place is a fundamental aspect of consumers’ lifestyles that structures and organizes identities, consumer behaviors, and experiences (Cuba and Hummon 1993; Sherry 2000, 1998; Thrift 1997). However, research in one’s relationship to place and the influence of this relationship in consumer behavior has been scarce. Recent work calls for the investigation of the ways that place structures consumption, especially consumption and experience of servicescapes (Sherry 2000; Thompson and Tambyah 1999). In social sciences, the main concept used to characterize the emotional and meaningful relationship between people and places is the concept of home (Altman and Werner 1985; Gunter 2000). By focuses on one notion of home, this study presents a new perspective, that of home as order, to help understand how place influences consumption of certain servicescapes, such as hotels.

This paper investigates how one concept of home, that of home as order, helps us understand consumer behaviors within hotel rooms and the experiences that consumers try to construct in this servicescape. Home as order defines home as a physical place where we feel oriented within a spatial, temporal, and socio-cultural order we understand (Dovey 1985, p. 35). In this way, one feels at home in any environment where a certain order or patterning of the space is re-created. For example, one may experience a foreign environment as home because home-like spatial patterns are in place, such as certain physical characteristics of the dwelling, including the architectural style of the environment, the size, the age, the level of orderliness, the lighting arrangements, the level of comfort, the colors, the smells of the place, etc., (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981). The home as order concept then suggests that in so far as order is the way we relate to an environment, home is not necessarily embodied in a specific house or a place. The home as order suggests a transportable way to relate to the environment; it suggests a ‘portable’ notion of home (Dovey 1985; Douglas 1991).

The study was conducted through 35 semi-structured interviews with highly mobile global professionals (McCracken 1988). I selected a sample of informants who continuously dwell in commercial spaces and for whom the issue of home constitutes a concern. The global consumer segment of highly mobile global professionals characterized by cosmopolitanism and voluntary mobility was selected (Featherstone 1995; Hamner 1990). The sample includes people who are continuously mobile professionally, such as roving professionals, business travelers, and expatriates. The interviews were structured to get to notions of home shared among these informants and the ways that they construct a home in mobility. Interviews were conducted either at their place of residency, work or in airports and lasted between 1 to 5 hours.

Overall, I found that multiple notions of home coexist and most of the informants have more than one home they dwell in. However, the focus on this paper is only on the notions of home as order. First, I identify the ways that informants understand and practice a home as order notion of home. Informants described the experience of being at home as being welcomed, secured, comfortable, and familiar. I analyzed the data to examine what types of spaces produce this experience of being at home. The data show that home is seen as four different types of spaces: a familiar space, a space with a certain type of order, a personal space, and a domestic space. This finding indicates that highly mobile professional find home in environments where any or a combination of these four types of spaces are in place. Environments where one is spatially oriented or that one considers a personal or domestic space produces the experience of being at home.

The second part of the study examines the ways that informants dwell in certain servicescapes, such as hotels. Informants reconstruct a sense of home on the road by re-creating their “main home” in commercial hotel servicescapes in temporary destinations. Using available local and marketplace resources in place (e.g., characteristics of the place) as well as personal resources that they bring to the destination (e.g., possessions), informants recreate a sense of home as order in these environments. I find that informants recreate a “being at home” experience in commercial hotel space by reconstructing a spatial order similar to the home order transforming in this way the commercial space into a home-like environment. Additionally, mobile professionals purposefully select commercial spaces with spatial, temporal or cultural place orders similar to home orders. By imitating home orders, these commercial spaces activate the home-as-order schemas and produce the experience of “being at home” in mobility.

I further find that informants recreate the four types of home spaces in the commercial servicescape of the hotel. Mobile professionals recreate a familiar space in the hotel room or try to maintain familiarity across destinations by staying in the same global hotel chain in each destination; or inhabiting the same hotel in a particular destination; or staying either the same room or a room in the same side of the horizon. These strategies enable mobile professionals to develop spatial knowledge of the place and maintain a sense of familiarity in mobility. Another way of maintaining familiarity in mobility is through selection of hotels that have a similar spatial order as back home, such as choosing to stay in hotels that have a similar architectural or decoration style as their homes. Selecting hotels with similar spatial order as their house creates a sense of home also by re-producing the certain, home order for mobile professionals. Informants recreate the certain spatial order of home by reorganizing and redecorating the room. For example, informants move furniture around to re-create a spatial pattern of the furniture similar to that in their house and request certain objects and furniture that they identify with home to be brought in the room. Additionally, informants transform the hotel rooms into personal spaces through several appropriation practices, such as removing commercial materials or hotel signs from the room; decorating the space with personal possessions; etc. A final important type of space that recreates the experience of being at home in the hotel is domestic space. A domestic space is create through the presence of social relationships, as well as the possibility of carrying out domestic functions in the hotel room, such as eating, cooking, growing plants, taking care of pets, etc.

REFERENCES


Balance in the (Re)making: A Deep Metaphor Analysis of Consumer Recovery Expectations
Glenn Christensen, Brigham Young University, U.S.A.
Torsten Ringberg, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, U.S.A.

Flights are cancelled. Food is overcooked. Baggage is lost. The actions companies take in response to these service failures are defined as service recovery (Gronroos 1988). A failed recovery at this secondary stage has been referred to as a double deviation scenario where a customer experiences dissonance in initial expectations of service performance followed by disconfirmation of expectations of recovery (Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault 1990).

Interestingly, most customers will not communicate with the firm about their dissatisfaction with the service failure. Why is it that so few people actually complain to the company? Because they do not think the company will respond or they do not know how (Harari 1997).

The extant literature further indicates that few service firms have established recovery strategies and thus employees are ill equipped to handle service deviations and breakdowns (Bitner, Booms, and Mohr 1994). At the critical incident of a service failure, other investigations demonstrate that consumers are right in (1) fearing non-response from the firm and (2) holding low expectations that service recovery efforts will be forthcoming (Armistead 1994). One study found that just 5 percent of organizations would go so far as apologizing to their customers following a service failure (Armistead and Clark 1994). Other studies show that the recovery expectations of complaining consumers are often not met (Yim et al. 2003; Gilly and Gelb 1982).

Taken together, these findings present us with an important and rather perplexing contradiction. If customers have such low expectations of the advent of service recovery efforts in the face of service failure, what leads them to continue to hold recovery expectations at all? What is clear is that consumers do hold recovery expectations (Yim et al. 2003).

If recovery efforts are happening so infrequently, why do customers continue to hold recovery expectations contrary to what experience teaches them to expect? Seeking a richer understanding of this contradiction and thereby identifying the deeper sources of consumers’ expectations of service recovery is the central purpose of this research. What is currently not well captured in our study of consumers are the fundamental motivations that cause expectations of service recovery to persist in the face of often unsupportive experiential evidence. Gaining this insight will extend our theoretical understanding by highlighting the basic goals that consumers seek to secure through the service recovery process.

Remarkably little research has directly investigated consumer’s expectations of service recovery (Yim et al. 2003; Dasu and Rao 1999). These expectations are generally thought to bifurcate into anticipations of what will happen and normative notions of what should happen (Kelly and Davis 1994). Will expectations are largely contextual and shown to be based on past experience with the firm. Should expectations are largely ignored in the current literature. This is unfortunate given that notions of what a company ought to do in a failure moment likely tap interpersonal and cultural norms of human behavior that are more atemporal in nature and thus are more resistant to situational updating and amendment.

We see the split between consumers’ will and should expectations of service recovery to be of central importance to a richer understanding and explication of the apparent contradiction presented by the literature. It may be the case that the persistence of consumers’ expectations of service recovery is supported by the normative standards set by should expectations. This research seeks to explore this possibility.

A ZMET STUDY OF CONSUMERS EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE RECOVERY
Twenty-four informants were recruited for participation in this study from the Northeastern, Midwestern, and Western United States as paid subjects. Each participated in a depth interview based on the several steps of the ZMET methodology (Zaltman 1997). The results of these interviews were transcribed and coded using open coding techniques (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

THE ZMET STUDY FINDINGS
When service provider and consumer come together, they enter into an implied, personal contract for services according to these respondents. “I mean, it is a contract—it is a personal sort of thing.” Interestingly, from the perspective of these customers, the focus and the onus is almost entirely on the company to make things right in the wake of a contract breach. The moment of service breach is filled with a remarkable array of disparate thoughts and feelings for these respondents. There is frustration, anger, understanding, anticipation of recovery, and hope. The core desire is that things will be “made right.” Making it right is a recurring and important theme within the narratives of these respondents. More than 80 different references are found across nearly all respondents that directly reference the verbatim words of this construct.

While these consumers hope that companies will “make it right”, they report that past experience has taught them that recovery may not come. Ultimately, the desire expressed by these customers at the moment of service breach is a recovery of the initial conditions prior to the failure—a restoration of balance in the system.

Participants identified four essential steps that firms ought to take in order to rectify balance and achieve recovery: “They should just admit at first that there is a problem.” Then “they should express sorrow for the problem and do it in a way that you know they’re sincere.” Then they should “use all their resources—whatever it takes—to help you fix the problem and make it right.” Finally the company should, “give the customer some compensation that needs to be greater than the failure itself.” These events can lead to a “bonding experience” that can actually “make me feel an increase of loyalty to that company.”

DISCUSSION
Emerging from this data is a deeper view of service recovery that maps these expectations onto the deeper, embodied metaphor of balance (Lackoff and Johnson 1980) and the cultural codes of normative behavior built upon that deep metaphor. It is shared cultural codes that form the genesis of customers should expectations of service recovery.

Thus it is within these cultural codes that consumers should expectations of service recovery find their phoenix like resiliency against the disconfirmation of lived experience. Even if companies fail to recover, the larger superstructure of cultural understanding continues to teach members the codes that ought to happen in the face of relationship breakdown and estrangement.
The remarkable power of a successful service recovery is its ability to tap deeply held cultural codes and then fulfill and confirm them. The conditioning of experience has taught customers low expectations of recovery that will likely happen in the face of service failure. Successfully executed service recovery efforts are actually a resonant validation of deeply held cultural codes, understandings, and shared presuppositions. A successful recovery positively disconfirms low expectations that consumer are conditioned by experience to expect but it also confirms deeply held, cultural expectations about how the world ought to be. These findings suggest a richer and fuller explanation of the remarkable impact of service recovery.

REFERENCES
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Physiognomy refers to the analysis of facial lineaments and somatic traits to judge character and personality (Guido 1995). People are likely to apply physiognomy patterns to infer others’ psychological traits; hence certain facial features may give rise to personality-trait impressions and affect reactions.

In this article, we aim to show how endorsers’ physiognomy may play a significant role in advertising. A distinction was made between baby-faced endorsers, whose facial traits remind viewers of those of an infant, and mature-faced endorsers, whose facial traits recall those of an adult (Zebrowitz 1998, p. 62; Zebrowitz et al. 2003).

First of all, we attempted to confirm quantitatively a preliminary finding by Guido (1995) who stated that the physiognomy of endorsers may be related to their credibility (CRED) and, in particular, to its three underlying dimensions (Ohanian 1990): namely, attractiveness, which is referred to as the pleasant physical appearance of the source (i.e., the endorser) and, to a lesser extent, the emotional attractiveness of the source; expertise, that is the extent to which the communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions about the object/message; and trustworthiness, which is the degree of confidence in the communicator’s intent to communicate the assertions s/he considers most valid. According to a preliminary experiment, each of the three underlying dimensions of CRED can be matched, by reason of similarity to product personality, with specific product categories: endorsers’ perceived attractiveness is associated with fashion goods; endorsers’ perceived expertise with medical goods; and endorsers’ perceived trustworthiness with hi-tech goods. Hence, the following three hypotheses were formulated: H1a The perceived attractiveness of endorsers of fashion goods is higher than that of endorsers of both medical goods and hi-tech goods; H1b The perceived expertise of endorsers of medical goods is higher than that of endorsers of both fashion goods and hi-tech goods; and H1c The perceived trustworthiness of endorsers of hi-tech goods is higher than that of endorsers of both fashion goods and medical goods.

Secondly, we attempted to show how certain facial physiognomies of endorsers can elicit affect in people watching them. According to recent research by Zebrowitz (1998, pp. 140-147), this should happen when endorsers are predominantly baby-faced, but not when they are mature-faced. In fact, a baby-face overgeneralization effect should occur whereby people who have babyish facial qualities are perceived to have childlike personality traits such as a physical, social, and intellectual weakness and to be more submissive, naive, honest, and warmer than others (Zebrowitz, Olson and Hoffman 1993; Zebrowitz et al. 2003). Moreover, baby-faced endorsers should enhance their attractiveness and consequently induce a higher positive affect (PA) in people watching them (attractiveness-halo effect) (Zebrowitz-McArthur 1998, pp. 141-146). Hence, the following hypothesis was developed: H2) Regardless of the three product categories, a baby-faced endorser elicits a higher PA than that elicited by a mature-faced one.

Finally, we attempted to extend, to both CRED and PA, Aizen’s (1991) model (Theory of Planned Behavior, TCP). According to his theory, the purchase intention (PI) is theoretically represented as a weighted sum of three predictors: namely, the attitude toward the purchase (AP), which refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the purchase behavior; the subjective norm (SN), which refers to the perception of the social pressure put on the perceiver to engage in the purchase behavior; and the perceived behavioral control (PBC), which is the perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform the purchase. Hence, in order to find the conditions under which CRED and PA are valid predictors of PI, the following two hypotheses were developed: H3 In addition to the traditional determinants of PI (Ajzen 1991), CRED is a further predictor of PI. H4 In addition to the traditional determinants of PI, the PA elicited by baby-faced endorsers, but not by mature-faced ones, is a further predictor of the PI of fashion goods; whereas, for both medical goods and hi-tech goods, PA is not a determinant of PI.

To test the previous hypotheses, a focus group was set to choose three branded products related to the three dimensions of CRED: Intimissimi lingerie, Mentadent toothpaste, and Nokia mobile phones were chosen as attractiveness-product, expertise-product, and trustworthiness-product, respectively.

A pilot study was carried out on a sample of students (N=30) to select the beliefs to be used as items in the main questionnaire to measures AP, SN, PBC, and PI. Finally, a main study was carried out on a larger sample (N=1200) by means of a questionnaire measuring specific multi-item scales AP, SN, PBC, PI, CRED—using Ohanian’s (1990) semantic differential scale—and PA—using the PA-Sub-scale by Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988). Three sub-samples (N=400 each) were matched with different mock-up ads of the three branded products, half (N=200) with a baby-faced endorser and half (N=200) with a mature-faced one.

An ANOVA was carried out to test H1a, H1b, and H1c, which were all demonstrated. These findings allowed us to maintain that the different dimensions of CRED have a different weight according to the type of advertised product. A t-test was carried out to verified H2 in order to show that a baby-faced endorser elicits a higher PA than that elicited by a mature-faced one, probably because a baby-face is perceived as more attractive and endorsed with more desirable personality traits (attractiveness-halo effect).

A number of multiple linear regression analyses were carried out to test H3 and H4. Results show that CRED is able to influence the PI of each investigated product type when using, indifferently, both baby- and mature-faced endorsers. On the other hand, the higher PA elicited by a baby-faced endorser influences PI merely for attractiveness-related products.

Operationally, marketers should be careful when choosing endorsers for their products: to maximize the effect on PI, they should choose endorsers according to the product type: mature-faced endorsers for both expertise-products (i.e., medical goods) and trustworthiness-products (i.e., hi-tech goods); and baby-faced endorsers for attractiveness-products (i.e., fashion goods).

REFERENCES


The Control of Commercials Targeting Children: An Experimental Approach to Investigate Context Effects

Claude Pecheux, LABACC, Catholic University of Mons, Belgium
Christian Derbaix, LABACC, Catholic University of Mons, Belgium
Ingrid Poncin, LABACC, ESC Lille, France

ABSTRACT
This paper presents two experiments investigating the impact of the program preceding TV ads on the effectiveness of these ads targeted at children from eight to 12. The objective is to provide answers to Policy Makers in charge of the control of advertising aimed at children in Europe and more particularly to the restrictions recently imposed in the French-speaking part of Belgium. Theoretical explanations for program effects offer a framework for this research.

INTRODUCTION
In February 2001, during its presidency of the European Community, Sweden argued in favor of a complete ban on advertising targeting children in the European Community. Although the Swedish position did not meet with the other EU-members’ approval, in Belgium it triggered off new debates about the need to control advertising targeting children. This issue is not new and advertising restrictions have already been implemented in some European countries. Two types of restrictions exist: those that control ad content (example: kids can only play a “passive role” in ads for sweets in Finland) and those that restrict ad placement (ban on ads during kids’ programs in Austria; ban on toys ads between 7 pm and 10 pm in Greece, etc.). In the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, advertising was rapidly forbidden five minutes before and five minutes after children’s programs (the so-called “five minutes” rule). The French-speaking part of Belgium recently adopted the same measure. This raises a question: are such ad placement restrictions really efficient? If the objective of such measures is to avoid the possible confusion between an ad and the surrounding program (that may have very similar formats), it makes sense. However, from an ad effectiveness point of view, placement restrictions could be questioned. Indeed, an advertisement more efficient if it appears during or around kids programs than family programs, as suggested by the “five minutes” rule (to the extent that kids watch also family programs)? Providing answers to these questions is the objective of this paper. Ad effectiveness will be measured in the context of different programs surrounding the ad. Moreover, different program-related variables (such as program-induced affect and program liking) will be used as well as measurement scales especially suited to the target population (children from eight to 12).

In the USA, this issue is not new. For years, various pressure groups have tried to control or even to impose a ban on ads for kids. However, such a ban has never been implemented (see for example the final report of the Federal Trade Commission in 1981, as well as numerous publications reporting FTC efforts to cope with various pressure groups). This provides good evidence that these issues are very complex and call for scientific studies.

BACKGROUND
Commercials never appear in isolation. They appear in context and this context can influence the reception of an embedded ad. This means that the context can affect how effective an ad will be. Various contexts could be investigated: the exposure or social context (being alone in the room or not; being at home or somewhere else, …); the channel selected; the TV program or segment of a program surrounding (preceding/following) the ads; the context created by the other ads in the block of commercials (Poncin 2003). In this research, we focus on the second type of context, i.e., the TV program surrounding the ads. According to Schumann and Thorson (1990; quoted by Murry, Lastovicka and Singh 1992), the surrounding program is a key determinant of ads’ effectiveness.

One traditional view is that commercials are more efficient if placed during or after a positive/happy program than during or after a program eliciting negative affective reactions (Kennedy 1971). This would be so because the affect induced by the program will be transferred to the ads. Such an assimilation effect means that a program eliciting positive affective reactions will lead to better ad evaluations than a program eliciting negative affective reactions. Goldberg and Gorn (1987) proposed a Mood-Congruency hypothesis to explain such effects (Bower 1981; Isen et al. 1978). According to this hypothesis, mood (or affect generated by the program) increases the accessibility in memory of information with the same valence, which would then bias ad evaluations. Nevertheless, contradictory findings were obtained such as the effectiveness of ads embedded in programs eliciting negative affect (Kamins, Marks, and Skinner 1991). Kamins et al. (1991) work suggests that people try to “maintain” positive affective states while they want to change negative affective states (“mood repair mechanisms”) (Isen 1984). Consequently, subjects exposed to programs generating negative affective reactions will focus on positive elements of the ads embedded in the program in order to remediate to this negative affective state, leading to increased ad effectiveness.1 In conclusion, the sometimes contradictory results observed suggest that other variables may be at play, either mediating or moderating program affect impact on ad evaluations.

One of these variables is program liking, a global evaluation of the program (Abelson et al. 1982; Schumann 1986) that when taken into consideration leads to understand why well-liked programs though eliciting “negative” affective reactions (i.e., sadness) can have a positive impact on the embedded ads. Schumann (1986) was among the first to show that ads placed in well-liked programs led to better evaluations of the products presented in these ads than when included in non-liked programs. Later, it was shown that program liking is positively related to Aad and mediates the effects of program-induced affect on ad evaluations (Coulter 1998). Actually, as stressed by Murry, Lastovicka and Singh (1992), two types of program responses can be considered: feelings and liking which both have to be studied if one wants to understand program effects on embedded ads.

Another interesting variable in this area of research is the similarity between the affective tone of the program and the affective tone of the ad. Happy commercials are evaluated more favorably in the context of a happy program while sad ads receive more favorable evaluations in the context of a sad program, in accordance with the Mood-Consistency hypothesis (Kamins et al. 1991).

1This makes the assumption that ad effectiveness is solely dependent upon the level of cognitive processing of the ad, which is not always the case (for example when a peripheral processing of the message occurs).
Program involvement has often been proposed as a moderating variable (Anand and Sternthal 1992). As stressed by Nahon and Tassi (1998), program audience measures do not have any utility without knowledge of the viewers’ involvement levels. Different explanations have been proposed to deal with involvement. On one hand, one of the findings has been that greater involvement with the program leads to reduced processing and/or recall of ad information (Kennedy 1971; Soldow and Principe 1981). The explanation is that in high involvement, all cognitive capacities are devoted to the program preventing people from processing ads centrally and therefore decreasing their effectiveness. On the other hand, some have argued that subjects would be more susceptible to program effects in low involvement (Lord and Burnkrant 1988) because this low level of involvement will continue during the ads. However, both Schumann (1986) and Murry et al. (1992) found program effects in high involvement. According to Tavassoli, Shultz, and Fitzimons (1995), the explanation for these apparently contradictory findings is to be found in the inverted-U form of the program involvement-ad effectiveness relationship, moderate involvement levels being preferable to low and high levels.

Commercial involvement (i.e., motivation to process the ads) also moderates program effects (Coulter 1998; De Pelsmacker, Geuens, and Anckaert 2002; Murry et al. 1992; Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983). Higher levels of commercial involvement lead to higher motivation to process the ads, to pay more attention to the ads as well as to more in-depth treatment of these ads which makes difficult for the program to have an impact. When involvement in the ads is low, the program and its evaluation may serve as peripheral cues for persuasion. In addition, involvement in the ads and in particular its enduring dimension (i.e., the interest in the product category) moderates the importance of a congruence between ads style and their contexts (for example, a humorous ad in an humorous program, a “warm” ad in a “warm” program). Such congruency improves ad effectiveness for low involved subjects while high involved subjects are more persuaded by ads contrasting with their context (De Pelsmacker et al. 2002).

Involvement is sometimes defined as the subject’s arousal level. The role of arousal in program effects has been addressed by Broach, Page, and Wilson (1995). They showed assimilation effects in case of high arousal: better ad evaluations were obtained for liked programs than for disliked programs. However, a contrast effect was observed in the context of low arousing programs. Indeed, in that case, ad evaluations were less positive in well liked programs than in less liked ones.

Finally, the position of the ad in a pod is another important variable, program effects being more significant for the first ads in a string of commercials than for the last ads (Murry et al. 1992).

All pieces of research mentioned so far deal with adults and were achieved within a framework focused on cognitive processes that has been the mainstay of consumer behavior research. To our knowledge, very few pieces of research addressed these issues with children as subjects. There are a few exceptions however. One of these dates back to 1982 when Greer and his co-authors showed that the change from program to commercials was attention getting when the commercials contrasted with the format features of the program. More recently, Gunter et al. (2002) examined the effects of the surrounding program environment and level of involvement upon children’s memory for television ads. Investigating cartoon ads versus non-cartoon ads placed in either cartoon or non-cartoon programs, the authors showed overall better memory performances for cartoon advertisements than for non-cartoon ones. In addition, brand recognition was better for the ads placed in the cartoon programs. Interestingly, their results suggest a “contrast” effect between programs and ads. Indeed, the authors observed that unaided recall of non-cartoon ads was better when placed in the cartoon program while free-recall of cartoon advertisements was better when placed in the non-cartoon program. Regarding the measures of audience involvement, they did not show any impact on the dependent measures. Let us note that in an earlier study, these authors found better recalls of ads placed in a comedy than in a drama. Ratings of the program as “enjoyable” were negatively associated with product recognition and brand recognition while a rating of “interesting” was positively associated with free recall. A last piece of related research is provided by Prasad and Smith (1994) even though their objective was slightly different. Indeed, their research aimed at assessing the impact of violent programming on ad effectiveness. They showed lower scores of ad recognition and less favourable ad and brand attitudes when the commercial immediately followed a high-violence dramatic program segment than a low-violence program segment.

In conclusion, this literature review shows that several program-related variables could be investigated in this context. Due to the lack of research on this topic when kids populations are considered, we will of course have to make some selection among the variables of interest.

**STUDY 1**

**Advertising Effectiveness Indicators**

Classical constructs of ad effectiveness studies among adults (MacKenzie and Lutz 1989; Muehling and Laczniak 1992) and among children (Derbaix and Bree 1997; Moore-Shay and Lutz 2000; Phelps and Hoy 1996) are used: *ad attitude* (Aa); *brand attitude* (Ab); *brand beliefs* (Cb). Aa can be defined as “the evaluative judgement of an ad occurring during or immediately after exposure to this ad” (Derbaix 1995) while Ab refers to “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a brand with some degree of favor or disfavor” (adapted from Eagly and Chaiken 1993).

**Program Variable**

As stressed in the background section, the impact of program has been assessed in past research by different types of variables: program liking, program affect, thoughts about the program, etc. Given that affective reactions are ubiquitous when studying children’s reactions (Derbaix 1982; van Raaij 1986), *program affect* (i.e., the mood induced by the program) was selected. Research conducted among adults shows that program affect can be transferred to the evaluations of embedded commercials. This argument appears particularly relevant for children. Indeed, on the basis of the “How do I feel about it?” heuristic (Schwarz and Clore, 1988) we believe that children could use their affective state as an input in the ad evaluation process. According to this heuristic people may simplify evaluation tasks referring to their affective state at time of judgment. This view offers a shortcut particularly suited to children for whom the task at hand appears very often complex and for whom the use of a variety of attributes in the decision process has a low probability to occur. It has indeed been shown that children focus on cognitively less taxing executional features in the ads (Derbaix and Bree 1997; Pecheux 2001; Pecheux and Derbaix 2002).

**Moderating Variable**

To provide a more comprehensive understanding, a variable likely to moderate the relationships between program affect and...
advertising effectiveness indicators is considered: felt involvement defined as “an individual cognitive effort expanded during processing of ad content” (Celsi and Olson 1988). On the basis of dual models of persuasion (Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Petty et al. 1983) research on advertising effectiveness among adults often proposed that people high on felt involvement display a more cognitive processing of the message (following a central route of persuasion characterized by the formation of cognitive responses such as brand beliefs) than low involved respondents (who follow a peripheral route in which variables like the ad attitude are highly predictive of the brand attitude). On this basis, numerous pieces of research about the impact of affect on judgements show that evaluations are more likely to be formed by affect transfer mechanisms in case of low involvement than when people are highly involved. Though never tested with a children’s population, a similar process could be hypothesized.3

**Hypotheses**

**H1:** A program inducing positive affect leads to more positive ad and brand evaluations than a program inducing neutral affect.

In line with adult studies revealing a transfer of affect from the program to evaluations, we postulate a similar process among children. Indeed, we expect that the affect induced by the program will be transferred to the ad and therefore “color” the ad and brand evaluations (Gardner 1985). Thus this hypothesis suggests a main effect of program affect. This hypothesis could be justified by the Mood Misattribution theory as well.

**H2:** The Aad-Ab relationship is the strongest in case of positive affect and low felt involvement.

In this case, an interaction between program affect and felt involvement is expected. Given that affect effects have been shown to be stronger in case of low involvement (Batra and Stephens 1984; Curren and Harich 1994) than in high involvement and given that research on advertising effectiveness has shown that the Aad-Ab relationship is more significant in case of low involvement, we expect this relationship to be the strongest in case of low involvement and when a positive affect is generated by the program. Petty, Gleichet, and Baker (1991) showed that involvement interacted with affect (mood) to influence persuasion. In addition, research has shown that affect transfer is more likely to occur when this affect is positive (people trying to maintain their affective state) than when affect is negative (in that case, people try to “repair” their affective state) (Iser 1984).

**Design and Manipulation**

A two by two between-subjects design was used: two levels of felt involvement (high vs. low) and two types of affect (positive vs. neutral) induced by the program. To create two levels of felt involvement, specific instructions were used that consisted either in telling kids they would see a program interrupted by ads on which they would be questioned and telling them they would receive a reward at the end (high situational involvement) or in telling them nothing about the ads (low situational involvement). These instructions used in combination with the level of enduring involvement in the product class (measured during a prior session) led to two levels of felt involvement: low and high. As far as the affect induced by the program is concerned, pretest sessions enabled us to select two programs: “The Flintstones’”; a program eliciting a positive mood (measured by way of a eight-items scale suited to children; Derbaix and Pecieux 1999) and a program teaching kids how to recycle plastic inducing a neutral mood. Consequently, four experimental groups were created.

**Stimuli, Procedure, and Measures**

One hundred eighty-one children from eight to 12 participated to all sessions of the experiment (prior sessions consisted in assessing cognitive age, knowledge and enduring involvement in the test product class). For the main session, upon their arrival children had to take part to a mood-neutralizing task followed by instructions manipulating involvement. One of the two programs was then broadcasted and interrupted by a string of commercials. A new advertisement for a new brand of biscuits targeting children (unknown by Belgian kids) was used as test ad. It was placed first and last in a pod made of five ads targeting children. Immediately after exposure to the ads, kids had to fulfill measurement scales for Aad, Ab and brand beliefs. In this research, the key constructs were all measured by multiple-items scales developed for children and recently published.

**Results**

Checks were performed on both the involvement and the program affect manipulations and revealed that they were successful. Next, variance analysis and regressions were used in order to test the hypotheses. Table 1 and table 2 display means respectively for Aad (range: 6 to 24) and for Ab (range: 7 to 28) for the different factor levels.

From these tables, it is clear that the results show a significant main effect of program affect on Aad but not on Ab. Positive program affect leads to more positive ad evaluations than neutral program affect while this is not true for brand evaluations. Hypothesis one is therefore only supported for Aad. As far as the interaction effect is concerned, it means (see figure 1) that the impact of positive affect on ad evaluations is much clearer in case of low felt involvement than in case of high involvement. In other words, ad scores increase more when going from neutral to positive affect in low felt involvement than in high felt involvement. This provides initial support to our second hypothesis.

Finally, regressions were computed (see table 3) and displayed that Aad was always a good predictor of Ab. As expected, the Aad-Ab relationship is stronger for positive program affect than for neutral program affect in case of low involvement, which tends to support hypothesis 2. But contrary to our expectations, this condition does not lead to a higher Aad-Ab relationship than high felt involvement conditions. The relationship between Aad and Ab is thus significant irrespective of the level of felt involvement. Additional and classic variables such as brand beliefs add nothing to the explanation of brand attitude when Aad is already in the model, even in the case of high involvement5 (while brand beliefs are usually significant among adults). In conclusion, the impact of Aad illustrates how affective variables and processes dominate among children exposed to commercials. Nevertheless, it is possible that the manipulation of felt involvement modified attention instead of involvement leading to more attentive children watching the ad and liking it better.

---

3A pre-experiment involving more than 300 children revealed a stronger Aad-Ab relationship in case of low involvement than in case of high involvement

4The ad came from Switzerland where it was regularly aired.

5Let us note that in case of high felt involvement, children were very explicitly told they would see ads and that questions about these ads would be asked which therefore makes possible a more cognitive processing of the ads.
TABLE 1
Aad Average Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neutral program Affect</th>
<th>Positive program affect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low felt involvement</td>
<td>12.41</td>
<td>16.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High felt involvement</td>
<td>16.98</td>
<td>17.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14.69 16.99

Significant main effect of program affect: F(1, 177)=7.49; p=.007
Significant main effect of felt involvement: F(1, 177)=10.48; p=.001
Significant interaction: F(1, 177)=4.90; p=.028

TABLE 2
Ab Average Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neutral program Affect</th>
<th>Positive program affect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low felt involvement</td>
<td>15.04</td>
<td>17.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High felt involvement</td>
<td>18.74</td>
<td>18.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16.89 17.98

No significant main effect of program affect: F(1, 177)=1.62; p=.204
Significant main effect of felt involvement: F(1, 177)=5.92; p=.016
Significant (« border line ») interaction: F(1, 177)=3.62; p=.059

FIGURE 1
Interaction Between Program Affect and Felt Involvement
Discussion, Limitations and Design of a New Study

The results of this first experiment tend to show an impact of program affect on ad evaluations, congruent with the predictions of the Mood Misattribution theory. However, this first study is not exempt from limitations and there may be some confounding variables to the impact of the program. Indeed, observations of the children during the data collection told us a somewhat different story. Actually, we clearly observed a contrast effect between the commercials when they interrupted the neutral mood inducing program (kids seemed to be “happy” the program was over). Such a contrast was not observed in the other condition (positive mood inducing program). We believe that in order to better understand the types of mechanisms underlying program effects, an improved design is needed. First of all the type of program variable used in this first study may be questioned. Program affect might not be the best variable to depict the child’s reaction to the program. In that respect, program liking or “the global reaction to the program” may be investigated as well (in our first study, these two variables may have been confounded). In addition, in the case of children, program liking may be strongly correlated with another variable: program involvement. Moreover, from a public policy point of view, the first study did not enable us to clearly consider different types of programs whose targets may be either the child or the family. A new study (study 2) is therefore proposed using two program variables: the liking of the program and the type of programs (regarding the target): family versus children programs. Considering the target of the program will be more in line with the actual public policy concerns.

STUDY 2

Advertising Effectiveness Indicators

Alike in study one, attitude toward the ad and brand attitude are used as advertising effectiveness indicators. The same multi-items measurement scales were administered. In addition, thought evoked by the advertisement were also recorded.

Program Variables and Program Selection

Two program-related variables were used. The first one, “program liking” (Schumann 1986) is measured in this research by two items (dealing with to what extent children liked/enjoyed the program and to what extent they would like to watch it again). The second one is the target of the program: the child versus the family. After a pre-study, 3 programs were selected: the Simpsons (a program liked by kids, targeting the family); the News (a program non liked by kids, targeting the family); Star Academy (a program liked by kids, targeting the family); the News (a program non liked by kids targeting the family).

Hypotheses

H1: There is no difference in terms of advertising effectiveness between an ad placed in a program targeting children and liked by children and the same ad placed in a program liked by children and targeting the family.

Contrary to what is proposed by some public policy makers and to the best of our knowledge there are no theoretical explanations that could predict more effectiveness of ads placed in a program liked by kids depending on the target of this program. Whatever the mechanisms at play, we predict no differences in terms of ad effectiveness for the same ad placed in two liked programs even though not targeting the same audience.

H2: An ad placed in a program non liked by kids will be more efficient than this ad placed in a liked program.

Based on Greer et al. (1982)’s results that changes from program to commercials is attention getting when commercials contrast with the “formal features” of the program and on the observations made during the first experiment, we propose that an ad placed in a program non liked by kids will be more efficient in comparison to when it is placed in a well-liked program. In a non-liked program, the ad will contrast with its context, attention will be increased and ad evaluations will be more positive (numerous previous research have shown a general positive attitude toward particular ads by children for whom ads are a “show”). If the context provides a level against which the ad is compared (i.e., contrasted with), a relatively neutral or even sad context may prove beneficial for evaluations of the ad. In addition, based on the strong Aad-Ab relationship highlighted in study 1, we could also predict the same effects on brand attitude. Let us stress that if this second hypothesis is supported by the data, this would strongly question the utility of the “five minutes” rule applied in Belgium.

Design and Manipulation

Three experimental groups and one control group were used in this experiment. Children were randomly assigned to one of the four groups. In the first three groups, children were exposed to one of the three programs followed by a string of commercials. The fourth group was a control group in which there was no program before the ads.

Stimuli, Procedure, Sample and Measures

In this research, the block of commercials was made of five ads in which the first ad the last ad were test ads. In this experiment two test ads were used (two different ads for two known brands belonging to the same product category: cereals). The objective was here to test program effects on the first ad following the program as well as on a further ad in the sequence (previous research has indeed shown a stronger impact of the program on ads placed earlier in the sequence).

One hundred twenty-six children from eight to 12 participated to the experiment which took place in schools (children were interviewed one at a time in a small room equipped with a TV monitor). Upon arrival to the room, a mood measure was taken before children were told they would watch a TV program and that questions would be asked later (no mention of the ads was made in either of the groups). About 10 minutes of the program were broadcasted (except in the control group where no program was shown) followed by a string of commercial announced by a jingle. After the first ad, the TV was shut off to ask questions about thoughts generated by the ad and ad attitude. The TV was then shut on again and the commercial break resumed. The last ad of the sequence was the second test ad on which questions were immedi-

---

6 Such a measure would enable us to identify a possible confusion between programs and ads as well as provide a first evidence of message acceptance or rejection (Wright 1980).
7 And “non weariness”.
8 About 40 children interviewed concerning what they used to watch on TV and what they liked.
9 Even though kids do not like “the News”, in many families kids are in the room with their parents when the News are broadcasted. Therefore, they are passively exposed to this program.
10 The positions of the test ads in the sequence were of course counterbalanced: first and last.
11 After removing incomplete questionnaires.
ately asked. Then the kids watched a second part of the program which was followed by questions about the program (program liking and prior exposure to this program) and brand attitude. The kids were then debriefed and thanked for their participation.

**Results**

**Manipulation checks.** First of all, checks were performed on the manipulated variables. The following table displays the results of the program liking measure (two items aggregated; Cronbach’s alpha=.86). As expected, the two liked programs have significantly higher scores than the non liked program while not differing among them (i.e., there is no difference in the evaluation of the two programs liked by children).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program liked by kids</th>
<th>Program non liked by kids</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program liking measure</td>
<td>Program liking measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low FL/Neutral P.A.</td>
<td>7.561 (n=32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low FL/Positive P.A.</td>
<td>7.06 (n=35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High FL/Neutral P.A.</td>
<td>4.34 (n=29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High FL/Positive P.A.</td>
<td>7.06 (n=35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target=kids</td>
<td>Target=the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target=the family</td>
<td>Target=the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Simpsons)</td>
<td>(Star Academy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The News)</td>
<td>(The News)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SD=1.25)</td>
<td>(SD=1.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.561 (n=32)</td>
<td>4.34 (n=29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SD=1.73)</td>
<td>(SD=1.73)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Groups equivalence on prior brand attitudes and on mood.** In this second study, known brands were used. While children are randomly assigned to the groups, it is necessary to check that they did not differ with respect to their prior attitude regarding these brands (the reason why no control was done before assigning children to a condition is that the brands used were two very well known brands of cereals and generally well liked by children). As can be seen in table 5, no significant differences were observed for the prior attitude toward the two brands used in study 2. An ANOVA performed on the mood scores before watching the programs also gave no significant results (see table 6), providing good evidence of group’s equivalence.

**Test of the hypotheses.** Before testing the hypotheses, it seems useful to show the mean scores obtained for the ad and brand evaluations in the different groups.

**Hypothesis 1.** Non different ad effectiveness scores were expected between the first two groups (the two groups who watched programs they liked before the ads). For the first ad, this hypothesis is supported by the data: 16.66 is not different from 16.66 (for Aad1); 21.54 not different from 19.19 (though the effect is borderline: \( p = .062 \)) (for Abp1). In order to provide a more compelling test of this hypothesis, we compared these two conditions with the control group. Indeed, the proof of no differences between the first two groups would be stronger if we show differences with the control group (not exposed to any program before the ads). These comparisons lead to conclusive results for Aad1 (\( p = .077 \)) but not for Abp1 (\( p = .51 \)). As far as the second ad is concerned, 18.00 is not different from 21.54 (\( p = .96 \)) (for Aad2) and 20.63 is not different from 21.47 (\( p = .54 \)) (for Abp2). However, the comparisons with the control group do not show the expected results (\( p = .96 \) for Aad2, \( p = .54 \) for Abp2).

In conclusion, the first hypothesis is supported by the data as far as ad attitude is concerned and for the first ad in the sequence (the results obtained for brand attitude as well as those observed for the second ad are not conclusive).

**Hypothesis 2.** In the second hypothesis, we anticipated a better ad effectiveness for ads placed in a program disliked by kids in

---

**TABLE 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Beta (Stand)</th>
<th>B (Unstan.)</th>
<th>SE (t)</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low FL/Neutral P.A.</td>
<td>.481</td>
<td>.497</td>
<td>.137 (3.64) (^a)</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low FL/Positive P.A.</td>
<td>.677</td>
<td>.700</td>
<td>.122 (5.75) (^a)</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High FL/Neutral P.A</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>.741</td>
<td>.104 (7.09) (^a)</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High FL/Positive P.A.</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td>.684</td>
<td>.107 (6.41) (^a)</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) means significant for \( p < .001 \)

\(^1\)F.I. refers to Felt Involvement; P.A. refers to Program Affect.

---

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program liked by kids (Simpsons) Target=kids</th>
<th>Program liked by kids (Star Academy) Target=the family</th>
<th>Program non liked by kids (The News) Target=the family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.561 (n=32) (SD=1.25)</td>
<td>7.06 (n=35) (SD=1.76)</td>
<td>4.34 (n=29) (SD=1.73)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)Average score; range=2-8.
The Control of Commercials Targeting Children: An Experimental Approach to Investigate Context Effects

**Comparison with a program they liked.** We will therefore compare each of the first two groups with the third one.

*Star Academy versus The News.* For the first ad, significant results are obtained for Aad1 \((p=.075)\) while not for Abp1 (the results do not go in the expected direction). For the second ad, the result is borderline for Aad2 \((p=.08)\) while non significant for Abp2 \((p=.44)\) though in the expected direction.

*Simpsons versus The News.* For the first ad, the comparison for Aad1 is slightly significant \((p=.068)\) but not for Abp1 \((p=.100)\) though in the expected direction. The same pattern is obtained for the second ad: significant comparison for Aad2 \((p=.034)\), non significant result for Abp2 \((p=.30)\).

In conclusion, the results of the second hypothesis show that an ad placed in a program kids do not like than in programs they like.

**Discussion and Test of Assimilation and Contrast Hypotheses**

How can we explain these results? Why do we observe an increased effectiveness of an ad placed in a program kids do not like? What mechanisms underlie these results, which theory could be used to explain them? First, contrary to what is assumed by those arguing in favor of a ban of ads targeting kids after kids program,
there does not seem to be an assimilation effect of the program on the ad. Indeed such an assimilation explanation could have been proposed if the ad evaluations would have been more positive for the ads following liked programs than for ads in the control group. This is not the case (statistical tests are even not needed because the results do not go in the expected direction). A mood misattribution explanation is neither possible according to study 2’s results. In addition, the thoughts evoked by the first ad gave no evidence of a possible contamination of the program on the ad. Would a contrast hypothesis be the explanation? As in the first experiment, a contrast between programs and ads seems to have occurred while it is difficult to prove it. Statistical comparisons of ad evaluations in the control group versus the group exposed to the news do not provide significant results. Indeed, to prove a contrast effect, we would expect better ad evaluations after a non liked program than in a control group with no program preceding the ads. The results on that point are not significant.

These two investigations have obviously just scratched the surface of an enormous iceberg. Therefore, to be better able to conclude concerning the underlying mechanisms, we believe our design has to be improved once again. Indeed, to identify a contrast between programs and ads, we probably need an on-line measure (during programs and ads) of what kids “feel” while watching them. The development of such a measure is the next step of our research as well as the design of a third experiment which would better describe the processes and would more clearly be related to theoretical explanations.

REFERENCES


**Symbolic Consumption: The Interplay Between Distinction, Distastes and Degrees of Rejection**

Margaret K. Hogg, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom
Emma N. Banister, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom

**SESSION OVERVIEW**

The goal of this session was to examine symbolic consumption (tastes and distastes) by presenting the results from a series of recent studies about different aspects of distinction and the rejection or acceptance of goods, linked to notions of distaste, disgust and contamination.

Interest in the area of negative symbolic consumption behaviour has grown rapidly over the past ten years. This was very much a neglected topic until the presentation of a few papers at ACR in the mid to late 1990s started to rouse interest in the unseen side of symbolic consumption. This relative neglect was despite the fact that, some years previous to this, Bourdieu (1984) had identified the importance of distastes in signalling membership of some groups, and non-membership of other groups; and recognised that distastes were probably more important than tastes in allowing us to indicate distinction, and thus association or disassociation with important social groups.

The papers in this session offered an evolving understanding of this neglected topic: the negative aspects of symbolic consumption; and covered a number of themes including the acquisition of tastes and distastes; social influences on tastes and distastes; and brand knowledge and attitudes. The first paper (Banister and Hogg) specifically examined how minimizing the negative aspects of symbolic consumption of clothing represented a stronger motivating force than maximizing the positive aspects of clothing as a communication device. The second paper (Decrop) concentrated on the refusal of tastes; and reported results from an extensive naturalistic study into how distastes are used to signal distinction within the context of football fans. The third paper (Roux) examined the underlying symbolic meanings which are associated with used (contaminated) clothing. Each paper had a different methodological focus (in terms of data collection and data analysis). The methodological difficulties which surround examining distastes which often leave no trace (Wilk, 1995, 1997) were discussed, including projective techniques (collages) and paired interviews (Banister and Hogg); longitudinal immersion in a subculture (Decrop); semi-structured in-depth interviews and mini family group discussions (Roux). In conclusion, there was some refinement and re-conceptualization of our understanding of the role of negative factors within theories of identity, self and consumption.

**References**


“Approach and Avoidance Behaviours in the Symbolic Consumption of Clothing”

*Emma N. Banister and Margaret K. Hogg, Lancaster University, UK*

Clothing provides an important role in identity creation, and consumers often decide whether to accept or reject products and brands on the basis of symbolic (as opposed to functional) attributes (Belk et al, 1982; Belk et al, 1984; Elliott, 1994; Freitas et al, 1997; Holman, 1981). Despite considerable research into understanding how individuals maintain or enhance their self-esteem by consuming the symbolic meanings of products and brands, rather less attention has been directed towards why consumers reject products or brands for symbolic reasons (i.e. negative symbolic consumption). One reason for this is that negative symbolic consumption leaves very few traces (Wilk, 1995; 1997).

We used qualitative methods, interviewing 30 consumers in ‘friendship pairs’ to explore why consumers reject products and brands. There were approximately equal numbers of men and women in the study; ages were evenly spread within the 18-30 years category; and our participants had a variety of different careers in both the public and the private sector (two of our participants were students). Projective techniques were conducted individually, prior to the interviews, and this provided an opportunity to capture individual thoughts and feelings as well as the more social aspects that emerged from the paired discussions.

Clothing clearly provided an important communicative device for our participants and a means to display their tastes, and via the avoidance of certain brands and styles of clothing, their distastes. Clear support was provided for the ideas of Georg Simmel (1904 cited in Gronrow, 1997:77), who saw two motivating functions for fashion— that of social identification (approach) and distinction (avoidance). A small number of our participants utilized what we have termed a ‘positive drive’. This meant they embraced the concept of positive possible selves (Markus and Nurius 1986), utilizing clothing as a means to enhance their self-image and realize their ideal self (or a range of ideal selves). However, the overwhelming majority of the consumers in our study had a different set of priorities and tended to use a very different strategy in their clothing choice. Rather than seeking to maximize the positive messages that their clothing communicated, the main concern of these participants was with an effort to minimize possible negative communication on the basis of their clothing. This entailed a very different mindset signifying a negative drive.

Participants used consumption stereotypes to illustrate their distastes and the meanings that clothing encompassed. Although the term ‘stereotype’ suggests universally defined categories, participants acknowledged that different social categories of consumers would interpret clothing in diverse ways (Belk et al, 1982), offering different ‘readings’ (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998). Some of the ‘consumption stereotypes’ evoked by consumers were at odds with marketers’ images (Ligas and Cotte 1998). This divergent symbolism supported Kaiser et al’s (1991) suggestion that varying interpretations of clothing symbols resulted from individuals’ diverse social experiences. Symbolism could also be associated with private experiences (or sentimental values) which would be invisible to observers (Campbell, 1996).

Participants who consumed with primary reference to a negative drive sought to avoid censure, played it safe and attempted to remain inconspicuous by avoiding standing out from the crowd or competing for status. These concerns reflected the view that wearing the ‘wrong’ item was likely to receive a stronger reaction than wearing the latest or the ‘best’ (Wilk, 1994). Many of our
participants interpreted what they termed “trying too hard” negatively, and this links with Wilk’s (1995) participants who criticised products that were too ‘flash’ or exclusive.

For many of the consumers in our study, clothing selection entailed a delicate balancing act. The safest option was often to avoid projecting a negative image (employing a negative drive) thus ensuring the maintenance of self-esteem. We would argue that if marketers are able to understand how consumers invest products and brands with negative meanings; and also how consumers associate these negative meanings with their rejected selves, they will be much nearer to understanding and managing the impact of negative symbolic consumption in the market place.

References

“Anti-Madridista: Negative Symbolic Consumption by Football Fans”
Alain Decrop, FUNDP, Namur, Belgium

Over the past five years we have immersed ourselves in the football fan subculture in order to understand why merchandising has been so successful. Why do fans buy? and how do they consume football-related tangibles (shirts, jerseys, scarves, hats, flags)? An earlier paper by Derbaix, Decrop, and Cabossart (2002) showed that the consumption of football entails a lot of symbolism, which is often related to colours and merchandise. Five major functions have been identified, i.e.: identification, integration, socialization, expression and sacralization. In terms of the first function, the dyad colours-team involves both a pronounced preference for the colours of their own team and an obvious rejection of the colours of rival teams. The focus of this paper is on this second dimension, connected with negative symbolic consumption. We do not focus on hooliganism but on the situations where fans identify against other teams in addition to or rather than identifying with their own teams. In other words, the question why consumers reject products/brands for symbolic reasons is examined here in the context of football consumption.

The following findings are based on in-depth interviews with more than 30 fans of the most popular Belgian, French and Spanish teams. These fans were also observed on match days and during other football-related activities such as bus journeys to the stadium, meetings, dinners or visits to their fan club. In addition, we attended about 50 matches in the Belgian, French and Spanish national competitions. Finally, we interviewed experts and fan shop managers and we collected documents such as brochures, press articles, and web sites. All these data were analysed through inductive thematic analysis.

All informants in this study constructed a large portion of their identities around being a football fan. Part of this identification is evident in the colours they displayed, the clothes they wore and the decoration of their daily environment (house, vehicles, pets). Four objects of identification may be distinguished: the team, the fan club, the player and the city. This paper focuses on the team, which is by far the most prevalent in the negative consumption of football merchandise. Two major identification dimensions emerge from the analysis and interpretation process: social imitation and the expression of self. To some extent, these may be connected with the two classical functions of fashion consumption, i.e., social identification and distinction (Gronrow 1997; Banister and Hogg 2004). Fans first and foremost buy and consume scarves and shirts to show others the team to which they belong. Fans incorporate football into their lives to the point that there often is an overlap between fun and team identity: when the team wins/loses, the supporter also feels like s/he wins/loses (Janda and Donavan 2004). Moreover, many fans want to be perceived as different from the others. In the context of football consumption, distinction may be understood both in a positive and a negative way.

On the one hand, some fans try to outdo the other supporters in their own community by their external appearance and paraphernalia. They make their own items such as flashy clothes, banners, badges or flags in order to be seen as the team’s greatest enthusiast: “I am unique, I am the best, I am the only one wearing these clothes … people will look at me”. This may be interpreted as a way to enhance self-esteem and be compared with Holt’s (1995) concept of individualization or Belk’s (1988) extended self. It is now widely accepted that consumers often want to differentiate themselves and to express their personality through their clothes (Banister and Hogg 2004).

The fan’s paraphernalia also entails negative aspects. Our observation data show that “anti-items” are widespread in the stadiums we visited and in other settings (e.g., on the Internet) both in Belgium, France and Spain. These range from official “t-shirts, scarves or embroidered badges to self-made banners or documents. Most of the time, these items show extremist symbols and negative messages addressed to the opponents using a warlike, sexual, or religious rhetoric. They are usually worn by younger and more
In Madrid, a opponent is geographically closer or/and threatens sport supremacy. It seems that rivalry grows as a far as the supporters. Finally, at the discrimination level, a lot of overt the rival teams (called the “in-group”) about the typical characteristics of the members of another group (the “out-group”). Prejudices pertain to negative attitudes toward the out-group whereas discrimination involves overt behaviour against it. At the stereotypical level, our data contain a lot of negative beliefs about the rival teams, such as illustrated by this quote: “The Real Madrid supporter is a bad supporter: he only loves football when his team wins”. On game days, fans tend to classify other supporters of the same team as rivals when they incidentally wear colours of the opponent. At the prejudice level, distinction may lead some fans to an unwillingness or refusal to wear clothes in particular colours, even in everyday life. Moreover, our data include a lot of affective statements against the rival teams (“I hate them”); on one banner, Marseille fans have written “Pedo Sado Gay” to disqualify the PSG (Paris Saint Germain) supporters. Finally, at the discrimination level, a lot of overt behaviours could be observed. Some fans used to burn the colours of hated teams and to wear anti-items. The hostility against other teams stems either from extra-sport conflicts or from competition-bound oppositions. It seems that rivalry grows as a far as the opponent is geographically closer or threatens sport supremacy. In Madrid, a Rayo Vallecano supporter typically told us: “I don’t have any anti-Athletico item because I don’t have anything against them, but I do have anti-Madridista: I have one anti-Madridista scarf and one ultra flag which claims Real’s death. I love those items”.

There are two major interpretations to those anti-items. First, they help to express the hatred of the opponent in other ways (actually in a very theatrical and grotesque way) rather than through acts of violence and direct aggression (Bromberger 1995). However, most often those symbols are used in a cathartic way rather than to affirm belongingness or socio-political opinions. In that sense, anti-items should not be confused with anti-brands. To some extent, anti-items serve as a safety valve for bottled up emotions, especially in our post modern societies which give little room for self-esteem. The concept of negative self (Wilk 1997) can also be used to interpret the previous findings. Supporters may reject other teams in order to maintain or enhance some negative aspects of their self-esteem. Banister and Hogg (2004) have recently documented how consumers may invest (i.e. fashion) products and brands with negative symbolic meanings and how this leads them to reject products and brands. More broadly, this study confirms the importance of clothing as an expressive medium and as a code in its own right that helps consumers to construct and communicate socio-cultural meanings (McCracken 1988).

References


“Clothes Maketh the Man: Symbolic Consumption and Second-hand Clothing”
Dominique Roux, University of Paris XII, France
Second-order marketing systems have received increasing attention in recent years. Clothing purchased through second hand shops, flea markets and web sites accounts for a significant part of this new trend of exchange, despite socio-psychological risks related to such purchases (O’Reilly et al., 1984). Among factors that can increase or decrease the willingness to acquire used clothing, economic constraints have often been pointed out as a critical aspect of the purchase decision. Conversely, concern about contamination are supposed to impede the transfer of certain types of items, especially those worn next to the skin (O’Reilly et al., 1984; Belk, 1988; Ostergaard, Fitchett and Jantzen, 1999). However, symbolic meanings associated with such consumption decisions have received less attention in comparison with demographic and behavioral variables related to products or purchase situations. By exploring the psychological and symbolic meanings associated with the exchange and resale of secondhand clothing, this paper aims at providing a broader understanding of what is at stake in both rejection and acceptance behaviours.

The aim of this exploratory, qualitative study was to explore first the reasons for buying, wearing or rejecting second-hand clothes, and secondly the psychological and social perceptions embedded therein. Forty-three semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted, each of which lasted from half an hour to two hours. Additionally, a series of twelve mini-group discussions were held with several members of the same family–husband and wife, parents and children-which provided an opportunity to explore family shared values and patterns of consumption.

The findings showed clear differential attitudes between respondents, ranging from those rejecting even the idea of wearing something previously used to those expressing attitudes of acceptance toward secondhand clothing. These attitudes appeared to depend on the importance attached by some consumers to their possessions in providing a sense of self (Belk, 1988). In particular, when they view clothing as an essential means for constructing and nurturing their sense of self, they are unlikely to exchange, sell or buy it, especially from strangers.

Negative perceptions confirmed that contamination is an important factor in rejection behaviors toward used clothes. How-
ever, this study goes further than prior research by showing that rejection is triggered less by a fear of germ contamination than by a specific concern about incorporating a degraded image of the previous owner (Rozin and Fallon, 1987). Death, disease or misfortune are often associated with the former wearer—generally unknown—and ‘bad vibes’ are imagined to transfer through his or her possessions to the new buyer.

In most of these cases, wearing used clothes is thus perceived as a territorial encroachment of a previous identity (Goffman, 1971), leading to feelings of dispossession. This point is particularly well illustrated by those informants who had to wear clothes passed down from their brothers or sisters who had outgrown them. Through knowing by whom the clothes were transmitted, they felt condemned to assume their elders’ identities and to leave their own behind. When dictated by necessity, wearing something that belonged to others tends to threaten the feeling of difference, unity and coherence which nurtures the sense of self (Erikson, 1968).

Conversely, the findings suggested also that the concern with unwanted contamination is not as general as it is sometimes thought to be. Positive symbolic contagion can be involved in exchanging clothing between friends or parents (Lurie, 1981). Moreover, fear of contamination may not play any part in buying or wearing second-hand clothes, even from strangers, when done by choice. What clearly differentiated acceptance from rejection behaviours was the ability of individuals to detach clothing from their extended self. When these possessions are not too closely associated with their wearer, they can be appraised for their own values instead of being reduced to the incorporated intimacy with another person.

In addition, certain characteristics of these clothes or of their state of use do create for some informants a particular desire for re-appropriation. The interviews brought to light different types of motives identified by distinctive symbolic representations and ideological arguments. First, the desire for uniqueness can be pursued through used clothes for their capacity to differentiate an individual from the mass and express his or her choices of counter-conformity (Fiske, 1989; Thompson and Haytko, 1997; Tian, Bearden and Hunter, 2001). Conversely, but within the same social comparison perspective, conspicuous behaviors can be achieved by purchasing branded luxury used clothes without paying the full price. In both cases, individuals use worn clothes—as they do new ones—as psychosocial markers. A third, more personal motive applies to retro clothing items, which tend to promote nostalgic imagery, thereby sustaining the revival of a mythical golden age or a shared past culture (Goulding, 2002). The final motive leading to secondhand consumption involves ethical concerns about the environmental and social impact of (over-)consumption and a desire for voluntary simplicity. In such cases, purchasing used clothes is viewed as a sign of opposition to consumerism and specifically as a response to waste. These four types of representations support some of the various functions performed by clothing as described by Holman (1981)—utilitarian, aesthetic, mnemonic and emblematic.

References


Fiske, John (1989), Understanding the Popular Culture, Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.


SESSION SUMMARY
Motherhood: Ideologies, Experiences & Consumption
Lisa O’Malley, University of Limerick, Ireland

Estimates of the annual financial worth of a mother’s work range from US$36,000 to US$500,000 (Selton 1998; Observer 2002) while the UN places the value of worldwide mothering at US$11 trillion (Observer 2002). These figures suggest that, in financial terms, mothers are exceptionally productive members of society. Moreover, such productivity is mirrored by almost unbridled consumption as mothers seek out consumption objects as markers of ‘good motherhood’. Nevertheless, with few exceptions (e.g. Prothero 2002; Jennings and O’Malley 2003; Carrigan and Szmigin 2004), there has been little explicit consideration of the link between motherhood and consumption. As such, this session contributes to the growing though embryonic body of work within this field.

Adrienne Rich (1976) draws an important distinction between motherhood as an institution and mothering as an experience. The institution of motherhood is driven by a set of culturally and historically specific ideologies that shape mother-identities and their attendant consumption patterns. At the same time, however, women experience motherhood in heterogeneous ways. In this regard, there have been calls to engage in research that emphasizes the experiential world of contemporary mothers (Crawford and Marecek 1989).

This session acknowledges directly this dual nature of motherhood. It draws together three papers focused on the relationship between motherhood and consumption and moves in a trajectory from ideology to experience. Furthermore, the papers draw from a rich mosaic of sources including parenting manuals, learned texts, the accounts of mother-informants and the introspective insights of the mother-authors. The first paper by O’Malley et al. addresses the ideologies of motherhood propounded in parenting manuals. Furthermore, it connects these variations on motherhood to the ideology of consumption which represents the dominant social paradigm. The second paper by Sørensen and Thomsen straddles the divide between ideology and experience by exploring the relationship between the transition to motherhood and symbolic consumption. The final paper by Carrigan and Szmigin examines the association between mothers’ experiences of time and consumption patterns. In particular, it focuses upon the notion of convenience. This well-integrated session promises some fascinating glimpses into the role of consumption in contemporary constructions of motherhood.

“Paperback Mother: Parenting Manuals and the Ideology of Motherhood”
Lisa O’Malley, University of Limerick
Maurice Patterson, University of Limerick
Caolífhionn Ní Bheachdáin, University of Limerick

In recent years, sales of parenting manuals have gone into overdrive. In the UK, sixty thousand copies of the best seller, Gina Ford’s The New Contented Little Baby Book were sold in the two years after its publication (Observer 2003). This runaway success story offers, according to the endorsements on its cover, “reassuring and practical advice from Britain’s No.1 childcare expert”. Ford’s book exemplifies a return to an ideology of motherhood centered on industrialization: where managerial principles are applied to the business of mothering. Aimed particularly at first-time mothers, Ford re-introduces strict time schedules, feeding regimes and modification of child behavior reminiscent of Victorian times. Such an approach is designed to help today’s time-poor mothers manage the inevitable chaos that a new birth introduces to family life and lies in stark contrast to the more permissive approach which emerged in the 1930s centered on mother love and affection (Hays 1996). However, Ford’s methods are not intended to create time away from the mothering role. Rather, the new mother must continue to devote all her energy to childrearing but must do so in a controlled, managerial fashion.

While Ford’s book is the most popular of its generation and is ably supported by brand extensions (Potty Training in One Week 2003; The Complete Sleep Guide for Contented Babies and Toddlers 2003; Good Mother, Bad Mother 2005), hers are not the only advice manuals taking this industrial approach. Books such as The Sixty Minute Mother (Parsons 2000), Mom Inc. (Godfrey 2000), and The Don’t Sweat Guide for Moms (Carlson 2002) appeal to many mothers because they address the very real pressures faced by these women in contemporary society.

As mothers, we intuitively understand the relationship between possessions and the self (Belk 2002). In order to appear to be doing the best for our children, we routinely seek out consumer goods as markers of ‘good motherhood’. Parenting manuals work well in this regard for they signify learning and suggest that mothers are taking personal responsibility for informng themselves. Moreover, these books fuel the desire for baby-centered consumption, listing a variety of must-have products and services. The result is a veritable feeding frenzy of consumption in the months surrounding birth.

This paper further explores these ideas by charting the development of a mothering audience: an audience of women who were literate, possessed suitable disposable income and whose identity was intrinsically linked to their role as mothers. Next, the paper examines how competition for shelf space amongst publishers, the appetite for information on mothering, and the plenitude of different mothering experiences have combined to deliver upon the parenting public ever more tightly defined subject matter. Then, the paper addresses the ideologies of motherhood propounded in parenting manuals and draws attention to the importance of consumption to each one. Finally, the paper suggests that while print culture is instrumental in the construction of impossible and chameleonic ideals of motherhood it may also re-empower women through their connection with a community of fellow readers.

“Becoming a Mother: The Symbolic Meaning of Pram Consumption in Denmark”
Elin Brandi Sørensen, University of Southern Denmark
Thyra Uth Thomsen, Copenhagen Business School

Since Schouten’s (1991) seminal contribution on the role of cosmetic surgery in personal rites of passage there has been steady interest in the relationship between symbolic consumption and personal role transitions. Obviously, transitional consumers provide a valuable site for research on the relationships between symbolic consumption and identity construction (cf. Hogg et al. 2003:262).

A theme of recent interest within consumer research has been the role of consumption during women’s life status transitions. In particular we have seen work on the transition to motherhood (e.g. Fischer and Gainer 1993; Jennings and O’Malley 2003) and the transition to the empty nesting (e.g. Hogg et al. 2003; Olsen 1999).

The empirical study reported in this paper should be seen as an attempt to explore the association between women’s transition to motherhood and consumption symbolism. Of particular interest is...
the acquisition and usage of prams and their potential in the construction of mothering identities.

In the eyes of most Danish parents and parents-to-be, a pram is considered a necessity. The pram is usually acquired well before the birth, and in many cases it represents the most expensive single item acquisition. For roughly the first three years the pram functions as the child’s second bed. Beyond this, the pram also represents a means of transportation. It is a very visible consumer good, consumed in the public space and subject to the public gaze. Therefore, in our preliminary understanding, the pram is a vehicle for identity construction. And for the mothers/parents to be, its acquisition represents a sub-process in the transition into the new role of mother/parents.

In the empirical work reported here we explore the potential of the pram as a source of meaning in identity construction. We take a phenomenological approach, investigating women’s lived experience of the transition to motherhood and how this is supported through product symbolism. The research involves the collection of written accounts and depth interviews. Written accounts from approximately 30 women with small children were gathered in the form of email-correspondences. The women were recruited via the authors’ personal network, via posters in relevant chat groups on the net, and via the snowballing principle (Miles & Huberman 1994). The round of depth interviews will include 4-6 women selected among the contributors of written accounts.

In the analysis of the material and of how symbolic consumption meanings can be vehicles for the acquisition of the role of a mother, we will employ a framework that integrates the idea that these meanings can reside in a common domain-or in a more private domain.

“The Convenient Mother: Myth and Reality”
Marylyn Carrigan, University of Birmingham
Isabelle Szmigin, University of Birmingham

In a society characterized by increasingly busy family lives, time has become a critical resource for parents. Marketing has offered a solution in the form of convenience products which supposedly enable us to better manage that precious quotient. Paradoxically, no matter how many timesaving inventions are purchased, consumers, and particularly mothers, often perceive themselves to be time-poor and dissatisfied (Southerton et al 2001; Reeves 2003). Partly, the explanation for such dissatisfaction lies in the complexity of modern lives and relationships; merely achieving ‘time-saved’ is an unsatisfactory and often ineffective solution for the temporal demands that mothers juggle on a daily basis (Thompson 1996). At the same time marketers’ understanding of convenience and its meaning for consumers has been equally simplistic, often leading to enigmatic research findings (Yale and Venkatesh 1986; Darian and Cohen 1995; McEnally and Brown 1998). Marketers tend to hypothesize that consumers with the greatest time constraints (i.e. in their view ‘working’ mothers) are going to buy convenience goods, yet the research implies a more complex connection (Yale and Venkatesh 1986; Maher, Marks and Grimm 1997).

This paper explores how the ‘paradox of convenience’ affects mother’s lives. We present the results from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with six mothers in order to explore their sense of fragmented time and their relationship with convenience goods. Given that the importance of convenience is likely to increase in parallel with the complexity of modern family life, this work is a timely and topical contribution to our understanding of family consumption behavior. We question whether convenience products alleviate or exacerbate the complexity of their lives. We show how mothers employ the convenience products they choose, and why they reject others. Warde (1999) argues that given the problems many people have in juggling time, the ability to organize time for your own personal purpose is a mark of privilege, and one that can be ‘bought’ with hypermodern convenience devices. There is no doubt that for many consumers convenience does deliver benefits. But there are other aspects that sit more uncomfortably with many mothers, characterizing for some the use of convenience products as being tinged with moral disapprobation. A tumble dryer will eliminate wet washing, pegging out and, even ironing, but it involves considerably more energy use, and is arguably less eco-friendly than traditional drying methods. Impregnated, disinfectant floor-wipes kill germs and reduce cleaning times, but potentially introduce carcinogenic chemicals, and contribute to landfill problems in a way that traditional ‘mop and bucket’ cleaning never did.

Almost 20 years ago Yale and Venkatesh (1986) made suggestions for future research into convenience and, while some progress has been made, there remain huge gaps in our understanding of what convenience means to consumers in general, and mothers in particular, both in terms of products and services, and desired outcomes. Is convenience ‘convenient’ for every mother? What are the advantages and disadvantages? Are there moral implications? The marketing ideology that assumes mothers perceive convenience as inevitably beneficial is fundamentally questioned in this paper that presents the experience of convenience as essentially flawed.

SELECTED REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

Product attachment is the emotional bond a consumer experiences with a product. This study examines the effect of congruity between the personalities of a person and a product on attachment and product lifetime. A scenario study shows that consumers develop stronger attachments to products with a personality that is congruent to their own. Although product attachment and product lifetime are related, feeling attached to a product with a congruent personality only results in a longer product lifetime for introvert people. Extroverts do not hold on to extrovert products. We propose that fashion moderates the relationship between product attachment and product lifetime.

PRODUCT ATTACHMENT

Product attachment is defined as the strength of the emotional bond experienced with a product (Schifferstein and Pelgrim 2004). This definition implies that an emotional tie exists between the owner and his/her object and that the specific product has an important meaning to the owner. When a person becomes attached to an object, (s)he is more likely to handle the product with care, to repair it when it breaks down, and to postpone its replacement (Belk 1991).

Although people may also be attached to people, places, or brands, product attachment focuses specifically on the relationship with specific objects. Accordingly, product attachment is conceptually different from the constructs: involvement, consumer-brand relationships, and materialism (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Kleine and Baker 2004; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988) that refer to product categories (e.g., Costley 1988), brands (e.g., Fournier 1998), and possessions in general (e.g., Belk 1985), respectively.

In the present study, we examine the effect of congruity between the personality of a person and his/her watch on the degree of product attachment experienced in an experimental setting. Furthermore, we provide insight in the relationship between product attachment and product lifetime. Finally, we discuss the role of fashion as a moderator for the relationship between product attachment and product lifetime.

PERSONALITY CONGRUITY

People have a need to maintain a consistent (self-consistency motive) and positive (self-enhancement motive) view of one’s self. The use of products is one way by which an individual can symbolically define and express his/her unique self (Sirgy 1982). Products serve as symbols of who we are, who we have been, and who we are attempting to become. Based on people’s tendency to behave consistently with his/her view of the self, scholars concluded that consumers prefer products that are congruent to their self-concept (e.g., Malhotra 1988; Sirgy 1982). People make a comparison between their own self-concept and the product image and prefer those products that have an image congruent with their self.

Based on the theory of self-congruity, Aaker (1999) and Govers and Schoormans (2005) found that consumers prefer products and brands with a set of personality characteristics congruent to their own. These products can help to maintain and express their identity. For example, a person can express that he is tough by driving in a tough car, such as a Land Rover.

Several qualitative and survey studies on product attachment have concluded that the degree to which a product is used to define and maintain a person’s self not only affects preference, but also the experience of an emotional bond to a product during ownership (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Belk 1988; Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). People develop strong attachments to products that define who they are as an individual, whereas least favorite possessions (weak attachments) often bring about associations that are “not me” (Kleine et al. 1995). Accordingly, we hypothesize that congruity between the personality of a person and that of his/her product will positively affect the experience of an emotional bond to this product:

H1: People experience stronger attachments to products with a personality that is congruent to their own personality, than to products with a personality that is incongruent.

CONSEQUENCE OF ATTACHMENT: PRODUCT LIFETIME

Schultz, Kleine and Kernan (1989) stated that our most cherished possessions are: “things which we would loath to give up, things which would be difficult to replace–in short, things to which we have become strongly attached” (p. 359). This implies that product attachment and product lifetime are connected. As discussed, a product to which one feels attached means a lot to the owner. Consequently, if a person should lose such a product, (s)he will experience an emotional loss. People exhibit more protective behaviors to products to which they are attached. Consequently, they will try to postpone their replacement as long as possible, which results in an extension of the product lifetime (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Belk 1991; Schultz et al. 1989).

Based on these arguments, we believe that the product lifetime is a direct consequence of the experience of attachment to a product. Determinants of product attachment will thus also affect product lifetime indirectly. Product attachment can thus be considered as a mediator for the effect of personality congruity on product lifetime (see figure 1). Accordingly, we hypothesize:

H2: People will keep products with a personality that is congruent to their own personality for a longer time period than products with a personality that is incongruent.

H3: Product attachment mediates the effect of personality congruity on product lifetime.

METHOD

This study uses a scenario/approach to create conditions of high and low personality congruity. A scenario or a vignette is a “short story about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances to which the interviewee is invited to respond” (Finch 1987, p. 105). Scenarios can play a useful role in theory construction. Accordingly, they are often used in research on post-purchase affect (e.g., Tsiros and Mittal 2000). Scenarios are useful for the study of attachment, because they allow studying processes that develop over a long period of time. In addition, they allow focusing on the topic of interest while controlling for additional variables that would interact in a real-life situation (e.g., type of product, memo-
ries elicited by the product, financial aspects). This selective representation of the real world can help to disentangle the complexities and conflicts present in everyday life (Hughes and Huby 2002).

A large degree of correspondence was found between the emotions experienced in a real life setting and the emotions subjects in a scenario-setting believed they were likely to experience (Robinson and Clore 2001). Moreover, asking people what a fictional other would do or think in a specific situation is a well-known projection technique in qualitative research (Gordon and Langmaid 1995). What respondents indicate as the experience of another may be interpreted as what they would do or think if they were in a similar situation.

In this study, the scenarios include a written description of the personality of a person and a picture of a product that is (in)congruent with the personality of the person. Subjects are asked to predict the degree of product attachment and the product lifetime. In the following section, two pretests and the main study are reported. The pretests are performed to check whether the personality manipulations are perceived as intended (pretest 1) and to select the product variants with the desired personalities (pretest 2).

Stimulus Material

For the success of the manipulation of our study, it was essential that subjects recognized both the personality of the person and the personality of the product. We chose to select the dimension extraversion, because in person perception this dimension was found to be best recognized by observers (Kenny et al. 1994). To create conditions of high and low personality congruity, we generated an extrovert (introvert) person and an extrovert (introvert) product.

Pretest 1: Manipulation of Person’s Personality. An impression of an extrovert and an introvert person was created using written descriptions. Both descriptions portrayed a 27-year-old woman, named Susan, and depicted her as either extrovert or introvert by unfolding her character traits. The descriptions were developed using items from several human personality tests (e.g., Hendriks, Hofstee, and De Raad 1995).

Twenty-eight subjects rated one of the persons portrayed on five items that are typical for the personality trait extraversion: (1) “not conspicuous”/“very conspicuous”, (2) “not exuberant”/“very exuberant”, (3) “not sociable”/“very sociable”, (4) “not defiant”/“very defiant”, and (5) “not cheerful”/“very cheerful” (α=.88). All items were measured using five-point scales. The mean score of the extrovert person was significantly higher than the scale’s neutral midpoint (M=4.08, SD=.47; t(14)=9.38, p<.001), whereas the mean score of the introvert person was significantly lower (M=2.08, SD=.47; t(12)=7.04, p<.001).

Pretest 2: Manipulation of Product’s Personality. A second pre-test was conducted to select an extrovert and an introvert product. Scholars in the design field have argued that consumer durables can have personalities as a result of their design (Janlert and Stolterman 1997; Jordan 2002). A set of eight color pictures of women’s watches encompassing a variety of appearances was rated by 20 subjects on the five extroversion items used in the first pretest (α=.90). The watches did not differ in functionality and were similar in price. Watches were selected as stimuli, because this product category is regarded as highly self-expressive. The watches with the highest and lowest mean on the extroversion trait were selected as stimuli. The mean score of the extrovert product was significantly higher than the neutral midpoint of the scale (M=3.99, SD=.69; t(19)=6.38, p<.001), whereas the mean score of the introvert product was significantly lower (M=1.68, SD=.54; t(19)=10.29, p<.001).

Subjects and Design

For the main study, 160 subjects were selected from a consumer household panel. Hundred-fifteen subjects (58 males and 57 females) returned their questionnaire in time, a response rate of 72%. Ages ranged from 26 to 73 years, with an average age of 50. Subjects were rewarded financially.

The main study had a 2×2 design (personality of the person: extrovert vs. introvert)×2 (product personality: extrovert vs. introvert) between-subjects full factorial design. Four experimental conditions were generated, two resulting in high congruity between the personality of the person and that of the product and two resulting in low congruity. Each subject was assigned randomly to one of the four conditions.

Procedure and Measures

Subjects received a scenario and a questionnaire by mail. The scenario consisted of a written description of the person’s personality and a color picture of a watch. The watch was presented as owned by the person. Subjects were instructed to read the description of the person carefully to form an impression of the person described, and to look at the picture of the watch. Subsequently, measures for the dependent variables and several covariates were obtained on seven-point Likert scales (1=“strongly disagree”, 7=“strongly agree”), unless indicated otherwise. To minimize demand characteristics, four multi-item filler variables were included in the questionnaire.

Dependent Variables. Product attachment was measured with four items: (1) “This watch has no special meaning to Susan (−)”, (2) “This watch is very dear to Susan”, (3) “Susan has a bond with this watch”, (4) “Susan is very attached to this watch” (α=.88).

To measure the expected product lifetime, we informed subjects that, on average, young women replace their watch after 3 years. Subjects were asked to indicate on an ordinal scale how long they expected Susan to keep her watch (“shorter than 3 years”, “about 3 years”, and “longer than 3 years”).

Covariates. Four covariates were included in the questionnaire to control for possible side effects of the scenarios. First, subjects’ attitude toward Susan was measured using three items on scales anchored with “negative”/“positive”, “unfavorable”/“favorable”, “dislike”/“like” (α=.89). Second, subjects’ attitude toward the watch was measured using the same three items (α=.93). Third, the degree to which subjects recognized themselves in Susan was measured with three self-generated items: (1) “I recognize myself in Susan”, (2) “Susan’s character is similar to my own personality”, and (3) “I resemble Susan” (α=.93).

A potential pitfall of the use of scenarios is that the scenario may not be considered credible by the subjects. If the scenario differs too much from the experiences of the subject, problems of validity may occur (Finch 1987; Hughes and Huby 2002). Therefore, the fourth covariate measured the scenario’s credibility with six items: (1) “I find the story of Susan credible”, (2) “The story of Susan seems artificial” (-), (3) “I think the story of Susan is plausible”, (4) “I could empathize with the story of Susan well”, (5) “I found it hard to imagine Susan’s situation” (-), and (6) “I could project myself in Susan’s situation well” (α=.83).

RESULTS

Manipulation Check

The manipulation check for personality congruity was not included in the main study to minimize demand characteristics. This separate pilot (n=28) had a 2 (personality of the person: extrovert vs. introvert)×2 (product personality: extrovert vs. introvert) factorial design. One written description of the person’s
personality and color photo-quality pictures of the two watches were presented to each subject. Personality congruity was measured with four items using five-point scales (Govers and Schoormans 2005): (1) “This watch is (not) like Susan”, (2) “Susan (does not) identify herself with the watch”, (3) “This watch matches (does not match) with Susan’s personality”, and (4) “This watch is (in)consistent with the way Susan sees herself” ($\alpha=.93$). The results showed a strong and significant interaction effect between personality of the person and product personality ($F(1, 26)=86.18, p<.001, \eta^2=.77$). As shown in figure 2, the two conditions with Susan and the watch having a congruent personality indeed resulted in the experience of high personality congruity ($M_E=4.30$ and $M_I=3.37$), whereas the conditions with Susan and the watch having incongruent personalities resulted in low personality congruity ($M=1.84$ and $M=1.73$).

**Credibility of Scenarios**

The scenarios were judged as highly credible ($M=5.44, SD=1.02$). Ninety percent of the subjects had a mean score on credibility that was equal or higher than the midpoint of the scale. No differences were found between the four conditions ($p>.20$).

**Tests of the Hypotheses**

*Effect of Personality Congruity on Product Attachment.* To control for effects of subjects’ attitude toward Susan, subjects’ attitude toward the watch, recognition in Susan’s personality, and credibility of the scenario, these variables were used as covariates in an analysis of covariance. None of the covariates proved to be significant and were, therefore, excluded from the final analysis ($p>.20$).

To investigate whether high personality congruity resulted in a higher degree of product attachment than low personality congruity, a $2 \times 2$ ANOVA was conducted with product attachment as the dependent variable and the personalities of the person and the product as the independent variables. The results revealed a significant interaction effect between personality of the person and product personality ($F(1, 109)=17.28, p<.001, \eta^2=.14$). Subjects who read about the extrovert person and were presented with the extrovert watch predicted a higher degree of product attachment as compared to those presented with the introvert watch ($M_E=3.54$ vs. $M_I=2.73$, $t(50)=-2.09, p<.05$). Similarly, subjects who read about the introvert person and were presented with the introvert watch predicted a higher degree of product attachment as compared to
those presented with the extrovert watch ($M_I=4.36$ vs. $M_E=2.93$, $t(59)=3.86$, $p<.001$) (see figure 3). Hypothesis 1 was thus confirmed. No main effects were found ($p>.05$).

**Effect of Personality Congruity on Product Lifetime.** Product lifetime differed significantly between the four conditions (Kruskal-Wallis test: $\chi^2=52.92$, $df=3$, $p<.001$). Although product lifetime was measured on an ordinal scale, we proceeded by analyzing these data by a $2 \times 2$ analysis of covariance (Gaito 1980), because this enabled us to investigate the role of product attachment in mediating the effect of product congruity on product lifetime. Product lifetime was recoded as follows (1="shorter than 3 years", 2="about 3 years", and 3="longer than 3 years"). All covariates proved to be insignificant and were excluded from the analysis ($p>.05$). The results showed a significant interaction between personality of the person and product personality ($F(1,109)=19.99$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.16$). Furthermore, significant main effects for personality of the person ($F(1,109)=56.69$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.34$) and product personality ($F(1,109)=30.64$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.22$) were found. Figure 3 illustrates that these results differ considerably from the product attachment results: Subjects who read about the extrovert person and were presented with the extrovert watch did not predict a longer product lifetime as compared to those presented with the introvert watch ($M_I=1.13$ vs. $M_E=1.26$, $t(51)=.95$, $p>.20$). More specifically, for the extrovert personality the expected product lifetime was rated below average for the congruent as well as for the incongruent product. For subjects who read about the introvert person the outcomes were in line with those found when product attachment was the dependent variable. When they were presented with the introvert watch, they predicted a longer product lifetime compared to those presented with the extrovert watch ($M_I=2.70$ vs. $M_E=1.50$, $t(58)=6.28$, $p<.001$). Hypothesis 2 was thus only confirmed for the introvert personality.

**Mediation Analysis.** To test whether product attachment and product lifetime are positively related, the Spearman rank correlation between product attachment and product lifetime was computed (Spearman $r=.44$, $p<.01$). Higher degrees of product attachment go together with longer product lifetime ($M_{shorter<3yrs}=2.91$, $M_{about3yrs}=4.00$, $M_{longer>3yrs}=4.36$).

To investigate the role of product attachment in mediating the effect of personality congruity on product lifetime, Baron and Kenny’s (1986) framework for mediation was used. Hence, an ANCOVA was performed with product lifetime as the dependent variable and the mediator product attachment included as a covariate. Product attachment significantly affected product lifetime ($F(1,106)=10.94$, $p<.01$). The interaction effect between personality of the person and product personality reduced in effect size, when product attachment was included as a covariate ($F(1,106)=8.72$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2=.08$; $\Delta \eta^2=-51\%$). This finding demonstrated that product attachment mediates the effect of personality congruity on product lifetime, supporting hypothesis 3. Including product attachment as a covariate did not have a substantial impact on the main effects for personality of the person ($\Delta \eta^2=-9\%$) and product personality ($\Delta \eta^2=-5\%$).

**DISCUSSION**

This study shows that people become more attached to products that have a personality that is congruent to their own. These products are used to define and maintain a person’s self. However,
our findings suggest that this emotional bond does not necessarily result in a long-lasting relationship with the product. Although we found support for the role of product attachment in mediating the effect of personality congruity on product lifetime, personality congruity only resulted in a longer product lifetime for the introvert personality. For the extrovert personality, the expected product lifetime was rated below average for the incongruent as well as for the congruent product. Thus, although the person felt attached to the product, this product was still discarded earlier than is common for the product category. We believe the observed differences may be related to fashion. Past research concluded that fashion changes can change a person’s relationship to a product (Roster 2001) and encourage early product replacement (Bayus 1991; DeBell and Dardis 1979). Moreover, watches are considered fashion products. Based on a further analysis of the stimuli material, we propose that fashion may influence the effect of personality congruity.

Role of Fashion as a Moderator

According to McCracken (1986), the fashion system is an instrument to transfer meaning to consumer goods. Consumers encode these meanings and use fashion to develop a personal identity (Thompson and Haytko 1997). A fashion is defined as “a style that is accepted and followed by the majority of a group at any particular time” (Jernigan and Easterling 1990, p. 7). Products follow different fashion styles that vary in their fashion cycle. Some fashion styles (short-lived fashions or fads) enjoy a sudden burst of popularity and disappear very quickly. Other fashions (long-lived fashions or classics) and the products that follow such a fashion continue to be popular and remain to be in general acceptance over an extended period of time (Jernigan and Easterling 1990).

Consumers can become attached to products with a design following a short-lived fashion, but most often only for a relatively short time period. When the fashion cycle has reached the obsolescence phase, the product style goes “out of fashion”. In general, people have a negative attitude toward products that are old-fashioned. Because people strive to maintain a positive view of the self (self-enhancement motive), an old-fashioned product is less valuable for maintaining a person’s self and, therefore, the experience of product attachment will decrease. If the experience of attachment to a product decreases, consumers become more willing to replace this product.

The extrovert watch used as stimulus material in this study has an eye-catching and colorful design, and the introvert watch follows a simple style with inconspicuous colors. In general, the design characteristics of the extrovert watch are associated with short-lived fashions, whereas long-lived fashions have design characteristics similar to the introvert watch. Hence, we believe that the extrovert watch was expected to be discarded on the short term also by the extroverts, because it is more fashionable than the introvert one. To test this assumption, we performed a post hoc test. Ninety-four subjects rated one of the two watches on three seven-point scales (“not fashionable”/“very fashionable”, “not trendy”/“very trendy”, and “not timeless”/“very timeless” (-), α=.82). In accordance with our expectations, the extrovert watch was considered more fashionable than the introvert watch (M\text{E}=5.19 vs. M\text{I}=3.16; t(92)=9.60, p<.001).

In conclusion, the findings of the post hoc test support the hypothesis that fashion can influence the product lifetime of a congruent product. Based on these results, we believe that personality congruity does not result in a longer product lifetime for the extrovert condition, because the extrovert watch is more fashionable. As a result, fashion changes encourage the extrovert person to replace the extrovert watch early, even though its personality is congruent to his/her own personality.

CONCLUSION

Research on human relationships revealed that similarity in personality positively influences the duration and quality of long-term relationships between two spouses (e.g., Antill 1983). Analogously, the present study shows that similarity in personality is also relevant for the development of an emotional relationship between a person and a product. People become more attached to products with a personality that is congruent to their own. We believe that self-congruent products serve people’s needs to maintain a consistent view of the self. Hence, these findings support and extend other work on product attachment that suggested that people become more attached to products that are used to define and maintain a person’s self (e.g., Ball and Tasaki 1992; Kleine et al. 1995; Schultz et al. 1989).

Second, our findings show that personality congruity does not necessarily imply that the consumer-product relationship will be long-lasting. Product attachment is not static, but changes over time due to dynamics in the product, the consumer, and the situational context (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Kleine and Baker 2004; Schultz et al. 1989). Fashion may serve as a moderator for the relationship between product attachment and product lifetime. A necessary condition for an extension of the product lifetime appears to be that the product’s design remains to be in general fashion acceptance. Otherwise, evaluation of the product as being old-fashioned will decline the product’s value for maintaining a positive and consistent view of the self, resulting in early detachment and a premature replacement of the product.

Implications

From the viewpoint of sustainability, it is interesting to create longer lasting products. Replacing and disposing products creates an environmental burden, because it produces waste and uses up scarce resources. Scholars have proposed product attachment as a means for designers to stimulate product longevity (e.g., Mugge, Schoormans, and Schifferstein 2005; Van Hemel and Brezet 1997). Our research shows that designing products with pre-determined personalities can be valuable to stimulate product attachment and thereby extend the product lifetime. However, product attachment only results in an extension of the product lifetime if the product is not fashionable. Consequently, the eco-design strategy to stimulate product attachment should be combined with the strategy to reduce a product’s fashionability by creating a ‘classic design’ (e.g., Van Hemel and Brezet 1997).

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of our study is that we solely investigate watches as stimulus material. Watches are conspicuous, hedonic products for which congruity and fashion may be relatively important. However, past research also revealed congruity effects for more utilitarian products (Govers and Schoormans 2005). More research is needed to establish the role of fashion for different product categories. Another limitation of the use of a watch as stimulus material is that it is presented as an ordinary possession. It is likely that the role of fashion on product lifetime is less important for products with deep, symbolic meanings, such as heirlooms. Future research should examine the relationships between product attachment, fashion, and product lifetime for these “most cherished” products.

A second limitation of this research is that we investigate a complex construct as personality in a simplified manner by focusing on only one personality dimension for a hypothetical person. More research is needed in real-life situations to fully understand the relationships between congruity, product attachment, product lifetime, and fashion.
Extrovert person

Susan is 27 years old and married to Stephan. She works as a pr-employee for a large media-company. When Susan enters a room, she will not remain unnoticed; she will take care of that herself with her enormous enthusiasm and liveliness. She would not like to go through life as a dull person. According to Stephan, the sun starts shining when she walks in, but she can irritate some people by her exaggerated presence. However, for her hobby her need for attention is very convenient: she is a singer in a band. She also spends a lot of time on her social life: she has many friends and she likes to be in the company of people. “The more, the merrier” is one of her mottos. Her friends would describe her as a special young woman who is always in for everything and who does not mince her words. Her ideal holiday is an active one, and it should be in a crowded area; it is nothing like her to stay in a remote cabin in the woods.

Introvert person

Susan is 27 years old and married to Stephan. She works in a chemical laboratory as an assistant. Although she likes her colleagues, she will not easily have a drink with them on Friday as is customary to do, because she never has a lot to say to them. Susan cannot bear to think of being the center of interest. According to Stephan, still waters run deep, but some people will typify her as distant. Susan has a few very close friends, whom she has known for a very long time. She does not like parties a lot, especially when she knows only a few people. She finds it hard to make contact and to get a conversation going. She prefers to stay at home on the couch with a good book or magazine. Her friends would characterize her as someone, who only speaks her true mind, if you know her well. Her ideal holiday is a hiking holiday with her husband to a remote cabin to enjoy the silence. A holiday in a crowded area is nothing for her.

REFERENCES


Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty: Conscious and Unconscious Evaluation of Archetypes Used in Advertising and Movies - Results from an Experimental Study

Andrea Groeppel-Klein, European University Viadrina, Germany
Anja Domke, European University Viadrina, Germany
Benedikt Bartmann, European University Viadrina, Germany

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In the consumer behaviour literature, there are already several articles dealing with Jungian archetypes from a qualitative research perspective. By contrast, we investigate Jung’s theory from a positivistic research perspective. The key issue is whether archetypes influence the conscious assessment of commercials, brands, and movies as well as unconscious approach reactions. Do men and women react similarly to the exposure and do different personality types vary in the degree to which they are attracted by archetypal advertising and movies?

Jung’s theory considers the so-called “collective unconscious” as one part of the psyche and this makes his theory stand out from others. The collective unconscious can be characterized as the body of knowledge with which all human beings are born. This knowledge is characterized by so-called “archetypes” that represent inborn and universal ways of perceiving the world. Therefore, archetypes are reflected in fairy tales and myths.

Jung describes a substantial variety of archetypal images (Jung 1954/1959a,b), but in our empirical study, we devoted special attention to fairy tale archetypes and especially from both a male and female perspective. The male perspective concerns the hero, who is characterized as a man who can master all challenges in life and is able to rescue an unhappy or threatened woman. The female perspective considers the Cinderella-archetype, the young, innocent and beautiful woman, who is in distress or misery and is rescued by a gallant prince who promises her a wonderful life free of worry and care.

Archetypes have an instinctive or biological function and activate behaviour. In order to gain insight into the (un)conscious activation reactions of test persons, we measured electrophysiological reactions (EDR) so as to explore the phasic arousal (Boucsein 1992) evoked by archetypal stimuli. Archetypal advertising resonates from innate human universals and focuses on innate needs. This would suggest that a message that is compatible with innate desires or desired behaviour will be more effective (in terms of approach behaviour towards this special message) than one that is less focused on these innate drives. That means that a TV-commercial which uses a typical fairy tale archetype will evoke higher phasic arousal reactions than commercials without such an archetype.

In order to analyze this issue, we conducted an empirical study that compares an archetypal TV-commercial with four other non-archetypal commercials and demonstrates significantly higher arousal for the archetypal spot. A fundamental result is that archetypes are clearly valuable tools for appealing to consumers in advertising.

Furthermore, the popularity of archetype-oriented movies is particularly relevant in this context. Movies portraying genuinely meaningful archetypal figures create living icons that are used by consumers as important personal anchors (Hirschman 2000). Hence, we propose that movies presenting typical Cinderella-archetypes as characters will generally evoke higher phasic arousal and be evaluated more positively than films presenting brave, aggressive and selfish female characters. To examine this question empirically, we compared “Pretty Woman” as a typical archetype-oriented movie with “Gone With The Wind” which presents Scarlett O’Hara as brave woman. The results show significantly higher arousal and a more favourable attitude towards the movie presenting the Cinderella-archetype.

However, feminists (Lauter and Rupprecht 1985) argue that Jung’s concepts have helped men enhance patriarchal myths and undervalue the merits of women as well as their experience and power. Furthermore, archetypes (though principally stable over time and culture) are nevertheless embedded in socialization processes. Therefore, we could question whether typical archetypes like “Cinderella” or “Sleeping Beauty” really reflect men’s and women’s present ideals.

From a male perspective, we could question whether men are still attracted by the hero-scheme. Does a man always feel capable of mastering all obstacles and is he really keen on assuming responsibility for his wife and family or does the hero concept lead to a feeling of being burdened? We found no gender differences with respect to the evaluation of typical archetypes. This might indicate that men can indeed identify with the hero, and women with the rescued maiden.

From a female perspective, we propose that self-concept clarity (Campbell et al. 1996) and romanticism (Holbrook and Olney 1995) also impact the evaluation of typical archetypes. We further assume that females who perceive themselves as romantic characters and who have unclear self-concepts will be more attracted by Cinderella-archetypal figures, because these fairy tales give a source of hope by showing how life could improve. We found support for this hypothesis.

Because archetypes refer to deep structures of the human mind, they act as organizing principles. Thus, we propose that the response to archetypal stimuli is consistent, regardless of whether they appear as commercials or movies. Therefore, we assume consistency: consumers who show high phasic arousal reactions towards the archetypal TV-commercial will also be highly activated by the archetypal movie. Therefore, we analyzed the correlation between arousal parameters of the archetypal commercial on the one hand, and the archetypal movie on the other hand, and found highly significant correlations.

Further research should control whether the arousal reactions of the TV-commercial are evoked because of the product category (sweets) or because of the well-known brand name or solely by the archetype-theme. In addition, a potential “Julia Roberts artefact” should be controlled. In our study, we chose the movie “Gone With The Wind”, because Scarlett O’Hara is probably one of the most prominent examples of a fearless female character. However, “Gone With The Wind” was shot before World War II and is set during the American Civil War, whereas “Pretty Woman” was produced in 1990 and features a modern “zeitgeist”. Furthermore, Julia Roberts is one of the most popular actresses in Hollywood and the arousal reaction to “Pretty Woman” might simply be due to her fresh and contemporary charisma. However, the initial results of a second experiment, in which we compared “Pretty Woman” to another movie starring Julia Roberts, this time not in a “Cinderella” role but in that of an emancipated woman, support the findings of the first study.

Some limitations of our empirical results should be mentioned. Firstly, our findings are based on relatively small sample sizes. This is due mainly to the intricate EDA measurement process.
Furthermore, our study was conducted only with students. Thus, it should be replicated with men and women from all age and income groups. Last but not least, it would also be useful to investigate our archetypal stimuli from a qualitative research perspective and to combine the qualitative and quantitative results.

SELECTED REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In tourism research, personality types of tourists are interpreted as a major influence on travel patterns and preferences. This taxonomy goes back to Plog’s (1974) classification of the U.S. population along a psychographic continuum. Dependables or psychocentrics prefer to avoid risks and are likely to return to a destination again and again. On the other end of the spectrum, venturers or allocentrics are people who tend to seek new destinations for each vacation. Changing service providers very frequently, in this case destinations, is also referred to as variety-seeking behavior (e.g., Hoyer and Ridgway 1984; McAlister and Pessemier 1982). For destination management organizations or hotels, restaurants and other tourism service providers, variety-seeking tourists are problematic. Even if they are very satisfied, they do not come back. Previous research revealed that variety-seeking behavior often occurs when consumers derive great hedonic choice from a product or service category which is certainly true for vacations (Inman 2001; Inman 2003; van Trijp, Hoyer and Inman 1996). In addition, the choice of a vacation destination is often driven by considering it as a means for self-expression. Consumers can demonstrate what they are or what they want to be by their choice of a destination. Considering a choice as an act of self-expression has also been found to be closely connected to the tendency to seek variety (Kim and Drolet 2003). Therefore, in tourism variety-seeking behavior is very likely to occur.

As a result, profits are negatively affected and the acquisition of new customers becomes essential. However, highly satisfied customers are likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth communication (Anderson 1998; Bone 1992). Word-of-mouth communication is generally seen as particularly influential in the acquisition of new customers (Bansal and Voyer 2000; Bristor 1990). Variety-seekers might not come back, but they might recommend the destination to others because they have been satisfied. Therefore, customer satisfaction is central for initiating positive word-of-mouth and hence, for realizing profits (Woratschek and Horbel 2003).

However, in order to use word-of-mouth communication efficiently for the achievement of the firm’s goals, it must become clear how it can be initiated and supported. For that reason, service providers need to know which customers are influential providers of word-of-mouth information and how they can be identified and encouraged to tell potential customers about their experiences. Recommendations of opinion leaders are assumed to have great influence on other consumers’ decisions. As opinion leaders often have great knowledge of the subject, they are perceived as credible sources by the recipients (Gilly et al. 1998). Research on opinion leadership further supports the proposition that they have greater product or service experience and therefore greater knowledge about product or service alternatives (Mitchell and Dacin 1996). Further it has been shown that they have high enduring product involvement (Bloch and Richins 1983; Jacoby and Hoyer 1981).

It becomes obvious that these characteristics show some parallels to venturers and variety-seeking tourists, respectively. They have great experience because they travel a lot and like to travel to many different destinations. Traveling occupies an important place in their lives indicating that their involvement in the subject is probably high. They are outgoing, inquisitive, curious and enjoy communicating with people (Goeldner and Ritchie 2003). Thus, it makes sense that they are willing to share their knowledge and experience with other people.

Taking these insights into account, it seems plausible, that variety-seeking tourists are often also opinion leaders. Opinion leaders mainly exert influence on people in their own social network because they frequently talk to friends, family, colleagues, etc. about service providers (King and Summers 1970). As these people are potential customers of the service provider, opinion leaders are the service provider’s gateway to this social network. Opinion leaders act as a sales force for the service provider because they enable the acquisition of new customers, which has a positive effect on the firm’s profits. The service provider’s profits are also positively affected by an increase of its reputation based on word-of-mouth communication in the network of relationships between old and new customers.

Opinion leaders must be identified by service providers and encouraged to tell others about their experience. Identifying opinion leaders is not simple (Yale and Gilly 1995). As we propose that parallels between variety-seekers and opinion leaders might exist, opinion leaders could be addressed by identifying variety-seekers. In tourism this should be comparably easy as there is often close interaction between tourists and the service providers, so that they can be encouraged to give word-of-mouth information to others.

An empirical study consisting of 136 in-depth interviews with tourists in three vacation destinations in Germany and Switzerland was conducted in order to find out which people give influential recommendations and whether variety-seeking tourists are opinion leaders. We decided to focus on the recipients’ perceptions of the information provider because the receiver is the person who can tell whether the information had an effect on his actual behavior. We then asked them to describe the information source in more detail, particularly concerning their personal characteristics and their knowledge in the field.

The study revealed that information seekers prefer venturers who travel to many different places as information sources. A comparison of word-of-mouth information given by venturers on the one hand and dependables on the other, supports the assumption that venturers are more likely to be opinion leaders than are repeat visitors of only one destination. Our study demonstrated that information sources who are venturers are more often perceived to have great knowledge on travel and destinations. Also, recipients of word-of-mouth information more often described venturers as individuals who have great interest on traveling compared to other people. Further, venturers seem more often to be highly involved in tourism, as recipients of word-of-mouth sources who are venturers reported that their sources gather a lot of information before they decide on a vacation destination themselves. Hence, venturers should be encouraged to engage in word-of-mouth communication.

Consequently, initiating and maintaining relationships with venturers is worthwhile as they are important sources of word-of-mouth information. Therefore, it is no longer sufficient to put effort in getting and keeping customers or trying to get them back. In order to encourage variety-seekers to provide word-of-mouth information to potential customers, a new dimension should be added to
relationship marketing: establishing and maintaining relationships with customers who will not come back.

REFERENCES

Whilst most consumers shop for belongings, many also have longings to shop, irrespective of any material gain—indeed, as long ago as 1972, Tauber suggested that shopping goals could be hedonistic rather than instrumental and the hedonic aspects of shopping behaviour have been well documented (see e.g. Woodruffe-Burton, Eccles and Elliott, 2002). This paper draws on research conducted by the authors into shopping behaviour which aims to try to understand the role of shopping in people’s lives and explores the reasons why some consumers describe their shopping experiences as a “buzz” or a “high” or sheer escapism. The findings from ongoing interpretive research conducted by the authors into compensatory consumption (e.g. Gronmo, 1988; Grunert, 1994 and Woodruffe, 1997) and addictive consumption (e.g. O’Guinn and Faber, 1989; Elliott, 1994) are examined here in the light of Csikszentmihalyi’s (1988) model of ‘flow’. Certain themes have emerged from the research which appear to be worthy of further exploration beyond the concepts of addictive and compensatory consumption which we believe help further our understanding of the role of shopping in people’s lives. Perhaps the most significant of these emerges from what we have learned about individuals’ descriptions of their lived experience of shopping; their engagement with shopping, their feelings during the shopping experience, the ‘needs’ they are seeking to fulfill. In this paper we demonstrate how Csikszentmihalyi’s (1988) ‘flow’ concept may have a great deal to offer in our understanding of consumer behaviour and shopping in particular.

THE CONCEPT OF ‘FLOW’

Csikszentmihalyi (1988) traces the development of his concept of flow to work he undertook in the mid-sixties, at which time, he notes, few psychologists were interested in intrinsic motivation; the predominant focus was still the explanation of behaviour in terms of extrinsic rewards. Csikszentmihalyi identified Maslow’s work as exceptional in this context, especially his notion of ‘self-actualisation’. However, whilst Csikszentmihalyi found Maslow’s ideas “compelling” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, p.5), he also found it wanting in the sense that:

“…it left many questions unanswered. For example, could any kind of process—or activity—give intrinsic rewards, or only a few chosen ones, like the making of art? Did all intrinsically rewarding experiences feel the same; were the intrinsic rewards from art the same as those one gets from sports, or from writing poetry? Did all people have the same propensity to be intrinsically motivated, or did one have to be born an artist to enjoy the making of art?” (p.5)

Csikszentmihalyi’s concept of ‘flow’—the term given to a common autotelic experience, one that is rewarding in and of itself—has been influential in psychology and has had an impact on the work of social psychologists in the study of leisure and sport, in particular, and in cultural anthropology. He argues that the self represents its own interests as goals; each self develops its own hierarchy of goals which become, in effect, the structure of that self:

“Whenever a new experience enters consciousness it is evaluated in terms of the goals of the self and it is dealt with accordingly. A bit of information that fits these goals strengthens the structure of the self, whereas one that conflicts with them creates disorder in consciousness and threatens the integrity of the self.” (p.22)

Csikszentmihalyi uses the term ‘psychic entropy’ to refer to those states that produce disorder by conflicting with individual goals (Csikszentmihalyi, 1978, 1985):

“Psychic entropy is a condition where there is ‘noise’ in the information-processing system. It is experienced as fear, boredom, apathy, anxiety, confusion, jealousy, and a hundred other nuances, depending on the nature of the information and the kinds of goals the information is in conflict with.” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, p.22)

Csikszentmihalyi (2000) has also drawn a link between psychic entropy and contemporary consumption behaviour which is acutely pertinent to this paper:

“The experiential need to keep consciousness tuned is responsible for a great deal of consumer behaviour. It could be said of shopping, as MacLuhan said of television, “the medium is the message”. In other words, it often does not matter what we are shopping for—the point is to shop for anything, regardless. It is a goal-directed activity, and thus it fills the vacuum that leads to depression and despair. The fact that we have to pay, that is expend the equivalent of psychic energy, for what we acquire lends an additional importance to the activity, thus, consuming is one of the ways we respond to the void that pervades consciousness when there is nothing else to do. Shopping and surrounding ourselves with possessions is a relatively easy way to forestall the dread of non-being, even though it may have serious consequences in terms of increasing entropy.” (p.270)

At the opposite extreme to psychic entropy is the condition which Csikszentmihalyi terms ‘psychic negentropy’. Optimal experience or ‘flow’ arises when the contents of consciousness are in harmony with each other and with the goals that define the person’s self. According to Csikszentmihalyi, these are the subjective conditions described as pleasure, happiness, satisfaction and enjoyment:

“Because the tendency of the self is to reproduce itself and because the self is most congruent with its own goal-directed structure during these episodes of optimal experience, to keep on experiencing flow becomes one of the central goals of the self. This is the teleonomy of the self, that is, the goal-seeking tendency that shapes the choice we make among alternatives.” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, p.24)

In describing the dimensions of the ‘flow’ experience, Csikszentmihalyi suggests that when a person’s skill matches the demands of a situation (and when, compared to everyday life in general, these demands are above average), then the quality of experience improves noticeably whether or not the person wanted
to do the activity or anticipated any enjoyment in doing it. Csikszentmihalyi suggests that even a frustrating job “may suddenly become exciting if one hits upon the right balance” (p.32), provided that the activity has relatively clear goals and quick, unambiguous feedback (it is difficult to become immersed in an activity in which one does not know what needs to be done, or how well one is doing). In addition to an equilibrium of challenges and skills, clear goals and immediate feedback, Csikszentmihalyi suggests, the ‘flow’ experience reported by people involved in enjoyable activities shares other common characteristics; focused concentration, a “merging of activity and awareness” (p.32), the effective exclusion of other everyday preoccupations, the sense that the outcomes of the activity are within the person’s control and a distorted sense of time. A further dimension of the ‘flow’ experience is not just that the person forgets his or her immediate problems but “loses temporarily the awareness of self that in normal life often intrudes in consciousness and causes psychic energy to be diverted from what needs to be done” (p.33). Escape from the self (e.g. Baumeister, 1995) suggests focusing one’s attention very narrowly on the ‘here and now’, however, Csikszentmihalyi notes a further depiction of this concept; the transcendence of self experienced at the most challenging levels.

Whilst Csikszentmihalyi’s concept of ‘flow’ initially explored people’s experiences of extremely challenging or technically demanding activities such as mountain-climbing, as suggested earlier, the concept has influenced a great deal of research in a variety of fields. Mitchell (1988) notes that, while it might seem sensible to assume that ordinary people’s day-to-day lives tend to lack the remotest parallel with experiences like climbing a mountain, yet ‘flow’ is possible in everyday events:

“Invisible mountains surround us all. They are hidden in stamp collection albums, in paints and brushes, in the well-written lines of a letter to a dear friend or an irritating politician, in making a fine souffle, in delivering a convincing speech, or in performing delicate surgery. Flow is not reserved for leisure in the limited sense of sport or recreation, but is possible whenever commitment, energy and will find meaningful and effective application in the world of social experience” (p.58)

Indeed, Allison and Duncan (1988) have studied the ‘flow’ experiences of professional and ‘blue-collar’ working women in their working lives while Massimini and Carli (1988) have conducted a specific study of ‘flow’ in daily experience. Wells (1988) studied the association between ‘flow’ and self-esteem in the daily lives of working mothers. The key to developing an understanding of the ‘flow’ experience (Massimini, Csikszentmihalyi and Delle Fave, 1988) is listening to the ways in which people—even from very different cultures—describe the ‘flow’ experience in terms of its onset, its continuation and how it feels while it lasts. More recently, researchers have turned to ‘flow’ as a useful construct for explaining consumer behaviour in the context of computer-mediated environments and it has been used in the study of user online internet experiences (Novak et al, 2001) and internet shopping behaviour (Smith and Sivakumar 2004), while Senecal et al (2002) explored how flow influences consumers’ hedonic and utilitarian online shopping experiences. Clearly some of this emerging area of research may be of considerable future interest for all consumer researchers with an interest in shopping behaviour but the research presented in this paper is based on real-life shopping experiences rather than virtual ones.

A perspective which may be useful in interpreting and identifying ‘flow’ is given in the study undertaken by Macbeth (1988) who looks at the reasons people give for enjoying an activity and how these contribute to the ‘flow’ experience. These reasons include: the activity itself; the pattern, the world it provides; enjoyment of the experience and use of skills; development of personal skills; friendship and companionship; measuring self against own ideals; emotional release; competition, measuring self against others (Macbeth, 1988, p.218). Csikszentmihalyi (1988) summarises the main dimensions of ‘flow’ as intense involvement, deep concentration, clarity of goals and feedback, loss of a sense of time, lack of self-consciousness and transcendence of a sense of self, leading to an autotelic, that is, intrinsically rewarding experience.

METHODOLOGY

This research is interpretive (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), based on the existential phenomenological interview as the main tool for engaging with lived experience (Thomson et al., 1989). Sample decisions were based on purposive methods as characteristic of qualitative research where individuals are sought for whom the processes being studied are most likely to occur and where the sample should be information rich (Patton, 1990). Volunteers were solicited through the use of personal networks, appeals in the local press and via word of mouth. The interviews generated a total of 83 individual case studies. Consumers taking part ranged in age from 19 to over 60 and included undergraduate students and some executive programme students but most were in full-time employment. To ensure confidentiality, participants’ real names are not used. As far as possible the sessions were “interviewee guided” (Sandelowski and Pollock, 1986) and there was no set list of questions, although the researcher’s prior knowledge, self-experience and awareness of emerging themes from previous interviews allowed for certain questions to be asked, or issues raised during the course of the dialogue.

The interviews were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interviewees were offered the opportunity to read the transcript of their interview if they wished. The resultant phenomenological descriptions were interpreted in line with the criteria noted by Thompson et al. (1989) and interpretation was conducted via a form of iteration described by Hirschman (1992) and Thompson et al. (1989). The iterative process took the form of a back-and-forth procedure between each interview and the entire set of interviews following the analysis of each interview where the back and forth is between passages in the interview and the entire interview (Spiggle, 1994).

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Many aspects of the ‘flow’ experience discussed previously can be seen to emerge from the individual accounts of compensatory consumption and shopping in this research. The escapist element of the shopping activity was a particularly strong theme which came through in individual accounts, where ‘the awareness of self’ is lost temporarily (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988), as these two excerpts show:

Lynn:

“Yeah I have say something hasn’t gone my way like an essay mark then I go out, it probably makes me feel better but it’s more a case of displacement. I’m not thinking about what’s gone wrong I’ve cleared my head of all negative thoughts I’m just getting on with the act of shopping. I haven’t gone out there thinking God I’ve got a bad essay mark blah blah. I don’t walk in the shop feeling negative about that, I completely forget about that.”
Christine:

"I like Southport. Always better than, say, an Arndale shopping centre or a big place where it’s claustrophobic and there’s piped music. But I do like those sort of places because you can amuse yourself in them can’t you...you can just go in them and disappear really and then come out...it’s magnificent the centre of London, you feel so small next to all these wonderful big buildings-then there’s lovely cafes and restaurants-you can go in the really really big shops and be very anonymous-be part of it but not be obvious-to go to a big city like that you can lose yourself."

Rachel’s account illustrates that what she is experiencing seems to go beyond Baumeister’s (1995, p.84) view that people try to escape from self-awareness by “restricting one’s attention to an extremely narrow focus on the here and now” and into a mode of being where she is transcending self, in line with the ‘flow’ concept.

Rachel:

“In some respects I kid myself because I think well that’s really nice I like that I’ll come back and get that knowing full well that I’ll never come back and get it because I can’t really afford it—it’s like you put yourself into like a false sense of security sort of thing wandering around...Some days I used to feel a bit depressed there were things we wanted and we couldn’t really afford them, it took my mind off the problems and I was able to wander around like a dumb blond sort of thing and I had no responsibility and I had no problems I could just wander round here and just look at all these really nice clothes and think that would be really nice for going to a do”

Susan describes feeling “hypnotised” when shopping which also captures the idea put forward by Csikszentmihalyi’s notion of ‘transcendence of self’:

“It’s almost as though it’s the buying that’s important, whether I need it or don’t need it. And in fact, I will become almost hypnotised in the shop with having to buy something...and I’m just sort of wandering round touching and looking. It’s as though I’m looking for something. I don’t know what it is necessarily—but I know when I see it.”

In the following passage, Stephanie links the escapism with the whole experience and it can be seen that the activity itself, in terms of the pattern and the world it provides, plays a role:

“I just like the way that you can escape reality, it’s like you are completely on your own, even though there are loads of people around you, you can get lost in it.”

(Interviewer) “So you can escape from reality and you can get lost in it. Tell me about a shopping experience that you have had where you have felt like that and that you have particularly enjoyed because of that, where do you like going?”

Stephanie:

“Well when I am at home I have got a particular set of shops that I always go into when I go on a shopping trip and I go round them all probably twice before I decide to buy something and then I usually go back to the one I went to first, because it is a sort of set pattern you’re looking at loads of different thing.”

Paul discusses the shopping experience in terms of excitement, a challenge (to find something ‘nice’), emotional release (a ‘buzz’) and feedback (in terms of taking the items to his girlfriend’s home and trying them on):

“I get quite excited when I first go into a shop particularly if I haven’t been in there for a couple of weeks, and you know that they’ve got stuff new in and you’re scanning through and you think I’m going to find something really nice in here, like often you see something and you think well I’ve got to have it, whereas other things might take a little bit more deliberation. When you are flicking through the rails, that gets me going. Because I think right if I spot something now that I really like then I’m going to have it straight away.”

(Interviewer) “So you actually feel physically excited?”

“Yeah I get a buzz out of it definitely. When you see something you know you really want even if you go round and have a look somewhere else before you buy it, and then you’re thinking that was it, that’s it, so you go back and hope that they haven’t sold it or anything. So you get it put it on the counter get your Switch card out or whatever and pay for it, you look in the bag straight away don’t you...Oh yeah, it’s the whole process of getting it and it’s like when you pay for it and they fold it up and put it in the bag and like he says, you look in the bag soon as you get outside. So the next step for me is that I can’t wait to get home or back to my girlfriends and try it on. In front of the mirror trying it on with all your different trousers and jumpers and shoes, do the total combination thing even with my bloody socks. It’s pretty sad but it gives me a good feel.”

The excitement or the ‘buzz’ that seems to accompany the shopping experience comes through in a number of accounts. Julie talks about it here:

“...actually I get a buzz more when I go and look for, and like or unusual ornaments or something like that, I love looking round furniture shops or interior designs and wallpaper and I absolutely love that ten times better than I would ever for clothes or basically going shopping. It’s not actually for the clothes that I go shopping it’s to go out for lunch or to go for breakfast somewhere and just sit and relax without being interrupted and thinking oh I’ve still got a couple of hours just to mill round and do what I want and that, that’s lovely that’s really good...”

Graham describes the escapist element of shopping in IKEA, in particular:

“If I’m anywhere near a particular IKEA then I can go in and basically let my mind wander, and fantasise and dream about things, I can do this to the house, that to the bedroom etc. And end up walking out the door with a catalogue and continue when I get home and think about maybe I’ll go back at some point and make a purchase of that, or maybe when I’m there I’ll make a small purchase of something...it’s the one place I can go and wander and spend quite a few hours”

However, his account of the excitement he craves in relation to his compensatory consumption shopping activities is so vivid, he actually likens it to the extreme sports he used to do:
“Having to come back and justify a purchase in almost an obscene way is almost a bit of a strange thrill. That you’re going to spend £100 pounds on a piece of clothing, or a pen, or 4/5 CDs knowing damn fine that you need to buy something for home...fords or whatever. Or you’re saving for a holiday or something and you think, what on earth are you doing spending money like that frivolously when it’s required to fulfil part of the budget? Again having to go over the road of escapism thinking about how on earth am I going to justify this when I get home and get told off sort of thing. To hell with it I’m going to do it anyway. I don’t know it’s quite strange...I used to have extreme sports a long time ago I don’t have it anymore, this may be a different bizarre way of fulfilling the excitement of things like that, extreme sports maybe”.

(Interviewer) “Is there a physical feeling that goes with the excitement?”

“Yes definitely. I get an adrenaline buzz”

(Interviewer) “What does that feel like?”

“I suppose it’s just exciting knowing that you either come up with a story which sounds fantastic and is a good piece of work. Or you’re travelling down that particular path of trying to come up with the story, and maybe as you approach home and you haven’t come up with a story, you think wow I’m going to get there in a minute and the story just does not hold water at all. I’m really in for it this time and then maybe as you’re literally getting out of the car and taking your briefcase and things to go into the house, a light bulb comes on in your mind and you think that’s it. You walk in the door and you’re blushing away at something that you’ve thought.”

Janet’s description of her shopping experiences frequently focus on the concentration and involvement in the task, the “merging of activity and awareness” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988) and loss of sense of time:

“I prefer to go on my own. I have no problem with going back to the same shop like five times if I need to look at something to decide, cos I can’t buy something unless I know it’s the best, say it’s a black top, it’s got to be the best black top in the whole town, cos I don’t want to buy it, go in the next shop and find one that I think is better or reduced cos I’d be really upset about it. So I need that time to go around on my own, I don’t want to drag people around while I go back and forth...So generally I’m better on my own. I mean I don’t mind if I’m there for hours and hours cos I’m not holding anybody else up you know so if I don’t get back till six or seven it doesn’t make any difference cos its only me that’s paying extra for the parking or only me that’s got blisters on my feet or anything.”

Lynn’s descriptions of shopping on a “good” day also show a similar focus:

“But if I’m feeling good, if I feel good about myself and it’s a nice sunny day -the wind’s blowing in the right direction- then shopping’s hugely exciting and I’ve got some money to spend and I know that I’m not using the plastic. If I’ve got money in my wallet and rather than using the card then shopping’s normally better for me. Often if I use my card and not know how much money is on it, but I know Barclays bank will let me go over the limit. Lots of people go out shopping and make a day of it and go for lunch or something, but if I’m feeling good then there’s no point in going to lunch because I just want to get on with the shopping and that will be it. I wouldn’t spend the whole day in town and go to the cinema and do something after, I’d much spend from 9 am to 5pm just purely shopping and finding everything that I want.”

An interesting dimension of the shopping experience which emerged several times in the interviews was the individuals’ accounts of the anticipation of (and even early enjoyment of) the shopping trip in terms which really fitted various descriptions of the ‘flow’ experience and which were then thwarted for various reasons, thus stifling the ‘flow’ and leading to expressions of disappointment and even distress. These examples may be seen to illustrate Csikszentmihalyi’s notion of ‘psychic entropy’ or states that produce internal disorder, discussed earlier.

For example, as Stephanie describes these feelings when the shopping activity fails to bring the desired rewards:

“I was actually here, and I wanted to buy a top because I don’t know I just got it into my head that I wanted to buy a top and I wasn’t feeling top of the world anyway because I had had a bad day lecture wise and stuff, so I went into town and had a mooch round all the shops couldn’t find anything I liked at all. You can feel it creeping up you know when you have been round a few shops that you are not going to find anything that you want and it just creeps up on you. A real anticlimax.”

Julie describes disappointment in terms of the ‘buzz’:

“Where I was the clothes were really really boring yesterday...er everything was like...and that was disappointing, thinking...I think you build yourself up you think ooh well I might find something really exciting today, and you get like this, bit of a high don’t you? And sometimes, I mean when, when I’ve done the shopping-like I’ve had a day out and it’s when you come home and the buzz has gone and you’re slightly, slightly sad inside, not sad...I think you build yourself up to have this fantastic day and you go and find this brilliant thing this...this dress that’s gonna make you feel fantastic, and it makes you feel good...and it doesn’t happen and it’s all an imaginary dress and there’s no bloody dress out there like the dress that you’ve got in your ‘ead, and that’s disappointing and you come home do...you do sometimes come home feeling disappointed.”

Christine also describes particularly poignantly her feelings when her husband spoils the excitement for her:

“I like going with my daughter more because she enjoys every single part-she likes doing more what I want to do. If you take B. (my husband) to Oxford Street he walks from one end with his hands in his pockets and then he’ll turn and walk back down the other side. I actually got him as far as Hamleys once and I turned and walked back down the other side. I actually got him as far as Hamleys once and he said ‘I’m not queuing up to get in a shop’ he said ‘I’ve never queued up to get in a shop’ and I’m not going to start now!”. So I said well I’ll queue up, you go and wait over there so but he did very grudgingly queue up to get in. My daughter would have said “great mum, there’s only 49 people in front of us!” and she would have seen it as part of the excitement-but B. spoiled it for me-I had a little bubble and it deflated before I went in-I bought what I wanted to buy and he did very grudgingly come in with me but by then it had spoiled it for me
because the excitement had gone then, going to Hamleys because I bought the earrings and then I came out. If I hadn’t been deflated if I hadn’t been shot down in flames before I got in the shop I would have done the whole 5 floors... these days, it doesn’t take much to burst my bubble.”

Both Christine’s and Julie’s account illustrate themes from the ‘flow’ literature such as intrinsic motivation (Julie’s ‘high’ or Christine’s ‘bubble’); they both focus on the involvement and engagement with the shopping activity itself; they both bring in the need for feedback from other family members and they both show the sometimes enduring disappointment or dissatisfaction which comes when their strategy fails to afford the outcome they desire.

**DISCUSSION**

Whether making choices in the shop (where they are matching their skills as a consumer with the challenge of achieving the ‘best’ possible purchase), or ‘losing’ themselves in the whole shopping process, or experiencing the sheer exhilaration and ‘buzz’ that shopping can offer, these consumers appear to be taken into the autotelic state described by Csikszentmihalyi (1992: p. 67). This is not mere pursuit of pleasure however, but is part of a conscious process of self-development where the individual is seeking to create and maintain an identity that is founded upon engagement with shopping. As Csikszentmihalyi (1988) comments, “because of the deep concentration on the activity at hand, the person in flow not only forgets his or her problems, but loses temporarily the awareness of self that in normal life often intrudes consciousness” (p. 33). It certainly seems that consumers enjoy and benefit from the positive feelings that being in a state of flow imparts upon them. The positive reinforcement that is provided by the achievement of flow and the construction of existential meaning may be a key attraction of “Retail Therapy”.

Csikszentmihalyi (1992) describes the ‘autotelic self’ as being able to translate potential threats into enjoyable challenges or opportunities for action. The term literally means ‘a self that has self-contained goals’ (p. 209). The examples of activities he cites may range from ‘dangerous’ sports such as hang-gliding or rock-climbing, through to less strenuous sports or hobbies, to everyday decisions about work, social activities and so on. ‘A person who is never bored, seldom anxious, involved with what goes on, and in flow most of the time may be said to have an autotelic self’ (p. 209).

Whilst it is not argued here that these consumers are in a state of flow all of the time, there is certainly some evidence from their reports that, within the parameters of the shopping encounter, these individuals experience ‘flow’.

There are, suggests Csikszentmihalyi, four criteria required in order to experience flow: setting goals; becoming immersed in the activity; paying attention to what is happening; and learning to enjoy immediate experience. All of these appear to be present in the accounts of the individuals who participated in this research. Goal setting may be in the long or the short-term, and centres around selecting a goal that is related to recognition of the challenges. So, in terms of the shopping experience, the goal setting may be looking for and deciding upon that ‘perfect’ item. However, such goal setting is seldom articulated in these precise terms, although expressions such as ‘challenge’ and ‘looking for something’ may be used. In Julie’s case, she talked about the “dress that’s gonna make you feel fantastic” even though she conceives this might be “all an imaginary dress”. Paul talked about the thing that would make him think “well I’ve got to have it... When you see something you know you really want”. However, other forms of goal setting suggested that individuals would deliberately set themselves goals which would enable them to enter a state of ‘flow’—notably the desire to “disappear”, to “lose yourself” or, as Stephanie says, to “escape reality”. There seems to be little doubt that these consumers meet the other three criteria. They are fully immersed in the shopping activity, shifting away from thoughts of or attention to the self to total involvement in their shopping task. Through concentrating on this, they are paying attention to what is happening at that moment in time and are wholeheartedly committed to the ‘mission’ or challenge. Finally, they enjoy the experience—this is not a demanding or involving activity that they find unpleasant or difficult. They gain real pleasure from being in the retail environment, immersed in and concentrating on the activity. As Csikszentmihalyi states: “Optimal experience [i.e. flow] is not the result of a hedonistic, lots-eating approach to life. […] One must develop skills that will stretch capacities. […] Flow drives individuals to creativity and outstanding achievement.” (p. 231)

It is argued here that the participants’ accounts from the interviews demonstrate that these consumers choose to engage deliberately in various forms of shopping activity and are able to understand their behaviour and control it by utilising their skills and knowledge to enter a state of ‘flow’ and gain satisfaction, excitement and/or escape from the ennui or stress of their personal daily lives. Csikszentmihalyi’s ‘flow’ model has enabled us to demonstrate here that:

“For the postmodern consumer, consumption is not a mere act of devouring, destroying or using things. It is also not the end process of the (central) economic cycle, but an act of production of experiences and selves or self-images. In effect, it is the process of producing one’s life, not mere maintenance or sustenance of life.” (Firat and Dholakia, 1998, p.6)

**REFERENCES**


"European Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 7) / 475"


Consuming Space: Finding Meaning within the Servicescape—A Research Agenda
Micael-Lee Johnstone, University of Otago, New Zealand
Sarah Todd, University of Otago, New Zealand
Margo Buchanan-Oliver, University of Auckland, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Place defines who we are and helps to answer the “Who am I?” question and yet we as humans also have a role in defining place (Stefanovic 1998, p33). In marketing and retail research there has been a tendency to focus on the physical characteristics of a place to explain patronage behavior, retail image and identity. However, if one looks at related areas in geography, psychology and sociology, the identity of place is not only restricted to its physical characteristics, it is also related to the social constructions of place (Lalli 1992). Using a multidisciplinary approach, a research agenda is proposed to help us better understand the social dimensions of the servicescape, and how people consume space and assign meaning to places.

INTRODUCTION

Place defines who we are and helps to answer the “Who am I?” question and yet we as humans also define place. Consequently, one should view place not just as points of geographical interest but also as something that may reveal essential information about the human ways of being-in-the-world (Stefanovic 1998, p33). One place in particular that deserves our attention is the servicescape, a term coined by Bitner (1992, p57) to address the role of manmade physical surroundings in consumption settings (e.g. retail stores, cafés, leisure sites). As Sherry Jr. (1998, p21) notes, ‘every servicescape is the co-creation of designer, marketer and consumer’. Within a retail context, this space has traditionally been considered both a gendered environment (e.g. Jansen-Verbeke 1987; Miller, Jackson et al. 1998) and a leisure site (e.g. Bloch, Ridgway et al. 1991; Shields 1992) but within marketing and retail literature there has been a tendency to approach it as a means to an end, hence potentially trivializing the significance this place may hold for its consumers. And yet, as marketers, we know very little about servicescapes, in terms of how consumers use this social space and assign meanings to such places.

The research agenda proposed in this paper adopts a multidisciplinary approach, drawing upon theories outside the discipline of marketing, such as place-related identity (e.g. Proshansky et al. 1983), to better understand how people consume space and assign meanings to place. But before proceeding, it is necessary to differentiate between space and place. Space can be thought of as the physical environment that we inhabit and/or occupy, such as buildings, parks, and lakes, although in more recent times one could also include cyberspace. But for the purpose of our study, we will focus on the physical environment. As Tuan (1977, p3) states, ‘we live in space’, whereas place is the identity or aura that we assign to space (Tuan 1977). For example, the expression, “there’s no place like home” refers to a space that has been assigned meaning. One’s home could be a building, the neighbourhood or one’s homeland, but no matter what form it takes, it has meaning because people have assigned meaning to it (Tuan 1977).

Place-related identity theories are not new to the social sciences (e.g. environmental psychology and human geography) but they have not commonly been applied in marketing and retail literature. Place-related identity research explores the relationships between people and place (Lalli 1992). Research in this area includes “place-identity”, whereby personal identity is defined by the physical environment (e.g. Krupat 1983; Proshansky, Fabian et al. 1983; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996); “place attachment”, the affective bond that individuals or groups develop towards their environment (e.g. Low and Altman 1992; Eisenhauer, Krannich et al. 2000); “sense of place” or “rootedness”, the sense of belonging one feels with their environment (e.g. Relph 1976; Tuan 1980; Jorgensen and Stedman 2001); “place dependence”, how well an environment serves one’s goals (Stokols and Shumaker 1981); and “community identity”, whereby one’s identity is defined by one’s community (Hummon 1986).

An appreciation of how people consume retail and service space and assign meaning to place will provide marketers with a better understanding of how to design spaces that consumers will enjoy; how to manage consumer resistance to proposed changes to the physical environment; how consumers identify with place; and how consumers shape space to suit their needs, especially during times of change, whether these changes are physical (e.g. the location is renovated), social (e.g. the population make-up within the area changes or a store’s personnel changes), relational (e.g. the relationship one has with others may influence patronage behavior) or transitional (e.g. the rites of passage, such as motherhood, may change the relationship one has with space). Within the marketing discipline, we have an understanding of how people consume products (e.g. Solomon 1983) and the reasons why people go shopping (e.g. Tauber 1972), but our understanding of how people consume space (i.e. servicescapes) and make meaning of place is still limited.

BACKGROUND

Within the marketing discipline, many studies have explored why consumers patronize particular stores and service locations, i.e., make ‘repetitive store choice behavior’ (Laaksonen 1993, p11). Some studies have focused on retail patronage behavior in terms of purchase intentions and buyer behavior (e.g. Hisrich, Dornoff et al. 1972; Swinyard 1993; Yalch and Spangenberg 2000), while other studies have investigated retail patronage behavior in terms of why people make repeat visits and form store/location preferences (e.g. Bellenger, Robertson et al. 1977; Darden and Babin 1994; e.g. Lee, Moschis et al. 2001).

Creating and managing a store’s atmosphere, as Truly and Milliman (2000, p193) state, is also ‘an important marketing strategy for most exchange environments’. Kotler (1973), who coined the term, defines atmospheres as the structuring of environmental cues to produce specific emotional effects in the consumer. Many studies over the years have manipulated a number of atmospheric stimuli, such as color (e.g. Bellizzi, Crowley et al. 1983, for an overview), music (c.f. Bruner II 1990; Mattila and Wirtz 2000), olfactory cues (c.f. Mitchell, Kahn et al. 1995, p229; Spangenberg, Crowley et al. 1996), and lighting (e.g. Areni and Kim 1994), in order to evaluate consumer responses in terms of store satisfaction and store image; the amount of time spent in the store; purchase intentions and so forth (c.f. Turley and Milliman 2000, for a comprehensive review).

There has also been much research in the area of image congruency, i.e., matching store image attributes with consumers’ self-images (e.g. Stern, Bush et al. 1977; e.g. Sirgy, Grewal et al.
Such studies have found that individuals’ experiences of places are often shaped by internal factors, such as one’s self-concept. This can be explained using self-congruity theory (e.g. Sirgy et al. 2000). If the store’s image is congruent with the consumer’s self-concept, it is expected that this will lead to retail patronage because the consumer is motivated to seek experiences that will enhance his or her self-concept (Sirgy et al. 2000). And yet the question remains, how are servicescapes consumed? As marketers, we know what stimuli appeal to consumers in order to encourage repeat visits but do we clearly understand how this space is used and how meanings are assigned?

### RELEVANT LITERATURE

#### Place and Social Identity

We contend that consumers use space as part of their social identity. Social identity is relevant to retail patronage research because people may choose to patronize a store if they experience a sense of oneness with either their peers within the retail environment, with other shoppers within the retail environment, with the store’s personnel or with the retail store itself. As Tajfel and Turner (1986) state, people will often try to maintain a positive social identity in order to be accepted by others. Social identity has been defined as ‘those aspects of an individual’s self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself belonging’ (Tajfel and Turner 1986, p16).

This categorization process serves two purposes. Firstly, as Ashforth and Mael (1989) state, it enables one to define others, as it provides a systematic means of segmenting and ordering the social environment. Secondly, it enables one to locate or define oneself in the social environment (Ashforth and Mael 1989, p21), hence providing a partial answer to, “Who am I?” (Turner, 1982 cited in Ashforth and Mael 1989, p21). People will often choose activities that are congruent with their identities (Ashforth and Mael 1989).

If we relate this to the physical environment, place is often used to identify social groups and differentiate between groups in terms of who is desirable and who is not (Duncan Jr. 1973), and it is through sociological approaches to consumption that group differences and social distinctions can be identified (Warde 1996, p307).

Place-identity research extends social identity theory by suggesting that one’s self-concept will be influenced by one’s relationship to one’s environment. ‘All aspects of identity will, to a greater or lesser extent, have place-related implications’ (Twigger-Ross and Uzellan, 1996). Place-identity research tells us that social interactions within the servicescape may influence how one perceives and identifies with the environment as well as the place (Relph 1976, p49).

The essence of place lies not so much in these [i.e. landscapes, cities, homes] as in the experience of an “inside” that is distinct from an “outside”; more than anything else this is what sets places apart in space and defines a particular system of physical features, activities, and meanings. To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with the place (Relph 1976, p49).

And yet, Rose (1995) contends that place-identity not only develops from an individual’s emotional attachment to an environment but also from their “dis-identifications” with places, e.g., people may identify with various places in terms of it being different from other people’s places. Within a retail context, consumers may identify with their own retail areas because they perceive it as being different from other areas. At the same time, one could posit that social interactions within the retail environment may influence how one perceives and identifies with the retail environment because we would suggest that the identity of place is partly shaped by consumers’ social experiences—the “social link” factor. As Shields’ (1992b, p110) states, ‘shopping is not just a functional activity. Consumption has become a communal activity, even a form of solidarity’. This has important implications for the retail environment because as some authors suggest, consumers are forming social links with others through their consumption activities (Cova 1997, p306). The link between consumers is becoming more significant than the product (Cova 1997; Aubert-Gamet and Cova 1999). However, we would suggest that not only does the product encourage these social links but the retail environment itself facilitates these social connections. Hence, we maintain that the servicescape is primarily a social environment. Consequently, one should consider the social context when exploring this environment.

#### Social Context

Very few researchers in the area of marketing or retail research have investigated the social nature of the servicescape (e.g. Goodwin and Gremler 1994; e.g. Aubert-Gamet and Cova 1999), how these sites are consumed within a social context, how people identify with these sites and with others within these sites (e.g. Sirgy, Grewal et al. 2000; e.g. Tombs and McColl-Kennedy 2003), or the influence that such identifications may have on patronage (e.g. McGrath and Ottes 1995). And yet, as some sociologists contend, the retail environment is primarily a social environment (Prus and Dawson 1991; Shields 1992a; Miller, Jackson et al. 1998). The reasons why people become attached to different locations extend well beyond the location’s physical characteristics, types of products it sells and/or level of service provided.

This has important implications for the marketer because, as has been suggested, consumers are forming social links with others through their consumption activities (Cova 1997, p306). Accordingly, the link between consumers is perhaps becoming more significant than the actual product consumed (Cova 1997; Aubert-Gamet and Cova 1999). We propose that it is not just the product that encourages these social links but it is also the environment that facilitates these links. The consequence of this is that, while some forms of consumption may decrease, others may increase because consumers will choose products and activities not for their use value but for their ‘link value’ (Cova 1997). Therefore, one could posit that social interactions within the servicescape may influence how one perceives and identifies with the environment as well as influence how these sites are consumed and socially constructed.

#### The Meaning of Place

If we move from retail and services literature to related areas in geography, psychology and sociology, we find recognition that the identity of place is not only restricted to its physical characteristics (e.g. Proshansky et al. 1983; Shields 1992; Miller et al. 1998), it is also related to the social constructions of place—those perceptions formed by individuals and groups (Lalli 1992). As Lalli (1992) states, it is a person’s relationship with place and how they identify with place, not the identity of the place itself, that gives meaning to place. The physical setting, objects, and activities that occur in various environments may provide one with meanings about place, but they are not the property of place, rather ‘they are [the] property of human intentions and experiences’ (Relph 1976, p47). Accordingly, people play a role in shaping place-identity, just as they do in shaping self-identity. But, more importantly, marketers need to recognize that place is a social construction; the servicescape is moulded by the very people who occupy it. Retail managers and
service providers, therefore, cannot assume total control or ownership of this space, since it is the consumer who assigns meaning to place.

Meaning may also be attributed to one’s sense of place. People often acquire a sense of belonging and purpose via personal attachments with a physical location (e.g. Relph 1976), which in turn may give meaning to their lives. It is one’s sense of place or rootedness that gives one a sense of belonging.

**Place Attachment Theory**

Place attachment, as described in geography and psychology literature, is the concept of people being bonded to places (Low and Altman 1992; Eisenhauer, Kramlich et al. 2000). Attachment emphasizes affect, and place relates to ‘the environmental settings to which people are emotionally and culturally attached’ (Low and Altman 1992, p5). Affect, emotion and feeling are central to the place attachment concept and appear consistently in most analyses (Low and Altman 1992). However, an attachment to a place does not have to be individually specific; groups and communities can collectively share attachments to places (Low and Altman 1992; Vorkinn and Riese 2001). Conversely, ‘the social relations that a place signifies may be equally or more important to the attachment process than the place qua place’ (Low & Altman 1992, p7).

Place attachment theory is useful because it helps to explain individuals’ and communities’ attitudes towards proposed changes in the environment (Vorkinn and Riese 2001). It also helps to explain how people identify with places. As Low and Altman (1992, p10) state, ‘place attachment may contribute to the formation, maintenance, and preservation of the identity of a person, group, or culture’. And yet, at the same time, place is also moulded by the very people who occupy it. In accordance with this, Rubinstein and Parmalee (1992) suggest that people do not necessarily become attached to places to the same degree—there will be differing levels of intensity. Based on individual and collective meanings, one will have different experiences depending on where they go and whom they encounter. Consequently, experiences will vary depending on the servicescape, the individual, and one’s level of attachment. Different places may also become significant for various reasons, e.g., due to an individual’s need for different kinds of experiences, not necessarily novel experiences.

Moreover, place attachment has also been investigated in terms of its physical, social and autobiographical dimensions (Rowles 1983). A pervasive theme in Rowles’ (1983) study was ‘insideness’. ‘Insideness’ consists of three components—‘physical insideness’, familiarity of the physical environment; ‘social insideness’, integration with the community; ‘autobiographical insideness’, historical dimensions/remembered places—this relates to a sense of self (Rowles 1983). As Rowles (1983, p308) states, ‘imbuing places with meaning as [an] expression of one’s identity serves several purposes’—it creates a sense of belonging, provides a sense of continuity between the present and future, and it plays a role in the adaptation of personal identity. ‘To abandon these places either physically or, more importantly, cognitively, is to give up identity’ (Rowles 1983, p308). Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996, p206) go on to note that one’s attachment with a place may help to support and develop aspects of an individual’s and/or group’s identity. Consequently, changes within the servicescape, for some people, may represent a sense of loss and hence a loss of identity.

At the same time, ‘just as personal identity transforms space into place, place shapes personal experiences’ (Rubinstein and Parmalee 1996, p206). The reasons why people become attached to different retail locations extend well beyond the location’s physical characteristics or the types of products it sells. Consequently this leads us to ask, do some people become attached to certain places because it helps to facilitate social experiences?

**Experiential Consumption**

As Holbrook (1987) suggests, consumer research should focus more on consumption activities rather than merely purchasing activities, because people engage in ‘consumption behavior’ as opposed to ‘buying behavior’. Douglas (2001) extends this by saying that, if we are to make sense of the world, both the good and the bad, through the consumption of goods [we would include space], we need to understand the meanings that are assigned to goods. If we focus on the goods only, ‘instead of on the meanings that the goods are used to express, we are really focusing on the surface’ (Douglas 2001, p266). The same principle could be applied to servicescapes. If one focuses on the functional aspects of the location only, rather than the meanings that have been assigned by the consumer, our understanding of how consumers consume retail/service space and assign meanings to place will remain limited.

The experiential perspective has much to offer marketing literature because, as Seamon (1984) suggests, people form emotional links with their environments based upon their experiences with the environment. By understanding the experiential nature of consumption (i.e. how people consume space), insights will be gained into why people regularly patronize specific servicescapes, and why they participate in various consumption activities. The social aspect of consumption not only influences decision-making, it also influences the way individuals structure their social reality (Solomon 1983). As Edgell and Hetherington (1996, p5) contend, the experience of consuming is shaped by social relations.

We propose that the experiential aspect of consumption and the location itself may for some people, in some situations, become even more important than the product itself. Products may be able to link consumers to each other, but the experience of shopping together, the experience of shopping for others, the experience of patronizing the location together, or the experience of, for example, enjoying a cup of coffee in the servicescape, may be just as meaningful. Hence, we stress the importance of acknowledging that retail and service environments provide many different kinds of consumption experiences for consumers.

However, as Clarke and Schmidt (1995) note, the way place has been defined in marketing literature to date has been very narrow in its focus. Retail literature has tended to focus on the physicality of the location, whereas, in disciplines such as geography and psychology, place is viewed in terms of its temporal, spatial, natural and social dimensions. By understanding place in terms of its cultural identity and the rituals that eventuate in places, Clarke and Schmidt (1995) suggest that service organizations can enhance the overall environmental encounter.

Similarly, very little retail research, if any, has looked at how the location itself may contribute to the formation and maintenance of strong social relationships within the retail environment (excluding store-customer relationships). And yet, the experiential perspective is relevant to retail patronage research because experiences are shaped by social activities. But more importantly, it is the retail environment itself that facilitates these experiences.

**RESEARCH AGENDA**

Our primary objective is to explore consumers’ social experiences within the servicescape; more specifically, personal relationships and the influence these relationships may have on patronage behavior. As Proshansky (1978) contends, even though the physical dimensions and characteristics of a place may help to shape the multiple identities a person has (i.e. personal identities and social identities), these same place characteristics and dimensions will also be shaped by the identity and characteristics of the person. Place is not only a personal construction, it also arises from the social environment (Proshansky et al. 1983). As Eisenhauer,
Krannich and Blahna (2000, p422) state, ‘people confer meaning on the environment in ways that reflect their social and cultural experiences’. Our secondary objective is to explore how consumers use and consume servicescapes and assign meanings to these places. However, consumption within this context will not be confined to shopping.

As the diagram above suggests (Figure 1), the servicescape’s identity is socially constructed; meaning is co-created, it is not created in a social vacuum. Consequently, retail managers and service providers cannot assume total control or ownership of this space, because it is the consumer who ultimately assigns meaning to place. However, we do not suggest that this model exclusively explains how a servicescape’s identity is shaped but we do propose that personal relationships may contribute to a servicescape’s identity as well as patronage behavior.

The Social Construction of Place model (Fig 1) is based on McCracken’s (1986) Transfer of Meaning model and Ritson and Elliott’s (1995) Advertising Literacy model but within a place identity context. McCracken (1986) proposes that cultural meaning in today’s society is resident in a Western society’s consumer system, whereby people attach symbolic meaning to things based upon their own cultural beliefs and experiences. As Lewis (1983, p136) suggests, symbols reflect the values and norms of society or the ideology of the social class [or social group]. Hence, the meaning a person assigns to a symbol dictates how they view the world (Denton and Woodward 1990).

As McCracken (1986) states, cultural meaning resides in a Western society’s consumer system because consumer goods have moved beyond their utilitarian value and commercial value, and are now ‘both the creations and the creators of the culturally constituted world’ (McCracken 1986, p74). Consequently, commodities have become significant because of their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning. At the same time, a culturally constituted world is a world of everyday experience, whereby ‘individual’s senses are fully shaped and constituted by the beliefs and assumptions of his/her culture’ (McCracken 1986, p72). Hence, we would suggest that the types of relationships one has with others and the components that make up the servicescape (i.e. objects, physical space, staff and customers), within a Western Society’s consumer system, are shaped by the individual’s culture.

While McCracken’s (1986) Transfer of Meaning model provides an excellent overview of how advertising and the fashion system can effectively be used to transfer meaning to the consumer, he neglects to acknowledge that the movement of meaning is a two-way process. Literacy of any text is not an independent variable, ‘but is open to the influence of the social world and the social uses to which it is put’ (Ritson and Elliott 1995, p1040). As Cova (1997, p312) explicitly notes people do not function in a social vacuum, acting on the sole impulse of advertising impacts. The meaning ascribed to products and services is often related to societal occasions and to social links, and rituals.
Ritson and Elliott (1995, p1036) view the advertising audience not only as an active one but as a heterogeneous one, who co-create meaning and act on these polysemic meanings. In other words, meaning is constantly being constructed and reconstructed by the consumer. Within the context of this study, the consumer is also actively involved in shaping the location’s identity, just as the location helps to shape the individual’s/group’s identity. In other words, a consumer’s perception of the servicescape, which encompasses staff, objects, the physical environment, and other customers, is a reflection of his or her cultural beliefs, values and experiences. And yet these things also help to shape the consumer’s values, perceptions and experiences. Thus, the transfer of meaning is a two-way process, whereby the process of meaning making is continuously being constructed and reconstructed.

In addition, the ways in which individuals or groups consume space will vary, depending upon one’s relationships with others (e.g. Mary might patronize Mall X when she is by herself, but she will only patronize Mall Z when she is with Sarah); one’s agenda (e.g. leisure, goal-oriented, or both); and one’s rituals (e.g. a consumer may go to the same café everyday to unwind after work).

Marketing literature has explored consumer-business and business-business relationships (e.g. Dwyer, Schurr et al. 1987; Grönroos 1994; Gummesson 1994) and services literature has looked at commercial friendships, i.e., the relationships that form between the service provider and the consumer (e.g. Goodwin and Gremler 1994; e.g. Price and Arnould 1995; Bendapudi and Berry 1997; Gwinner, Gremler et al. 1998; Price and Arnould 1999). However, we are interested in exploring personal relationships (e.g. friends and family members) and the influence they may have on a servicescape’s identity and a consumer’s patronage behavior. We are interested in the social link factor, whereby personal relationships may influence retail patronage and consumption behavior. For example, a consumer’s attachment to a location may be meaningful because it provides a social link for the individual, e.g., a consumer may always patronize servicescape Z because it nurtures the relationship he or she may have with a friend. However, if that relationship undergoes some change (e.g. dissolves), the consumer may no longer feel the need to patronize that location because the social link factor no longer exists.

**METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Since the focus of this study is to explore consumers’ social experiences within the servicescape, a constructionist perspective is adopted because we consider place to be a socially constructed concept.

Secondly, as Crotty (1998) suggests, the methodological perspective one chooses to adopt in a study will govern one’s choice and use of methods. For the purpose of this study, a phenomenological-methodological approach will be used because we are interested in exploring the “lived experiences” of individuals and the role place plays in consumers’ lives. As Masberg and Silverman (1996) state, phenomenology is a valuable conceptual and methodological approach because the basis for phenomenology is to study the perspective of the individual who is experiencing the phenomenon; understanding emerges from their discourse. Phenomenology ‘seeks the meaning of events, not their causes’ (Seamon 1982, p123). It is also acknowledged that, even though individuals construct their own meanings, these meanings are not created entirely on their own, due to one’s social interactions with the world. Subsequently, the overall objective of phenomenology is to understand the lived experience (Sanders 1982, p354).

We propose that the way in which consumers assign meanings to place and consume space is a reflection of the social links that consumers form with others. While the research is exploratory and interpretive in nature, some guiding questions have been developed and are detailed in Table 1.

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) How do consumers’ social experiences shape the servicescape, in terms of consumer identification?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) How does the servicescape shape consumers’ social experiences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) What role do relationships play in servicescape patronage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) How do relationships influence consumption behavior within the servicescape (e.g. consumption rituals)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) How does the servicescape contribute to consumers’ relationships?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES**

By understanding how place is socially constructed and consumed, servicescape managers may be able to better manage servicescapes and enhance consumers’ overall experiences. Equally important, retail managers may be able to anticipate how consumers will respond to proposed changes within the servicescape, especially if a consumer’s identification and emotional attachment with the servicescape is strong. For example, a consumer’s place attachment may be influenced by how well a retail site satisfies a consumer’s need for social experiences. This may be particularly useful to know when a site undergoes physical changes, because proposed changes to a retail site may affect the ‘link value’, i.e., social link, within the retail environment. One should not underestimate the social link factor because this may influence patronage motives.

The experiential perspective also has much to offer retail literature because, as Seamon (1984) suggests, people form emotional links with their environments based upon their experiences with the environment. By better understanding the experiential nature of consumption, one will gain more insight into why people patronize retail and service sites and participate in various consumption activities. But more importantly, a better understanding of how the identity of a retail location is socially constructed will be obtained. As Abbott (1955, p40 cited in Holbrook 1987, p161) states, ‘what people really desire are not products but satisfying experiences.’ At the same time, the *experience* of consuming is also shaped by social relations (Edgell and Hetherington 1996, p5).
This study should also highlight the need to explore other types of relationships within the retail environment. Changes that often occur between people (i.e. the formation of new relationships, the dissolution of old relationships) may affect how people identify with retail locations. Lastly, an understanding of how retail space is consumed may provide additional opportunities for retail managers. For example, the creation of replicable and homogenous shopping mall designs is widespread and, although current marketing literature emphasizes the importance of communicating a consistent image (e.g. Duncan and Moriarty 1998), it could be suggested that it is equally important to provide heterogeneous environments. As some authors suggest, places should encourage self-expression and personalization due to one’s self-concept being influenced by one’s relationship to the environment (Krupat 1983).

**CONCLUSION**

The underlying premise of our proposed study is that social interactions within the servicescape (i.e. personal relationships) may influence how one perceives and identifies with the environment as well as influence how these sites are consumed and socially constructed. The potential contribution of this understanding should not be undervalued because how we better manage these servicescapes if we do not understand what, how or why people become attached to locations, identify with locations, and consume these locations? Secondly, few studies in marketing and retail literature have investigated the social and communal aspects of the servicescape and the influence this may have on retail patronage. One should view the servicescape within a social context because shopping by its very nature is a social activity, whether one is shopping for oneself, for others, by oneself or with others. How one identifies and interacts with place and others within the servicescape is important because the identity of place is not directly related to its physical characteristics, instead it is related to the social constructions of place (Lalli 1992). At the same time, it is becoming increasingly important to view these sites as ‘community spaces’ (White and Sutton 2001), because people play a role in shaping the identity of place, just as they do in shaping self-identity. This study aims to develop a theoretical framework, drawn from a multidisciplinary background, which can be used in future servicescape studies.

**REFERENCES**


To our knowledge, seasonal sales as a social or commercial ritual (see table 1) have never been the subject of academic research. However, eight out of ten French people count on finding bargains in the summer or winter seasonal sales (Belot, 2001). In 2000, seasonal sales and special offers accounted for a major share of the French textile market: 26% of turnover in department stores, 36% of purchases made by correspondence, and 25% of turnover in chains with outlets under 4,000 square metres (La Tribune, 2002a). The winter seasonal sales at Printemps, which last six weeks but are mainly concentrated in the first 10 days, represent 13% of annual turnover (La Tribune, 2002b). Visits to the Paris department store, Printemps, which makes 25% of its annual turnover during the winter and summer seasonal sales, increase from 40,000 per day on average to 100,000 during the summer seasonal sales.

In this article, we aim to identify the determinants of consumers’ attitude towards seasonal sales, in order to obtain a clearer understanding of their behaviour during this period and measure the parameters. Attitude has been defined as ‘an index of the degree to which a person likes or dislikes an object, where ‘object’ is used in the generic sense to refer to any aspect of the individual’s world’ (Ajzen and Fischbein, 1980, p.64). An individual’s attitude towards seasonal sales is, therefore, defined as the degree to which the person likes or dislikes them. Verhallen and Van Raaij (1986) emphasized that an attitude towards an object results from a comparison between the benefits and costs associated with it. What are the benefits and costs associated with seasonal sales? A qualitative study was carried out among 18 women between the ages of 24 and 54 to answer this question. The interviews covered purchases of clothing and shoes in the seasonal sales, as seasonal sales mainly affect the textile sector: 80% of textiles are included in the seasonal sales, compared to 10% of non-textile goods. These interviews identified the costs and benefits related to seasonal sales. A quantitative study of 295 students was carried out to confirm the findings of this initial phase. In part one of this article, we analyse research on shopping and consumer experience, as well as research on bargain hunting, in order to identify the benefits and costs associated with seasonal sales. Part two presents the findings of the qualitative study and proposes a conceptual framework for the antecedents of attitudes to seasonal sales. The third part presents the findings of the quantitative study.

**COSTS AND BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH SEASONAL SALES**

The benefits related to consumer and shopping experiences have already been analysed (Richins, 1994a, 1994b; Lai, 1994; Babin, Darden and Griffin 1994; Holbrook, 1999; Aurier, Evrard and N’Goala, 1999; Filser, 2000). Interesting work on promotions has been done by Schindler (1989), Mano and Elliott (1997), and Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2001). However, little research has been done into the costs associated with the buying experience or promotions. In this article, we aim to confirm previous research into consumer and shopping experiences, highlighting the benefits and costs associated with seasonal sales.

**Shopping as an activity…**

Store frequented by consumers’ objectives in terms of product-purchase (Filser et al., 2003) and efficiency (time spent and effort required) (Seiders, Berry and Gresham, 2000), shopping is also a form of escapism, involving consumers’ interactions with the store outlet, staff, and other shoppers, as well as a source of sensory input: sounds, sights, smells, and even taste or touch (Rieunier, 2000; Rieunier and Dauce, 2002; Filser et al., 2003). Few researchers have investigated the costs associated with the shopping experience. Some authors have, however, worked on the consumer experience. Zeithaml (1988) pointed out that consumers devote not only financial resources but also time, energy, and effort to shopping. Her work dealt separately with financial costs, search costs, temporal costs, and mental or psychological costs. In the same way, Lai (1994) focused on costs in terms of money, time, social interaction, and energy, as well as the risks associated with owning, consuming, and maintaining products. Bender (1964) observed that the choice of shop is based on primary costs (price of a product or, more broadly, total purchases) and secondary costs. Secondary costs may be financial (parking, credit, or taxes), temporal (finding items, waiting, or travelling), and psychological (conflict in the shopper’s mind or with others, frustration, depression, temperature, atmosphere, and shop layout).

In a similar vein, Astous et al. (1995) identified sources of irritation during shopping. Psychological costs can be divided into four areas: contacts with employees (sales pressure, negative attitude, unavailability, etc.), characteristics of the assortment (unavailability of products on special offer, missing sizes, etc.), design factors (no mirrors in changing rooms, price tags missing, etc.), and the atmosphere (overheating, loud music, unpleasant smells, etc.). Arnold et al. (2004) and Machleit, Meyer and Eroglu (2003) obtained similar findings. Particularly, Arnold et al. (2004) showed the importance of contacts with employees in creating delightful or terrible shopping experience.

It confirms research on store or service environment. Bitner (1992) and Baker, Levy and Grewal (1992) make a distinction between ambient factors (basic environmental conditions: temperature, smell, noise, etc.) social factors (human elements in the shop: employees and other shoppers) and design factors (functional and aesthetic elements, such as architecture, decor, etc.). Previous researches on store atmosphere focused on the role of music, smells, colours, crowding and store layout (Kotler, 1973 and 1974; Belizzi, Crowley and Hasty, 1983; Eroglu and Machleit, 1990; Baker, Levy and Grewal, 1992; Rieunier, 2000). These researches demonstrated the impact of store environment on internal costs (negative feelings such as irritations or loss of control, as well as difficulty in processing information and making decisions).

And bargain hunting …

Bargains have initially an utilitarian aspect. Promotions provide an opportunity to save money, buy more products, or obtain better quality items (Chandon, Wansink, and Laurent, 2000; Ailawadi, Neslin and Gedenk, 2001). They also attract attention to a product in the store or in the retailer’s advertising, thus facilitating shopping.

However, prices may trigger emotions, either negative (if the price paid is considered too high) or positive (in the opposite case) (Schindler, 1989; Honea and Dahl, 2003). Thus, paying a low price makes shoppers feel proud, clever, or competent, gives them the impression that they have “beaten” a large corporation or the satisfaction of having know-how they can use to help others...
As the products on promotions are constantly changing, promotions meet consumers’ need for variety and stimulate their curiosity (Chandon, Wansink, and Laurent, 2000). Finally, consumers may enjoy taking part in certain promotional activities, such as games and competitions. At the same time, Desmet, 2002 identifies seven costs associated with taking advantage of special offers.

This analysis of the literature is an attempt to identify the costs and benefits associated with shopping and bargains. The seasonal sales represent a specific shopping situation that has not been covered in existing literature. A qualitative survey was, therefore, carried out to identify their associated costs and benefits.

COSTS AND BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH SEASONAL SALES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

We identified the motivations and disincentives for purchasing products during seasonal sales from a review of the literature and consumer interviews.

Presentation of the qualitative study

We carried out 18 semi-directive interviews with women aged from 24 to 54. These consumers had a wide range of incomes and family situations (single women to mothers of 3 children). The interviews generally lasted 15 to 30 minutes. The women described their perceptions and behaviour in relation to seasonal sales. This methodology has already been used in other research on shopping. Table 2 presents the methodology of the qualitative study in greater detail.

Some simple statistical analyses were carried out to obtain a global, objective perspective on the findings of the qualitative study (Brucks, 1986). These results were from a small sample of 18 participants. While they do not provide any definitive, representative data, they are useful for assessing the general importance of the various costs and benefits in the opinion of the interviewees. It was also possible to identify the points that were mentioned systematically and those that were significant for only a small number of women. A total of 392 comments were obtained (i.e. an average of 22 per theme) on the costs and benefits of purchasing products during seasonal sales. Comments repeated several times by the same interviewee were only counted once. The number of comments per consumer varied from 12 to 35. Table 3 shows the frequency with which each category was mentioned during the interviews. It also indicates the authors cited above who have discussed each topic in their research.

Excluding the comments on itinerary, which could be positive or negative depending on the situation, 42.6% of the comments made concerned benefits and 41.4% referred to costs. According to Ajzen and Fischbein’s model (1980), the relative importance of these items should be taken into account. Apparently, for the majority of interviewees, the costs were clearly outweighed by the benefits. Finally, certain points (“standing out from the crowd” and “not interested in savings”) were only mentioned by a small minority of interviewees. We now present the 14 determinants of attitude towards the seasonal sales, on the basis of theory combined with interview extracts (see figure 2).
In the context of this study, establishing a typology (also known as a taxonomy) of the antecedents of attitudes towards seasonal sales consisted of studying consumers’ motivations and disincentives in relation to seasonal sales. In order to do that, a certain number of consumers were interviewed and the content of their answers analysed to test the typology. It is possible to analyse these interviews in several ways (Evrard, Pras, and Roux, 1997), depending on the objectives of the research. Encoding systems may be developed to classify as many statements as possible, each referring to one of the antecedents identified. In this case, an encoding system defines a typology for the field under examination: for example, Bettman and Park (1980) set up an encoding system for classifying the use of knowledge in a decision-making situation, while Brucks (1986) developed an encoding system for classifying and studying knowledge of a category of products. Bruck defined three objectives that an encoding system (and the associated typology) must meet:

1. The typology must be relatively parsimonious, while covering the subjects’ statements as well as possible;
2. The encoding system and typology must be easy to use and seem logical to the people who encode the answers;
3. The categories in the typology must be as distinct as possible.

The interviews were recorded and a transcript was prepared for analysis. The interviews were then divided into semantic units, each expressing a different idea. Units consisted of a word, a sentence, or even a whole paragraph. Each semantic unit corresponding to the theme of the study was then allocated a category code. The interview transcripts were analysed by one of the authors, using ModaLisa software.

### TABLE 2
Methodology of the qualitative study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>buying products cheaper</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better value for money</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buying more</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pleasure of spending money</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-satisfaction</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>itinerary</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear of being cheated</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>product quality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficulty finding the right product</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shop atmosphere</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waste of time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standing out from the crowd</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear of wasting money</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not interested in savings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># shoppers who mentioned it at least once</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>buying products cheaper</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better value for money</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buying more</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pleasure of spending money</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-satisfaction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>itinerary</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear of being cheated</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>product quality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficulty finding the right product</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shop atmosphere</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waste of time</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standing out from the crowd</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear of wasting money</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not interested in savings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review of the literature: Authors

- Chandon, Wansink, and Laurent (2000)
- Chandon, Wansink, and Laurent (2000)
- Schindler (1989)
- Bender (1964), d’ Astous et al. (1995)
Findings of the qualitative study

The first three benefits listed were financial:

- **Simply buying products cheaper.** Consumers enjoy buying products at a lower price during the seasonal sales: “I like seasonal sales simply because things are cheaper than usual” “The pleasure is twofold: first, I enjoy buying new clothing and, second, I feel I have made a bargain.” Schindler (1989) noted that price reductions gave rise to positive emotions. The pleasures of bargaining and finding good deals are some of the shopping motivations (Tauber, 1972; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Roux, 2003). According to a study on shopping motivations by Arnold and Reynolds (2003), consumers enjoy “hunting” bargains, finding special offers, and finding items at low prices.

- **Buying more.** Some people take advantage of lower prices to buy more products than they intended: “If, for example, a garment is at half price, I may buy two, perhaps a t-shirt or nice, sweater, suitable for anytime wear.” According to Schindler (1989), price reductions produce positive emotions thanks to the possibility of saving money and buying more products.

- **Better value for money.** For the interviewees, better value for money meant buying high quality clothing that would be too expensive the rest of the year. For many people, the sales periods are the only time when some brands are affordable: “Sales are a great pleasure, because you can go into shops where you don’t usually go, and buy things that are normally too expensive at a much cheaper price. That’s what I do during the seasonal sales, it’s my objective” “It’s the
possibility of buying clothes I couldn’t usually buy because they’re too expensive, so you can buy them at lower prices, which are normally more reasonable. And I often wait for the seasonal sales to buy specific items."

There are two benefits related to making purchases:

- **The pleasure of spending money.** Consumers are motivated as much by the product as by the act of buying itself. They cheer themselves up by spending money on their own pleasure or buying themselves little gifts (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). In this context, seasonal sales are simply another way of giving oneself pleasure. “It’s the ‘pretty woman’ syndrome, but I’m paying, it doesn’t matter, I enjoy it, after all, that’s what I work for, too. I enjoy being able to splash out, because I’ve worked for it.”

- **Self-satisfaction.** Self-satisfaction follows on from the perception of having found a bargain: “When I come home from the seasonal sales, I talk about it, I show them what I’ve bought, try it on in front of my friends and they say ‘Hey, that’s great’!”. The price paid also has an impact in terms of expression of the ego (Schindler, 1988, 1989). Obtaining a price reduction generates positive emotions like pride and makes consumers feel intelligent and competent. It also bolsters consumers’ self-image or the image they want to give others, as ‘smart shoppers. This feeling of pride or self-satisfaction also appears in other shopping situations (Tauber, 1972; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). For example, Arnold and Reynolds (2003) demonstrated that consumers felt proud when they purchased the perfect gift.

One point may be considered a benefit or, on the contrary, a cost, depending on the individual and/or the situation:

- **Itinerary and preparation.** This category covers selecting the shops before the seasonal sales start, not just listing them but also deciding on the best time to go there (morning or evening, weekdays or weekends, etc.) as well as any people to accompany the shopper. This aspect is reminiscent of literature on rituals in consumer behaviour (Rook, 1985). Seasonal sales are a ritual for some consumers with a script (itinerary, dates, and time of day) and several people playing different roles (accompanying the shopper, family and friends to whom consumers show their purchases, etc.): “It’s like a pilgrimage, or the ‘stations of the cross’ and I usually start in Rue Sainte-Catherine because there are quite a few shops I like there and then I go down.” In other, less extreme cases, this organisation and itinerary may simply be a way of saving time. In this context, a prepared itinerary may be a way of avoiding crowds.

There are a large number of negative aspects, shared by varying numbers of participants. Three categories are related to the products on offer: fear of being swindled, doubts concerning product quality, and the difficulty of finding the right product.

- **Fear of being swindled.** Interviewees expressed a mistrust of seasonal sales and doubts concerning the honesty of stores during seasonal sales: “I get the feeling I’m being cheated during seasonal sales I don’t trust them.” Terms frequently used in interviews included “suspicion” and “swindle.” Some interviewees expressed doubts as to the reality of price reductions advertised by distributors and the types of products on sale: “I’m a bit fed up as, during the seasonal sales, a lot of shops increase their prices just beforehand then offer 30 or 40 % off, but they had increased their prices to start with. Shops like that get on my nerves” “Because they often bring out stuff, either special things for the seasonal sales, for example sets of T-shirts that hadn’t been in the shops before but they put out just for the seasonal sales, lines they couldn’t, or items from last year.”

- **Doubts concerning product quality.** Some expressed doubts about product quality: “I get the impression that in lots of shops, the things they put in the seasonal sales are not really top quality.”

- **Difficulty finding the right product.** Products are sold out so quickly during the seasonal sales that many consumers have difficulty finding products to suit them: “What I don’t like about the seasonal sales is when I find a style I like but there are none left in my size. That’s what annoys me the most” “It’s always the same clothes in the seasonal sales. In any case, the problem is that you can’t find the right sizes. It’s true, when there is a pair of trousers you really like, you want to buy it but they haven’t got it, then you go to all three shops […] and they don’t have the size either […] you’re really disappointed.”

Two categories are related to changes that take place in shops during seasonal sales and their consequences:

- **Store atmosphere.** This includes comments on the store staff, customers (jostling…), the arrangement of products on the shelves, etc. during seasonal sales. Changes in the environment in shops during seasonal sales cause negative emotions (displeasure, annoyance, frustration) and have a negative impact on consumers’ ability to find products and analyse information in making decisions (McGoldrick, Betts and Keeling; 1999; Rieunier, 2000). Factors that deteriorate the atmosphere during seasonal sales include crowding, which causes negative emotions for some consumers and reactions such as escape or aggressiveness (Dion, 2000). Social (number of people) and spatial (space available) density in stores increase during seasonal sales. Interviewees mentioned: “jostle” “crush” “crowd”, and “queue.” The behaviour of other consumers may also be perceived as a source of stress: “I don’t like crowds or stress and it’s clearly a tough time, even if you’re pleased with your purchases you have to fight for them and prepare yourself, as people jostle each other and as soon as you put something down, someone else picks it up, and people often pinch things when you’re in the middle of trying them on and I must admit it’s not my favourite activity,” Machleit, Meyer, and Eroglu (2003) showed that “other” consumers were a source of annoyance while consumers were in the stores, especially when they behaved rudely. Another two aspects of the irritation related to shopping reported by Astous et al. (1995) appears in this research: store layout and contact with the store staff.

- **Waste of time.** Shopping during seasonal sales may be perceived as a waste of time, often due to the crowds in shopping centres: “I am not necessarily going to spend more money during the seasonal sales, as they don’t have all the sizes, people grab things, some items are reserved a week in advance, and I haven’t got the time” “It makes you buy things you hadn’t planned and it can cost you a lot of money, not to mention the time it takes.” Due to the crowds, the mess in the stores and the more limited choice during this period, consumers have difficulty finding and choosing...
products (decrease in the convenience of finding items) (Dion, 2000; Seiders, Berry, and Gresham, 2000). As a result of long queues at checkouts, consumers have difficulty paying for products (decrease in the convenience of purchasing) (Seiders, Berry, and Gresham, 2000). According to the consumers interviewed, shopping requires more time and effort during the seasonal sales (Berry, Seiders and Grewal, 2002).

Finally, it is possible to distinguish three categories corresponding to more widespread consumer attitudes, which may explain rejection of the seasonal sales:

- **A need to stand out from the crowd.** Some consumers feel a need to be unique and stand out from the crowd: this motivation may be described as nonconformist (Burns and Warren, 1995; Simonson and Nowlis, 2000; Tian, 2001). “It would spoil my pleasure to stand in a queue with 50 women fighting to buy something for about ten euros less.” When consumers feel too similar to others, they react with a need to feel unique, which compels them to distinguish themselves from the crowd to overcome their negative emotions and bolster their self-esteem (Tian, 2001): the need to be unique is expressed via the acquisition, use, and possession of consumer goods. It is also apparent in shopping choices: Burns and Warren (1995) showed that the need for uniqueness influence shopping centers patronage. Consumers who have a strong need to be unique choose shopping centers outside the area where they live more than others do. In the case of seasonal sales, the need to stand out from the crowd is apparent via one of the signs of the need to be unique (Tian, Bearden and Hunter, 2001): rejection of similarity and popular practices.

- **Fear of wasting money.** The excitement caused by the seasonal sales, widely reported in the media, may lead some consumers to buy products then be sorry for it afterwards: “superficial, because, in fact, when the seasonal sales are on I have a greater tendency to buy things I don’t really need”; “I remember the time I must have spent 3,500 French francs in one day because I didn’t watch my money, I bought a pair of shoes, a pair of cropped trousers, another pair of trousers, and you tell yourself you’ll only just one more thing because it’s the seasonal sales and you always feel you’re buying things cheaper and at the end of the day, you’ve bought a bunch of stuff and it has cost you more and they’re things you don’t really need”.

- **Not interested in seasonal sales.** Finally, some consumers may not be interested in the savings they can make on products during seasonal sales: “But, in fact, I usually make impulse purchases, so I buy when I see something I like. If an item is very expensive, I won’t wait for the seasonal sales, or check how much it costs, pick it out two weeks beforehand, and tell myself it’s going to be a lot cheaper so I’ll wait, etc. I don’t do that.” This aspect may be related to work on price-sensitivity (Lichtenstein, Bloch, and Black, 1988; Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer, 1993). This research emphasizes two dimensions of the way consumers relate to prices: in their negative role, i.e.: looking for the lowest price, and their positive role, i.e.: price as a sign of quality. Seven points come into play: (1) value-sensitivity (value for money), (2) wanting price information, (3) price-sensitivity, (4) bargain-sensitivity, (5) coupon-sensitivity, (6) the perception of price as a quality indicator, and (7) the perception of price as a prestige indicator. Lichtenstein, Bloch, and Black (1988) demonstrated that price-sensitivity has a negative impact on the range of acceptable prices, whereas implication in relation to the product has a positive impact. In the context of our study, it could be assumed that consumers who were not very price-sensitive and/or those highly involved in ready-to-wear would be less sensitive to the financial benefits associated with seasonal sales.

In view of the results in table 3, the typology of antecedents of attitudes towards seasonal sales that we suggested meets the criteria defined by Brucks (1986): exhaustive and easy-to-use, with distinct categories. We can, thus, reasonably consider that we have identified the 14 antecedents of attitudes towards seasonal sales.

A quantitative study was then carried out to define a scale for measuring the costs and antecedents of attitudes toward seasonal sales.

### DEVELOPING A SCALE FOR MEASURING ATTITUDES TOWARD SEASONAL SALES AND THEIR ANTECEDENTS

We drew up a list of 76 items supposed to measure each of the 15 constructs previously identified, i.e. attitude and antecedents. These items were measured using the Likert 7-point scale. The questionnaire was administered via Internet, to a sample of 295 students at a higher education establishment in southwest France. Prior to analysing the data, we used exploratory factorial analysis (EFA) as a “preliminary technique to build a measuring scale” (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988, p. 189). According to Gerbing and Hamilton (1996, p. 62), EFA is “a practice involving the processing of a matrix of indicator (or item) correlations by statistical software (…). As the only specification possible was the number of factors, the procedure extracted factors automatically and rotated them to provide a better interpretation.”

In practical terms, in agreement with the authors cited above, we used Statistica 6 to carry out several PCA with Varimax rotation on all the items, eliminating each time those items which caused problems (saturation on several axes or no axes). In view of the large number of constructs (15), our objective was, ideally, to obtain 3 items per construct, to avoid overloading the next set of questionnaires. Initially, 3 to 5 items were retained for each dimension. To reduce the variables to 3 items per dimension, we eliminated, if necessary, those items that saturated their factorial axis as little as possible, and had a lower mean correlation to the other items in their respective dimensions.

However, we had problems with the self-satisfaction dimension: in all the PCA we carried out, the items supposed to measure this aspect were relatively saturated (values between 0.35 and 0.50) on the “attitude toward seasonal sales” and, above all, the “not interested in savings” axes. The self-satisfaction dimension therefore lacked discriminating validity. In fact, there seemed to be two opposite reactions to the “not interested in savings” dimension: consumers only felt self-satisfied if they were interested in saving money and, on the contrary, other individuals who were not very interested in saving money did not feel particularly self-satisfied when they purchased sale bargains. The items related to the “self-satisfaction” dimension were, therefore, withdrawn from the analyses.

The titles of the items retained and the Cronbach’s alphas are given in annex 1. The alphas ranged from 0.71 to 0.96, which is entirely satisfactory.

The scales developed led to a better understanding of the phenomenon of seasonal sales, as perceived by consumers. They
should be tested in a future study to assess their correlations as well as the impact of the 13 dimensions on attitudes toward seasonal sales.

CONCLUSION

This article discusses the seasonal sales, an important economic and social phenomenon, often reported on by the mass media and managerial publications, but which had not previously been the subject of academic research. Considering that an attitude toward seasonal sales is a single-dimensional variable, we reviewed the literature to analyse its antecedents. This analysis was followed up with a qualitative study then an exploratory quantitative study.

Four benefits associated with seasonal sales were distinguished on the basis of the findings of the qualitative and quantitative studies: better value for money, buying more, buying products cheaper, and, finally, the pleasure of spending money.

These results are consistent with the literature on prices, promotions and shopping (Tauber, 1972; Schindler, 1989; Chandon, Wansink, and Laurent, 2000; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Roux, 2003). Our findings show that the hedonic aspects of seasonal sales are mainly due to the pleasure of spending money. Fun, adventure, and the social aspect of shopping (seeking contact with other consumers in the store) (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003) and of promotions (Chandon, Wansink and Laurent, 2000) do not seem to have any impact on this level.

The social aspect of shopping came up only in the “itinerary” dimension: which shops to visit, and with whom? To whom do we show our purchases? We confirmed the ritual dimensions identified by Rook (1995).

Simultaneously, we identified several costs or negative aspects associated with seasonal sales: fear of being swindled, doubts concerning product quality, difficulty to find the right product, store atmosphere, waste of time, fear of wasting money, the need to stand out from the crowd, and lack of interest in saving money.

Some of our results confirm those of earlier research, for example:

- D’Astous et al. (1994) and Machleit, Meyer, and Eroglu (2003) on irritations related to shopping for the “atmosphere” and “difficulty finding products” dimensions;
- Seiders, Berry, and Gresham (2000) and Berry, Seiders, and Grewal (2002) on shopping convenience for the “waste of time” dimension;

Some findings are more specific to seasonal sales: lack of trust in distributors, fear of wasting money, and, above all, the need to stand out from the crowd.

From a managerial point of view, we envisage several possible applications for this research:

- This exploratory study highlighted consumers’ lack of trust in retailers. It would be useful to analyse the sources of this suspicion in greater detail so that they can respond to this attitude more effectively by using appropriate communication tools. For example, a retailer could develop a “seasonal sales charter”, making a commitment to good conduct during the seasonal sales, compliance with legislation, and product quality. This charter would be printed in catalogues distributed during the seasonal sales, on flyers available in stores, or at the entrance to shopping centres.

- Store atmosphere during seasonal sales is a factor that retailers should try to improve to enhance customer satisfaction. It would be advisable to make an effort to ensure that conditions in the store outlet meet customers’ expectations, e.g. by increasing the number of store staff. However, this type of action may not be effective as the main issue is the huge number of customers during those periods. Dion (2002) emphasized that lengthening opening hours made it easier to manage overcrowding in stores. One solution to the problems associated with crowding would be to have longer opening hours during the first week of the seasonal sales. In January 2004, Kiabi kept their stores open until midnight on the first day of the seasonal sales and later than usual on the following days. It is also necessary to promote efficient shopping to reduce the time spent in each store. There are several possible solutions: installing efficient signage, as well as employing temporary staff to help consumers find their way around the store and provide information on prices. The most effective solution would be to make stores more “legible”, i.e.: help consumers find their way around more easily (Titus and Everett, 1995). The store’s atmosphere must be changed to reduce the impression of overcrowding, e.g. by changing lighting colour and intensity, using an uncluttered decoration scheme, and opening up space in the centre of the store floor. According to Dion (2002), informing consumers about crowding and waiting time reduces their feeling of stress. Sensory marketing techniques may also be used to alleviate customers’ feelings of stress. Piped music should have a positive impact on consumer’s emotional states (Rieunier, 2000): but, can we say that, broadly-speaking, you need music with a slow tempo to alleviate consumer stress or more lively music to encourage shoppers to make their purchases more quickly?

The limitations of this research, due to sample composition and its exploratory nature, should, however, be taken into account. We used a sample consisting of students for reasons of convenience. Both the informal interviews and the study results indicate that the student population is particularly interested in seasonal sales. This study will certainly require confirmation using a broader sample. In further research, it will be necessary to assess the psychometric qualities of the scales developed in greater detail, then test the relationships between the antecedents identified and attitudes toward seasonal sales using a structural equation model. It will then be possible to establish links with individual variables such as values, personality, price-sensitivity, or the need to be unique.

REFERENCES


Anonymous (2002b), Entre soldes et promotions, les français privilégiennent plus en plus les prix barrés, La Tribune, Janvier 2002, p. 2
ANNEX 1
Titles of items retained and Cronbach’s alphas

Attitude (alpha=0.94)
I just love the sales
I enjoy shopping in the sales
The sales are a real pleasure for me

Buying products cheaper (alpha=0.82)
The sales are an opportunity to buy products cheaper in my usual shops
The sales are good because you spend less money on the brands you buy all-year-round
During the sales, you pay better prices for clothing you can wear the rest of the year

Better value for money (alpha=0.83)
In the sales, I can afford products that are too expensive the rest of the year
Thanks to the sales, I can buy myself things that are usually unaffordable
During the sales, I can afford major brands

Buying more (alpha=0.80)
During the sales, I buy larger quantities for the same price
During the sales, I get more for the same price
I take advantage of the sales to buy more for the same amount of money

Swindle (alpha=0.83)
Shopkeepers take advantage of the sales to sell old products
During the sales, shops get rid of products they haven’t been able to sell
Sales give shops an opportunity to get rid of old inventory

Atmosphere (alpha=0.90)
During the sales, the shops are a mess
During the sales, the shops are disorganized
The shops are overcrowded during the sales

Standing out from the crowd (alpha=0.83)
You lose your personality buying things in the sales like everyone else
People who always buy in the sales are like sheep
Shopping in the sales means getting lost in the crowd

Fear of wasting money (alpha=0.83)
During the sales, you tend to spend money on worthless things
During the sales, you’re likely to buy products you don’t really need
During the sales, you tend to buy unnecessary items

Difficult finding the right product (alpha=0.85)
It’s difficult to find what you want during the sales
During sales, I have trouble finding what I need
It’s difficult to find exactly what you’re looking for in the sales

Preparing your itinerary (alpha=0.85)
You have to prepare for the sales
When I go to the sales, I prepare my itinerary in advance
It requires preparation to really take advantage of the sales

Not interested in savings (alpha=0.82)
I’m not interested in saving a few euros by buying in the sales
I’m not the kind of person who buys things in the sales to spend a little less money
It’s not my style to do the sales to save money

Pleasure of spending money (alpha=0.71)
During the sales, you can buy things without feeling guilty
During the sales, you can buy things that take your fancy without worrying about your bank account
I enjoy spending money during the sales
ANNEX 1 (CONTINUED)

Titles of items retained and Cronbach’s alphas

**Waste of time (alpha=0.80)**
- If you want to do the sales right, you mustn’t be in a hurry
- To do the sales right, you need plenty of time
- It takes time to do the sales

**Lower quality (alpha=0.86)**
- Products offered during the sales are usually lower quality
- Clothes you buy in the sales are rarely very good quality
- Products offered during the sales are poor quality

Arnold, Mark J., Reynolds, Kristy E., Ponder, Nicole and Lueg, Jason E. (2004), Consumer delight in a retail context: investigating delightful and terrible shopping experience. *Journal of Business Research*
Bender, W. C. (1964), Consumer purchase costs- Do retailers recognize them?, *Journal of Retailing*, 40, 1, 1-52
Desmet, Pierre (2002), *La promotion des ventes--Du 13 à la douzaine à la fidélisation*, Dunod
Dion, Delphine (2002), Comment gérer l’affluence?, in. *Marketing sensoriel du point de vente*, Dunod, coordonné par Sophie Rieunier, pp. 159-185
Filser, Marc (2000), La valeur du comportement de magasinage. De la conceptualisation aux stratégies de positionnement des enseignes, Actes du 3ème colloque Etienne Thil, Université de La Rochelle, Septembre 2000, CD-ROM


Hui, Michael K., Dubé, Laurette and Chebat, Jean Charles (1997), The impact of music on consumers’ reactions to waiting for services, *Journal of Retailing*, 73, 1, pp. 87-104


Learning Unit Prices in an Unfamiliar Currency
Asgeir Juliusson, Center for Consumer Studies (CFK), Sweden
Amelie Gamble, Center for Consumer Studies (CFK), Sweden
Tommy Gärling, Center for Consumer Studies (CFK), Sweden

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
In times of transition from different domestic currencies to a unitary currency (the euro) now taking place in many European countries, consumers are forced to adapt their price evaluations to the new currency. The possibility to compare prices across borders will probably lead to lower prices benefiting consumers (Mussweiler & Strack, 2004). Still, in the shorter term term annoying mistakes will be made when prices are evaluated. One such mistake is the “Euro illusion” (Gamble, Gärling, Charlton, & Ranyard, 2002; Jonas, Greitmeyer, Frey, & Schultz-Hardt, 2002; Raghurib & Srivastava, 2002) that refers to the tendency to evaluate prices on the basis of their nominal representation, thus ignoring the real value after the transition. As a consequence prices may be evaluated as lower or higher depending on the exchange rate.

Re-learning prices in the new currency is a strategy for adapting to the transition. In effect, citizens again engage in a process of learning prices similar to the process they have previously experienced with their own domestic currency. Field studies indicate that this process may be slow (Marques & Dehaene, 2004).

In this paper we attempt to identify factors that account for why learning prices in a unfamiliar currency is slow. An essential part of learning may take place through associating prices with the quantity or quality of products frequently encountered in stores. Assume that price ($P$) increases linearly with quantity ($Q$), that is

$$ P = a + bQ \tag{1} $$

where $b$ is the unit price and $a$ is a fixed fee added to the unit price. Equation 1 thus represents the structure of the information consumers encounter in the market place.

In a series of laboratory experiments we examine the learning of prices of cellular phone calls. In real markets such prices vary with call duration and must frequently be inferred after calls have been made, thus provides one of many examples of that prices are learned from encounters of quantity-price pairs. Gasoline, fruits or other types of non-standard packaged products represent other examples. Furthermore, the unit price for cellular phone calls may vary depending on such factors as time of day and type of call. A fixed connection fee may also be charged.


REFERENCES


Can Consumers Behave Chaotically?
Andrew Smith, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
Leigh Sparks, University of Stirling, United Kingdom

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
The detection of chaotic consumer behaviour would have far reaching implications for consumer researchers in terms of how the consumer is conceptualized, modelled and analyzed (see Hibbert and Wilkinson 1994; Smith 2002; Holbrook 2003). In this paper deterministic chaos is briefly described prior to a discussion of how chaotic time series behave in phase space. Phase space is an abstract mathematical space in which co-ordinates (based on explanatory variables or lagged values of the dependent variable) describe the phase (or state) of a dynamical system at any one time. True chaos will display certain types of recognizable migrating geometric patterns in phase space and will not visit any one phase space co-ordinate more than once. In this sense the paper takes a purist stance (see Williams 1997) on its definition of chaos rather than equating chaos with a general state of complexity (see De Greene 1996). So this paper does not accept the proposition that chaos exists in any situation with verifiable causes and complex output. The paper uses individual product choice time series as the case for discussion regarding the applicability of deterministic chaos in consumer research. The reason for this is the importance of product choice as a building block of the market and its position as the most obvious ‘output’ to the processes of consumer behaviour.

Much of the previous research into choice patterns has described many micro level time series as complex or even random (e.g. Bass, Jeuland & Wright 1976; Goodhardt et al 1984; Ehrenberg 1988). These inferences allow for the potential of chaos, which is often first described as randomness i.e. chaos can ‘masquerade’ as randomness. Chaos can appear stochastic in a simple time series or sequence plot but there must be an underlying or ‘hidden’ form to that plot. Any form is evident when the data is plotted in phase space.

This paper argues that the process required to generate chaotic series is highly unlikely in conceptual terms in this context. Chaos requires a system where output is entirely endogenously determined. It therefore requires the consumer to be a calculative variety seeker impervious to situational factors and other exogenous determinants e.g. advertising in order to behave in a manner that is truly chaotic. True variety seeking as opposed to derived variety seeking would be the only behaviour that could lead to the avoidance of any repetition of phase space coordinates (e.g. product a could never be consumed after product b more than once). It also requires the series to be non-stationary since chaotic form in phase space is migratory. We know from previous research that most micro-level processes are stationary in the long term. The paper therefore suggests that chaotic models and efforts to detect chaos face intractable conceptual problems in the area of product choice and consumer behaviour in general since ‘exogenous’ influences are always present (and often very powerful). This mirrors the difficulties apparent in applying chaos to other social and behavioural sciences and its failure thus far to enact the impact that was initially predicted when the concepts first emerged from the natural sciences (enclosed systems with limited exogenous influences are more common in the natural sciences). Subjects like people and markets are often as-sailed by exogenous factors and are therefore far more likely to be stochastic rather than deterministic process such as chaos.

REFERENCES
ROUND TABLE
Consumer Experience from a Consumer Perspective
Solveig R. Wikström, Stockholm University, Sweden

SUMMARY
Although "experience" is a widely used concept in recent consumer marketing, and even in discussions of industry structure (experience industry) and economic development (the new experience economy) there is sparsely of research on the consumer perspective of the concept. The discussion, with the aim to stimulate more research on this topic, focused mainly on two issues. First, on aspects relevant for an understanding of the concept? How can the concept be defined? Second, how to pursue research on consumer experience? What approaches are suitable?

Participants: Alladi Venkatesh, University of California at Irvine, Fuat Firat, USD, Odense, Denmark, Jacob Östberg, Stockholm University School of Business, and Niklas Gustafsson, SCT and Stockholm University School of business, reporter. The attendants at the discussion filled the room. Excerpts from the lively discussion:

Concepts and understanding

• Fuat Firat: All consumption is seen through the “lens” of experience.
• A gentleman from Brazil: every act of consumption is an experience......
• Dannie Kjeldgaard from University of Southern Denmark: the discussions around the concept of “experience” must be discussed on two different levels: (1) How consumers discursively understand what an experience is and (2) how do you actually experience something? The challenge is how we as researchers in this field can go into the latter.
• Gunter Silberer: Experience is a cognitive affective process... in the 70:s there were only attributive research.... A key question is if you define experience as a process or a result. ..... 
• Niklas Gustafsson: ..... experience is a cognitive process that is connected to memory!!.... but intention is not required for the creation of memorable experiences....
• Susanne H.G. Poulsson, Bond University, Queensland, Australia: It is important for the discussion around experience to get the terminology right. If we star to use the term experience when handling a vacuum cleaner it gets misleading. One way is to divide it into pure experience (e.g.amusement park visits) vs. experiential aspects of goods and services.
• Päivi Timonen, National Consumer Research Center, Finland: We tried to work with experience but changed the focus to the term “Fun” instead.....Personal interest is very important....
• Bernard Cova, ESCP-EAP, France: regarding the question of how to help consumers to emerge him/her self into the experience--we borrow the psychological concept of “Appropriation”

How can we pursue research/measure experience
Fuat Firat suggests that it would be good to start with classifying experience. What is experience?

Gunter Silberer, Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen: We try to measure experience in a way that is different from the ordinary attitude measurement used in marketing. We try to find out what a consumer feel and think......

Susanne Poulsson: An interesting question is if experience actually can be measured and in that case what are we going to measure and when?

Solveig: Are there any possible approaches to measure the experience?

Gunter Silberer: We present a paper tomorrow... we try to measure experience via aided recall ..... getting people to talk about their experiences... Measuring reality as they go along... The peak measurement measuring only things that are very high in the emotional scale.....

Alladi: measure on scales of dichotomies, for example Positive–Negative Memorable–Not memorable High meaning–Low meaning High substance–Low substance

Kara Chang: measuring via consumers’ meaning and engagement.....

People conducting research in this area are aa:
Päivi Timonen, senior researcher, PhD(econ.)National Consumer Research Centre,Finland e-mail paivi.timonen@ncrc.fi, www.ncrc.fi; Gunter Silberer, Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen, gsilber@gwdg.de; Niklas Gustavsson, Stockholm University, Niklas.Gustafsson@svb.stockholm.se; Solveig Wikström, Stockholm University, sw@fek.su.se.
The economic, social, and political dynamics of our Western society are both presaged by and encapsulated in the relations of sound production and consumption, including music, warning noises, signaling devices, and mass media. Sound is involved in the making of contemporary social reality–our world is thoroughly driven, shaped and constrained by sonic considerations. Yet despite its widely acknowledged significance in the world of consumption, music is relatively under researched within the consumer behavior literature. Whereas studies have focused on music in marketing communication (Scott 1990), including advertising (e.g., Basu, Goldberg and Gorn 1997; Blair and Kelleris 1993; Gorn 1982), music consumption (e.g., Hogg and Banister 2000; Olsen and Gould 1999; Wallace 1997), musical preferences (Holbrook and Schindler 1989) or background music (Brouncer 1990; Milliman 1986), few have studied sound in its historical, cultural and consumption context.

This session advanced the study of music within consumption by considering the symbiotic relationship between the cultural frameworks that orient how people interact with commodities and the political economy of the audible. We argue that for an appropriate understanding of consumer behavior, researchers must listen to the sound by which it is represented. The music-fueled presentations explored the complex relationship between consumption, culture and sound.

The co-chairs helped the audience to frame, question and debate issues such as: What types of sound are prevalent in consumer culture? What is the role of historical and political narratives in these sounds, and in contemporary consumption? How does technology change sonic consumption? How can sonic consumption studies contribute to consumer research and our understanding of consumer cultures? The researchers presented perspectives on music consumption focused on different ethnographical contexts, including retro-music, club music, and traditional folk music.

First, Alan Bradshaw, Pierre McDonagh and David Marshall explored the experiences of musicians in dealing with marketing and their beliefs of what music should be. Noting how musicians are typically engaged in negotiating between artistic intention and commercial pragmatics, these scholars conclude that the musicians still intend for music to maintain an antithetical dimension. Second, Jonathan Schroeder and Janet Borgerson illuminated and analyzed an iconic example of sonic branding. The Hawaiian music genre invokes the nostalgic nirvana of a time when jet travel was glamorous, tiki culture was the rage, and a Polynesian paradise still seemed attainable. Music assists in this case study of sonic branding, providing an exoticized cultural history and the soundtrack for retro atmospheres behind the burgeoning tiki renaissance, including repackaged exotic lounge music and supporting surf culture’s prominent place in “cool” and “extreme” market aesthetics. Finally, former label owner, music producer and consumer researcher Markus Giesler explored a posthumanist perspective on technological forms of music production and consumption, examining what they signal for our posthuman future as a whole. DJ “prosumers” (simultaneous producers and consumers) ideological and consumption related social discourse and practices were analyzed combining a sonic and an ethnographic research method.

Giesler’s findings reveal that the musical interplay between human and technology may open up new forms of self-realization and hyper-embodiment. Together, these papers presented new perspectives on how music intersects with consumer behavior. Each paper engages with the way critical theory has influenced how music has been studied, and draws connections between music and broader cultural issues (cf. Murray and Ozanne 1991). The proposed session is of particular relevance to consumer researchers interested in the socio-cultural dimensions of consumer behavior. This session will help these researchers to consider the value of a sonic perspective in their own work on consumer behavior. We believe that the presentations are, in themselves, studies that merit further attention and that may inspire an increased interest in the consumption of music—or at the very least expose the audience to new ideas and sounds.

References


“Theorizing the Relationship between Music and Marketing: The Musician’s Perspective”
Alan Bradshaw, University of Exeter
Pierre McDonagh, Dublin City University
David Marshall, University of Edinburgh

From Pope Gregory XIII’s call for ‘revising, purging, correcting and reforming’ (De Nora, 2003) church music in the sixteenth century to calls for censoring Eminem today, the history of western music is marked by concerns over its potential dangers and uses for society (North and Hargreaves, 2003). For Attali (1985) music carries significant powers, it is capable of causing people to forget, to believe and ultimately to silence people—in short he took music to be a ‘battleground to knowledge’ (pp20). For Adorno & Horkheimer (1998), music held the promise of antithesis to a reified world however due to the forces of the culture industry music was becoming subsumed and re-routed in accordance with the logic of capitalism until it deceptively aided that very process of reification. As musicians are typically imbued with the spirit of bohemia with its inherent anti-materialism (Becker, 1991; Frith and Horne, 1987; Kubacki and Croft, 2004; Robinson et al., 1991), can we consider musicians to be hostile to marketing and if so does music exist as an anti-marketing discourse within the consumer society? Or could it be that the culture industry has established itself as a monopoly whereby musicians no longer act antibiotically?

This study considers these questions by conducting a series of interviews with professional musicians from a cross-section of the musical world. We investigate their experiences in dealing with marketers and their beliefs of what music should be. Noting how musicians are typically engaged in negotiating between artistic intention and commercial pragmatics, we conclude that the musicians still intend for music to maintain an antibiological dimension. We theorize that such data does not suggest a study of co-optation but rather we explore Frith & Horn’s (1987) contention that the conflict lends itself towards one of how ‘truth’ and ‘subjectivity’ and ‘uniqueness’ are registered in normal market relationships. This contention goes beyond Scott’s (1994) claim that music’s use in marketing contexts ought to be regarded as meaningful and language-like to suggest that music is also ideological. We conclude by suggesting that this results in a far more complex relationship between music and marketing than was previously understood.

References


“Soundtrack to Paradise:
Sonic Branding in the South Pacific”
Janet Borgerson, University of Exeter
Jonathan Schroeder, University of Exeter

Hawaii, as an iconic sound, a repertoire of songs, a musical identity, and an auditory brand asset, provides a performative example of what has been called “sonic branding.” The case of Hawaii shows how place branding, sonic branding, and iconic branding intersect. The marketing of Hawaiian popular music through radio shows and record albums aided in Hawaii’s transformation from a “primitive” paradise into the 50th state. What became known worldwide as Hawaiian music provides a soothing soundtrack for South Pacific holidays, backyard luau parties, or ironic late night lounging. The marriage of stereo technology and so-called authentic music was a potent force in the acoustic branding of Hawaiian paradise. By capturing the tropical sounds of Hawaii on the latest hi-fi advanced recording equipment, the recording industry offered up Hawaiian music as part of the latest achievement of modern technology, promoting paradise as a sound as well as a place to visit (Schroeder and Borgerson 1999).

Many tourist-marketing campaigns not only relied upon a visual representation of Hawaii, but also defined a Hawaiian sound (e.g., Costa 1998; Desmond 1999; Sturma 1999; Urry 2001). The iconic Hula girl and her musical accompaniment have for decades formed the foreground of a strongly appealing and attractive Hawaiian identity, helping make Hawaii instantly recognizable the world over (e.g., Buck 1993; Kirsten 2000; Tauck 2003). This aural image, specifically designed for consumption, has been reflected in and transmitted through familiar easy listening music—created mostly by white mainland songwriters with little or no connection to the islands. Moreover, airlines, travel agencies, the Kodak Film Company, and the U.S. government’s support of the Hawaii Calls radio show worked to develop her brand recognition; hi-fi stereo and photographic information technology helped frame Hawaii’s image of carefree paradise.

The process of branding Hawaii turned Hawaii into a sign that could be associated with other signs—music and sound. This sonic resource helps give an “authentic” cultural history to the brand by drawing upon cultural, historical, mythical, and stereotypical resources about Hawaii, Otherness, paradise, and US expansion (see Schroeder and Borgerson, 1999). Hawaii, and what the branding of Hawaii has deemed her liltiing and undulating call, lure us to the ultimate retro-escape. Hawaiian music calls forth an earlier era, and invokes a complex legacy of culture and history, tourist management and nostalgic hype. The Hawaiian music genre captures the retro, the paradise and the escape of Hawaii’s marketed image—perhaps vibrating through strings of a steel guitar, a ukulele, or coconut shell bongos on famous favorites “Little Brown Gal” or “Lovely Hula Hands” on literally thousands of “Hawaiian” albums. We investigated details in the legendary history of Hawaii’s sonic branding, unpacking the Hawaiian presence via a media analysis of our growing archive of Hawaiiana and drawing upon recent developments in internet marketing and marketing thought generally, including sonic branding (Barnet 2001; Hirsch and Schneider 2001) and retropscapes (Brown and Sherry 2003). Our journey invoked our own experience of sonic branding, offers some related
sonic examples from other realms, and provokes broader reflections of the intersection of music, branding, and consumer culture.

**References**


Tauck Tours (2003), Hawaii (tourist marketing brochure).


---

**“Music as Posthumanist Prophecy: Listening to the Sonic Cyborgs”**

Markus Giesler, Schulich School of Business, York University

Combining cultural theorist Kodwo Eshun’s (1999) critique of well-established humanistic theories of music styles and culture with my own experience as a label owner and music producer, this paper explores a posthumanist perspective on technological forms of music production and consumption, examining what they signal for our posthuman future as a whole. The palpable desire to “become a machine” evoked by the German band Kraftwerk or experimental jazz legend Sun Ra’s and American funk band Parliament’s claims to be “from outer space” indicate a movement towards trying to become a sonic cyborg (Giesler and Venkatesh 2004). A posthumanist understanding (both methodologically and substantively) of sonic consumption will significantly enlarge our understanding of the relationship between music, consumption and technology. The aim of this study then is to shed light on the posthuman properties of sonic consumption. DJ prosumers’ (they are simultaneously consumers and producers) ideological and consumption related social discourse and practices were analyzed combining sonic and ethnographic analysis. Three sound recordings were produced by and three long interviews were conducted with three DJs during an experimental studio session. The recordings and interviews were analyzed in tandem focusing particularly on the human-technology interactions involved in the musical production and consumption process.

Following social theorist Jaques Attali (1985), “today, no theorizing accomplished through language or mathematics can suffice any longer; it is incapable of accounting for what is essential in time—the qualitative and the fluid, threats and violence. In the face of the growing ambiguity of the signs being used and exchanged, the most established concepts are crumbling and every theory is wavering. The available representations of culture fail to
express what awaits us” (p. 4). In order to speak to new realities of consumption, it is necessary to explore and develop radically new theoretical forms (e.g., Giesler and Venkatesh 2004; Sherry and Kozinets 2000; Lincoln and Denzin 1994; Brown 1995). Music, the organization of noise, is one such form. Music might herald prophecy, not simply reflect consumer culture, but a harbinger of change, an anticipatory abstraction of the shape of things to come. According to previous historical, cultural and political theorizations, technology is seen as having a negative influence on the production and consumption of music (e.g. Taylor 2001; Jameson 1977). Ever since the advent of sound generated by machines rather than traditional instruments, there have been dire predictions about the fate of the Audience and the death of the Song (e.g., Adorno 1949; Benjamin 1969).

My findings reveal that the musical interplay between human and technology opens up new forms of self-realization and hyper-embodiment. The way that musical technology like the sampler complicates musical history by raiding and redesigning the past to construct the present makes the consumption of music shift away from any idea of history or heritage. While sampling and pitching are key practices for sonic cyborgs, the moral foundation for them is located in an explicitly posthuman dialectic within which DJs “construct music” as a remix of their own sonic reality of consumption. Findings also shed light on the cultural codes of the DJ subculture, with implications for the broader range of music consumers. While DJs serve as cultural producers of the present, observations of perspective in action reveal a world of future fantasy, play, inner desire, escape and utopia that translates the noise of new conditions into a sound system of relationships. I argue that a key to understanding our posthuman future are the sonic cyborg musicians and DJs of the present who interact with musical instruments and technological equipment such as keyboards, sequencers or turntables to give a sonic form the technocultural transformations taking place as machines become increasingly prevalent in everyday life.

References
SESSION OVERVIEW

There is widespread recognition that design offers a potent way to position and differentiate products, as competition intensifies and technological differentiation becomes more difficult. Some argue that “design is the factor that will often give a company its competitive edge” (Kotler, 2003). Researchers have made important advances into understanding the cognitive and emotional processes underlying consumers’ reactions to product design (e.g., Bloch 1995; Cox and Cox 1994; Creusen and Schoormans, 2005; Holbrook 1986; Sewall 1978; Verzyer and Hutchinson 1998); however many fundamental questions still require study in order to advance the study of consumer research on design response.

One aspect of product design is product appearance. Product appearance is often ignored in consumer research. However, the appearance of a product is salient in many purchase situations, and even influences decisions for industrial products (Yamamoto and Lambert, 1994). This means that a better insight into the effect of product appearance on consumer product choice is highly relevant. This session hopes to make consumer researchers and practitioners more aware of the importance and influence of product appearance in consumer product choice and increase interest in investigating issues in product appearance as related to consumer behavior. In addition, insight into the influence of product design on consumer preference expands our insight into product preference formation. For practitioners, the session gives some insight into the influence of design characteristics on consumers’ perception of aesthetics, functions, quality and usability.

The papers in this session try to give some guideline to attune the design (appearance) of a product to consumers (all studies are completed). The first paper shows that visual complexity and symmetry in a design influence consumer preference, but that this relation depends on the product aspect that is important to consumers—aesthetic attractiveness, number of functions, quality impression or ease of operation. For product appearance can influence the perception of all of these aspects (Bloch, 1995; Creusen and Schoormans, 2005). The product aspect that is most important to the target group of consumers should therefore be the starting point in design. This study is an addition to existing research, which mostly focused on the influence of design characteristics on aesthetic value. In the second paper, the influence of another kind of variables —namely design novelty and prototypicality— on aesthetic preference is investigated. The unequivocal results about the relationship between typicality and aesthetic preference in the literature is explained by the effect of another variable: design novelty. Typicality and novelty are both found to have an independent effect on aesthetic preference, even though the two constructs are highly negatively correlated. This means that products with an optimal combination of typicality and novelty will be preferred aesthetically. This optimal combination may depend on the target group of consumers and the kind of product. The third paper stresses that design should not discriminate against certain groups of people. This philosophy is called “Universal Design” and leads to products that can be used, to the greatest extent possible, by everyone. Designers have been interviewed, and many are found to have the ambition not to distinguish between disabled people or others diverting from the norm (e.g., children, elderly) and ‘normal’ people. For some designers, Universal design implies a criticism of the trend that design is treated as a superficial activity, concerned only with the aesthetics of the product’s surface. On the other hand, a too strong focus on people’s abilities runs the risk that the aesthetic design aspect is neglected, even though it might be equally important to consumers.

In conclusion, this session gives insight into design characteristics that influence aesthetic product value, and other types of product value such as (perceived) quality and ease in use. Some attention should be paid to all of these aspects —aesthetic attractiveness, functions, quality and ease of operation— in designing a product and its appearance. Specifically concerning ease in use, no consumers (e.g., elderly, disabled people) should be excluded beforehand from using the product. However, focus on usability should not result in neglecting other aspects important to consumers, such as aesthetics.

LONG ABSTRACTS

Mariëlle E.H. Creusen, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Robert W. Verzyer, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Jan P. L. Schoormans, Delft University of Technology

While consumer researchers have made advances into understanding consumers’ reactions to product design, many consumer psychology questions remain with regard to this marketing variable. Empirical evidence indicates that design principles such as “complexity,” “unity,” and “symmetry” influence aesthetic judgments for artificial stimuli (Arnheim, 1974; Berlyne, 1971; Murdoch and Flursheim, 1983; Verzyer, 1993). A study into the effects of these design principles for “real” products would provide critical advances in consumer research on design response. Furthermore, product appearance (form) may also influence judgments about function, such as the number of functions, ease of operation, and product quality (Bloch 1995, Creusen and Schoormans, 2005). Therefore, not only the influence of design principles on aesthetic judgments should be assessed, but also on other judgments that are partly based on product appearance, such as quality and ease of use. We investigated the influence of two design principles (symmetry and complexity) on the preferences for real products. More specifically, we investigated the extent in which the influence of these two design principles depends on the product aspects that consumers consider in their preference judgments; aesthetic attractiveness, number of functions, ease of operation, or product quality. In addition, we assessed whether the importance of these aspects differed with age, gender and educational level.

In order to investigate our research questions, we selected black-and-white pictures of the front side of existing video recorders (VCR’s). We needed stimuli that scored either high or low on each principle so that we could fill each of four cells in an orthogonal factorial design. In order to fill the four cells with two VCR’s each (a total of eight), the VCR’s were judged on their amount of symmetry and visual complexity in a pilot study. In additional pilot studies, we tested, digitally changed and tested these VCR’s until all cells were filled. In the main study, 422 members of a consumer household panel indicated their preference for the eight VCR pictures on a seven-point scale ranging from ‘low
preference’ to ‘high preference’. Their gender, age, and education were known. They also indicated the importance of several aspects in their preference judgments: aesthetic attractiveness, product quality, number of functions, and ease of operation.

We found that the two design principles had a significant influence on preference for the VCR’s. Visual complexity was most important in subjects’ product evaluation. Respondents preferred high symmetry and low complexity. However, the preference for these two design principles differed depending on the aspects that subjects considered in making their preference judgments. Judgments about the number of functions, ease of operation, product quality, and aesthetic attractiveness, were all related to the complexity of the product appearance. A complex VCR looks like it has more functions, appears to be of high quality, but also looks less easy to operate. This is probably largely due to the number of buttons, which was an important factor influencing visual complexity. A less visually complex VCR is valued from an aesthetic point of view. Symmetry of the product appearance did not influence the perceived number of functions or perceived quality. However, it did influence perceived ease of operation; subjects for whom operation of was important preferred less symmetrical VCR’s. Indeed, one can imagine that buttons are more easily differentiated when they are differentiated in their location on the VCR front, that is, not divided symmetrically. From the literature, one would expect symmetry to be more important for subjects who paid attention to aesthetics. A statistical trend was found in support of this.

The importance of the product aspects—aesthetic attractiveness, perceived number of functions, quality impression and perceived ease of operation—differed with gender, age and education. In addition to importance of the number of functions, subjects indicated whether they prefer a small, average or large amount of functions. We found that males prefer more functions than females, consistent with Henry’s finding that males employ more functionally oriented purchase criteria (Henry, 2002). Furthermore, the number of functions and ease of operation was more important to older subjects. There is a statistical trend that older subjects want fewer functionalities on a VCR. Quality impression was more important to young than to old subjects. In addition, aesthetic value was more important to younger subjects, consistent with Henry’s finding that expressive orientation in product purchases declines with age. We furthermore found that the number of functions and ease of operation was more important with lower educational level. However, these effects disappeared when age group was included in the same analysis (educational level and age correlate negatively).

In conclusion, subjects preferred products that exhibit high symmetry and low complexity. However, the preference for these design principles differed with the product aspects that subjects considered in their preference judgments. This gives a more detailed insight into the influence of symmetry and visual complexity on product preference, as until now only the influence of these principles on aesthetic value has been investigated, while we also included functional aspects. So whether low or high visual complexity and symmetry should be used in a design depends on the product aspect that is most important to the target group of consumers. We identified differences in aspect importance between age, gender and educational groups. These findings give some guidelines for attaining the product appearance to specific target groups. This research advances our understanding of the influence of design principles on consumer responses to real products. Yet, more work is needed to further our understanding of the relationship between design characteristics and consumer responses.

References

“The Relationship Between Design Typicality, Novelty and Aesthetic Judgments”
Dirk Snakey, Delft University of Technology
Paul Hekkert, Delft University of Technology

According to the preference-for-prototypes theory (Whitfield and Slatter, 1979) there is a positive relationship between typicality and aesthetic preference, because people appreciate easy to classify objects. However, other links have also been proposed. These have been both U-shaped, with typical and a-typical (novel) exemplars being most preferred (Martindale 1996), and inverted U-shaped, with mildly a-typical exemplars being most preferred (Mandler 1982). Finally, the relation between typicality and aesthetic preference has also been criticized as being circular (Boselie, 1991), since preferred artifacts in a market will lead to higher demand, higher sales, and a higher frequency of exposure. Empirical evidence has been also mixed: positive relations were found for a wide range of products and works of art (Hekkert and van Wieringen, 1990; Pedersen, 1986; Purcell, 1984; Veryzer and Hutchinson, 1998). Yet, non-monotonic J- or U-shaped relations (Martindale, Moore, and West, 1988) and inverted U-shapes (Meyers-Levy and Tybout, 1998) have been reported as well, whereas in other studies no relationship was found (Hekkert and van Wieringen, 1992; Purcell, 1990).

In this paper, we look at the relationship between typicality, novelty and aesthetic preference. We propose that the relationship between typicality and aesthetic preference explains one half of a combined effect, based on two evaluative processes: a) a fast automatic process where typical exemplars are preferred for their ease of processing, and b) a slower, more effortful process where novel exemplars are preferred for their surprising and thought provoking qualities (see also Hekkert, Sneiders and van Wieringen 2003). Since the two evaluative processes are so different, they may have independent effects on judgment. But it may be difficult to show these independent effects because typicality and novelty are negatively correlated. The negative correlation with novelty may lead to a suppressed effect of typicality on aesthetic preference, and vice versa. In order to test this independent effect theory, two studies were carried out.

In the first study, 24 students rated 14 telephone models on a number of 9-point rating scales. The telephones were selected to
cover a wide range of typicality and novelty. The rating scales were:
poor example–good example of the category (i.e., typicality), not
original–original (i.e., novelty), and ugly–beautiful (i.e., aesthetic
evaluation). These scales were preceded by elaborate instructions
on how to interpret the typicality scale, based on Rosch and Mervis
(1975). Following Barsalou (1985), three measures were added as
possible predictors of typicality: two rating scales: frequently–
infrequently encountered a model like this (i.e., frequency of
exposure), and practical–impractical. Finally, subjects rated the
similarity between all pairs of 14 telephone models. Central
tendency was calculated as the average similarity of one telephone
model with all other models.

Ratings on all scales were reliable (ICC>-.80) and show that
typicality and novelty have no significant correlation with aesthetic
preference (r=-.38 and -.07). However, typicality and novelty are
highly negatively correlated (r=.91). For this reason, partial corre-
lations were calculated between typicality and aesthetic preference
(partialling out the effect of novelty: pr=.75, p<.01), and between
novelty and aesthetic preference (partialling out the effect of
typicality: pr=.70, p<.01). These partial correlations show that
typicality and novelty have independent effects on aesthetic prefer-
ence. Further, in a regression analysis, typicality and novelty jointly
explain 56% of the variance in aesthetic evaluation.

To further explore the suppression effect, three predictors of
typicality: frequency of instantiation, ideals, and central tendency
were measured as well. Partial correlations were calculated be-
 tween each of these predictors with typicality, canceling out the
effects of the other two predictors. Only frequency of exposure and
central tendency had significant independent effects on typicality
(pr=.63 and .87). When replacing typicality with these two predic-
tors, we see that the independent effect of typicality on aesthetic
preference is fully explained by central tendency. Among the
partial correlations of frequency of exposure, central tendency and
novelty with aesthetic preference, only the last two were significant
(pr=.08, .77 and .59). The non-significant effect of frequency of
exposure runs counter to Boselie (1991), who argued that the
typicality effect on aesthetic preference is circular because a pre-
ference for artifacts leads to a higher exposure frequency and
typicality ratings.

In a second study, we tested that the typicality effect is based
on a fast evaluative process and the novelty effect on a slow
evaluative process. Two groups of 15 students were asked to choose
between pairs of singing teakettles. Fourteen teakettles were used,
leading to 91 pairs that were presented in a random order. In a first
series, the question was which of the two kettles was the most
beautiful. In the second series, which was the best example for the
category, and in the third series, which was the most original. In
the first condition, subjects were instructed to make the beauty choices
as fast as possible, and after each choice they were given feedback
on their decision times (typicality and novelty choices could be
made in the subjects’ own time). The mean decision time for beauty
choices was 1.28 seconds. In the second condition no instruction
was given to make fast choices, and there the mean decision time for
beauty choices was 2.9 seconds.

For each kettle and for every type of choice, the average
number a kettle was chosen in the pairs was calculated over the 15
subjects in each condition. In this way, measures were obtained for
aesthetic decisions, typicality and novelty of the 14 kettles. Because
aesthetic decisions in condition 1 were made as quickly as possible,
it was thought that this would affect the effect of novelty on
aesthetic decisions, but not the effect of typicality. This did not turn
out to be the case: in both conditions the results of study 1 were
replicated: typicality and novelty had significant partial effects on
aesthetic decisions in both conditions (for typicality and novelty,
condition 1: pr=.90 and .82, condition 2: pr=.82 and .71). However,
the suppressor effect was smaller than in study 1 because of lower
negative correlations between typicality and novelty: r=-.38 in
condition 1, r=-.70 in condition 2.

Using a choice task instead of ratings, Study 2 replicates the
finding that typicality and novelty have independent effects on
aesthetic judgment. However, it is not shown that fast aesthetic
judgments are less dependent on novelty judgments. Thus the idea
that novelty effects are based on a slow evaluative process was not
corroborated in this study. In an earlier study, Snelders and Hekkert
(1999) found that novelty ratings were related to the relative
uniqueness of the associations people have with a product, suggest-
ing a slow evaluative process. However, recent research suggests
that novelty may also affect judgment quicker, through higher
attention for the stimulus (Pieters, Warlop and Wedel, 2002), and
heightened, surprise induced arousal (Vanhamme and Snelders
2001, 2003). Further research on the novelty effect should pay
attention to this.

References
Boselie, Frans (1991), “Against prototypypicality as a central
concept in aesthetics,” Empirical Studies of the Arts, 9, 65-
73.
Hekkert, Paul, Snelders, Dirk, & van Wieringen, Piet C.W.
(2003), “Most advanced, yet acceptable’: Typicality and
novelty as joint predictors of aesthetic preference in
of colour in the aesthetic appraisal of cubist paintings,”
Proceedings of the XIIth international congress on empirical
Mandler, George (1982). “The structure of value: Account-
ing for the importance of the central tendency,” In Affect and Cognition, ed. Margaret S. Clark,
prototypicality and preference,” Empirical Studies of the
Arts, 14, (1), 109-113.
of preference judgments to typicality, novelty, and mere
exposure,” Empirical Studies of the Arts, 6, 79-96.
Congruity as a Basis for Product Evaluation,” Journal of
Consumer Research, 16, 39-54.
Perceptual and Motor Skills, 63, 671-677.
Pieters, Rik, Warlop, Luc, & Wedel, Michel (2002), “Breaking
Through the Clutter: Benefits of Advertisement Originality
and Familiarity for Brand Attention and Memory,” Manage-
ment Science, 48 (6), 765-781
reality,” In Cognitive processes in the perception of art, eds.
ences of paintings,” Proceedings of the Xth international
congress on empirical aesthetics, Budapest, 135-138.
Rosch, Eleanor, & Mervis, C. B. (1975), “Family resemblances:
Studies in the internal structure of categories,” Cognitive
Psychology, 7, 573-605.
measures as predictors of product originality,” in Advances in
Consumer Research (Vol 26), eds E.J. Arnould & L. Scott,
Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.


“Designing for Inclusion Rather Than Exclusion”

Lena Hansson, Göteborg University

Today design permeates all levels in society and is acknowledged in contemporary consumer cultures both as a practice of creating desirable objects and for consumers as a means to create a meaningful life (e.g. Lury, 1997). Most interfaces we as consumers meet in our everyday life, such as products and environments, have been ‘designed’ in one way or another. If then design, as an important aspect in consumers’ everyday life, is discriminatory it becomes a social issue. This paper introduces the ‘philosophy’ of Universal design that can be viewed as a visionary declaration towards design that counteracts exclusion and thus creates a more ‘inclusive’ society. Universal design can be defined as “an approach to design that incorporates products as well as building features which, to the greatest extent possible, can be used by everyone” (Preiser and Ostroff, 2001). However, Universal design is often mistaken for design for specific consumer groups, that is, design for disabled and elderly (e.g., Welsh, 1995; Leibrock and Terry, 1999). The ambition is instead to broaden mainstream design and make attractive and marketable products and environments usable for more people. Ability impairments should therefore not stand in the way for individual consumers to choose in accordance to their preferences for aesthetics and other important aspects.

As consumers we want aesthetically pleasant things but at the same time we need most of them to be usable. The aesthetic aspect of design has been investigated for some time in consumer research (e.g., Holbrook, 1986; Veryzer, 2000). Visual aesthetics is important, as product appearance is what consumers initially meet (Bloch, Brunel and Arnold, 2003; Creusen and Schoormans, 2005). The usability aspect is explained by Norman (1998) as the need for design to make sure that a user can grasp what to do and knows what is going on. Nevertheless, we experience things with all our senses to a greater or lesser extent (e.g. Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982), something comprised in the aesthetics of useful products (Monò, 1997) and thus important when considering Universal design.

The purpose with this paper is to illustrate how designers within the field of Universal design understand the concept and, more specifically, how they view users or consumers in relation to design. Twelve in-depth interviews have been carried out with designers (architects, designers and traffic planners) talking explicitly about Universal design, Design for All or Design for Accessibility, which are some of the most common concepts within this area.

In the interviews the designers depict Universal design as a means to create opportunities for more people to take part in everyday life and participate in society on equal terms. They give emphasis to the way of ‘thinking’ in order to avoid exclusion by design and how to work with inequalities and inaccessibilities. Because then independent of their abilities consumers will no longer feel ‘handicapped’. They have an ambition not to distinguish between disabled and ‘abled’ people or others diverting from the norm, such as children, elderly, immigrants et cetera. Instead, everyone should be considered to be alike, everyone should have the same possibilities. Nevertheless, when discussing projects they have been involved in, the designers still tend to talk mostly about different groups of disabled and in addition how working with these groups also provide other user groups with more accessible environments or easy handled products. The aesthetic aspect of design is on the other hand not something reflected much upon among the designers in the interviews. Some of the designers view Universal design as a force against the increased flashy design without true content that seems to have taken over the ‘good’ design where people’s true needs are acknowledged. This is also reflected in a number of things that people in their everyday life do not know how to handle, often involving technology.

One of the obstacles with Universal design is how to handle the diversity among consumers in the design process. It seems to result in choosing limited user groups, often disabled only. There is thus a risk that user tests then provide very good information on the accessibility or usability aspects but lack information on other aspects important for making environments and products understandable and pleasant as well. However, the fact that aesthetics does not seem to be an important issue among the interviewed designers may be a result of the need to explain why Universal design is important and the fact that complex diversities should be handled in the design process.

The opportunity with Universal design seems to be its implication for people that today are discriminated by design. Our personal self-esteem, identity, and well-being are deeply affected by our ability to function in our physical surroundings with a sense of comfort, independence and control (Kanes Weisman 4/1999). Further, a potential market demand of usable and aesthetical pleasant products is emerging due to the growing elderly population and a Universal design approach could thus be used to create consumption choices important for retaining quality of life. In order to reflect Universal design in mainstream design the first step would be to consider consumers with diverse abilities in the conceptualization of targeted consumer groups. This requires knowledge and a capability in the next step to get beyond abilities and design marketable products et cetera.

But it is essential not to forget that designers besides handling diversity among consumers must also recognize the significance of visual aesthetics because for consumers this is important in their quest for a meaningful life. Norman (2004) even suggests that aesthetically pleasant things also work better because then consumers experience them more positively and thus consider them easier to use. Therefore more research is required to further the understanding of how designers working with a Universal design approach actually consider the aspect of aesthetics in their work.

References


Designing for Inclusion Rather Than Exclusion
Lena Hansson, Center for Consumer Studies (CFK), Sweden

ABSTRACT
This study explores the ‘philosophy’ of Universal Design among designers in Sweden in order to see how they view consumers in relation to design and their understanding of the concept. Universal design is in theory defined as “an approach to design that incorporates products as well as building features which, to the greatest extent possible, can be used by everyone” (Ostroff 2001). Three themes emerging from the data are evoked: the challenge of going beyond disability; counteract design exclusion; and the form should elucidate the function. The awareness of design exclusion is important but not enough for integrating Universal Design into mainstream design.

INTRODUCTION
All interfaces we as consumers meet in our everyday lives, such as products and built environments, have been ‘designed’ in one way or another. Design is acknowledged in contemporary consumer cultures both as a practice of creating desirable objects but also for consumers as a means to create a meaningful life (e.g. Lury 1997). If then design is discriminatory it becomes a social and cultural issue.

Universal Design is a ‘design philosophy’ that counteracts such exclusion and thus creates a more ‘inclusive’ society. It can be defined as “an approach to design that incorporates products as well as building features which, to the greatest extent possible, can be used by everyone” (Ostroff 2001).

The purpose with this study is to problemize the theory of Universal Design with the application by illustrating how designers within the field of Universal design understand the concept and, more specifically, how they view users or consumers in relation to design. The issue of aesthetics is discussed as an important design aspect in this context since one of the ambitions with Universal Design is to integrate it into mainstream design.

Aesthetics and usability aspects in relation to Universal Design
As consumers we want aesthetically pleasant things but at the same time we need most of them to be usable. The aesthetic aspect of design has been investigated for some time in consumer research (e.g., Holbrook 1986; Veryzer 2000) and visual aesthetics is important, because product appearance is what consumers initially meet (Bloch, Brunel and Arnold 2003; Creusen and Schoormans 2005). However, as we experience things with all our senses to a greater or lesser extent (e.g., Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) this should be comprised in the aesthetics of useful products (Mönö 1997). The product must then not only have the right look but must further ‘feel right’ for the consumer, which includes eventual sounds and smells etcetera. The usability aspect is explained by Norman (1998) as the need for design to make sure that a user can grasp what to do and knows what is going on. However, he believes aesthetics and emotions are of significant importance in consumers’ interaction with any designed artifact (Norman 2004).

Even though the usability aspect is salient when it comes to Universal Design other aspects must be considered as well. Universal Design is often mistaken for design for specific consumer groups, that is, design for disabled or elderly (e.g., Welsh 1995; Leibrock and Terry 1999), which commonly is referred to as “assistive design”, “adaptable design” et cetera. The ambition is instead to broaden mainstream design and make attractive and marketable products and environments usable for more people. Because designers in favor of this thinking object to the traditional segregation and stereotyping of people who do not fit ‘the norm’, such as children, elderly, and disabled. According to Mace (cited by Reagan 1998), Universal Design should be viewed as a consumer market driven issue and a way of broaden mainstream, to integrate people with disabilities yes, but with a focus on all people not specifically on people with disabilities. Universal Design should therefore not be interpreted as an impossible standard or a “one size fits all” approach but a quest for more alternatives so that ability impairments will not stand in the way for individual consumers to choose in accordance to their preferences for aesthetics and other important aspects.

METHOD
The study was carried out during 2003 and 2004 in three major cities in Sweden and interviewing was the main method of data collection. The interview material includes twelve interviews lasting 1.5 hours in average with designers within architecture, interior design, industrial design, web design, traffic design (or engineering), and rehabilitation engineering consisting of rich accounts of their experience and their practice of Universal Design. The interviewed designers are all talking explicitly about the concept but have different experiences of it as they represent a variety of design disciplines.

The interviews were partly semi-structured as the respondents were asked about how they define Universal Design and if they could explain what the concept was all about. However, as the respondents were representing various fields of design and because the emphasis was on the respondents’ own experience and practice of Universal Design the questions were open-ended and asked in relation to the respondents’ own narratives of the topic. The interviews in this aspect came to resemble conversations; an interview strategy which Rapley (2004) refers to as ‘cooperative work’.

The study takes on an interpretive approach (e.g. Thompson et al. 1989) in order to explore the designers’ experience of Universal design and their view of consumers in relation to design. A search for patterns and themes in the analyzing process of the transcribed interviews has generated some themes evolving around design exclusion and aesthetics which will be presented in this article.

FINDINGS
The following discussion outlines three themes of interest for this study: the challenge of going beyond disability; counteract design exclusion; and the form should elucidate the function. Each theme is illustrated with the help of examples drawn from the interviews.

The challenge of going beyond disability
The designers have an ambition not to distinguish between disabled and ‘abled’ people or others diverting from the norm, such as children, elderly, immigrants et cetera. Instead, everyone should be considered to be alike, everyone should have the same possibiliti-
ties. Nevertheless, when talking about the practice of Universal Design most of the designers still tend to invite only people with different disabilities to participate in the design process. Some of the respondents argue that working with these groups also provide other user groups with more accessible environments or easy handled products.

“What is good for those with the greatest problem is good for everyone, and it should work for everyone, that you don’t make special solutions. A typical reservation is to create a special web site for those who can’t see, without pictures and without integrating it, which is a typical example for me. The thought isn’t to have a kitchen entrance for one who can’t walk but to build a ramp at the main entrance instead. It’s the same thought on the web, the main entrance should be made for as many as possible to enter, then clearly for those with severe disabilities…I mean ‘for all’ that is more utopia” (Anna).

Making web sites that are accessible for disabled is both in line with legislation that governs the design of public web sites but has also proven commercial successful for e-businesses as many consumers with disabilities are great users of Internet according to Anna. It provides them with increased freedom to buy on line themselves instead of having to rely on other people to do it for them. Furthermore it might require much less effort than to move from home to a shop and back.

One of the obstacles with Universal Design is obviously how to handle the diversity among consumers in the design process. It seems to result in choosing limited user groups, often disabled only even if the intention is to broaden the user inclusion. There is therefore a risk that user tests then provide very good information on the accessibility or usability aspects but lack information on other aspects important for making environments and products understandable and pleasant as well. This must be acknowledged when it comes to designing consumer products. Then other interests come into play, not the least the consumers’ individual preferences. Like Clarkson et al. (2003) state, “if the design is tailored too closely to the needs of special groups the overall ability of the final product or service to meet the needs of other end users may be compromised.” It could then even be seen as another kind of exclusion.

The expressions of Universal Design become very different depending on how a designer chooses to apply the idea of Universal Design in the design process and what it is that are designed. The above view of web sites is one approach of many possible. Public products and environments are great challenges as they require designers to target all citizens. For instance a street and a pedestrian crossing must be accessible to people with many different requirements. The design of the so called kerb-cuts (the sloping kerbstones on the edge of a pavement that provides a smooth transition between the pavement level and the road) was initially designed to help wheelchair users but also people with strollers or on bicycles et cetera have benefited by this design (e.g. Keates and Clarkson 2004). However, they are causing problems for people with visual impairments and even though measured have been made to counteract this obstacle the lack of a holistic approach leads to unnecessary exclusion.

Counteract design exclusion

Although the term Universal might be somewhat provoking as it leads to the idea of one single ‘universal’ solution for a problem or a design, this is not how the designers in the study understand it. Achieving Universal Design is utopia according to them and what is believed to be more important though is to be aware of whom you exclude in the design process, intentionally as well as unintentionally. In the interviews the designers depict Universal Design as a means to create opportunities for more people to take part in everyday life and participate in society on more equal terms. They give emphasis to this way of ‘thinking’ in order to avoid exclusion by design and how to work with inequalities and inaccessibilities. Because then independent of their abilities consumers will no longer feel ‘handicapped’, a state of mind that we all may feel from time to time in different situations, explained somewhat different by two of the respondents:

“It’s the environment that makes you handicapped. The environment puts certain demands on you and if you can’t control all of them, you become handicapped” (Karoline).

“We are individuals, we are of different lengths, we have different abilities to hear well, and we also hear various well in different situations, and we see differently well in different situations. In the mornings when it’s dark in the bedroom it can be hard to see the time if it isn’t well-lit, or if the contrasts are not good et cetera. In other situations we easily see the time. It’s the same for those who are visual impaired, in certain situations they see great and in other cases they get really dazzled, which is more disturbing than anything else for one person but not for another” (Harald).

Such a way of thinking clearly expresses an inclusive view of the role of design and implicitly the view of people. The underlying assumption is that we are all excluded by design because of the shortcomings of poor design but this should be recognized as a design problem and not as a user problem. Because human abilities are something that changes over time, not only by age, and even so it is something we ought to consider being normal. However, even if there are no obvious obstacles for a consumer to use a product there are still many consumers that are having problems handling them. The video recorder is an excellent example as it is often mentioned by consumers (e.g. Keates and Clarkson 2004). The design exclusion is obvious because if you cannot handle your video recorder you become handicapped as you do not live up to the requirements set by the design, even if it happens to be a poor design. By identifying why and how end-users cannot access or readily use a product or service, enables the possibility to counter design exclusion (Clarkson et al 2003).

The form should elucidate the function

For some of the designers, Universal Design also implies a criticism of the trend that design is treated as a superficial activity, concerned only with the aesthetics of the product’s surface. On the other hand, a too strong focus on people’s abilities runs the risk that the aesthetic design aspect is neglected, even though it might be equally important to consumers. The aesthetic aspect of design is not something reflected much upon among the designers in the interviews, in the sense that they talk explicitly about aesthetics. When asked directly about the issue one of the architects explains her understanding of it like this:

“It’s about to reach a good function through aesthetics you could say, but not good function to any price. I mean, the aesthetical values must also be present as in all other contexts but then tastes differ and the values vary, even though it naturally has a very great significance as well. At the same time you could say that if you don’t understand the function and the mechanisms then aesthetics isn’t, then you can’t do
much with the aesthetics either. You still have to start with doing things usable and then understand how you can make the utmost of it” (Bodil).

There are some exceptions to the neglect of talking about aesthetics in the interviews and one of the industrial designers formulates an aesthetic approach in her definition of Universal Design:

“Universal Design is to reach a ‘gestalt’ that is both beautiful and good for as many as possible, a well defined group.../.../ It can be both disabled and abled bodies /.../...I don’t think anything is good if it isn’t both beautiful and functional” (Berit).

It is all about designer competence or lack thereof if you fail in handling both aspects according to the respondent. She continues with that the function ought to include how easy it is to use, what it should be able to do and not, how complex technology should be included and concludes that the form should strengthen the function.

Another kind of acknowledgement of aesthetics can be found in the material when the designers explain how to avoid stigmatizing people. Then besides making things usable for more people they must also be made attractive for users because in that aspect there are no differences between consumers. For instance when designing a knife that people with lowered physical strengths in the hand can use as well, this particular knife can be included in a knife set with a similar aesthetic expression. However, alternatives are required to cover different aesthetic preferences among people.

The aesthetics is thus not unimportant for the designers in the study but when it is discussed it seems to have the purpose of elucidating the function. For aesthetics to have this role is not unusual as studies show that aesthetics may influence judgment about for instance the number of functions and ease of operation (Creusen and Schoormans 2005). Norman (2004) even suggests that aesthetically pleasant things also work better because then consumers experience them more positively and thus consider them easier to use. This further goes in line with Monö’s (1997) claim that aesthetics could enhance the understanding of the whole not only the function.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Although Universal Design can be compared to ergonomic design or human factors in product design (see Benktzon 1994; Green and Jordan 1999), two well-known design areas that use close user interaction to make more user-friendly products, what characterizes Universal Design is the awareness of design exclusion. Universal Design is a challenge for the designers in the study because they need to get beyond disability to counteract exclusion and this is not easily done. However, the awareness of who are excluded, why they are excluded along with how they are excluded is more important than to reach a ‘universal’ solution. The opportunity of Universal Design is its implication for people that today are excluded by design. Our personal self-esteem, identity, and well-being are deeply affected by our ability to function in our physical surroundings with a sense of comfort, independence and control (Kanes Weisman 4/1999). In this there is also a potential market demand of usable and aesthetical pleasant products emerging due to the growing elderly population.

The study shows that the aesthetic aspect of design seems to be overridden by the focus on function and usability in relation to Universal Design. For parts this might have to do with the concept’s core value, which is usability for a broader range of people in society (e.g. Ostroff 2001), and thus aesthetics becomes less visible. At the same time the designers claim there is no conflict between aesthetics and function and usability as it is only a matter of competence from the part of the designer. However, if the focus then is narrowed down to the usability aspect the aesthetic expression may be challenged or even neglected. Therefore it is essential not to forget that designers besides handling diversity among consumers must also recognize the significance of visual aesthetics because for consumers this is important in their quest for a meaningful life. Universal Design could thus be used to create consumption choices important for retaining quality of life but the ethical interests must here co-exist with the commercial interests in order for such a design approach to be considerer in mainstream design.

It is important not to make the mistake and out rule elderly. Being elderly today means something different than it used to and since people grow older very differently the cognitive age might divert significantly from the biological age (Moschis et al. 1997). The cognitive age is as important to consider when studying how consumers live their lives, even if consumers diminishing abilities over time must be considered in the design process as well. A first step to reflect Universal Design in mainstream design would be to consider consumers with diverse physical and cognitive abilities in the conceptualization of targeted consumer groups. More importantly, to reach the proper usability you need to address the true abilities of consumers, not only the ‘average’ consumer. Therefore a variation of consumers as users must be invited to participate in the actual design process. Ford Motor Company used in their design of Ford Focus a so called ‘third age suit’ to simulate lifespan changes in vision and strength as well as flexibility in order to design an “age less car” (Steinfeld and Steinfeld 2001). But of course, it is not marketed as such because there is a long-held automotive marketing approach: You can sell a young man’s car to an old man, but you can’t sell an old man’s car to a younger man. This is probably true for many products. So to conclude, much research is required to further the understanding of how a Universal Design approach should be integrated not only in the design process but as well in the marketing process.

**REFERENCES**


Clarkson, John, Coleman, Roger, Keates, Simenon, and Lebbon, Cherie (eds.) (2003), Inclusive design: Design for the whole population, Great Britain: Springer-Verlag London Ltd.


Leibrock, Cynthia A. and James Evan Terry (1999), Beautiful Universal design—a visual guide, New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.


___ (2004), Emotional design: Why we love or hate everyday things, USA: Basic Books.


ABSTRACT
The paper is concerned with the measurement of emotions and the study of the role of emotions in consumer choice. Contemporary neurological findings suggest that emotions may play a role in its own right, quite different from the way in which they have been considered in traditional consumer choice behaviour theory. A large-scale study including 800 respondents, covering 64 brands, provide findings on emotional response tendencies for the brands, and relate these to involvement, type of need gratification, purchasing behaviour, etc.

EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS
One of the things we now know about memory is that when we are experiencing something, if it is fully processed, all of its component parts will be stored in various parts of our memory. One of the components of that experience that will be stored is any emotion that is associated with it, in our nondeclarative emotional memory. When a memory is recalled, all of the component parts are reunited from the various areas of the brain, and that includes the emotional memory associated with the experience.

What this means is that our experiences with brands, as retained in memory, will include our emotional associations with the brand. In a very real practical sense, if we can measure the emotions associated with a brand, it will enable managers to better understand it, better position it, and importantly work toward optimizing positive emotional associations in memory. Before we introduce a new method for measuring the emotional associations with brands, we would like to discuss briefly just exactly what we mean by ‘emotion.’

We certainly all experience ‘feelings’ which we think of as emotions, and they certainly relate in most cases. But the concept of emotions goes beyond this and is perhaps best understood within the context of something called affect program theory. This deals with a specific range of emotions that generally correspond to Ekman’s (1980) idea, adopted by Damasio (2000, 2003), of the six primary emotions: surprise, anger, fear, disgust, sadness, and joy. These primary emotions are a basic part of our being human, and appear to be unrelated to culture. There is great similarity in the way in which they function.

This is very important because it means that primary emotions are the same for everyone. While the basic emotions comprising the affect program are fundamental to all humans, Damasio (2000) and Le Doux (1998) believes that secondary emotions (emotions like embarrassment or guilt) are to some extend acquired, and triggered by things people have come to associate with that emotion through experience. Because of this, it makes sense to think about ‘emotions’ as the base neurological process, and emotional response as ‘feelings,’ or how we experience and articulate our emotions.

Even though our emotions, through the feelings they give rise to, especially primary emotions, have limited involvement in the actual cognitive processing controlling long-term action, they nonetheless will be strongly integrated into the cognitive processes leading to long-term planned action. In a very real sense, emotional responses ‘frame’ conscious cognitive processing. This is why if we understand the emotional associations with a brand in memory, advertising (or other marketing communication) that elicits emotional responses consistent with the brand should help reinforce positive brand attitudes as well as purchase intentions formed as a result of that advertising.

This works because feelings aroused by emotions are part of a cognitive process that actually leads to logical thinking, even though emotional memories are stored out-of-consciousness. Damasio has argued our reasoning is significantly influenced by both conscious and unconscious signals from the neural networks associated with emotion. We all acquire emotional memories related to experiences with different things (for example brands), and these emotions are unconscious and independent of any conscious memories or understandings we might have of those same things. So when we think about something, while we are conscious of what we ‘know’ about it, our thinking will also through feelings be informed by our conscious emotional memory.

MEASURING EMOTION-BRAND ASSOCIATIONS
As we have just seen, there are emotional memories associated with everything we experience, and this includes brands. If we can come up with a reliable and usable battery of scales to measure the emotions and the related feelings associated with a brand, we will have a powerful tool for understanding brands, and how to position them to capitalize upon positive emotional association in the brand’s marketing communication.

Toward that end, an ambitious study was undertaken where we looked at 16 product categories covering 64 brands. Each of the four quadrants of the Rossiter-Percy (1999) grid was represented (see Table 1). In choosing the categories and brands, the leading brands in the category were included, along with one or two others (where available) with unique images. A random sample of consumers was pre-recruited by telephone and asked to participate in a study of feelings for brands and product categories. Subjects were randomly assigned to four groups, each representing four of the 16 categories, and mailed a self-administered questionnaire. Field work was carried out by TNS/Gallup in Denmark. The response rate was 67%.

EMOTION SCALES
In the psychology and consumer behaviour literature, and even in the marketing literature (Richins, 1997), there are numerous batteries of scales for ‘measuring’ feelings (sometimes labeled emotions). We initially considered simply using an established set of scales, but we were concerned that when people talk about their feelings for things like adverts or brands they may not mean exactly that same thing that one might infer from a particular scale. If you are talking about your feelings toward, say, an advert, are you really ‘happy’ or ‘sad’ or ‘angry’? Perhaps, but more than likely people probably pick the feeling word that comes closest to describing their feelings.

To develop a set of scales in measuring the emotions associated with adverts and brands, to be certain that we really understand what people want when they check a feeling scale, we conducted a pre-test using adverts as stimuli. Four different adverts representing the four quadrants of the Rossiter-Percy brand attitude strategy grid were exposed to a sample of graduate students at the Copenhagen Business School. Among other questions, we asked what emotions or feelings they were experiencing as they read the advert. We later asked them to use a battery of feeling word scales culled from the literature. An analysis was conducted relating the expressions of
emotion or feeling experienced with the responses checked from the battery of scales. This resulted in a set of 24 items.

**ANALYSIS**

One of the goals of the analysis was to come up with a reduced set of scales that would be reliable and easily used in advertising and brand research. Toward that end, a factor analysis of the profiles for each brand and each category was conducted. After reviewing the various rotations, a decision was made to concentrate on 2-factor solutions that reflected in each case a strong positive-negative distinction. As an example, the original principal component analysis for Dove shampoo yielded a 7-factor solution, using the traditional cut-off of an Eigen value of one. But the 2-factor solution accounted for 41% of the total variance and clearly identified a positive vs. negative set of emotional responses. By eliminating those items that did not load highly on either factor, a set of 14 scale items was selected and re-factored. By then looking at only the items with high loadings, a battery of 10 items (6 positive and 4 negative) resulted (see Table 2). A similar procedure was conducted for each of the 16 categories and 64 brands.

Scores were then calculated for each subject based upon the intensity of felt emotion (for each ‘checked’ feeling statement subjects ranked how strongly they felt it applied on a 6 point scale) and the factor loadings to produce a positive and negative score for each brand, category, and quadrant from the Rossiter-Percy grid. Table 3 illustrates the scores for the brands in the Shampoo category.

**INSIGHTS FROM MEASURING EMOTION-BRAND ASSOCIATIONS**

Looking at the emotional associations people have with brands, as we have suggested, can provide important insights into how people perceive brands. Looking again at the scores in Table 3, we see that people have strong positive emotional associations with both Dove and Sanex. But in the case of Head and Shoulders, we find that both positive and negative emotions are associated with the brand in memory. Clearly, people’s emotional experiences of Dove and Sanex are quite different from their experience of Head and Shoulders. (We, of course, are using the term ‘experience’ in its broadest sense, not to mean actual usage.) Looking at the emotional intensity scores for the shampoo category, we find that Sanex, and to a somewhat lesser degree Dove, reflect the feelings associated generally with the category.

The explanation for the atypical Head and Shoulders scores is found when we look at users vs. non-users (see Table 4). Non-users associate negative feelings with the brand, but users have very positive emotional associations with the brand. Clearly, the non-users mix emotional responses to dandruff with those of the brand.
TABLE 3
Emotional Intensity Scores for Shampoo Brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Positive Emotion</th>
<th>Negative Emotion</th>
<th>NERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dove</td>
<td>1.095</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head &amp; Shoulders</td>
<td>.379</td>
<td>.477</td>
<td>-.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanex</td>
<td>1.577</td>
<td>.296</td>
<td>1.281</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4
Emotional Intensity Scores for Shampoo Brands: Users vs. Non-Users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Positive Emotion</th>
<th>Negative Emotion</th>
<th>NERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dove user</td>
<td>.979</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove non-user</td>
<td>1.111</td>
<td>.279</td>
<td>.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head &amp; Shoulders user</td>
<td>2.970</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>2.650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head &amp; Shoulders non-user</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>.731</td>
<td>-.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanex user</td>
<td>1.968</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>1.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanex non-user</td>
<td>1.416</td>
<td>.283</td>
<td>1.133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 5
Emotional Intensity Scores for Television Set Brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Positive Emotion</th>
<th>Negative Emotion</th>
<th>NERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B&amp;O</td>
<td>15.64</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>13.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philips</td>
<td>8.96</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>7.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panasonic</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>5.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grundig</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, both users and non-users of Dove and Sanex associate positive emotions with those brands. We shall not speculate upon these findings, but they do illustrate how useful measures of emotional associations with brands can be.

One final example will further illustrate this. Table 5 presents the emotional intensity scores for the television set category. Those familiar with these brands will know that B&O has positioned the brand in recent years to a more transformational brand attitude strategy, specifically encouraging a more emotional than reasoned reason for buying the brand. Their success is clearly illustrated in the significantly higher positive emotional associations with the brand.

In this sense the NERS score may be seen as a measure of that part of brand equity which is not determined by market factors such as price, availability, technical quality, etc., but rather reflects the inherent intrinsic value of the brand. In exhibit 1, we give the scores for the different brands and categories included in the study. It is remarkable here to find over 9 brands scoring higher than the category per se. These may truly be seen as outstanding brands with high value build into the brand name. That brands such as Tivoli, Legoland, Bang & Olufsen are among these is not surprising in a Danish context.

SUMMARY
Emotions and feelings are a key part of our experiences, and will be associated with those experiences in memory. Our experiences with brands, whether in terms of actual use or simply an understanding of them, will have emotional associations linked to them in memory. By measuring the emotional associations with brands managers will have another important tool for better understanding their brand and for developing advertising communication strategy.
### EXHIBIT 1
Emotional Response Strength Scores and Net Emotional Response Strength Scores (NERS) for Categories and for Brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Positive Strength</th>
<th>Negative Strength</th>
<th>NERS</th>
<th>Brand Average</th>
<th>Grid Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Involvement/Informational</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shampoo Category</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>7.294</td>
<td>1.597</td>
<td>5.697</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dove</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.981</td>
<td>1.604</td>
<td>3.377</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head &amp; Shoulder</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.376</td>
<td>2.996</td>
<td>-0.620</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanex</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6.833</td>
<td>1.281</td>
<td>5.552</td>
<td>2.770</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline Category</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4.334</td>
<td>0.283</td>
<td>4.051</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shell</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.842</td>
<td>-0.090</td>
<td>2.933</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydro Texaco</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6.851</td>
<td>0.704</td>
<td>6.148</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK Benzin</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3.509</td>
<td>0.682</td>
<td>2.827</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.484</td>
<td>0.202</td>
<td>4.282</td>
<td>4.047</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detergent Category</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4.249</td>
<td>0.653</td>
<td>3.596</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariel</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.575</td>
<td>0.526</td>
<td>4.049</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bio Tex</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4.158</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>3.213</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.300</td>
<td>0.624</td>
<td>2.677</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persil</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.794</td>
<td>0.560</td>
<td>2.234</td>
<td>3.043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain Killers Category</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.562</td>
<td>1.177</td>
<td>3.384</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panodil</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.542</td>
<td>0.784</td>
<td>3.758</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnyl</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.333</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td>3.497</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirin</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.875</td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td>3.118</td>
<td>3.457</td>
<td>3.360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Involvement/Transformational</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffe Category</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>8.952</td>
<td>1.199</td>
<td>7.754</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrild</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>8.269</td>
<td>1.896</td>
<td>6.374</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gevalia</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6.157</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td>5.201</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BKI</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.880</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td>4.075</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karat</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.534</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>3.932</td>
<td>4.895</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal Category</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>8.622</td>
<td>1.146</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelloggs</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8.452</td>
<td>1.411</td>
<td>7.041</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guldkorn</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.695</td>
<td>1.154</td>
<td>6.541</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ota</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7.037</td>
<td>1.057</td>
<td>5.980</td>
<td>6.521</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread Category</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>8.398</td>
<td>0.996</td>
<td>7.402</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasa</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.783</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>5.939</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schulstad</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>6.763</td>
<td>0.835</td>
<td>5.928</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohberg</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7.240</td>
<td>1.081</td>
<td>6.158</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatting</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.441</td>
<td>1.182</td>
<td>7.259</td>
<td>6.321</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetic Category</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>11.264</td>
<td>2.215</td>
<td>9.050</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nivea</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8.150</td>
<td>1.376</td>
<td>6.774</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Factor</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8.833</td>
<td>1.818</td>
<td>7.014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybelline</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.599</td>
<td>1.476</td>
<td>6.123</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REFERENCES**
**EXHIBIT 1 (CONTINUED)**

Emotional Response Strength Scores and Net Emotional Response Strength Scores (NERS) for Categories and for Brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Involvement/Informational</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Positive Strength</th>
<th>Negative Strength</th>
<th>NERS</th>
<th>Brand Average</th>
<th>Grid Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perfume Category</strong></td>
<td>78</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugo Boss</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Biagiotti</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.16</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Gils</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninna Ricci</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cars Category</strong></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>9.19</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiat</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skoda</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toyota</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>7.02</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citroen</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>6.91</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TV-Sets Category</strong></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B&amp;O</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15.64</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>13.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philips</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8.96</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>7.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panasonic</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grundig</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>7.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amusement Parks Category</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9.70</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>8.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tivoli</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>12.49</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>11.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGOLand</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bon Bon Land</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.01</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakken</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>6.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cell Phone Companies Category</strong></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonofon</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDC</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computers Category</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dell</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Macintosh</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fujitsu Siemens</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hewlett Packard</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.44</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.34</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Airlines Category</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maersk Air</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAS</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sterling Airways</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krone</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Banks Category</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danske Bank</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordea</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7.89</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG Bank</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alm. Brand Bank</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>News Papers Category</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlingske Tidende</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politiken</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.98</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jyllands Posten</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekstra Bladet</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

For many years the rationality assumption was regarded as adequate approximation for modeling and predicting human behavior in social sciences (Luce and Raiffa 1957; French 1988 and for reviews Baron 1994; Shafir and LeBoeuf 2002). Thus, it was assumed that people assess the impact and likelihood of possible outcomes of alternatives as well as the utility value of each alternative and integrate this information through some type of expectation-based calculus in order to arrive at a decision. Motivated by Kahneman and Tversky’s research on intuitive judgments and heuristics (Kahneman 2002) it was shown that people use simple decision rules which do not follow basic principles of logic and reason. Thus, the inadequacy of the rationality assumption has been documented in the literature (e.g. Kahneman 1994). Although emotions were typically not considered in the rationality analysis, recent research was particularly concerned with investigating the role of affect in judgments and decision making (Loewenstein and Lerner 2003). Previous research has shown that affect can have a significant influence on choice processes (Schwarz and Clore 1988), affective deficits can decrease the quality of decision making (Damasio, Tranel and Damasio 1990; Wilson, Hodges and LaFleur 1995; Bechara et al. 1997), and the integration of affect in decision making models can increase their explanatory power (Mellers, Schwartz and Ritov 1999). Further, several empirical studies have proven that specific stimuli such as decision alternatives evoke an affective evaluation which is not always conscious (Zajonc 1980; Kahneman, Ritov and Schkade 1999; Bargh 2002).

Against this background Slovic and colleagues have introduced the concept of the affect heuristic (Slovic et al. 2002). The findings suggest that affect plays a double role in information processing and decision making (Loewenstein and Lerner 2003). On the one hand, conscious feelings are integrated as rational information in analytical decision strategies as in the case of the “How-do-I-feel-about-it?”-heuristic (Pham 1998). According to this concept, positive (negative) feelings lead to a favorable (unfavorable) evaluation. On the other hand, mostly subconscious emotions can directly influence decision making by an affect heuristic which is not mediated by brain areas being responsible for analytic information processing (Slovic et al. 2002). Using a readily available affective impression can be easier and more efficient than applying analytical decision-making strategies (Slovic et al. 2004). Thus, a positive rather than a destructive influence of emotions on decision making is assumed. The affect heuristic seems to be an adequate explanation of Adaval’s and Jacoby’s findings that the existence of a prominent brand during evaluation processes by consumers leads to a dominant overall effect (Jacoby, Olson and Haddock 1971; Adaval 2003).

In line with literature on brand relationship theory (Fournier 1998; Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001; Aaker, Fournier and Brasel 2004; Thomson, Maclnnis and Park 2005), we assume that strong brands can be such an affect laden stimulus and that brand choice processes can be based on the affect heuristic concept. In contrast to other work which has been done in that field we examine consumer evaluations of nearly similar brand products from the same product class which can only be distinguished by the implicit and explicit brand information. We assume that brands are perceived as suggested by Jacoby (1977) as an information chunk which joins a “chunk” of information that has psychological significance. That means that the brand symbol activates a specific associative and implicit or explicit knowledge structure. If the brand knowledge exhibits a specific psychological effect, the brand has the potential to lead to a bias in decision strategy, resulting in the affect heuristic.

One major difficulty in examining the suggested affect heuristic is that most information processing is subconscious, in particular that related to emotions (Alba et al. 2002, Bargh 2002).

In order to gain new insights into the extensive literature in this field, a tried and tested measurement method from neuroscience is introduced into consumer research. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) facilitates the analysis of human brain functions directly while the test persons perform decision-making tasks. Thus, intervening variables become observable and to date, non-observed influences of the effect and interplay between analytic and affective information processing could be analyzed by means of the new methodologies.

In an empirical study, the brain activity of two separate cohorts of twelve male and ten female healthy economic students during binary brand choice tasks were measured by a high-field magnetic resonance whole body scanner (for details see Deppe et al. 2005). As product categories, coffee for the group of female subjects and beer for the male group were used to ensure brand expertise. These commodity goods have similar ingredients (e.g. German purity law for beer) as well as sensory qualities, so that the brand itself functions as the major selection criterion.

The major finding of the study is that in a competitive choice situation, only the first choice brand (FCB) has the specific power to switch to the affect heuristic, whereas even a secondary rated brand fails to do so. Furthermore, our results provide evidence of two different pathways in brand choice. Based on the “Somatic Marker Hypothesis”, the FCB can be regarded as a stimulus, which evokes a somatic state that either “forces attention on the negative outcome of the decision” and immediately rejects the negative course of action, i.e. not to choose the FCB, or, if the marker is positive, it becomes a “beacon of incentive” to select the FCB. This FCB effect provides neuroscientific proof of the existence of the affect heuristic and a positive understanding of the influence of emotions in decision making. Our selection of the particular brand was based on implicit memory contents and experienced emotions, usually stored long before the actual decision. Thus, the consumption experience is seemingly a central factor in marketing management.

Finally, it could be assumed that, in a more general and social perspective the concept is not limited to consumer goods, but can possibly be expanded to other appropriate objects or persons.

REFERENCES

Brand Switching as a Function of Variety Seeking Behavior and Product Characteristics: Testing the Hoyer and Ridgway Model
Nina Michaelidou, Birmingham University, United Kingdom
Sally Dibb, Warwick Business School, United Kingdom

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumer behavior research examines brand switching as a result of internal satiation with a brand’s attributes, yet disregards the possible effect of other internal or external factors (e.g., McAlister 1982). Hoyer and Ridgway (1984) developed the only theoretical model which distinguishes between internal (e.g., variety seeking) and external (e.g., out of stock conditions) factors and which addresses the mediating role of product class. These authors suggest that a number of objective and perceived characteristics mediate brand switching in a specific product category. Little other research has been undertaken to examine this area. The research in this paper addresses this gap by exploring brand switching in the context of apparel purchase, as a function of variety seeking levels and product characteristics.

Variety seeking behavior has been previously found to affect brand switching behavior (Raju 1980, 1983). Variety seeking or novelty seeking behavior is manifested by an individual’s drive which itself is determined by certain personality traits. For example, an individual who is authoritarian or dogmatic is likely to exhibit an aversion towards change or novelty. On the contrary a person characterized as extrovert or creative is likely to look for change or novelty in daily activities (including shopping behavior). Variety seeking behavior has been captured in consumer research via the notion of Optimal Stimulation Level (OSL), which maintains that individuals have a preferred (or optimal) level of environmental stimulation. Individuals attempt to adjust the level of environmental stimulation if it falls below or above their optimal by engaging in variety seeking or avoidance behaviors (Raju 1983).

According to Hoyer and Ridgway (1984), certain product characteristics are likely to mediate brand switching in a specific product class. Objective product characteristics such as inter-purchase frequency and the number of choice alternatives are said to determine the product category in which brand switching is likely to occur. For example, brand switching is likely to occur in a product class with many alternative brands and types where inter-purchase frequency is relatively short. Perceived characteristics, which include involvement, perceived risk, brand loyalty, brand similarity and hedonism, are based on subjective consumer perceptions which vary across consumers in a particular product context.

Using the purchase of apparel as the context, measures were developed to capture variety seeking levels, product characteristics and brand switching propensity. Apparel was chosen because it is a medium-priced product appropriate to both men and women, there are many different brands and types of apparel, and inter-purchase frequency is short (Goldsmith 2000). The apparel sector is also relevant to researchers because it attracts opinion leaders and serves a symbolic function for self image and social identity. Variety seeking levels were measured using the notion of OSL, applying the arousal seeking tendency scale of Mehrabian and Russell (1974). This scale has been preferred by many consumer researchers (e.g., Joachimsthaler and Lastovicka 1984; Raju 1980) because it is concise, easy to administer and has high reliability and validity levels. A number of measures were developed to capture involvement, perceived risk, brand loyalty, brand similarity and hedonism in apparel purchases. While involvement, perceived risk and brand loyalty were operationalized as multidimensional constructs, brand similarity was treated as a uni-dimensional construct, and hedonism (or pleasure), as a dimension of involvement (Kapferer and Laurent 1985a; Peter and Ryan 1976; Spangerberg, Voss, and Crowley 1997; Uncles and Laurent 1997).

An online questionnaire was sent to a sample of three thousand individuals randomly derived from a large customer database. A response rate of 19% was achieved. Regression analysis was used to examine the hypothesis that brand switching propensity is a function of variety seeking levels and product characteristics. Prior to the regression analysis, data reduction of the OSL, involvement and perceived risk variables was carried out. Four new OSL factors and 8 new product factors were derived as a result of the analysis. Multiple regression was used to investigate whether variety seeking and product characteristics explain brand switching propensity. Due to the large number and complex variables involved, two linear models were derived to assess the effect on brand switching propensity of each independent factor.

The results of both regression models suggest that OSL and product characteristics do not explain brand switching propensity in apparel purchases. While apparel may, in theory, be a suitable context for brand switching to occur, product characteristics appear to affect its occurrence. Similarly, while relatively high levels of variety seeking have been found in this research, these levels do not explain brand switching propensity.

Of course, these findings cannot be generalized to other product categories. On the contrary, the results of this research indicate the need for further research into the extent to which product characteristics mediate brand switching propensity.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The growing complexity of the social interactions that brands inspire among individuals, communities, and societies requires an adequate complexity in the corresponding consumer culture theories (CCT). Brand-related social phenomena, such as emerging brand identities, brand communities, or acts of consumer emancipation, have recently been on the rise and of interest for consumer researchers. Yet despite their significance for consistent interpretations, the exact relationships between these perspectives remain insufficiently understood.

This paper advances the “brand systems” notion of Giesler and Venkatessh (2005) to approach this particular gap of knowledge from a sociological perspective. A brand, according to these authors, is a set of economic, social, political, and aesthetic distinctions. Products, prices, channels, logos, and etc. are considered elements of the brand. The brand systems notion, instead, embraces the social communications that evolve around a brand. From a brand systems perspective, the dynamic relationships between brands, brand communities, and society are prime sociological concerns. To best reveal the brand systems notion, I first abstract relevant aspects of brand theory and social systems theory. Then, I conduct a qualitative content analysis on five salient CCT studies on brand phenomena. The goal of this analysis is to portray the complexity, diversity, and communalities of the authors’ observations. Using this empirical context, I subsequently elaborate on how the brand systems notion allows for a more consistent understanding of these ostensibly diverse or even paradoxical observations.

The study reveals the following key insights: First, brand systems are established through social communication about brands. Brand systems proliferate with every reference made to the brand, but as human memory is ephemeral, they begin to dissolve in the moment consumers cease to communicate about them. Second, without conspicuous distinctions brands are invisible for the different observers (e.g. marketers, consumers, mass media, researchers) and brand systems have no reason to emerge. Generally, it is irrelevant for the brand systems’ “volume” whether the distinctions that brands make are accepted, altered, or opposed. As long as they inspire these observers to communicate about them, brand systems exist.

Third, as brand systems depend on continuous renewal, they are constantly at risk. Being intelligent in their reproduction, the systems negotiate and perpetuate specific programs and structures that guide, constrain, and inspire communications. Programs and structures allow consumers, marketers and other observers to communicate in accordance with or against the predominant disposition of a brand system. Fourth, brand systems can only be successful with respect to its observers, as only observers can perceive brand-specific communication and contribute to it. Marketers, as corporate observers, profit from strong, positive brand systems as they spread the brand’s distinctions at low costs and enthuse consumers. Yet a brand system’s program can turn against the goals of the marketer if the brand’s distinctions become predominantly rejected. Consumers, as individual and social observers, use brand systems to make suitable choices, to identify with, contribute to, or lean against. Finally, mass media and scientific observers reflect on the brand systems’ distinctions, programs, and structures and thus inform their audiences about the branded world they live in. This study is one example.

In sum, the proposed brand systems framework not only confirms most of the brand-related findings in consumer culture literature but also sets them into a larger and more comprehensible sociological context. In doing so, it helps consumer researchers not only to better understand the complex social dynamics of particular brand identities, brand communities, and brand protest movements, but also the fundamental communalities of their emergence, proliferation, interrelation, and dissolution.

REFERENCES


Habermas, Jürgen (1984), The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Hoffman, Kai-Uwe (2003), Soziologie der Marke, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.


Klein, Naomi (1999), No Logo-Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies, New York: Picador.


Parsons, Talcott (1951), The social system, New York: The Free Press.


Riezebos, Rik, Kist, Bas and Kootstra, Gert (2003), Brand Management-A theoretical and practical approach, Harlow et al.: Prentice Hall.


Brand Trust and Authenticity: The Link between Trust in Brands and the Consumer’s Role on the Market
Clara Gustafsson, Stockholm University School of Business, Sweden

ABSTRACT
Consumers increasingly demand that brand authenticity means that the brand’s values are aligned with the corporation’s actions, which are made transparent (Holt 2002). Interrogating Holt’s claim that “consumer resistance” is inevitably staged in the marketplace, I suggest that the implications of seeing brand authenticity as linked to trust are related to how the consumer’s role on the market is perceived. I argue that as a consequence of “consumer resistance” taking place on the market, there will be a power asymmetry between consumers and brands, increasing the vulnerability of consumers, and affecting the form that the consumer-brand trust relationships can take.

INTRODUCTION
In this paper, I explore the implications of seeing brand authenticity as linked to trust, in order to shed new light on brand trust. Further, I discuss Holt’s (2002: 89) claim about consumer resistance being something that helps the market “rejuvenate itself”, relating it to the concepts of trust and reliance, in order to investigate how brand trust is linked to the consumer’s role on the market.

Within consumer behavior, researchers focusing on trust in corporate brands are scarce, although Holt (2002) points out the increased importance for brands to have consumer trust, posing trust as a major aspect of future relationships between brands and consumers. In recent years, trust and reputation have become increasingly much researched within the marketing discipline, often in relation to corporate brand culture and image. De Chernatony (1999) argues that reputation (i.e. the brand’s image of trustworthiness) is so important that brand managers should start monitoring brand reputation rather than brand image (i.e. consumers’ view of what the brand values are). Furthermore, Fombrun (1996) has suggested that a brand can recover faster from a crisis if it has a high level of stakeholder trust, and if managers address stakeholders concern during and after the crisis. The importance of trust has also been pointed out for example in service management (e.g. Grönroos 1989), and relationship marketing (e.g. Morgan & Hunt 1994). Holt (2002, 2003) contributes with interesting theories on consumers’ trust relationships to brands; however, there are some ideas that I find problematic. Although Holt (2002) suggests that in the future, the brands that have consumers’ trust will have adapted to what consumers demand that authenticity means, he does not see consumers as ever being able to escape the market through “consumer resistance” (89).

The aim of this paper is to shed light on trust and authenticity as discussed in Holt (2002;2003), problematizing it in relation to Holt’s (2002; 89) claim about consumer resistance being something that helps the market “rejuvenate itself”; and to place trust in broader issues as Holt’s work has been influential. Consumers are increasingly asking of brands that they should be trustworthy and authentic in the sense that the brand and the organization behind the brand share the same values; consumers are “Peeling Away the Brand Veneer” (Holt 2002; 86). Through interrogating the notion of the “brand veneer”, I make clear that the assumption underlying Holt’s argument is that corporations may not be able to escape the new reality they are facing, where a “brand veneer” becomes worthless if it is not combined with genuine efforts to show stakeholders that the values of the brand are reflected in the excellent practices and values of the corporation. Then, I suggest that the implications of seeing brand authenticity as linked to trust are related to how the consumer’s role on the market is perceived. I conclude that in case consumers cannot escape the market, the consequential lack of power on the part of consumers will increase the demand for truly trustworthy brands, as well as affect the forms that the trust relationships between consumers and brands can take.

AUTHENTICITY, CONSUMER CULTURE AND BRANDING PARADIGMS
Taking a standpoint against both modern and postmodern advertising and ways of hailing the consumer, Holt (2002) argues that the new “post-post modern condition” of consumer culture that will effect what brands survive in the future, stem from five “postmodern contradictions” (86-87). These contradictions are: First, “Ironic Distance Compressed”, meaning that consumers see through irony as an advertising technique that is used in order to create an image of disinterestedness on the part of the brand using it. Second, “The Sponsored Society”, meaning that brands’ technique of sponsoring popular persons and make them market the brand in their everyday life will be exploited by marketers to the point when consumers will be able to see through that technique, and reject it, as well. Third, “Authenticity Extinction”, means that it is increasingly difficult for marketers to find cultural expressions, such as songs, that have not yet been used in advertising to create an aura of “authenticity”. Fourth, “Peeling Away the Brand Veneer”, means that there is an ongoing struggle between brand managers that try to separate the brand from the corporation behind the brand, and “antibrandizers” that see this as inauthentic; authenticity means aligning corporate practice with brand values, they argue. Fifth, “Sovereignty Inflation”, means that the pressure on postmodern consumers to become “sovereign consumers” through their choice of brands has gone so far as to clash with other aspects of their life; most people do not have the time to consume brands in a way that allows them to feel sovereign. This is why they rely heavily on taste makers (Holt calls them “infomediaries”), such as web sites and magazines that weed out the brands and products that different consumer segments might like. (Holt 2002:86-87)

In the past, as well as in the future, the perceived authenticity of the brand is in focus within the brand paradigms, even though the meaning of authenticity is currently changing (Holt 2002:87-88). Holt argues that as contradictions have risen in consumer culture, the branding paradigm will shift to accommodate these contradictions. As described above, one of the contradictions states that there is an inconsistence between how consumers and corporations perceive authenticity. Consumers, led by “antibrandizers”, increasingly demand that authenticity should be a consistence between brand image and the actions of the corporation behind the brand (86). This is in stark contrast to the meaning of “authenticity” that prevailed in “the postmodern branding paradigm”. There, authenticity meant that the brand communicated an image of “disinterestedness” to consumers, through ironic advertising techniques which implied a (non-existent) gap between the profit motive of the corporation and the image of the brand. The aim of Holt’s article is to try to find an explanation to why this “consumer resistance” against the corporations’ practice of separating the brand from the
corporation emerged. He claims that there is no explanation to it within the branding paradigm, rather, the explanation is found in consumer culture, and in the “dialectical” relationship between current brand paradigm and consumer culture (Holt 2002). Calling the very culture that we live in today “consumer culture”, Holt joins in on a sociological discussion (see e.g. Slater 1997) which suggests that consumption is what mainly structures our lives. Seeing that this view of our culture is Holt’s point of departure, it is not surprising that brands are suggested to be given an even more prominent role in the lives of consumers in the near future.

From the viewpoint of the importance of consumers’ trust in brands, I suggest that it is of special interest to review the way Holt (2002) explores the future of the brand paradigm in relation to consumer culture with particular attention to the change in how authenticity is seen. Before, authenticity was seen as something which was sought out in cool, unexploited subcultures. Finding this authenticity, however, has become increasingly difficult as the fierce quest of marketers to discover new subcultures for their brands to appropriate has made subcultures become virtually extinct. Subcultures now get appropriated so fast they have barely been formed before they are usurped by marketing. Simultaneously, consumers are asking more of brands; it is no longer enough for a brand to be authentic in the sense that it is subculture cool or ghetto chic. In the new consumer culture that is emerging of authenticity primarily means being trustworthy, in the sense that the corporation should act in line with its brand values and behave as a citizen of the community (Holt 2002: 88). Of course, to win in the fierce competition, acting as a “corporate citizen” is not enough to make consumers chose your brand, but it is necessary in order to get their trust, which in turn is a strict condition for having consumers of the future even consider choosing your brand. Holt suggests (2002: 88). This view places an enormous importance on consumers’ trust in brands. Also, because Holt is stating the need for active work with corporate citizenship, I suggest that the implication is that trust has to become part of the brand strategy in the future. Thus, implementing brand authenticity as linked to brand trust requires engaging not only marketing, but rather, building trust through all parts of the organization behind the brand.

“Consumer culture” and “brand paradigm” are important concepts in Holt (2002):

“Consumer culture is the ideological infrastructure that undergirds what and how people consume and sets the ground rules for marketers’ branding activities. The branding paradigm is the set of principles that structures how firms seek to build their brands. [...] Contradictions between consumer culture and the branding paradigm propel institutional shifts in both.” (80)

Consequently, Holt sees brand management and consumption as interrelated activities that necessarily influence one another. This dialectical relationship entails that together, consumers do have a say in what the branding paradigm will look like in the future. Individual firms that do not tap into contradictions in current consumer culture will go under. However, in claiming that there is a dialectical relationship between branding activities and consumption practices, there is a risk of forgetting that the corporation may have more power in that relationship. As Schroeder and Borgerson (1998) argue, “Reality and advertising do not constitute two separate spheres acting upon one another; advertising and the mass media contribute to the visual landscape that constructs reality” (161). Here, it is pointed out that for all the interrelatedness of consumers’ reality and brands, much of the relationship is mediated through ads, and even if consumers can influence ads in a round-
about way, it is not consumers who make the ads which have a part in constructing their reality. Further, “The more prominent certain images become, the more power they have in the sea of images...” (Borgerson and Schroeder 1997 in Schroeder and Borgerson 1998: 164). Thus, it would seem that in case a large corporation would choose to use one ad extensively, that picture would have more power than an image which is used on a smaller scale. This is one example of why the relative power of corporations, as compared to consumers, cannot be ignored when talking about the impact that consumers have on the branding paradigm, and vice versa (c.f. Schroeder & Borgerson 1998).

In his empirical research study Holt (2002) attempts to capture today’s contradictions between consumer culture and the postmodern branding paradigm, and the future shift in the branding paradigm. In order to do that, he starts out by giving a critique of contemporary postmodern consumer behavior theories which state that “consumer resistance” can be a way of escaping the market. Holt (2002) has conducted a research study of consumers that he claims are engaged in consumer resistance in the sense that postmodern theories ascribe to the concept. However, for all their resistance, he does not see consumers as ever escaping the market. One of his informants treats his hobbies much as if they were his jobs; this informant is in a sense a “perfect” consumer, because even though he aspires to outsmart marketer intentions (for example, he buys cheap food through bicycling between stores and buying things that are on sale in each store), he is still buying a large amount of things, and he is doing it on the market. I will come back to Holt’s critique of contemporary postmodern consumer behavior theories later on, as it is related to the claim that trust will become necessary for any individual brand that wants to survive.

Over time, brand management and consumption have an effect on one another (Holt 2002). Accordingly, Holt argues that the view of authenticity in the present, “postmodern consumer culture” is a reaction to the previous, “modern”, branding paradigm where brands had “cultural authority”, meaning that brands reached out to consumers in a highly authoritative mode, basically telling them why their brand was the best brand, and then telling them to buy it. Here is an example of this kind of authoritative ad; a 1954 car ad sounds like this:

“Oldsmobile’s FABULOUS NEW ‘Starfire’ NOW IN PRODUCTION! Starfire—the ‘show car’ that can be your car! Starfire [...] saddle-stitched leather interior in dramatic new two-tone patterns. Starfire—with the surging might of a new 185-horsepower “Rocket” Engine! See and drive this glamorous new Oldsmobile convertible—the “Dream car” Ninety-Eight Starfire—at your Oldsmobile dealer’s now.” (Heimann 2002: 146)

The car for sale is an emerald green convertible with white details. There are two pictures of the car in the ad. The text (quoted above) is placed in the middle of the picture. In the picture at the top of the page the whole car is visible; a woman wearing a scarf is sitting by the steering wheel, and a man in a suit and a hat is leaning his hand on the windshield. They are looking at each other. In the second picture, the woman is standing next to the car looking at it; she is patting the windshield with her white-gloved hand, her other hand placed on her hip. Thus, she looks very confident and pleased with her car. There is a yellow rocket flying through the headline of the ad. At the right hand corner of the ad, in very small letters, it says “Be careful—drive safely!”

This ad is authoritative in its tone, even though it seems as if the marketers are trying to play down that impression through the use of small letters in the most extremely authoritative part of the ad.
Further, the ad states exactly what associations the car should evoke in the (female) consumer: the car is a “show car”, it is “glamorous”, “dramatic”, and “surging”, and the “Starfire” should be driven by a woman.

Clearly, the elegant woman in the pictures reinforces the message of the car’s elegance and glamour. On top of the exhaustive description of the car’s properties, the exhortation to “Be careful–drive safely!” cements the authoritative tone that is typical of the modern way of hailing consumers. This example shows that marketers within the modern marketing paradigm put the product qualities, and the role of the brand and organization, before the role of the consumer, because the ad leaves little room for creativity on the part of consumers; instead it presents a product and tells the consumer that it is “now in production”. Consumers in the modern consumer culture had “not only accepted but sought out” this kind of “paternal” advice (Holt 2002: 81).

During the 1960s, a reaction to the modern view of how brands should hail consumers started. Blatant authority was not appealing to consumers any more, and to address this change, ads, for example, became more ironic in their tone as “[postmodern consumers perceive modern branding efforts to be inauthentic because they ooze with the commercial intent of their sponsors.]” (Holt 2002: 83). In order to accommodate this shift in how consumers perceived authenticity, the branding paradigm shifted from the modern way of hailing the consumer to “the idea that brands will be more valuable if they are offered not as cultural blueprints but as cultural resources, as useful ingredients to produce the self as one chooses.” (Holt 2002: 83). This idea is highly controversial within consumer research, as there is an ongoing discussion on whether consumers are sovereign and thus able to “produce the self as one chooses,” or dupes, manipulated my marketing (see e.g. Firat & Venkatesh 1995; Slater 1997). I will come back to this discussion when talking about consumer resistance and brand trust, below.

**TRUST AS AUTHENTICITY**

Currently, the postmodern branding paradigm is under attack, Holt (2002) argues. A shift in consumer culture takes place because when marketers exploit the postmodern branding paradigm where “authenticity” is in the guise of “disinterestedness” in the brand, new contradictions between that branding paradigm and the current consumer culture arises. The contradiction, “Peeling away the brand veneer” (Holt 2002: 86) means that the separation of brand and corporation that consumers perceived as authentic before is instead seen as a way of cowardly trying to avoid taking responsibility for the actions of the corporation. Holt (2002: 88) argues that: “Brands now cause trouble, not because they dictate tastes, but because they allow companies to dodge civic obligations.” Nowadays, consumer resistance is firstly about not accepting that a brand become a colorful patch covering up an organization with doubtful practices, for example, in the form of sweatshops, dubious bonus systems, etc.

Acknowledging that the postmodern conception of brands has resulted in brand managers’ having separated the brand almost entirely from the corporation in a way that has made it possible for corporations to misbehave without losing profits is part of the shift in consumer culture that will influence the future branding paradigm, Holt suggests. In the future, brands will act as artists that help people construct their identities, but they will only be allowed to do so if they have consumer trust. In this new “Post postmodern Branding Paradigm”, Holt sees the brand as a “Citizen-Artist” (2002: 81), where “Citizen” stands for the brands’ having to align their brand values with the actions of the corporation and act as a “corporate citizen” in order to gain and keep consumer trust and survive in the future market place (2002: 88). For example, corporate citizenship may involve long-term support of activities of local importance wherever the brand is situated. Also, the company needs to act as a citizen, in the sense that it takes care not to pollute the environment, not exploit its labor force, etc. In the future, “Post postmodern” consumer culture, “Brands will be trusted to serve as cultural resource material when their sponsors have demonstrated that they shoulder civic responsibilities as would a community pillar.” (Holt 2002: 88). Thus, the demands on more ethical behavior on the part of future brands are very high, and require that corporations redefine their sense of what authenticity means. Further, as Schroeder (2002) argues, listening to what critics say about the brand can help corporations improve their brand through providing important insights on how to understand it.

However, changing the authenticity of the brand to become a concept that is intimately linked with trust is not straightforward. This is shown in the example that Holt (2002) gives of how slowly Nike reacted to consumers’ insistence that they needed to have corporate practices that were aligned with the brand’s values. Also, I argue that this is evident from the way that Holt (2003) omits the problem of authenticity, as well as in the claim that Holt (2002) makes about postmodern researchers’ notion of “consumer resistance”.

**WHAT IS AUTHENTICITY TO AN ICON BRAND?**

Surprisingly, Holt (2003) ignores the problems surrounding the emerging notion of authenticity as being increasingly much linked to trust. Here, he describes authenticity in a way that is more similar to the way that the earlier article describes as the “postmodern”, view of authenticity. Holt (2003) suggests that “authenticity” is connected to what is “far removed from commercial, cultural, and political power: on the frontier, in bohemia, in rural backwaters, in athletic leagues, in immigrant areas, and ghettos.” (44). The way authenticity is described here is highly inconsistent with the discussion of authenticity in Holt (2002). According to the later article, myth making draws on environments with the kind of authenticity that is offered by subcultures, and the people in them; rebel myths can be shaped from an understanding of them, according to Holt. Trust as linked to authenticity has thus been overlooked in this article, in favor of a more simplistic view of what authenticity in a brand means.

In Holt (2003), authenticity has a lot to do with the brand’s signaling a “cool”, “subculture” attitude, and nothing to do with whether the brand values and the actions of the corporations are aligned. This shows the complexity of the claim that trust is becoming more linked to authenticity which Holt makes in the earlier article. However, Holt (2002) calls attention to another problem with the postmodern view of authenticity as he points out one more contradiction between consumer culture and the postmodern branding paradigm. This contradiction is called “Authenticity Extinction”, meaning that finding “cultural texts that still have their aura intact, unstained by corporate sponsorship” is becoming very hard for marketers as that is the strategy of all postmodern brands. There are only so many subcultures to be found and explored. (Holt 2002: 86). That is, when nearly all subcultures have been appropriated by marketers, the chase for new subcultures becomes extremely intense, and thus, the corporations have had to start looking for other ways to reinvent themselves in order to appeal to consumers. I suggest that one way of doing this is through embracing the signs that the meaning of “authenticity” is changing to become more complex than it is within the postmodern branding paradigm (c.f. Holt 2002).

Why does Holt (2003) go back to the postmodern branding paradigm’s definition of authenticity? Perhaps it is because the article draws from past advertising campaigns to stage Mountain
Dew as an example of a brand that has been an “Icon” to consumers for decades. This does indeed mean that they perfected the postmodern notion of authenticity in their brand practice during the postmodern consumer culture era. However, given the description of authenticity in the “Post postmodern” consumer culture of “Why Do Brands Cause Trouble?”, where the very title of the article draws attention to the problem of the brands’ having been used as a cover for corporations to avoid behaving as corporate citizens, it is surprising that Holt (2003) does not assign much interest to this new notion of authenticity in his later article, rather the brand’s trustworthiness in the eyes of consumers is suggested to be linked to its “political authority”.

“Political Authority” is one of the things that Holt (2003) advises brands that are icons to use in order to successfully target “contradictions” in “national ideology” (48), which is what icons do in order to create the myths that make them icons (43). It is the conflicts between personal and national ideology that makes people need myths (43-44). “Political Authority” as described by Holt (2003), however, does not connect brand trust to the authenticity of the brand. Rather, having successfully communicated a brand image of trustworthiness is seen as a reason for brands to believe they have the power to influence loyal consumers. At first glance, it is difficult to see how this “political authority” differs from the taken for granted authority of brands in the 1950’s, even though I can understand that “political authority” has been earned by the marketers through hard work with communicating the brand’s trustworthiness. However, this is not explicitly stated in the text, which leaves a lot to the reader in that respect.

BRAND TRUST AND CONSUMER SOVEREIGNTY

Due to the contradiction between consumer culture and the postmodern branding paradigm, which Holt (2002) calls “Sovereignty Inflation”, people may start wanting brands to be “Citizen-Artists” (81, my emphasis) which act as “one of many original source materials that may be useful in their self-construction projects.”(88). “Sovereignty Inflation” means that consumers do not have the time to construct their identities like the old definition of the “sovereign consumer” advocates. Lack of time to make active, reflexive, consumer choices makes them rely increasingly much on magazines and other sources to help them decide what brands to buy.

It is not farfetched to ask whether the lack of consumer sovereignty practices among ordinary people leads to an increasing need for trustworthy brands. Holt (2002) does not explicitly ask this question. However, in the conclusion it is suggested that brands need to be “Citizen-Artists” and consumers “will rely upon cultural specialists to do most of the heavy lifting in creating new cultural materials.” (88). That is, the brands will be relied upon to help consumers feel sovereign, even though (or because) they do not have the time to invent their own sovereignty practices anymore. I argue that the need to “rely” on brands to do this makes trust an even more important topic within the future branding paradigm, because it is not easy to know where we draw the line between reliance and trust.

Philosopher Annette Baier actually defines trust as “reliance on another’s good will” (1986: 234), which implies that reliance and trust are interrelated. Baier’s reason for defining trust as a form of reliance is the vulnerability that is inherent in trust. If you trust in someone’s good will, you rely on the size of that good will to be sufficient, so that the person will not misuse your trust in her/him (Baier 1986:235). Thus, in not having the time for sovereignty practices, and at the same time wanting to be able to choose brands that act as civil citizens, consumers become more vulnerable to the limits of the good will of corporations. The less time there is for consumers to choose for themselves and evaluate the trustworthiness of certain brands, the more important will it be that brands really are trustworthy. In case a brand takes care to communicate trust to consumers, on the other hand, the effect should be that consumers feel less vulnerable. On the other hand, corporations that do not acknowledge consumers’ increased need to rely on them to act as citizens that have a good will towards others, may act unethically and exploit the trust given to them.

WHAT HAPPENS TO BRAND TRUST IF “CONSUMER RESISTANCE” DOES NOT INVOLVE RESISTANCE AGAINST THE MARKET?

In Holt (2002; 2003) trust is described as a way to keep consumers interested in the brand at a minimum level (i.e. more things are needed, but if the brand is not perceived as trustworthy, it will be discarded). The two articles are similar in their close attention to consumer culture, and to the need for corporations to understand shifts in consumer culture. Shifts in branding techniques are seen to be emerging as a response to shifts in consumer culture. Holt (2002) explicitly critiques what he sees as a common belief among postmodern consumer behavior researchers (such as Firat & Venkatesh 1995; Ozanne and Murray 1995; Murray and Ozanne 1991), i.e. that marketers impose images and meanings on consumers in a way that aims at dominating the consumers (72). Firat & Venkatesh (1995) exemplifies this through the ways in which experiences are sold instead of, or even as a complement to, reality: “tourists in droves visit the IMAX theatre next to the Grand Canyon to watch it on film to ‘really experience it’; visitors to Las Vegas become absorbed in the experience of the simulated volcano in front of the Mirage Hotel...” (252). Firat & Venkatesh (1995) suggest that this marketing of images is a form of use of technological advances creating fragmented meanings which impose themselves on consumers: “These meanings and reactions seep into our senses and impact our reason; they impress themselves upon us.” (252). If looking at marketing activities and technological advances in this light, it would seem that marketing and branding are inherently unethical activities that turn consumers into passive spectators; as if marketers lived in a vacuum where they created meanings and images in order to change the thinking of consumers. Firat & Venkatesh (1995) suggest that engaging in consumption outside of the market place is the way to escape these meanings from “impressing” themselves on consumers. According to Holt (2002) claiming this passivity on the part of consumers in the market place is not realistic as it is the consumers themselves that provide the most interesting cultural material that the marketers then appropriate.

The critique of the research carried out within the postmodern branding paradigm, is pursued throughout the article; the empirical research study of consumers is used as evidence that consumers are not passive enough to be manipulated by marketing in that sense and, paradoxically, that consumers are not engaged in “consumer resistance” in the way that postmodern marketing theories have proposed earlier on. Rather than escaping the market, consumers engaged in “consumer resistance” tend to become expert consumers that define their own identities primarily within the market place, Holt argues (2002: 79, 88). This is possible because even if they have “decoded” marketers’ codes, or are engaged in a more “creative resistance” where they ascribe their own meanings to the commodities they buy, they are still consumers: they are still engaged in an act of consumption situated on the market (2002: 79, 88). Furthermore, Holt (2002) argues, as it is so hard for marketers...
to find authentic cultural expressions, the consumers engaged in “consumer resistance” provide perfect material for them to appropriate in the quest for what is “authentic” (meaning untouched cultural expressions), but not yet used by brands. An example might be the use of graffiti to spread anti-brand-, and anti-consumption, messages. Every brand with self-respect targeted to adolescents (for example, brands as diverse as Sprite and Levi’s) have taken up on the graffiti style, both in terms of the writing/art and in terms of the hairstyles and clothes worn by “graffiti-artists”, using it in their advertising campaigns.

Holt (2002) argues that “Peeling Away the Brand Veneer” (86) means that the corporate practices should be shown to the public as they are. How can this happen? It can happen through changing the communication policy in order to become an open organization (Holt, 2002), for example, through the use of codes of ethics as a marketing tool as well as a management tool.

A “cool” brand does not use sweatshops; especially not while pretending as if it does not. Consumers will see through brands that are inauthentic in this sense that the corporation behind the brand does not act in line with what the brand stands for. Consumers and “the antibranding movement” use the Internet to spread the word on real corporate practices that do not go with the corporations’ brand values. Consumer resistance is increasingly making corporations shift their practices to work with the brand values. Holt (2002: 87) argues that this first happened when the antibranders “hit critical mass” in the middle of the 1990s. Then, through the media coverage of consumer resistance, even corporations that had been reluctant to accept the demands on consistency between corporation and brand finally took in the message and started adapting their corporate policies to freely give consumers extensive information on their corporate practices.

Holt uses Nike as an example of a corporation that did not change its strategy until management could clearly see that the widely spread consumer resistance had put the brand “at risk”. Then Nike made efforts to become a more transparent company and opened up its subcontractors’ production to independent inspection. As Holt puts it: “To maintain consumers’ trust in their brand, Nike has found it necessary to move toward becoming a transparent company...” (87). That is, transparency in a company helps consumers evaluate the company’s practices better, while it also shows that the company behind the brand makes an effort to show that it does not, for example, exploit its workers.

There is a tension between corporations and stakeholders—both want to profit from authenticity, however, they often have different views on what authenticity is and should be. As Holt points out in the Nike example, projecting an image of the corporation itself as worthy of consumers’ trust, through more transparent corporate practices, has become part of what the public demands from corporations with well known brands. Corporations may not be able to escape the new reality they are facing, where “a ‘brand veneer’ becomes worthless if it is not combined with genuine efforts, on the part of corporations, to show stakeholders that the shiny values of the brand are a reflection of the excellent practices and values of the corporation behind the brand. This assumption underlying the argument needs to be clearly pointed out here, because Holt (2002) does not really problematize the trust relationship between consumers and brands. However, Holt does say that consumers will rely more, rather than less on brands in the future. I argue that this reliance creates vulnerability on the part of consumers, and that vulnerability should not be exploited through dubious corporate practices hidden behind a strong brand; rather it should be respected by corporations through building a trust relationship with consumers. In order for the corporations to respect the difference in power between the individual consumer and the corporation behind the brand, this trust relationship should involve a dialogue where the corporations listen carefully to consumers’ point of view (e.g. Gustafsson 2005).

Does the market have the power to simply turn consumer resistance into competitive advantage? Holt’s (2002) last sentence clearly points out that consumers are never a challenge to the market itself: “What has been termed ‘consumer resistance’ is actually a form of market-sanctioned cultural experimentation through which the market rejuvenates itself.” (89). There is a power asymmetry implied in Holt’s (2002) description of “consumer resistance”, because whatever the consumer does s/he is doing it on the market and there is really no escape. The market is always taking advantage of what happens in consumer culture (Holt 2002). In case the market only uses consumer resistance as an arena in which to “rejuvenate itself”, “consumer resistance” is not resistance at all; which is probably Holt’s (2002) point. Who is in power on the inescapable marketplace? It does not seem to be the consumer; especially not in times of “Sovereignty Inflation” (Holt 2002: 87) when the consumer barely has the time to make consumption choices. If “consumer resistance” is staged within the market, this will have profound consequences for what forms the trust relationships between brands and consumers can take.

Of course, even if the consumers do not escape the market, the struggle that “consumer resistance” puts up can pose a threat to individual brands, although it is not a threat to the market. However, there is a risk that brand managers see consumers’ demand for trustworthiness as just another fad, and treat it as such. It is easily done; especially when even consumer researchers do not clearly maintain their standpoint on what brand authenticity means.

**CONCLUSION**

I have argued that because of the emphasis on the link between trust and authenticity in Holt (2002), it is surprising that Holt (2003) chooses to leave trust out of the discussion of authenticity in the later article mentioning trustworthiness merely as something which icon brands can draw from at times when they need to change their brand strategy. As Holt (2002) points out it is for the “future” branding paradigm to adjust brands to become “Citizen-Artists” that see to consumers’ demands that authenticity should be about trust, and a convergence between brand values and corporate practices. The contradiction of the “Brand Veneer” (i.e. the brand covers up for corporate practices which are not aligned with brand values) is there for everyone to see in consumer culture, but the shift in branding paradigm takes its time. However, aligning brand values with corporate values, making corporate actions transparent, and communicating that the brand is a good citizen, are necessary steps towards becoming trustworthy and towards engaging in trust relationships with consumers; it is the way towards authenticity. I have argued that this needs to be done through strategic work engaging not only marketing managers, but instead carried out in all parts of the organization behind the brand.

Further, I have argued that Holt (2002) does not really problematize the trust relationship between consumers and brands. How can consumers be sure that what they put their trust in is not a new kind of “brand veneer” that only aims at showing a trustworthy brand image outward? “Trust” and “transparency” may not be more than the new buzz-words that corporations use to create an “image” of trustworthiness which appeals to the consumer, and other stakeholders, of today’s consumer culture. This paper suggests that these questions are highly relevant because of the power asymmetry between consumers and the market of brands which would be a consequence of “consumer resistance” being staged on
the marketplace, as Holt suggests (2002: 89). The individual consumer does not have much power in the marketplace. Thus, in future research it would be of interest to explore further what forms of trust are possible between consumers and corporations/brands. In case consumers are trapped without escape on the market, consumers would need to rely on brands to a larger extent than if they had been able to choose not to take part in the market. However, it is increasingly difficult for the individual company to go against large changes in consumer culture, as exemplified by the current demands from consumers that authenticity in the brand means transparent and ethical corporate practices that are in line with the brand values. I have argued that this assumption underlying the argument in Holt (2002) needs to be clearly pointed out. Further, as shown in the example in Holt (2002) of Nike’s slow reaction to consumers’ insistence that authenticity requires openness and does not entail production in sweatshops, changing the authenticity of the brand to become a concept that is intimately linked with trust is not straightforward. Nevertheless, changing to become more transparent is key for brands in order to acknowledge the change in what authenticity means to consumers, and to show consumers that they are trustworthy.

REFERENCES
Consumer Meaning and Identity Production and Consumer Research—Issues of Literacy, Gender and Identity
Fuat Fırat, University of Southern Denmark-Odense, Denmark

ABSTRACT
The focus on consumers and their actions or behaviors in consumer research has generally led to an overestimation of consumer power and individuals’ ability to construct personal meanings for their consumption. This paper discusses theoretical issues of literacy and identity formation in contemporary—specifically, modern western—cultures to shed some light on the obstacles to autonomy of and control by individual consumers. Examples of objectification and insights into the complex of desire lead to a conclusion that studying consumers as active vehicles of sign systems that they inhabit and accommodate may be necessary to recognize possibilities of human agency.

INTRODUCTION
Taking off from developments in semiotics and discourses on interpretive communities, and reinforced by the interpretivist research findings in the discipline itself, it has recently become quite fashionable in consumer research to talk about meaning-producing consumers. Often the argument is that consumers, who encounter brands, images, advertisements, and other marketing products in the market, engage in a conversation with the signs emanating from such things and construct distinct meanings of their own. Especially when members of consumer collectives, such as those called brand communities or subcultures, encounter products of marketing they are said to manipulate and, at times, subvert the meanings intended to be transmitted or relayed by marketers, thus taking ownership of the meanings that they consume.

Other works, especially informed by discourses on the postmodern, have been interpreted to indicate a growing ability on the part of the consumers to construct self-determined lifestyles and life experiences, often through using marketed products. The increasing choices among different lifestyles, (sub)cultures, and orders in and as a result of a globalizing world and fragmented markets for consumers of means are taken to represent greater consumer power in deciding their own lives. This, in fact, is mostly not the case. Consumers of the world, a large majority of them, still lack the ability, the power to determine their own experiences and consumption patterns, despite the fact that they have, globally, more consumption choices. In effect, they are choosers among alternatives of consumption and modes of life that are determined largely without any effective input by consumers.

Insights into two issues very much concerning many intellectuals today enlighten this condition: (1) literacy and (2) identity.

THE ISSUE OF LITERACY
In a 1989 Public Television program (The Public Mind: Consuming Images) aired in the USA, sociologist Neil Postman, author of the popular book Amusing Ourselves to Death, implies the lack of public literacy in a world where the written word is but only one of a multiplicity of media bombarding the contemporary individual. He argues that with verbal or especially the written statements we had a chance to have double-think (Miller 1988). With one part of our mind we know exactly what is going on and yet with the other part of our mind we understood the meanings and possibilities hidden “behind the lines,” because, having learned how to read through our modern education institutions, but as important, how to write or compose “eloquent” sentences and essays, we know how persuasive, impressive statements can be structured and composed. Thus, we are able to have insight into the intentions and the guiles, the strategies of building such impressive statements. We can “read” not only the statements, but the context and the system of ideas in which they are embedded.

In the contemporary world, while we are consistently exposed to multi-media messages, so eloquently composed by a few who know how, a very large majority of us have not been educated to compose them. We have, many of us, written things, but so few of us have produced a film, a television program or advertisement combining not only words—linguistic utterances—but sonic and visual signs as well. We know very little or nothing about the principles and intricacies of creating such multi-media compositions, especially eloquently. Consequently, when exposed, we are often awed and uncritical recipients of these messages, having low or no defenses against the seduction of eloquence. Many of their elements penetrate our consciousness without the kind of judgments and “defenses” we can have when we read the words. Even if we, in general, know their intentions, such as of advertisements, and reject what they want us to do, we end up going blindly along with much. The phenomenon of, what the sociologist Mark Crispin Miller calls, “double-think” occurs (Miller 1988). With one part of our mind we know exactly what is going on and yet with the other part of our mind we are seduced and adhere to the claims and requests of these messages.

Consider a television advertisement for Old Spice after-shave lotion that successfully ran for many years:

We see a young man sitting on the docks with a rather dejected look on his face. A sailor steps off a ship and a beautiful young woman runs and hugs him. The sailor sees the dejected young man and takes out a bottle of Old Spice and throws it to him. Next we see the young man happy and smiling, with two beautiful women with their arms around him. He now spots an even younger man dejected and alone. He takes out the bottle of Old Spice and throws it to the younger man.

Can you imagine this advertisement running where the meanings intended are now spoken as words? “Look, if you use Old Spice, young and beautiful women will swarm around you!” The whole
audience, including young boys, would laugh and make fun of the “stupidity” of this idea. Yet, the exact same message gets through to the intended audience when composed in a multi-media form(ate).

In our contemporary culture, therefore, the individuals who are not literate in the new sense, that is those who do not have (multi) sign-efficacy (Firat 1996), are mostly reflectors of the sign systems and the seductive images and meanings produced by institutions that utilize such literacy, without having a chance of participating in such production. Yet, this is only one disadvantage of the individual consumer today.

IDENTITY

Formation of the human subject’s identity in modern discourse has been largely based on two premises: (1) that the subject and the object are separate and separable, and (2) that the individual and the social are separate and separable. Through these separations, the human individual obtained one’s autonomy and agency, that is, one’s independent will and power to act as an individual subject to decide and determine one’s own destiny.

These separations did not play significantly in traditional culture where the identity of the individual was largely given by one’s ancestry, and one’s fate was determined by superior powers. In modernity, having an identity became a matter of acquisition—not a given—an issue to be decided and determined, and a project to complete. Yet, in modern culture, the material existence of the human subject and one’s acquisition of identity were also greatly problematized by the appearance of gender categories, the rupture of consumption and production, and the overlaps between the gender categories and consumption and production—specifically the feminine with consumption/consumer, and the masculine with production/producer (Firat 1994). Furthermore, these issues have been at once complicated and, yet, enlightened by the modern consumerization of the subject.

GENDER

We know that gender played a central role in the development of modern identities. People who had lost their given identities had to find images of what they could or ought to be. Based on their sex, modern culture provided these images through gendered experiences. Individual subjects who were purported to be autonomous and independent deciders of who they were to be(come) were, nevertheless, required to represent gendered images. This constituted one basis for the consumerization of the subject. The other basis was the increased and extended role of the market in everyday lives and human experience. Acquisition of identity became the acquisition of products in the market that reflected the images of feminity and masculinity to others and, thereby, to oneself (Belk 1988).

The consumerization of the feminine and the feminization of the consumer in modern culture have further reinforced the gendering of identity. Women had to represent the culture’s images of the feminine; images that at times comp(leted) each other (the vamp and the “nice girl”) and that were modified with time. These gendered images were, nevertheless, monolithic in that they prescribed one gender for women to represent. Men had a similar experience in representing the masculine. This was mass production with two singular market segments—a modern marketing dream: minimize complexity to maximize control and profits; just keep suggesting different ways to “better” arrive at the goal of representing the feminine/masculine. For both sexes, representing the gender categories, then, acquiring the ideal self, becomes acquiring the “correct” products in the market as well as acquiring the “evocative” behaviors. The process of acquisition, especially as the market reached further spheres of human life, has reinforced the commoditization of identity.

There is a potential freedom in this process of consumption of identity. It points to the fluidity of identity; the possibility of a multiplicity of experiences of being. Yet, in modernity this potential is not realized. It is reined through the cultural process of monolithic gender significations and through the production of consumption meanings.

SUBJECT-OBJECT DUALITY

Modern understanding of the subject is predicated on the idea that the human being is or can be a subject—is not merely an object (of nature)—because s/he can have a detached existence in relation to the material world of objects. This ability to have detachment lies in the argument—the origins of which may well be in the Cartesian meditations, and related to the separation of mind (soul) and body as Ricoeur (1992, pp. 5-11) articulates—that the human body, which is very much an integral part of material nature, is a vessel for the cogito. It is the cogito that enables the detached existence and, thus, makes the human (body) able to act as an agent of its own independent will and power. It is the existence of this ability that constitutes the subject in relation to the object.

A further necessity of subject-hood is the recognition of the subject self, which requires the cognition that one exists (“cogito ergo sum!”). In short, then, one who has this cognition possesses the ability to be a subject, while that which can only be recognized—but cannot rec(ognize)—is the object. That is, the subject lies in the mind (cogito), the body is the vessel object to carry the mind. But, more important, objects are things that often lack life, or if alive lack a mind, upon which the subject acts for one’s purposes.

We are aware of the difficulties with the separation of the mind and the body, both philosophically and in terms of more recent medical findings (Giddens 1991). For our purposes, this reflects unto the separation between the subject and the object, signaling their inseparability. After all, within our world, no subject exists without object. That is, to exist, the human subject of mind needs the body—the object. Every subject is, thus, simultaneously an object. Every moment that we act upon our bodies—putting fluids into it, or cutting our nails—we certify its object-ness. The subject that has the will acts upon the object! But where does the subject, the cogito, acquire the will to act? Is it not the encounter with the object that gives it this will? Is it, therefore, not the object that is acting on the subject? It seems that the only separation between the object and the subject is made possible by momentary perspectives—that is, the separation is only in the perspective as to what is action and, therefore, who is acting. Furthermore, the only one who can recognize the separation(s) is the one who can have a perspective.

The argument here is that in our investigations we need to abandon the idea of constant and consistent subjects and objects, and adopt the idea of momentary subjects and objects. In every moment of our lives we are a subject-object. Our investigations may provide rich insights if we explore the continual tension between these two modalities of our existence rather than insist that there are subjects and there are objects.

Can we say, then, that the subject is the one who recognizes oneself and one’s ability to act independent of the other? What happens, however, when the subject is “moved” by one’s desire for the object (the other)? What happens, that is, when the independence of the act is in question? Furthermore, what happens, as Lacan indicates by advancing Freud, when one acts on the basis of one’s “desire to be desired or possessed by the Other as the object of the Other’s jouissance” (passive anaclitic desire) (Bracher 1993, p. 21)?
A way to satisfy passive anaclitic desire is, clearly, to objectify oneself in order to have the power to incite other’s desire. That is, one way to lay claim to power is to take control of the construction of the other’s desire—by constructing oneself as the object of desire.

INDIVIDUAL-SOCIAL DUALITY

The inseparability of the subject (cogito) and the object (body), and the necessity of self-objectification through the play of desire(ability) to become a subject, are further complicated by the process of delineation of oneself from the other(s). Identity, as it is carefully investigated in Ricoeur’s *Oneself as Another* (1992), has been conceptualized as oneness in modern discourse. The self is the expression, then, of this one who is not the other(s). According to Ricoeur (1992), this has two components: ipse, which is selfhood, and idem, which is sameness. The discussion of these two components makes it clear that the existence of memory is central to the construction of identity. In fact, everything changes that relates to one—the human being is not the same from one moment to another either physically or mentally. While s/he is very similar from one moment to the next, each ticking second of time changes one physically, and each moment of experience mentally. What designates the similar yet different presences of the individual—and, of course, everything around one also changes, presenting different contexts—as the same one (idem) is the continuity of memory. Memory allows one to say, “while I may have changed a little, I am still the same person.” (When we have discontinuity of memory, we have the schizophrenic, different personalities/people inhabiting the “same”—which, in fact, is continually changed—body.) This continuity of memory is not even sufficient when only the one has it. There is a requirement that memory be shared by one and the other(s). Recognition of sameness (idem), which then makes the continuity and, thus, the existence of selfhood (ipse) possible is impossible without shared memory.

Thus, the memory of self is inevitably a social construct. The presence of the other is a must for one to be delineated. The identity of one must be reflected in the gaze(s) of the other(s), and thereby verified or confirmed to oneself (Lacan 1977; Gallop 1985). That is, the reflection of one to one’s self has always had to be mediated through the “eyes” of the other(s). One’s recognition of one’s identity is dependent upon the other’s gaze. Yet, in modernity, the Cartesian separation further fragmented one’s own gaze from oneself. The modern individual has increasingly gazed upon oneself as (an)other. One’s self has become the object of one’s gaze—the gaze of the social other(s)—the object of desire.

This phenomenon is well evidenced in the star/celebrity system. For one thing, the celebrities—who are at once consumed by their audiences and yet are the heroes of our high modernity—are actors in the most general sense. They affect personas or identities that they see to be marketable to their constituencies/markets. The marketable identity is, indeed, formed on the basis of the other’s gaze, which is internalized as one’s own. The objectification/commodification of the one by other(s) is thus completed by one’s self-objectification/commodification. This cycle is evident in studies of consumers (Thompson and Hirschman 1995).

The objectification of the self, especially in modern culture, is indicated further by psychoanalytic studies. For example, in trying to understand self-extrangement in and through desire, Kovel (1981, pp. 66-69) provides cases of his patients and of himself (as an exercise of self understanding). In times of feelings of elation or depression or anger, it seems, many are taken to binging behaviors. Finding reasons to give oneself a treat, because one deserves it, often leads to uncontrollable amounts of treats. The patient, in such circumstances tends to construct a self to attribute this unruly behavior to: “I was not myself.” An “other” self has indulged, not self. The indulgences often promoted and desirable in our culture can then be experienced without complete self-hatred through construction of other selves. Among the selves that enable the pursuit of desires—surely seductive, but not completely acceptable desires—is the self that is itself desired. In modern society, construction of “other” selves that enable indulgence with objects of desire facilitate objectification of the image in the desired existence.

It is questionable that the urge to have this one desirable object-self is as strong in postmodern culture (Gergen 1991). Self-identity can be more readily expressed by the metaphor of the player than by the metaphor of the pilgrim (Bauman 1996). In effect, all attainable selves that enable the pursuit of desires may be becoming equally desirable and, thus, the objectification of self increasingly more culturally acceptable.

When the subject tries to attain the self because it is a desirable object, that is, when s/he is seduced by the image of an object of desire in acting to attain a self, furthermore, when the cognition of oneself is in the image of an object of desire, can it ever be argued that subject-hood exists? Given that all action is in response to other(s), specifically, object(s) of desire, including even the cognition of oneself, the idealized construct of the modern self—one who is in control of one’s actions—certainly seems suspect. What can replace, if anything, this ideal but unachievable existence? Here, we may need to hypothesize subject-object unity and (re)construct the cultural complex of individual selves, also recognizing, in effect, the inseparability of the individual from the social, in other words, from the total system of objects.

THE POWER OF OBJECTIFICATION

Objectification may not necessarily be all bad. Many influential scholars, including Baudrillard, Bourdieu, Galbraith, and Jameson, among others, have come to the conclusion that objects produced to serve the human subject often end up in control, influencing and directing human lives. As mentioned above, as objects of desire, objects “move” the subject, seducing one, pulling one under their spell. Objectifying oneself, then, may be one way of claim to power for the individual.

Going back to the issue of star/celebrity system, consider the examples of Marilyn Monroe and Madonna. In the first instance, we may argue that they both represent objects of desire, specifically as sex objects. Yet, there are the differences. Marilyn Monroe, it seems, had little control over her object status as she seems to have had little control over her own life. As an object of desire many men—powerful men included—lusted after her. This lust took different forms. For many it was vicarious, sometimes actualizing itself in physical relationships with substitutes. She was seduction! It could be argued that, as a result, she had some power, allowing her to have, while she lived, access to privileges and possessions that very few could have. Something about the quality of her powers, however, made her, in the end, a plaything. We find that even in the heyday of her popularity and stardom, her life and her possessions were often controlled by others. It may seem, therefore, that she fit the image of the objectified feminine well.

Take, on the other hand, Madonna. Here we see another star/ celebrity, who also commands the admirations and desires of many. She also has played the sex object image, and her sex life has been very much in the public eye. Yet, she seems to control, to a great extent, her career, her image(s), in general her life, as well as command possessions and a lifestyle that only the powerful very few can have access to. She seems to have the many qualities of the
DESIRE, POWER, AND THE SOCIAL

When investigating the issue of power at an individual level, it seems possible to say that no individual has claim to power, unless s/he is independent of desire—which is an impossibility. It is very enticing to think that the only one who may have a true subject-hood and claim to power may be the one who strives for the undesirable self. Yet, even then, the impetus to strive for the undesirable must lie in the desire to reject the social, and why would anyone have such a desire unless there are elements in the social that indicate a lack—constituting a desire to be different, better, or ahead of other(s)? Consequently, it may be tempting to say that seeking subject-hood or power in an individual may be a futile endeavor. Both are rooted in the social, and it is momentary perspectives of an individual’s placement in the social that presents the effect of having power or being a subject.

It may have been a similar insight that prompted Baudrillard to declare that seeking control over one’s life is akin to death, that (excitement of) life is to be found in abandoning control to (an)other (Baudrillard 1993). The question is where the control of the other lies! Who or what ever has control?

Let us venture to say that all power may lie in the social construction of desire, that is, it is always in the moment of social encounter among subject-objects. No definition of power seems possible without the constitution of desire. Power is always access to that which is desired. Consequently, understanding power, including the power of objectification, requires an interrogation of the cultural complex of significations of desire.

Giddens claims that “the constraints of the body ensure that all individuals, at every moment, are contextually situated in time and space” (Giddens 1991, p. 187). The recognition of self, and the individual existence are also, at every moment, contextually situated in the social. This social context provides the cultural complex of significations of desire (complex of desire). Since the constitution of each individual self already assumes an anchoring to the set of desires within this complex, no individual can, as an individual, lay claim to power or subject-hood (Deleuze and Guattari 1983). At each moment of (re)cognition of individual self, the status of power and subject-hood may always already be predetermined by the placement of this recognized individual within the complex of desire.

For this reason, Giddens is at once right, in articulating the dilemmas of the self as “unification vs. fragmentation,” “powerlessness vs. appropriation,” “authority vs. uncertainty,” and “personalized vs. commoditized experience,” because these dilemmas are integrated in the modern human experience due to the modern ideologies, but also futile, because these are signified not in the constitution of the individual self but predetermined in the social. The tyranny of modern subject-hood may well be in the insistence that once a self is recognized, it has to be articulated or developed in and through the same perspective. Thus, the feminine has been imprisoned to powerlessness when multiple perspectives could and do imbue it with power that cannot otherwise be attained.

CONSUMER RESEARCH

We may evoke Bataille’s (1985) notions of expenditure and excess, which Baudrillard (1993) also explores. It is in the instances of excess, when we encounter that which is not purposefully produced or yet not signified that we have a chance of asserting agency, in giving the unformed a form through our perspective in the encounter, thus signifying it into presence. Our reality is, then, shaped, shaping us. Reality exists, but it does not have a presence before it is encountered, and every encounter is from a point of origin (set of conventions) and at an angle (perspective). Agency and the possibility of subject-hood is in this moment of encounter, in the presentation of the new, not in the representation of that which is already produced.

The double forces of insufficient multi sign-efficacy and objectification of identity, therefore, make it greatly impossible for consumers to attain independent and individual meanings, and to have control over the meanings in and through which they operate in the world. Whatever control or autonomy is possible for individuals, they seems to be limited to only momentary experiences; as consumers we live most of our lives as reflectors of sign systems that are systemically produced and act through individuals. Understanding the condition(s) of the world and consumption, therefore, does not happen as much through an understanding of the actions of individual consumers—as contemporary consumer research mostly tries to do—but more effectively through an understanding of sign systems. Consumer research, to develop insights into the human condition, needs to study consumers largely as vehicles that accommodate these sign systems and not as ends in themselves. Then, we may also discover how and when sign systems may accommodate human agency.

REFERENCES


Miller, Mark Crispin (1988), Boxed In: The Culture of TV, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.


Re-Examining Smokers’ Perceived Vulnerability to Disease: Self-Report Measures May Not Tell the Whole Story
Jeremy Kees, University of Arkansas, U.S.A.
Elizabeth Creyer, University of Arkansas, U.S.A.
Eric Knowles, University of Arkansas, U.S.A.

STUDY BACKGROUND
This exploratory research examines the potential use of implicit measures (e.g., the IAT) to supplement self-report measures of risk vulnerability. Perceived risk is often operationalized as a joint function of perceived susceptibility (vulnerability) to a negative event and the severity of consequences of that event. There has been speculation that current methods to measure consumers risk vulnerability are often misused and/or misinterpreted. Like many self-report measures, current measures of risk vulnerability are easily influenced by context and may not represent well-formed, stable beliefs.

Just as consumers have been found to consciously bolster behavior that is disapproved by others by reporting a favorable attitude toward the behavior, consumers may also consciously discount their personal risks of being harmed as a result of a behavior they choose to partake in that are known to cause harm. Smoking is one such behavior that people continue to partake in despite being aware that smokers are at an increased risk for developing serious and life-threatening diseases as a result of smoking. Because this knowledge is inconsistent with other important goals (i.e. to remain healthy or to stay alive), smokers may create, modify, or bolster cognitions to support their behavior. While smokers have historically reported lesser estimations of the likelihood of getting a disease as a result of smoking than nonsmokers, this may be a result of cognitive bolstering rather than true feelings of vulnerability to diseases caused by smoking. The purpose of this research is to explore the use of the Implicit Association Test to measure consumers’ implicit vulnerability to diseases caused by smoking.

METHOD AND RESULTS
In an initial study of smokers’ implicit disease-risk perception, Study 1 used the IAT to contrast subjects’ association with diseased body organs and tissues (i.e. lungs, heart, gums) versus healthy (nondiseased) body parts. The concept categories “self” and “other” were used in conjunction with the categories “diseased” and “normal” to determine if smokers and nonsmokers responded differently.1 Specifically, we predicted that smokers would be faster at grouping target pictures and words when self and diseased were paired together. A computerized IAT was administered to 126 undergraduate smokers and nonsmokers. Subjects categorized target “self-other” words and pictures of diseased and healthy organs. Results reveal a significant smoking behavior by response time interaction effect \(F(3,89) = 3.89, p < .05\). Follow-up contrasts show that smokers were faster than nonsmokers at categorizing target pictures when the words “self” and “disease” were paired together \((t = 6.63, p < .05)\), whereas no difference in response latency between smokers and nonsmokers was observed when “self” and “normal” were paired together \((p > .1)\). Consistent with the smoking risk literature, smokers self-reported a lower perceived health risk of smoking than nonsmokers \((t = 2.08, p < .05)\). Implicit and explicit measures showed no correlation \((p > .1)\). This finding suggests that smokers implicitly associate themselves with smoking-related diseases more so than nonsmokers.

Study 2 was identical to Study 1 except the category “holiday” replaced “normal.”2 A sample of 103 smokers and nonsmokers categorized target words and pictures into the self-other categories, as well as the new disease-holiday categories. Again, a significant smoking behavior by response time interaction was found \((F(4,79), p < .05)\). The mean difference scores for nonsmokers and smokers were 27 and 161 respectively \((d = .63)\). Focusing on within-subjects differences, smokers’ response latencies were much quicker when “self” and “disease” were paired together than when “self” was paired with “holiday” \((t = 3.02, p < .05)\), whereas nonsmokers showed no difference in response speed. Results from Study 1 were partially replicated in that smokers’ response latencies were quicker than nonsmokers’ when “self” and “disease” were paired together, however this difference was not statistically significant. Smokers self-reported a lower perceived health risk of smoking than nonsmokers \((t = 2.53, p < .05)\), and consistent with Study 1, implicit and explicit measures showed no correlation \((p > .1)\). These findings reaffirm that smokers are quicker than nonsmokers at responding when “self” is paired with “disease” and suggest that smokers are quicker at responding for the self-disease pairing than when self is paired with a neutral category.

Unlike studies 1 and 2, study 3 used words rather than pictures for the categorization targets.3 As in the previous studies, the “self-other” categories were used. Seventy-four subjects participated in two IATs separated by a series of self-report risk and smoking behavior questions. In the first IAT, the contrast category that sat opposite of disease was British Fern Species, whereas the contrast category was holidays. The results from each IAT were analyzed separately, but demonstrated similar results. A significant smoking behavior by response time interaction was found for each test \((F(3,70) = 3.88, p < .05)\). In both cases, smokers were significantly faster at the categorization task when “self” was paired with “disease” \((t = 2.3, 1.83, p < .05 \text{ and } .1)\) and quicker at responding than nonsmokers. Nonsmokers demonstrated no difference in response time when self was paired with disease or the neutral contrast category (i.e. fern or holiday). These findings further bolster findings discussed in studies 1 and 2.

BRIEF DISCUSSION
Given the limitations of traditional measures of smokers’ perceived vulnerability to diseases scientifically linked to smoking, evidence from three exploratory studies offers preliminary support for an implicit measure of risk vulnerability. Smokers are consistently faster at categorization tasks when “self” is grouped with

1For the “disease” category, diseases were used that are most commonly linked to smoking (i.e. lung cancer, heart disease, and emphysema). Participants were explicitly informed that the diseases used in this study were all scientifically linked to smoking.

2We chose the category “holiday” for this experiment in an attempt to have a somewhat neutral contrast category while maintaining similar levels of abstraction. We picked fairly neutral holidays such as St. Patrick’s Day and President’s Day.

3It was suspected that the pictures, that were very graphic in some cases, could adversely affect response latencies and distort the risk vulnerability effects we were looking for.
“disease” than when “self” is grouped with a neutral category. Furthermore, smokers are faster than nonsmokers at categorizing words and pictures when “self” and “disease are paired. These findings suggest that smokers demonstrate a stronger association with smoking-related diseases than do nonsmokers despite self-reporting a lower level of risk than nonsmokers.

The IAT has been tested as a valid measure of implicit attitudes, stereotypes, and self-esteem. Findings presented here suggest that the IAT may be a useful tool in measuring consumers’ perceived risk vulnerability.
“Doing Something I Might Regret”
Developing ‘Self-relevant’ Alcohol Campaigns: Implications for Public Policy from Consumer Research

Emma N. Banister, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom
Maria G. Piacentini, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom
Balogianni Kyriaki-Ioanna, Lancaster University Management School, United Kingdom

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Excessive alcohol consumption amongst young people has been recognised as a major problem for Western countries in recent years. The UK government is particularly concerned about ‘binge drinking’, which is prevalent among people between the ages of 16 and 24. Our research focuses on one specific group of young people where alcohol consumption is known to be high—students. A number of studies have focused on young drinkers, but few studies have focused on the UK student population, despite acknowledgements that alcohol plays a key role in students’ social life and culture.

In the light of current debates about the prevalence of binge drinking in many Western countries, one of the major challenges facing governments is that of communicating the potential problems associated with binge drinking, in ways that are not considered patronising and that fit with young peoples’ particular cultural understanding of the role of alcohol consumption in their lives. One possible means to educate young people about the potential problems associated with binge drinking is to use ‘fear appeal’ messages that motivate young people to drink responsibly. Fear appeals attempt to persuade or manipulate consumers by arousing the emotion of fear through the depiction of personally relevant threats whilst outlining effective strategies that can be used to deter that threat (Witte, 1992). Fear appeals have been criticised, primarily for measurement reasons and for ethical concerns (Hastings et al 2004). Our findings suggest that fear appeals might be more successfully employed if health campaigns can successfully find a way by which to ‘tune in’ and identify the scenarios and (negative) possible end states that young people will consider relevant to them.

We take a novel approach, conducting six in-depth interviews with young people who identify themselves as light drinkers, and explore the reasons for their personal limits on alcohol consumption. Our findings suggest that participants’ reasons for limiting their alcohol consumption can be linked to highly personal accounts of their possible (negative) end states which are informed both by personal experiences as well as the experiences of those close to them.

Our participants discussed why they chose to restrict their drinking levels, and described critical incidents that had influenced their behaviour. There seemed to be universal agreement regarding the behaviour of men and women under the influence of alcohol. Highly sexualised negative images tended to be associated with female drinkers. These negative end states appeared to have a strong motivational effect on the women in our study as they took action to distance themselves from this image (even though there was little suggestion that they had ever behaved in line with these expectations). For males, the equivalent negative end state was very much associated with aggression and violence. In addition to these gender generalisations, all participants were able to relay personal stories that had discouraged them from drinking. Most of these personal stories did not feature violence or sexual activity. Instead they tended to involve the participants participating in a series of activities or behaviour that they later regretted, resulting in embarrassment and endeavours to cut down on their alcohol consumption.

Our findings suggest that although young people are aware of the health risks associated with high levels of alcohol consumption, short-term personal experiences are more pertinent to them on an everyday basis. We suggest health promotion campaigns should attempt to tap into more personally relevant messages that fit with younger consumers’ understanding of their personal experiences with alcohol and the risks involved. To this effect we propose that health promotion campaigns aiming to reduce binge drinking could fruitfully focus on consumers’ actions—‘doing something I might regret’. This message should replace the prevalence of long-term health messages, which may be more helpful in discouraging sustained long term drinking behaviour, but does not appear to tackle the short term high associated with excessive alcohol intake. It may be that different messages need to be developed for different audiences, but in general young people do not see their behaviour as reflecting a long-term relationship with alcohol. Our suggestion would be that future campaigns should emphasise the dangers of ‘doing something I may regret’, and this may be a more effective means by which to reach young adult binge drinkers.

REFERENCES

Coping with Making and Maintaining Dietary Change: A Comparative Study
Liz Logie-Maciver, Napier University Business School, Scotland
Maria Piacentini, Lancaster University, England
Douglas Eadie, Stirling University, Scotland

ABSTRACT
Many social marketing studies concern the uptake of ‘healthful’ behaviour changes (Hastings et al., 1999b). The issue contained in this paper is why it is that some people make and maintain dietary behavioural change and others do not. The paper is part of a larger qualitative study which was located in central Scotland. The study concerned people making changes to their diet after a diagnostic test (for bowel cancer). The paper focuses on one aspect of behaviour change which is the coping strategies that people put into place (Folkman et al., 1986). The findings for two groups of participants from the study were explored: (1) those people who made changes to their diet and maintained the changes and (2) those people who made limited changes to their diet or none at all. The medical test was conceptualised in the study as a potential stimulus of change for the individual. Utilising the Theory of Coping (Lazarus, 1991) the responses of the participants in the study are explored concerning their appraisal processes and the coping strategies they put into place.

An interpretivist approach was chosen for the study so that the social context of the diagnostic test (source of stress) and the behaviour changes were explored. This approach clarified why people make and maintain change within a given set of circumstances (Hudson & Ozanne, 2001). A phenomenological methodology (Moustakas, 1994) provided a clearer understanding of the patterns and experiences that the participants went through during the behaviour change and maintenance period. In depth semi-structured interviews were utilised to provide richer accounts of the participants’ experiences (Sanders, 1994). Within the interpretivist approach a conceptual framework of literature was built (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The framework consisted of key theoretical processes within the literature that explain what happens during behaviour change. Both content and interpretative analysis techniques were adopted when analysing the interview data. The carefully focused group of participants in the study were people who had taken a diagnostic test for cancer and had received a result demonstrating that they were suffering from a minor bowel disease (Patton, 1990). The forty participants in the larger study were aged 30-83 years of age with a mean age of 51 years similar to the mean age for minor bowel disease (Harris, 1998). A staging algorithm provided a way of categorising the participants into groups according to stage of change (Curry et al., 1992; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). This paper focused on two groups of participants who had different patterns of behaviour (Spiggle, 1994). The first group represented a group who made behaviour changes over time and the second group represented those not making changes over time.

Two appraisal processes were conceptualised in the study that of primary and secondary appraisal (Park & Folkman, 1997). Within the present study the risk to future health was considered within primary appraisal and the consequence of making a dietary change for health. The goals that were set in primary appraisal related to the beliefs the individual had concerning changing their diet for better health. Environmental factors that could help or hinder change were also considered during primary appraisal (Bagozzi, 1992). The participants evaluated the means they could employ to change their behaviour such as family support in the secondary appraisal (Folkman et al., 1986). The coping processes that were conceptualised (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984b) involved the response by the participants to the stimulus of change (the diagnostic test). Coping concerned problem focused coping where the participants took action to alleviate their stress (confrontive coping, planful problem solving or accepting responsibility). Emotion focused coping described the situation where participants denied the stress existed or distanced themselves from the threat and avoided thinking about it (distancing or escape avoidance). Finally seeking social support was employed as a coping process where emotional or informational support was sought by participants (Folkman & Lazarus, 1986, 1988).

The findings from the analysis demonstrated the different ways two sets of people coped with the stimulus of change. Some of the participants responded to the stimulus and made primary and secondary appraisals and used problem focused and emotion focused coping strategies. These coping strategies for making and maintaining change were accepting responsibility, using self-control, planful problem solving and positive reappraisal. This group received and used social support. Those who did not make changes did not carry out primary or secondary appraisals and used emotion focused coping strategies. These strategies were distancing and escape avoidance. This group of participants did not use social support. The study demonstrated the importance of appraisals and coping strategies for people who make and maintain behaviour change. The study makes a contribution to the literature concerning stress and coping (Folkman et al., 1986) and consumption behaviours (Sujan et al., 1999; Godwin, 1995). The literature of behaviour change was developed (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1992) beyond the implementation of behaviour changes (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990) and explored the factors involved in maintaining change (Lazarus, 1991; Rothman, 2000). The interpretive methodological approach explored the patterns of change in the context of these participants’ lives (Hudson & Ozanne, 2001). This developed the understanding of qualitative methodologies within social marketing further (Weinreich, 1996).

INTRODUCTION
The consumer plays a central role in most social marketing studies (Lefebvre & Flora, 1992; Andreasen, 1995; MacFadyen et al., 1999). Often these studies are focused on behaviour change with an emphasis on attempting to facilitate the uptake of ‘healthful’ behaviours (Hastings et al., 1999b). While individual behaviour has been the focus of much of this research to date (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982; Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Lazarus, 1991), we still have a limited understanding of why it is that some people make and maintain behavioural change while others do not.

This paper is part of a larger qualitative study looking at issues of dietary change, but specifically focuses on one aspect of the behaviour change process, that of the coping strategies people have put into place (Folkman et al., 1986). Within the context of people making changes to their diet triggered by a medical diagnostic test (for bowel cancer), we compare the experiences over one year of two groups of people: (1) those who have made changes to their diet and generally maintained these changes and (2) those who have made very limited changes or none at all. Using the theory of coping (Lazarus, 1991), we conceptualise the medical test as a source of...
potential stress to the individual, and consider the ways in which individuals respond to this (i.e. their appraisal processes and their subsequent coping strategies).

**LITERATURE REVIEW: COPING THEORY**

The different ways in which individuals confront the challenges or stresses of life have been explained by theories of appraisal and coping (e.g. Lazarus 1991; Roseman 1991), and a few recent studies have applied this theoretical perspective to consumption contexts (e.g. Sujan et al. 1999; Godwin et al. 1995). Appraisal comprises of an evaluation of what is known concerning the desired behaviour and how this knowledge could with other factors lead to better health (Lazarus, 1991; Folkman et al., 1986). The personal significance and relevance of the event in terms of what a person already knows or believes about the proposed behaviour affects their commitment and aims towards behaviour change (Park & Folkman, 1997). The amount of benefit perceived to be derived from carrying out the plans relates to how worthwhile the goals are perceived to be (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999). The task of planning is complex with dietary change and other supporting activities can vary daily.

Primary appraisal relates to the evaluation of the benefits or disadvantages involved in making a behaviour change. The commitments and goals set in primary appraisal relate to the person’s existing beliefs and values (Park & Folkman, 1997). For instance a change of diet for health reasons could be evaluated in terms of future health and responsibilities and effects to family and loved ones. A response to the appraisal in the form of action represents taking control of the situation especially when the event has indicated that there is some risk to future health (ibid, 1997). In primary appraisal the relevance of environmental conditions are considered along with the conditions that will help or hinder behaviour change and maintenance of change (Bagozzi, 1992). A secondary appraisal is a consideration of the means that would be employed to change the behaviour (Folkman et al, 1986). Within the present context of dietary health a person would consider what resources they would need to change their behaviour such as family support or other activities (Bagozzi, 1993). It is at this point that the options for coping with change are considered and the possible success or failure of the coping strategies are evaluated (Lazarus, 1991).

Coping refers to the way in which individuals respond to situations that cause them stress involving personal and environmental factors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984b; Folkman et al., 1986), and can be distinguished as: problem-focused coping—where action is taken to alleviate the source of the distress; emotion-focused coping—where people either alter the meaning of the source of distress (by denying a threat exists or distancing themselves from the threat) or avoid thinking about it; and cultivating, seeking and using social support—which can offer emotional, tangible or informational support. Folkman & Lazarus (1986, 1988) have identified 8 main coping strategies, which are summarised in Table 1.

Any situation or experience which is harmful or threatening to the individual in any way, leads to a negative emotion to be felt and is therefore a source of stress for the individual. How an individual responds to this stress is their coping strategy. In this paper, we examine the coping strategies of people who have all experienced a potentially stressful situation, namely a diagnostic test for bowel cancer. By investigating their subsequent behaviour and coping strategies over time we aim to develop understanding of the key factors influencing health-oriented behaviour change.

**METHODOLOGY**

The present study explored the link between the stimulus of change and how behaviour changes are implemented. The focus was on how behaviour was sustained using appraisals and coping (Lazarus, 1991; Folkman et al., 1986). An interpretivist approach was chosen so that both the social context of the stimulus and the behaviour change itself were explored to clarify why people change and maintain change within a given set of circumstances (Hudson & Ozanne, 2001). A phenomenological methodology was selected so that the group of participants within the study were reviewed over a period of time (Creswell, 1994). In the present study the group of participants were interviewed three times over the period of one year. A clearer understanding of the patterns and experiences that the participants went through during the behaviour change and

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem-focused strategies</th>
<th>Confrontive coping</th>
<th>Aggressive efforts to alter the situation or taking a risk with a new behaviour (perhaps when family or peers do not agree with the changes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planful problem solving</td>
<td>Describes efforts to create a problem-focused effort to alter the situation coupled with an analytic approach to solving the problem (made a plan of action and followed it).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accepting responsibility</td>
<td>Recognising one’s role in the problem, with concomitant them of trying to put things right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion-focused strategies</td>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>Efforts to regulate one’s own feelings and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distancing</td>
<td>Describes efforts to distance oneself from situation, to detach oneself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Escape-avoidance</td>
<td>Describes wishful thinking and behavioural efforts to escape or avoid the situation. Contrast with the items on the distancing scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive re-appraisal</td>
<td>Describes efforts to create positive meaning by focusing on personal growth, also can have a religious tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking social support</td>
<td>This serves both a problem solving approach (e.g. seeking information from others to find out more about a situation) and emotional support (e.g. seeking sympathy and understanding from others)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the maintenance period was derived by utilising phenomenological methods (Moustakas, 1994).

In depth semi-structured interviews were used to collect the comprehensive accounts of the participants’ behaviour change and the reasons why they did not make changes (Sanders, 1994). Within the interpretivist approach a conceptual framework was utilised in the research process (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The conceptual framework consisted of the key issues in the literature reviewed that explain what happens in behaviour change (Creswell, 1994). The conceptual framework provided signposts for the framing of the questions for the three interview schedules (ibid, 1994). In analysing the interview data, a qualitative approach using content and holistic interpretivist methods were adopted (Tesch, 1991). This study focused on the themes from analysis of primary and secondary appraisals and the coping strategies used by two groups of participants (Folkman et al, 1986): (1) those that made and maintained dietary change behaviour and (2) those that made little or no change to their behaviour over the research period.

THE SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants who took part in the study were people who had received a diagnostic test for cancer and the result of the test demonstrated that they did not have cancer but were suffering from a minor bowel disease. The carefully focused group of participants provided rich case study material (Patton, 1990). The forty participants in this qualitative study were aged between 30 and 83 years of age, with a mean age of 51 years similar to the mean age for minor bowel disease (Harris, 1998). The study was centred in central Scotland. There was an even mix of gender and socio-economic status (as assessed by the deprivation categories, McLoone 1991).

A staging algorithm provided a means of categorising groups of participants within different stages of change (Curry et al, 1992). The stages of change were pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance of change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). The ‘stage of change’ data provided useful background information to assist in categorising participants by level of change, and also in tracking these changes over time.

ANALYSIS

In this study we focus our analysis on two groups of participants who demonstrated different characteristics and distinct patterns of behaviour (Spiggle, 1994). The first group consisted of participants who had made changes to their diet and had sustained the changes during the period of the study. The second group consisted of participants who made limited changes or no changes to their diet during the period of the study. The analysis section deals with each group in turn, providing a description of and insights into the different coping strategies used.

GROUP 1: BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE SUSTAINED OVER TIME

Appraisals & Coping

The participants within this group considered the threat to health to be a risk after carrying out primary appraisals (Folkman et al, 1986; Lazarus, 1991). The participants made judgements concerning what needed to be done to change their behaviour in their secondary appraisals and examined the means to overcome any impediments to changing behaviour. Group 1 participants utilised problem focused coping strategies (accepting responsibility, planful problem solving). They utilised self-control and positive re-appraisal (emotion focused coping). The participants also used seeking support and advice (both problem solving and emotional). The coping strategies were analysed as:

Confrontive Coping

Sometimes the participants had to be strong and assert their position in terms of changing their behaviour. One participant had criticisms from his family concerning the changes.

"My youngest daughter criticises me a lot. My son is a chef and he makes comments on what we are eating. They don’t complain they only pass comment but we do try to eat a healthy diet" (male participant, aged 51 years, Group 1).

In this case the social support received from the participant’s wife was part of the coping strategies. The participants felt positive after carrying out the coping strategies and could see the benefit in their long term health goal (Folkman et al, 1986; Huffman et al 2000).

Planful Problem Solving

Participants made plans concerning dietary change from the consumption of foods that caused problems in terms of their disease.

"I am conscious of diet. I don’t eat a lot of meat. I take about three apples and a salad a day. I have fibre cereal and skimmed milk. If I am out eating I would decide what is suitable for me. I avoid spicy stuff since the test. I am doing everything I can" (male participant, aged 67 years).

The participants made their behaviour change plans flexible and longer term so that they could cope with the many different situations with temptations of unhealthy food.

Accepting Responsibility

The participants took responsibility for their poor eating habits and made changes to their diet. One highly symbolic example of the direct action was the removal of a cooking utensil by one participant with the support of his wife.

"We threw out the electric chip pan because I used to eat chips a lot. Well virtually every night I would have fried food of some type which I don’t have now” (male participant, aged 49 years).

The fact that the cooking utensil had been part of the poorer eating habits and was removed meant that changes could be carried out and maintained. These participants had knowledge of appropriate foods for bowel health from childhood socialisation and they accepted the responsibility for a poor diet in the past.

"My diet was rubbish, fried eggs, sausages and a pint of beer at 4am. My job led me to go from extreme fitness to a couch potato. I am more conscious of what I eat now” (male participant, aged 51 years).

This participant’s knowledge of diet and his responsibility for his own health helped him makes dietary plans and maintain change (Huffman & Houston, 1993). The emotion focused coping strategy of positive re-appraisal was part of their secondary appraisals.

Positive re-appraisal

Many participants felt better as a result of making the behaviour changes and this reinforced the appraisals they had made. The benefits one participant experienced by making changes to his lifestyle helped him make and maintain change.
was received by a positive response to the changes in diet. Needed to have extra help and were tempted to relapse. The support was a key factor in their maintenance of change at times when they social support strategies into place. An important coping strategy for participants took her mind off eating unhealthy foods.

Social Support
The social and professional support the participants received was a key factor in their maintenance of change at times when they needed to have extra help and were tempted to relapse. The support was received by a positive response to the changes in diet.

Self-Control
The ways in which participants used self-control to control their actions and maintain change varied depending on the context of their lifestyles/family circumstances. One participant used various activities to cope with change such as hobbies and activities that took her mind off eating unhealthy foods.

“I sit and do cross-stitch and sometimes just go out for a run in the car. Being an active member of the church has helped with the diet” (female participant aged 57 years).

The participants could see the benefits of putting coping strategies into place. An important coping strategy for participants was social support in the home.

Social Support
The social and professional support the participants received was a key factor in their maintenance of change at times when they needed to have extra help and were tempted to relapse. The support was received by a positive response to the changes in diet.

“I had to push myself to eat better. My daughter and her boyfriend help me though and give me support” (male participant, aged 56 years).

One participant gained support from a phone call to the nurse and this participant felt supported in her efforts to change.

“In hospital someone talked to me about diet. I wasn’t given any leaflets as I knew what I was doing. What inspired me during that time was the clinic nurse. I had support there and I felt motivated and sustained” (female participant, aged 40 years).

Some participants utilised professional support staff as a form of emotional support and to alleviate their worries concerning their disease. Support at home was anticipated at the time of the stressful event (the test) and this support was of benefit as the participant and their family worked as a team to make behaviour changes.

“She prepares a lot of things and then I cook them when I come home from work. We work together to improve things. My sister-in-law helps too.” (male participant, aged 49 years).

This participant took responsibility for his dietary changes initially but the positive emotional response and support at home was the factor that helped him maintain change.

The participants within Group 1 found that they had benefited from making appraisals and putting coping strategies into place. They used all three coping strategies to sustain their efforts at making behaviour changes.

GROUP 2: THOSE NOT MAKING CHANGE OVER TIME

Appraisals & Coping
The participants within Group 2 were aware of the fact that the diagnostic test they had taken was for cancer involved a threat to health. However they denied that any further risks would be involved after their result of minor bowel disease. They did not make primary or secondary appraisals (Lazarus, 1991). The participants within this group utilised emotion focused coping (distancing, escape/avoidance). The coping strategies emerging from analysis for this group are:

Distancing
Participants did not accept the need to change their eating habits and detached themselves from the responsibility of making the decision to change. The participants all used a positive outlook on their health as part of their detachment and explained that their eating habits were part of their lifestyle.

“I have three or four slices of bread on top of each other with jam. It’s part of the diet here–part of the culture. That’s what I have eaten since I was young and I tend to do the same now” (male participant, aged 51 years).

This participant asserted his diet was fine as it was part of his lifestyle since childhood. The participants distanced themselves from any support offered to them to change their diet.

“She tries to make a difference and puts cereal in my case when I work away but I don’t take much notice” (male participant, aged 33 years).

This participant denies he needs support from his partner and as he works away from home during the week he is able to distance himself from the problem of his poor diet.

Escape/Avoidance
The participants in this group felt that if they did not think about their illness it would go away. They accepted the disease caused problems but preferred not to deal with them.

“I have accepted the situation—that is how it is going to be. I still have sausage and chips but no for breakfast” (male participant, aged 54 years).

When environmental influences tempted these participants into eating or drinking unhealthy foods they did not perceive any risks to their future health. They had not anticipated the benefits of the consequences of behaviour change and made no appraisals or coping strategies to help them achieve better health in the longer term.

“My work mates drink a lot and I will drink with them. It’s not peer pressure. It’s just if you are sitting in the office on site and others have brought a carry-out and a curry in” (male participant, aged 33 years).

Participants did not communicate their dietary needs to peer groups as they did not anticipate a positive response in terms of support and preferred to conform to the group.

The findings from the analysis have demonstrated the differences in the way two sets of people cope with a stimulus of change and why some people respond to the stimulus and make behaviour changes while others detach themselves from the stimulus and the idea of behaviour change.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS
This study demonstrates the importance of making appraisals and coping strategies in the making and maintaining of behaviour...
change for people who have a stimulus of change. Group 1 participants adopted problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies for coping with behaviour change (Lazarus, 1991). They used the social support of family living at home as they perceived that they would receive this support and would benefit from it. For Group 2 emotion-focused strategies are dominant (distancing/escape avoidance) which provide the illusion of emotional well-being concerning present and future health. These participants did not have the health beliefs that social support would help them and they did not have knowledge of how they could change their diet from childhood.

The study adds to the literature concerning stress and coping and consumption behaviours (Sujan, 1999; Godwin, 1995). The longitudinal study developed the literature concerning behaviour change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982) and coping strategies (Folkman et al, 1986) beyond the implementation of behaviour changes (Ajzen, 1991). It also explored the factors that affect the maintenance of change (Bagozzi, 1992) such as health beliefs (Becker, 1974) including knowledge of diet (Huffman & Houston, 1993) and the setting of long term goals (Huffman at al, 2000).

Taking the interpretive methodological approach (Hudson & Ozanne, 2001) provides a rich view of the patterns of change in the context of the participants’ lives. The experience of making behaviour change is developed beyond previous understanding using qualitative methodologies within social marketing studies on behaviour change (Weinreich, 1996). A richer story of each of the participant’s experience of change and the factors that led to maintenance of change (Rothman, 2000) is provided by the use of qualitative methods (Carson et al, 2001).

REFERENCES
Curry, S, J. Kristal, A., R., Bowen, D. J. (1992) “Application of the stage model of behaviour change in five classes of health-related behaviour–findings for qualitative research” Health Education Research, 6(4), 443-453.

Fishbein , M., Ajzen, I. (1975), Belief attitude, intention and behaviour; an introduction to theory and research, Reading: MA Addision Wesley Publishers.


Lefebvre, C., R., and others “Use of Database Marketing and Consumer Based Health Communications ‘Five a day for better health’ Program” In E., W. Maibach & R., L. Parrot (Eds.), Designing Health Messages, Newbury Park: Calif: Sage.


Tesch, Renata (1990), Qualitative Research—Analysis Types and Software, New York: Falmer Press.

PAPERS PRESENTED

“The Denomination Effect”
Priya Raghubir, University of California at Berkeley
Joydeep Srivastava, University of Maryland

“Money Illusion and Mental Currency Conversion”
Gita Venkataramani Johar, Columbia University
Joachim Vosgerau, INSEAD
Klaus Wertenbroch, INSEAD.

Discussant
Priya Raghubir, U.C. Berkeley

SESSION SUMMARY

While the importance of amount of money is recognized in most economic theories, these theories are generally silent regarding how different representations of an identical amount of money influence spending decisions. The extent to which spending decisions are influenced by how a specific amount of money is represented would challenge a basic tenet of most standard economic theories. The move to the Euro in Europe has brought the issue of the subjectivity in the value of money to the forefront of consumer behavior and economics research. The papers in this session documented findings in consumer behavior that demonstrate different effects debunking the normative economics theory that consumers spending is based on utility maximizing whereby they assess the relative value of a product versus the utility associated with the money used to pay for it.

The papers introduce original and different (but related) findings to show that consumers’ valuation of money is subjective and based on context. The contextual cues are: the denomination of a currency (The Denomination Effect; Raghubir and Srivastava: Paper 1), and the ease of converting prices from local currencies to the Euro (Johar, Vosgerau, and Wertenbroch: Paper 2). Paper 1 reports results from six field studies based on undergraduates in the US, young grade school children, teenagers in Mumbai, India, young adults in Omaha, US, and housewives in Xiang Tan, China. Paper 2 reports results from an experimental field study in 8 European countries: France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain (n=752).

The results of the paper all speak to the issue of how people’s spending patterns are contingent. This is an important issue in Europe given the change to the Euro. Earlier studies conducted in Europe all show that consumers react differently to prices presented in local currencies as compared to the Euro. Many of these effects are based on the “money illusion” effect that documents a bias in assessing economic transactions due to over-weighting nominal values relative to real values (Shafir, Diamond, and Tversky 1997). The application of the money-illusion to the Euro conversion has produced a variety of interesting effects such as the “face value” effect (tourists valued a product based on its face value, without adequately adjusting for exchange rates, leading to under-spending when the face value of a foreign currency was a multiple of a unit of a home currency and overspending when it was a fraction: Raghubir and Srivastava, 2002). This session provided an opportu-
Pets as Extended Self in the Context of Pet Food Consumption

Henna Jyrinki, University of Vaasa, Finland
Hanna Leipämaa-Leskinen, University of Vaasa, Finland

ABSTRACT

In this paper, the construct of extended self is connected to pets and especially to pet food consumption. Literature review showed that the construct of extended self relating to pets consists of three opposing aspect pairs: personal and social, symbolic and functional as well as attachment and control. Our empirical data was quantitative by its nature. As a result, our data suggests that those consumers who regarded their pets as their self extensions differ from other respondents and consume pet food differently than the others. Furthermore, most of the theoretically found aspects could be connected to pet food consumption patterns.

For long, one of the basic assumptions of consumer behaviour has been that consumers’ possessions have meanings beyond their utilitarian benefit (e.g. Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Wallendorf, Belk and Heisley 1988). Accordingly, it has been claimed that we define, learn and remind ourselves through consumption objects. In this way, consumption objects become consumers’ extended self. (Belk 1988.)

Belk in his seminal work (1988) provides evidence from several disciplines for the existence of the construct of extended self, its functions, processes related to it and different categories of possessions it could be applied to. One of the possessions categories in which the construct of extended self has been applied to is pets. When seeing pets as extended self, consumers adopt pets’ traits, behaviours, and appearance and project their own personality onto the pet (Beck and Katcher 1983, 253; Savishinsky 1986, 120-121). There is also plenty of evidence in the research of human-animal bond stemming from various disciplines concerning pets as self extensions or parts of consumers’ self (e.g. Beck and Katcher 1983; Savishinsky 1986). In spite of the large attention and discussion for and against (Cohen 1989) the construct of extended self has gained, it still seems to remain ambiguous.

Moreover, the construct of extended self has not been connected to consumption and buying behaviour. It is noticed that consumers’ possessions reflect consumers’ self, but how does this show in consumers’ consumption behaviour? Especially, the connections between seeing the pet as extended self and buying products to it, is yet to be studied (cf. Aylesworth, Chapman and Dobscha 1999).

In this paper, we aim to grasp the ambiguous construct of extended self as it is seen related to pets. More specifically we are to study pet food consumption of those consumers who see their pets as their extended self. Food consumption is chosen to our study context because it is something that both pets and humans have in common. In this study pet food consumption refers to both buying pet food and feeding the pet.

We set following objectives to our study. First, we offer a literature review concerning pets as extended self in order to clarify different aspects of the extended self construct. Literature review is based on both consumer behaviour research as well as on studies related to human-animal bond from other disciplines. Second, we set three empirical objectives: characterising the extended self group, comparing pet food consumption between the extended self group and the others, and connecting empirical results with the theoretical aspects of the construct of extended self. The study is exploratory in a sense that it approaches the phenomenon quantitatively, while it previously has mainly been studied qualitatively. On the whole, we wish to contribute to the much discussed construct of extended self in order to provide building blocks for both theory-building and further empirical testing of the construct.

CLARIFYING THE CONSTRUCT OF EXTENDED SELF RELATED TO PETS

During the literature analysis we found out that the construct of extended self seemed to be an ambiguous one. Belk (1988; 1989; 1996) makes a significant contribution in his works in recognizing the construct, but however, it still seems to remain complicated. In order to make it clearer, we reorganized and made visible some of the central, earlier often implicitly recognized aspects of it. These aspects seem to be even opposing, but still simultaneously present.

Even though it might be possible to recognize more aspects, we chose three aspect pairs under examination, because they seemed important especially when related to pets. Besides they came up in consumer behaviour literature, they were also found in studies concerning human-animal interaction in other disciplines. First, even though the construct of extended self refers to a consumer’s self-concept and personality, it is also highly social by nature. Second, consumers have both symbolic and functional roles for their possessions that are regarded as extended self. Third, consumers seem to form close emotional attachment to possessions, especially to pets, and it also seems to be so that control over and by those possessions is an important element when a pet is viewed as extended self. Next, we look at these aspects more closely from the standpoint of pets as self extensions.

Extended Self as Personal and Social Construct

The construct of extended self includes both personal and social aspects. Supporting this view Belk (1996, 127) found out that pet owners claimed their pets to fit to their personalities, lifestyles and families, which as such reflects personal and social aspects.

It is reasonable to assume that pets can mirror owners’ personalities and traits, both positive and negative (Belk 1996, 128). It is even stated that human’s choice of an animal is itself a definition of a self. A pet could be compared to a hair style or clothing. (Savishinsky 1983, 120.)

To explain this, it is claimed that pets are seen as us, because a pet is a representation of ourselves as infants. The pet is the self as an infant, who is no longer part of nature and not yet trained to live in adult society. (Beck and Katcher 1983, 88.) In this role, the pet represents the id of its owner (Hirschman 1994, 618). Consumers, as adult human beings must control his/her doings and beings very closely, but pets can freely express emotions that might be forbidden for human beings (Beck and Katcher 1983, 89; Savishinsky 1983, 120). This could explain that when consumers are mourning for the lost pet they are mourning besides the pet, also because of their lost childish nature. So, when we are mothering our pets we would be mothering ourselves. (Beck and Katcher 1983, 90; cf. also Belk 1988, 144.)

Moreover, pets have been seen as vehicles for narcissistic love, and thus they are used to express love to oneself. It is seen that animals have so little personality of their own that pet owner projects attributes he chooses to the pet without feelings of contradiction. Indeed, when we are talking about the love the pets offer,
we are talking about our feelings, not pets’ feelings. All pets may be used narcissistic ways, but interesting examples are exotic animals, like snakes or wildcats. (Beck and Katcher 1983, 92-95.)

Self extension is seen especially evident for men, who own large, aggressive male dogs. In these cases, pet owner can see himself in the sexual potency and virility of his dog. He may even react negatively to suggestions of the dog to be castrated or might resist dog leash laws. (Beck and Katcher 1983, 253; Hirschman 1994, 620; Savishinsky 1983, 120.)

A phenomenon labelled persona perception is closely connected to personal aspect of the construct of extended self. This phenomenon means that consumers attach companion animals’ personalities to those of the animals’ human owners. Usually, this is directed to somebody else and often pet is a projective target for negative feelings that consumers might have towards for example family members. (Hirschman 1994, 621.)

Like this latter example shows, self is expressed in different levels; we don’t exist only as individuals but also as groups (Belk 1988, 152). Even though, Belk (1998, 145) claims that he focuses on individual; he still cannot leave the social nature of this phenomenon without attention. As he says, person-thing –relationship is never two-way, but always three-way, person-thing-person (Belk 1988, 147). This view was even more emphasized from the perspective of symbolic interactionism in which it is claimed that there are different ways of expressing and defining social group memberships through consumption possessions. It is seen that self derives from actor’s social interactions in the ongoing process of self definition (Sanders 1990, 662). As Solomon (1990, 68) says, this discussion “helps us to move toward the embrace of phenomenological individual who actively uses goods to construct and maintain his/her social reality”. Thus, possessions are used in order to extend the social self. For instance, it could be claimed that owning a horse involves identifying oneself into the social group of certain type of horse owners.

Extended Self as Symbolic and Functional Construct

Besides personal and social aspects, the construct of extended self includes also symbolic and functional aspects. Symbolically pets are expressions of consumers’ identities and functionally they are consumers’ appendages (Belk 1996, 128). Objects extend consumers not only symbolically helping them being something desired but also literally by giving possibilities of doing things that they couldn’t otherwise do. These two functions are integrally related to having these possessions that enable us being and doing the desired. (Belk 1988, 145-146.)

First, explaining symbolic nature of the construct, it is found out that in several cultures either owners are named after their pets or pets names reflect owner’s wishes to be identified. For example aggressive, humorous or literary names communicate pet owners individual or class values. By this way, pet owners indirectly label themselves by naming their pets. (Savishinsky 1983, 119-120; Solomon 1990, 69.)

Second, pets literally aid consumers to do certain things, which gives pets functional roles. There are several supporting examples for this. Before cars, horses were largely used as equipment for transportation and travelling, and horses also helped in hunting and farm activities (Hirschman 1994, 618). Nowadays, animals can still have many functional properties; especially dogs have several functions as such. Dogs are used to protect consumer’s homes, find bombs and drugs, they serve as companion to handicapped or guide for deaf and blind, and they assist in instructing children and are helpful in therapy for elderly and infirm people.

Functional role of pets can be seen in strong emotions that are directed to pets, for example losing a pet has been compared even to loosing an arm or a leg (Belk 1996, 128). Also, symbolic role is highlighted in emotions, for pet owners may feel proud about their dog, cat or horse when it wins in a competition. Similarly, criticism directed to consumer’s pet might cause shame when it is deserved and anger when it isn’t. (Belk 1996, 127; Sanders 1990, 665-666; Solomon 1990, 68.)

Control and Attachment as Aspects of Extended Self

Finally, control and attachment are aspects of the extended self construct. First, control over and by objects is seen to result in feelings that relates to object’s identity (Belk 1988, 140-141; 1989, 130). Control over pets is shown in several ways, for example consumers seem to want dress and groom their pets according to their own wishes, want to train their pets to obey them and show mastery over a pet by birth control or neutering a pet (Belk 1996, 132-133). On the other hand, pets seem to control consumers’ lives too. Pets need never-ending attention and care on a daily basis, they may be messy and may do damage to our homes or even family members, and despite time demands, consumers spend enormous amounts of money to their pets (Belk 1996, 125; Voith 1981).

Second, distinction between an object having just mnemonic value and an object reflecting pet owner’s extended self is be made according the type of attachment. In order to an object to be extended self, consumer should have emotional, not just functional attachment towards it. (Belk 1989, 130.)

Indeed, being closely attached to one’s pets implies seeing animal as a part of self. By this way pet is seen that much part of self that consumers couldn’t imagine living without it. This would be realised especially when pet owners have extreme troubles getting over of the lost of a pet. A test for this non-rational attachment would be when pet owner is not willing to substitute a pet by a functional equivalent. (Belk 1996, 126.)

These three aspect pairs depict the construct of extended self related to pets. How do these aspects appear when consumption is directed toward pets? This is where we put our focus on in the following empirical part.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

As our empirical aim was to explore how consumers’ seeing their pets as extended self can be found to explicate their pet food consumption, quantitative structured interviews were performed to gather the data. Indeed, Belk (1989, 129) states that the construct of extended self can be feasible in both positivist and non-positivist research. The present study lies somewhere between these two extremes.

Structured interviews were conducted with Finnish pet owners in the autumn of 2003. Total sample consisted of 264 respondents (ages 20–86, 34% males and 66% females). Concerning the general representativeness of the sample, women were overrepresented, but otherwise demographic and socio-economic profiles of the respondents were in line with the general characteristics of the population in Finland. Respondents owned wide range of various pets. Structured interviews were performed by students from a course of consumer behaviour as a part of their course requirements. Interviewers were trained before-hand by the authors of this paper and they were assigned to choose respondents representing different demographic and socio-economical backgrounds.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire consisted of items concerning respondents’ relationships to their pets, their own food consumption and their pet food consumption. All the items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type
scale. The analysis of the respondents’ own food consumption is not included in this paper. However, the formulation of these items is discussed briefly here because they gave a base for pet food consumption items.

There has been critique toward an overall measurability of the construct of extended self (cf. Cohen 1989). Despite of this critique, Belk (1989, 130) introduces a way to measure extended self starting by naming important objects, experiences and peoples in a person’s life. He further suggests that straightforward questions about what defines a person and what objects belong to a person’s self are generally sufficient. In our research, we were interested in seeing pets as extended self, so we started asking directly about the respondents’ relationships towards their pets.

The items concerning the respondent’s relationship to his/her pet were developed on the basis of prior literature. Previously, pets have been seen both as objects (avocations, ornaments, toys or status symbols) and as companions (family members, friends, extended self) (Hirschman 1994; Beck and Katcher 1983; Belk 1988; Belk 1996). All these aspects were measured in our questionnaire, however, as the focus in this paper is on pets as extended self only those items are taken under further consideration. In total, four items concerned pets as extended self: 1) “I don’t care what other people say about my pet” (used in a reversed form in analysis: “I do care what other people say about my pet”), 2) “The appearance of my pet is well in accord with my style”, 3) “On the base of a pet one can conclude a lot about its owner” and 4) “My pet is part of me”.

The developed items exemplify the aspect pairs of the construct of extended self presented previously in the theoretical part of this paper. Thus, by formulating these items we offer the first attempt to quantify the aspects of the construct of extended self. Personal aspect of extended self is seen to be highlighted in the second and the fourth item, and social aspect is seen especially in the first, the second and the third item. Symbolic as well as functional role of extended self is reflected in the second item, because seeing pet as a part of personal style could be seen both symbolic and functional. Other roles of functional aspects of extended self were not included, because they would be too relationship- and animal species-specific (e.g. safe would be provided more likely by a Rottweiler than by a cat). Attachment towards a pet could be seen in the items one and four. According to our view, control over a pet is seen in the items two and three.

Food consumption items were based on the food-related lifestyle measurement instrument devised by Grunert, Brunns, and Bisp (1993). This measurement instrument is developed to measure consumers’ food consumption rather broadly distinguishing following categories of food-related lifestyle: shopping scripts, meal preparation scripts, desired higher-order product attributes, usage situations and desired consequences. However, we adapted the instrument so that we included only those items to the questionnaire which were previously found to work best in Finland (Laaksonen, Laaksonen, and Leipämaa 2002). This is how we ensured that only relevant items were asked.

Pet food consumption items were developed on the basis of food consumption items. The contents of these items were designed to follow food consumption items as straight as possible. For example, when the original item was “I always try to get the best quality for the best price”, the pet food item was formulated as “I always try to get the best quality for the best price when I am buying pet food.” However, in some cases the formulation of the item had to be changed lightly in order to ensure that the item would be logical in the case of pet food consumption.

Validity Assessment

Validity of the study can be assessed in terms of the extent the measure actually measures what it is intended to measure. Validity can be improved by developing measurement instrument so that it does not allow systematic error, thus ensuring the construct validity. Within construct validity, nomological validity is based on consistency between theoretical concepts and measures of those concepts, which renders it the most important validity type of this research. Other types of construct validity, convergent and discriminant validity are not discussed here, because the correlation between two different measurements is not of interest in this research. Instead, the focus is on testing whether there are differences in consumption behaviour of two different groups of respondents (extended self group and others). (cf. Peter 1981, 136-138; Churchill 1979, 70-71.)

Consequently, in the following discussion we consider only nomological validity. For this Pearson correlation matrix (Table 1.) of the extended self items was generated. On the basis of the correlations Cronbach’s alpha was calculated. As a result Cronbach’s alpha reached the required level (0.74; thus scoring >0.60 and <0.90).

Statistical validation was reached even if one the items (“I do care what other people say about my pet”) did not correlate significantly with the others. However, it was included in analysis, because as discussed in theoretical section the construct of extended self is divergent. Indeed, this particular item is theoretically related to the construct of extended self emphasising especially social and attachment aspects as discussed above. As a whole, correlation within other relationship items was not tested, because consumers’ relationships with their pets are not expected to be just extended self by its nature, instead it is assumed that consumers have multifaceted relationship with their pets.

RESULTS

Next, we move on analysing our empirical results. Three empirical questions guide our analysis. First, we characterize those respondents who saw their pets as extended self. Second, we further analyze their pet food consumption in comparison to other respondents. Third, we explore how these results can be connected to the aspects of the construct of extended self.

Characteristics of the Extended Self Group

We identified the group of respondents regarding their pets as extended self by selecting a subset of the respondents on the base of extended self -items. In order to become selected to the subset, a respondent should have agreed either partially or totally on a 5-point scale (1=disagree totally, 2=disagree partially, 3=neutral, 4=agree partially, 5=agree totally) with at least three of the four items.1 According to Belk (1989, 130) the concept of extended self should be seen more like relative than absolute. This is why we wanted to use rather strict condition to our subset. Moreover, by this way we ensured that those respondents who become selected to the extended self group saw strongly their pets as self extensions. In total, 74 respondents (28% of total sample) were selected to the extended self group. Differences between this group’s and the other respondents’ demographic, socioeconomic and pet related backgrounds were tested with One-Way ANOVA.

---

1) “I do care what other people say about my pet”; 2) “The appearance of my pet is well in accord with my style”; 3) “On the base of a pet one can conclude a lot about its owner” and 4) “My pet is part of me”
TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>My pet is part of me</th>
<th>I do care what other people say about my pet</th>
<th>The appearance of my pet is well in accord with my style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do care what other people say about my pet</td>
<td>r 0.043</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The appearance of my pet is well in accord with my style</td>
<td>r 0.324**</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the base of a pet one can conclude a lot about its owner</td>
<td>r 0.347**</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.353**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson correlation matrix, (scale 1-5), *<0.1, **<0.05, ***<0.01

As a result, none of the demographic and socio-economic variable of these respondents did differ significantly from the other respondents (p>0.05). Instead, the extended self group owned different kinds of pets having significantly more dogs (p<0.05) and significantly less small pets (p<0.05), as hamsters, than the others. Those respondents who did not see their pets as extended had almost same number of dogs and cats.

Moreover, the breeds of the dogs differed between these two respondent groups. When coding the data dogs were grouped according to FCI’s (Fédération Cynologique Internationale) breed groups. The extended self –group owned significantly more dogs from the breed groups one (Sheepdogs and Cattle Dogs), two (Pinscher, Schnauzer and Molossoïd Breeds) and nine (Companion and Toy Dogs), instead the others owned more dogs of Spitz and Primitive Type Breeds (p<0.001). Dogs from group eight (Retrievers, Flushing Dogs and Water Dogs) were common among the respondents and were owned almost same number in both groups. This may be due to the overall generality of Retrievers and Spaniels in Finland.

Furthermore, the extended self group was significantly more engaged to their pets than the others (p<0.01). Slightly over half of them said that they do have some activities with their pets, as going out together, being together, or taking agility or obedience classes, whereas 66% of the others said that they didn’t have any avocation with their pets.

Pet Food Consumption of the Extended Self Group

Our second empirical question was to analyse pet food consumption of the extended self group compared to others. Differences in the pet food consumption were tested using One-Way ANOVA.

Most of the pet food consumption items didn’t reveal significant differences between the two groups. However, the extended self group and the others differed significantly according to some pet food consumption patterns. Significant differences are presented in table 2. First, the extended self group emphasised more quality (p<0.01) and prices (p<0.01) than the other respondents. Second, giving pleasure to their pets by feeding was seen more important (p<0.05) in that group than among others. Third, the extended self group’s self-esteem was added a lot when their pets’ feeding was praised (p<0.001) and they knew better how their pets should be fed (p<0.01). Fourth, these respondents planned their pet feeding ahead more often than the others (p<0.001). In sum, price and quality consciousness, pleasure giving, self-esteem and knowledge concerning pet feeding as well as planning the pet feeding were more important to the extended self group than to the other respondents.

Connecting Empirical Results and the Aspects of Extended Self

Next, we analyse the connections between empirical results and the theoretical aspects of extended self (personal, social, symbolic, functional, control and attachment) identified previously in this study. Our analysis is tentative of its nature, and more than precise results, we wish to give building-blocks for future research.

Concerning consumer characteristics, pet species, breeds and interests with pets of the extended self group naturally indicate most of the aspects rather directly. This is because our subset was selected on the base of extended self-items. This validates our items at some level. We next further analyze some of the most interesting results in order to give examples of different aspects appearing in consumer characteristics.

Related to pet species, those consumers who saw their pets as extended self had more dogs, whereas the others had dogs and cats same amount. Moreover, consumers who did not see their pets as extended had more small pets than those who did. This makes perfectly sense, because cats and other pets living mostly inside house are not as visible as dogs. Thus, this could be interpreted so that dogs can be related more easily to social and symbolic aspects of extended self.

Moreover, dog breed groups that contained breeds like Rottweiler, Doberman, German Shepherd and so on, were significantly more common among consumers who saw their pets as extended self (cf. Hirschman 1994). In addition, it seemed that also small Companion and Toy Dogs would reflect their owners’ self. On the other hand, consumers who did not see their pets as extended owned more often Spitz and Primitive Type Dogs. Those are mostly dogs that are used for hunting and traditionally in Finland they seem to possess more of a utilitarian value than that of a companion to whom consumers form deep attachment. Thus, the findings of Hirschman (1994) are both confirmed and added with new and more specified elements concerning pet species and dog breeds.

In addition, the social nature of this phenomenon is confirmed by the finding that consumers who see their pets as extended self do have an avocation with their pets more often than the others. This is also in line with the results concerning pet species and breeds.

When all the three aspect pairs were present in the case of consumer characteristics, also most of the aspects could be found in pet food consumption. A few aspects of the construct of extended self can be highlighted for each item. Table 3 illustrates these...
connections between pet food consumption items and different aspects of the extended self construct. Moreover, it could be seen that consumers want to show both their attachment and control over pet by saying that it is important to get best quality for the pet. They want, maybe unconsciously, be in charge of their pets feeding. However, when they see that the pet needs food of high-quality, it could be interpreted as a way of showing emotions towards a pet.

Second, the extended self group seemed to emphasise also the pleasure in pets’ eating. This could indicate the role of attachment. When consumers have deep emotional attachment towards pets, it...
does matter whether the pet enjoys its meal. Moreover, by definition when pets are seen as extended self, the pleasure in pets eating could refer also to personal pleasure, pleasure for oneself.

Third, the personal nature came up also in items “Being praised for my pet’s feeding adds a lot to my self-esteem” and “I know well how to feed my pet”. The first one, however, very well describes how the construct of extended self is personal and social at the same time; it is about oneself in a social context. To be aware of social context refers also to the possibility that there are symbolic meanings attached to pet feeding.

Fourth, consumers who saw their pets as extended self seem to plan their pets feeding more carefully than those who didn’t see their pets as extended self. This could mean that consumers want to have a control over their pets. Moreover, extended self group scored higher in item “I notice when pet food products I regularly buy change in price”, which could indicate planning as well. However, it could be interpreted that not only control but also attachment plays a role here. In an opposite case, when a consumer would not have emotional attachment towards a pet, probably he/she would not plan its feeding that carefully. These last two items can be connected to the personal aspect of extended self too.

The connection to the personal aspect could be explained also by the fact that most of the items were grammatically formulated in the first singular format. Instead, the functional aspect didn’t appear in any of these items. This is at least partly due to the formulation of the items.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we analyzed the group of consumers which regards their pets as extended self. Furthermore, we explored how this close relationship with one’s pet can be seen in one’s consumption behaviour concerning the pet.

According to our results it could be argued that the construct of extended self is indeed relevant in consumer behaviour related to pets. There was actually a distinct group of consumers who regarded their pets as extended self in our data.

We found out that 28% of the respondents in our sample could be interpreted as seeing their pets as self extensions quite strongly. Further, according to our findings seeing pets as extended self did not vary by socio-demographic variables. Instead, it seemed that certain animal species, breeds and avocation with pets made a significant difference between those consumers who saw their pets as extended self and those who didn’t. Further, we were able to take a step forward in the study of extended self by finding certain amount of significant differences in pet food consumption. Consciousness regarding prices and quality, pleasure giving, self-esteem, knowledge and planning pet’s feeding were emphasized among extended self group.

Even though, Belk (1989, 131) says that the research in consumer behaviour and study of extended self should not concentrate on positivist notions of explanation and prediction, the construct seemed to have some explanatory power over consumption behaviour in our research. Thus, our study confirms that the construct of extended self is not just theoretical of its nature. Therefore, the present study gives support to Belk’s work on the contrary to Cohen’s critique (1989). Moreover, the fact that we found a connection between seeing pets as extended self and consumption behaviour in pet food confirms Belk’s (1988, 157) notion that extended self would play a role in vicarious consumption. According to this view, we could for example conclude that buying high quality food for one’s pet, so that the quality could be apparently seen in pet’s coat, would exactly be consuming vicariously through a pet. Thus, the admiration the consumer’s pet possibly gains, is admiration to the consumer. Similarly, the idea that extended self—group seem to want their pets to enjoy their food, would indicate that indeed they want to get the same pleasure themselves.

In this paper we approached our research questions in an explorative way. In the future, more quantitative validation is needed in order to further testing the measure instrument. On the other hand, this phenomenon could be studied qualitatively in order to get a deeper understanding over it. Indeed, the extended self construct is claimed to contribute to consumer behaviour especially by adding our understanding about consumers (Belk 1989, 131). This could also give support to interpretations presented in this paper concerning the different aspects’ connections to consumption items. For example, the functional aspect of the extended self construct could be further analysed qualitatively as our data didn’t show any connections between functional aspects and pet food consumption behaviour. Doesn’t it actually play a role in this construct in this specific context?

On the other hand, the personal aspects did appear simultaneously with the social aspects as well as the attachment aspects and the control aspects were intertwined. These could be thought as juxtapositions which are present at the same time. In today’s post-modern society, it is seen that a consumer is living in a world of contradictions (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). Moreover, it is seen that in current time the self is empty and fragmented. This is a self that seeks continually to be fulfilled for example by consuming goods, calories, experiences, politicians, romantic partners and emphatic therapists. (Cushman 1990.) Self with its extensions is thus still an essential construct in a post-modern consumer research highlighting fragmented, decentred and opposing views to self.

Moreover, future studies could be more in detail focused on the relationship between consumption directed to oneself and to one’s pet. Food could still be a fruitful context to this kind of study setting. In fact, Belk (1988, 151) states that food is something that is very much related to oneself, so sharing food may be a symbolic way to represent group identity. In these future studies it could be assumed so that consumers represent their extended identity by sharing same food consumption patterns with their pets.

Our study offers some interesting managerial implications. The fact that there is a distinctive and recognizable group of consumers who regards their pets as their self extensions serves a good base for developing marketing activities. The share of these consumers was in our study as high as 28%. This is such a large consumer group that pet food products could be developed on this group’s terms. Indeed, our study suggests that price and quality consciousness, pleasure giving, self-esteem, knowledge and planning are important elements to those consumers concerning pet food consumption. These elements should be emphasized for example in advertising and product development when directing marketing to this group. In sum, these results confirm the idea that today’s marketing cannot be based just on demographic and socio-economic variables, instead we need deeper information about consumers.

REFERENCES


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumer involvement was mainly manipulated by the purchase availability manipulation; namely, using a future event or one that occurs in a far away country as compared to using a current event or one that occurs in the subject’s own country or city. We questioned the use of the purchase availability manipulation as a substitute for involvement when predicting purchase intention. We posited that the involvement antecedents- consumer’s personal profile, purchase situation and target product- would better explain involvement.

Meta-analyses of previous studies indicated that both the three antecedents’ framework and the purchase availability manipulation have considerable relations with involvement and that these components do not differ in the extent of their association with involvement. Independently, we found significant relations between involvement levels and purchase intention. These findings gave support to the comprehensive model operated within our research.

The research model included the activation of specific components in each of the antecedents and the purchase availability manipulation as independent variables: (1) Consumer’s personal profile antecedent: we concentrated on the enduring involvement (EI) attribute. Consumers with high EI have a continuing and strong interest in a specific product class. They may subscribe to or regularly purchase magazines dealing with the product class and maintain perceptual vigilance for information concerning the product. (2) Target product antecedent: we focused on the target product’s complexity, recognized as one of the specific attributes that influence the involvement levels in a stable manner. For that purpose, four products were examined: a mutual fund and a savings account, taken from the financial context; and a stereo and a radio tape, taken from the audio devices context. We reassured that a mutual fund is perceived as more complex as compared to a savings account; a stereo is perceived as more complex as compared to a radio tape; and that either a mutual fund and a stereo or a savings account and a radio tape are not perceived differently in terms of their complexity. (3) Purchase situation antecedent: we activated the social context of the purchase situation. Prior research suggested that when the social context is in the presence of others, it encourages consumers to pay closer attention to the purchasing process, and therefore increases involvement levels. Specifically, the current study examined the effect of others that are present during the purchasing episode and are assumed to be interested in the same product as the consumers themselves. (4) Purchase availability manipulation: we activated it in terms of time: whether the product is available to purchase today or in a future date (six months from now).

We measured their effects on two dependent variables: involvement with the product and purchase intention.

The study included a sample of four hundred and forty graduate participants. Two hundred and forty participants were exposed to financial products and two hundred participants were exposed to audio devices. Participants were randomly assigned to each of the conditions by cells in a four (target product) by two (purchase situation) by two (available vs. unavailable) between subjects matrix. The study was based on a written questionnaire.

Using the Structural Equation Modeling methodology, we explored the direct and indirect effects of the purchase availability manipulation and the three antecedents in determining purchase intention. The effects were estimated by a maximum likelihood method.

Our findings replicated the meta-analyses findings with regards to the significant effects of the antecedents on involvement, and further extended these effects to purchase intention. However, they raised questions concerning the purchase availability effect on involvement and its direct effect on purchase intention. We found that the purchase availability manipulation had an additional substantial effect on purchase intention, which is considerably higher from its effect on involvement; whereas the three antecedents exclusively influenced involvement levels.

Examination of the cognitive responses content revealed that participants were negatively influenced by the unavailable condition and that the available condition had lead to minor cognitive responses. We did not find a consistent direction of content inference (favorable/ unfavorable) within the involvement antecedents.

In sum, we found that the purchase availability manipulation is insufficient to act as a substitute for operating involvement when determining purchase intention due to its additional direct effect on purchase intention. A feasible explanation for the direct effect may derive from the unanimous way of inferring the purchase availability manipulation as compared to the multidirectional inference of the antecedents. We further found that the antecedents as an integrative framework better explained the involvement variable.

One of the possible ways to overcome the inaccuracy of the purchase availability manipulation as a substitute to involvement includes linking it to other involvement manipulations, such as providing a free gift in the end of the experiment (the target product/another product) and sample size (small/large groups). Nevertheless, based on the current findings and their proposed explanation, it may be assumed that although the linkage solution provides alternative ways to operate involvement, it does not eliminate the additional direct effect of the purchase availability manipulation on purchase intention.

We suggest another possible solution based on a hybrid manipulation of the involvement antecedents: the consumer’s personal profile and the target product antecedents. The core principle behind the suggested hybrid procedure is based on the nature of relations that exist between the consumer’s EI attribute and the complexity of the target product. Specifically, we posit that a complex target product would enlarge the differences in involvement levels between the high and low EI consumers and by that would enhance the manipulation effectiveness; whereas, we do not expect to find significant differences in involvement levels when exposing the consumers to a simple product.

REFERENCES


Consumer Responses to Flattery: Empirical Evidence of the Sinister Attribution Error
Kelley J. Main, York University, Canada
Darren W. Dahl, University of British Columbia, Canada
Peter R. Darke, University of British Columbia, Canada

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
The current research used an attributional framework to investigate questions relating to the effectiveness of flattery in consumer settings. Attribution theory’s discounting principle suggests that consumers are likely to accurately discount flattery for the presence of plausible ulterior motives in the situation (such as trying to make a sale). This discounting would result in a negative reaction from consumers as they discount flattery for the presence of plausible ulterior motives in a sales setting. However, an emerging concept in the attribution literature suggests another potential consumer reaction to flattery. Kramer (1994) discussed a sinister attribution error where individuals are overly suspicious of the motives and intentions of others and assume a lack of trustworthiness (Kramer 1994). In a sales setting, consumers whose judgments are influenced by the sinister attribution error would react negatively to flattery based on the assumption of possible ulterior motives such as trying to influence the sale, regardless of the validity of the assumption or the plausibility of those motives.

Two experiments, a field study and scenario study, examined consumer reactions to flattery when there was an obvious ulterior motive present (i.e. the salesclerk flattered prior to the purchase decision) or when there was no obvious ulterior motive (i.e. flattery occurred after the purchase decision). The results of the field study demonstrated that consumers make less of a distinction between flattery before and after purchase in a real shopping situation. The distinction as to when flattery occurred was subtle in this real purchase context and consumers responded based on the presence or absence of flattery as opposed to when it occurred. It was flattery that became a salient cue in the situation to consumers, and their reactions to flattery were primarily negative. Consumers who were flattered prior to purchase perceived the clerk as less trustworthy and reported more negative attributional thoughts than consumers flattered after purchase. The results for flattery before purchase suggest that consumers accurately detected the fact that the flattery might plausibly serve as an ulterior motive, and this identification of an ulterior motive resulted in distrust. What has not been previously demonstrated in the literature is the fact that even flattery occurring after purchase resulted in negative perceptions of the seller when compared to consumers who were not flattered at all. Consumers flattered after purchase experienced more negative reactions than were warranted by the situation. This finding serves as evidence of the sinister attribution error (Kramer 1998) given that consumers were overly suspicious of flattery and failed to take into account when the flattery occurred in the situation.

In the scenario study, once again, perceptions of the clerk’s trustworthiness were lowest in the flattery before purchase condition and consumers who were flattered after purchase still perceived the clerk as significantly less trustworthy than consumers who were not flattered at all. An accurate consumer would not respond in this manner, as they should recognize that attempting to make a sale is an implausible ulterior motive when flattery occurs after the purchase has been completed. This finding suggests that consumers were overly suspicious of flattery from the clerk and overcorrected for the possibility of ulterior motives. For attributional thoughts, results demonstrated that consumers flattered after purchase experienced more negative attributional thoughts than consumers who were not flattered. The results suggest that consumers experienced perceptions of ulterior motives and negative thoughts about the causes of flattery both when flattery occurred before purchase and even when flattery occurred afterwards. Further analysis suggested that attributional thoughts mediated perceptions of the trustworthiness of the clerk, depending on when the flattery occurred. For consumers who were flattered prior to purchase, perceptions of the clerk’s trustworthiness were mediated by more thoughtful and effortful attributional processing. Consumers who had more negative attributional thoughts (such as believing that the clerk was working on commission) had lower perceptions of the clerk’s trustworthiness. In contrast, if consumers made positive attributions for flattery (such as the clerk being helpful), perceptions of the clerk’s trustworthiness were higher. For consumers who were flattered after purchase, mediation results were not significant and demonstrated that perceptions of the clerk’s trustworthiness were made automatically. Overall, this analysis demonstrates that consumers’ judgments of the clerk’s trustworthiness were made both automatically and consciously.

When we examine the findings of the current research in comparison to those previously reported, there was a partial replication. In particular, the negative reactions of consumers who were flattered before purchase were consistent between the current research and that of Campbell and Kirmani (2000), and serve as evidence that consumers were able to adequately use persuasion knowledge in determining potential explanations for flattery received in a consumer context. Consumers who were flattered before purchase were able to discount appropriately for the presence of ulterior motives in the sales situation. With the addition of a group of consumers who did not receive flattery, the results for flattery after purchase become clearer. Results confirmed that consumers make fairly sinister attributions for influence tactics used in sales settings. Instead of recognizing that there are no plausible ulterior motives for flattery after purchase, consumers responded just as negatively to this flattery as they did to flattery received before purchase. Consistent with other research (Kramer 1994), consumers exhibited an irrational suspicion that they were the target of an influence attempt and made sinister attributions for the flattery.

The results of this research make a number of contributions to the literature. First, it is one of only a few papers to investigate consumer behavior within an attributional framework, answering repeated calls for research in this area (see Weiner 2000). Second, this research is one of the first to demonstrate empirical evidence of the sinister attribution error (Kramer 1999a), and the only to apply this concept to a consumer setting. Third, this research has demonstrated that it is not just the presence of ulterior motives that influences interpretations of flattery, but rather it is the sales situation itself, regardless of the implausibility of ulterior motives, that was partially responsible for consumer reactions to flattery.

REFERENCES


A New Approach to Assessing Cognitive Processes at the Point of Sale: Video-Cued Thought Protocols
Günter Silberer, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

It has been demonstrated that many purchasing decisions occur only at the point of sale (Cobb and Hoyer 1986). Whenever planning to influence consumer decisions in a retailing environment, customers’ paths and interactions with the store environment have to be taken into consideration because they determine the (possibilities for) contacts with certain products. This also applies to cognitive processes which occur at the point of sale, as these reflect “inner interactions”. However, tracking cognitive processes raises problems which have to be addressed.

Our article deals with various approaches for assessing thoughts, more precisely Concurrent Verbalization (Thinking-Aloud; Ericsson and Simon 1993), the Interruption Technique (e.g. Hoyer 1984; McIntyre and Bender 1986), and Immediate as well as Delayed Retrospection (Ericsson and Simon 1993; Fidler 1983). Thereby, we focus on both internal and external (ecological) validity. Whenever the goal is to assess sequences of thoughts completely, Thinking Aloud and Immediate Retrospection are of interest. Thinking Aloud has been used frequently (Payne and Ragsdale 1978; Reicks et al. 2003; Titus and Everett 1996) but its internal and ecological validity can be questioned (Russo, Johnson, and Stephens 1989). Retrospection has not been applied because only unaided retrospection has been considered so far. However, aided recall has to be taken into consideration because such an approach is less vulnerable to the argument of forgetting or incomplete recall (cf. Raaijmakers and Shiffrin 1992). However, choosing an adequate recall aid is the pivotal point when applying this method.

Videos from the shopping episode can be an adequate recall aid when customers’ paths and their interaction with the store environment can be recorded and demonstrated well and as completely as possible. Therefore, instead of using an eye camera or head camera we used a camera operator who followed the customer as inconspicuously as possible. Thereby, customers’ agreement to being filmed was essential. Another issue considered, was to attract as little attention as possible from bystanders in order to avoid influences on the situation.

A first use of these Video-Cued Thought Protocols was applied in a study at the point of sale in a store for electric and electronic goods. One hundred twenty-eight visitors took part in the study. The recorded footage was shown to the participants behind the checkout area. While watching the video, they were asked to concurrently verbalize everything that had been on their minds while they were walking through the store. In order not to discourage more extensive verbalizations, it was possible for either the researcher or the participant to pause the video at any time. Finally, the video footage and the sound recording of the thought verbalization were saved as one file for further analysis.

One question of the study addressed the disturbance resulting from the recording and the presence of the camera operator. The results show that 33% of visitors responded that they had not been bothered at all. Around 40% stated that they had been “hardly” disturbed and around 20% felt “more or less strongly” disturbed. Therefore, we can conclude that applying Video-Cued Thought Protocols produces an influence of varying strength that is, overall, rather low. Furthermore, this influence has to be viewed in comparison with the disturbance that results from a possible application of the Thinking-Aloud technique.

The video and its combination of verbalization of thoughts on the one side and customers’ thoughts paths though the store and their interaction with the store environment on the other side, facilitated the analysis of customers’ thoughts. Thoughts were coded using a system of categories (Büttner, Rauch, and Silberer 2005) which had to be suitable for different types of actions: for reflecting searching behavior as well as for coding the behavior of those visitors who come to the store without a concrete intention to buy. These two groups, i.e. seekers and non-seekers, are represented in the sample and were compared with each other. The purpose of this comparison was to validate our instrument by differences between known-groups. We expected seekers to be more concerned with thinking about orientation and goals, to perceive more problems during pursuing their goal and to be more selective (cf. Gollwitzer 1996). The latter implies that they have fewer thoughts on searching, perceiving and evaluating alternatives but more on the selection of alternatives. Furthermore, we expected seekers to think more about whether and how far they have achieved their goals. The support for all but two of our hypotheses can be interpreted as an indicator of known-group validity. For the purpose of assessing all cognitions at the point of sale in their completeness, the advantage of Video-Cued Thought Protocols over Thinking Aloud is not restricted to internal validity but applies to ecological validity as well.

REFERENCES

Raaijmakers, Jeroen G. W. and Richard M. Shiffrin (1992),
“Models for Recall and Recognition,” in Annual Review of
Psychology, 43, 205-34.
Reicks, Marla, Chery Smith, Helen Henry, Kathy Reimer, Janine
Atwell, and Ruth Thomas (2003), “Use of the Think Aloud
Method to Examine Fruit and Vegetable Purchasing
Behaviors among Low-Income African American Women,”
in Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, 35 (3), 154-
63.
Russo, J. Edward, Eric J. Johnson, and Debra L. Stephens
Cognition, 17 (6), 759-69.
Wayfinding Tests, Strategies and Errors: An Exploratory
Field Study,” in Psychology & Marketing, 13 (3), 265-90.
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Despite the common assumption that the processes underlying consumer behavior are dynamic in nature (Bettman, Luce, and Payne 1998; Jacoby et al. 1994), most of the research is conducted using static methodological approaches (Jacoby, Johar, and Morrin 1998). This is especially noticeable for research at the point of sale and might be attributed to the lack of adequate process tracing techniques. Therefore, we examined a method for process tracing consumer cognition with regard to its value for consumer research at the point of sale.

For process tracing consumer cognition, we applied video-cued thought protocols (Silberer 2005). The core idea of this technique is to use a video of the shopping episode as a recall aid when assessing verbal reports on cognitions retrospectively. Assessing thoughts retrospectively should minimize reactivity, which is the main argument against applying thinking-aloud at the point of sale (cf. Russo, Johnson, and Stephens 1989). Moreover, the video should help to overcome the pitfalls of unaided retrospective reports such as forgetting and fabrication of thoughts (Silberer 2005). For analyzing consumers’ thoughts, we developed a system of categories which consists of various classes of thoughts referring to information processing, decision making, goal-directed behavior, orientation in the store, and artifacts produced by the method or setting of the study (e.g. Bettman et al. 1998; Büttner and Mau 2004; Carver & Scheier 2002; Jacoby et al. 1994; Nisbett and Wilson 1977; Titus & Everett 1996).

The first research question was to assess the validity of video-cued thought protocols by examining convergent and discriminant relationships between certain classes of thoughts and certain classes of observable behavior (Jacoby et al. 1978). Second, we wanted to assess the value of video-cued thought protocols for predicting the pivotal outcome of a shopping episode: whether a customer buys something or not. Furthermore, we wanted to analyze the interplay between consumers’ motivational state and information processing.

For the latter, we drew on the model of action phases and corresponding mind-sets (Gollwitzer 1996). According to the model, the process from wishes to desires can be segmented into different phases. In each of these phases, different cognitive activities are more dominant as a result of the different mind-sets of the individual. In our study, we distinguish between two groups of customers (purchasing goal vs. browsing goal) who are supposed to differ in their motivational state and, thus, the way they process information. On the basis of this assumption, we derived hypotheses on the differences between these two groups with regard to types of thoughts. We proposed that those who come to the store with the particular intention of buying something will express more thoughts related to orientation in the store, selecting alternatives, problems with goal achievement, and evaluating goal achievement. Browsing individuals were hypothesized to be more concerned with intentions, searching/perceiving alternatives, and evaluating alternatives.

One hundred twenty-eight visitors to a store for electronic and electrical goods participated in the study. At the entrance to the store, they were asked to participate and, if they agreed, followed and filmed during their visit to the store. Immediately afterwards, the video was presented on a laptop computer and participants were asked to verbalize the thoughts they remembered having during the shopping episode while the video ran. The resulting reports were coded using the system of categories. Assessment of inter-rater-consistency indicates acceptable reliability of the coding. Furthermore, behavioral data were coded from the videos with regard to certain types of action, such as touching products.

The correlations between classes of thoughts and classes of actions are mainly in accordance with convergent and discriminant validity. Testing differences between the two groups of customers with regard to the proportion of thoughts from the respective categories by t-tests yielded support for five of the seven hypotheses. Browsing individuals are more open-minded regarding information whereas customers with a particular purchase goal are more concerned with pursuing their goal. This is consistent with research on motivation and information processing (Gollwitzer 1996). These findings indicate that goals and resulting motivational states should be considered when studying consumer behavior at the point of sale because they affect customers’ way of information processing in the store.

Furthermore, we analyzed whether data on customers’ thoughts were able to predict whether individuals with a particular intention to purchase actually did buy or not. Logistic regression yielded a significant model with three predictors. Running the same procedure with behavioral data instead of cognitive data did not result in a significant model. This finding highlights the importance of process tracing consumer cognition at the point of sale.

From these results we conclude that applying process tracing in the field can contribute to a better understanding of consumer behavior at the point of sale and that video-cued thought protocols are suitable for this purpose.

REFERENCES


Mapping the Different Purposes for Integrating Off-line and On-line Data Sets in Discovery Oriented Consumer Research
Margaret K. Hogg, Lancaster University Management School, England
Pauline Maclaran, De Montfort University, England
Carolyn Folkman Curasi, Georgia State University, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

In this paper we show how qualitative off-line and on-line data sets can be integrated for discovery oriented consumer research. After identifying five purposes for integration in multi-method research designs, we illustrate these (triangulation; complementarity; development; initiation; and expansion) with findings from a study which combined in-depth interviews with on-line ethnography (netnography). In conclusion we present a generic framework for integrating offline and online methods for market research.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper we evaluate how qualitative off-line and on-line data sets can be integrated for a range of overlapping purposes linked to discovery oriented consumer research. We illustrate this with a worked example where on-line ethnography (netnography) was combined with more traditional off-line data collection methods to augment and strengthen an empirical investigation into ‘meaning-based dimensions of consumption behavior’ (Thompson, 1997, p. 439; Wells, 1993). We begin firstly by briefly synthesizing current debates about integration, identifying five overlapping purposes for multi-method research designs: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion (Greene et al., 1989, p. 255). Next, we draw on these five purposes to show how findings from offline and online datasets can be combined to generate enhanced insights and more nuanced understanding of consumer segments in discovery oriented market research. We illustrate our discussion with examples from an investigation of empty nest women which used netnography and offline in-depth interviews (Hogg, Curasi and Maclaran 2004). Finally, we propose a generic framework for integrated designs which combine offline and online research methods for discovery oriented market research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Multi-method research designs

Evaluating the soundness of research designs, and then assessing the subsequent trustworthiness of research findings generated from integrated data sets, remain central concerns for marketing researchers (Wells, 1993). Multi-method research designs have long been advocated in social science research (Campbell and Fiske, 1959; Jick, 1979) for increased confidence in research findings and the inferences drawn from data sets (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 232); and are regularly employed in interpretive research (e.g. Hakim, 1987, p. 144; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 230ff; Mason, 1996, p. 148-9; Miller, 1997, p. 25; Silverman, 2000, p. 99). A number of overlapping purposes have been identified for multi-method research designs, ranging from convergence to divergence i.e. triangulation, complementarity, initiation, development and expansion (Rossman and Wilson, 1985; Greene et al., 1989). “Triangulation... can be something other than scaling, reliability, and convergent validation. It can also capture a more complete, holistic, contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study” (Jick, 1979, p. 603). Integrating data sets is especially effective for discovery-oriented market research when the methods have been chosen to explore both ‘the structural aspects of the problem’ and the ‘essential elements of its meaning to those involved’ (Fielding and Fielding, 1986, p. 34).

Online Research and Netnography

Computer technology has the capacity to help market researchers and corporations better understand the behavior of customer segments both in cyberspace and in the traditional marketplace (Escobar, 1994; Hakken and Armstrong, 1997; Kozinets, 2002; Miller and Slater, 2000; Taylor, 1999); and represents an important opportunity for generating online data sets. Many methodological tools are currently being adapted to study consumers, cultures and communities on the WWW (Kozinets 1997, 1998, 2002). Netnography is an interpretive method for qualitative data collection which has been used to investigate consumer behavior in market segments through the use of the WWW (Kozinets, 2002). In this paper we report a study which combined data sets generated via offline in-depth interviews and online netnography (Kozinets, 1997, 1998, 2002) to examine a growing market segment.

Major demographic changes in Western society require increasing attention by market researchers, in order to understand the changing nature of market segments as the composition and economic ecology of families and households alters. For this study we concentrated on empty nest women because they represent a growing market segment of increasing importance, as the baby boom generation ages. Many women are experiencing the change in their mothering role as their children leave home, and the consequent impact on their market place behaviour.

We begin by describing the study of empty nest women (that is, women whose grown children have recently left home, Hogg, Curasi and Maclaran 2004). We show how our research investigation (a ‘between-methods design’, Denzin, 1978; Jick, 1979) took advantage of all five purposes of integration: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989). At the same time we also show how combining the different on-line and off-line data sets allowed us to access multiple perspectives as well as to strengthen the inferences which we drew from our interpretation of the findings from each data set. We then discuss the synergy achieved through our combined methods approach and illustrate how this enhances our understanding of consumer behavior market segments. Multiple methods allow a better understanding of the complexity inherent in many of the phenomena related to consumer behavior.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Illustration of Integrative (Offline/online) Research Design: Empty-nest women

We outline our methodology very briefly here, as it has been reported in considerable detail elsewhere (Hogg, Curasi and Maclaran 2004). The overall objective was to understand the
impact of the transition to the empty nest on women consumers. We used an interpretivist approach to explore the lived experience of women consumers in empty nest households (e.g. Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994; Barnett and Baruch, 1985; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio, 1989; DeVault, 1991; McMahon, 1995; Thompson, 1996); and to elicit these women’s experiences of identity (re-)construction during a period of role transition and role status change.

Our multi-method research design combined off-line in-depth face-to-face interviews with on-line ethnography (unobtrusive and participant observation of two empty-nester bulletin boards over a one and a half-year period, resulting in the downloading of five hundred postings for analysis; email interviews and online chats). The processes of data collection, analysis and literature review unfolded in a continuous process of iteration across and between on-line and off-line sites.

Method: First data set (offline). The offline in-person in-depth interviews were conducted in two phases over a period of six months with women in major conurbations in the north of England, Northern Ireland and on the East Coast, USA. We adopted a theoretical sampling approach (Miles and Huberman, 1994:28; Mason, 1996, p.93; Silverman, 2000, p.105ff) for recruiting informants, looking for ‘representativeness by purposefully’ choosing a sample that typifies the population, the theoretical category or the phenomenon to be studied’ (McMahon, 1995, p.34). We started with three interviews to develop an initial understanding of the phenomena. We then augmented our interview data set with eighteen additional in-person interviews, resulting in the final total of twenty-one in-depth interviews for the in-person offline interview data set. The interviews were conducted with women in their own homes and lasted between 30 minutes and two hours, averaging one hour in length. Our informants were well-educated, white, middle-class mothers. Some were full-time professional women; others had part-time work outside the home; and some were full-time mothers. 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. All the interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim, resulting in approximately 300 pages of data. The in-person interview data set was complemented with an electronically derived on-line data set collected via netnography (Kozinets, 1997, 2002).

Method: Second data set (online) ~ netnography. This second data set was collected via on-line bulletin boards; email interviews and on-line chats. The sites selected are specifically designed for women who are dealing with the day-to-day experiences of recently becoming empty nesters. One Empty Nest Bulletin Board was chosen as the initial research site because it was rich in the number of exchanges taking place. As the study progressed we expanded our on-line participation to a second on-line bulletin board. These bulletin boards provided excellent sites for us to learn more about the phenomenon of women in empty nest households. Data collected by participant observation allowed us to develop a better understanding of the experiences of empty nester women and how they negotiate this transition in their lives as expressed via cyberspace bulletin boards. Following research ethics suggested by other researchers involved in on-line ethnography (Sharf, 1999, p. 254; Schrum, 1995, p. 314), we announced our presence on the bulletin boards.

In conjunction with the postings we also used the on-line messaging facility on the second online site to conduct several on-line chats with community members. These were carried out on an informal and spontaneous basis, although we were always careful to declare our research agenda. Again, such chats gave us opportunities to ask more focused questions and to elaborate on some themes and consumption practices that rarely occurred during the normal course of postings. Email interviews confirmed the information obtained from the off-line interviews. However they also provided an opportunity to draw out the cyber informants on potentially interesting topics that had not been raised on the board but that had emerged in the off-line interviews.

Data analysis. Data collection, analysis and interpretation building progressed in an iterative and interrelated manner between the on-line and off-line environments until we were confident about our emerging understanding of the phenomenon (Spiggle 1994; Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Themes were compared within each data set; and then across each data set. Consensus was reached for each theme after discussion. The data was then coded into discrete parts (open coding), closely examined and compared for similarities and differences, with each code representing a particular aspect of the phenomenon under study. Then patterns were identified across the multiple sources of data to contextualize and integrate the themes. The final stage of the interpretive process used selective coding (identifying the core categories) to specify relationships and to move to a higher level of abstraction and what Arnould and Wallendorf (1994, p. 495) have described as the “empirical grounding for an etic understanding”. Our emerging interpretation iterated back and forth between the offline and online data sets and the literature (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

FINDINGS: THE PURPOSES OF INTEGRATION

We use our findings to demonstrate how our research took advantage of all five purposes of integration: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion (Green, Caracelli and Graham, 1989), identifying where the vignette was taken from (i.e. the off-line or on-line dataset).

Triangulation.

Triangulation of the on-line and off-line data sets allowed us to access and corroborate multiple perspectives (Patton, 2002, p.544) and disjunctures (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994, p.494); across respondents, data sources; researchers; and techniques (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 230-1) as well as to strengthen our confidence in the inferences we were able to draw from each data set. We noticed a great deal of consistency between many of the themes that emerged from the in-person interviews and many of the bulletin board postings. An important theme that we examined in the bulletin board data set was how difficult these empty nest mothers found it to adjust to their new status. Consistently, the online bulletin board conversations had much in common in experiences and in content with the in-person interview discussion of the individual adjustments that had to be made. However, the bulletin board data set reflected a greater number of informants as well as a greater number of perspectives. In addition, overall, the bulletin board participants provided greater evidence of difficulty in adjusting to this new life stage, thus, some disjunctures were noted as well. In a few cases our informants spoke of only minor difficulty negotiating this transition. However, many more of the women interviewees and all the bulletin board participants articulated difficulty dealing with this transition:

"Hello to all, Melissa here, one daughter, Sandy, age 19. Sandy married on July 7 and moved to England to live. …Needless to say—I crashed and burned. It has been 4 months and I am happy to say, I am having some good days, more good
days than bad. Between seeing a great doctor and some assistance from prozac, wellbutrin, and ambien, I am making my way back. I am hoping to be drug free soon.” (Empty Nest Bulletin Board)

The following informant was interviewed in-person. Although she says things have gotten much better for her, it is clear that this has been an incredibly difficult transition. Notice the consistency between this interview conducted in-person and the previous posting to a bulletin board:

“This year hasn’t been bad. It’s the second year. The first year was...The first year started about Christmas time of her senior year and her graduation from high school and it was just devastating for me...I mean, I stopped eating. I stopped sleeping. By the time she graduated from high school my parents were looking at my husband and going...(laughs) “Feed her, make her sleep” (laughs), because I looked horrible in the graduation pictures. Then 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)

Taken together, these two informants provide cogent evidence of just how difficult this transition can be for some of the empty nest women.

As a research site the empty nest community on the bulletin board had certain unique characteristics that contributed to our richer appreciation of the experiential aspects of this life stage. This particular group of respondents were still at the stage of grieving (“the personal experience of the loss” Worden, 1991, p. 34) and had not reached the stage of mourning (“the process which occurs after a loss” Worden, 1991, p. 34). This group of respondents seemed often to be women who were full-time mothers, for whom the mothering role was more salient (McCall and Simmons, 1978, p. 84, cited in McMahon, 1995, p. 19) which supports McMahon’s (1995, p. 19) observation that maternal identities appear less salient among women who are employed full-time.” In these ways we capitalized on the inherent strengths of both our on-line and off-line data collection methods to increase the trustworthiness of our emerging constructs and inquiry results.

Complementarity.

When multi-methods are used to seek complementarity the goal is to further elaborate, enhance, illustrate or clarify the findings from one method with the findings from the other method. We were able to elaborate on the data we collected through in-person interviews by applying interpretations to it from the data we collected on-line. Both through the volume of data we were able to collect and download from the bulletin boards and through the content of the postings, we were able to better understand the meanings and the structural issues, when comparing the findings from each data set.

Complementarity can be illustrated by our desire to better understand the subtle shift we initially felt might be occurring between the dichotomy of production and consumption by the empty nest mothers. Our informants spoke of enacting mothering through an emphasis on production-based tasks that seemed to dominate when children were in the home but their references after the children had moved out of the home seemed to shift to the enactment of mothering through more consumption-linked activities. Although we felt this might be evident in the data, with it occurring in a small number of in-person interviews, we wanted stronger support before accepting this as a key theme. By examining the data collected through bulletin board postings we found that there was strong evidence in that data set to support such a contention. This respondent illustrates how she uses consumption to enact her mothering role:

Did you all send your “kids” Halloween boxes? Daddy sent Mandy tons of M&M’s, or m-en’s as she always called them. We sent her four boxes in the past three weeks plus she got one from our church and her grandmother! (Empty Nest Bulletin Board)

This interviewee is also trying to traverse this transition to the empty nest. She describes the things she has purchased for her daughter:

I bought a new rug for her apartment, because we only bought one set and I figured she needed more...And I send her care packages. I send her a card, like once a week and in between I think I’ve sent her two or three care packages, no two. But I have some other things I like to buy for her when I see them, like last time I sent her a care package I sent her a CD and a magnet for her fridge and some jiffin pops…they’re like a kool-aidy stuff…just fun stuff…She loves getting real mail! She says e-mail is great fun and she hears from everybody, but...My mom will send her a card occasionally, sometimes with cash involved—she likes those...And it’s fun for me too. (In-person Interview)

Thus, there was an interesting pattern in the data identifying a behavioural shift from one where parents place the main emphasis on the labor within the home, with production-led tasks, to an emphasis on consumption-linked activities and purchases made in the form of groceries and gifts for the adult children (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995) during the role transition.

The nuanced differences between these two data sets provided additional clarity and illustration that would not have been possible without their use in combination. For example, firstly, the specificity of the bulletin board participants, who were largely housewives, compared with the mixture of professional women and housewives in the off-line data sets enhanced our understanding of this phenomenon. Secondly, the ‘group effect’ of the on-line discussions allowed us to capture a ‘conversation in progress’ without the self-impression management we felt was occurring on the part of our in-person interview participants. The in-person settings of our off-line interviews potentially created more formal contexts and possibly a stronger motivation for self impression management and the production of different self-representations by the participants (we return to these issues in more detail below). In these ways our on-line and off-line methods complemented each other to draw out more information about specific aspects of the research and increase the meaningfulness of our understanding of the data.

Development.

Development seeks to use the results from one method to develop or inform another method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as to provide greater insight in measurement decisions. For this study we were able to access a sample of respondents that otherwise would have been difficult to access. The on-line respondents gave us experiential insights, allowing us to listen to ‘conversations in progress’ on the Bulletin board as women shared their experiences
Initiation.

Initiation seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction and looks for new perspectives or frameworks, or the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from another. Unlike the in-depth off-line interviews, where there was only a little indication of the intensity of the emotions that could be experienced during this life stage, the postings to the bulletin board concentrated much more on emotional aspects of this transition. In learning about the experiential aspects, we were able to recast our off-line research questions in order to explore the emotional aspects of the transition phase in more depth. Many of our off-line informants seemed to gloss over the more painful emotional aspects of their transition and concentrated on the more practical aspect of ‘getting on with their lives’. Initially they tended to stress the more positive benefits of having more time for themselves, for their partners, for their jobs and for their hobbies. It was often difficult to elicit any deeper emotional response, although we all felt that there was some impression management on the part of our informants. By contrast, postings to the bulletin board concentrated more frequently, and in much more depth, on the emotional aspects of this transition. On the bulletin board it was commonplace for women to use expressions such as “being an emotional mess”, “feeling like it’s the end of the world”, “incessant crying”, and “fear in the pit of my stomach.” Most often these types of postings sought validation of their feelings within the larger community and sought reassurance that others could share such emotions, that what they were experiencing was ‘normal’.

This is an example of where an on-line data collection site allows researchers to capture the dialogue of the social exchanges as it takes place in a cyber-community, so that we were able to listen to the conversation without interrupting the flow of thoughts and feelings. The anonymity provided by the WWW bulletin board granted greater freedom for these women to discuss their feelings that is otherwise often not afforded a satisfactory outlet. In turn, this allowed our research team a unique and candid perspective, not often provided to researchers collecting data through other methods.

Again we were able to feed these insights back into our off-line interviews to draw informants on their emotional experiences and to recast some of our questions in light of our on-line results. For example, in the following exchange this woman begins to talk about her depression and reveal how empty she feels without her mother—siblings or partners. The more formal researcher/informant settings of the face-to-face interviews seemed to be less conducive to such disclosures. This possibly illustrated the different contexts in which the revelations were taking place, first of all the cyber community of empty nester women, compared with the research environment represented by the interviews (however informally they were conducted). Similarly on the bulletin board, women felt able to air reservations they had over relationships with husbands or partners. We were able to increase the scope of our investigation by following the threads of these extended discussions.

Expansion.

Expansion seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components. Expansion seeks to test and extend the boundaries of an investigation or theory. The emotional yet supportive, and relatively anonymous, context of the bulletin board meant that participants seemed happy to confide in each other about more personal aspects of various relationships. This frequently resulted in a confessional mode of communication. Such confessions and confidences concerned not only their relationships with their children but also those with their husbands or partners. From such discussions we learned how women were candidly appraising many aspects of themselves, evaluating their roles as mothers, career women and wives or partners. The more formal researcher/informant settings of the face-to-face interviews seemed to be less conducive to such disclosures. This possibly illustrated the different contexts in which the revelations were taking place, first of all the cyber community of empty nester women, compared with the research environment represented by the interviews (however informally they were conducted). Similarly on the bulletin board, women felt able to air reservations they had over relationships with husbands or partners. We were able to increase the scope of our investigation by following the threads of these extended discussions.

DISCUSSION: SYNERGY BETWEEN METHODS

Through careful comparison and interpretation both divergent and convergent elements can be combined in a “thick, multilayered, representation of market behavior” (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994, p. 501.) The synergy of methods allowed us to capture some important substantive insights into this group of consumers, linked to both meaning and structure (Fielding and Fielding, 1986). By tracking the processual aspects of these women’s experience, we can begin to identify the richer text which surrounds the socio-historical “conceptions of gender and motherhood that are particularly salient to this generation of babyboom women and support a number of thematic commonalities among their personalized consumption meanings” (Thompson, 1997, p. 449) and thus elicit the “many unarticulated layers of consumer meaning; (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994, p. 500), thereby contributing to the “meaning-based dimensions of consumption behavior” (Thompson, 1997, p. 439).

One important consumer behaviour insight from this study of empty nest women was the realization that they represent an important market segment characterized by heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. Different subgroups could be identified within
this segment that are related to a number of different intersections. Mothers’ identities are located at the intersection of a range of roles, characteristics and factors such as class and socio-economic status (including household income); demographic status (e.g. age); family status and composition (e.g. single parent families); ethnicity, race and culture; and stage of loss, grief and mourning. As McMahon (1995, p. 11-12) argues “No woman is only a woman (or mother)—she is socially located by race, class, age, sexuality…[all which] constitute the meanings and experiences of being female and of mothering.” The dynamically changing experiences of loss during this life stage differentiate the subgroups identified among this segment and supports arguments for understanding the diversity of women’s experience of the empty nest. The comprehension of the heterogeneity of this group of consumers has important implications for marketing managers. The relationship between consumption and identity for women who are mothers in empty nest households has to be understood as complex and contingent.

Research Design: generic framework

Finally, we propose a generic framework (Figure 1) for integrating offline and online research methods for discovery-oriented research. In so doing we extend earlier methodological research undertaken in on-line environments. In this framework the five purposes for multi-method research designs: triangulation, complementarity development, initiation, and expansion (Greene et al., 1989, p. 255; Rossman and Wilson, 1985) are linked to strategies for combining methods of data collection. Strategies for integrating offline and online methods can vary from simple to complex designs (Jick, 1979, p. 603). The simpler, symmetric comparative approach uses similar methods across the two environments (e.g. identical semi-structured interviews conducted in parallel almost simultaneously off-line and on-line). In contrast, the more complex research strategies employ an asymmetric, combinatory approach, often using different methods in the two environments (e.g. off-line in-depth interviews combined with on-line participant observation of bulletin boards, conducted either in parallel or serially). The research designs can range from simple, comparative and symmetric to complex, combinatory and asymmetric.

This framework (Figure 1) is different from previous research because it summarizes the different purposes and strategies that can be pursued in combining subjects, sites and methods across off-line and on-line environments. Using this framework the WWW can be seen as either a site (e.g. bulletin boards or chat rooms); or a text (e.g. websites) or an instrument (e.g. survey questionnaires embedded in websites) for data collection.

CONCLUSION

Using both off line and on-line data sets enabled us to develop a much richer comprehension of this increasingly important consumer segment, and a depth of understanding that would be difficult to replicate without the use of both on-line and off-line research. Both types of data sets strengthen the information gained from the other and each play different roles in the process of constructing an interpretation. Kozinets (2002, p.62) argues that: “marketing researchers wishing to generalize findings of a netnography of a
particular online group to other groups must apply careful evaluations of similarity and employ multiple methods of triangulation” (emphases added). The findings show how the integration of off-line with on-line data sets contributes a third approach (in addition to Arnould and Wallendorf 1994; and Thompson 1997) to discovery-oriented market research.

REFERENCES


McCall G. and Simmons, J. (1978), (Eds.), Identities & Interactions, New York: The Free Press.


Cultural Marketing and Consumer Research: Analytics of Cultural Practice
Johanna Moisander, Helsinki School of Economics, Finland
Anu Valtosen, University of Lapland, Finland

ABSTRACT
This paper outlines and discusses a discursive approach to cultural marketing and consumer research entitled Analytics of Cultural Practice (ACP), which draws mainly from the poststructuralist streams of cultural studies and interpretive marketing and consumer research. The analytic focus in ACP lies strictly on cultural structures and practices, not on the personalized cultural meanings, values and experience of individual members of culture. More specifically, marketplace phenomena are analyzed in terms of the interplay of everyday discursive practices and institutionalized or culturally standardized discourses. The paper also illustrates how the visual marketplace can be empirically addressed from this particular cultural perspective.

INTRODUCTION
Recently, in the field of marketing and consumer research there has been a growing interest in studying marketplace phenomena from different distinctively cultural perspectives. As a response to an alleged crisis of relevance in academic marketing research, alternative “interpretive” and “heretical” approaches to theorizing and empirical research have been proposed and discussed in an attempt to improve both the social and the practical pertinence of academic research. As a result, new academic journals have been established (e.g., Journal of Consumer Culture and Consumption Markets & Culture), and the number of scholarly articles published in the established mainstream journals focusing on cultural aspects of consumption and market phenomena has been growing steadily (see Arnould and Thompson 2005 for a review). Informed and inspired by recent theoretical and methodological developments in cultural studies, anthropology and sociology of consumption, this literature has typically focused on questions of community, identity, agency and change, emphasizing the contextual, historical, and geographically distinct cultural nature of knowledge. The most important cognitive goal that characterizes this orientation is, perhaps, the goal of gaining a better understanding of complex social behaviors, established on shared cultural meanings and social relations, and of the sociopolitical and cultural contingency of marketplace phenomena.

Many of the studies that seem to represent this orientation appear to be based on a “cultural studies framework” (Denzin 2001) of sort. Arnould and Thompson (2005) and Tapp (2005) have recently offered the term ‘Consumer Culture Theory’ (CCT) to capture the core theoretical interests and questions that define the new, still emerging research tradition. They characterize CCT as “a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings”. Acknowledging that the body of literature focusing on these relationships “represent a plurality of distinct theoretical approaches and research goals”, they argue that CCT scholars nevertheless “share a common theoretical orientation toward the study of cultural complexity that programatically links their respective research efforts”.

We largely agree with Arnould and Thompson and find their paper important, in many ways, for further development of the field. Here, however, we wish to call attention to the variety of paradigmatic, theoretical and analytical perspectives that the body of research they refer to entails. The emerging CCT is currently a heterogeneous field of research consisting of a range of different theoretical and methodological approaches, grounded on more or less different, often implicit and sometimes conflicting epistemological, ontological and methodological commitments (Arnold and Fischer 1994, Moisander 2001). Sometimes, moreover, this work does not appear to be particularly coherent in terms of the cognitive goals, values and philosophical commitments that guide theorizing and methodological choices (Thompson 2002, 143). We argue, therefore, that to support theoretically sophisticated research in the field (which also makes empirically well grounded research possible) there is a need to specify and outline a set of clear, philosophically coherent theoretical positions for cultural research on marketplace phenomena. This paper sets out to work towards that end.

As a distinct research approach, cultural marketing and consumer research constitutes itself at a number of theoretical and methodological levels, and thus takes somewhat different forms depending on the selections made at each level. We argue, therefore, that researchers need to explicitly specify these choices in order to be able to define the particular cultural approach that their study is based on.

Rather than insisting on philosophical purity of research, we wish to emphasize that all marketplace knowledge is perspectival, something that is always constructed from a particular perspective with particular interests (Arnold and Fisher 1994, Longino 2002). Therefore it would seem to be a good epistemic practice to explicitly deliberate on the perspective and the interests pursued. The paradigmatic assumptions, possible theoretical perspectives and epistemic virtues that inform and guide research practice need to be explicitly specified and submitted to inter-subjective evaluation and constructive critique within the research community (Longino 2002).

In this paper, we have chosen to work toward specifying and outlining only one of the many possible forms of cultural research on consumer behavior, which we call Analytics of Cultural Practice (ACP). It focuses on everyday consumption activities as cultural practices, made available, guided and constrained by historically specific, institutionalized or culturally standardized discourses or systems of representation (e.g., du Gay et al. 1997, Hall 1997, Woodward 1997). ACP draws significantly from the “Analytics of Interpretive Practice” proposed by Jaber Gubrium and James Holstein (2003) and also from Huber Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow’s (1983) analysis of Michel Foucault’s “interpretive analytics”. We however have chosen to refer to the perspective that we develop here as Analytics of Cultural Practice to emphasize that the analytic focus in this approach lies strictly on cultural practices—not on the personalized meanings, values and experience of individual members of culture. In the following sections we first discuss some of conceptual foundations and philosophical underpinnings of the approach, and then briefly outline the ways in which the visual marketplace may be empirically addressed from this particular perspective.

1This paper is based on our forthcoming book, Qualitative Marketing Research: A cultural approach, which will be published by Sage. We would like to thank the Finnish Foundation for Economic Education for financial support for this project.
ANALYTICS OF CULTURAL PRACTICE: CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS AND PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Analytic focus: interplay of discursive practices and cultural discourses

Influenced and informed particularly by the work of Gubrium and Holstein (2003), Hacking (2004), Miller (1997), ACP draws from two basic interpretive analytics for studying the cultural complexity of marketplace phenomena: (1) ethnomethodologically informed analysis of everyday discursive practices through which social reality is constructed and social order achieved within an existing institutional and cultural structure (e.g., Potter, 1996; Potter and Wetherell, 1987) and (2) analysis of culturally standardized or institutionalized discourses, which is based on more poststructuralist and Foucauldian ideas and considerations (e.g., Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983).

These two analytics may be viewed as two slightly different orientations toward the study of cultural practice and the workings of culture in the everyday life of its members. In the analysis of everyday discursive practices, the focus is particularly on the ways in which people make use of the available cultural categories, rationalities, visibilities (visual objects and spatial arrangements) and representations to make sense of their life and to achieve social order. It is emphasized that culture, and the rules, norms and values it involves, is not something that is merely imposed on people but something that people “do” and produce themselves in social interaction. The analysis of culturally standardized or institutionalized discourses, on the other hand, focuses primarily on the ways in which these cultural discourses and the networks of power/knowledge they entail come into being and are structured, and how they constitute the conditions of possibility for subjectivity and agency for the members of culture. It is emphasized that cultural discourses not only provide people with discursive resources but also guide and constrain meaning making and social action.

The methodological perspective we propose here is thus a discursive approach to cultural marketing and consumer research, and it is based on the assumption that social reality, what is real and meaningful for people, is culturally constructed. Cultural discourses and social reality are produced by people in social interaction but simultaneously these cultural discourses constitute the conditions of possibility for that cultural production of social reality. The relationship between cultural discourses and everyday practices of meaning making and construction of social reality is thus reflexive. They mutually constitute each other. In other words, accounts and descriptions of social reality constitute that reality in a particular cultural context while they are simultaneously shaped by that context. Cultural discourses and their everyday mediations must therefore be viewed as reflexively interwoven with talk and social interaction (Gubrium and Holstein 2003).

Consequently, ACP focuses on the *interplay*, not the synthesis, of discursive practices and cultural discourses. They can be viewed as parallel, complementary methodological approaches focusing on the interactional, institutional, and cultural factors of socially constituting discursive practices and institutionalized or culturally standardized discourses (Gubrium and Holstein 2003, Hacking 2004, Miller 1997). Moreover, ACP is not a theoretical framework in the traditional sense. It does not try to explain the state of matters in question or pose the question why individuals are doing and feeling the way they do. It rather aims to describe the ways in which individual experience is represented and thus rendered intelligible in text, talk and signifying practices. It is pre-theoretical in this sense (Gubrium and Holstein 2003).

Analytics of Cultural Practice and interpretive consumer research

Much of interpretive marketing and consumer research has tended to focus on the individual—the first-person-view of experience, personal meanings, or personalized cultural meanings—drawing largely from psychological theories of identity and phenomenological research methodology (Thompson 1997; Thompson et al. 1989). Existential-phenomenology for example, in the form that it has been introduced to marketing and consumer research, is characteristically psychological in nature. The research method suggested for the approach, the phenomenological interview, is based on Gestalt psychology and clinical practice, and it is claimed to be “perhaps the most powerful means of attaining an in-depth understanding of another person’s experiences” (Thompson et al. 1989, 138). In studies employing this perspective, experience is understood as a pattern that emerges in a cultural setting, in the context of “person-in-the-world”, but the research focus, nevertheless, remains mainly on the individual and his or her experience as described from a first-person-view. (Ibid. 137). In the more recent versions of this approach (Thompson 1997), there is a more central emphasis on the cultural narratives that consumers draw from when making sense of their life. But the analytical focus is still on the individual, e.g., his or her “sense of evolving self-identity” be it actual, ideal or undesired (Ibid. 448).

Hence, much of the evidence that phenomenologically oriented marketing scholars offer for the knowledge that they produce about consumption practices is the “evidence of experience”, as if experience were the originary point of explanation, a foundation upon which the analysis is to be based (Scott 1992). Compared with the prevalent logical-empiricist approach to research, focusing on the first-view experience of the consumer may sound plausible. What could be more authentic than a person’s own account of what he or she has lived through? It may be argued, however, that there is nothing particularly authentic in people’s lived experiences in the sense that the prevalent systems of representation bring about the conditions of possibility for those experiences. Experience is largely an effect of power/knowledge and discourse as we will explain later (when discussing subjectivity). Therefore, when experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject (the person who had the experience and the researcher who recounts it) becomes the bedrock of evidence upon which accounts of social reality are built, and critical questions about the constructed nature of experience are left aside (Scott 1992).

To avoid these epistemological problems, Analytics of Cultural Practice focuses on the discursive and socially constructed aspects consumption. It focuses on culture and cultural practices as texts and refrains from relying on the “knowing subject” and from trying to understand the intra-personal psychological constructs of individual consumers. In that sense, ACP is very different from the phenomenological-hermeneutic approaches to qualitative consumer research, which have been very popular among interpretive marketing scholars during the past twenty years. It is more in line with the critique of Douglas and Isherwood (1979) who highlight the thoroughly social and cultural nature of consumption, the “Liberatory postmodernism” of Firat and Venkatesh (1995), and the poststructuralist feminist critique of consumer research introduced by Bristor and Fischer (1993), which denies that objective knowledge can be obtained by experience and argues that it is socially constructed by historically, socially, and politically shaped discourses (Ibid. 524).

Conceptual and methodological foundations

Much like contemporary cultural studies and the work of Gubrium and Holstein (2003: 226-27), the methodological per-
suspicion (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, xxii), which is often based
on transcendental phenomenologists’ attempt to understand people as meaning-giving
subjects and locate meaning in the social practices and literary texts that human beings produce (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983; Foucault 1980, 1983). From Heidegger’s (1962) phenomenology it adopts the idea that human subjects are formed by the historical cultural practices in which they develop. These practices form a background which can never be completely explicit, and so cannot be understood in terms of the beliefs of a meaning giving subject.

This is also in line with Althusser (1971) who argued that ideology constitutes the very subjectivity of individuals, irrespective of their own understanding of it—whether or not we believe in the unconscious which he posited as conceptually linked with ideology. ‘Ideology’ is not conceptualized as a distortion of reality or a false consciousness, but as a conceptual framework through which people interpret, make sense of, experience and ‘live’ the material conditions of their everyday life. Ideology forms and shapes our consciousness of reality, operating not explicitly but implicitly in practices, structures, and images people take for granted. For Althusser, consequently, the notion of an essential self disappears as fiction, as something that is not possible. Self is a social being who possesses socially produced sense of identity, i.e., subjectivity. It can be contradictory, and it can change within different situations and in response to different kinds of address (Turner 1990). As Stuart Hall (1996, 226) puts it:

“We can no longer conceive of the ‘individual’ in terms of a whole, centered, stable and completed ego or autonomous, rational ‘self’. The ‘self’ is conceptualized as more fragmented and incomplete, composed of multiple ‘selves’ or identities in relation to the different social worlds we inhabit, something with a history, ‘produced’, in process. The ‘subject’ is differently placed or positioned by different discourses and practices.”

Hence, this approach to cultural marketing and consumer research can be distinguished from the (traditional) interpretivist stances emphasizing “empathic identification” (Schwandt 2003, 296) that abound in the field of sociology, anthropology and interpretive marketing and consumer research. Such studies are typically concerned with personal structures of meanings and thus aim to get inside people’s head to understand what they are up to in terms of motives, beliefs, desires, and thoughts. Scholars employing these phenomenological or naturalistic methods claim to be able to produce correct, valid, representations of action and its meaning using particular procedures of ‘understanding’ as a method. With Atkinson and Silverman (1997) and many others, however, we maintain that it is not possible.

Consequently, ACP is in clear counter position with the culturalist paradigm of cultural studies (Hall 1980, van Loon 2001), which gives a pivotal role to “lived-experience” in cultural analysis, reading structures of social relations and cultural practice in terms of how they are lived and experienced. In ACP, experience has no special epistemic value but is rather analyzed as the effect of power/knowledge and discursive (and material) practice (e.g., Foucault 1980).

Nevertheless, ACP is sensitive to the dual concerns often read from Marx’s well-known adage: people make their own history but not in the conditions of their own making. On the one hand, it posits an active subject, who is actively implicated in the production of social order, e.g., “doing” social life, concretely constructing and sustaining social entities such as gender, race, family, and the self. Rather than simply playing out moral directives people are also seen to actively use them to give their world a sense of orderliness. (Gubrium and Holstein 2003, 215, 218-219.) On the other hand, ACP is also conscious of the many material and discursive constraints of choice and limited available possibilities that people are...
dealing with. As Hacking (2004, 287) has pointed out, it is important to analyze the ways in which the space of possible and actual action is determined not just by physical and social barriers and opportunities, but also by the way in which we conceptualize and realize who we are and what we may be.

It is emphasized that at a given place and time, only some possible ways of acting and being are thinkable and intelligible. Others are not open, not because of physical and social (normative) constraints or limitations but because they do not make sense. Hence, “power” lies in the articulation of discursive forms of social life as such, not only in the application of particular resources by some to affect the lives of others (Gubrium and Holstein 2003, Foucault 1980, 1983).

Therefore, ACP attends to the reflexivity of discourse. It focuses on the ways in which discourse, the prevalent system of representation (Hall 1997) or the matrix of understanding (Butler 1990) in a particular context is both constitutive and meaningfully descriptive of the world and its subjects. It also analyzes the ways in which people’s and groups of people’s accounts of settings constitute those settings while they are simultaneously being shaped by the context they constitute. In other words, social order and its practical realities are taken to be reflexive. Accordingly, ACP sets out to investigate how these conditions and structures that guide, constrain and enable action emerge and are produced, reproduced, contested and transformed both in historical and cultural processes as well as in everyday social interaction.

Next, we shall discuss how Analytics of Cultural Practice can be employed in empirical consumer research by taking an example from the study of visual (consumer) culture.

**ANALYTICS OF CULTURAL PRACTICE AND VISUAL CONSUMER CULTURE**

In Analytics of Cultural Practice, the meanings of visual images and visibilities (visual objects and spatial arrangements) are not studied as such but as keys to a fuller understanding of the culture in which they are embedded. In line with the basic assumptions of the approach, the visual is investigated as something that simultaneously reflects and contributes to the production, reproduction and transformation of consumer culture.

While the term, ‘visual culture’, is often used to refer to the nature of present-day culture as primarily visual, or to the particular segment of that culture that is visual, we use the term to refer to everything we see or may visualize. Visual culture is concerned not only with visual images such as paintings, photographs and movies but also with various sorts of other visibilities, such as visible spatial arrangements and material artifacts that communicate through visual means. From this vantage point, visual inquiry is no longer the study of the image, but rather the study of the seen and observable (Emmison and Smith 2002, ix). For cultural consumer research, therefore, there is a whole range of visuals (things and qualities that appeal to the sense of sight) available for investigation, as the study of Peñaloza (1998) on Nike Town, for example, shows.

Hence, the focus, in ACP, is on the ways in which the various spaces of the marketplace are visual and how they are also consumed visually. The importance of the visual-spacial relation becomes evident if we consider companies such as Nike that have developed fastidiously designed, highly interactive product showcases with a dramaturgical presentation (Peñaloza 1998). In these sorts of consumption sites visuals may play diverse roles in enabling and constructing particular consumption experiences, part of which come from looking at goods, walking around, seeing and being seen. These sorts of spaces are purposively arranged, designed and displayed to throw off meanings, such as heroic stories of athletics, and in doing so, they also bear the imprint of society and culture.

How to analyze visibilities and visual environments then? As we have discussed, ACP is concerned with the interplay of cultural discourses and discursive practices, focusing on what discourses are played out in particular contexts and how they are played out. The process of analysis, therefore, moves back and forth between these dimensions by means of analytic bracketing (Gurium and Holstein 2003, 234-36). At one moment, the researcher tries to be indifferent to the discursive structures of everyday life so as to be able to document the ways in which these structures are produced through discursive practice. Then, in the next analytical move, the researcher temporarily defers, or “brackets”—but not forgets—her or his interest in the practices to focus primarily on the structures. The principle of bracketing, in this context, thus refers to an act of temporarily suspending ontological judgments about the nature and essence of phenomena so that the researcher can focus on the ways in which they are discursively constructed. The idea in analytic bracketing, in other words, is to oscillate indifference to these realities of everyday life.

To illustrate, studying a space such as a shopping mall from this perspective means, first of all, that the mall is understood as a textual construct and shopping as a cultural form interrelated with other cultural forms, representations and practices that make up a whole way of life. It also means that attention is focused on cultural structures (instead of trying to understand how people experience the visual environment) and to structures-in-use, in particular (Frow and Morris 2000, 326). In practice, the task is to identify the sorts of discourses that are present in the context of a mall and how they are practiced and displayed in the everyday use and management of the mall space. For instance, how certain economic discourses are practiced in the ways in which the mall is managed or in the ways in which pricing strategies are implemented. Or, how particular aesthetic discourses are practiced through particular product displays, uses of colors and layout. The focus of attention, then, is on the interplay of these cultural discourses and discursive practices in the empirical context of the mall.

Such an analysis acknowledges that this interplay is not neutral or innocent but political in complex ways. Therefore, the fields of power in which the cultural discourses and discursive practices construct the conditions of possibility for action in the mall is also analyzed, focusing e.g., on zoning permits, the micropolitics of corporeal discipline, or gender-specific targeting and display of products.

Methodically there are several options to conduct this sort of analysis. The researcher may conduct an ethnographic study, for instance, and immerse into the life a particular mall for a period of time, obtaining data through observation and photography (Pink 2001). She or he may also use existing empirical materials, such as architectural drawings of the mall, advertising materials, or managerial documents such as memos of meetings of personnel, or ask consumers to produce visuals (see e.g. Belk, Ger and Askegaard 2003).

In conducting such a visual inquiry, the researcher may use various techniques of analysis, creatively applying any appropriate theoretical constructs as analytic tools that may be of help in capturing the visual phenomenon under study. Semiotics is one potential source but many other disciplines, such as art history and anthropology, may also offer appropriate tools for visual analysis (see e.g. Schroeder and Borgerson 1998). The work of Mary Douglas ([1966] 2002), for instance, provides an interesting viewpoint to the study of visual culture by drawing attention to what is invisible, i.e., to those elements and objects that are hidden from the public view or put in the backstage areas. Attention could be paid,
for example, to rooms associated with animal bodily functions, toilets and baby changing rooms, or product displays that are more or less hidden in a mall. From this conceptual perspective, one could to incite people to start looking for different understanding of the cultural complexity of the marketplace.

This sort of cultural knowledge of the marketplace is crucial also for consumer organizations and policy-makers, considering the all-pervasive and constitutive role of marketing and consumption in contemporary western market economies. The struggles between marketers and consumers are not only about what is supplied in the market and at what price, but also about the acceptable and desirable modes of being (see e.g., Miller and Rose 1997). Therefore, it would seem to be important to critically analyze the roles and positions that different market actors take and are given in the relations of power involved in processes and practices of consumption and production (see e.g., Peñaloza 1994).

On the whole, in analyzing cultural discourses and discursive practices, ACP provides a basis for critically challenging the representational security of taken-for-granted realities. Elaborating on the constitutive processes that produce and sustain particular realities, it cautions people to remember that the everyday realities of our lives are realities that we do (Gubrium and Holstein 2003). As Hacking (1999) has argued, the point in making these sorts of claims is primarily to raise consciousness. ACP reminds us that social facts and their meanings are not fixed, inevitable, and ‘natural’. Rather, they are products of a history of social events and forces, all of which could have been different. It is hoped that this will encourage—in a sense liberate, as Hacking argues—people to question the status quo; to incite people to start looking for different alternative ways of viewing the world, representing themselves and others, and maybe also to contest or negotiate undesired stereotypical, culturally shared meanings.

REFERENCES

CONCLUSION
To conclude, we briefly discuss the practical and theoretical relevance of Analytics of Cultural Practice for marketing and consumer research. We see the relevance of ACP primarily in its ability to participate in the ongoing cultural dialogues by providing people with new opportunities to make sense of the world around them. It can provide firms and marketers as well consumers, consumer organizations and consumer policy-makers with new conceptual tools and a set and methods for gaining a better understanding of the cultural complexity of the marketplace.

For marketers, the cultural knowledge of the marketplace that ACP provides is of crucial importance because it enables them, as recent examples show (Holt 2003), to design products and services that make sense in and add value to the everyday life of their customers, and thus helps them to build and manage strong and appealing brands. It also helps them to critically reflect on their roles in shaping possible courses of action in the market, and in constituting particular modes of being for people.

This sort of cultural knowledge of the marketplace is crucial also for consumer organizations and policy-makers, considering the all-pervasive and constitutive role of marketing and consumption in contemporary western market economies. The struggles between marketers and consumers are not only about what is supplied in the market and at what price, but also about the acceptable and desirable modes of being (see e.g., Miller and Rose 1997). Therefore, it would seem to be important to critically analyze the roles and positions that different market actors take and are given in the relations of power involved in processes and practices of consumption and production (see e.g., Peñaloza 1994).

On the whole, in analyzing cultural discourses and discursive practices, ACP provides a basis for critically challenging the representational security of taken-for-granted realities. Elaborating on the constitutive processes that produce and sustain particular realities, it cautions people to remember that the everyday realities of our lives are realities that we do (Gubrium and Holstein 2003). As Hacking (1999) has argued, the point in making these sorts of claims is primarily to raise consciousness. ACP reminds us that social facts and their meanings are not fixed, inevitable, and ‘natural’. Rather, they are products of a history of social events and forces, all of which could have been different. It is hoped that this will encourage—in a sense liberate, as Hacking argues—people to question the status quo; to incite people to start looking for different alternative ways of viewing the world, representing themselves and others, and maybe also to contest or negotiate undesired stereotypical, culturally shared meanings.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

In this paper, we propose an analytical framework for the investigation of consumers’ lived experience of identity related consumption in stable and transitional phases. The framework integrates the ideas (1) that objects can support the consumer’s identity construction because of their ‘signal’ value-or because of their potential to provide the consumer with a certain ‘experience’ of self, (2) that these meanings can reside in a ‘common’ domain-or in a more ‘private’ domain, and (3) that these meanings can be vehicles for the ongoing ‘maintenance’ as well as ‘acquisition’ or ‘disposition’ of important life roles.

INTRODUCTION

Ever since 1959, when Levy’s seminal paper “Symbols for sale” entered the arena of marketing research, attention has been given to the symbolic virtues of consumption products. According to Levy, products are not only bought for what they do, but also for what they mean (Levy, 1959). Two decades later, Levy’s assumption was revived at a conference on symbolic consumer behaviour (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1981), which set the scene for the emergent discipline labelled the interpretive consumer research. Interpretive consumer research was interdisciplinary and holistic in nature and gave special attention to context, culture and symbolic meanings (Belk, 1995). In the wake of this discipline, the link between symbolic consumption and identity construction became one of many focus areas and has so far resulted in extensive theoretical insights and empirical evidence.

The purpose of this paper is to extract certain aspects of the rich body of research on the topic of symbolic consumption and identity construction into a comprehensive analytical framework. The framework will focus on how the consumer may encounter identity construction through consumption and give special attention to the rather new body of literature on symbolic consumption and identity transition. Accordingly, the framework will be able to account for one of the key characteristics of the late-modern consumer, which is the consumer’s ever-changing identity.

In the following, the presentation of the framework will be executed in two different steps. First, we will briefly review the body of literature covering relevant aspects of symbolic consumption and identity construction applicable to relatively stable life role phases. Subsequently, we will integrate the concepts of role separation and role transition into this framework in order to make it applicable to transitional life role phases and possibly radical changes in consumption practice and consumer identity too.

SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

From the point of view of the consumer, we take identity to be the answer to the question: “Who am I?” (cf. Thomsen, 2001a/b, Weigert et al., 1986). Following a social constructivist framework, the answer to this question can be conceptualised as a result of an ongoing symbolic interaction between the individual and society (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Weigert et al., 1986; Gergen, 1997). Thus, identity is negotiated and may have many faces (Gergen, 1995). These faces—that is the different answers to the identity question—must be meaningful and somewhat typical to be intelligible (Weigert et al., 1986).

A primary means of symbolic interaction is consumption. This means that consumption has communicative aspects. An extensive body of interpretive consumer research has focused on these aspects of consumption and documented that consumption objects and consumption practices1 are charged with symbolic meanings that may play a part in the construction of the consumer’s identity (e.g. Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Solomon, 1983; McCracken, 1986; Belk, 1988; Richins, 1994; Kleine et al., 1995; Thompson and Hirschman, 1995; Askegaard and Firat, 1996; Thompson and Haytko, 1997; Holt, 1995/1997/2002; Murray, 2002). Each of these works contributes to a comprehensive picture of how consumption and consumption meanings may contribute to the consumer’s identity construction. In the following, these aspects will be summed up and illustrated analogous to a framework developed for the analysis of consumer practice in the field of transportation (Thomsen, 2001a/b).

The choice of a certain consumption object can be a signal source for the construction of identity by saying something about or to the consumer (Belk, 1988; Solomon, 1983; McCracken, 1986). Moreover, the choice of a consumption object may be an experiential source for the construction of identity by giving the consumer a certain feeling about himself as a person (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Askegaard and Firat, 1996). This leads us to a distinction between the ‘signal’ value and the ‘experiential’ value of a consumer good.

Also, we may distinguish between—what we will call—the ‘private’ and the ‘common’ symbolic meaning of consumer products (Richins, 1994; Holt, 1995). A private symbolic meaning is ideographic and less institutionalised than the common symbolic meaning of products. A common symbolic meaning of a product, on the other hand, is part of a culture’s common knowledge like, for instance, some consumption stereotypes. Still, any private meaning is embedded in the common symbolic universe that is shared by the consumer culture. According to Thompson and Haytko (1997: p. 38), dominant discourses—in the sense of offering a conventional or preferred reading of cultural events—as well as more marginal discourses all exist as possible narratives from which consumers can construct an understanding of everyday life.

Whether or not the consumer may choose freely between these marginal/private and dominant/common consumption meanings is frequently discussed. Thompson and Hirschman (1995) argue that identity selection by the post-modern consumer is “an optimistic theoretical construction”. A free selection of meanings—and thus identities—is a utopia. However, according to Murray (2002), this is but one of two possible perspectives. From a sign experimentation perspective, the consumer may “have free reign in the play of signs to piece together a collage of meanings that expresses the desired symbolic statements”. The ‘sign domination’ perspective, on the other hand, eliminates this emphasis on agency in favour of structural processes. The framework suggested here acknowledges the concept of agency, while recognizing that this agency is embedded in certain structural imperatives. As a consequence, the symbolic meaning attached to products by the consumer are expected to be of both private origin and structurally guided. The consumer may thus

---

1In the remains of the paper any reference to consumption objects will cover both objects and practices.
not only express the meaning of consumption in easily recognizable common stereotypes, but also in more marginal private symbols.

Combining the distinctions between ‘signal’ versus ‘experience’ and ‘private’ versus ‘common’ as described above, a consumer may encounter identity through symbolic consumption in the ways depicted in figure 1 (cf. Thomsen, 2001b).

The above-illustrated four categories will be briefly described below. The categories are not mutually exclusive since a product can add to the consumer’s construction of identity in more ways than one and at the same time (cf. Holt, 1995). The overlapping circles illustrate this point. Even so, from an analytical point of view, the distinctions made are important in order to avoid focusing on the perhaps most obvious source of identity construction that objects may carry, which is their common signal value. While the commonly shared cultural meaning of consumption objects—such as consumption stereotypes—are widely recognized to have implications for consumer identity, the private and experiential meanings of consumption are more easily overlooked.

A) Common signal. Here, the consumer ascribes a common communicative meaning to the consumption object. The consumer (re)produces a typified and commonly shared meaning of consumption. Consuming a certain object tells a story about the consumer that will be understood in much the same way by himself according to experiential meanings of the consumer product according to his own understanding of it (cf. Thomsen, 2001b).

B) Private signal. In this case, the consumer ascribes an idiosyncratic communicative meaning to the consumption object. The consumption communicates something to the individual. Through auto-communication, the private symbolic meaning of the consumption object can add to the consumer’s sense of self (Belk, 1988; Solomon, 1983; McCracken, 1986).

C) Common experience. A common experience of consumer products is based on the consumers’ general evaluation of the consumption object. This evaluation is embedded in the consumer culture’s norms, history and conventions (Holt, 1995). Here, the consumer experiences himself according to experiential meanings of a consumption object commonly agreed on.

D) Private experience. Here, the consumer ascribes an idiosyncratic experiential meaning to consumer products. The consumer’s aesthetic, emotional or sensual reaction to the consumption object can be both positive and negative (Holt, 1995) and bring about a certain sense of self (Askegaard & Fírat, 1996).

The theoretical framework described above illustrates how consumption can be thought to add to the consumer’s identity construction. Examples of these types of identity construction through consumption will follow in the next section. It is worth mentioning, however, that non-consuming may add to the consumer’s identity construction in much the same way. In the age of reflexive consumerism, expressed as a dislike of certain products and a distancing from certain values of consumer culture, may be equally important sources of identity construction (Kleine et al., 1995; Douglas, 1996; Holt, 2002).

Finally, as noted earlier, a key characteristic of the late-modern consumer is the consumer’s ever-changing identity. Since the above-presented framework is based on a constructivist paradigm, by nature it is adaptable to the notion of identity change. As a further consequence of its constructivist origin, it is open to the notion that a perfectly healthy modern consumer has many faces and may embody several identities at the same time (Gergen, 1995). However fluid, the plasticity of self manifests itself in somewhat fixed and recognizable shapes of identities during the individual’s life course (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). These identities may however change in a radical way during certain life stages and rites of passage and that consumption can play an important part in these transitional phases. The next section will address these issues.

SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION AND PERSONAL TRANSITIONS

Since Schouten’s (1991) seminal article on the role of cosmetic surgery as a marker of important personal transitions, there has been a moderate but steady interest in the complex relationship between symbolic consumption and personal role transitions. Among the personal role transitions that have received attention, we find the transition of going away to college (Noble & Walker 1997), the
transitions into motherhood (e.g. Fischer & Gainer 1993; Jennings & O’Malley 2003), women’s transition into the empty nest stage (e.g. Hogg, Maclaran & Curasi, 2003; Curasi, Hogg & Maclaran, 2001; Olsen, 1999), and end-of-life dispositions of possessions (Arnould et al. 2004).

In most of this literature, a central idea is that life status changes involve not only a movement into a new role, but also a movement away from a previous role, and that these movements are marked symbolically through consumption behaviour. Thus, entering a role is marked symbolically by the acquisition of new products or activities (Noble & Walker 1997), while leaving a role is marked symbolically by disposing of old possessions and practices that relate to the old role (Young 1991; Adelman 1992; Price et al. 2004).

This central idea has its roots with van Gennep and his classic work on ‘rites of passage’ (van Gennep, 1960). Van Gennep contends that important life transitions, e.g. the birth of the first child or the death of a spouse, usually comprise three distinct phases. First there is ‘separation’, where a person seeks to dispose of a previous role or identity. Then there is ‘transition’ where the person seeks to adapt to and create a new role or identity. And finally there is ‘incorporation’, where the person integrates the new role or status into the self.

In primal societies, culturally prescribed rituals, the so-called rites of passage, would support the individual during his role transition. However, in a modernized secular world, people often lack such supportive rites. They are more often than not left on their own to cope with the difficulties of transition and the ambiguities of self-concepts. On this background, Schouten (1991) develops the idea that people who are in the process of a role transition are likely to employ the symbols and activities made available to them by our consumer culture to create their own personal rite of passage.

As previously suggested, the idea that life role transitions may be marked symbolically through consumption has been well developed. But what is less clear in this literature is that the symbolic meanings differ in nature. When a pregnant woman decides to give up going to pubs in order to be seen as a responsible person by others (cf. Jennings & O’Malley 2003), the symbolic meaning resides in an institutionalised understanding of how a good mother behaves. But when a woman gives her car to her brother, because it contains too many bad memories of her rebel youth and therefore invalidates her sense of being adult (cf. Young 1991), the act of disposition derives its symbolic meaning from a very private resource; that is, the woman’s specific experiences with that car.

Thus, to develop a tool for analysing the symbolic meanings of transition-related consumption in more detail than has been the case hitherto, we propose to integrate the concepts of role transition described in this section into the framework for analysing symbolic consumption described in the previous section. We thus suggest that symbolic consumption may support life role transitions in four different ways: that is, due to its value as a ‘signal’ versus an ‘experience’ and its meaning residing in a ‘private’ versus a ‘common’ realm.

In table 1, we present the four categories of identity related symbolic consumption and our proposed equivalents for the process of separating oneself from a previous role and for the process of approaching a new role.

The table illustrates the kinds of identity-related meanings consumption can take on during ‘role maintenance’, ‘role acquisition’, and ‘role disposition’. The meanings that consumption takes on are dependent on how the consumer encounters the consumption object or consumption practice. Therefore, the lived meanings are only accessible to the researcher through the consumers’ expressions of their encounter with consumption objects in stable and transitional phases.
transitional phases. Examples of such encounters are illustrated below the table.

The Maintenance of Identity: The Example of Being a Man

Common Signal Value. A man may state that wearing clothes of masculine colours and patterns is important to him, and that wearing a shirt with pink flowers, for example, may communicate wrong ideas about his gender identity and his sexual orientation to others. Thus, he expresses an expectation that others ascribe the same meaning to certain styles and colours of clothing as he does. In this case, the meaning of his clothes can be said to take on a ‘signal’ value, since they are supposed to communicate something about him and they reside in the ‘common’ domain.

Private Signal Value. A man may also report that he perceives his hairstyle to be masculine since it resembles the hairstyle of his late father, while he could not see himself with a fancier, more modern hairstyle. This selection of hairstyle does not rest on the perceptions of others, but is a response to how he sees himself based on his own life history. The meaning he ascribes to his hairstyle can be said to take on a ‘signal’ value, since it tells a story, but it is located in the ‘private’ domain, as others would not easily recognize this meaning.

Common Experiential Value. A man may explain how riding his motorcycle with his buddies makes him feel like a man and how it is an emotional experience to him. He may express the expectation that this experience is easily understood and recognized by others. In this example, we would say that the symbolic meaning of consuming a motorcycle has an ‘experiential’ value, since it adds to his sense of self and that this meaning resides in the ‘common’ domain—as he believes motorcycling to be a particularly masculine enterprise in his consumer culture.

Private Experiential Value. A man may tell a story about having tried on some new clothing style that otherwise sent the right signals about his identity. But trying on the new clothes, he may have encountered a physical feeling of discomfort, a feeling that this is ‘just not me’, and thus rejected them. Such meanings we would categorize as ‘experiential’, since they refer to how he senses himself, but since the experience cannot be traced by anybody else than himself we would say that it resides in the ‘private’ domain.

The Approach of a New Life Role: The Example of Becoming a Mother

Common Signal Value. A mother-to-be may state that she looks forward to the first strolls with her baby in the pram, since this to her would be an activity that would show the rest of the world that she is now a mother. In her eyes, this may be the obvious way to be recognized by others as a mother or parent. In this case, we would say the woman ascribes a ‘signal’ value to the pram, and this meaning resides in the ‘common’ domain, since she believes this signal to be recognized by other people.

Private Signal Value. A woman may report that as part of her transition into motherhood she has reconfigured her wardrobe, not as much in response to the perceptions of others, but more in response to how she sees herself. She may report not being able to connect her previous dressing style with her new status as a mother, but at the same time she may express awareness that this is an idea of her own that has less to do with how other people would see her. In this case, we would say that she ascribes ‘signal’ meanings to her wardrobe, but that these meanings are located in the ‘private’ domain, since she seems to be communicating primarily with herself rather than her social surroundings.

Common Experiential Value. The pregnant woman may report that she is carrying out a number of activities that prepare her mentally for the upcoming family extension, for example decorating the nursery or cleaning the house. She may report that these activities provide her with a feeling of getting closer to the actual state of motherhood. And she may refer to these activities as part of her nesting instinct, an instinct she may consider commonly known and which she believes that almost any pregnant woman will experience. In this case, the meaning of her consumption activities can be said to take on an ‘experiential’ value that resides in the ‘common’ domain.

Private Experiential Value. The newly hatched mother may tell a story about experiencing a sense of nostalgia and security when using the same brand of lotion for her baby as her own mother did. It may provide her with a feeling of doing the right thing for her baby and thus support her in approaching the new role as a mother. She may express awareness that others would attach very different meanings to this lotion brand, for example that it was old-fashioned. In this example, we would say that the consumption meaning of the product has an ‘experiential’ value—it makes her feel a certain way—and that this meaning is a ‘private’ one—she does not expect anybody else to have the same experience she has.

The Disposal of a Previous Life Role: The Example of Divorcing

Common Signal Value. A newly divorced woman may report that she has taken off her wedding ring. She may also relate that she has disposed of the door sign with both her and her ex-husband’s names on it. Insofar as the woman expresses a belief that these activities are commonly recognized ways of communicating to the social surroundings that her life role status has changed and that she is no longer somebody’s wife, she thus ascribes a ‘signal’ value to these activities belonging to the ‘common’ domain.

Private Signal Value. The newly divorced woman may report that she has stopped buying some of the brands that she and her ex-husband used to purchase for their shared household. They have come to represent him and their life together and she may express a need of telling herself a new and different story. The woman is communicating with herself, and we would say that the ‘signal’ value she ascribes to the brands in question is ‘private’ due its specific reference to her life with her ex-husband.

Common Experiential Value. The divorced woman may quit former consumption practices that are normally linked to married life in her consumer culture; for instance regular cooking or grocery shopping. Giving up these activities may have an emotional aspect and provide her with a feeling of freedom, a feeling of finishing up a stage in her life. She may state that she considers giving up former practices as a normal way of coping with a divorce. Thus, we would say that the meaning of these activities takes on ‘experiential’ values that are considered to reside in the ‘common’ domain of symbolic meanings.

Private Experiential Value. The divorced woman may report that she has made a great effort to tidy up and clean the house, getting into all its corners, and that this activity felt like removing the presence of her ex-husband. She may express the belief that others might find her feelings silly and that they would ascribe very different meanings to the very same activities. We would say they carry ‘experiential’ meanings, but due to their particularity they are ‘private’.

Discussion

Since the framework focuses on the lived meaning of consumption objects on identity construction, the ordering of consumption meanings in the above illustrated categories rest entirely on the way consumers encounter the consumption objects and practices. Also, the same consumption object may carry several consumption meanings and thus support identity construction in multiple ways. The framework’s strength, we believe, resides in
highlighting the point that consumption may support an identity in multiple ways—other than through the well-known common symbolic values of, for example, consumption stereotypes.

In our view, at least two types of projects could benefit from the employment of the framework. One type of research projects would be those focusing on the issue of identity—whether it is the ongoing identity construction or more radical life role transitions. One point of departure could be a specific group of consumers, for example young people moving away from home or women in the transition into motherhood. The challenge here is to investigate how specific identity issues and role transitions are supported by the symbolic meanings of various products and activities.

Another type of research may focus on a specific product or product category—with the purpose of establishing the various identity-related meanings that are attached to this very product. The framework invites a focus on the acquisition/disposition of products or activities that are particularly prevalent in transitional phases, for example the acquisition of a driver’s license or the acquisition and usage of prams.

Whatever the focus of the research, it is the lived experience of the consumer that is central for the analysis proposed in the framework presented here. Although some consumption objects are obviously spun into tight nets of commonly shared symbolic meanings, such as for instance a wedding ring, these meanings are not necessarily prevalent in the consumer’s understanding of the object and related self. Different and unexpected meanings of consumption goods may exist. Therefore any research applying the presented framework must rely on consumers’ own expressions of consumption meanings acquired by means of, for instance, written accounts or oral statements.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to propose a framework for analysing the lived experience of consumers’ identity-related consumption of products and activities in stable and transitional phases. The first step was to present an analytical ‘lens’ that might be used for the investigation of the ongoing identity projects of consumers. This part of the framework incorporates a set of conceptual dimensions salient in the literature on symbolic consumption. One dimension describes the idea that consumption objects can support the consumer’s identity construction process because of its ‘signal’ value—or because of its potential to provide the consumer with a certain ‘experience’ of self. Another dimension describes the idea that the meanings, which consumers ascribe to consumption objects, can reside in a ‘common’ domain—or in a more ‘private’ domain.

The second step was to develop this framework further to make it suitable for the analysis of consumers’ lived experience in major life role transitions. A central idea in previous consumer literature on transitional consumers is that life status changes may involve not only a movement into a new role but also a movement away from a previous role—and that these movements are marked symbolically through consumption. Thus, the concepts of ‘distancing’ oneself from a previous role and the ‘approachment’ of a new role are incorporated into the framework.

In the framework, we seek to typify the expressions that consumers may have about their encounters with identity and transition related products and practices. Thus, the framework should be suitable both for the analysis of consumers’ lived experience of life role transitions and how this is supported through product symbolism as well as for the analysis of the more specific meanings ascribed to specific products or product categories. The first results of applying this framework to an empirical setting are promising. In the study of pram consumption in Denmark (Thomsen and Sørensen, 2006) the framework proved to be suitable for the analysis of the identity related meanings that were attached to prams by both expectant and newly hatched mothers. Future research may seek to further employ and develop the proposed framework on material comprising consumers’ expressions on their lived experience with consumption and identity projects.

REFERENCES


McCracken, Grant (1986). “Culture and consumption”. Journal of Consumer Research, 13 (June), 71-84.


Home Confined Consumers: Identity Continuities and Discontinuities

Hilary Downey, Queen’s University Belfast, United Kingdom
Miriam Catterall, Queen’s University Belfast, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

Consumers confined to the home through disability or long term illness are unable to access the marketplace directly and consume through the socialization process. The consumption situation of home bound individuals is the concern of this study, specifically, issues of consumer (re)socialization and consumer identity post home confinement. The research focuses on possessions, with respect to meanings, role and the process of socialization in relation to identity. Findings indicate that the nostalgic consumption of possessions offers the ability to (re)construct the self-identity after confinement. Additionally, possessions afford opportunities to maintain continuity with former ablest identities after the discontinuity of enforced marketplace withdrawal. An individual case study illustrates this point.

INTRODUCTION

Postmodern theory acknowledges the central role of consumption of the social world in general and individual identities in particular (Baudrillard 1998). Most individuals learn the meanings of consumption through the socialisation process, via families, friends and especially through direct interactions in the commercial marketplace (Miller 2001). Consumers who have very limited or no accesses to the commercial marketplace are as such disadvantaged in their ability to utilise product cues and consume symbolically (Belk et al.1982). The consumption situation of consumers confined to the home due to disability or long term illness is the central focus of this study with particular emphasis on consumer identity (re)construction as a consequence of their withdrawal from the marketplace. The study focuses on possessions, in terms of their acquisition, maintenance and disposition as a key factor in identity (re)construction. The paper begins by locating the research in the literature on consumer identities, possessions and nostalgia. This is followed by a brief explanation of the research approach employed in the study. It is argued that identity (re)construction amongst home confined consumers is an active, complex and nuanced process whereby earlier lives as well as current situations are interconnected through possessions. The study of ‘extreme’ cases, in this instance home confined consumers reconstituting and maintaining their identities through products and consumption rituals reveals the deliberative and thoughtful nature of the identity creation process. In order to capture this complexity, the findings from the study will be illustrated by discussing a single case in some depth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Firat and Dholakia (1998) argue that identity construction, or construction of self-hood is increasingly dependent on consumption. In order to define oneself to others, even to one’s self, requires greater and greater use of products and consumption experiences. The construction of identity or self-hood is a highly paradoxical process in contemporary culture (Breen, in Brewer et al. 1993), as such individuals find relatively greater freedom and control in the sphere of consumption. Self-identity in other words, is not something that is just given, but something that has to be routinely created and sustained. This reflexive process, the mobilising of self-identity is not confined to life’s crises but is a general feature of modern social activity in relation to psychic organisation (Giddens 1994).

Bearing in mind this inherent need to create and construct, not only singular but multiple identities through the medium of consumption, it is important to incorporate the sociological phenomenon of nostalgia as part of preference in the consumption of goods and experiences (Holbrook 1993). The nostalgic experience provides reassurance of past happiness and accomplishment and has an integral role to play in the construction, maintenance and reconstruction of identities. Nostalgia, as Davis (1977), suggests is the key consideration in relation to identity continuation that Belk (1988) extends to embrace the consumption of possessions. Although possessions may evoke the past, it is only when interpreted that they have meaning, but the ultimate composition and selection of such consumption experiences remains firmly in the domain of the consumer. Possessions not only extend the identity but the competencies and capabilities associated with securing such consumption is further empowered and developed in the pursuit of the extended self. The most basic and powerful fact of consumer behaviour is that we are what we have; the metaphor “extended self” is used to comprise “not only that which is seen as me (the self) but also that which is seen as mine” (Belk 1988).

When a particular object provides such an intense emotion that one must possess it, there is little doubt among consumer researchers that the consumption of said possession will in some way reflect the world of the consumer (Belk 1995). The possessions we consume act as mirrors that not only reflect ourselves to ourselves and as such affirm our own identities but also to project the self in its experiential reality for confirmation and support from significant others. The relationship between possessions and the sense of self, will aid understanding of how consumer behaviour contributes to the broader existence as human beings and by extension our identity. The life-cycle of the consumer tends to suggest a shift in tendency to cite “special” possessions those that symbolize other people. This further suggests that possessions are regarded not only as a part of self but also as instrumental to the development of self. Special possessions play an even more important role in easing life transitions and are instrumental to maintenance of the self-concept (McCracken 1987). The home-confined consumer by inference is highly connected to these suggestions in the context of major transitional life experiences having played a significant role in their current identity situation.

Integral to who we are, is a sense of our past, possessions are a means of storing memories and experiences that represent the past and inherently take account of the relevance of nostalgia. Implications for the socio-historical grounding of the self-identity are woven into the fabric of consumption in all its facets. In direct response to this understanding it would seem understandable that possessions regarded as being particularly strong in attachment to oneself would be deemed to be more closely held to the proximal self and as such offer deep insight into identity building components integral to the maintenance and extension of self. Possessions offer a medium of interaction through which parts/metaphors of self are assembled, created and extended. Material possession attachment defines the relationship between specific person and object and by doing so reflects the extent of “me-ness” associated with that possession (Kleine et al. 1995). The extension of this thought to include the concept of identity formation through interaction and involvement with possession consumption is highlighted. The
importance of this form of interaction helps to narrate a person’s life story, past, present and future, where the socio-historic aspects are brought into play as an extremely informative and necessary guide from which to extend the self. In direct contrast to the former considerations those possessions held in rather a negative light and whose attachments are somewhat weak, represent a period in life from which a person wishes to dissociate. The implications of this removal of certain identity facets lends much to the present understanding of the self in relation to past identity construction. It is generally agreed that individuals use attachments to define and maintain their identities (Belk 1988; Schultz et al. 1989; Wallendorf and Arnold 1988). Identity is reflected in one’s life narrative, or life story, capturing various roles including past, present and anticipated future selves.

People are motivated universally to establish and maintain a personal and unique identity (autonomy seeking), while at the same time they are motivated to maintain interpersonal connection that also defines the self (affiliation seeking). The underlying assumptions running through this theme advocate the use of social networks in the form of significant “others” to fulfill the links to socialization and as a consequence the attainment of maintenance and extension of identity.

Schultz et al. (1989), suggests, that possessions reflect autonomy seeking when they evidence individual accomplishments, distinctiveness, uniqueness, independence, self-control or other aspects of individual integrity. Affiliation seeking, by direct contrast is apparent when possessions reflect connections with others, one’s heritage or tradition, or reflect being in touch with or cared for by others. This is very pertinent to the home confined consumer, specifically the significant “others” who are an essential component in the realization of self-affirmation in terms of support and by extension the future of the self-identity when the corroboration of these self constructed “others” provides the medium in which the reflexive mobilization of an identity can be created, nurtured and sustained. Indeed the constant struggle to negotiate affiliation and autonomy seeking proponents of identity “may be our experience of the unitary, restless, creative motion of life itself” (Kegan 1982).

Another theme in the identity literature is the evolutionary characteristic of life stories, life narratives include an individual’s current understanding of the present self (McAdams 1985). The self narrative captures the output of a person’s progression through various life stages. It is an integrated, socio-historical self-constructual, weaving together stories that portray significant life episodes, reflecting self-change and self-continuity. No single facet of the narrative is more authentic than another because one’s life story is identity. A possession’s potency for self-significance arises directly via its link to a meaningful life narrative episode. Thus possessions are not literally the self but artefacts of the self. Self-identifying possessions reflect who I am as a unique individual and consequently positions identity within its socio-historical context. People use possessions, events, or places to infer the meaning of self when those entities are connected to a developmental episode in the life story. The home confined consumer is in a major developmental episode in their life story, the transition from socialization to non-socialization of interaction directly in the marketplace. People use external objects (of self) to infer meaning of self when they are especially useful for telling stories of the self.

The dialectic tension between stability and change is another motivator of development of self. Possessions create a tangible residue of the past, present and possibly anticipated future identity development. Special possessions therefore could facilitate self-continuity by connecting a person with a desirable past self (memories), a present self (me now), or a future self (who I am becoming). Individuals possess portfolios of attachments, each attachment reflecting different combinations of affiliation, autonomy seeking or past, present and future temporal orientation. Temporal orientation helps identify whether a possession reflects self-continuity or self-change (Ball and Tasaki 1992). Present-oriented possessions reflect tasks in the here and now; they reflect issues of who I am now that are currently being cultivated. Particular importance is attached to the home confined consumer, whose present possessions have added reflections in respect of a stronger motivation to cultivate and maintain their own identity in terms of invisible socialization connections.

Consumption and possession practices have perhaps been the most widely studied range of phenomena identified with Consumer Culture Theory (Belk et al. 2003; Joy and Sherry 2003). These studies have highlighted the impact of such consumption practices on consumers’ roles and identity transitions (Bonsu and Belk 2003; McAlexander et al. 1993). Kleine et al. (1995), suggest that periods of transition offer opportunities to explore and understand consumption and possession practices in relation to self-identity. Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) is concerned with socio-historic influences and the social dynamics that shape consumer experiences and identities in doing everyday life (Holt 1997, 1998; Thompson et al. 1990; Wallendorf and Arnold 1991).

CCT has developed to show how consumer culture is sustained, transformed and shaped by historical forces and marketplace systems. In keeping with these thoughts, this research explores the socio-historical consumption experiences afforded by nostalgia in relation to the home confined consumer. The consumption of such special possessions and the subjective experiential reality created as a result of such “interaction” will essentially be the basis for building knowledge in relation to identity construction, currently not afforded by a direct socialization process.

The significance of the consumption experiences of the “particular” (the home confined consumer) in relation to the “general” is an all important consideration for the further development of CCT. This group “in extremis”, as part of consumption society need exploration and understanding in relation to their “invisible” socialization process.

**METHODOLOGY**

Given the challenges in understanding the consumer identity creation amongst consumers confined to their homes through disability or long term illness, there was a need for a methodology that was sensitive to the research agenda of discovery and the research context. As one of the purposes of this research is to understand the consumer experiences of home confined consumers within their own social contexts as opposed to that of a consumption society, the experiences should be described as they are lived and originate from the perspective of “person-in-the-world”.

The approach adopted stems from the understanding that human beings have the ability to create understandings that help them navigate life, regardless of whether or not these match an external reality. Radical constructivism emphasizes such ability. Von Glaserfeld, (1995) asserts that human perception is adaptive; it evolved to help people survive. Humans’ sense of continuity is preserved because we construct, and manage to believe in a relatively smooth narrative of events. To the radical constructivist, discontinuities in action are to be expected at every level of social living, from the individual to the communal. Furthermore, the self as a locus of experience is an active agent rather than a passive entity.

The term “intersubjective” denotes the highest most reliable form of experiential reality (Von Glaserfeld 1984). This level arises through the corroboration of other thinking and knowing subjects. The introduction of “others” might seem in flat contradiction of the
constructivist principle that all knowledge is subjective. Although the others are the individual subject’s construction, they can nevertheless provide corroboration of that subject’s experiential reality. The individual has a need to construct others and to keep these models of others as viable as possible because only viable others can lend the highest level of support to the subject’s experiential reality (Von Glaserfeld 1995).

As the “intersubjective” consumption process in relation to building knowledge of the experiential reality of the home confined consumer underpins this research, a small number of research subjects were selected for in depth study over a long period of time. To date, a year into the research, this has involved weekly ‘interview’ sessions with each research subject. For the most part, each session has focused on the consumption of possessions since these are found to be central in the exploration and understanding of the home confined consumer’s “social world” and hence the ongoing construction, maintenance and extension of identities. Some of the findings in relation to one of the research subjects, Jay, are now discussed.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Jay is an individual whose direct marketplace interaction was instantaneously severed, as the result of an automobile accident. For a period of 24 years, interaction and consumption processes have been “invisible” to mainstream society. As a quadriplegic, Jay’s position in terms of consumption experiences and decision-making competencies, were primarily constrained due to the initial eighteen months he spent in an institutional rehabilitation environment after the accident. Although the subjective nature of consumption experiences and the experiential reality created is essentially as a consequence of self, and not position, the curtailed freedom in relation to consumption of possessions was noted. In keeping with Brownlie and Horne’s (1999) study of inmates in a penal environment, a period of approximately three years was found to be the time span that reflected “inactivity” in terms of identity construction. It was only after this period that wish lists and self-gifts were formulated. The year of Jay’s release from “institutionalized” living was spent alternating between the homes of his two sisters. After this period Jay took control of his life in terms of setting, and accomplished, with much effort, independent living.

Holak and Havlena (1992) suggest that smells provide a catalytic impetus for the re-experiencing of emotion associated with nostalgia. Favourite smells evoke a certain security and by catalytic impetus for the re-experiencing of emotion associated with the smell of Patchouli. In keeping with literature, the most valued possession is the closest to the proximal self and as a consequence of this, ultimately provides the essential ingredients for the construction of identity.

Patchouli creates a certain mood or ambience in Jay’s physical space for himself and for the significant “others” who interact in this setting, (selected or unselected). As Jay’s experiential reality is being actively constructed and determined through such consumption experiences, it is understandable that his self-identity is strengthened and reaffirmed as a direct consequence of such interaction. As Maturana (1988), suggests individual identity is a result of the on-going process of autopoeisis irrespective of the context of the individual, but emphasizes the need for the “corroboration of others” in this very subjective process. The benefits received via the consumption of this special possession are extremely important in the very subjective lifestyle of the home confined consumer. In the absence of direct marketplace interaction the necessity for the presence of significant others is particularly pertinent to sustain and maintain the core identity. The “visibility” of this special possession initiates and forges new channels of interaction with self and “others” and as such keeps the evolving identity visible and strong.

Jay keeps a plentiful supply of Patchouli and the keeping of such possessions in “bulk” shows a fear of “running out” of such a positive aspect or dimension of individual identity. The constancy of smell is cumulative in its desired effect and provides a “solid” structure of support in absence of “others”. The engine of identity creation and self production is kept oiled and running with such consumption behaviour to ground the core identity.

Given that Patchouli is such an important and cherished belonging, it would seem reasonable to assume that its storage would be of interest. Jay has set aside a particular drawer for the safe-keeping of possessions of value. Other possessions kept alongside the Patchouli include Jay’s money. This has particular significance as the smell of the Patchouli permeates the paper money and the saturated or positively contaminated product essentially takes on aspects of the individual’s identity and transfers ownership or “me-ness” to this possession.

As a direct result of this form of extension, an individual ritualized behaviour has been established that pulls together the nostalgic link that enhances and cements identity construction. As consumption literature implies, only through consumption can freedom be realised (Firat and Dholka 1997). To this end, it would seem appropriate that the possessions of money and of Patchouli Oil, separately and together constitute freedom, but from very differing aspects. The freedom in terms of “ableism” is provided by the nostalgic element associated with the smell of Patchouli. In
direct contrast, the freedom associated with money comes from the power it gives Jay to purchase and consume and, thus, the ability to choose identity construction routes.

When money is required to buy or pay for certain items, the paper notes are lifted and spread over Jay’s face so that the full sensory experience can be inhaled. This immediate consumption experience brings together the two main components of freedom and power that comprise the “ablest” perspective which transcends through time unchanged, despite the changes in identity that have occurred over the same time period for Jay. The ability “to do” in these two respects, represent strong components or facets of an identity that can be carried on past and present components of the self constructing identity.

The paper notes must spend a certain period of time with the Patchouli before they reach the required saturation level and are deemed ready for spending in the marketplace. The implication for extension of self is highlighted by this simple act, everyone who is considered a significant “other” is in no doubt as to the identity of this possession. Since the smell of Patchouli is a particularly strong and lingering one, there would be few doubts as to the origin of this possession should these “others” come across them whilst interacting directly in the marketplace. Indirectly Jay’s identity is filtrated out into the marketplace and interaction occurs but in an experiential reality that is subjectively created.

The continuing cycle of consumption of possessions relies on positive experiences for its regeneration and (re)creation of one’s self. The continual “feeding” of the self, provides the energy, impetus, motivation and interaction essential in making visible an identity (which for the home confined consumer), could easily become an invisibility and hence a non-identity.

Jay’s expression of ritualistic behaviour as enacted out by the example above can be seen to be dramatically scripted, acted out and performed with formality, seriousness and inner intensity. Tetreault and Kleine (1990) make the distinction between ritual and ritualistic behaviour. Solomon (1983) argues that ritualized behaviours are more likely to be associated with the maintenance and/or change in one’s self perception. The mundane repetition of this behaviour occurs in self-time, and accentuates the individual, subjective creation of Jay’s identity through a period of many transitions.

The holding on to, or preserving of this special possession, Patchouli, provides an insight into other subjective creations to Jay’s history and as such the nostalgic consumption experiences provide an interaction or socialization process for the individual concerned and even though it is not in the external marketplace, it is directly, subjectively interactive and essentially more pertinent and integral to the sense of self and one’s individual identity. The same criteria, decision making processes afforded by direct marketplace interaction are available to Jay in respect of consumption experiences, valued, selected or discarded. It is through the consumption of these possessions that the self can be strengthened, extended and continually constructed.

CONCLUSIONS
Few consumer research projects focus on disabled consumers and even fewer focus on those who are confined to their homes, an invisible but growing group. This study has shown that identity (re)construction amongst home confined consumers is an active, complex and nuanced process whereby earlier lives as well as current situations are interconnected through possessions. The sheer efforts that home confined consumers make to maintain their ‘consumer visibility’ and their links with past lives reveals that as consumers they are far from ‘damaged, feeble, passive and dependent’ as is generally assumed (Murphy 1990; Phillips 1990). Indeed, it could be argued that these ‘invisible’ consumers work harder and more deliberately than other consumers at making themselves ‘visible’. Thus, the study of these consumers reinforces the importance of consumption to identity creation and maintenance not only of these disadvantaged consumers but the findings can be extended to the more dominant members of consumer society.

REFERENCES
EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction: Understanding Independent Travel Through Guidebooks

The independent travel sector has mushroomed in recent years, but despite the rapid expansion of the sector, there is as yet only a small, albeit growing, stream of academic literature exploring the phenomenon of independent travel (e.g. Elsrud 2001; Loker-Murphy and Pearce 1995; Sørensen 2003). Moreover, the question of what it really means to be independent within a huge industry of supporting and enabling service industries, or of how consumers maintain a sense of independence within this web of market interdependencies, have yet to be addressed. These are critical questions though given that the consumption experience itself is predicated on, orientated around, and indeed valorised by, a sense of independence.

This paper seeks to explore independence by examining how the notion of independent travel is constructed through the discourse of alternative guidebooks. Alternative guidebooks are an important element in the independent traveller’s consumption experience, and are a key repository of meaning for tourists. Along with other “markers” they play a central role in what tourists see and do, and how they see and do things (Bhattacharya 1997; Siegenthaler 2002). Moreover, by showing readers “how to get the most out of their trip”, alternative guidebooks propagate a set of implicit values and ideal behaviours that underline what it means to be an independent traveller, thereby shaping the identity and self-image of the traveller.

Methodology

The study utilised a discourse analytic technique, the prime concern of which is with the role that language plays in the reification of social realities–here the “reality” of independent travel. Embedded in a social constructivist philosophy that assumes texts are constitutive of social meaning, discourse analysis offers to researchers a way of seeing the processes involved in the production and maintenance of consumer practices. The approach adopted is closely aligned to Fairclough’s (1992) multi-dimensional approach to critical discourse analysis. The analysis was thus concerned with both the constructive effects of language and simultaneously with the power relations implicated within that process of reality construction.

The focus of the discourse analysis was The Rough Guide To Spain (Ellingham and Fisher, 2002), a self-proclaimed alternative guidebook for independent travellers. This is part of a larger series of books covering a wide range of county and city destinations around the world. The Rough Guide series is for “independent-minded visitors on any budget” (www.roughguides.com).

Constructing Independence

Independence is a central idea running through the sample text and our analysis suggested that it could be best understood in terms of three underlying themes–reifying inaccessibility, interpreting value, and constructing inauthenticity. By analysing these themes, we reveal that the independent traveller can be characterised as someone who defies inaccessibility, practices bargain hunting, and avoids inauthenticity.

Reifying inaccessibility

The concept of inaccessibility is manifest throughout the text and is evident within clauses such as “Vacancies are extremely thin on the ground” (959) and “Although the options are very limited” (960). However, it is most striking in the metaphor of the traveller as guerrilla fighter that pervades the text. By suggesting that it takes a military strategist to reach certain destinations, the reader is offered an interpretive position by which the possibility of surmounting or defying such inaccessibility becomes tenable.

Interpreting value

The analysis also demonstrated that a theme of cost was persistent in the text, and that the guidebook would effectively interpret value for money for the independent traveller. Typical clauses would read: “inexpensive tapas bars”, “good food at low prices”, “for just 770”, “prices are surprisingly low” and “very well-priced” (956). Interestingly, these clauses appear to resemble a kind of “good value” marketing discourse. They work to suggest that the reader can expect to find food of a good quality but importantly, that it will not cost too much, generating for the reader an interpretive position equivocal to the social role of the bargain hunter.

Constructing inauthenticity

The emergence of authenticity as a key theme in the text’s construction of independent travel was identified through the reoccurring manifestation of words such as “traditional”, “authentic,” and “real”. These words were often found to work in conjunction with the key cultural identities “Spanish,” “Mallorcan,” “Balearic,” or “Catalan”. Significantly, many of these clauses were juxtaposed against an inauthentic reality of Spain. Not only did the text appear to invoke a tension between the inauthentic and authentic, but it also formulated authenticity as the preferred option for readers and offered the reader the opportunity to surmount this perceived inauthenticity. Consequently, the repeated textual situations in which the authentic and inauthentic are juxtaposed and which see, in the end, the reader’s transcendence over inauthenticity, implicitly suggest the reader as someone whose role as an independent traveller is to avoid inauthenticity.

Engendering Dependence

Overall, the guidebook makes independent travel meaningful through a certain set of consumption practices and, at the same time, cements the consumer’s dependency upon the text itself. This resonates with other studies that contend that guidebooks play a key role in shaping the traveller’s engagement with destinations (Bhattacharyya, 1997; McGregor, 2000; Siegenthaler, 2002), but extends this line of reasoning to show how the identity of independent travellers, and the meaning of independent travel itself, are inextricably bound up in the discourse of alternative guidebooks.

This is particularly significant given that independent travel, by definition, is typically identified as a consumption practice that is autonomous and free. Yet, our analysis offers an alternative interpretation that suggests independent travel is simultaneously a controlled and constrained consumption practice. In contrast to Hyde and Lawson (2003) who characterise independent travellers as experiencing an evolving itinerary, a willingness to take risks, and having a desire to experience the unplanned, the discourse of alternative guidebooks suggests a tightly controlled set of predetermined itineraries that enable the traveller to defy inaccessibility and
avoid inauthenticity; a comforting security in knowing how this can be achieved, and in the most cost-effective way; and offering a thoroughly mediated travel experience.

It would seem that the alternative guidebook offers consumers a self-image of risk, adventure and autonomy—an independent travel identity (Sorensen, 2003)—whilst also offering them protection from the concomitant uncertainty, unfamiliarity and fear that independence in travel might be expected to bring. As such, the notion of the independent traveller represents a powerful cultural myth to anchor understandings of tourist experiences and to give meaning to otherwise potentially contradictory consumption behaviours (Belk and Costa 1998; Stern 1995; Thompson 2004).

References
*Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (2), 139-168
London: Macmillan.

Hierarchicality in Consumption Visons: Imagery Anticipation and Dynamics Within the Goal Structure

Glenn L. Christensen, Brigham Young University, U.S.A.
Jerry C. Olson, Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.
William T. Ross, Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.

EXTENDED 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; Demasio 1994) and the pervasive frequency of future thought (Bramn 1991). In this work, we attempt to rectify that oversight and forward the process of theory building in this important area.

Other research directly investigating the future tense of consumers’ mental life shows that the phenomenology or lived-experience of a consumer goal is a consumption vision (Christensen 2002; Christensen, Olson, and Ross, 2003). For example, in a diary study of consumption visions, one consumer recorded the following anticipatory consumption imagery experience regarding an upcoming vacation with her husband:

I said relax but what I was picturing [in my mind] was us eating out and smiling. I pictured us in the condo we’re staying in just kicking back. I envision Jack and I just laughing and having fun. I guess I sort of envision us not waking up to kids and we just stretch and we don’t care what time it is and that type of thing.

In this example, the consumer goal is relaxation but this abstract label does not completely express lived-experience of that goal. As the respondent notes, the verbal label relax abstracts the undercurrent of her imagic thought—the series of mental images and vignettes—that is the phenomenological experience of a relaxation goal for this informant.

This paper seeks to build upon and extend this theoretical understanding through a deeper investigation of the goal-like characteristics of consumption visions. For example, self-regulation and motivation theory predicts a hierarchical relationship and organization among goals (cf. Carver and Scheier 1999; Austin and Vancouver 1996—see figure 1 for a graphical summary). If consumer goals are phenomenologically experienced as consumption visions, then theoretically we should expect to find evidence of hierarchicality in a direct examination consumption visions.

We present the findings of an exploratory diary study undertaken to directly investigate consumption visions. Fifteen respondents (8 female, 7 male) were recruited from communities in the northeastern and northwestern United States. Respondents were purposefully selected to represent a range of age, income, and life-stage demographics to ensure a breadth of response. Participants were asked to carry a microcassette recorder with them for a week and record instances when they found themselves imagining the possible future consumption of a product. As an initial attempt at directly investigating and capturing consumption visions in situ, participant instructions were intentionally open-ended. Informants were asked to narrate and describe their mental imaging experience and record contextual details such as time, date, location and situation. In all, the respondents recorded 707 consumption visions (an average of 47 per respondent) that were subsequently transcribed, analyzed, coded, and catalogued using the open-coding techniques of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

The data gathered in this diary study provide evidence for the theoretically expected hierarchical characteristics of consumer goals experienced as consumption visions. However, what is also clear from these data is that hierarchicality is not a consciously experienced aspect of the phenomenology of a consumer goal. Rather, for consumers engaged in a consumption vision, hierarchy is a transparent characteristic of the natural flow of imagic thought. However upon direct investigation, this hierarchicality becomes apparent to the analyst and the structural relationship between goal elements can mapped.

Emergent Theme—A Two-Step Flow of Consumption Visions

True to the nature of grounded theory building, unanticipated themes emerged in the rigorous course of coding and re-coding the diary data. Looking directly at the subset of consumption visions recorded while consumers were engaged in the stages of consumer decision making (426 recorded consumption visions) reveals an important two-step flow of consumption visioning as consumers are occupied in the choice process.

During the evaluation stages of decision making, consumption visions often focus on mentally simulating the possible goal-states (the potential benefits) proffered by a product offering. Here the consumption visions are not of consumer goals per se, but rather of possible goals—goals in potentia.

These data show that as consumers evaluate a possible course of consumption, they form consumption visions to answer salient questions—Is this something I want to do? and Is this something I am able to do? Respondents do not report actually sub-vocalizing and consciously engaging these questions. Rather the phenomenology is a seamless visioning experience of mental images, implicit questioning, and affective response.

These questions correspond to the two-step flow of consumption visioning described earlier. They also correspond to different levels in a goal hierarchy. The primary question relates to the desirability of a potential consumption course. Is it what I want to do? Thus it relates to a somewhat higher order goal in the hierarchy. Subsequent visioning relates to consumer’s evaluations of self-efficacy relative to the potential consumption course under evaluation. How could I actualize that in my life? Thus this level of visioning here “drops down” the hierarchy from the what to the how.

Answers to these questions seem to emanate from the affective response experienced as part of the consumption vision. For example, if the felt response is negative or even neutral during a consumption vision evaluating desirability, the goal in potentia is not compelling, and consumption visioning often stopped there.

However, if the goal was a desirable course of action—something judged worthy of effort—then the consumption vision instantly seemed to change focus from the desirable “what” to the unanswered “how”. The vision now focused on the steps necessary to make the primary image real in experience. Again the answer to these secondary questions seems to be bound up in the affective component of the imaging experience. Many times when the efficacy answer was clearly negative (often due to budget constraints), the imaging would stop, and negative consequent affect would ensue.

In consumer decision making, this two-step flow process of consumption visioning seems to establish a customer’s effective demand for that product—their willingness (desire) and ability
(capacity) to buy (cf. Kerin and Peterson 2001). Given positive evaluations at both stages of consumption visioning, a consumer goal is embraced, a plan of action is committed to, and a behavioral intention is set.

In summary, the two-step flow process that emerged in the analysis of these data implicates consumption visions as a fundamental component in goal selection processes—an aspect of goal-research that is “comparatively understudied” (Carver and Scheier 1999). Further the two-step flow of consumption visioning further substantiates the hierarchical nature of consumption visions of consumer goals shown previously. Taken together, these findings extend our understanding of anticipatory consumption imaging and further demonstrate the goal-like characteristics of consumption visions.

References
ABSTRACT
Since the 80s, movies have been used as a source of information for the analysis of consumption culture. Movies often include consumption symbols in the form of products, brands, icons and even movies. In this paper, after a brief review of the literature about movie analysis in a consumer culture perspective, some insights from the movies of Italian masters (1945-1975) will be given. Since the 40s, consumption symbols have been widely used: specific product categories were employed for metaphoric purposes (cigarettes and automobiles), movies and made in the U.S. goods were considered as highly expressive symbols.

INTRODUCTION
This paper is part of a larger research project aimed at the analysis of the relationship between Italian cinema and Italian consumer culture. The main purpose of the project is to review the most famous works of art from Italian production in order to outline how they represent consumption culture. A distinctive characteristic of this research is to sidestep commercial movies and concentrate on the more artistic ones: the idea is that the former are very much related to and dependent on actual consumption ideology, while the latter may give insights into less conventional as well as more innovative ways of portraying consumption and consumers. A further element is that such movies are less prone to deceptive advertising and product placement.

The secondary purpose of this paper is to give further impulse to the analysis of cultural products as sources of data for consumer research, by illustrating how films can be considered in terms of their representativeness of the social and cultural setting. The analysis will concentrate on movies and, among them, on those that can be considered real works of art. For this purpose, 48 movies by the best Italian directors were selected from the period that goes from 1945 to 1975. They have been used to find out if and how consumer culture related themes and topics are portrayed.

The paper is divided into four sections: in the first one, the literature regarding movies as sources for consumer research is reviewed and some problems with past research are outlined. The second section contains a brief historical description of Italian cinema and related connections to social and cultural history. The third section describes the methodology employed in the empirical analysis. The fourth section reports on some preliminary findings, and the final section gives some implications for further research.

USING MOVIES AS CULTURAL PRODUCTS IN CONSUMER RESEARCH: LITERATURE REVIEW
What is the role of movies in consumer research? According to the literature, there was growing interest in this art form during the 80s and early 90s. Elizabeth Hirschman and Morris Holbrook led this trend, giving guidelines and defining reference points (Holbrook, Grayson, 1986; Hirschman, 1987a, 1987b; Holbrook, 1988).

The basic tenet of this kind of research is that cultural products are firmly embedded in popular culture: songs, plays and novels (Friedman, 1985, 1991), as well as movies, are dependent on the meanings, symbols and values that stem from the culture that produces and consumes them. Because of this, they can be considered an important source of information for the purpose of consumer research.

Movies and consumer research
The first example of consumer research using movies as empirical data is the article by Holbrook, Grayson (1986). The authors are interested in “what consumption can tell us about works of art” (p. 375). They follow the semiotic approach to investigate the use of symbolic consumer behavior in an artwork to help convey the meaning of that artistic creation. From the analytical point of view, these authors rely upon abductive inference, a form of generalization that starts from a rule (elite people generally drive expensive cars), considers a result (Jane drives a Cadillac) and produces the case (Jane is probably elite). More in detail, this model has been applied on two levels: a) large themes and broad characteristics associated with the film’s central story; and b) more fine-grained nuances of plot and character (ibidem).

In almost the same period, Hirschman (1987a, 1987b, 1988) adds some utilities from structuralism and syntactical analysis to the semiotic perspective (Hirschman, 1988, p. 344). The hybrid method (structural-syntactical) and the semiotic approach share the assumption that cultural artifacts are viewed as carriers of the ideology of their creators and consumers. Hirschman’s analysis seems to be more detailed and effective from an interpretive point of view in that she considers the ways in which consumption symbols are linked to specific actions and outcomes within the story.2

After these seminal works, other articles appeared in which movies were used as primary sources of data. All of these articles seem to be aimed at specific purposes within the consumer culture field: Holbrook (1988) addressed the concept of materialism; Hirschman looked at possession and commoditization (1991), ethnicity as it emerges from Afro-American movies (1994) and the representation of drug consumption (1995); Hirschman (1993) and Hirschman, Stern (1994) focused on how women are portrayed in contemporary movies; Gould, Wong (2000) used the movie Ermo (Zhou, 1994) to infer some of the characteristics of the new consumer culture in China.

Another important contribution to be considered from this perspective is the paper by Hirschman et al. (1998), which seems to give new effectiveness to the analysis of cultural texts. In particular, these authors call attention to different levels of text analysis: texts about products or texts that include products are strictly related (and they have to be interpreted from this perspective) to the practice level (everyday consumption activities) and to the historical dimension of such practices (Hirschman et al., 1998, p. 34). Secondly, different texts from different levels about the same object (product, brand, etc.) are strictly related to each other and they have to be compared and considered together for a proper interpretation within the context of a specific culture. This is the notion of intertextuality (ibidem): as will be clear in the following sections, intertextuality can be considered by comparing different movies from different authors are interested in

1 This piece of research is empirically grounded on the analysis of the Dallas and Dynasty TV series: the difference in format (TV vs. cinema) is not relevant from the point of view of the present discussion on both theory and method.

2 This is probably the most important aspect of this analysis, at least from the perspective of this paper, and we will come back to it in the next section.
periods/genres/authors and referring to social and economic history.

The Relationship Between Artwork and Real Life

In every almost every paper in this stream of research, authors have considered movies as equivalent to reality: the basic assumption is that moviemakers, as well as other artists from other cultural contexts, tend to give a picture of the real world that is as naturalistic as possible. As Holbrook, Grayson (1986, p. 379) put it, “these artworks represent life, and the artistic uses of symbolic consumer behavior may tell us something about humanity itself”. Hirschman (1988, p. 344) seems to share the same perspective: “mass media vehicles may express and represent the values of the social and historical context that engenders them”.

The same holds true for Hirschman et al. (1998, pp. 34-35): “texts about products (such as ads) or texts that include products as symbols (such as TV shows) both derive from the body of practices that has grown up around the consumption of a particular object in the culture from which the text comes (or to which it is addressed). … the makers of television narratives generally (but not always) try to represent consumption practices in a fairly accurate and naturalistic way, so that the settings and actions will seem real to the average American”.

When looking at cinema, as well as at other creative jobs, the above perspective cannot be applied to every product (movies, paintings, plays, etc.): Hirschman et al.’s (1998) last words seem to suggest that movies “do not always” represent reality in naturalistic terms.

From the point of view of film theory, realism has been a core concept since the very beginning of movie production. Movies “were” realistic until the 40s (Bazin, Kracauer), but they simply do not match reality, at least after the big debate opened during the 50s by Lucaks and followed by Deleuze, Metz and others who elaborated the concept of realism (Casetti, 1993). Movies cannot be considered only in terms of verisimilitude, but in terms of veridiction: images, sounds and characters are used to represent a situation that is not necessarily realistic (in its naturalistic sense), but that is reasonable, possible or even simply understandable by the viewer. This is particularly true for movies that can be considered as artworks, whose characteristics can be summarized as follows:

- whether or not it is realistic, a movie is the product of the author (Caughie, 1981): it is the author’s representation that produces the reality that we see on the screen. In this sense, real artworks come from an intense, but subjective, interpretation by the artist. They can be considered and analyzed from such a perspective: scenes, characters and objects have no meaning outside of this artistic representation;
- since Laffay (1964) and Mitry (1963), cinema has been considered as a special language, the best language for story telling: without narration there is no artwork in movies. The subject of story telling is the artist, and she/he gives a very specific picture of reality that depends on the historical context, on the author’s subjective perspective, and even on her/his values and ideological beliefs. Only in these terms can movies be considered elements of a certain culture and hence be used as sources of insight for analyzing that culture. Because of this, semiotic approaches are not specific enough to grasp the precise meanings the authors have given to scenes and symbols within the movie. Other elements have to be considered, such as the author’s ideological perspective and value system, the social and historical context, and the like.

Artistic movies can be considered to be of a special kind: they present a strong and original narrative texture and they represent a very peculiar perspective from which to look at reality. In this sense, masters of cinema can be considered as a sort of avant-garde in the cultural process (McCracken, 1986): we expect them to represent stories, situations and events, as well as consumption practices, that not only represent what’s going on in average consumer culture, but more sophisticated and subtle aspects and themes also.

ITALIAN MOVIES: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (1945-1975)

It is only recently that documents about even minor aspects of human life have been considered as sources of data. From this perspective, cinema can play an extraordinary role in the description of cultural as well as geographical and historical development. In Italy, cinema is probably the most important source of such data for 20th century history: micro vs. macro, material vs. ideological and actual vs. desired historical events are represented in movies. Since the very beginning of “900, movies have become the main vehicle for symbols and myths of a national identity that was not so clear cut.

Italian cinema is explicitly considered by its members and representatives as coming directly from literature and visual arts, taking stories, symbols and stylistic features from the Italian cultural tradition, as well as from other cultures. After the Second World War, Italian movies became a major instrument for representing small collective dreams, a mirror of ordinary daily life, a lens capable of magnifying vices and virtues of the Italian personality that would develop during the 50s and 60s. This is the way that moviegoers, as well as moviemakers, have considered it and the same holds true for those watching Italian movies from the perspective of other cultures/countries.

Between 1945 and 1950, Italian moviemakers created a new genre called neorealismo: Rossellini, De Sica and Visconti developed a very effective and impressive way of representing what they thought reality was in that period (Brunetta, 2003). It is not only for the purpose of “representing reality” that these authors appeared as real innovators, but also because they brought empathy, solidarity and sharing in the relationship between artistic production and the social context to be represented. They put ordinary people on the screen not only to represent the story in a naturalistic way, but more significantly—to raise ordinary life up to the artistic discourse. And this has nothing to do with realism in its primitive sense, but with the subtle interface between fiction and reality.

Neorealismo has influenced Italian movies for a long time, even those not directly inspired by neo-realistic purposes: every time a play has to represent something from ordinary life, codes and stylistic features from neorealismo instantly appear.

The early 60s are the roaring years of commedia all’italiana (Italian comedy): moviemakers no longer depict the poor and the ugly of the immediate post war period, and turn their attention to the middle class, the real protagonist of developing Italian society. Dreams, needs and fears are represented in both tragic and ironic terms and comedy becomes the simplest and least sophisticated way to tell the story of an affluent society. At the very beginning, it was treated as a minor genre, market prone and culturally underdeveloped. But in a few years, very good directors (Steno, Monicelli, Risi, Scola) and actors (Gassman, Tognazzi, etc.) raised comedy up to true masterworks.

Other artistic movies came from a more fictional representation of reality: Federico Fellini and Michelangelo Antonioni are probably the most significant artists in this tradition. They gave a poetic inspiration to moviemaking and finally turned audience
attention away from mere realistic cinematography, to a more sophisticated perspective on realism: dreams, symbolic interaction and desires are the real stuff of daily life and they portrayed such a stance very well.

METHOD

The project deals with masters’ movies: they were selected in cooperation with colleagues from the humanities department. Professors and researchers in film theory and cinema history courses took part in an iterative selection process at the end of which 48 movies from the period 1945-1975 were identified.3

Movies were viewed and analyzed separately by the researchers and subsequently codes and results were compared and homogenized. Basic consumer behavior definition elements were used to isolate scenes that represent subjects engaged in consumption-related activities (search, judgment, choice, disposal) regarding goods (products, services, etc.) in order to satisfy needs and pursue desires.

Coding followed previous research methods (Holbrook, Grayson, 1986; Hirschman, 1988; Hirschman et al., 1998): once selected, scenes were coded according to several attributes: subjects, activities and other consumption-related aspects.

3Some examples are Roma città aperta (Rossellini, 1945), Ladri di biciclette (De Sica, 1948), La dolce vita (Fellini, 1959), Rocco e i suoi fratelli (Visconti, 1960), Il sorpasso (Risi, 1962), Ultimo tango a Parigi (Bertolucci, 1972), C’eravamo tanto amati (Scola, 1974). The project is going to move on to contemporary production (1975-2005).

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Objects</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>Consumption</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>Goods</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Purchase</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Communication#</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men and women</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Information seeking</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Disposal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No one*</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one*</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>783</td>
<td></td>
<td>783</td>
<td></td>
<td>783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There is no subject (activity, object) in the scene because, for instance, a poster has been put in the background or subjects are speaking of a product that is off screen.

# Posters, signs, TV ads, etc.

### DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Table 1 gives an idea of what emerged from the coding. It seems that the use of consumption practices and objects has slightly increased, but not with the same trend found elsewhere (Friedman, 1991). This preliminary result has to be confirmed by the analysis of more recent movies.

In-depth analysis reveals some important themes that emerge from the data. In the following section, we will devote some attention to those that seem to be more frequent and more common during this period and that play a significant role from the perspective of the development of Italian consumer culture.

### KEY THEMES

Cigarettes

Cigarettes are represented in 280 scenes out of the 550 in which a consumer good is present, appearing twice as often as automobiles. They appear around 6 times per film on average and two thirds of the cases involve a man, 15% a woman and the rest portray both genders.

Cigarettes appear to be the most widespread consumer good: they are cheap, easy to find and very well known as a consumption object. They have very important properties on the screen: firstly, from a very practical and “realistic” perspective, characters smoke to relax and/or to cope with tension and stress. Secondly, but more importantly, from a more rich and creative point of view, they are used as a means of emancipation by marginal and weak subjects (very young men and children, women, poor people). They use the product as if they were able to express a sort of consumption capability and habit.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Movies (n)</th>
<th>Scenes (n)</th>
<th>Scenes per movie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-75</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cigarette consumption is socially undifferentiated: rich and snobbish characters, like Maddalena (A. Aimée) in La dolce vita (Fellini, 1959), and poor people, like Simone (R. Salvadori) in Rocco e i suoi fratelli (Visconti, 1960), and Mimi (G. Giannini) in Mimi metallurgico (Wertmüller, 1971). Unlike other goods (automobiles), cigarettes don’t tell us anything about the social and economic status of the consumer, but they play a major role in differentiating the subjects among their peers, especially in the case of women.

Since the very beginning, cigarettes have been considered as something to do with illegal and deviant practices: children smoke in jail (Sciuscià, De Sica, 1946) and out on the street (Paisà, Rossellini, 1946) and Adelina (S. Loren) is a smuggler in Ieri, oggi e domani (De Sica, 1963). Sometimes cigarettes are used as a means of payment in strange and/or illegal settings: the prostitute in La dolce vita says that she has been paid with a pack of cigarettes and one of the main characters in Drame della gelosia (Scota, 1970) pays the seer with some cigarettes.

In II sorpasso (Risi, 1962), the main character (Bruno, V. Gassman) is a typical, nice, Italian lady-killer, with no stable job, who wishes to get everything he wants at any cost: he is selfish, exhibitionist and basically unreliable. He wants to convince Roberto (J.L. Trintignant), his travel mate, that smoking “is good for you” and, rather, that not smoking is even harmful. But when he sees his daughter smoking, he sternly scolds her, telling her that smoking isn’t healthy or appropriate for young people. In this movie, smoking is used by the same character in two idiosyncratic ways: when Bruno needs to give the impression of an independent, cynical and reckless fellow, he supports the idea of smoking as a sort of borderline attitude. But when it comes to his role as a father, he suddenly goes back to a more wise and judicious point of view. Still, family and gender roles are very important in explaining the attitude towards this highly symbolic consumer good.

From the symbolic point of view, there is a sort of evolution in the way cigarettes are represented: during neorealismo, they are considered as a generic, undifferentiated, unbranded consumer good. During the 60s, cigarettes received an identity when brands began to be distinguished from one another: in movies, local brands (Nazionali) appear together with foreign ones (Marlboro, Chesterfield, etc.) and it is only recently (70s) that packets have begun to appear on the screen. In a very few cases, cigarettes are explicitly considered as branded products, holding specific meanings as, for instance, “cigarette americane” (made in the U.S.) in II sole negli occhi (Pietrangeli, 1953).

Automobiles

Cars appear in 112 scenes: they are virtually absent from neorealismo movies and they began to appear on the screen during the 50s. Post war years were dedicated to reconstructing Italian cities; the streets were full of military vehicles and there were very few cars: it was a very exclusive product. The only scene with cars in Sciucia, and the car is a Fiat Topolino B-type, a small and cheap one. During the 60s, a rapidly growing number of families were able to buy a car, which became one of the most important symbols of a new mass consumption society. In this period, moviemakers began to use it as such, and began to choose models and brands according to the social role of the characters and situations. The most common car in that period was the Fiat 600, which became a sort of utility car stereotype. On the other hand, convertibles were considered as exclusive, but informal and definitely associated with handsome and lovely actors: V. Gassman drives a Lancia Aurelia B24 in II sorpasso, M. Mastroianni drives a Triumph TR3A in La dolce vita. Huge cars mean richness, wealth and snobbishness: in leri, oggi e domani, Anna (S. Loren) is a rich woman from Milan and she drives a Rolls Royce when she meets her lover, a poor blue-collar worker, owner of a Fiat 600. In the comedy II vedovo (Risi, 1959), the rich wife owns a Lancia Flaminia, while her husband, who is deep in debt, drives a Fiat 600.

In some movies, luxury cars are used to emphasize the materialistic orientation of the upper middle class: Very Important Persons in La dolce vita drive big and/or expensive cars. When facing the huge black car of Maddalena, the prostitute says “this is not a car, it is an apartment!”

In a highly significant scene, Sylvia (A. Ekberg), the famous Hollywood actress, is picked up at the airport in a huge, black and white, American car. While Silvia is being driven to Rome in the car, they travel along a small country road and come up against a shepherd with his flock. The contrast is striking, and it is enhanced by other small cars (Fiat) and scooters (Piaggio Vespa) carrying the paparazzi that are hunting the American star. From a metaphorical point of view, Fellini represents the modern hierarchy of success and happiness in this scene: like in a royal train, the Queen is followed by her knights, and the peasant stands at the bottom, close to the sheep. In this process, cars, scooters and other consumption goods are of major relevance in defining the role of each character.

The role of cars in representing wealth and upper status becomes more and more important as we enter the 60s and the 70s: furthermore, movies represent cars more frequently and place them closer to the core of the screen/action. The role of the product is more and more integrated within the story. It is not a paradox that in II sorpasso, the car (Aurelia B24) is considered as a character, appearing on the screen for almost the same amount of time as the real main characters.

From this perspective, cars were used in movies because, during the 50s and 60s, they became symbols of the social role of individuals: richness, exclusivity, middle class, poverty, etc. Each level has a special relationship with specific brands and models. And this, in turn, has emphasized such a stereotype system within consumer culture. Taking symbols from these movies, consumers strengthen the meaning structure in which they are embedded and whose consolidation they contribute to.

Made in the U.S.

Un Americano a Roma is probably the most famous example of the process of the Americanization of Italian consumer culture: lots of American goods appear in Italian films. Critics have considered this practice as a further form of cultural colonization: together with colossal Hollywood productions, symbols and icons of American consumption culture have been imported into Italy and other European countries, even into local productions.

This trend depends on historical as well as ideological factors: U.S. troops helped free the country from Fascists and the German Army. Together with freedom, they brought a lot of U.S. products that were highly appreciated by the population, which had experienced a long period of shortage. As a consequence, a strong and positive affect toward people and symbols, as well as consumption goods, from the States emerged immediately after the war (Riso Amaro, De Santis, 1949). At the beginning of the 50s, the U.S. support (Marshall plan) for post war reconstruction further increased such an affect: young Italian consumers developed an incredibly positive attitude towards U.S. made goods. Un americano a Roma is a grotesque but very effective representation of an Italian consumer entirely dominated by the U.S. lifestyle. Nando Moriconi (A. Sordi) is the main character: he is amazed by and fully immersed in the American culture, but—not so paradoxically—he is not able to speak a single word of English. He uses sounds and fictitious words to give the impression of speaking Americano. His clothes, furni-
tured and motorbike are U.S. made and he is completely mesmerized by American symbols. It is an extreme characterization of a trend that rapidly grew up in the late 50s.

The real problem is when Nando tries to develop American eating habits: he scornfully rejects red wine and the macaroni his mother prepared for him to eat milk, white bread, yogurt, jam and mustard all mixed together. The result is so disgusting that he goes back to macaroni and red wine: “Maccaroni m'hai provocato? E io me taglio, mi distruggo!” This is probably one of the most famous scenes in Italian cinema.

The movie (distributed in 1954) portrays a phenomenon that later proved to be a real trend, very common in many Italian towns during the late 50s and early 60s, but at that time it was simply a slight and tenuous trait of Italian urban culture. This trend is a very typical one: consumers basically discover American culture, consumption goods and habits from Hollywood movies: until the beginning of the 60s, TV was not widely spread and people obtained information and trends from movies. The most intriguing aspect of the movie is that Nando has never been to the States and probably will never be able to get there, but he behaves as if he were perfectly aware of the language, consumption habits, goods, movies, and the like. Everything he knows about America comes from Hollywood movies, and he tells us how important these cultural products were in the development of Italian consumption culture.

Is this a representation of real Italian consumer culture at that time? Surely it isn’t. Furthermore, authors make fun of Nando: he is represented as a fool, surrounded by wise and judicious people that take care of him. Hence the choice of this unusual aspect of contemporary consumer culture can be seen as a warm and amusing critique, and not simply as a picture.

Mass Consumption Society Has Come: A Pleasure?

The 50s and 60s have been labeled as the Italian economic miracle: in those years, rural and conservative Italy turned into an industrialized, modern and consumption-oriented society. During this period, old social typologies changed their roles (professionals, clerks, women) and new subjects appeared (young consumers). More in general, many movies in different periods clearly described such a transition, often in dramatic terms. This reinforces the idea of a kind of movie that does not simply represent the real world, but that focuses on specific aspects, anticipating and often criticizing it.

In this case, it has to be noted that the vast majority of Italian moviemakers were left-oriented: they were open to acknowledging the role played by the U.S. in historical terms, but they were very sensitive to the drawbacks of importing materialism and mass consumption.

Until neorealismo, this dimension is strictly related to consumer culture and symbolism: during the 40s and early 50s, people had to cope with demanding situations and common people often experienced financial straits when trying to survive. The young mother in Ladi di biciclette has to pledge her trousseau to raise the money necessary to redeem her husband. The woman from the past and the child from the present are the victims of the show business of the future: their efforts to change their old status into a modern one break down against the immorality and unreliability of the new society. Their dreams have been stolen and changed into a consumer good (Lambretta): in this case also, consumer goods are used both to represent a specific aspect of social and cultural growth and to criticize some of its drawbacks.

Around the mid 50s, Italian society changed a lot compared to the 40s. Some of the weak signals that neorealist authors put on the screen have now turned into full trends in the pre-modern consumer culture. With the help of television, a sort of commoditization of society began. Masses became segments, workers became consumers, and objects of ordinary life became consumption goods. Following Beaudrillard’s critique (1970) of western societies, even human beings became objects of consumption and their myths and symbols began to be closely related to mass communication, marketing and–finally–consumption. Even intellectuals (and artists) are overwhelmed by this process and sell their resources to the industrial and political system: they help manipulate public opinion, realize cultural products as mere consumption goods, etc.

Commedia all’italiana is the typical genre of this period: it fits very well into the rapidly changing habits of Italian middle class. The country is growing and people want to laugh, but within the nooks and crannies of the system, moviemakers find controversial aspects of the ongoing process: the end of a rural society, poor, but full of dignity, overcome by the rise of an urban bourgeoisie, vulgar and boorish, alienated by an ephemeral mythology.

Il sorpasso is full of information about fast growing Italy: adolescents and young adults from the countryside are compared to those (more stylish) from big cities, new and modern family stereotypes, status symbols, new leisure activities, and evidence of an improved education are displayed. But also traces of restlessness and anxiety: it is the first time a comedy ends up with the death of one of the main characters. Young consumers are depicted in a very standardized way: they are now able to consume and, by so doing, they express themselves, but they are more and more equal to each other. They have the right (and the duty) to desire and try to purchase expensive sports cars, sailboats, and beautiful houses. They have to go to expensive restaurants, exclusive night clubs and nice holiday spots. Cars, cigarettes, phones, and jukeboxes are distributed in the movie as in a shopping mall. Bruno tries to convince Roberto, his travel mate, to apply his weak philosophy, full of tricks, opportunism and disenchantment. Bruno’s family has vanished and his wife and daughter hate him: furthermore, his wife seems to be very happy without him. Roberto is a young law student and his travels with Roberto (40 years old) sound like a sort of accelerated, but not necessarily pleasant, process toward maturity. Bruno leads him on a journey throughout new consumption practices and experiences, some of which are deviant and unhealthy (smoke, spirits). Roberto is attracted by Bruno’s ease and, sometimes, boldness, but he also slowly realizes his hollowness, superficiality and sorrowfulness. In the end, the young man dies in a car crash.

---

4“You, macaroni, have provoked me and I will eat you, and destroy you” (dialect and slang).
5“You have to be an actress” (dialect and slang).
6A scooter like Vespa.
7The state owned network (R.A.I.) starts in 1954.
From this point of view, movies tell very interesting stories about social and cultural development, but they cannot be isolated from either the context or the author’s perspective. In this sense, results will be more limited and specific compared to those obtained from pure semiotic analysis, but they will be more effective for the interpretation of the interaction between consumer culture and cultural products.

REFERENCES

Brunetta, Gian Piero (2003), Guida alla storia del cinema italiano, Turin: Einaudi.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this paper is twofold: on the one hand, we want to use movies to describe how Italian consumption culture has evolved in descriptive terms. On the other hand, we want to give some methodological insight into how to use movies for the purpose of consumer research.

From the descriptive point of view, the main results are the following:

• the more important product categories represented in Italian art movies are cigarettes and automobiles: they have been used as both a realistic component of the scenario, but also for their symbolic nature. Emphasizing the role that these goods hold in ordinary consumer culture, moviemakers have contributed to the development of a metaphorical and imaginary discourse to which these goods actually belong;
• two more general themes emerge from the data:
  √ the positive affect towards U.S. products and lifestyle: many movies represent this sort of peaceful invasion of U.S. goods and symbols and the positive attitude of Italian consumers;
  √ the criticism against mass consumption: several authors aimed their attention at the negative effects of materialism and consumerism.

The latter themes could seem controversial and related to different views of the world. But they are the product of the same cultural community, sharing almost the same tradition and having the same set of values. They emphasize both the effects of the role played by the U.S. in the liberation and development of the country and the drawbacks of an excess of materialism. The only way to appreciate this result and to use it as a tool for the interpretation of Italian consumer culture is to give room to the consideration of specific characteristics of authors (ideology, personal history) and of the social and historical context.
Semiology of Cinematic Consumption: Symbolic Consumer
Behavior in ‘Out of Africa’,” Journal of Consumer Research, 13 (December), 374-381.
McCracken, Grant (1986), “Culture and Consumption: a
Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the
Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods”, Journal of Con-
sumer Research, 13 (June), 71-84.
Deliberate Self-Indulgence vs. Involuntary Loss of Self-Control: Exploring the Influence of Culture on Consumer Impulsiveness Trait

Piyush Sharma, Nanyang Business School, Singapore
Bharadhwaj Sivakumaran, Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai, India
Roger Marshall, Nanyang Business School, Singapore

INTRODUCTION

Impulse buying is considered an important and widespread phenomenon by consumer researchers as well as marketing practitioners in the US and other western countries and it has been considered largely universal in nature (Beatty and Ferrell 1998; Hausman 2000; Rook and Fisher 1995). However, there is no consensus among researchers on the exact structure or nature of this complex psychological construct and extant literature is replete with its several significantly different interpretations and conceptualizations e.g. buying impulsiveness (Rook and Fisher 1995), consumer impulsiveness (Puri 1996), impulse buying tendency (Weun et al. 1998) and consumer buying impulsivity (Youn and Faber 2002).

Moreover, researchers have begun investigating impulse buying in other countries besides US such as Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam (Kacen and Lee 2002; Tuyet Mai et al. 2003). However, most cross-cultural studies into impulse buying did not adequately address the issue of measurement equivalence despite using scales developed in the US among their non-US respondents. Hence, there is still no conclusive evidence to support the assumption that impulse buying has the same meaning and implications for consumer across different cultures or indeed even within the same culture.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this research, we address this gap with three studies. In our first study, we used an existing scale to measure consumer impulsiveness construct, which is defined as a combination of two components–prudence and hedonism each of which along with the situational factors may influence the accessibility of the costs and benefits leading to either resistance or enactment of the buying impulse (Puri 1996). These two components of consumer impulsiveness are expected to be independent of each other and opposite in terms of their association with impulse buying behavior i.e. negative for prudence and positive for hedonism.

STUDY 1

Based on this conceptual framework, we investigated the consumer impulsiveness trait as a part of another larger study with 204 Singaporean undergraduate student respondents. We were unable to establish measurement equivalence for the consumer impulsiveness scale with our Singaporean sample showing a three-component structure compared to the two-component for US respondents as reported in prior studies. Six out of the seven items related to the original “prudence” component loading as expected on one single component, but the five items of “hedonism” component and item 7 from “prudence” component loaded on two different components, which we named “impulsivity” and “self-indulgence”.

STUDY 2

These findings prompted us to conduct another study to explore the possibility that the consumer impulsiveness construct may actually have different meaning in different cultures and also rule out other explanations like chance factor or idiosyncrasies of the sample in our first study. In our second study, we again used a similar approach with 648 Singaporean undergraduate respondents and then we ran exploratory factor analysis to demonstrate if consumer impulsiveness did indeed have an extra “self-indulgence” dimension for our Singaporean respondents. We once again discovered a three-dimensional structure and used these findings to develop a modified three-dimensional scale to capture the consumer impulsiveness construct across different cultures.

STUDY 3

Finally, in our third study with 160 Singaporean and US student respondents each, we ran confirmatory factor analysis on this new scale using a Structural Equation Modeling approach and our analysis did show that the three-dimensional measurement model provided a better fit for the Singaporean sample and a two-dimensional model for the US sample. We also measured level of individualism and collectivism for both our samples and split the pooled data into individualists and collectivists. We found that the three-dimensional measurement model provided a better fit for the collectivists and the two-dimensional model for the individualists.

CONTRIBUTION AND IMPLICATIONS

Our research represents one of the first few conceptual efforts to acknowledge and explore the cross-cultural differences in the consumer trait associated with impulse buying behavior. Using a series of three studies among Singaporean and US respondents we were able to demonstrate that the consumer impulsiveness construct does indeed have a different underlying structure for these two groups. We also developed a modified scale for consumer impulsiveness trait which should be useful in future research in this area especially in cross-cultural studies.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

However, we do have a few limitations. We have used only student respondents and a similar methodological approach in all our studies and explored only the trait aspects of impulse buying behavior. Future research should replicate our studies with non-student respondents using other research methods to eliminate the possibility of common method variance and also explore cross-cultural differences in the influence of relevant situational factors such as time and money availability, mood and involvement level.

REFERENCES


Risk Reversals and the Reflection Effect: The Moderating Role of Uncertainty Avoidance

Subimal Chatterjee, Binghamton University, State University of New York, U.S.A.
Junhong Min, Binghamton University, State University of New York, U.S.A.
David W. Taylor, Binghamton University, State University of New York, U.S.A.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Prospect Theory (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979), perhaps the most influential theory of risk of our era, posits that people are generally risk averse in gains and risk seeking in losses (reflection effect). For example, although people prefer a sure $3,000 to risking an 80% chance of winning $4,000, they would rather risk an 80% chance of losing $4,000 than accept a sure loss of $3,000. Such risk reversals, however, are not always obtained (e.g., Schneider and Lopes, 1986), and, in this paper, we propose that the individual difference variable, uncertainty avoidance (UA; Hofstede, 1991, 2001), is an important moderator of the reflection effect.

Uncertainty avoidance is defined as the extent to which people feel threatened by “uncertain or unknown situations” (Hofstede, 1991, Page 113), a feeling that is communicated through anxiety, and a need for explicit and clear rules. We propose that the feeling of anxiety persists even when the risks of a decision are explicitly stated. For example, a lottery that offers a known 80% chance of losing $4,000 also includes a 20% chance of losing nothing. Thus, if people wish to avoid the anxiety associated with not knowing what the outcome will be (e.g., $4,000 or nothing), they are likely to select the sure outcome in gains as well as in losses, and thus violate the reflection effect. The latter tendency, we propose, will be manifest more in higher UA individuals and less so in their lower UA counterparts.

Our first experiment (Experiment 1) is divided into two parts. In the first part, we show that (1) the UA construct is separate from risk avoidance in general, and (2) contrary to the assumption that risk ceases to be a source of anxiety once the probabilities are known, a state of anxiety persists even when probability information is made explicit. We measure UA using a five-item scale from Yoo and Donthu (2002) with items like it is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I am expected to do, rules/regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me. We measure risk avoidance with a seven-item scale adapted from Donthu and Gilliland (1996) and Griffin, Babin and Attaway (1996), with items like I have considered skydiving as a hobby (reverse scaled) and I avoid risky things. A confirmatory factor analysis shows both convergent validity as well as discriminant validity for the two constructs. After the scale measurements, we asked some participants to imagine how anxious they would be to play a lottery where picking a white ball from a container of 80 white balls and 20 red balls meant winning (or losing) $40 (the risk condition). Other participants were asked the same question for a lottery that involved picking a white ball from a container with red and white balls in unknown proportions (the uncertainty condition). We measured anxiety using a six-item scale from Pham (1996) and Taylor and Claxton (1994). We found that participants were more anxious in losses than in gains, but their anxiety state did not differ across risk and uncertainty conditions.

In the second part, we asked participants to make two choices:
(1) A gain lottery entailing a choice between a sure $3,000 and a lottery offering an 80% chance of winning $4,000, and (2) a loss lottery entailing a choice between a sure loss of $3,000 and an 80% chance of losing $4,000. The reflection effect predicts the choice of the sure thing in gains, and the choice of the risky lottery in losses. However, as expected, the reflection effect prevailed strongly among lower-UA participants (81%) and weakly among higher-UA participants (59%). More tellingly, thirty percent of the higher-UA participants selected the sure option in both gains and losses compared to only 8% among their lower-UA counterparts. The participants’ risk attitude, on the other hand, did not matter. Seventy-two percent of the higher risk-averse participants followed the reflection effects, and 67% of their lower risk-averse counterparts did likewise, a difference that was not statistically significant.

In Experiment 2, we further tested for the generalizability of our results among higher and lower UA individuals by adapting two problems from Prospect Theory in a between-subjects design. The first problem was identical to the problem used in Experiment 1. The second problem entailed a choice between a near certain win or loss (e.g., 90% chance of winning or losing $3,000) and a probable win or loss (45% chance of winning or losing $6,000). When necessary, participants were divided into lower and higher UA groups based on the median split of their raw UA scores. As expected, the reflection effect was much weaker among higher compared to lower-UA individuals. Among the higher-UA participants, 80% preferred the certain (or 90%-certain) gain and only 47% preferred the risky loss. Among the lower-UA participants, the corresponding percentages were 85% and 70% respectively.

In Experiment 3, we tested for the reflection effect among participants belonging to two cultures, one purportedly higher in UA (Japan), and the other less so (United States). Hofstede (2001), for example, computed UA indices for countries based on employee response to three questions: rule orientation, stability, and stress. On an index, where the maximum score was 112 (Greece) and the minimum was 8 (Singapore), Japan ranked 7th (Score of 92) and the United States ranked 43rd (Score of 46; see Hofstede, 2001; Page 151). The participants from these two cultures were given two decisions (in gains, a choice between a sure $3000 gain, or taking an 80% chance of winning $4,000; in losses, a choice between a sure $3,000 loss, or taking an 80% chance of losing $4,000). As expected, an overwhelming majority of the United States participants obeyed the reflection effect (86%) but just half of the Japanese participants did so (50%).

In the fourth and final experiment, we tested for a motivational correlate of UA that has often been cited as a key difference between higher and lower-UA societies: higher-UA societies are driven by a fear of failure whereas lower-UA societies are driven by the hope of success (Hofstede, 2001; see for example, Exhibit 4.6, Page 169). Thus, if higher-UA individuals are driven by the motivation to reduce losses, they should more susceptible to frames that describe losses as non-losses compared to their lower-UA counterparts. For example, in a choice between a sure loss of $3,000 and an 80% chance of losing $4,000, the sure loss of $3,000 can be framed as avoiding an 80% chance of not losing $1,000 more. The results show that framing the sure loss as a non-loss resonates more strongly among higher-UA individuals. Interestingly, framing the risky loss as a non-loss (e.g., describing an 80% chance of losing $4,000 as a 20% chance of not losing a sure $3,000) had no differential effect on the preferences of higher and lower-UA individuals. It appears therefore that the non-loss frames appear attractive to higher-UA participants as long as such frames are not applied in a risky domain.
In a highly competitive, global marketplace, as firms become ever more dependent on product innovations to generate revenues and market share, gaining rapid acceptance of new products is critical for market survival. New products, however, always entail an element of uncertainty, given that, without history to fall back on, consumers can only make a probability assessment how likely the product is to work for them. Our results suggest that, among segments that are intolerant of uncertainty, promising the absence of harm may turn out to be more critical than an assurance of help.

REFERENCE


ABSTRACT
Gamblers often have an illusion of control, believing that they can influence random outcomes. This study explores whether a gambler’s locus of control affects the illusion of control. As expected, the illusion of control was strongest amongst gamblers with an external locus of control (externals). Externals believed that they could choose numbers that would be more likely to be drawn in a lottery. Unexpectedly, gamblers with an internal locus of control (internals) believed the ticket that they were assigned had a better chance of being drawn. We concluded internals may be revealing a more passive form of illusory control.

“I figure you have the same chance of winning the lottery whether you play or not”
Fran Lebowitz

INTRODUCTION

“People [should] not trust the computer to pick your [lottery] numbers. I trust myself more”
A gambler, after he paid extra to select his ticket.

“Showing the previous sequences makes you [buy] more if you understand the law of averages”
A gambler, also a PhD student.

Do gamblers really believe they have some role to play in the outcome of a randomly determined event such as a lottery draw? Do they believe that they can correctly pick the winning numbers? A number of studies across a range of gambling forms have shown that gamblers engage in high levels of irrational thinking while gambling (Coulombe, Ladouceur, Desharnais and Jobin 1992; Delfabbro and Winefield 2000; Gaboury and Ladouceur 1989; Ladouceur and Gaboury 1988; Ladouceur, Gaboury, Dumont and Rochette, 1988; Ladouceur, Gaboury, Bujold, Lachance and Tremblay 1991; Walker 1992b). These irrational beliefs can cause gamblers to misperceive the economic utility of gambling (Ladouceur and Walker 1996), providing them with false expectations of control over events determined randomly, (Wagenaar 1989) and lead them to continued gambling despite the inevitability of monetary loss (Ladouceur and Walker 1996).

Studies into irrationality have identified a number of cognitive biases among gamblers (see Wagenaar 1989; Toneatto, Blitz-Miller, Calderwood, Dragonetti and Tsanos 1997; Toneatto 1999) which have been classified into two categories; errors in estimating the probability of an outcome and perceived control over a randomly determined event (Walker 1992a; Ladouceur and Walker 1996). The first category relates to the overestimation of the chance of winning due to a misunderstanding of the independence of random outcomes. The second category refers to the “illusion of control” (Langer 1975) which occurs when individuals hold erroneous beliefs about his or her control over randomly determined or uncontrollable events.

THE ILLUSION OF CONTROL
Langer (1975) allowed participants to purchase lottery tickets under two conditions. In one condition, participants were handed a lottery ticket (no choice). In the other condition, participants were permitted to select the ticket they would like in the draw (choice). After all tickets were sold, participants were then told that another person wanted to partake in the lottery. The investigator then asked all participants to report how much money would be necessary for them to sell their ticket to this person. Langer (1975) hypothesised that the participants who selected their lottery ticket would demand a higher price. The hypothesis was confirmed, participants in the ‘choice’ condition demanded over 400% more money to part with the ticket (choice=$8.67, no choice=$1.96).

A similar result was found in a study by Ladouceur, Mayrand, Gaboury and St. Onge (1987), where people that chose their ticket numbers in a lottery were more reluctant to part with the tickets, than those who had a ticket with randomly allocated numbers. The result was replicated recently; Wohl and Enzle (2002) allowed 25 students to select a lottery ticket, while another 25 were given a computer selected ticket. They found an illusionary control effect on estimated likelihood of winning with participants in the ‘choice’ condition, reporting a significantly greater belief of their chance of winning than participants in the ‘no choice’ condition.

Langer (1975) explained the illusion as a false belief that skill could be used to influence the outcome of a randomly determined event. The illusion occurred because participants saw features in a chance-determined situation as similar to a situation determined by skill. The confusion results in participants using strategies perceived as effective in skill-determined tasks which gave them an illusion of control. Overall, a substantial amount of support for the illusion of control has been found (see Bouts and Van Avermaet 1992; Davis, Sundahl and Lesbo 2000; Langer and Roth 1975; Dixon 2000; Gilovich and Douglas 1986; Davis, Sundahl and Lesbo 2000; Ladouceur, Tourigny and Mayrand 1986).

Are there conditions under which the illusion of control is reduced or even eliminated? Langer (1975) proposed that if participants in a chance-related task were reminded of the objective probabilities of success, the illusion would be reduced. Dunn and Wilson (1990) found an illusion of control in situations when potential losses are low with participants betting more and reporting greater confidence in their chance of winning. However, when they increased the stakes, the illusion was eliminated. Dunn and Wilson’s (1990) explanation was consistent with Langer’s (1975) proposition, that an “intrusion of reality” accompanied the increase in the potential loss. The increase in the stakes encouraged individuals to focus on the objective probability in the task, consequently reducing irrational thoughts. Given that there are boundary conditions, and that not all participants in the studies reviewed here were equally susceptible to the illusion, we suggest that there may be quantifiable differences between those more or less susceptible to the illusion. To our knowledge, there have been only two studies investigating how individual differences affect an illusion of control (see Wildman, 1998), both concerning the effect of depression on feelings of control.
The objective of this research is to explore whether a gambler’s locus of control (Rotter 1966) affects the susceptibility to the illusion of control when making decisions on a chance determined gambling task. This objective is consistent with Wildman’s (1998) call for studies into the illusion of control utilising the locus of control formulation and other personality factors because the findings may be useful in improving our understanding of continued gambling behaviour.

**LOCUS OF CONTROL**

According to Rotter’s social learning theory of personality (1966), an individual’s perception of control should increase when events are thought to be determined primarily by an individual’s own behaviour or personal characteristics (internal locus of control or internals). This perception of control diminishes if outcomes are seemed to be determined by a function of external factors beyond the individual’s control such as chance or the control of powerful others (external locus of control or externals) (Rotter 1990). Therefore, individuals whose locus of control is primarily internal believe that their life circumstances and outcomes are the result of their own behaviour. Accordingly, externals tend to see themselves at the mercy of circumstances beyond their control.

**Locus of control and games of chance**

Internals are predisposed to avoid chance-determined gambling because if they spent considerable time gambling, they would soon discover that they have little influence over determining future outcomes (Walker 1992a). Compared to internals, externals have consistently been found to favour (Lester 1980; Walker 1992a) and perform better on skill-related tasks (Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder 1982). On the other hand, externals have been shown to express a stronger liking for chance tasks over skill-related tasks and an overall stronger preference for chance situations. Externals have also been found to try harder and perform better in chance related tasks (Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder 1982).

Externals tend to perceive chance as controllable (Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder 1982). Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder (1982) found that externals behaved in a manner consistent with a perception of control on chance related tasks, but not on tasks determined by skill. The opposite pattern was found for internals. Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder (1982) also found on self-report findings that only externals stated that they perceived the chance task as measuring their ability. Consequently, externals are prone to the illusion of control as they tend to believe that successfully predicting future chance outcomes is based on their personal aptitude, and are more likely to engage in skill-related behaviours when participating in such tasks. In this study we have given participants the option of choosing their own numbers or being given a random set of numbers for a lottery draw. Those participants who assign a greater chance of winning or preference to selecting their own numbers would be more susceptible to the illusion of control bias. Therefore, we hypothesize that externals will be more susceptible to an illusion of control than internals on a chance related task.

**METHOD**

**Participants and Design**

Fifty-three participants (30 females and 23 males) were recruited from a large suburban club that provides a wide range of gaming services to the general public. All participants reported that they gamble. Over 75% of the sample stating they played gaming machines at least once a week.

The research presented here is part of a larger study designed to investigate gambler’s varying susceptibility to a number of cognitive biases. The study was conducted in sessions comprising of 4-6 people who were required to participate in 3 chance-determined gambling tasks. The first task was to report on the likelihood of winning in a lottery. All participants received club membership points for participating in the study and were allowed to keep all money won in the study in the form of club membership points. All participants were required to gamble on every bet offered in the study. These membership points could be used to purchase non-gambling goods and services at the Club. This form of remuneration was used to encourage participants to participate in a realistic manner and provide the study with external validity.

**Stimuli**

*Lottery Tickets.* Six numbers were chosen at random for each of seven different 6/49 lottery tickets. The tickets designed to appear random using the same technique described in Hardoon, Baboushkin, Hayley, Derevensky, Jeffrey, Gupta’s (2001) a study of cognitions in lottery ticket selection. Participants in each study session were given one of these random tickets (the assigned ticket) and told that this was their ticket in a lottery draw that was about to be held. Numbers were to be called out at random until a participant in the session matches all 6 numbers. The first person to have all their numbers called out will be the winner of the lottery task. The winner would be awarded with $30 that could be used on further gambling tasks in the study and ultimately be converted to club membership points. After participants have considered the pre-selected ticket they were asked to select 6 numbers that they would like to have in the lottery task (selected ticket).

**Dependent Measures.** In previous studies there have been different measures used to measure the illusion of control. They range from ratings of perceived control (Langer and Roth 1975), ratings of confidence (Langer 1975; Dunn and Wilson 1990), bet size (Bouts and Avermaet 1992; Dunn and Wilson 1990; Gilovich and Douglas 1986; Davis et al. 2000; Wolfgang, Zhenker and Viscusi 1984), bet difficulty (i.e. betting on low probability options) (Davis et al. 2000), trading selected lottery numbers (Langer 1975) and perceived chance of winning (Wohl and Enzle 2002). Participants in this study were asked to use an associated chance of winning scale to rate their chances of winning the lottery with the assigned and then the selected tickets. The scale was a 12.5cm continuous scale anchored by “very good” to “very bad.” The preference scale asked the participants to indicate their preference for choosing the selected ticket using a 12.5cm continuous scale anchored by “yes, definitely [choose the selected ticket]” to “no, definitely not [choose the selected ticket].”

**Locus of control questionnaire.** As devised by Rotter (1966), this scale comprises of 29 pairs of statements including six filler items. In each pair of statements, one relates to an internal locus of control and the other an external locus of control. In its original format, participants are asked to indicate which one of the two statements better describes their thoughts and behaviours (Rotter 1966). Valecha (1972) augmented the scale by requiring that participants state if the choice is much closer or slightly closer to their actual opinion. We used the augmented scale in this analysis. The locus of control scores were distributed normally. A median split was used to place participants into internal and external groups. This resulted in 26 internals and 26 externals.2

---

1The money won in the study was converted to club membership points and awarded to the participant.

2One person did not complete the locus of control questionnaire reducing the sample size to 52 people.
Procedure
Participants were recruited from the gaming floor. The cover story was that the study was investigating gambler’s perceptions and opinions of a number of new gambling games. All participants were handed the assigned lottery ticket and completed the associated chance of winning measure. Participants then chose six numbers for the selected ticket and completed the associated chance of winning and preference measures. Participants were asked to select only one of these tickets to enter into the lottery draw. After the lottery was held, participants participated in two further gambling games for about 20-30 minutes and then completed the locus of control questions.

RESULTS
External locus of control gamblers. The illusion of control occurs when gamblers believe that they can affect the outcome of a random event by choosing numbers or otherwise actively affecting their odds of winning. The illusion has been a robust finding. Are all gamblers susceptible? The hypothesis for this study was that gamblers with an external locus of control are more likely to have illusions of control compared to gamblers with an internal locus of control.

Did the gamblers externals believe that they would be more likely to win the lottery if they were allowed to choose the numbers on their ticket? The difference between the gamblers’ belief that a ticket with their choice of numbers would win versus the probability that the ticket they were assigned would win was the first measure to test for the illusion of control. Gamblers were categorised as to their susceptibility to the bias with the difference variable. A chi-squared test reveals that externals were more likely to believe that a ticket with their choice of numbers would win (externals=53%, internals 31%. χ²=2.84, p=.09). The second measure is the preference for trading the assigned ticket for the ticket with numbers the gambler could choose. The gamblers indicating that they would believe their active participation in the lottery would improve the probability of winning also had a significantly greater preference for the new ticket (t=3.46, p<.05).

Internal locus of control gamblers. What did the internals believe? Other than not being as susceptible to illusions of control, we did not offer a hypothesis. Previous research suggests that internals are less likely to believe that they can affect the outcome of a game of chance (Lester 1980; Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder 1982; Walker 1992a). For this reason, the internals might be hypothesised to be ‘rational’ and have no preference for control. However, all people in the study reported that they do gamble with 75% gambling on a regular basis.3 Although internals do not generally exhibit behaviour consistent with having an illusion of control, the regularity of gambling behaviour by internal gamblers in this study could indicate some level of misunderstanding of the nature of chance outcomes.

Upon closer inspection of the data, it was revealed that the proportion of the sample that did not believe that their active participation in the lottery would positively affect the probability of winning were not as rational as it initially appears. It was not the case that these gamblers understood the probability of random events as equal across ticket numbers. Most of this group actually believed the assigned ticket had a better chance of winning than a ticket they could choose. The sample was divided into 3 groups; those that believed the ticket of their choice had a better chance of winning, those that believed the probabilities associated with the two tickets were equivalent, and those that believed the assigned ticket had a better chance of winning. The internals were susceptible to the latter bias which is labelled the ‘Passive Control’ in Figure 1. The rationale for the label will be explained in the following paragraphs.

There are two cognitive biases that might explain the unexpected result; the endowment effect and the status quo bias. The endowment effect occurs when people demand more money to give up an object than they were willing to pay for the same object (Thaler 1985). The status quo bias occurs when individuals have a strong preference for the status quo (Samuelson and Zeckhauser 1988). A loss aversion explanation has been offered to account for both effects (Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler 2000). Since the individual’s focus is on the potential losses involved with changing the situation, the disadvantages of choosing a new alternative loom larger than the advantages to be gained by the trade. In this case, if a gambler has a lottery ticket and is asked if they want to change it for a different ticket, the status quo bias would predict that they would not change the ticket, in fact, they might even pay to keep their own. However, this effect is not driven by a perceived enhancement of the ticket the gambler owns, but the predicted pain of giving it up (Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler 2000). The loss aversion explanation requires that the gambler does not believe the ticket has a better chance of winning than the alternative ticket, but because they are psychologically at the origin of the value function, they see giving up the ticket as a loss. The data presented here shows that internals do believe that the ticket they are holding is more likely to win, therefore, these alternative explanations are ruled out.

Ryckman & Rodda (1971) found that internals experienced a significantly greater decrease in confidence than externals following failures on a chance task. However, they also discovered that externals increased in confidence more than internals following initial successes on the chance task. They attempted to explain this surprising finding by contending that externals tend defend against failure by refusing to change their confidence ratings. However, it could be hypothesised that although internals tend not to believe that chance outcomes are controllable, the fact that their confidence decreased after failure on a chance task suggests that they do perceive some element of control when predicting future outcomes.

In this study all participants were required to gamble on chance determined tasks with the lottery being the first such task. Perhaps, when responding to the chance of winning items, internals were considering the future betting opportunities to come in the study. From their gambling experiences, they could have perceived that if they did actively participate in the lottery draw and lost, it would have reduced their confidence, as they had the opportunity to exhibit some control when selecting their own numbers. This loss of confidence could be perceived as potentially impacting their performance on the future games. If they simply chose the assigned ticket and lost they could attribute the losses to an aspect totally beyond their control. This attribution could be perceived as not impacting their confidence and ultimately their performance on future bets.

Langer (1975) manipulated task participation by either allowing individuals to choose their own numbers for a lottery draw (active participation) or by assigning numbers for a lottery draw to individuals (passive participation). The key finding in the paper is that individuals in the active participation condition had a greater illusion of control. The illusion of control was measured by an increased belief in the ability to affect the outcome of the randomly determined event. In the results presented here the internals appear to believe that a passive strategy of accommodating the environment (Toneatto, Blitz-Miller, Calderwood, Dragonaetti, and Tsanos 1997) would improve the probability of their winning. It is referred

---

3A chi-square test found no relationship was found between locus of control and frequency of gambling behaviour (χ²=1.47, p>.05).
600 / Strategies to Improve the Probability of Winning a Lottery: Gamblers and their Illusions of Control

FIGURE 1
Bias by Locus of Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
<th>Passive Control</th>
<th>No Bias</th>
<th>Illusion of Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

to as a secondary type of control. In other words, the internals may also have an illusion of control, but it manifests itself in a behaviour that is diametrically opposed to the behaviour of the externals: Accommodating the environment versus modifying the environment. This is a post-hoc explanation only and requires further research.

**DISCUSSION**

The illusion of control has been found to be very prevalent amongst gamblers (Ladouceur, Mayrand, Gaboury and St. Onge 1987; Langer 1975; Wohl and Enzle 2002). In fact, some suggest that it is a defining characteristic of a gambler. We found that the preference for control was strongest in the gamblers with an external locus of control. Internals did not believe that their active participation would positively affect the outcome of the lottery. Quite the opposite, although not hypothesised, the internals preferred not to actively participate in the lottery. They believed that the ticket they were assigned had a better chance of winning. We suggest this may be a different strategy for controlling situations. This strategy is related to the passive control discussed by Toneatto, Blitz-Miller, Calderwood, Dragonaetti, and Tsanos (1997) as a secondary type of control.

This is interesting because by definition, in situations that are not determined by chance, internal locus of control individuals are more likely to believe they can control the environment. They tend to be convinced that their own skill, ability and efforts determine the bulk of their life experiences. In other words, they can modify the environment by their actions.Externals are less likely to believe in their ability to control the situation. They believe that their lives are determined mainly by sources outside themselves— fate, chance, luck or powerful others. In other words, they are forced to accommodate the environment. However, the ‘accommodate or modify’ decision reverses when the outcome of an event is to be determined by chance.

Internals may understand that chance will determine the outcome, but are still not completely rational as they use a passive strategy to improve the probability of a positive outcome. Externals, who do not generally believe they can hone skills to control the future, appear to believe that they have some power to influence the outcome of a randomly determined event. Gamblers in this study were not provided an opportunity to report why they believed the ticket they were assigned and the ticket they could choose had different probabilities of winning. There were two reasons why we did not include a question allowing them to justify their decisions. First, the lottery draw was followed by other gambling tasks not reported here. Asking them to justify their decision may have affected future behaviour. Second, we were not convinced that gamblers can articulate the rationale behind their decisions (Delfabbro and Winefield 2000).

The results here contribute to a burgeoning literature on gambling behaviour. The illusion of control is believed to be one of the key determinants of prolonged gambling sessions. Insights into when the illusion occurs and what strategies lottery ticket holders use to try to improve the probability of holding a winning ticket is critical to our understanding of behaviour in this $124 billion a year industry (Productivity Commission 1999). Our contribution is that
both internal and external locus of control gamblers try to control
the situation, but their strategies are completely different: Internals
use a passive approach, externals use an active approach.

REFERENCES
Familiar or Unfamiliar Cards: Stimulus Familiarity, Chance
Orientation and the Illusion of Control,” Personality and
Coulombe, Andree, Robert Ladouceur, Raymond Desharnais and
Jean Jobin (1992), “Erroneous Perceptions and Arousal
Among Regular and Occasional Video Poker Players,”
Journal of Gambling Studies, 8(3), 235-244.
Davis, Deborah., Ian Sundahl and Michael Lesbo (2000),
“Illusory Personal Control as a Determinant of Bet Size and
Type in Casino Crap Games,” Journal of Applied Social
Psychology, 30, 6, 1224-1242.
Delfabbro, Paul H. and Anthony H. Winefield (2000), “Predic-
tors of Irrational Thinking in Regular Slot Machine Gam-
Variations in Gambling as a Function of Perceived Control
over Chance Outcomes,” The Psychological Record, 50, 4,
705.
Dunn, Dana S. and Timothy D. Wilson, (1990), “When the
Stakes are High: A Limit to the Illusion of Control Effect,”
Perceptions and Gambling,” Journal of Social Behavior and
Personality, 4, 411-420.
Evaluations of Randomly Determined Gambling Outcomes,”
Hardoon, Karen K., Hayley R. Baboushkin, Jeffrey L.
in the Selection of Lottery Tickets,” Journal of Clinical
Psychology, Vol 57(6), 749-763.
Kahneman, Daniel, Jack L. Knetsch, and Richard H. Thaler
and Status Quo Bias,” in Choices, Values and Frames, ed.
Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, Cambridge, UK:
Cambridge University Press, 159-170.
Limited and Unlimited Stakes on Gambling Behaviour,”
Ladouceur, Robert, Anne Gaboury, Michael Dumont, Pierre
Rochette (1988), “Gambling Relationship Between the
Frequency of Wins and Irrational Thinking,” The Journal of
Psychology, 122(4), 409-414.
Ladouceur, Robert, Anne Gaboury, Annie Bujold, Nadine
of Laboratory Studies of Videopoker Gambling,” Journal of
Gambling Studies, 7(2), 109-117.
Ladouceur, Robert and Marie Mayrand, Anne Gaboury and
Myrielle St Ouge (1987), “Compartment des acheteurs de
billets de lotteries passives et pseudo-actives: Etude
comparative,” Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science, 19,
266-274. in Wildman, Robert W. (1998), Gambling: An
Attempt at an Integration, Wynne Resources, Edmonton,
Canada.
Ladouceur, Robert, Marc Tourigny, Marie Mayrand (1986),
“Familiarity, Group Exposure and Risk-Taking Behavior in

European Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 7) / 601

Perspective on Gambling,” in P.M. Salkovskis (ed.), Trends
in Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies, 89-120, New York:
Wiley.
Personality and Social Psychology, 32, 311-328.
Langer, Ellen J. and Jane Roth, (1975), “Heads I Win, Tails It’s
Chance: The Illusion of Control as a Function of the
Sequence of Outcomes in a Purely Chance Task,” Journal of
Personality and Social Psychology, 32, 6, 951-955.
in Locus of Control,” Psychological Reports, 47, 22.
Productivity Commission. (1999), Australia’s Gambling
Rothbaum, Fred., John R. Weisz and Samuel S. Snyder, (1982),
“Changing the World and Changing the Self: A Two-Process
Model of Perceived Control,” Journal of Personality and
Versus External Control of Reinforcement,” Psychological
Monographs: General and Applied, Vol. 80, No. 1 (Whole
No. 609), page 1–28.
Rotter, Julian B. (1990), “Internal Versus External Control of
Reinforcement: A Case History of a Variable,” American
Psychologist, 45(4), 489-493.
Ryckman, R. M., Rodda, W. C. (1971), “Locus of Control and
Initial Task Experience As Determinants of Confidence
Changes in a Chance Situation. Journal of Personality and
Social Psychology, 18, 116-119
Bias in Decision Making,” Journal of Risk and Uncertainty,
1, 7-59.
Gambling,” Substance Use and Misuse, 34(11), 1593-1604.
Toneatto, Tony, Tamara Blitz-Miller, Kim Calderwood, Rosa
Distortions in Heavy Gambling,” Journal of Gambling
Studies, 13(3), 253-266.
Valecha, Gopal K. (1972), “Construct Validation of Internal-
External Locus of Control as Measured as an Abbreviated
11-Item Scale,” Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, The
Ohio State University.
Wagenaar, Willem A. (1989), Paradoxes of Gambling Behavior,
U.S.A.; Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.
Walker, Michael B. (1992b), “Irrational Thinking Among Slot
Machine Players,” Journal of Gambling Studies, 8(3), 245-
261.
Wildman, Robert W. (1998), Gambling: An Attempt at an
Integration, Wynne Resources, Edmonton, Canada.
Deployment of Personal Luck: Illusory Control in Games of
Pure Chance,” Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,
28, 1388-1397.
Wolfgang, Ann K., Sanford I. Zenker and Theresa Viscusi
(1984), “Control Motivation and the Illusion of Control in
SESSION SUMMARY

Prior research in marketing has shown time and time again that consumers prefer choosing from larger assortments (e.g., Kahn 1995, McAlister and Pessemier 1983) and are more likely to shop at stores offering greater variety (Arnold, Oum and Tigert 1983). As a result, retailers, particularly online (Alba et al. 1997), often position themselves in terms of the size of their assortments. Their hope is that by offering a larger assortment, consumers will be more likely to find better fitting products, thereby improving sales, satisfaction and loyalty. Based on this reasoning, retailers have been uneasy to cut back on the number of SKUs even though prior research suggests such reductions may go unnoticed (Broniarczyk, Hoyer and McAlister 1998).

The three papers presented in this session offer novel and nuanced insights into how assortment size and variety affect consumer behavior. Together these papers suggest that (1) consumers and marketers alike overestimate the value of more choice—not only because they underestimate the costs, but because they also overstate the benefits. (2) Retailers, however, may rightfully be weary of simply cutting the number of SKUs since such reductions could have negative implications for sales. (3) Rather than focusing merely on the number of options available, closer consideration should be given to variety on the attribute level and its implications for search and choice. Recognizing that responses to variety can be both positive and negative and may also depend on the types of products in the assortment, the three papers included in this proposal all try to show how variety can be used to influence and predict consumer purchase decisions.

While greater variety often leads to positive outcomes, recent work demonstrates that offering too much variety may be overwhelming and motivating for consumers due to choice overload (Huffman and Kahn 1998; Iyengar and Lepper 2000). This prior research suggests that there are significant costs associated with choosing from larger assortments. In addition, the paper by Diehl and Poynor suggests that consumers and retailers may overestimate the benefits derived from larger assortments. Their work shows that larger assortments create heightened expectations regarding the preference match one will be able to find. Such extreme expectations are likely to be disconfirmed, leading consumers to be less satisfied with the same product chosen from a larger compared to a smaller assortment. Even for objectively better preference matches, such improvements do not translate into greater willingness to pay and thus the benefits of larger assortments may not necessarily materialize.

Work on choice overload suggests that consumers experience lower cognitive costs when choosing from smaller assortments. Gone unnoticed, such reductions could also lead to substantial monetary savings for retailers (e.g. Broniarczyk, Hoyer and McAlister 1998). However, if the decrease in assortment is noticed, consumers may experience reactance (Fitzsimmons 2000) and reduce purchases. The work by Nunes and Boatwright presented in this session examines the impact of assortment size on purchase intent. Contrary to recent work on assortment reductions (FMI 1993, Drèze, Hoch, and Purk 1994; Broniarczyk, Hoyer, and McAlister 1998; Boatwright and Nunes 2001, 2004), they find that reducing assortment size decreases shopping frequency as well as purchase quantity. However, they also find that the negative impact resulting from assortment reductions differs largely by category, suggesting that reductions can be made strategically for certain categories without suffering the full extent of negative consequences.

While prior research has mainly treated variety and the total number of options available synonymously, not all variety is created equal. People respond differently to the variety in an assortment, depending on the type of attributes involved. Inman (2001), for example, found that consumers are more likely to seek variety and satiate on sensory attributes (e.g., flavor) versus non-sensory attributes (e.g., brand). In the last paper, Morales, Moe, and Kahn show a distinction in how product-related versus non-product related attributes influence perceptions of variety (Keller 1993). While differences on product-related attributes (e.g., calories for nutrition bars) make product assortments seem high in variety, non-product related attributes (e.g., number of servings) offer very little variety. Consistent with the idea that variety seeking along a given attribute is an indicator of preference uncertainty for that attribute, they find that consumers who search across products that differ only on non-product related attributes are more likely to make a purchase, while consumers who search across products that differ on product-related attributes are less likely to make a purchase.

Taken together, this session broadens our knowledge of how variety in product assortments can influence consumer decisions. Based on experimental as well as field data that has been already collected for all three projects, these papers make it clear that bigger is not necessarily better with regard to assortment size. More importantly, they also show several ways that assortment variety can affect the likelihood of consumer purchases as well as marketers’ ability to predict such purchases. Given the importance of these issues, it is expected that this session will be of interest to a wide audience, including researchers interested in variety, assortment, retailing, and decision-making in general, as well as marketing practitioners alike.

SESSION ABSTRACTS

“Great Expectations?! Assortment Size, Expectations and Purchase Likelihood”

Kristin Diehl and Cait Poynor, University of South Carolina

Many studies in marketing have shown that consumers value greater selection (e.g., Kahn 1995; McAlister and Pessemier 1982). Recently, however, researchers have demonstrated that consumers can experience choice overload. Consumers are less likely to actually purchase when faced with larger as opposed to smaller selections (Iyengar and Lepper 2000; Iyengar and Jiang 2003) and may be less satisfied with their chosen option (Wood, Swain and Wadden 2004) as well as less confident in the choices they made (Chernev 2003). This stream of research suggests that greater selections can be ‘demotivating’ because such assortments may be overwhelming and can heighten decision difficulty (e.g. Huffman and Kahn 1998).

We propose an additional mechanism, based on the effect of assortment size on consumers’ expectations that, alongside the effect of cognitive load, may explain lower purchase likelihood
from larger assortments. We predict larger assortments will raise expectations about the preference match that can be achieved from that selection. Higher expectations may give rise to negative disconfirmation when searching a particular assortment thus leading to fewer purchases.

In expectation, consumers should always be able to find at least as good a match from larger as from the smaller sets. However, negative disconfirmation from larger assortments is still likely because (1) consumers may overestimate the extent to which they will be able to choose more advantageously (e.g. Diehl, Kornish Lynch 2003) and (2) because discrepancies from the ideal will be perceived as more severe (Wedell 1996). We therefore make the following predictions: (1) Larger assortments lead to lower purchase likelihood. (2) Larger assortments increase expectations about the best fitting product available. (3) The effect of assortment size on purchase likelihood will be mediated by experienced negative disconfirmation.

So far, we have collected data from a scenario study and a real choice study, supporting our proposed framework. Note that in these studies, the dependent variables are willingness-to-pay (WTP) and product usage, respectively, rather than purchase likelihood measures.

In study 1, participants were asked to review a restaurant menu on behalf of a Diet Club and to select the option that best met the goal of 10 total carbs or less. The design was a 2 (menu size: 10 vs. 30) by 2 (expectation measure taken prior to choice: Yes/No) between subjects design. In both menus, the best and second best option as well as the worst option were identical; however, the larger menu featured more items within the same range. As predicted, a larger assortment raised the degree of preference match participants expected. We also found that larger assortments decreased participants’ WTP and satisfaction for the same, good option. Note that assortment size had this effect regardless of whether or not participants had previously expressed their expectations.

In Study 2, participants chose an actual pen from a large (25 pens) or small (5 pens) catalog. Subsequently they used this pen to answer an unrelated, open ended questionnaire. As predicted, participants expected to find a more ideal pen when given the larger catalog to choose from. Interestingly, however, those choosing from the smaller catalog actually used the chosen pen more extensively, i.e., wrote more words in the subsequent task, than those choosing from the larger catalog. Controlling for choice from the larger catalog being perceived as more difficult, these results still hold.

Recently, researchers have challenged the idea that greater choice is always desirable, focusing on the effects of choice overload. We contribute an additional mechanism to the current discussion, suggesting that increasing consumers’ expectations of what should be available and therefore what constitutes acceptable products can have negative consequences.

**“Effect of Product Assortment Changes on Customer Retention”**  
Peter Boatwright, Carnegie Mellon University  
Sharad Borle, Rice University  
Joseph B. Kadane, Carnegie Mellon University  
Joseph C. Nunes, University of Southern California  
Galit Shmueli, University of Maryland

Recent research in both the academic and the practitioner literatures suggests grocery retailers can reduce product assortment with little or no loss in sales. A Food Marketing Institute study (1993) found no significant loss in sales after a reduction in the number of Stock-Keeping Units (SKUs) in six test categories across three retail chains, and Boatwright and Nunes (2001, 2004) also found no impact on sales in a study of 42 categories. Drèze, Hoch, and Purk (1994) found sales actually went up nearly 4% in eight test categories after experimenters deleted 10 percent of the less popular items. Similarly, a study by Broniarczyk, Hoyer, and McAlister (1998) found substantial reductions of low-selling or small-share items can occur without significantly impacting perceptions of assortment within a category.

Offering large assortments is costly, and Wal*Mart’s success has forced retailers to re-evaluate the current business model. According to the notion of “efficient assortment,” cost reductions associated with reducing the number of slow-selling items a grocer carries within a category should result in increased category profits. For example, Progressive Grocer (Krum 1994) reported 87% profit gains in a study of cat box filler where the number of category items was reduced from 26 to 16. Nevertheless, retailers remain reluctant to cut assortments. One of the primary value propositions offered by many grocers is one-stop shopping; customers can find exactly what they are looking for without visiting multiple stores. Retailers fear that backing off from this principle could steer consumers to a competitor that continues to offer a broader product assortment. Simply put, retailers fear assortment reductions erode customer retention.

This research evaluates the outcome of an extensive reduction in assortment conducted by a retailer abiding by the principles of efficient assortment espoused by analysts and supported by prior studies. Specifically, we investigate the impact of a large-scale, one-time assortment reduction on customer retention across each and every category within the store. At the most basic level, we investigate whether or not customers changed their shopping behavior after being offered fewer alternative products from which to choose. The results from our panel level model indicate that the reduction in assortment reduces overall store sales, and decreases both sales frequency (store visits) and quantity (total basket size). We also find that the assortment reduction had a greater overall effect on purchase frequency than on purchase quantity. The decline in sales is in contrast with previous research suggesting that eliminating moderate amounts of low-selling SKUs results in unchanged or increased category sales (Broniarczyk, Hoyer, and McAlister 1998; Drèze, Hoch, and Purk 1994; Boatwright and Nunes 2001, 2004). It is important to point out that earlier research focused on assortment changes within select sets of categories, while we investigate the effects of an assortment reduction on customer retention both across all categories and within individual categories.

Our category-level analysis reveals that less frequently purchased categories are more adversely affected by the reduction in assortment than other categories. We also find that the reduction has a greater effect on purchase frequency than on purchase quantity at the category level (category purchase incidence and purchase quantity), just as it did at the store level. Recent empirical studies have focused on exploring the effects of assortment cuts on purchase quantities in popular categories. We suspect this concentration on frequently purchased categories, where our model predicts a decline in purchase frequency would have a less profound effect, may contribute to the varying results across different studies. It is important to note that sales did not decline in every category, and our results also reveal certain categories for which purchase frequency actually increases while quantity remains unchanged.

To summarize, the primary purpose of this research is to explore the effect of a large-scale, one-time decrease in assortment on customer retention at both the store and category level simultaneously. We utilize sales data from each and every category within a store to examine the effect of a reduction in low-selling SKUs on assortment changes.
that relate to its purchase consumer; flavor) versus attributes. He found a distinction between sensory attributes are considered product-related attributes in Keller's framework.

Several researchers have argued that not all types of product attributes play the same role in a consumer's decision process. Keller (1993) dichotomized attributes as product-related versus non-product related attributes. Product-related attributes are defined as those "ingredients necessary for performing the product or service function sought by consumers." Non-product related attributes are defined as "external aspects of the product or service that relate to its purchase consumer;" these include price information, packaging or appearance, and user/usage imagery.

Inman (2001) also proposed different categories of product attributes. He found a distinction between sensory attributes (e.g., flavor) versus non-sensory attributes (e.g., brand) in terms of the degree of variety consumers sought along each type of attribute. Specifically he shows both empirically and experimentally that consumers are more likely to seek variety and satiate on sensory attributes. Interestingly, although these two types of attributes result in very different buying behavior, both sensory and non-sensory attributes are considered product-related attributes in Keller's framework.

In this paper we examine attribute-level based perceptions of variety and their impact on the buying process. Building off of Keller's framework, we first consider both product-related (including sensory and non-sensory) and non-product related attributes, and look at how variety along these two types of attributes impacts overall perceptions and preferences for product assortments. One key difference between this paper and others in the area is that rather than looking at the variety in a store's product assortment, we focus on the assortment of items consumers choose to look at during the search process and examine how this assortment varies with regard to attribute-level variety.

Previous research has proposed that variance along a product attribute is an indicator for uncertainty (Pras and Summers 1978). In addition, Moe (2003) suggests that consumers may seek different levels of variety depending on where they are in the decision process. Early in the decision process when consumers are first creating their consideration sets and learning more about the products, they are likely to seek more variety, while later in the process when they are evaluating alternatives, they are likely to seek less variety. Building off of these same ideas, we propose that variety seeking along a given attribute in the search process is an indicator of preference uncertainty for that attribute. Consequently, consumers who search a higher variety of products may be classified in a different stage of the purchasing process. If this is indeed the case, the variety of the assortment searched by a consumer can be a powerful indicator of purchasing behavior and may ultimately be used to predict, and even encourage, the likelihood of purchase. Therefore, it is important to study the relationship between attribute-level variety in the assortment of products searched and purchasing behavior, as it may provide the e-commerce marketer with another way of identifying likely buyers.

In this paper, we use a combination of controlled, laboratory experiments and online clickstream data to show distinctions between variety along product-related and non-product related attributes with regard to where consumers are in the decision process. In the first laboratory study, we vary attribute-level variety in an assortment and measure perceptions of variety and preferences for the assortment. The results indicate, across several product categories, that the two types of attributes have differential effects on perceptions of variety. Specifically, attributes that make products least similar (or most different) are all product-related attributes that change the product substantively (e.g., calories for nutrition bars, flavor for cake mixes, fragrance for facial tissue), while people see no differences between products that differ on non-product related attributes (e.g., brand, price, number of servings). We complement these initial results with an empirical investigation of an online retailer to show how attribute-level variety in the assortment of products searched can be used to assess where consumers are in the decision process and their likelihood of making a purchase. Preliminary results indicate that consumers who are more likely to make a purchase search across products that differ only on non-product related attributes, while consumers who are less likely to make a purchase search across products that differ on product-related attributes. Finally, in a second experimental study, we replicate these empirical findings in a laboratory setting, again showing that consumers who are further along in the decision process choose to look at products with different non-product-related attributes, such as brand.
SESSION SUMMARY
In their restatement of their 2005 JCR, Arnould and Thompson stressed four points: first, their motivation in undertaking a disciplinary rebranding exercise; second, some caveats worth discussion in the European context; third, a broad definition of consumer culture theory research; and fourth, a discussion of European exemplars of the research streams they identify.

Three main issues motivated the crafting of the 2005 JCR. One is the desire to rectify several enduring misconceptions about this tradition of culturally oriented consumer research in the broader field of consumer research. The second is the recognition that CCT research faces significant problems of social reproduction, particularly in regard to placement of new PhDs. In other words, many doctoral students and new lecturers or assistant professor have considerable difficulty in understanding how to make a contribution to the tradition, and defend their interests to colleagues working in other traditions. This concern was informed by the authors’ tenures as Associate Editors at JCR. The third motivation is a response to a pandemic disciplinary conflation of context and methodology with theoretical agenda that impedes the diffusion and acceptance of culturally oriented consumer research.

The authors offer some caveats to their position with relevance for European consumer researchers. In the authors’ opinion, the institutional problems we identify are most relevant to the American marketing context; a network of CCT-friendly scholars is relatively well established in Europe. In US consumer research, the dominant scientific paradigms are information processing psychology and econometric modeling, and it appears that disciplinary boundaries are hardening at many schools. Still, some of the misconceptions and disciplinary biases identified in the 2005 JCR still operate in some quarters of the European academy, so it may prove useful to some European scholars.

The terms of the authors’ JCR review piece required that they focus on work published in JCR. Hence, the review does not cover the body of CCT work published in European journals or edited volumes. Insofar, as European marketing academics are experiencing more institutional pressure to make a mark in the US journals, the CCT framework and review may be useful for European researchers seeking to position their work relative to North American CCT research and targeting American journals, particularly JCR.

In CCT, consumer culture is the central construct, conceived as a social arrangement in which the relations between lived culture and social resources, between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, are mediated through markets. The consumer research inspired by this construct generally addresses the socio-cultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption. More specifically, CCT is an emergent theoretical program that addresses the complex dynamics between consumer identity projects; popular culture; marketplace structures; emergent socio-historic patterning of consumption; and, marketplace ideologies.

CCT research dealing with consumer identity projects focuses on the co-constitutive, co-productive ways in which consumers, working with marketer-generated materials forge diversified and contextually fragmented senses of self. In this work, consumers are conceived of as producers of identity projects that they undertake using the material and symbolic resources offered by the market-place. The study of consumer identity projects meshes well with consumer research’s more traditional interest in consumer goals and motives. One example is Askegaard, Arnould and Kjelgaard (2005), who in a post assimilationist theoretical context, illustrate the multiplicity of emergent identity positions discursively produced by immigrant informants and the centrality of consumption choices in constituting ethnic identity positions.

CCT research on popular culture explores how with marketer derived resources consumers produce feelings of social solidarity and create distinctive, self-selected, and sometimes transient cultural worlds through the pursuit of shared consumption interests. In this work, consumers are conceived as social actors who participate in multiple cultural worlds, enacting subculturally specific identities and values in each. Such work poses a major dilemma for demographic and psychographic classifications. In CCT we are more and more giving up typing and classifying consumers, and instead studying what they do, and the conditions of cultural enactments. Building from Michel Maffesoli, Guy Lipovetsky, and the work of the French Mouvement Anti-Utilitaire en Sciences Sociales (MAUSS), Cova 1997 establishes this terrain conceptually, while Cova and Cova (2001) illustrate with an apposite example drawn from an effervescent French in-line skating tribe. Similarly, Goulding, Shankar and Elliot (2002) have developed the ideas of neotribal consumer culture in the context of British rave culture. And emphasizing marketer-consumer interaction, Szmigin and Reppel (2004) begin to theorize the centrality of technology, interactivity, and value to the emergence of on-line brand communities in the full sociological sense of the term.

CCT research on the socio-historic patterning of consumption explores the institutional and social structures that systematically influence consumption and reciprocally, the relationships between consumers’ experiences, belief systems and practices and these institutional and social structures. In this work, consumers are conceived of as players in a social game who are predisposed toward certain actions and improvisational moves by their history of socialization and governing social norms and rules. For example, building from classic work on the Italian motor scooter Hebdige (1979); O’Donohoe (1994) and Ritson and Elliott’s (1999) examine the uses of advertising among teens. Goulding, Shankar and Elliot (2002) show how in consumer culture age becomes a differentiated and contextually malleable construct. Likewise, Hogg and Garrow (2003) challenge classic information processing conceptualizations of gender within advertising research because they show gender groups have become cognitively heterogenous and disconnected from biological sex. And Malina and Schmidt (1997) illustrate how a novel retail environment can facilitate dramatic reconstructions of female sexual identity.

A final stream of CCT research explores mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers’ interpretive strategies. This work conceives of consumers as interpretive agents whose meaning-creating activities range from those that tacitly embrace the identity and lifestyle ideals portrayed in mass media to those that consciously and critically deviate from these ideological instructions. Examples include discussions of postmodernity and its theoretical and pragmatic consequences such as Elliot’s (1997) seminal paper on desire. Patterson, et al.’s (1998) brilliant, polyvocal exegesis of a Caffrey’s Irish ale ad is an exemplar. Maclaran and Brown (2001; 2005) illustrate the role of utopian ideologies in...
consumers’ narrative readings of and experiences in a festival mall. And in a critical vein, Schroeder and Borgerson (1999) describe some darkside dimensions of the ideological constitution of omnipresent, appropriating consumer culture via a pathway that privileges sound over the visual.

In his presentation, Kent Grayson focused primarily on one of the myths identified by Arnould and Thompson (2005): that the primary differences between CCT and other traditions of research are methodological. More specifically, he addressed three questions. Where does this myth come from? To what extent is it a myth? And, if it is a myth, does the CCT label help to dispel it?

When considering many of the seminal articles written in support of what Arnould & Thompson (2005) now call CCT research, it is not surprising that methodological misconceptions exist. These papers frequently argued that the research methods dominant at the time had inherent limitations that kept consumer research from developing a full picture of the consumer experience. They also usually suggested alternative methods for gaining a more complete picture of the consumer experience, with particular emphasis on qualitative data collected in-context (i.e., in the field), for the purpose of understanding (not prediction) and particularization (not generalization).

Seminal CCT papers introduced consumer behavior topics to the field that were not previously considered by consumer researchers. These topics included extended service encounters, impulse purchasing, possession ownership, brand relationships, subcultures of consumption, and gift giving. Yet, although these research topics are justifiedly considered part of the CCT domain, it is interesting to note that a non-trivial percentage of these articles use quantitative methods that are usually considered to be more “positivist” than “postmodern.” As an example, of 14 JCR papers on possession attachment, 6 rely either extensively or exclusively on quantitative data.

Arnould and Thompson (2005) briefly recognize that CCT’s methodological inclinations lean away from positivist techniques. But more importantly, they define the sub-domains of CCT research in terms of topics and phenomena examined rather than by the research methods used. Grayson felt that this is a potentially useful step toward dispelling the methodological myths associated with CCT research and more accurately capturing the diversity of methods that has historically been (and should continue to be) used to examine these topics.

Nevertheless, there are some reasons why the new label may not be accepted. First, because even the best categorization systems are imperfect, it is likely that the CCT label as defined by Arnould and Thompson (2005) will inadvertently exclude some postmodern research topics. Second, the postmodern label emphasized epistemological and paradigmatic issues that are not emphasized by the CCT label. Some researchers may feel that too much is lost with this shift in emphasis. Third, the postmodern label emphasized a critical stance toward the field, while the CCT label does not. Some postmodern researchers may therefore resist both the loss of an explicitly critical research perspective and the institutionalization of a new set of labels. Fourth, Arnould and Thompson (2005) suggest that CCT researchers are wrongly accused of having a fascination for context at the expense of theory. To the extent that Arnould and Thompson (2005) are being more aspirational than descriptive with this claim, not all researchers will feel that these aspirations are worthy ones and not all researchers will be able to live up to them.

Jean-Sebastien Marcoux outlines a specific extension of CCT in the general domain of the relationship between possessions and identity. Specifically, his aim was to discuss the prospects for the development of a theory of “possessions” in consumer research. In doing so, he expanded Doug Holt’s critique of the well-known “container” metaphor of possession meaning to examine how contemporary material culture studies may advance our reflections in the areas of materiality and temporality. Marcoux argues that despite Holt’s critique and major advances in the last 10 years, the container metaphor remains a predominant one. The problem with the metaphor is that by focusing so much on the meanings, or the personal memories that objects “contain”, consumer researchers underestimate the importance of objects per se. CCT research has actually rarely attempted to grasp the materiality of objects. Few CCT researchers have examined and problematized the properties (the sensuality, the presence, etc.) of objects, and how these objects work; namely what they do, in addition to what they mean.

An alternative perspective is offered by the material culture group pioneered by scholars at University College London and Cambridge. These scholars examine the material components of social life. They focus on how things come to matter physically, and socially. Above all, they are concerned with the ways in which social phenomena assert their presence in the world. As such, their view of materiality is radically different from the psychological vision of materialism that almost invariably links materialism to a lack: of social skills, emotional strength, intellectual depth, etc.

In particular, material culture studies show promise for the study of collective memory. Memory, here, relates to the peoples’ understanding of the past, and their expectations of the future. It rests upon a distinction often used in social sciences, since Halbwach’s (1992) work, between individual and collective memories. A number of researchers have explored different forms of objects that constitute the material world, and their role in the social construction of time and memory.

The silence over commodities may reveal that different forms of materiality (and their hierarchisation) are intertwined in moral and social systems of values. But if we were using Arnould and Thompson’s words, commodities may also become an important source of mythical and symbolic resources for consumers. Similarly, they may provide the basic empirical material for the construction of the past, and the articulation of the future. As such, CCT research may assert itself as important in understanding the complex interplay between collective and individual aspects of memory construction, while expanding beyond the psychological dimensions of the memory.

The discussant Richard Elliott raised several points of concern that aimed to stimulate a dialogue with the audience. The first issue he raised was whether it would be either necessary or desirable “to legitimize and institutionalize” the loose congeries of theoretical orientations Arnould and Thompson try to group under the CCT heading. In other words does this move respond to any actual need? A second issue he raised was whether adopting the CCT label might cost us certain critical or theoretical ground gathered around the labels postmodernism, poststructuralism, and interpretivism. In other words what happens to these perfectly serviceable intellectual trends if the CCT label is adopted? A third issue raised is to question whether what Arnould and Thompson are up to represents anything more or less than a modernistic/hegemonic project perhaps largely beneficial to these authors or to North American consumer researchers. A fourth important issue he raised concerns demarcation criteria; in other words what is included, what is excluded from the CCT umbrella. A fifth issue of concern is whether scholars need or want CCT in Europe. Considering alternative movements underway in the UK such as critical marketing and in continental Europe such as the Latin marketing movement, European scholars may well wonder if CCT is a mere distraction from more important projects closer to home. And finally, Richard offered the parable of “My SAAB and me.” Richard explained that he loves his SAAB.
When SAAB was bought by Ford it made him feel uneasy, but he continued to love his SAAB. He felt like something of the original soul of SAAB had been lost but he couldn’t put his finger on what was lost. He felt something similar when reading the Arnould and Thompson article on CCT. It made him feel uneasy but he can’t say precisely why.

REFERENCES
Exploring the Dimensions of Ethical Consumption
Isabelle Szmigin, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom
Marylyn Carrigan, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT
Ethical consumption is part of a broader consumption picture. This paper conceptualizes ethical consumption by theoretically positioning it within Holt’s typology of consumption practices (1995). In particular it focuses upon ethical consumption as an integration process, identifying four possible dimensions of ethical consumption as a distinction process, as hedonistic pleasure, as a sign of love and as engaging an aesthetic response. The theoretical underpinnings for these dimensions are considered and some recent communications from fairly traded producers are examined to see how they correspond with the dimensions suggested.

INTRODUCTION
All purchase behavior is in some sense ethical, involving moral judgments (Burke et al. 1993), but most consumers pressured with the concerns of daily living, are unlikely to be making moral decisions over each product and brand choice. Nevertheless, ethical consumption is part of a broader consumption picture. As more ethical choices both positive, in terms of buying fairly traded or environmentally friendly goods, and negative, in terms of boycotting or avoiding certain goods or companies, enter consumers consciousness, understanding ethical choices becomes an important focus for consumer research. This paper develops thinking about ethical consumption by theoretically placing it within an existing typology of consumption and exploring the possible dimensions of ethical choice. It begins by considering the concept of the ethical consumer positioning him or her firmly within the realm of consumption rather than non-consumption. Our argument is that ethical consumers are first and foremost consumers; they may be motivated by many factors but their behavioral context is one of pro-active consumption choice. The moral dimensions of consumption are then discussed, and ethical consumption is framed within an existing consumer research context, namely Holt’s typology of consumption practices (1995), and in particular we suggest that ethical consumption is an integration process. Four possible dimensions of this process are proposed; ethical consumption as distinction, as hedonistic pleasure, as a sign of love and as engaging an aesthetic response.

CONSUMPTION VERSUS NON CONSUMPTION
We begin by making a distinction between ethical consumers and voluntary simplifiers which we see as fundamentally two sides of dialectic between consumption and non-consumption. Voluntary simplifiers restrict their consumption, resisting what Cherrier and of dialectic between consumption and non consumption. Voluntary and voluntary simplifiers which we see as fundamentally two sides within an existing consumer research context, namely Holt’s typology of consumption practices (1995). In particular we suggest that voluntary simplifiers choose to reduce consumption whereas ethical consumers are usually refining it. This is an important distinction as it can after all be argued that there is a fundamental contradiction between the terms ethical and consumption (Shaw and Newholm 2002). Ethical consumers cannot ensure that all they purchase is ethically produced and as such their consumption behavior is likely to have a number of ethical anomalies (Strong 1997). In light of this fundamental dichotomy the following section will consider some of the moral aspects to consumption before further exploring the dimensions of ethical consumption. In using the term ethical consumption in this paper, we are describing pro-active choices to purchase ethically produced goods and as such we are not commenting on the ethical position of those who do not purchase such goods. Following Harrison, Newholm and Shaw (2005, 2) we use ethical consumption in a broad sense understanding that ethical purchasers ‘have political, religious, spiritual, environmental, social or other motives for choosing one product over another’ but that what unites them is a concern regarding the effect their purchasing has on the external world.

THE MORALITY OF CONSUMPTION
For some, the problem with the puritan approach of the voluntary simplifier described above is its lack of recognition for the joy of consumption. There is a polarization in the literature that often assumes we are either shopping addicts or self-righteous simplicity seekers; a dichotomy possibly derived from the ideological concern to demonize materialism (Miller 2001). Miller suggests we should accept the benefits of consumption and focus on developing an empathetic concern with the desire to eliminate poverty and an ethics based on understanding the desire for greater access to material resources that would help relieve such poverty. It is a self-righteous luxury to be writing about the evils of consumption from a position where we can effectively decide to what extent we downshift. Such downshifting would always be a matter of degrees of comfort as compared to those people who desperately need more consumption, more food, pharmaceuticals, housing and books (Miller 2001). If as Miller (1998) argues there is to be any consistency between our academic perspective and our private lives we must acknowledge the benefits of the commodities that we can afford and do buy. We must also be wary of our own hypocrisy as Rotzell (1992) points out, when citing George Will’s opinion that, it is an affectation and sign of condescension to hold consumer culture in contempt. Most people enthusiastically welcome commercialism and find authentic sources of meaning in the goods they buy. Goods do have a democratizing dimension; the social transfor-
mation in Eastern Europe, for example, was driven by economic as well as political aspirations. It is a mistake to assume that people’s relationship with consumption is any less authentic than their relationship with production (Miller 1998). While there has been a growing awareness of the social and environmental impacts of consumption (Klein 2000; Shaw and Clarke 1998), as Miller points out, accepting that people will desire goods does not actually detract from critiques that attack the way companies sell or exploit people or resources. Miller believes that the moral stance taken by many writers in consumer research reflects more their own anxiety than the reality of actual consumers and empirical consumption studies. Any form of voluntary simplicity is working within the consumer society (Etzioni 1998) and may even be subsumed by it (Miles 1998). Already companies have identified the marketing opportunities for social responsibility, with the branding consultant Wolf Olins pronouncing that the next point of differentiation for brands will be to show that they behave well (Szminig 2003). This reflects Whitley’s (1993) assertion that the increasingly high profile of the ‘green consumer’ in the 1980s was just the exploitation of a consumer niche. Similarly it is important to remember that a well known company such as the Body Shop is primarily part of the cosmetics industry and financial priorities are likely to be put before ecological concerns (Miles 1998). Empirical studies of voluntary simplifiers reveal that a choice to downshift from say cars to cycles brings further consumption, such as the latest high quality cycling equipment (Holt 2002; Shaw and Newholm 2002). Having fewer possessions does not mean that you will place less value on them rather than those who live with fewer objects may assign more importance to them (Holt 1995; Hill and Stamey 1990). So if the aim of voluntary simplifying is to free oneself from the hegemony of the consumer society, in practice it is unlikely to be achieved. The distinctive feature of consumer society is its emancipation from its past instrumentality that defined its limits with functional bonds (Bauman 2001); our choice of transport is not constrained and so we can choose a mode that may be less harmful in terms of pollution but then we are still left with many and other consumption choices say of which bike to ride and how to equip it.

Of course certain areas of consumption can and are challenged through boycotts or latent discontent, as in the case of GM foods in Europe. Parents may object to vending machines in schools and company sponsorship of community projects, and such action may have an important role in curtailing the power of large corporations to dictate what we consume. But this type of action is not an objection to consumption per se rather to the activities of certain companies and in particular, where such companies appear to invade and coerce the vulnerable, reduce effective choice or disadvantage other forms of production. More often the frustration with consumption is voiced in some extreme statement such as the hope that Euro Disney ‘burns to the ground’ (Rotzell 1992) which does not reflect the reality of most people’s acceptance of the consumer society. It would take a critic with a strong sense of moral and ethical absolutes to suggest we revert to a form of instrumental consumption. More importantly as Miller argues, what right do we have to deny consumption to others when it has made our lives if not morally better then certainly more comfortable?

DEFINING ETHICAL CONSUMPTION

An ethical consumer may also be a voluntary simplifier just as one would expect that consumption within the voluntary simplifier lifestyle to be ethically driven, although there is some empirical evidence to show this relationship cannot just be assumed (Bekin et. al. 2005). While ethical consumers are concerned about consumption levels, they are not necessarily radical anti-consumerists (Shaw and Newholm 2002). Rather they are making decisions around whether to consume with sensitivity through selecting ethical alternatives. Values may drive ethical consumption behavior but where ethical issues are often many and complex, positive choices may not always be made (Shaw and Clarke 1998). Other authors provide a more general approach to consumer ethics; for Muncy and Vitell (1992) it is ‘the moral principles and standards that guide behavior of individuals or groups as they obtain, use, and dispose of goods and services’. This moral dimension is contained in other definitions, for example Smith (1990, 178) presents ethical purchasing as being ‘an expression of the individual’s moral judgment in his or her purchase behavior’. Crane and Matten (2004, 290) suggest that the main essence of the concept of ethical consumption is ‘the conscious and deliberate decision to make certain consumption choices due to personal moral beliefs and values’. In developing their definition they make clear that ethical consumption may mean the conscious choice of particular products such as detergents low in bleach as well as the rejection of others such as purchasing gasoline from Esso because of the company’s approach to global warming. As well as worries about pollution, waste and animal welfare, ethical consumers are likely to be concerned with the developing world and principally that producers should get fair wages and improved working conditions (Shaw and Clarke 1998).

For the purpose of this discussion we suggest that a key identifier of ethical consumption is that while socially and environmentally aware, it is firmly placed within an existing framework of the consumer society. Ethical consumers do not deny consumption but rather choose goods that reflect their moral, ethical and social concerns. Ethical consumption is as much part of the active social process of consumption with its material and symbolic dimensions as any other form of consumption; we should not view it in isolation but accept that ethical attributes will be measured by consumers along with others relevant to their choice decisions (Shaw and Clarke 1998). Ethical consumption can be integrated into our general understanding of how consumers consume and as such, requires further exploration and investigation in terms of what it means to consumers beyond external and instrumental reasons such as welfare, pollution and appropriate disposal. What other factors drive the choice of an ethical product or brand and what satisfactions are derived from its purchase and use? In particular we wish to explore how ethical consumption can be integrated into our picture of consumer behavior. While we recognize that this opens up a realm of possibilities in terms of existing theories of consumption and in particular decision making processes and attitude and behavioral models, we have chosen in this paper to use Holt’s (1995) typology of consumption practices to inform our discussion. Holt’s typology was developed from a research tradition describing important aspects of how consumption objects are used, and situated within this tradition, it provides a comprehensive framework of how consumers consume. Using this all encompassing approach was considered a useful starting point for further exploration of the nature of ethical consumption and, as detailed below, the integration dimension was particularly appropriate for developing the discussion of the dimensions of ethical consumption.

ETHICAL CONSUMPTION AS INTEGRATION

Holt’s typology of consumption practices (1995) identifies four distinctive metaphors to describe how people consume. Consuming as experience, integration, classification, and play provide
what Holt describes as a vocabulary for how consumers consume. The metaphor of consuming as integration is particularly potent for the examination of ethical consumption as it highlights the methods used to enhance the value of ethical choices within people’s existing consumption choices and as a reflection of their identity. Here we propose four ways that consumers use their ethical consumption choices for integration: as a form of distinction; for hedonistic satisfaction; for love and for aesthetic appreciation. In developing these four dimensions of the integration metaphor we also build on the work of Schaefer and Crane (2001) who developed three alternative views of green consumption which in particular questioned the green consumer as a rational decision maker. They investigated green consumption as hedonistic self indulgence, as a form of identity construction and as part of social relationships.

The consuming as integration metaphor used in our conceptualization refers to ‘methods used by consumers to enhance perception that a valued consumption object is a constitutive element of their identity’ (Holt 1995, 6). Integration can be automatic for activities, such as photography, where consumers are significantly participating in the consumption object but are more difficult where mass produced consumption objects are concerned.

While many ethical consumer goods will be classified as alternatives to other mass produced items, e.g. coffee and chocolate, they may well engender a feeling of significant participation, requiring a highly conscious choice. Those making consumption choices on the basis of ethical consciousness can still be subject to the production of identity through consumption (Bauman 1988; Giddens 1991), defining themselves through the goods they buy and reject. The symbolically significant is arbitrary: there is no reason why personal identity may not be expressed through rejection of material culture and disciplined asceticism.

Distinction

Ethical consumption as distinction may imply conspicuous consumption (Veblen 1970) or issues of taste as distinguishes (Bourdieu 1984), apparently antithetical to an ethical stance. It is, however, widely accepted that the cultural meaning of goods is more diverse than Veblen’s focus on status was able to recognize (McCracken 1988). Indeed, Veblen never suggested that the symbolic signification of material goods should be limited to their function as signs of pecuniary prowess (Ramstad 1999). The concept of distinction may also be seen to stem from an important debate in the 19th century related to a focus on productive and unproductive consumption (Hilton 2004). While originally associated with productive and unproductive labor it also became associated with the more general moral categories of virtue and vice, use and abuse, rational and irrational etc. informed by the ‘social possibilities of economic chivalry’ (Marshall 1907/1925), civic-minded philanthropic Victorians often saw themselves as having consuming obligations and a duty to consume with a concern for others; prohibiting unproductive consumption and promoting that which was morally, economically or socially productive (Hilton 2004), publicly eschewing irrational luxuries and making positive measures to provide productive forms of leisure and appropriate consumption for others. Similarly ethical consumption requires the consumer to distinguish themselves through proactive purchasing and rejection. Strong (1997) emphasizes that participation in fair trade requires consumers to pay more for products, make a greater effort to purchase them and engage in extensive search activities to ensure the ethical attributes of their purchases. Whether or not the consumer seeks status gains from such activity there is likely to be a degree of social visibility inherent in such behavior. Just as conspicuous consumers are not deterred by high prices, similarly ethical consumers are often less concerned with the price of the commodity but look for reassurance that the goods have the appropriate ethical attribute. This may involve patronizing only certain retail outlets and rejecting products accepted by others. Such consumption activities are performed in public, often involving explanations to friends or colleagues of one’s behavior and choices and so offering opportunities for social differentiation and distinction which become integrated into the person’s consumption behavior. The choice of ethical brands can reflect life style choices and statements of personal identity as much as prestige alternatives. For example the director of Ethical Media, Keith Patton, identifies the Toyota Prius which runs on a mix of petrol and electricity as speaking ‘of a lifestyle that is not hippie-woolly jumper but sleek, clean and modern living’ (Anonymous 2001, 9). Similarly Wright’s (2004) interpretation of Cafédirect advertising suggests that the line ‘So do yourself a favor and drink some’ is used as a form of distinction confirming the consumer’s superior taste and social status in a similar manner as the L’Oreal campaign slogan ‘Because I’m worth it’.

Hedonism

Holbrook and Corfman (1985) defined a moral or virtuous consumption experience as intrinsically motivated where the appreciation of the experience is an end in itself, where virtue is its own reward. We suggest that the experience in the form of an ethical purchase can offer hedonistic pleasure. The term hedonism may be associated with instant gratification and a connection with an egoistic, individualistic materialism conjuring up ideas of excess and selfish behavior, yet as Gabriel and Lang (1995) reveal there are many and contradictory opinions as to what it means to be hedonistic in modern society. An important informant for their discussion is Campbell (1987) whose modern hedonist seeks pleasure in emotion accompanying all kinds of experiences, including those which may be sad and painful. Historically there have been many interpretations of what hedonism may imply, Sidgwick (1874/ 1981) described egoistic hedonism as where the ultimate good is defined as the happiness of the individual, whereas universalistic hedonism akin to utilitarianism, suggests that we should act in a manner which brings about the most pleasure to the greatest number in the long term. Similarly ethical hedonism requires actions that produce pleasure and prevent pain. In choosing to purchase ethical goods, consumers can be said to be acting hedonistically both in relation to their own feelings of pleasure from the purchase and in terms of the good they may bring to others. Human motivation may include wishing to see ourselves as possessing good qualities; we may gain pleasure from responding to what we consider to be our moral obligations Campbell (1987). Hedonism can be a legitimate dimension of ethical consumption if we accept that doing the ‘right thing’ may be associated with feelings of self-respect which in turn give us feelings of pleasure. While consumer preferences are often driven by the anticipated hedonic experience, this may still be within parameters of self-control or moral dimensions; consumers will even gain hedonic benefits from manipulating the choice sets they face (Wertenbroch 2002). So an ethical choice may be more appealing when made in the presence of less ethical choices.

Love

The search for self-identity has been presented in terms of our requirement for love both of loving and being loved (Luhman 1998). The need for love exemplified in Maslow’s model (1968) has been successfully interpreted into a myriad of marketing opportunities to meet people and have human contact. Similarly much advertising relies on the image of people together as couples
and families, conveying the understanding that the purchase of a brand will act as a defense from being alone (Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Consuming provides opportunities to demonstrate our love for one another through the care and attention we give to the purchases we make. There are times when we define ourselves through the love we feel for others. Prothero (2002) revealed the level of importance she placed upon the consumption choices for her child, often reflecting an inner conflict of doing the best for him, while at the same time balancing her environmentalist opposition to over-consumption. Schaefer and Crane (2001) recognized that we may make special purchases for those dear to us, such as buying organic baby food when we do not normally buy organically grown goods for ourselves. The feeling of responsibility expressed in Prothero’s account is part of the greater context of love (Miller 1998) and it is love which is often expressed in our shopping and provisioning for others. Miller suggests that we might use other terms such as care, concern, obligation and responsibility but essentially these terms can be encompassed in a normative ideology of long term commitment rather than an idealized romantic form. Importantly this version of love is long lasting and influenced by general beliefs about what we should do in our social relations. In Miller’s ethnographic study of families in north London he examined the form love takes in its manifestation of shopping and caring for others. He showed how daily decisions are made in the context of moral questions about what is good or bad. This form of love serves as an important dimension to ethical consumption which encompasses deep feelings of concern for family members and friends expressed through provisioning with care for their environment, and ensuring the goods provided are not sufficed by exploitative practices. Ethical consumption can be used as a basis for emulation, indicating values and moral codes. In a broader sense ethical consumption shows an active concern for people and societies both local and further afield that may be affected by consumption choices. It is no surprise that research shows important perceived attributes of patronizing farmers markets include; the enjoyable experience of getting to know the stallholders, and knowing your purchasing gives support to the local producers (Young and Holden 2002). Clearly this does not discount the positive instrumental outcomes people expect from such exchanges but supporting a local fair trade community over shopping at the nearest supermarket can also be described as an act of love for that community and the broader issues it espouses.

Aesthetic Appreciation

There is a strong historical tradition for producing things that are aesthetically pleasing, useful and non exploitative. The Arts and Crafts movement began in England in the 1860s as a reform movement with John Ruskin as its philosophical leader. It made a direct connection between art, nature and morality with William Morris combining aesthetics and social reform into the production of goods. Morris had observed the dreadful working conditions in factories and believed that if the quality of design could be improved, this would have a positive effect on the character of the person producing the goods which in turn would improve society. His famous statement ‘Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful’ (Morris 1880, 51) encapsulates the belief that, in today’s language, ethical consumption can and should be aesthetically pleasing. In practice it was not easy to translate the principles into reality; at a time of growing industrialization it was difficult to produce hand crafted items that could be bought by anyone other than the well off, and the market for many of his goods was limited in terms of taste too. Veblen attacked Morris’s Kelmscott Press produced books as not even being serviceable–arcane in their production, expensive and not appropriate for modern use, interestingly though he still thought they could act as a form of distinction.

There are parallels which can be drawn between the Arts and Crafts movement and the perceptions and realities of ethical consumption. In comparison to mass market goods, ethically produced ones are likely to be more expensive, and there has also been a perception that a green lifestyle is associated with more rugged artifacts, ‘macramé and coir matting’ as one commentator has described the stereotypical vision of ethical household goods (Muir 2004). Today, however, the arguments for an aesthetic dimension to ethical consumption are more compelling. Such a position is fundamentally informed by Featherstone’s (1991) assertion that everyday life has become aestheticized. The boundaries between art and life and the distinction between high art and mass popular culture are in the process of removal, which has ultimately led to a cultural de-classification, an ‘assumption that art can be anywhere or anything’ (1991, 268). One might argue that this process refers to all aspects of every day life and consumption rather than a particular emphasis on ethical consumption. Featherstone, however, identifies three particular senses of the aestheticization process one of which is especially relevant to the historical tradition of aestheticization and social reform discussed earlier. This is the project of turning life into a work of art. The desire for a life for all that was useful and beautiful in content and purpose, espoused by Ruskin and Morris, is encapsulated in Featherstone’s assertion that a life of aesthetic consumption and the need to form life into an aesthetically pleasing whole is part of the desire to construct distinctive lifestyles. Recent work in consumer research has also critiqued the Kantian elimination of all non cognitive responses from an aesthetic experience (Joy and Sherry 2003), suggesting that aesthetic experience can be embodied. Similarly, the consumption of ethical goods can embody a particular aesthetic experience that is built, not only upon the knowledge of consuming something different to other mass produced goods, but also on the understanding that the good has been produced in the context of fair trade or an environmentally appropriate form.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF CONSUMPTION

As Prothero and Fitchett (2000, 46) have pointed out, one of the problems we face when addressing the relationship between capitalism and the environment is that the representation is often one of ‘irreconcilable opposition’. They go on to say, however, that consumption does not need to depend only on negative notions but can be seen in a more positive ecological light. The same can be said for the concept of ethical consumption; if we can accept that ‘ethics’ and ‘consumption’ can lie together we are better placed to firstly understand the nature and motivations of those who do consume ethically, and then communicate with them in an appropriate fashion. Already we can see, through examining advertising for ethical companies, an understanding of some of the issues of concern to consumers above and beyond the basic benchmark of buying an ethical good. As mentioned earlier in relation to Cafédirect, most advertisers of fairly traded goods make a point of distinguishing their products in terms of superior taste. Green and Black’s chocolate company for example state on their website ‘fairly traded products have to be as yummy–or yummier than what else is out there or shoppers won’t buy something more than once and the lives of third world farmers and growers won’t be transformed’ (greenandblacks.com). Wright suggests that the depiction of far-flung places in the Cafédirect advertising ‘can be read as an appeal to the imagined consumer’s cultural capital, whose enjoyment of
travel and tourism will ensure their appreciation’ (2004, 668).

Hedonism is likely to be more apparent in advertising for products such as chocolate that may be classified as an indulgence. In our analysis of advertising we found this to be so, however, in the case of Divine chocolate this was always tempered with a strong mention of the fairly traded attribute. One advertisement addresses the consumer thus: ‘it’s time you indulged in some gorgeous chocolate with a clear conscience’ and the line used in all their advertising is ‘Heavenly chocolate with a heart’; we are first addressed as consumers encouraged to partake in hedonistic pleasure and secondly as potentially ethical purchasers. Love, in advertising for ethical goods, is primarily presented as doing the right thing for your family, in line with Miller’s interpretation of love in the consumption context. Ecover, ecological washing up liquid, for example, shows a man washing up with his young child and the simple line ‘We made ours an Ecover home’, similarly all their products carry the line ‘for people who care’ implying a concern not only for the environment but for using environmental friendly products in the family setting. The wine company Thandi’s name is actually the Xhosa word for love, again implying an appreciation by the producer of the importance of this facet to understanding consumer’s motivations in purchasing. Finally, we suggest that the aesthetic dimension is prevalent throughout the advertising for ethical goods. The producers have, perhaps unconsciously, taken up Morris’s maxim understanding that the goods and the advertising for those goods need to be part of a consumer culture where the aestheticization of the everyday is the norm. From the simple bold colors of Green & Black or the often mysterious landscapes of Cafédirect, the aesthetic dimension is integrated into the visual rhetoric (Scott 1994) of the advertising.

We note that our analysis of ethical consumption as integration may not be comfortable to many involved in the fair trade movement and in Wright’s words our interpretations may read as ‘minority world consumers can ‘redeem’ majority world producers by perpetuating consumer lifestyles prioritizing self-gratification’ (2004, 678) and while we understand this point of view we also correspond with her observation that ‘legitimizing consumer pleasure’ (2004, 678) may be the price to pay for fairly traded goods reaching the mainstream. Understanding and exploring the dimensions of consumer pleasure are a necessary prerequisite to furthering the development of ethical consumption.

REFERENCES
____ (1990), Thinking Sociologically, Oxford: Blackwell.
Crane, Andrew and Dirk Matten, (2004), Business Ethics, Oxford: OUP.


Strong, Carolyn (1997), The problems of translating fair trade principles into consumer purchase behavior, Marketing Intelligence and Planning, 15, 1, 32-38.


EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Since the early 1990s, the establishment of ethical codes of conduct has increased considerably in Western companies. The growing corporate concern for ethical trade may suggest an important development: that stakeholders in the Western world are becoming aware of the conditions in low income countries where so many of our consumer goods are produced (e.g. Blowfield, 1999) – and in turn make demands on corporations to take social responsibility for their production and supplier chain, irrespective of where in the world it takes place.

However, neither the reasons behind companies’ introduction of ethics codes nor the understanding of consumer perceptions are evident. In order to understand the intentions behind how companies in retail trading are communicating ethics, there is a need to know, not only more about both how the companies that communicate the ethics codes are approaching them, but also how the communication is perceived in the consumer chain and to articulate what consumers tell beyond their contemporary demands on companies’ responsibilities, and furthermore implicitly, suggest communication in the future in accordance with Holt (2003).

The purpose of this paper is to shed new light on the incentives for companies to establish ethical codes of conduct and to investigate consumer’s attitudes towards ethical issues in their consumption and ethics codes in particular, in other words; to understand how ethical codes of conduct can be consumed.

Accordingly, the empirical data in this paper is on the one hand, drawing on a corporate view on communication of ethical codes of conduct. Depth interviews were made with CEO’s, purchase managers and information managers with responsibility for establishing and overseeing implementation of the corporate codes at three major Swedish clothing and home-furnishing companies offering low- to mid price products. On the other hand, the corporate view is contrasted with a consumer perspective and six consumers were interviewed. The study uses an interpretive, hermeneutic and qualitative approach (e.g. Arnold and Fischer, 1994; Borgerson and Schroeder, 2005; Thompson, 1997).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been approached as a strategic tool for improving business (e.g. Mohr et al 2001), yet the relation between CSR activities and profit remains uncertain (Burke and Logsdon 1996). In addition, researchers like Carrigan and Attala (2001), Creyer and Ross (1997), Michieletti et al. (2003) agree on that consumers care about corporations’ ethical conduct. However, they disagree on whether consumers’ actual buying decisions are affected by corporate conduct. Nevertheless, the ways in which consumers perceive the communication of ethics, and how they act with respect to this, is essential for both the ethical strategy and communication strategy in corporations. By consuming ethical codes of conduct that the companies gives them, consumers’ contradictions between the wish to benefit the family, though ethical labeled products are associated with a higher price, or the working conditions for distant others, may be easier to deal with for the individual consumer (Miller, 2001). On the other hand, for the companies in this study, that already are offering low-to mid price goods, the codes may guarantee an acceptable conduct, in case a low price range is associated with less ethics. This assumes that consumers actually are worried before the codes are communicated to them, because otherwise the codes in themselves may send new signals that there actually is something wrong in the company’s supply chain.

The companies in the study are communicating their ethics codes mainly on their web sites. In spite of the examined companies’ work, effort and resources set aside for ethical codes of conduct, they are cautious in their external communication of ethics. They are caught in the dilemma of making more promises than they can keep. One of the major problems, in the case companies’ perspective, in working with ethical codes of conduct, is that none of the examined companies can 100 per cent guarantee the ethics codes are followed in their supplier chain.

Results from the study also revealed, that companies have surprisingly little knowledge of how the communication of their ethical work was perceived among consumers, and, moreover, whether it had any impact on consumers’ purchase behavior; nor had they done market research on how ethical issues are evaluated among consumers. They don’t think that consumers care about ethical issues or how the products they consume are produced. In the corporate view, consumers are primarily concerned about price of the products.

However, the depth interviews with consumers in this paper show that in the first layer, a lot of consumer concerns is, accordingly, about price and a potential higher cost could be an obstacle for not consuming ethical. But the underlying meanings, seems to be less about money per see, but point at information asymmetry; a lack of trust and the perceived risk of being cheated on by the companies, even though the consumers obviously are concerned of ethical issues in their consumption.

Trustworthiness, though, is obviously not built only due to the fact that companies today establish ethical codes of conduct on a voluntary basis, but by implementing, working with and communicating them. Even so, none of the consumers in the present study perceived that companies communicated ethical issues at all, except for in marketing of organic products. Accordingly, none experienced that companies are communicating their ethics codes.

The consumers admitted at the same time that they hadn’t looked for it either. Furthermore, none of the consumers knew exactly what an ethical code of conduct entails. On the other hand, all of them expressed their concern for how the products they consume are produced.

The efficiency of ethical codes of conduct as a strategy for communicating the brand identity depends on the consumers’ awareness and knowledge of what the codes entail. Therefore, “education” of consumers is a necessity for efficient ethical communication. The prerequisite is of course that there is no credibility gap between what a company communicates and what they really do.

A related obstacle for ethics codes, pointing at something that has been emphasized in earlier studies (e.g. Carrigan and Attala, 2001), is that the consumers found it easier to punish a discovered unethical company than to promote an ethical one. Because it may be that the “ethical” company is nothing more than a company whose misbehaving has yet not been discovered. Accordingly, ethical codes of conduct do not tell what the company really does, even if they in themselves are indications of what the company wants to communicate. Inevitably important for consumers to actually consume ethics codes, is that they believe that they have the ability to change corporate behavior, other consumers and current conditions in the world through their consumption choices. Ethical codes of conduct still seems too abstract, though consumers do not know either their content nor anything about their implementation.
or their efficiency for changing bad producing conditions (e.g. if the independent monitoring is working) to the better and this definitely are obstacles for actually consuming the ethics codes.

REFERENCES
Miller, Daniel (2001), The Dialectics of Shopping, USA: The University of Chicago Press
ABSTRACT

To what extent are ‘ethical consumers’ different from other consumers regarding their decision-making in situations that have moral implications? Are they any different at all? Despite the fact that ethical consumption is receiving increased recognition from researchers, there are currently no satisfactory answers to these questions. Existing individual morality measures fail to account for the large spectrum of morality approaches and have been mostly developed for application in an organisational context. Accordingly, the concept of a new measure is proposed that takes a wide variety of morality approaches into account and is specifically developed for use in the context of consumption.

BACKGROUND

Consumers’ attitudes towards corporations have severely deteriorated since the early 1980s, as demonstrated by more than a halving of the number of UK respondents between 1980-1998 who agree with the statement that large companies help improve consumers’ lives (Howard and Nelson 2000). This dramatic deterioration in trust is probably due in no small way to the publicity surrounding notorious incidents such as the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska and Shell’s 1995 attempt to sink the oil platform Brent Spar in the North Sea, to name only two. The decline in public trust in corporations is seen as one of the main drivers of what is now called the ‘ethical market’ (e.g., Cowe and Williams 2001). Research findings suggest that consumers show a growing awareness of and an increasing interest in what can be summarised under ‘ethical consumption’, a phenomenon usually associated with people’s consumption-related concerns regarding issues such as environment sustainability, animal welfare, fair trade, labour standards, but also personal health (e.g., Tallontire, Rentsendorj, and Blowfield 2001).

Numerous indicators support the assumption that the ethical consumption movement is still gaining momentum, potentially resulting in what Tallontire et al. (2001) call negative and positive purchase behaviours. On the ‘negative behaviour’ side, for example, according to Mintel’s 1990 special report, 50% of UK respondents would not buy animal-tested products (in Tallontire et al. 2001); almost ten years later, as many as 85% of UK respondents indicated that animal testing of cosmetics safety (e.g., skin care products, makeup) is never justified (MORI 1999). The resulting avoidance or boycotting of certain products or entire companies can cause significant negative consequences, even for big corporations. A case example here is Monsanto, which reacted arrogantly and insensitively to public concerns about the use of GM technology in soybean production in Europe. Supercilious corporate dismissal of concerns about bio-diversity and human health resulted in a considerable public impetus to NGO-initiated anti-GM campaigns (e.g., Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth), which lead a number of food manufacturers and retailers in Britain to turn against GM technology altogether (Cowe and Williams 2001). On the ‘positive behaviour’ side, consumers may actively seek products and companies which they perceive as ethical. In 2000, 51% of UK respondents had chosen products/services based on a company’s responsible reputation at least once over the last 12 months, with one-third of them having done so at least four times. Fifty-two percent had recommended a company based on its responsible reputation at least once, over one-quarter of them had done so at least four times (Hines and Ames 2000). Examples of organisations that have profited significantly from their ethical image are The Body Shop, having over 2000 stores in 50 countries and achieving a 25% operating profit growth in 2004, and TransFair in the USA, with average annual Fair Trade coffee growth rates of 75% between the launch of the label in 1998 and the year 2003. Accordingly, the phenomenon of ethical consumption can be seen to have a significant (positive or negative) impact on the performance of corporations.

An alternative perspective from which ethical, or environmentally and socially conscious, consumption can be approached, is that of sustainability. It has been argued that a sustainable future can only be achieved when behavioural changes of consumers are given equal attention as that given to producers (e.g., Haake and Jolivet 2001; Michaelis 2000). There are two notable aspects to this. Firstly, it has been reasoned that consumers need to change regarding what and how they consume (e.g., Haake and Jolivet 2001). This includes behavioural modifications such as purchasing Fair Trade products, buying household appliances of higher energy efficiency, and using public transportation instead of private cars. Secondly, there is another, by far less popular, element of sustainable consumption, called ‘sufficiency’ (e.g., Linz 2002). Given the current size and growth of the world population combined with the limited resources on the planet, in order to enable every person on earth (particularly in the southern hemisphere) to reach at least minimum living standards, it has been argued that individuals in developed countries have to decrease consumption levels all together (e.g., Linz 2002; Sachs 2002; Scherhorn 2002). Consequently, for individuals from places such as Europe and North America, this would not only mean consuming differently but consuming certain products/services in a lesser volume or even not at all. Such patterns of reduced consumption behaviour are already evident among groups that have been called ‘voluntary simplifiers’ and ‘frugal consumers’ (e.g., Craig-Lees and Hill 2002; Lastovicka et al. 1999; Shaw and Newholm 2002).

As a result, the phenomenon of ethical or moral consumption (the terms ‘ethical’ and ‘moral’ are used synonymously in this paper) is of great interest from at least two angles, namely from the perspective of corporations and from the sustainability side. All the more surprising then is the fact that, so far, the morality of consumers has received so little attention in the marketing field (e.g., Folkes and Kamins 1999). Looking at the moral decision-making of the individual in particular, most research has focused on modelling the decision-making of the seller side (Al-Khatib, Vitell, and Rawwas 1997; Muncy and Vitell 1992). Accordingly, it is not surprising that most existing individual morality models and measures have been developed for studying moral decision-making from an organisational perspective. Very little is known about the morality-related decision-making of consumers. Do the so-called ‘ethical consumers’ use different moral norms, rules, and principles as compared to their mainstream counterparts? Are they perhaps more deontological in nature? Do they possibly show consideration for a larger range of people affected by their actions? Or do they perhaps have a higher degree of internalisation of their morality beliefs? So far, there are no answers to these questions and existing individual morality measures are not designed in a way that helps to address
this deficiency. Bearing this in mind, the concept of a new individual consumer morality measure is developed in this paper.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to clarify some key definitions. In this paper, ‘individual consumer morality’ denotes those morality approaches that individuals apply when making consumption-related decisions in cases of conflicts between the benefit of the decision-maker and the benefit of other affected stakeholders in all stages of the marketing circle. The term ‘morality approaches’, also called normative theories or ethical theories synonymously by other authors (e.g., Frankena and Granrose 1974), denotes those norms, rules and principles that were proposed by normative authorities (e.g., moral philosophers and the Church) to provide individuals with decision-making guidelines in case they encounter benefit conflicts as mentioned above. Examples of morality approaches are ‘classical utilitarianism’, commanding that one should always act in a way that maximises the balance of pleasure over pain for everyone affected by one’s action (e.g., Gensler 1998), and Kant’s exceptionless rules approach, advising only actions consistent with the maxim which one would at the same time wish to become a universal law (Kant 1994). Benefit conflicts, that is conflicts of interest, arise typically from an inverse nature of gains for the different stakeholders; more benefit for the decision-maker frequently results in less benefit for other stakeholders and vice versa. For example, the purchase of an animal-tested cosmetics product leads to benefit gains for the purchaser, the manufacturer and the distributor (among other stakeholders). At the same time, however, the suffering of animals, environmental degradation from waste (for example, from chemicals in the manufacturing process, the product packaging, and the product itself), and social costs (for example, from supporting the controversial ideal of beauty) are on the downside of effects. Any decision that affects parties other than the decision-maker him- or herself has a moral element. Consequently, almost all consumption decisions have a moral dimension, giving further emphasis to the importance of the subject matter.

Having outlined the relevance of the individual consumer morality concept and provided some necessary definitions, the next step will be to review and critique three existing individual morality scales. In the subsequent section, the concept of a new individual consumer morality measure which addresses various criticisms will be introduced. Given the diverse and complex nature of the field of moral philosophy, an attempt will be made there to deal with moral decision-making approaches in a very systematic way. Thus, the new scale will be presented by introducing its main dimensions, illustrated with examples of morality approaches. Finally, the methodology for the technical scale development will be outlined.

REVIEW OF EXISTING INDIVIDUAL MORALITY MEASURES

A major criticism that existing moral decision-making scales have to accept is the fact that they insufficiently account for the rich variety of morality approaches proposed by normative authorities in the past (e.g., Hansen 1992; Skipper and Hyman 1993). The three instruments which have achieved particular popularity in past marketing research are Forsyth’s (1980) idealism relativism scale, Reidenbach and Robin’s Multidimensional Ethics Scale (e.g., 1988; 1990), and Muncy and Vitell’s (e.g., 1992) Consumer Ethics Scale. These have been used by a multitude of authors to understand morality-related decision-making; accordingly, a closer examination of the three scales is indicated. However, the review will be mostly limited to the question of how the scales account for morality approaches. For a more detailed overview of issues see Grix, Lawson, and Todd (2004).

The idealism/relativism scale (IRS) is based on the assumption that morality approaches can be parsimoniously discriminated by using two constructs, namely ‘relativism’, the extent to which individuals hold universal moral codes, and ‘idealism’, the view that desirable consequences can always be obtained or that they may be accompanied by undesirable ones (Forsyth 1980; Schlenker and Forsyth 1977). Accordingly, the two constructs are used to span a two-by-two matrix (high/low relativism, high/low idealism), where the four resulting fields are proposed to represent major moral-philosophical approaches.

As the IRS claims to be a measure of morality approaches, the face validity of the scale must be questioned. After all, the two IRS dimensions do not correspond to any of the philosophical ethics theories or any key constructs associated with them. The association of a number of ethics schools with idealism and relativism that was apparently clear to Forsyth (1980) cannot be accepted without reservation. In addition, some of the major morality approaches (e.g., utilitarianism) as well as more secondary ones (e.g., prima facie duties) have not been linked to the IRS by its creator at all. All together, it seems doubtful that a field as rich as moral philosophy can be covered even to a somewhat adequate degree by only two constructs. Consequently, Forsyth’s instrument has to be criticised as being not comprehensive (see also Barnett et al. 1998).

The Multidimensional Ethics Scale (MES) has been described as an effort to capture the plurality of normative ethics approaches in moral philosophy into account. Reidenbach and Robin’s (1988) initial scale development attempt was based on 33 items from the five approaches of justice, relativism, egoism, utilitarianism, and deontology. The final result was a three-factor solution based on the dimensions of ‘moral equity’, ‘relativism’, and ‘social contract’ (measured by eight items all together). The instrument is based on a number of vignettes describing scenarios that contain morally questionable decisions or activities. Vignettes have been widely used in other research on ethical decision-making as well (e.g., Fritzsche and Becker 1984; Hyman 1996).

It is questionable whether Reidenbach and Robin’s choice of constructs was appropriate. As a-priori scale dimensions, the authors chose a number of normative morality approaches (such as deontology and utilitarianism) and attempted to represent them in one single factor each. Every approach is, however, so diverse and full of different ideas (and therefore constructs) in itself that it seems impossible to force it into just one single factor. As such, it is perhaps not surprising that the authors were unsuccessful in rebuilding the chosen a-priori factors or, in some cases, unsuccessful in finding them in their empirical data at all. Due to its resulting non-correspondence with any ‘pure’ philosophical morality approaches, the face validity of the MES has been questioned in several cases (Cohen, Pant, and Sharp 1993; Hansen 1992; Hyman 1996; Skipper and Hyman 1993). The lack of deontological and teleological dimensions in the final MES seems critical as well. These two streams have been called the two rival views of ethics which have greatly influenced world affairs in the 20th century (Brady 1990) and are represented in major moral decision-making models (e.g., Hunt and Vitell 1986, 1993). Their absence becomes even more implausible as Cohen, Pant, and Sharp (1993) found evidence for the existence of an utilitarian dimension in their MES re-development effort and Hansen (1992) reported a factor that represented deontological judgment. The MES has also been criticised for lacking other essential components. Among others, Skipper and Hyman (1993) note that a religion component is missing, while Hansen (1992) comments on the lack of the ethical egoism approach. The final critical issue that is to be raised here refers to Reidenbach and Robin’s choice of the vignettes. Apart from stating that the three scenarios used for the scale development were chosen on the basis of the “variety of ethical problems they presented and because of the variability of individual reactions to
them” (1990, 642), the authors give no rationale for the selection of their vignettes. They do not appear to have been systematically chosen or purposefully constructed. However, given that the content of a vignette has potentially a significant impact on the later identification and development of specific factors from the data that were collected based on these vignettes, it seems important to make an effort to either conscientiously choose scenarios with certain characteristics or to even generate them in a methodical way.

The Consumer Ethics Scale (CES) differs from the former two in that it is not based on morality approaches at all but on dimensions of (usually immoral) behaviours. However, as it is the only consumer morality scale that has achieved some popularity, it is briefly discussed in this review (the IRS and the MES were developed to measure the morality of individuals in organisations). It is designed to measure the beliefs of consumers with respect to a number of questionable practices (e.g., pirating movies, keeping excessive change). These items load on the factors ‘proactively benefiting at the expense of the seller’, ‘passively benefiting’, ‘deceptive practices’, and ‘no harm/no foul’.

Given that the CES purpose is not the detection of the individual application of morality approaches but of immoral behaviour, the scale is not based on any ethical theories. This is not so much a criticism of the scale itself but an illustration of the fact that there is currently no instrument for measuring morality approaches applied by individuals facing consumption situations that have a morality dimension.

In summary, existing individual morality measures have received significant criticism regarding their potential to provide details on an individual’s application of morality approaches to an appropriate extent. In the following, this criticism will be addressed and the concept of a new individual consumer morality measure will be introduced.

CONCEPTUALISING A NEW INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER MORALITY MEASURE

As stated at the beginning, it is intended to treat moral decision-making approaches very systematically in this research. This will be done by characterising all of the morality approaches along the same dimensions. These common dimensions will then serve as the basis for the development of the new morality measure. To account for morality approaches in an adequate manner, six dimensions are suggested, namely i) basic reasoning logic, ii) decision-making principle, iii) situational flexibility, iv) consideration scope, v) source of morality beliefs, and vi) roots of morality beliefs.

These six dimensions have been chosen because it is believed that they provide the major common characteristics along which all, or at least most, of the major morality approaches can be simultaneously characterised. While it would certainly be possible to describe each morality approach based on further, very approach-specific features as well, these are not included because at the same time they would not be applicable to other approaches. Their inclusion would result in an unmanageable number of concepts in the new morality measure and would detract from the desired systematic approach to morality. Even though this means that the approaches will not be represented in every single detail in the final measure, given their multi-faceted nature, there appears to be no better systematic way of building a morality scale (see also criticism of the Multidimensional Ethics Scale above). In the following discussion, the six dimensions and their components (scale constructs) will be characterised and discussed. In addition, examples will be given to illustrate how the major morality approaches are represented by these constructs in the new measure.

i) Basic Reasoning Logic. This dimension relates to what Singer calls the “great divide within ethics” (1994, 243), that is the controversy over whether the moral quality of an act should be evaluated based on the properties of the consequences it causes or based on certain properties of the act itself (i.e., whether it follows a rule or principle). Approaches based on the former are usually summarised under ‘teleology’ or ‘consequentialism’. Its advocates take the view that every act that has a morality dimension should be evaluated exclusively based on the net goodness/badness resulting from it (e.g., Gensler 1998); when having a number of alternative activity options, one should always choose that activity which produces the greatest amount of net-benefit (or the least amount of net-harm). In contrast, approaches based on the latter often trade under ‘deontology’ and ‘non-consequentialism’. Deontologists propose that, in order to be moral, the act itself has to fulfil certain criteria (other than leading to consequences of a particular quality). Thus, only activities which are in accordance with certain norms or principles or with ones duty should be chosen (e.g., Höffe 2002; Preston 2001). Accordingly, the basic reasoning logic dimension contains the two constructs ‘deontology’ (goodness of ends makes means moral) and ‘teleology’ (acts meeting certain criteria makes means moral). Examples of individual morality approaches that fall into the former category are utilitarianism (proposing that such an act is moral which leads to the greatest good for the greatest number) and ethical egoism (proposing that such an act should be pursued which leads to the greatest good for the decision-maker). On the contrary, Kant’s exceptionless rules approach (proposing that an act must always be in accordance with universal principles), represents a very influential deontological version or morality (Preston 1, 2001).

ii) Decision-Making Principle. In this dimension, the optimisation rule and the optimisation criterion underlying each morality approach are dealt with. For example, while utilitarianism is associated with the construct ‘maximise happiness’ (maximisation being the rule and happiness being the criterion), situation ethics is concerned with ‘maximise agape’ (love of the neighbour in a Christian sense). The ethics of care approach promotes ‘maximum care’ for others while Kant’s exceptionless rules approach commands to ‘meet universal principles’. Discourse ethics requires that, in order to be moral, a norm must find “approval from all concerned parties as participants of a practical discourse” (Habermas 2001, 103). Accordingly, this approach promotes finding ‘maximum consent’ among the affected parties (Höffe 2002). Thus, the decision-making principle dimension refers to the most specific and (more or less) hands-on ‘algorithm’ provided by an approach to guide individuals in their decision about what is moral and what is not and, therefore, what to do and what to avoid.

iii) Situational Flexibility. This dimension pertains to the nature of each approach to morality with regard to how much it accounts for specific characteristics of the decision-making situation. This feature is closely linked to a morality approach’s characteristics in the decision-making principle dimension discussed above. Among others, constructs in the situational flexibility dimension include ‘strict principles’, best applicable to Kant’s exceptionless rules approach. According to Kant, universal principles have to be followed at all times; thus, an act that has been identified as immoral once is immoral in every case (following, e.g., Taylor 1975). A false promise, for example, is never permissible regardless of the situational circumstances and no matter how inappropriate this rule may seem in some situations (O’Neill 1993). As a result, this approach has no situational flexibility at all. Utilitarianism, on the other hand, requires individuals to make an entirely new maximum happiness calculation in every morally
significant situation that occurs. Thus, every time a morality decision is to be made, all situational specifics can be (and, in fact, have to be) taken into account again, resulting in a ‘full situational appraisal’. The prima facie duties approach stands between the two as it promotes that individuals should follow those principles that fit the specific situation (Ross 1930), resulting in the construct ‘applicable principles’.

iv) Consideration Scope. The consideration scope of an approach relates to the extent to which the interests of others are taken into account when making morality decisions. On the one hand, the scope can be limited to the extreme, leaving only room for the interests of the ‘decision-maker’ him- or herself. This is where one would expect to find an approach such as ethical egoism. However, there have also been arguments that Kant’s exceptionless rules approach primarily accounts for preserving the virtue of the decision-maker (by preventing him/her from engaging in wrong activities) rather than for an individual’s concerns for others (e.g., Davis 1997). For example, while the rule that one must never lie helps an individual to stay virtuous, in certain situations it may lead to catastrophic consequences for other individuals for whom a lie would have saved considerable grief. On the other hand, the consideration scope of an approach can be very large, requiring that a decision-maker takes into account ‘all human individuals affected’ by an activity (e.g., utilitarianism and discourse ethics). Resulting in an even broader scope, individuals may also choose not only to be concerned about the interests of humans but also about the interests of other subjects as well. This may result in a consideration of ‘all sentient organisms affected’ or even ‘all nature affected’, including organic (e.g., plants) and non-organic components (e.g., the sea and the mountains) of the natural environment (for a continuum of environmental entities see also Meyers 2002).

A different approach is taken by prima facie duties, which requires an individual to particularly care for the concerns of those people to whom the decision-maker has ‘special relations’. Accordingly, prima facie duties require the decision-maker to rate higher the interests of people to whom he/she, for example, has made a promise or to whom he/she has a debt (e.g., due to reciprocity) than the interests of those to whom he/she is not tied in such a way (Ross 1930).

v) Foundation of Morality Beliefs. The fifth dimension refers to the fundamental base from which an individual draws his/her morality beliefs. In this work, these sources can be, for example, of ‘religious’ or ‘secular’ nature. In the first case, religious proponents of deontology would be assumed to believe that they have to follow certain rules because it pleases God. Similarly, situation ethics followers maximise agape for the reason that it is God’s commandment (Fletcher 1966). In contrast, a secular individual believes that all morality decisions should, e.g., be logically consistent (e.g., Kantian ethics) or be in accordance with the law of nature (e.g., Locke 1994; Singer 1994).

vi) Roots of Morality Beliefs. The sixth and final dimension refers to the question of whether individuals decide and act upon principles and convictions because they hold them themselves or because they believe that others expect them to comply with such principles and convictions. Individuals of the former kind would be internally driven, the latter externally driven (see also Grix et al. 2004). Kant himself, for example, realised that only because individuals act in a certain obligatory way does not necessarily mean that they act out of duty (i.e., because they believe themselves that they have a duty to act this way). Instead, they may just as well act in accordance with duty (despite inwardly preferring to act differently), for example, when they feel that they are not safe from discovery (O’Neill 1993). This feature has not been formally associated with any specific morality approaches by normative authorities. On the contrary, it is easily conceivable that any morality approach could be rooted internally in or externally to the individual. The dimension has been included in the new concept because it is felt that it may provide an important characteristic to explain individual differences in individual moral decision-making.

As a summary, table 1 provides an overview of the measure dimensions and examples of the major constructs. In addition, examples of morality approaches are provided.

In contrast to existing individual morality scales which take only very limited ranges of morality constructs and approaches into account, table 1 illustrates how the proposed new measure is designed to cover a wide spectrum of these. While the scale incorporates the regularly considered utilitarianism and exceptionless rules, it also includes much less accounted for approaches such as ethics of care, situation ethics, prima facie duties, discourse ethics, and varieties of utilitarianism with extended consideration scopes. Accordingly, the new scale contributes to examining a wide variety of normative approaches that individuals may potentially use for their moral decision-making. In particular, for the first time a measure will facilitate the quantitative study of these approaches in the area of consumption-related decision-making.

Regarding the current state of the project, the review of the relevant literature for the theory-based concept development has been finished, the preliminary result being the measure concept as illustrated in the preceding paragraphs. A preliminary list of scale items has been generated (not included in this paper). The next step, the technical scale development including qualitative and quantitative empirical research, will be initiated in November 2004.

SCALE DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Following the theory-based conceptualisation, the further development of the measure will proceed in two distinct steps, a qualitative and a quantitative empirical research stage. Purpose of the first stage is to qualitatively explore which approaches individuals use when making consumption decisions that have moral implications (i.e., involve a conflict between the interests of the decision-maker and the interests of other stakeholders). The research population for this stage is a group of New Zealand farmer families who have chosen to live jointly in an eco-village community, following a philosophy of living an environmentally and socially conscious life. Accordingly, they engage in activities such as cultivating their lands based on organic principles, harvesting power from wind and sun, building houses from recycled natural materials, and treating grey water self-sufficiently. It is assumed that the members of the community made their lifestyle changes, at least partly, on the basis of moral considerations. An example would be conflicts of interest resulting from consumption-inflicted damage of the environment, which threatens natural integrity, including the welfare of animals and humans. Hence, the community members’ likelihood of having experience with moral decision-making (leading to an improved ability to perceive moral implications of consumption decisions in general) is assumed to be more substantial as compared to that of the average (New Zealand) consumer. Scholars have argued that moral norms are only likely to be activated if the individual perceives that the decision has a moral dimension (e.g., Schwartz 1968). Accordingly, the community members are believed to be an appropriate sample for the exploration of decision-making approaches applied by individuals in interest conflict cases. At the end of November 2004, a researcher...
Towards a Measure of Individual Consumer Morality

will join the community for a period of two weeks. He will fully integrate into the community and participate in the daily eco-village life. Even though community members will be aware of the research, this approach will allow to pursue relevant information leads naturally when they occur in discussions and to gain additional impressions from participant observation. More formal interview sessions will be conducted to investigate the moral decision-making of community members in greater detail. Morality approaches identified in the explorative research will be used for verification of and/or integration into the new individual consumer morality measure. In addition, research insights will be used to complement the existing list of scale items and refine the questionnaire for the consumer morality survey. The research opportunity will also be used to collect material for the development of appropriate vignettes (see criticism of the Multidimensional Ethics Scale regarding this matter further above). In this research, vignettes will be constructed by describing social situations which incorporate those factors that are assumed to be most important to the respondents’ decision-making processes (Alexander and Becker 1987). Accordingly, in order to improve chances for the data-based identification of all those morality constructs that were described in the last section, the vignettes will be composed in such a way that all constructs can be potentially applied based on at least one vignette by respondents. For example, in order for the construct ‘maximise

TABLE 1
CONCEPT OF A NEW INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER MORALITY MEASURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Construct examples*</th>
<th>Morality approach examples*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Reasoning</td>
<td>Evaluation of an act based on its consequences or the properties of the act itself</td>
<td>Teleology</td>
<td>Utilitarianism, Ethical egoism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logic</td>
<td>Deontology</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exceptionless rules, Christian religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decision-Making Principle Optimization rule and criterion (algorithm) provided by the morality approach</td>
<td>Maximise happiness</td>
<td>Utilitarianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maximise agape</td>
<td>Situation ethics, Christian religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maximise consent</td>
<td>Discourse ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maximise care</td>
<td>Ethics of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Degree to which behaviour can be adapted to situational specifics</td>
<td>Strict principles</td>
<td>Exceptionless rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>Applicable principles</td>
<td>Prima facie duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Full situational appraisal</td>
<td>Utilitarianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consideration Scope Degree to which the interests of parties affected by an activity are taken into account</td>
<td>Decision-maker</td>
<td>Ethical egoism, Exceptionless rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special relations</td>
<td>Prima facie duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All human individuals affected</td>
<td>Utilitarianism, Discourse ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All sentient organisms affected</td>
<td>Extended utilitarianism I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All nature affected</td>
<td>Extended utilitarianism II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation of</td>
<td>Fundamental base from which an individual draws its morality beliefs</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Situation ethics, Christian religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morality beliefs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>Exceptionless rules, Discourse ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roots of morality beliefs Distinction between beliefs that are internally rooted or externally imposed</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Any</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Due to space restrictions, examples cover only a fraction of constructs and morality approaches in the final concept.
care’ to emerge from the survey data, there must be at least one vignette to which the ethics of care approach can be applied.

Based on the refined questionnaire, quantitative research will commence in the first quarter of 2005. Data collection is scheduled for February 2005 and will involve a nationally representative consumer sample as well as an additional purposive sample of environmentally and socially conscious (and therefore potentially more morality-experienced) consumers. The two different samples will be employed to allow testing for differences in the individual morality scale structure emerging from the survey data. Data analysis will involve a determination of the underlying factor-structure by exploratory factor analysis with a substantiation of these results undertaken by confirming relationship patterns through structural equation modelling (e.g., DeVellis 2003).

**SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK**

As stated in the beginning of this paper, so far there are no satisfactory answers to the question regarding if and how so-called ‘ethical consumers’ are any different from other consumer groups regarding their decision-making in situations that have moral implications. Existing individual morality measures insufficiently account for the large spectrum of morality approaches and have been mostly developed for application in an organisational context. Accordingly, the authors propose a new concept for an individual consumer morality scale that takes a wide variety of morality approaches into account and is specifically developed for use in a consumption context.

Findings from the explorative research will be available shortly after finishing the qualitative stage of the study at the end of 2004. First ‘hard’ results from the quantitative research can be expected at the beginning of the second quarter of 2005. These results will, for the first time, allow answers to the question, which of the wide variety of morality approaches (and which particular elements of these) individuals apply when facing consumption situations that have moral implications. In addition, the research will provide indications as to how individuals combine these morality approaches.

**REFERENCES**


Cowe, Roger and Simon Williams (2001), *Who are the ethical consumers?* Manchester: The Co-operative Bank.


Tallontire, Anne, Erdenechimeg Rentsendorj, and Mick Blowfield (2001), Ethical consumers and ethical trade: A review of current literature. Greenwich: Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich.

Stoveside Potterings and other Transformations: On Cooking Representations of Culinary Culture
Paul Hewer, University of Stirling, Scotland
Douglas Brownlie, University of Stirling, Scotland

ABSTRACT
The paper introduces a conceptual vocabulary by means of which to frame commodities as placed cultural artefacts. Following Schroeder and Zwick (2004), it positions culture as text and representations of culture as situated inscriptions. It draws on Williamson’s (1978, p.99) notion of ‘synchronic structures’ to explore the play of power and desire in cultural artefacts and their place in constituting social relations (Miller, 1987). A turn to commodity cookbooks provides a context within which to evaluate the potential of the interpretive framework to enrich our understanding of the motivated character of representations within consumer culture. The paper argues that the verbal narratives and visual content of cookbooks can be read as skillfully constructed instantiations of cultural forms and as boundary markers and components of cultural codes (Baudrillard, 1996, p.16). They can also be read as reference points towards subject positions always already infusing the manufacturing work of a representational economy of ‘signs and spaces’ (Lash & Urry, 1994). So, rather than being understood simply as reactions to changing social and economic relations and market opportunities, we argue that cookbooks should be understood as artefacts of cultural life and work in the making. It finds that representations of contemporary culinary culture invoke ideas of exoticism, privacy and escapism in staging persuasive accounts of how social relations can be ‘cooked’ in pursuit of consumerist choices around identity, status and lifestyle. It reveals that, although such commodities as cookbooks may work towards the homogenization of styles of living, bricolage gives rise to ways of resisting this which can themselves become commodities at work. In this sense commodity cookbooks can be said to do transformative work.

INTRODUCTION
Deetz (1977, p.7) writes that “material culture is that segment of man’s physical environment which is purposely shaped by him according to a culturally dictated plan”. In this sense it is possible to understand that when so-called ‘natural’ objects, such as moon rock, flint spears or bronze cauldrons, are deliberately placed within specific contexts of social significance, they are naturalized and turned into material culture. The artefact can then be seen as an unstable and temporary outcome of objectified social relations.

Building on Miller’s work on the construction of social relations through commodity consumption, the paper advocates the importance of studying the ‘object’ (or ‘work’) as material culture in the making, as a medium of objectification (Miller, 1987, p.129). Indeed, we do so rather in the sense that McLuhan (1964) viewed technologies as media of social transformation that become established as part of the “everyday environment, the taken for granted context for living” (Miller, 1994, p.17).

That we should take commodities seriously as objectifications of social relations, as productive of and enabled by social change, has gained recognition among interpretive consumer researchers (eg Joy, 1994; Belk, 1988, 1994). We argue that this is especially so in studies of objects such as print advertisements which are theorized as placed cultural artefacts (eg Wernick, 1991; Schroeder & Zwick, 2004). We illustrate how it is possible to situate such objects, or works, within a significant cultural context by virtue of a small but powerful conceptual vocabulary, opening up the appropriated object and disclosing how it puts culture to work and how culture in turn puts it to work.

The paper discusses how we can understand the ‘constructedness’ of such commodity objects as cookbooks, arguing, after Pearce (1994, p.10), that they are as much social constructs as flint tools or Jacobean urns, and as susceptible to social analysis. Indeed, taken as instantiations of particular forms of signifying practice within contemporary consumer culture, they can be seen to act as elements of a representational system that produces and reproduces meaning outside the realm of the kitchen or the home. In this sense social life is thoroughly mediated by the commodity form.

We argue that ‘cooking’ is a cultural practice, whether it is meat, fish, vegetable or symbols that are being ‘cooked’-as is the consumption of the prepared product, the material culture. So we understand that, although cooking reproduces “a way of thinking and provides a medium for thought” (Tilley, 1994, p.70), representations of cooking also invoke circulating discourses of culinary culture, taste and lifestyle consumption. And so it is that the paper critically examines renditions of contemporary culinary culture as staged through the images and narrative of two sites of discursive formation, namely two commodity cookbooks (Brownlie, Hewer and Horne, 2005; Hewer and Brownlie, 2005). We argue that the staged representations of those cookbooks and the subject positions they give us, not only express and inscribe contrasting conceptions of culinary culture, they also reproduce a ‘meaningful system of difference’ (Schroeder and Zwick, 2004, p.22) upon which to lend shape to circulating discourses of marketing, such as that of consumer profiles, target groups and market segments.

While we argue substantively that interpretive consumer researchers may overlook the study of cookbooks as placed cultural artefacts, we also illuminate the more general methodological insight that such artefacts are capable of “[rendering] curves of social discourse [and] fixing it into an inspectable form” (Geertz, 1993, p.19). The paper draws on material that explores the potential of ‘synchronic structures’ to generate analyses of culturally embedded-representational work, such as those demonstrated by Williamson (1978) in her seminal study of advertising ideology. It is also sensitive to material on representations as points of access to processes of making contemporary consumer culture, such as the analysis of literature (Fitchett 2002; Eid 1999; Stokes 1997; Brown 1996), film (Denzin 2001; Holbrook 1986), poetry (Sherry and Schouten 2002; Holbrook 1990) and art (Schroeder 1999, 2002; Brown and Patterson 2000; Fillis 2000).

In the reported study, we set out to explore the potential contribution of a turn to cookbooks for enriching our understanding of the character of representations of transformation within contemporary consumer culture. It is no convenient coincidence that we selected cookbooks as the constitutive empirical site. For you may recall how Levi-Strauss (1970) captured the notion of naturalizing ‘nature’, of rendering it in culture, by means of the metaphor ‘cooking’. As Williamson (1978, p.103) writes, “ Levi-Strauss describes the cultural transformation of natural objects as a process of ‘cooking’ ….In cooking, nature, in the form of raw material (eg meat) enters a complex system whereby it is differentiated culturally (for example it may be roasted or grilled). In just the same way, images of nature are ‘cooked’ in culture so that they may be used as
part of a symbolic system... Once nature has been drawn into culture it is given meaning... in this sense, nature has been transformed into ‘the Natural’. Citing Macnaughton and Urry (1998), Bhatti and Church (2001, p.366) argue that ‘human relations with... are fashioned by everyday domestic routines’, such as gardening and cooking. They note that those activities can be understood as social practices which not only construct and transform natures, but also carry a number of constitutive principles so that they are discursively ordered. Kitchens, like gardens, can then be seen as sites of cultural consumption. We argue that since nature is not something already there, but is itself manufactured (Barthes, 1973; Bourdieu, 1977), that apparently ‘natural’ facts can be considered discursive ‘facts’, that is, discursive effects created at the intersection of signifying practice and related discourses. Indeed, some of those effects are so familiar to us that, as Eagleton (2004, p.95) notes, they have become as transparent or natural as words like ‘bread’ or ‘grass’.

In effect the paper discusses the unraveling of knots of naturalization. It attempts to decontextualize reified social constructions invoked by the images and narrative strategically situated within two cookbooks. Those two items are taken as commodity forms rendered as material culture in social and cultural context (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979). In closely observing the ‘cooking’ of symbols and their placement within a system of differentiation where subject positions are made, the paper builds a platform for commentary upon the transformative work of those cookbooks. In doing so it attempts to open up possibilities repressed in the constitution of taken-for-granted and apparently ‘objective’ social relations (Laclau 1990) embedded in the cookbooks’ representations of contemporary culinary cuisine.

This essay builds on these lines of thought, rendering cookbooks as cultural artefacts (commodity cookbooks) which have to be understood in relation to their social context (Brownlie, Hewer and Horne, 2005). In so doing, the wider ambition of the essay is to explore the potential contribution of the textual approach for enriching our understanding of contemporary consumer culture with regard to the preparation, presentation and consumption of food.

**FRAMING COMMODITY COOKBOOKS**

In our view such work demonstrates the potential of this form of critique to generate disciplinary space from within which to begin to problematise representations of contemporary culture, including representations of contemporary culinary culture. Schroeder (1999) shows how to accomplish this problematisation, and thus to decipher contemporary society through the device of textual analysis. To elaborate, we argue, after Pilchner (1995), that cookbooks can be treated as a literary genre that is part of the fabric and expression of our culture and which, in an analytical sense, serves to reproduce culture. This view is echoed by Appadurai when he states that “we need to view cookbooks in the contemporary world as revealing artefacts of culture in the making” (1988, p.22). Or, as Tobias writes, “Cookbooks contain not only recipes, but hidden clues and cultural assumptions about class, race, gender and ethnicity. They reflect many of the dramatic transformations that have come to define the boundaries of the modern public sphere.” (1998, p.3).

This material establishes our central point that, from an analytical perspective, commodity cookbooks must be understood, not merely as instrumental texts, conveying, by means of recipes, information about ingredients, their assembly, processing and presentation. Rather, they also offer access to “unusual cultural tales” (Appadurai 1988, p.3) which generate representations of food as a placed cultural artefact, suggestive of where we have been, who we are and where we may be going. This point is underlined in Pilchner’s research when he approaches cookbooks as voices, capable of speaking “unique tales of home and nation” (1995, p.301). So, understood as a form of placed cultural artefact (Gagliardi 1990), we can conclude that commodity cookery books can then be studied for what they reveal about the constitutive effects of time and space (Neuhaus 1999), questions of identity (Zafar 1999), the construction of gender norms (Tobias 1998: Neuhaus 1999) and the reproduction of dominant culinary values (Curtin 1992).

Tobias (1998) analysed cookery books published in eighteenth-century America, concluding that they served to position women and define their role in society. Pilchner (1995) continues this theme in his analysis of Mexican cookbooks, arguing that they served as sources of ‘cultural capital’ for women in Latin American society. Likewise, in her analysis of two black women's cookbooks, Zafar (1999) notes that they represent a space through which cultural identity is ‘recreated’. In this way she likens her analysis to that of an ethnographic journal, providing a “reading of what we eat, to understand how we construct a self around the axes of food” (1999, p.463). Zafar sums up the revelations of her analysis as placing “…African-American cuisine in a political context, record[ing] a social history that must not be forgotten, and relat[ing] the lived experience of the writer and/or her family.” (Zafar 1999, p.464).

Zafar thus suggests that cookbooks represent, or function as ‘recoveries’, or ‘recastings’ of the culture of African-American consumption, as signs of refusal and of forbidden identity. This use of cookbooks as cultural artefacts can also be traced in the work of Novero (2000). Her analysis of cookbooks published in Weimar Germany, between the First and Second World Wars, reveals how they function to “reconcile nutritional and economic precepts with an ideology of taste and a modern lifestyle” (2000, p.163). This is most evident where she reveals how the representations situate cooking as a technical skill, mediated by the rhetoric of instrumental rationality and efficiency. For instance, in her analysis of a cookbook by Kopp, entitled Bache nach Grundrezepten (Bake with Basic Recipes 1933), Novero shows how its content, that is, the recipes, are rendered as if they were “…formulas that have been tested and perfected” (2000, p.167).

This scientific representation of cooking is further conveyed through the use of over five hundred black and white photographs illustrating the ‘precise’ stages of food preparation. It is clearly framed as ‘rationализed work’ (Novero 2000), and Novero struggles to find a place for any notion of ‘pleasure’ in the representations. In a study of the changing contents of food columns in popular UK women’s magazines between 1967-1992, Warde arrives at similar conclusions. He observes a discourse of compliance, noting that: "Information is now given fairly routinely, not only about precise quantities of ingredients and cooking times, but also about preparation time, nutrient contents, sometimes shopping instructions too...science, measurement, the use of information derived from experiment, rather than trial and error and ad hoc judgement, appear more frequently in the food columns.” (1994, p.24).

This discourse of compliance contrasts with the notion of culinary practice as a site of resistance. Bracken’s publication The I Hate to Cook Book (1960) is indicative of the social tensions of the late 1950s. It provides tales of the drudgery of cooking and the repression of women in male dominated society. In coded form the book suggests how women might avoid this drudgery through using processed foods and avoiding elaborate recipes, yet still be seen to fulfill the expectations of their defined role. This text functions in a subversive and liberating way to clearly contest and encourage resistance to the dominant gender norms of the 1950s.
A METHODOLOGY

This essay has its origins in questions raised during a wider empirical study of attitudes towards food and cooking among young people in the UK.1 During interviews and focus groups, informants suggested with noticeable frequency that two particularly popular TV cooks and their cookbooks performed a key role in making the routine and mundane everyday practice of cooking appealing and ‘sexy’ to them, but also ‘how to cook properly’: Jamie Oliver’s The Return of the Naked Chef (2000) and Nigella Lawson’s Nigella Bites (2001). In these beautifully produced cookbooks, the photography subtly echoes the narrative concerns and clearly announces the coming of further merchandising and TV deals and celebrity brand status.

The paper draws methodological inspiration from the work of Williamson (1978, p.110) who uses the idea of ‘synchronic structures’ to argue that the ‘cooking’ process in representation is one of “appropriating form without content; of manufacturing symbols and products simultaneously out of the raw, meaningless and undifferentiated mass which is nature, and then substituting these symbols and these products for nature.”

Following Barthes (1973) and Zafar (1999) whose studies both drew on a critique of two texts, we also selected two texts (Oliver and Lawson) as an appropriate way to set off on a modest exploratory textual journey, intending, through the reportage of our contrapuntal readings, to generate sufficient insights and lessons about the nature of contemporary consumption to help consumer researchers decide if representations of contemporary culinary culture do indeed have the potential to enrich our understanding of consumption. Our research thus maps out the three core themes to emerge from a reading of the cookbooks, these are organised as follows: re-enchanting the kitchen, stovetop pottering and culinary tourism.

THE RE-ENCHANTMENT OF THE KITCHEN

One of the first characteristics observed is how the two cookbooks attempt to situate their various representations of culinary practice against the backdrop of contemporary events and social trends. This is accomplished in a number of ways. First is in terms of how the contents are organized. Eschewing the traditionally popular approach of organizing recipes by main type of produce, eg meat, pasta, or fish, Nigella’s chapter structure is almost existential in its use of headings evocative of the angst of contemporary lifestyles. Chapters, with accompanying images are positioned as envelopes for recipes, as soul food of therapeutic value for the following occasions: ‘Rainy Days’, ‘Slow-Cook Weekend’, ‘Comfort Food’ (arranged according to ‘our life, our timetable and our mood’).

This is echoed in the aestheticized (Featherstone 1991) ‘look’ of the cookbooks where the focus is very much on design intensity, glossy, colourful and artful image-based communications of the sort popular in lifestyle magazines targeted at the ‘sophisticated and cultured’. Many of the images foreground the kitchen and its associated technological paraphernalia as key signifiers of lifestyle. For example, the image which heralds chapter one in Nigella Bites, entitled ‘All-day breakfast’, stages truth effects in support of a claim that our notions of breakfast are, or at least should be, undergoing considerable rethinking, as a site of resistance to popular notions of the stressful rushed breakfast. In this sense the stylised aspirational representations of culinary culture delivered in

1This data was selected from a broader study of young people’s living skills, in total twenty young people aged from sixteen to twenty-two years, living in the UK were interviewed during 2002.

Nigella’s book can not only be thought of as coded responses to changes affecting the community as a whole. They can also be seen as an attempt to reposition and recontextualise the ‘commodity cookbook’, by subverting their conventional uses and inventing new ones—in this case as a site of resistance to contemporary cultural imperatives.

Alongside this we are presented with a soft-focus image of Nigella, ample charms draped in long silk dressing gown and dark brown hair in curlers, pouring while pouring a cup of coffee, clearly with time on her side. On her kitchen units a number of unused stainless-steel utensils are arrayed. Providing further glimpses of an aspirational lifestyle statement, there is the liminal presence of a Kitchenaid Mixer and a Dualit Blender—both branded tools, representing the essential scaffolding of a lifestyle kitchen for the culinary guru. The subtle background of fetishized machinery and foregrounding of the beautiful dark-chocolate and cream looks of the female gastro-guru hints at the ‘food porn’ label the TV version of the book attracted in the American press. It also reveals a discourse of recovery through distance and control which is at odds with the notion that human conduct is increasingly subject to forms of control and constraint delivered by machines. It reproduces notions of technology in its place, as a tool of power to be controlled and used to support and facilitate human activity, not to dominate or constrain it. These objects are not mere accoutrements though. As aspirational brands they can also be understood as vital props, as wands for negotiating the jungle of contemporary culinary culture and appropriating some of the magical aura of the sexy culinary guru. They are also important symbols by means of which to imagine the re-enchantment of the commodity kitchen, as a site spectacular consumption and performance.

STOVESIDE POTTERRINGS’ AND THE ACT OF CONSUMING

The contrasting images of the act of consuming are matched by the contrasting tales they have to tell about the act of cooking. For Oliver, the act of cooking appears to be very much secondary to the act of consuming. Many of his recipes in this respect focus upon the temporal dimension, justifying their use in terms of their speediness to prepare. For example, his recipe for ‘beef tomatoes, basil, ham and mild cheese on thick toast’ states “This brekkie or snack takes precisely 1 minute to make... Very simple, very tasty” (2000, p.30). The recipe for ‘braised five hour lamb with wine, veg and all that’ starts with the lines: “This is a real hearty and trouble-free dinner. There’s barely any preparation, just a nice long cooking time which will reward you with the most tender meat and tasty sauce.” (2000, p.174). For Oliver, we might argue that the dominant representation is one of attempting to make life easy (2000, p.14). A view which concurs with Warde’s (1994) argument that convenience rather than care is foregrounded within magazine recipes.

In this way, for Oliver the act of cooking is represented as a means-to-an-end activity, as in the depiction of the stages of ‘making tortellini’. This almost functional approach to the why of cooking contrasts sharply with Nigella’s approach to the act where home-made and nostalgia are foregrounded. Granted we are given images of cooking as a ‘low-effort undertaking’ (2001, p.190), but alongside such talk she suggests ‘stovetop pottering helps me unwind’ (2001, p.55). In her recipe for Lemon risotto this notion of ‘stovetop pottering’ is explored:

“This is comfort food on so many levels. For one, risotto has to be one of the most comforting things to eat ever. What’s more, although everyone goes on about the finickiness and crucial fine-tuning involved, I find risotto immensely comforting to make: in times of strain, mindless repetitive activ-
We are thus told that for Nigella the act of cooking is symbolic of ‘temperament and habit’. This more care-driven and emotional approach attempts to deny the calculative rationality of weights and measures, in her recipe for mashed potato we are told: “I hesitate before giving quantities, so please regard the specifications below as the merest guidelines.” (2001, p.32). Additionally, in ‘granny lawson’s lunch dish’ we are told “Cooking isn’t just about ingredients, weights and measures: it’s social history, personal history.” (2001, p.162). A representation which attempts to imbue the act of cooking with extraordinary relevance.

INGREDIENTS, RECIPES AND CULINARY TOURISM

The idea of cookbooks as offering consumers some kind of easy made solution to the dilemmas of contemporary life is extended through a discussion of the game of distinction played out in the texts. Warde (1994) considers recipes as ‘messengers of taste’, a recipe provided by Oliver for: “Seafood broth, ripped herbs, toasted bread and garlic aioli” serves to illustrate this point. Reference to the ingredient ‘aioli’ also appears significant: “The aioli is not essential with this, but it is fantastic and you should give it a go.” (2000, p.90). In other words, a game of distinction (Bourdieu 1984) appears to be being played out through the exotic ingredients included, a game which on the surface offers a choice, but which is constraining in its overall appeal due to its overly prescriptive nature. Aioli thus functions to exclude and distinguish those without the cultural competence, or as Bourdieu prefers: “Consumption is… an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code. In a sense, one can say that the capacity to see (voir) is a function of knowledge (savoir), or concepts, that is, the words, that are available to name visible things, and which are, as it were, programs for perception.” (1984, p.2). To help understand how cookbooks stage and reconstruct cultural difference we invoke the following notions: culinary practice as what Cook and Crang (1996) refer to as the ‘local globalization of culinary culture’; and the cookbook as a site from which to experience that local globalization and with which to participate in metrocentric global culinary culture. So, Nigella gives us ‘American pancakes with wafer bacon and maple syrup’ followed by ‘Asian-spiced kedgeree’ followed by ‘Masala Omelette’ followed by ‘Apple and blackberry kuchen’. The cookbook in this sense reads like the enchanted and enchanting tour guide for a grand tour across the world in miniature, from the U.S. to Asia to Europe in the space of fourteen pages. In this sense the cookbooks not only provide geography lessons. Through the deliberate use of enchanting streams of symbols of travel and exotic places, they also manufacture the global diversity of culinary culture and bring it to your doorstep. As Cook and Crang remark “the touristic quality of these constructions [is] particularly apparent when [it] allows consumers to bring the experience of travel to their own domestic culinary regimes” (1996, p.136). So, you can think of cookbooks as offering you a holiday for your tongue which, as Lash and Urry observe, “encourages us to gaze upon and collect the signs and images of many cultures— to act as tourists in other words” (1994, p.272). Therefore, even if the recipes are not made and the exotic food is not eaten, the reader can still gaze at colorful constructions of far flung places of the globe and achieve imaginary gratification (Smart, 1994).

CONCLUSION

This paper has sought to render cookbooks as cultural artefacts to thereby make them amenable to textual analysis, in order to counter their taken-for-grantedness amongst consumer researchers. It is further argued, that the turn to contemporary culinary practices and their representations serves to enrich our understanding of consumer culture and insights about the nature of consumption practice, enabling us thereby to illuminate not only dominant discourses, i.e. with respect to notions of food as cultural capital and culinary tourism but also counter-discourses emerging forms of meaning. In this respect we seek to position and read off cookery books, as windows through which to glimpse and problematise representations of contemporary culture. But more, we want to suggest that through their representations are gleaned instances of culture in the making. In this sense, the cookbooks are transformative in terms of invoking ideas of exoticism, privacy and escapism to stage persuasive accounts of how social relations can be ‘cooked’ in pursuit of consumerist choices around identity, status and lifestyle. We have revealed how commodities such as cookbooks may work towards the homogenization of styles of living or consumption practices, however bricolage gives rise to ways of resisting this which can themselves become commodities at work. In this sense commodity cookbooks can be said to do transformative work. Finally we would like to suggest that the paper opens up a rich avenue of research around cookbooks, such as what consumers do with cookbooks, or how the sensuality and visibility of the book may be transformed into the messy sensuality of the performance of the everyday act of ‘doing-cooking’. The kitchen thereby becomes a re-enchanted space (Hewer and Brownlie, 2005), or as de Certeau et al (1998: 148) expresses: “Our successive living spaces never disappear completely; we leave them without leaving them they live in turn, invisible and present, in our memories, and in our dreams. They journey with us. In the centre of these dreams there is often the kitchen, this ‘warm room’ where the family gathers, a theatre of operations for the ‘practical arts’, and for the most necessary among them, the ‘nourishing art’.”

REFERENCES


De Certeau, Michel; Giard, Luce and Mayol, Pierre (1998), The Practice of Everyday Life, London: Methuen and Co. Ltd.


The Relevance of the Quality Construct to Wine Consumption
Steve Charters, Edith Cowan University, Australia
Simone Pettigrew University of Western Australia, Australia

ABSTRACT
This study focused on consumers’ difficulties with the concept of quality using the example of wine quality. The research was carried out because previous academic perspectives on quality have focused on the conceptual problems faced by researchers, rather than concentrating on the difficulties consumers may have with the idea of quality. Informants reported that dealing with quality in an aesthetic product like wine is complex, partly due to the abstract nature of the product, partly because of the focus required during engagement, and partly because of the difficulty of verbalising that engagement.

INTRODUCTION
This study focused on the difficulty drinkers can experience with the concept of quality using the example of wine quality. Quality is a term which is used almost daily by both marketers and consumers. The concept is an important issue within the field of consumer behaviour, with much discussion focused on trying to explain its nature and scope (Holbrook and Corfman 1985, Zeithaml 1988, Sweeney and Soutar 1995, Steenkamp 1990). Although consumer researchers acknowledged the problem of determining precisely what product quality is from an academic perspective, they appear to pay less attention to the dilemmas faced by consumers in defining the concept. This article is an attempt to redress this imbalance by exploring consumers’ understanding of the concept of quality in wine.

Using the Term Quality
Marketing academics have readily acknowledged that quality is difficult to define (Steenkamp 1990, Zeithaml 1988, Sweeney and Soutar 1995, Holbrook 1999). It seems that the confusion arising from varying interpretations of the term have led researchers to focus less on the nature of quality itself and more on its relationship to other variables. Where quality is addressed, the main emphasis of marketing researchers has been to try to categorise and define quality in an academic sense, rather than focus on the problems consumers face in understanding the concept.

The term quality is often utilised specifically by both consumers of wine and the professionals involved in the production and distribution of the product (Charters and Pettigrew 2002). In what is one of the most fragmented of all markets, any criterion which can frame or inform consumer purchase decisions is useful. Consequently the perception that one buys or experiences quality by one’s choice may have a significant influence on the decision-making process. For wine producers, understanding how consumers view quality may give them a critical edge in marketing their wines. Yet despite regular use of the term quality within the wine industry, there is little consideration of how consumers conceptualise quality and the resulting implications for developing quality-related communications.

To provide context to this investigation of consumers’ perceptions of wine quality and how they may differ from those of academics and wine marketers, relevant academic and practitioner viewpoints are presented below. The academic perspective on quality is that adopted by marketing academics, particularly consumer researchers, while the practitioner viewpoint is sourced from wine industry publications.

The Marketing Perspective
Steenkamp (1989) has offered a particularly precise analysis of the different means of categorising quality. He offers four different approaches to the concept, noting that one of these, adopted by the discipline of marketing, is ‘perceived quality’. Further, there are ten overall definitions of quality given by the Macquarie Dictionary (Delbridge and Bernard 1998), of which one is relevant to this discussion: ‘excellence or superiority’. It is excellence and superiority which are generally used in the marketing literature when referring to quality per se as a facet of consumer perception (Zeithaml 1988). The single definition ‘superiority or excellence’ in fact contains two different interpretations. Superiority is relative; there must be at least one other product of the same class in order for an item to be judged as superior. Excellence is discrete to the individual product. It is either excellent or it is not. Although ignored by consumer researchers, this distinction may, however, be relevant from the consumer’s point of view and it is almost certainly relevant from the perspective of the wine producer and critic. For instance both definitions operate separately in the Australian wine show system. In a class of (say) chardonnays there is no limit to the number of wines that can gain more than 18.5/20 and be awarded gold medals—their excellence is therefore assessed discretely. However, only one of these wines can be selected as a trophy winner—the best in its class—which is a comparative judgment. It may well be that consumers view the two alternative definitions as separate processes and goals. Depending on the situation (for instance the purpose of consumption) they may seek merely something that is comparatively better than similar product types, or they may seek excellence as a discrete end in itself. This dichotomous understanding clouds the definition of wine quality.

Zeithaml (1988) considered the definition of absolute quality within a marketing context to suggest that it refers to ‘the actual technical superiority or excellence of the products’ (1988, 4). She added that ‘the term objective quality’ refers to measurable and verifiable superiority on some predetermined ideal standard or standards’ (1988, 4). This approach, using external data to attempt to establish the quality of specific products, has been adopted by other researchers (e.g., Hjorth-Andersen 1984). However, it is perceived quality as a paradigm, rather than absolute quality, that has dominated the perspective of marketing academics (e.g., Compeau, Grewal, and Monroe 1998, Holbrook and Corfman 1985). Perceived quality is considered an abstraction, resulting from the evaluation of a product (Zeithaml 1988). Perceived quality may be interpreted as “an overall subjective, evaluative judgment of a product’s perceived ability to deliver an expected bundle of benefits relative to benefits offered by other products” (Compeau et al. 1998, 296). Perceived quality is thus a subjective and personal evaluation made by the consumer.

The Outlook of the Wine Industry
Oenological academics, who train and consult to winemakers, focus on wine quality as a production management issue. Thus the standard text on producing wine examines quality control in some detail, without actually defining quality (Rankine 1989). This reflects the production management approach and may help winemakers to produce technically correct wines, yet does not necessarily assist consumers seeking to engage with the idea of
wine quality. Some oenologists are more consumer-focused. Jackson (1994), for example, argues that quality is evaluated by the wine’s conformity to objective benchmarks, such as ‘regional standards’, or by the analysis of its discrete quality elements, such as the length of finish. This, however, tends to be the exception rather than the rule.

Wine producers and commentators also show an unwillingness to deal with quality as a concept. For example, The Oxford Companion to Wine, edited by the eminent British commentator Jancis Robinson (1999), is the major English language reference work on wine. Nevertheless, Robinson only considers quality in terms of the European Union’s legal construct ‘quality wine produced from a specified region’ (QWPSR). QWPSR implies that quality only exists because the wine comes from a specific geographic area, rather than because it tastes better than other wines. This difficulty of engaging with quality has even led one wine marketing practitioner to conclude that quality is an irrelevant term for wine (Gardner 1998). Gardner proposes that overuse of the term by wine producers means that it is almost “meaningless” (p 145) so that “the term quality remains contemptible” (p 151).

The reluctance among wine critics to deal with the concept of wine quality probably results from two factors. The first is the lack of a commonly accepted definition of wine quality. Secondly, there is uncertainty about the benchmarks against which a wine can be judged. For certain commentators the evaluation of wine is an aesthetic practice (Amerine and Roessler 1976), while for others it can be a subjective process (Peynaud 1987). Alternatively, it may be considered scientifically verifiable and thus objective (Somers 1998).

Determining wine quality presents specific problems to wine professionals because of the complexities surrounding the process of tasting, which is not a precise science. It is clear that there is uneven sensory awareness, both in a single person and between individuals, and that this unevenness relates both to olfactory perception (Woods 1998) and the sense of taste (Peynaud 1987). Crucially, enjoyment lies not in the aroma itself but in our interaction with it; thus pleasure is partly about our personal perspective (Engen 1988). Consequently tasting skill, personal preference, and external notions of quality may interact erratically as one tastes a specific wine.

Understanding Quality

Based on the above discussion, the problems surrounding the concept of quality can be analysed in at least two ways. The first is definitional. Is quality excellence (and thus discrete to the product) or superiority (and therefore comparative)? Secondly, emphasis can be placed on determining if quality is perceived (subjective and thus rooted in the individual consumer) or absolute (determined by external criteria which can be accepted by all consumers). Perceived quality is the paradigm adopted by most marketing academics. This can be seen as a means for placing the responsibility for determining quality firmly on the consumer. This illustrates how the focus of consumer researchers is on their own difficulties in defining and categorising quality, rather than the problems encountered by consumers.

The wine industry shares the uncertainty about the concept of quality displayed by marketing researchers, an uncertainty which is accentuated by factors which relate specifically to wine as a product. There is, for instance, an apparent indecision about how the assessment of wine quality is carried out. Is it a matter of chemical analysis, an organoleptic procedure which requires tasting, or does it require external means of benchmarking quality? Furthermore it is clear that the very process of tasting accentuates the problems of understanding quality, fraught as it is with uncertainties over personal taste and uneven sensory perception. However, the industry also focuses on its own difficulties in analysing quality rather than the problems faced by the consumer.

Involvement

Crucial to this study, and to the problems drinkers may encounter with the idea of wine quality, is the concept of product involvement. A recent definition of involvement suggests that it is “a person’s perceived relevance of the object based in inherent needs, values and interests” (Brennan and Mavondo 2000, 132). Relevance is a key word in the definition and it is also important to note the focus on the consumer; it is not the product which creates involvement. It has been shown that involvement is a major factor in the development of a drinker’s outlook on wine generally (Lockshin, Quester, and Spawton 2001, d’Hauteville 2003, Quester and Smart 1996). It has also been suggested that high-involvement drinkers form about one third of the market for wine (Lockshin and Spawton 2001), and that these drinkers constitute a group which has a very different perspective on wine consumption from other consumers (Lockshin 2002).

It is commonly the case that involvement is described dichotomously as high or low (e.g., Quester and Smart 1996). Some others claim that it is more likely to operate on a continuum, even though this is harder to assess practically (Brennan and Mavondo 2000). For wine, at least, involvement appears to operate on a continuum (d’Hauteville 2003). Accordingly in this study consumers were split into high- (HI), medium- (MI), and low-involvement (LI) drinkers. This allowed a clearer analysis of consumption practices to explore how the relevance of wine to individuals may shape or reflect their perspectives on quality. Consumer involvement was gauged following a close analysis of expressed consumption behaviours. It used a wide range of activities such as information seeking, frequency of purchase and methods of evaluation. Thus if an informant invariably tried to purchase wine at a low price or showed inaccurate knowledge they were more likely to be low-involvement. In line with the exploratory nature of this study, this qualitative means of deriving involvement level was considered to be more appropriate than the administration of the Personal Involvement Inventory.

PROCESS

An exploratory approach involving interviews and focus groups was used to obtain insight into the ways Australians conceptualise wine quality, which may or may not have similarities to their understandings of quality relating to other classes of goods. In order to access those who were most likely to have thoughts relating to wine quality, sampling was limited to those who classified themselves as wine drinkers. The limitations of this approach include the inability to assume the findings have relevance in wine markets outside of Australia and the possibility that non-wine drinkers have different characteristics to wine drinkers.

Sixty informants took part in the study, 35 participated in focus groups and 25 were interviewed individually. Informants for the research process were selected to mirror the range of general consumers of wine, and as such they reflected an array of levels of involvement with wine and wine consumption. A more detailed description of the informants, their recruitment, and their involvement classification has been provided elsewhere (Charters & Pettigrew, 2003). Informants were informed that the interviews (individual and focus groups) would discuss wine, but they were not aware that the focus would be specifically on wine quality. During the interviews informants were invited to comment on their motivations to drink wine and their perceptions on the nature of wine quality. Other topics included the factors consumers use to interpret...
quality, their views on the relationship of quality to value, price, and purchase, and how they assess wine organoleptically. Wine was used as a stimulus in the focus groups to facilitate exploration of consumers’ sensory engagement with the product. Tasting wines and discussing the process of quality evaluation in situ was found to be a very useful approach.

From commencement of data collection a practice of analysis and cross-referencing of data was adopted that involved comparing and contrasting what informants were saying and doing. This process was adopted in part to start the process of analysis by developing data categories (Janesick 1994), and also to improve further data collection by allowing it to be more precisely focused (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The focus group and interview transcriptions were analysed using NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Information Searching Indexing and Theorising).

The trustworthiness of research is based on two factors (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). The first is the nature of the data collected. In an attempt to attain data trustworthiness in qualitative research the standard process is to submit the data and the data-collection process to triangulation—the use of multiple practices to validate the research (Denzin, 1989; Janesick, 1994). Two forms of triangulation were employed in this study, data triangulation, using different involvement levels and varying locations in Australia, and methodological triangulation employing focus groups and interviews. The second factor necessary to attain trustworthiness is the role of the researchers themselves (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989).

Thus, the cross-checking between the researchers of (1) data analysis, (2) interpretation and (3) tentative conclusions offered a further means of adding rigour to the study.

**FINDINGS**

Informants discussed several aspects of wine quality. It quickly became apparent that many informants considered the concept of wine quality to be complex and elusive, probably as a result of its abstract nature:

Ian (LI): I think quality’s an interesting one. It’s a tough one to actually put your finger on.

This perspective was shared by high-involvement consumers also, as the following extract suggests:

Kate: (HI) [Grape quality is] a form of lusciousness—but that’s not necessarily based on body. You can have a fairly light bodied wine that has texture and has structure. And you can have those wines that actually can have some texture and structure but not necessarily be terribly expensive. But they are... [pause]. Difficult questions—god... [long pause]. Quality? On each different level there’s different things you can say.

Kate offered a link between the quality of grapes and the weight and texture of wine—but, whilst she could comment on possible dimensions of quality, she found it hard to be precise about its overall, global nature.

Informants particularly noted the difficulties of quality assessment relating to the physical and cognitive skills involved in evaluation and the need for focused concentration. They also commented on the relevance or otherwise of wine quality to their decision making. Each of these aspects is outlined below.

**Assessing Wine Quality**

**Process difficulties.** Lower involvement informants often referred to the difficulties they face determining whether a wine is of good quality. For some this was the result of a feeling that they lacked appropriate experience:

Nettie (LI): I understand that I don’t understand much about wine quality. I’ve heard all the terminology, ‘something on the nose, and a bit on the back of the palate and the front of the palate—and it’s finished with this and decorated with that.’ I don’t understand.

Nettie believes that some form of external (objective) quality exists and she is aware that a specialist jargon exists for framing it, but she cannot understand the language so she considers that she is unable to perceive the nature of quality in wine.

For some, the difficulty in conceptualising or defining wine quality meant that it is easier to focus on poor quality rather than good quality. Avoiding poor quality, as the converse of seeking out good quality, was often referred to by informants and seemed to be an important issue for them:

Norman (LI): I’m not particularly fastidious about wines and to my mind the quality is such [that] it is drinkable, pleasant. But I did actually buy a cask of Kaiserstuhl Moselle the other week—and I took it home and that had got a very boxy taste to it. It had gone off. It had been in the sun or something... and it was a really unpleasant taste. In fact I couldn’t even manage a glassful and I took it back and swapped it for another one.

Norman offered the fairly uncomplicated and broad ‘drinkable, pleasant’ as his definition of quality, yet was apparently much more at ease in apprehending the absence of quality in a wine. Elsewhere in the interview Norman showed little interest in expensive wines and little complexity in his conceptualisation of quality, yet he can express distaste vigorously when a wine is unpleasant. Even the opportunity to finish the first glass before returning the cask was eschewed, so awful was the wine.

Medium involvement informants also often communicated uncertainty in their discussions of wine quality. Diana, for example, had just started attending a wine education course to improve her ability to assess wine quality. When asked what processes she uses to evaluate wine she commented:

Diana (MI): I have to say that trying to define the tastes and aromas—I find it very difficult to isolate a flavour and say ‘that’s grapefruit’, or ‘that’s kerosene’, or ‘butter’. I find that very difficult. So I suppose I don’t know.

Diana sensed that she should be showing some coherent, analytical approach to the evaluation of wine, but found as many others did that it is hard to place precisely the flavours that she is tasting. This difficulty with the process of assessment and the related issue of articulating the criteria for evaluation was common amongst low- and medium-involvement drinkers.

**The Need for Focus.** As a corollary to the difficulty of assessing wine, some informants were explicit that the process of engaging with wine requires focus. Typical of those who discussed the need for focus was Norman, who talked about the time when he would travel away from home to work and often buy a cask wine to consume on his own:

Norman (LI): I think it’s a matter of distraction or concentration. Sitting in the motel room, I’m very much aware of my friend Bacchus and the quality of what I’ve got there—because you know there’s just silence, perhaps, and the laptop and me. In a barbecue you’re chatting, you’re laughing, I might even
end up singing. So you are distracted, I suppose, to some extent. Unless somebody specifically brings your attention to it and says ‘this is a such and such, what do you think?’ the chances are you don’t prejudice it that much. You just say ‘oh that’s a chardonnay, very nice, thank you,’ glug, glug and down it goes. I think it makes a difference what concentration you’re putting on the actual drink that you’re having.

When Norman can concentrate on wine he can reach some conclusions about its quality. When he cannot focus he just accepts the offer of a drink and ‘down it goes’. The implication is that he does not think about it carefully in a social context. This view was held by a range of other informants, including some classified as high-involvement.

As suggested by the example above, the need for focus can be confounded by distractions in the drinking environment. Situational factors were described by a number of informants as being problematic in the assessment of wine quality. In the following extract Fred, an occasional musician, is talking about the drinks he sometimes gets served when performing in a hotel:

Fred (LI): They’ve got a particular house white, or something with their own label on it ... And I taste it-and I don’t know whether it’s ... $40 a bottle or $10. And sometimes I think ... it’s the effervescence of the occasion-but I don’t know whether it’s $40 or $10.

The occasion, Fred suggests, may overwhelm his powers of analysis. When he does not know which wine he is drinking he is unable to place its quality, at least as it is judged according to price.

Decision Making

Many informants considered wine quality to be a determining factor in their wine selection, and this was particularly evident among higher involvement drinkers. For some informants, however, the concept of quality in wine was reported to be irrelevant. This was particularly apparent among those who took a subjective view of the nature of quality (‘good wine is just what I enjoy’), or for those who–like Nettie above–viewed wine quality as a foreign language which they cannot speak. Thus in a focus group:

Cleo (MI): I don’t really buy a wine for quality. I buy it just for me liking it.

Alec (MI): I think quality’s completely personal.

Cleo: Quality is just a word that doesn’t come into it for me.

For some informants the concept of wine quality actually had negative connotations. The following exchange occurred in a focus group:

Question: What does everyone else think quality is about?

Florence (LI): I think a lot of the time it’s snob value.

Damian (MI): I agree.

Ben: To me it’s not much more than the money that you pay for it and I don’t pay too much attention. I’m quite happy with the better cask wines myself.

The ‘anti-snob’ theme recurred regularly in this focus group. Ben and Florence both showed very low-involvement levels; Damian was a medium-involvement consumer, but seemed to restrain some of his enthusiasm for wine in order to ensure that he ‘belonged’ to the group. Ben and Florence were adamant that high quality, as reflected by high price, is at best irrelevant and at worst an unpleasant expression of status-seeking behaviour.

DISCUSSION

It was noted in the literature review that researchers find the concept of quality difficult to define and engage with. This difficulty is in part a result of the multiple definitions of the concept and in part to do with its abstract nature. Consequently, researchers themselves use varying ways of categorising and analysing quality, including a tendency to resort to perceived quality as a definition. This has two outcomes. First, it places the onus on the consumer to determine what quality is. Second, it simplifies the tasks of marketing researchers by absolving them from the responsibility of defining quality. It becomes a process limited to recording, analysing, and quantifying the consumer’s perceptions of the quality dimensions of a product. This may be comparatively simple with consumer durables (for instance electrical goods (Sweeney and Soutar 1995)). However, it becomes more difficult with quasi-aesthetic products like wine where the old saw de gustibus non est disputandum (‘there can be no debate about matters of taste’) is regularly used to pre-empt effective comparison or evaluation. With electrical goods it is relatively simple to evaluate performance. The safety, efficiency, speed, and whitening ability of a washing machine can be measured. By comparison, the concepts employed to evaluate wine are imprecise and there is no common agreement about what they are (Charters and Pettigrew 2002). Even more the consumer’s assessment of, and response to, music, paintings or craftworks may falter because of a lack of commonly agreed or widely understood evaluative criteria.

It is clear from the findings of this study that the difficulty in grappling with the concept of quality is not just experienced by academics and wine industry professionals but also shared by wine consumers. In considering the nature of wine quality, the assessment of wine quality and its relevance to them, many drinkers revealed the complexities they face in coming to terms with the concept. These complexities appear to stem from a number of sources. In part they result from the problems consumers can experience when conceptualising wine quality. Thus they seem to share a common predication with academics in trying to define an abstract concept. This is compounded with a product like wine because of the fuzziness of its aesthetic nature (Amerine and Roessler 1976), which is harder to engage with than, say, the speed and fuel consumption of a car. The suggestion has therefore been made that wine quality is much easier to recognize than define (Amerine and Roessler 1976, 2). Further, the difficulty for consumers appears to be accentuated when they ‘don’t have the language’. Just as tasting is a process categorised for most people by aroma rather than words (Engen 1987), so quality can be more easily categorised and therefore comprehended when one has the ‘right’ words. For the less involved (thus, generally, the less ‘wine literate’), this powerlessness to express the evaluation of quality may distance them from the concept itself. The fact that there may be multiple definitions of wine quality adds to this inability. One consequence is that some consumers may find it easier to focus on the absence of quality–on what they dislike–rather than determine or explain its presence.

The problems of comprehending wine quality appear to be accentuated by the difficulties associated with its evaluation. The physiological and psychological problems with assessing wine detailed in the literature review were noted by some informants. Additionally, situational problems and the need to focus intently on the process of evaluation were also reported by informants to be issues affecting the evaluation of wine. For some consumers these difficulties may create ambiguity about the nature of wine quality. Some informants, even those who accepted the existence of some form of objective quality, suggested that quality is still irrelevant to their preference. A few appeared to view the concept of quality in
a negative light, including the perception that it is merely a market-
dering device.

It is also apparent from the responses given in the study thatthere may be different approaches depending on the involvement
level of the individual. High involvement consumers seemed as
likely as others to consider the nature of wine quality difficult to
grasp as an abstract idea, and agreed that evaluating wine quality
required focus. However, they were less likely to dismiss it as
irrelevant or negative. Lower involvement consumers commented
more often on the linguistic, situational, and processing problems
related to the comprehension of quality. Given that the number of
high-involvement drinkers has been estimated at around one-third
of all wine consumers (Lockshin and Spawton 2001), the relatively
large proportion of low- to medium-involvement consumers has
implications for marketing practitioners who use ‘quality’ as a
device to promote wine. If a wine is likely to be aimed at a market
segment comprising mainly high-involvement drinkers, then talk-
ing about quality may be appropriate. If the market segment is more
likely to include the less involved then a focus on other aspects of
the wine, such as taste, pleasure, or the situation of consumption,
may be more useful. It is further likely that involvement level is
relevant to the consumer’s ability to evaluate not merely wine, but
aesthetic products generally. This has been implied in some studies
into aesthetic consumption (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982), but the
issue has not previously been investigated in detail. It can be
postulated that the more highly involved, having more knowledge
about and interest in the product, consequently have greater under-
standing of and facility with the processes required to appraise it.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that consumers can experi-
ence difficulties with the nature of wine quality and by extension
quality in aesthetic products generally. For some this may be
because evaluating quality requires considerable focus or that
clearly describing the elements of quality may be challenging. For
many, however, the problem becomes more specific, focusing on
how quality is actually assessed and the intricacy involved in
pinning it down precisely. This is an unsurprising conclusion and
reflects the trouble expressed by academics in dealing with the
However, this difficulty faced by consumers appears to have been
largely overlooked in studies on the subject. Consequently, the fact
that it is difficult for consumers to get to grips with and explain
quality, at least in relation to a quasi-aesthetic product like wine,
makes any conclusions about the nature of wine quality doubly
tentative. By extension it is possible, and perhaps likely, that the
idea of quality in any aesthetic product complicates consumers’
evaluations. This has important implications for marketing theory
where the emphasis is on ‘perceived quality’. If consumers them-
selves feel they are not in a position to ‘perceive quality’, then the
quality construct in the discipline is undermined.

This struggle to comprehend wine quality has two practical
outworkings. The first is that elements of wine quality may produce
ambivalence, even negativity, amongst some drinkers, especially
those with lower product involvement. This applies to the nature of
quality itself and to various issues surrounding its evaluation and
relevance. Consumers may conclude that evaluating quality has no
relevance to them, nor little applicability to their purchase deci-
sions. Crucially, product involvement appears to have a relation-
ship with the difficulty experienced in coming to terms with wine
quality. Whether this is an issue of cause or effect remains to be
examined. It may be that finding the idea of wine quality easy to deal
with allows consumers the luxury of becoming more involved.

Alternatively, it could be that as a result of their higher involvement,
and the associated increase in knowledge (Goldsmith and d’Hautville
1998, Dodd, Pinkleton, and Gustafson 1996), they have learnt more
about the abstraction which is wine quality.

REFERENCES

Amerine, Maynard A. and Edward B. Roessler (1976), Wines:
Their Sensory Evaluation, New York: W. H. Freeman and
Company.

Unfinished Story?”, Australian and New Zealand Marketing
Academy Conference, 29 Nov-1 Dec, Griffith University,
Queensland, 32-137.

Charters, Steve and Simone Pettigrew (2002), “‘Gladdening the
Heart’: A Perspective on Wine Quality,” in Bacchus to the
Future Conference, ed. C. Cullen, G. Pickering, and R.
Phillips, St Catharines, Ontario: Brock University Press, 279-
304.

Charters, Steve and Simone Pettigrew (2003), “‘I Like it but
How Do I Know if it’s Any Good?’ Quality and Preference
in Wine Consumption,” Journal of Research for Consumers
(www.jrcustomers.com), 5.

“Role of Prior Affect and Sensory Cues on Consumers’
Affective and Cognitive Responses and Overall Perceptions

Delbridge, Arthur and J. R. L. Bernard (eds.) (1998), The
Macquarie Concise Dictionary, Sydney: The Macquarie
Library.

Prentice-Hall.

d’Hautville, Francois (2003), “The Mediating Role of Involvement
and Values on Wine Consumption Frequency in France,” in International Colloquium in Wine Marketing, ed.
Larry Lockshin and Cam Rungie, University of South
Australia, Adelaide, 1-17.

Dodd, Tim H., Bruce E. Pinkleton, and A. William Gustafson
(1996), “External Information Sources of Product Enthusi-

Engen, Trygg (1987), “Remembering Odors and their Names,”
American Scientist, 75 (5), 497-503.

Engen, Trygg (1988), “The Acquisition of Odour Hedonics” in
Perfumery: The Psychology and Biology of Fragrance, ed.
Steve van Toller and George H. Dodd, London: Chapman
Hall, 79-90.

Gardner, Peter (1998), “The Concept of Wine Quality is an
Outmoded Descriptor in Contemporary Communications,”
Australian and New Zealand Wine Industry Journal, Annual
Technical Issue, 145-152.

Glaser, Barney and Anselm Strauss (1967), The Discovery of

Wine Consumption: Empirical and Theoretical Perspec-
tives,” British Food Journal, 100 (4), 184-190.

“Hedonic Consumption: Emerging Concepts, Methods and
Propositions,” Journal of Marketing, 46 (Summer), 92-101

Hjorth-Andersen, Chr (1984), “The Concept of Quality and the
Efficiency of Markets for Consumer Products,” Journal of
Consumer Research, 11 (2), 708-718.

A Framework for Analysis and Research, ed. Morris B.


The Value of Ritual Theory for Understanding Alcohol Consumption Behaviours

Kieran Tucker, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland

ABSTRACT

This paper explores how theories of ritual can lead to a richer understanding of alcohol consumption behaviours. The research challenges studies of drinking patterns which reduce the phenomenon to volume measures of consumption alone. It is proposed that reported increases in binge drinking amongst young adults can be understood as a change in ritual forms with the onset of postmodernity. Ritual theory is shown to provide a conceptual framework for understanding how the symbolic meanings of material goods are made manifest in consumption practices.

INTRODUCTION

A large scale public debate has emerged concerning the rightful place of alcohol in Irish society. Less than fifty years ago, per capita consumption of alcohol in Ireland was amongst the lowest in the current EU countries. However, for the period 1989 to 1999, whilst elsewhere levels were stabilising or falling, the country saw an increase in consumption of 41%, ranking it second only to Luxembourg in Europe (Department of Health and Children 2002). Questions are being asked of young people’s drinking behaviours which are widely viewed as uncontrolled and disorderly. Patterns of alcohol consumption are changing reflecting a similar trend in Britain (Gofton 1990) and to a lesser degree in Europe (Jernigan 2001; Simpura, Karlsson, and Leppänen 2002); young people’s alcohol consumption in Ireland increasingly involves binge drinking behaviour.

Binge drinking describes a pattern of excessive consumption motivated by a desire for intoxication. Although binge drinking is not new to Irish drinking culture, the emerging binge drinking paradigm is qualitatively different from its predecessor and results from a changing understanding of the accepted symbolic meaning of alcohol, a phenomenon which may be illustrated and explained with reference to ritual theory. Traditionally in Ireland, a young man’s first drink was an expression of his acceptance into the adult male community (Gofton 1990; Share 2003) whereas initiation into alcohol culture now takes place largely in the peer group and lacks such gender distinctions. Examining this development from a ritual perspective it appears that the symbolic meaning of drinking occasions has been changed from a rite of passage to adulthood to a ritual of extended adolescence which is practiced as a gesture of liberation and supposed personal freedom (Gofton 1990; Hollands 1995).

The majority of studies into binge drinking define the phenomenon by volume measures of consumption alone whereby a particular unit-based figure serves to distinguish between binge and non-binge drinking occasions (e.g., Ramstedt and Hope 2003, Wechsler et al 1995). Because patterns of consumption are grounded in cultural norms, no universal barometer of “normal” drinking exists. Using a set number of drinks to define binge drinking can lead to objections of understatement or overstatement. Volume level classifications overlook the intentions of the drinkers under scrutiny, and the actual and desired effects of their drinking. It is a denotation which emphasises the inputs over the outcomes thus the harms of heavy drinking are merely assumed and not directly examined.

The present discussion shall attempt to demonstrate how theories of ritual can provide a richer understanding of the symbolic meaning of alcohol as made manifest in the consumption practices of young people in Ireland. The study of binge drinking ought to be appropriately sensitive to the intent, and style of drinking behaviours as these are more predictive of the alcohol’s social impact than volume measures alone. Individuals do not drink alcohol according to their own free licence; it is essentially a rule governed-activity. Norms and customs dictate who can and cannot drink, what they should drink, where, when and how they consume it, and for what reasons. Drinking behaviours can be seen to be symptomatic of highly formalised and symbolically meaningful consumption patterns, related to the larger social structure in which they occur. Ritual theory recognises the symbolic value of drinking occasions and attempts to locate this within its cultural context.

THE RESEARCH APPROACH

The following discussion is based on empirical data from an ethnographic investigation into drinking amongst young adults in Ireland and draws on theories of ritual behaviour and alcohol consumption. Though the topic of alcohol consumption, in particular excessive or problematic consumption, is well theorised, studies that approach the topic from a ritual perspective are rare. In the few exceptions, ritual is commonly used as a synonym for drinking style, ignoring the symbolic importance of the construct. The symbolism of ritual behaviour is socially and culturally embedded and an analysis of ritual requires that the social processes be understood, not simply described.

Ethnography has consistently been the methodology of choice in the field of ritual studies as it is appropriately sensitive to the subtleties of sociocultural patterns of action (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). Ethnography is essentially descriptive anthropology in which the primary means of data collection are qualitative, namely participation in settings, observation and interviewing. Through immersion in a social setting for an extended period of time, the ethnographer attempts to build an understanding of the workings of a particular culture. It is a naturally evolving, iterative process of data collection and analysis which is particularly attuned to investigating the subtleties of mundane experience. The context-bound nature of ethnography means that it is capable of revealing uniquely intimate perspectives which would have been impossible to achieve through other research methods. The objective is to render an empathetic understanding of the symbolic world of a social group (Geertz 1973).

RITUALS OF CONSUMPTION

The concept of ritual is receiving increasing attention amongst consumer research in recent years (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989; Holt 1992; Rook 1985; Wallendorf and Arnould 2001) however there is much variation to be found in the use of the word. Classifying behaviours as either ritual or non-ritual can be a contentious issue; while some restrict the term to large-scale, public, ceremonial events, there is a strong argument that the term can also be applied to the often taken for granted behaviours we engage in everyday such as grooming, watching sports, or sharing a meal (Rook 1985; Holt 1992; Wallendorf and Arnould 1991). Although the word brings to mind primitive customs, rituals have survived in modernity and postmodernity, though they have evolved to suit their changing social context.

Ritual consumer behaviour is unconventional in that it is not self-serving by nature but is executed with the interests of a group in mind. Christmas dinner, for example, reflects more than personal preferences; it references an archetypal model, a perceived “real”...
Christmas which is universally shared. In order to achieve this, individual tastes and particularities are de-emphasised (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991). This practice is believed to be symbolically rewarding despite the potential for inconvenience or sacrifice.

Rituals are not mere leisure pursuits conducted for their own sake rather than they come about out of necessity (Driver 1991). The functions that rituals attempt to achieve, however, are not always made explicit during the performance. This is because rituals function symbolically, not in an instrumental manner. While many forms of human interaction can be seen to be symbolically charged, rituals are distinctive in that they perform a profound function which goes beyond the strict semiotics of the symbols used. Ritual “is not in service of the symbols, but the other way around. Rituals employ symbols so as to invoke, to address, to affect, even to manipulate, one or other unseen power” (Driver 1991, 97). Consumer research places significant emphasis on the symbolic properties of material goods. McCracken (1986) proposes that it is only in using an object, specifically ritualised use, that an individual can appropriate its symbolic meanings. The study of consumption rituals addresses this appropriation process in a social context.

It is proposed that there has been a shift in the form and function of drinking rituals in response to changing social circumstances. Two models of ritualized consumption are presented here: the classic model and the liminal model. These alternative models exist alongside each other but are distinguishable by their form and function.

THE CLASSIC RITUAL MODEL: AN APPLICATION TO DRINKING

Order

A Durkheimian view of culture emphasises that for society to function effectively it requires a shared worldview or a common set of values. The classic model of ritual (Cheat 1989) serves to communicate and maintain a social and moral order. Order in this context describes a sense of organisation, form or regularity without which reality would appear chaotic. Rituals in this sense are conducted with the intention of securing oneself within a larger cultural system or structure. Rituals exemplify “truths” about the world in which we live and persuade us that this is the way things inevitably are and should be (McCracken 1986). However, this is not just a means of conceptualization; order is always connected with definite practices, that is, it directs action (Durkheim 1912/1975).

Accordingly, the classic drinking ritual, the traditional paradigm of alcohol consumption, serves to establish social order amongst its participants. This order is best exemplified by the rules and regulations of the pub, which not only govern behaviour within the building itself but also reify the values considered important in the external culture. The social order of the pub is not imposed upon the drinkers but actively created through the rituals in which they engage.

The majority of alcohol in Ireland is consumed in pubs and bars. The pub is a place where contacts are made, deals are agreed and disputes are settled (SIRC 2003). Everyday life and existence is enacted here in the patterns of social interaction. Drinking in the pub was once a privilege reserved primarily for men. Patriarchal notions of a women’s role in society often characterise alcohol as unsuitable for “respectable” women. The traditional pub brought together other wage-earning male drinkers of various ages who lived and worked together in the community. Heavy drinking was a badge of masculinity and attachment to the local way of life. The manual workers in particular were attracted to strong beers which were consumed in volume over regular and frequent sessions (Gofton 1990; Share 2003).

Nevertheless, “real” drinking also involved certain norms about acceptable behaviour during and after these sessions. Open drunkenness was looked upon as the antithesis of this masculine ideal (Gofton 1990). The shame associated with unfettered drunkenness emanates from the perceived role of the male within the community. Modernism ascribes control to the individual and it has become a masculine trait to be able to take charge of one’s comportment under any circumstances, intoxication included. Self-control was viewed as a feature of proper drinking. The most competent drinkers demonstrated their ability to “hold” their drink in the company of others. Such bounded consumption allowed the drinker to experience alcohol’s pleasurable effects without any significant impairment to his behaviour or judgement.

The cultural notions that direct social interaction both inside and outside the pub are rarely made explicit but rather they are evident in behaviour. The classic drinking ritual converts such abstract notions of masculinity and self-control into definite practices. Through ritual, the symbolic meanings of alcohol and the pub are manipulated in order to reify the social order.

We must draw a distinction between social order as provided by ritual, and ordered behaviour as dictated by the ritual script. Whereas a script is operational for the duration of a ritual, social order acts as a precedent for behaviour throughout life. Social order concerns the role of shared norms and values in maintaining cohesion in society. Through rituals, people reproduce culturally approved patterns of interpersonal relations and heighten our consciousness of them. However, order and script are not unrelated. The ritual script tells us the right way to do things and this is informed by society’s moral authority, that is, by its own social order.

Community

Social order comes about as a product of ritual but this is not an end in itself. It is however a prerequisite of the subsequent social gift of ritual, community (Driver 1991). Drinking is almost always defined as a social activity. To become a regular of a particular pub is expressive of certain group solidarities and an attachment to a local community. Only regulars, “the privileged pub elite” (Share 2003, 7), can justifiably sit at the bar while casual patrons might feel ostracised. In an environment defined by class, locality, or gender boundaries, an outsider can expect a certain amount of alienation.

That rituals build solidarity among those who share in their performance is a common sense assumption. A group can achieve solidarity simply because they look for it together.

Ordered Transformation

According to Driver (1991), order and community are only two of ritual’s three gifts, the third being transformation. While the twin functions of order and transformation may appear contradictory, the transformations that occur in the classic ritual are not threatening to the social order, they are ordered transformations. A rite of passage may grant an individual a new status in society however the rite still instructs about society itself and the role of the individual in it. Transformation in the classic ritual affects only the subject and not the shared worldview. A wedding unites two people as a couple; initiation makes a man of a boy; and a signature makes the unofficial official. Ritual is a means of symbolically enacting such changes.

The transformative potential of the classic drinking ritual is evident in the rites of passage that serve to initiate a novice into the pub culture. Traditionally a young man would be socialised into a
drinking group by established drinkers, usually his father or older brothers, in recognition of his coming of age. This process would help him acquire a taste for alcohol, teach him how to “take” his drink and instil behavioural norms. In this way, the inexperienced drinker assimilated adult drinking rules and conventions by rite (Gofton 1990; Share 2003). These activities mirror the apprenticeships of industrial work (Hollands 1995) adding further support to the notion of classic drinking rituals as integrated with the everyday life of the working class male in modernity.

However, with experimentation with alcohol occurring at a younger and younger age, many drinkers in Ireland now start drinking with their peers and away from adult supervision. One comment which typifies the experiences of many young drinkers was:

...most of my friends in school drank [by age fifteen] but very few of our parents knew about it. We were in the park up in [place name] so it was a bit of a safe haven actually. We were free to drink without anyone looking over our shoulders. (Male, 20)

Such inductions into drinking culture represent a break from the classic ritual and suggest an alternative paradigm of alcohol consumption. It is increasingly common for alcohol consumption to be characterised by unrestrained drinking of a kind not fitting with the classic model. Not restricted to working class men, this particular ritual is practiced by young males and females from all class backgrounds. The core feature of this second ritual is that it serves as a marker of liminality.

THE LIMINAL RITUAL MODEL: AN APPLICATION TO DRINKING

Anti-Structure

Certain theorists have proposed that we are currently living in a postmodern society, characterised by a chaotic mix of disparate lifestyles and identities. Postmodern culture celebrates the heterogeneous, fragmented, paradoxical, and ambiguous qualities of contemporary society (Firat and Venkatesh 1995). In a culture which celebrates choice and individual freedom of expression, the need for social order as prescribed by the classic ritual is lessened. Postmodern rituals exist in the liminal form, marked by diversity and disorder instead of organisation and conformity.

Liminality describes a peculiar, bracketed social time and/or place which is set apart from the mundane. Liminality brings with it not only a loss of identity for the subject but a temporary absence of time and place, a state of being “betwixt and between” (Turner 1969, 81). It is distinguishable from profane time in both its significance to ritual participants and its tempo (Belk et al 1989). Within liminal time and space, society’s normal codes of behaviour no longer apply. The “anti-structure” of liminality, in contrast to the conventional, emphasises homogeneity, equality, and anonymity (Turner 1969). Established social order is replaced with a new set of codes, such as expectations of appropriate conduct, tone, and emotion responses (Belk et al 1989; Driver 1991).

The liminal drinking place, the stage for the liminal drinking ritual, rejects the modest air of the everyman pub and its associated rituals. The drinking places which have adapted to accommodate the liminal ritual celebrate excessiveness in their attitude and design (Brown and Patterson 2000). City centre nightclubs, music bars, superpubs and superclubs (large, chain-owned establishments with sufficient capacity for several thousand customers) embody this attitude. These venues typically comprise of a number of bars and dance floors under one roof, and are often given extravagant themes realised through excessive decoration and ornamentation. In all the sites visited during fieldwork where theming was a feature, be it Australian beach culture, fin-de-siècle Paris, Soviet Russia, authenticity was secondary to style and novelty. The intention seemed not to accurately recreate the motif but to create hyperreal environments.

The style of the establishment inspires the style of drinking that takes place there. The emotionally charged ambience of liminal drinking places provides a temporary outlet for hedonic pleasures. Music, light and dark, clothing, dancing, drugs, and alcohol all figure in the theatrical experience. The promise of spectacular experiences and infinite possibilities tempts the consumer to submit to the hedonism of the festival atmosphere.

Informants described how the aura of liminality within contemporary pubs and clubs affects the drinking experience. “Quiet pubs” or “old-man pubs” were seen as a “home from home”, places to go for a chat and catch up with friends. On the other hand, the liminal drinking place is not part of the fabric of daily life; it is valued for being quite the opposite, an escape from the pressures and constraints of normal life. Drinkers readily distinguish between establishments in terms of the style of drinking deemed appropriate there:

“In [a named superclub] the idea is to drink as much as you can, dance and have a good laugh.” (Male, 23)

The post-industrial city at night comprises of an abundance of drinking places in close proximity to each other, each with its own atmosphere and appeal. Collectively these outlets serve to temporarily reinvent the city as a postmodern playground of leisure and hedonic excess where choices are based on aesthetic judgements (Hollands and Chatterton 2003). The emerging nightlife industry has widened its focus from just selling alcohol to selling atmospheres, images, and lifestyles.

Featherstone (1990, 14-15) emphasises the ordered disorder of liminal space and points to the carnivals and fairs in pre-industrial Europe to illustrate this. The carnival provided “symbolic inversion and transgressions of the official ‘civilised’ culture and favoured excitement, uncontrolled emotions and the direct and vulgar grotesque bodily pleasures of fattening food, intoxicating drink and sexual promiscuity”. The night time economy purposefully distinguishes itself from the everyday in an attempt to bring this carnivalesque temperament to social life.

Communitas

The liminal model asserts that rituals “can be agents of change forging new boundaries, rather than conservative gatekeepers of social continuity” (Ustuner, Ger, and Holt 2000, 209). In this way instead of preserving the status quo rituals serve to bring about changes to social order. Liminal rituals are optimistic in their outlook in that they allure to an idealised version of existence where classic rituals merely recreate it as it is.

This utopian ideal is best reflected in the pattern of social interaction which emerges in liminal contexts. Turner used the term communitas to distinguish between the community formed through classic ritual and its liminal equivalent. Community is embodied by the structures and stratifications which organise a group of individuals. In contrast, communitas is “an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be no society” (Turner 1969, 97). Communitas exists independent of normal social roles and structures whereby ritual performers are immersed in a temporary state of status equality. Self-interest is momentarily forgotten and in-
stead a group attempts to achieve an experience of shared euphoria (Driver 1991). This distinction might appear subtle but it represents differing manifestations of social relations in modern and postmodern society (Maffesoli 1996). Modern life is focused on the individual and intimate communal relations may be threatening to hierarchical systems. Thus modern rituals establish solidarity through mutual support and reciprocity but only within the boundaries of the collective. A community is formed through bonding practices which attempt to reinforce exclusive identity within a homogenous group. Communitas on the other hand is an outcome of bridging practices which strive to be inclusive by strengthening weak ties within a heterogeneous group.

In the traditional pub, a part of the social fabric of a community, regulars are likely to know the staff or other patrons on familiar terms (Share 2003). My own observations suggest that liminal drinking place serves no such function. They bring together hundreds of individuals who otherwise have little in common except for their shared state of abandonment. Each is engaged in a project to temporarily withdraw from modern society and the obligations it imposes (Goulding, Shankar, and Elliott 2002; Malbon 1998). The loud music typical of liminal drinking places makes talking, the principle activity in the traditional pub, difficult. Solidarity is instead expressed through non-verbal means; a common understanding of codes and symbols, an appreciation of the music, or an intangible suggestion of affinity (Goulding et al 2002). The intimate and playful fashion in which personal space is shared while dancing makes it an act of mutual connectedness which is at odds with the impersonal logic of the city. Subjective differences such as age, ethnicity, and class are said to lose their significance in the social experience and individual become part of a collective subject. The relationships formed there are more likely to be built around a sense of communitas rather than any definite connection.

Liminal Transformation

As with the classic model, liminal rituals bring about transformation however liminal transformation is not found within established social order but in anti-structure. Identity is malleable in liminal space. An individual may adopt a persona of their choosing which is in no way indicative of his real world character or state. Ritual provides for subjective transformation by affecting one which is in no way indicative of his real world character or state. Identity is malleable in this manner, consumers are able to engage in the spectacle of liminality without withdrawing from mainstream society or committing completely to a subculture.

Alcohol is instrumental in creating and marking this ethic. Participants in the liminal ritual consume alcohol with the intention of getting drunk, akin to a mood-altering drug. Intoxication in this context is understood as a state of altered consciousness or temporary insanity. If hedonic experience exists in a different life world, it is logical that the transition between states be immediate. Young consumers have been shown to strategically consume alcohol in a manner which allows them to get drunk and get drunk quickly (Brain 2000). In order to achieve this, they seek out strong alcoholic drinks, drink at speed, and mix drinks for maximum effect. The pattern of drinking celebrates abundance and immoderation.

Drinking thus resembled a strategic exercise depending on participants desire to achieve a level of intoxication appropriate to the ritual. Managing the pace of alcohol intake was the most common means of affecting this however other means were consciously employed.

Every Saturday, we go out with the intention of getting completely drunk. (Male, 19)

I always make sure to eat something before I go out so as not to get too drunk. While some of my friends are the opposite. They would say “don’t eat too much, you want to get drunk!” (Female, 19)

I used to swallow a few Paracetamol before I went out drinking just so I’d get drunk quicker. (Female, 20)

The marketing efforts of certain alcohol brands have been directed at positioning alcohol products as recreational drugs (Brain 2000). Seeking to attract the dance club market, such products compete directly with illicit drugs by emphasising alcohol’s transformative potential in their brand imagery. There is a related trend towards stronger drinks such as fortified wines, premium beers, caffeinated mixers, and an assortment of shots and shooters targeted at young consumers seeking a more intense buzz. These developments in the market are indicative of the industry’s recognition of the central role that brands play in the performance of alcohol consumption rituals.

Figure 1 summarises the classic and the liminal models of ritual. There are as many variations on drinking patterns as there are drinking occasions and not every drinking occasion can be comfortably categorised as one or the other. The two models of ritualised consumption presented here should merely be regarded as ideal types which differ in their apprehension of a good night out. The liminal model has not replaced the classic drinking ritual as both still hold some relevance for young people. In different circumstances, informants would switch between liminal and classical drinking rituals depending on the group they were with, their perception of the occasion, their mood or other such context specific reasons.

DISCUSSION

MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969, 164) maintain that “truly significant advances in our understanding of why people do what they do when they are drunk will come only from a more fully informed grasp of societies’ differing understandings of the nature of drunkenness”. It is unfortunate that the majority of research into
alcohol neglects this premise and focuses instead on volume measures of consumption.

The primary difference between the classic and the liminal drinking ritual is in their opposing understandings of the symbolic meaning of alcohol which is manifested in practice. The liminal ritual, primarily practiced by a younger generation of drinkers, is directed by the transformative potential of alcohol and prescribes that the best reason to drink is to get drunk. Intoxication is viewed as a “time out” period of social licence and release from conventional constraints. This outlook is incompatible with the classic drinking ritual, and thus it is shocking to older generations. Where the young might celebrate the release from constraints that drunkenness offers them, to external observers it appears dangerous, uncivilised, and symptomatic of moral decline. Ireland is currently questioning the place of alcohol in its society. This is a debate which has its roots in conflicting perceptions of the how alcohol ought to be used, that is the appropriateness of particular consumption rituals.

The case of alcohol is illustrative of the ambiguous meanings of certain material goods. The above account has shown how alcohol is used in its symbolic capacity to perform two contrasting rituals and accordingly is understood differently by different types of drinkers. The drinks industry has a vested interest in directing the popular understanding of their products. Likewise, consumers are actively engaged in interpreting the meaning of commodities according to their own priorities. Product meanings are negotiated through rituals of consumption where consumer and producer interests interact.

What the above account illustrates, rituals are not given, unchanging patterns of behaviour rather they adapt to their particular cultural context. Drinking is a social activity which evolves as its environment evolves. By studying which aspects change and which remain relevant, we are afforded valuable insight into the dynamic relationship between ritual practices and those who engage in them.

The study of drinking patterns cannot be reduced to a simple mapping the quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption as is the case with much research in the area. How an individual chooses to drink is loaded with multiple complex symbolic meanings and sociocultural motivations, qualities to which ritual theory is particularly attuned.

REFERENCES
The Value of Ritual Theory for Understanding Alcohol Consumption Behaviours


A Longitudinal Study of Product Attachment and its Determinants
Ruth Mugge, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Hendrik N. J. Schifferstein, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Jan P. L. Schoormans, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT
This paper investigates how the emotional bond a consumer experiences with ordinary durables varies over time. We found that product attachment is affected by the degree of self-expression, memories, and perceived pleasure. Over time, the determinants of product attachment can be added or lost, or their impact on product attachment can change. Our research shows that product usage is essential to maintain the impact of memories on product attachment. For users, the impact of the determinants was stable over time. For non-users, however, the impact of memories on product attachment decreased to non-significance, whereas the impact of the low pleasure ratings increased.

INTRODUCTION
Consumer behavior research has focused primarily on purchase behavior. However, to understand consumers’ replacement behavior, more knowledge is needed of the relationship that consumers experience with products during ownership. Specifically, how does the consumer-product relationship evolve over time? Product attachment is defined as the emotional bond a consumer has towards his/her product (Schifferstein and Pelgrim 2004). This definition implies that an emotional tie between the owner and the object and that the specific product has a deep and important meaning to the owner. People experience more protective behaviors toward these objects (Belk 1991) and often develop long-lasting relationships with them. Product attachment is concerned with specific objects. This makes it conceptually different from two other constructs: product involvement and consumer-brand relationships (Kleine and Baker 2004). These constructs are generally conceived as the importance of a product category to a person (e.g., Costley 1988) and the relationship to a brand (e.g., Fournier 1998), respectively.

Several qualitative and survey studies on product attachment have investigated the degree of product attachment at one specific moment in time (e.g., Ball and Tasaki 1992; Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). Although these studies are clearly valuable for understanding the concept of product attachment, they have some apparent shortcomings. Attachment tends to develop over time as a result of recurring interactions between an individual and the attachment object (Baldwin et al. 1996; Kleine and Baker 2004). These interactions encourage the development of meaning in reference to the object. Accordingly, several scholars have acknowledged the importance of longitudinal research to examine consumers’ dynamic relationships to their possessions to deepen our understanding of product attachment (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Kleine and Baker 2004). This research provides a first attempt to investigate the concept of product attachment using a longitudinal approach.

DETERMINANTS OF PRODUCT ATTACHMENT
The experience of attachment to a product is related to the degree to which this product is used to define and maintain a person’s self (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Kleine et al. 1995). Based on the different facets of the self (Greenwald 1988), we distinguish four possible determinants of product attachment: self-expression, group affiliation, memories, and pleasure.

Self-Expression
The first determinant stems from people’s need to express their personal identity. People are motivated to establish and communicate a personal identity, distinct from that of others. The use of products is one way by which an individual can symbolically display one’s individuality to oneself and to others (Solomon 1983). For example, a person’s clothing expresses who (s)he is as an individual. People tend to develop stronger attachments to products that are used to express and maintain a personal and unique identity (Kleine et al. 1995; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988).

Group Affiliation
The second determinant stems from people’s need for affiliation. People experience a need to be connected, joined, associated, and involved with others. The products that support group affiliation define to what groups of people an individual belongs to. They symbolize a person’s desirable connections to family members, friends, or social groups. For example, a sweater can show a student’s connection to a fraternity. People become more attached to products that symbolize an important person or social group, because these products enhance that part of the self that needs to feel connected (Kleine et al. 1995; Schultz, Kleine, and Kernan 1989).

Memories
A product can remind a person of people, events, or places that are important to that particular individual. It can help them or her to maintain a sense of the past, which is essential to define and maintain one’s identity. Part of who we are today is the result of who we were in the past. For example, a souvenir can remind someone of a favorite past travel experience. Several studies concluded that people become more attached to products that serve as a reminder of the past (Belk 1988, 1990; Kleine et al. 1995; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988).

Pleasure
According to Greenwald’s (1988) conceptualization of the self, the self contains a component that strives for hedonic satisfaction: the diffuse self. This component has its roots in the body’s innate pleasure and pain responses. It includes pleasure experienced during usage as a result of superior functionality, aesthetic pleasure derived from the product’s appearance, or pleasure resulting from its benefits, like entertainment or relaxation. An example is a person who enjoys his high-quality stereo, because it provides a great sound. Schifferstein, Mugge, and Hekkert (2004) found empirical evidence for the effect of pleasure on product attachment. Moreover, past studies distinguished pleasure (or enjoyment) as a reason to consider a product as special, cherished, or treasured, which indicates the presence of an emotional bond (e.g., Dittmar 1991; Kampfer 1995; Richins 1994).

DYNAMIC CHARACTER OF PRODUCT ATTACHMENT
In some cases, the experience of an emotional bond to a product can be relatively static over time (Kleine and Baker 2004). For example, heirlooms tend to have deep, symbolic meanings of family and self-continuity that are passed from one generation to the next (McCracken 1986; Price, Arnould, and Curasi 2000). How-
ever, for most possessions that are used daily, the experience of product attachment is dynamic. This article contributes to the literature on product attachment by investigating how the emotional bond to ordinary products may change over time.

The dynamic character of attachment can come about in two ways: 1) the degree to which a product is used to define the different facets of the self can change (i.e., the four determinants can be added or lost) or 2) the importance of each determinant for the development of product attachment can change over time (i.e., the determinants’ impact can vary).

First, the degree to which a product brings about the four determinants of product attachment can vary over time. Changes in the consumer-product relationship can influence the extent to which a product is used to define and maintain a person’s self. A person’s identity may evolve as a result of role transitions (e.g., graduating from school, changing jobs, or getting a divorce). Accordingly, the meaning associated with a product and its autobiographical function changes as well (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Young 1991). As a result, people psychologically outgrow products that symbolically reflect their ‘old’ identity and the degree of attachment to these products will decline. For example, after a promotion a person may feel that his car does not fit him anymore (a loss in the product’s self-expressiveness) and, therefore, he may decide to replace it for a more expensive one that conveys more status.

The product-related memories will not remain static either. The recurring interactions between the owner, the product, and other people can result in an accumulation of memories associated with the product. Determinants can also be added or lost due to changes in the target product (e.g., performance deficiencies, changes in appearance) or the situational context (e.g., fashion changes, technological improvements) (McCracken 1986; Roster 2001). For example, a product’s malfunctioning or the introduction of new products with extra features can reduce the pleasure experienced with the currently owned product.

Second, the importance of the determinants for the development of product attachment can change over time. In time, some determinants may gain impact, whereas others become less important. For example, if a product reminds the owner of someone special, the feelings of attachment toward the object may increase when this person dies. Although the product still conveys the same memories, these memories have increased in importance. Likewise, a relationship break-up may decrease the impact of the determinants memories on the degree of product attachment.

The recurring interactions between the owner, the product, and other people can result in an accumulation of memories associated with the product. Determinants can also be added or lost due to changes in the target product (e.g., performance deficiencies, changes in appearance) or the situational context (e.g., fashion changes, technological improvements) (McCracken 1986; Roster 2001). For example, a product’s malfunctioning or the introduction of new products with extra features can reduce the pleasure experienced with the currently owned product.

Second, the importance of the determinants for the development of product attachment can change over time. In time, some determinants may gain impact, whereas others become less important. For example, if a product reminds the owner of someone special, the feelings of attachment toward the object may increase when this person dies. Although the product still conveys the same memories, these memories have increased in importance. Likewise, a relationship break-up may decrease the impact of the determinants memories on the degree of product attachment.

Based on these arguments, we present the following model for the development of product attachment over time:

\[
\text{ATTACH}_{it} = b_0 + b_1 \text{SELF}_{it} + b_2 \text{GROUP}_{it} + b_3 \text{MEMORIES}_{it} + b_4 \text{PLEASURE}_{it} + e_{it}
\]

\[
\text{ATTACH}_{it} = \text{subject } i \text{'s attachment to a product at time } t
\]

\[
\text{SELF}_{it} = \text{the degree to which a product is self-expressive for subject } i \text{ at time } t
\]

\[
\text{GROUP}_{it} = \text{the degree to which a product symbolizes group affiliation for subject } i \text{ at time } t
\]

\[
\text{MEMORIES}_{it} = \text{the degree of product-related memories for subject } i \text{ at time } t
\]

\[
\text{PLEASURE}_{it} = \text{the degree to which a product elicits pleasure for subject } i \text{ at time } t
\]

\[
b_0, b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4 = \text{regression weights at time } t
\]

\[
e_{it} = \text{error terms}
\]

\[
i = \text{subject } i
\]

\[
t = \text{time period } t
\]

In this regression model, variations in the degree to which a product brings about the four determinants of product attachment over time are revealed by changes in the means of SELF, GROUP, MEMORIES, and PLEASURE. Variations in the impact of the determinants over time are revealed by changes in the regression weights \(b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4\).

The Present Study

The aim of this study is to investigate how the experience of attachment to relatively ordinary consumer durables develops over time. Specifically, we test the assumption that variations in the experience of attachment to a product can come about in two ways (i.e., the determinants can be added or lost or the determinants’ impact can change). Accordingly, we present a longitudinal study which comprises of two questionnaire waves separated by a five months interval.

METHOD

Stimulus Product

The study investigates the development of attachment to a backpack that new university freshmen received for free, during their orientation week. This backpack was exclusively designed by a graduate student from the faculty of Industrial Design Engineering at the Delft University of Technology (DUT) in the Netherlands.

Studying the development of attachment to this particular product makes it possible to control for several influencing factors. Different products, product categories, or situations may all induce different effects on the evolution of product attachment. By choosing one product that is acquired at a specific occasion, we have kept these variations to a minimum and were able to focus primarily on the effect of time. Second, our approach enables us to study attachment to products from the outset. The first wave was conducted approximately two weeks after the students received the backpack. Third, the backpack was used in a natural setting for the study, which enhanced the study’s external validity. Fourth, a backpack is an ordinary durable that can offer both functional and symbolic benefits. Accordingly, we assumed that all four determinants of product attachment are relevant for the backpack.

Questionnaires

The questionnaires explored the respondent’s relationship with the backpack. Respondents reported the degree of usage and indicated whether or not they still owned the backpack. The following measures concerning the consumer-product relationship were obtained: the degree of product attachment (4 items; \(\alpha_1=.82, \alpha_2=.77\)), self-expression (5 items; \(\alpha_1=.76, \alpha_2=.80\)), group affiliation (3 items; \(\alpha_1=.75, \alpha_2=.71\)), memories (4 items; \(\alpha_1=.90, \alpha_2=.95\)), and pleasure (3 items; \(\alpha_1=.81, \alpha_2=.78\)). Several control variables were included concerning the consequences of product attachment for consumer behavior (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Grayson and Shulman 2000; Schultz et al. 1989): disposal tendency (4 items; \(\alpha_1=.81, \alpha_2=.74\)), product care (4 items; \(\alpha_1=.88, \alpha_2=.85\)), expected life span (2 items; \(\alpha_1=.81, \alpha_2=.86\)), and irreplaceability (4 items; \(\alpha_1=.72, \alpha_2=.76\)). All variables were measured on seven-point Likert scales (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) and were randomly ordered. Most of these items were obtained from past research in which the measures’ internal consistency (Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .78 to .86) was established (Mugge, Schifferstein, and Schoormans 2004a, 2004b; Schifferstein and Pelgrim 2004). The other items were self-generated. The items for product attachment and its four determinants are included in appendix A.
Sample and Procedure

In wave 1 (T1), the questionnaire was handed out to 754 university freshmen. These potential respondents were informed that they would take part in a lottery for five gift vouchers when completing the questionnaire. Initially, 35% of the students \( n=261 \) returned their questionnaire. Some respondents were deleted from our sample, because they did not own the backpack anymore \( n=22 \) or because they did not complete the questionnaire \( n=12 \). This resulted in a sample of 227 respondents (64% males). Respondents were asked to supply their names and email addresses to be able to distribute the follow-up questionnaire by Internet. Twelve respondents did not respond to these questions, and could not be contacted in the second wave. These respondents were classified as non-respondents at wave 2.

Wave 2 (T2) was conducted five months after the first questionnaire. To enhance participation, a small financial compensation was promised in the form of a gift voucher or a contribution to charity. A reminder was sent to students who had not responded after two weeks. One hundred and twenty-seven students returned their questionnaire at wave 2 (response rate=59%). Six respondents were deleted, because they did not own their backpack anymore at wave 2. Consequently, we obtained a usable sample of 121 respondents (69% males) for T2.

Forty-eight percent of the respondents indicated in the questionnaire at T2 that they had not used their backpack anymore after the orientation week. This may affect our results, because attachment develops as a result of recurring interactions (Baldwin et al. 1996; Kleine and Baker 2004). Therefore, we subdivided the group of respondents into users \( n=63 \) and non-users \( n=58 \). The group of users had kept on using the backpack after the orientation week, whereas the group of non-users had not used it anymore. Figure 1 presents a summary of the different groups of respondents distinguished in this study.

To gain sufficient statistical power for the analyses, we used mean substitution as an imputation method for handling the missing values (0.4% of the data points were missing).

RESULTS

Non-Response Bias

Respondents and non-respondents at T2 were compared with respect to their scores on T1. No differences were found for the demographic variables, product attachment, and the four determinants \( p>.05 \). However, t-tests revealed significant effects for the control variables disposal tendency \( t(219)=2.78, p<.01 \), product care \( t(219)=-2.61, p<.05 \), and expected life span \( t(219)=-2.11, p<.05 \). In general, the non-respondents at T2 experienced less protective behaviors toward the backpack at T1. This non-response bias may affect our results. Therefore, we decided to consider the non-respondents at T2 as a separate group during all analyses of T1.

Changes over Time

For the respondents at T2, we investigated whether the degree of product attachment and its determinants changed over time by five \( 2 \times 2 \) repeated measures ANOVAs. Product attachment and its
A Longitudinal Study of Product Attachment and its Determinants

four determinants were used as the dependent variables. Time (T1 vs. T2) served as repeated measure and Usage (users vs. non-users) as between-subjects variable. Means are provided in table 1. The results showed significant main effects of Time on product attachment ($F(1, 119)=4.51, p<.05$) and on memories ($F(1, 119)=8.55, p<.01$). At T2, respondents indicated to be attached stronger to the backpack and to associate more memories with the backpack than at T1 (see table 1).

The ANOVA results also indicated a main effect of Usage on product attachment ($F(1, 119)=8.75, p<.01$), self-expression ($F(1, 119)=11.02, p<.01$), and pleasure ($F(1, 119)=29.40, p<.001$). The respondents who still used the backpack after the orientation week were more attached to this backpack, perceived the backpack more as a means to express their individuality, and enjoyed it more than the non-users. No significant interaction effects were found ($p>0.05$).

Impact of Determinants over Time

Regression analyses were performed for the groups of users and non-users at T1 and T2, and for the non-respondents at T1. In each regression analysis (equation 1), product attachment was used as the dependent variable and the determinants self-expression, group affiliation, memories, and pleasure as the independent variables (see table 2). It is plausible that the determinants of product attachment are not totally independent. For example, the product-related memories may also encompass some group affiliation characteristics. To determine whether this potential dependency affected our results, we checked for multicollinearity. No evidence for the presence of multicollinearity was found in our data (VIF$\text{max}=2.25$).

On the whole, we found significant effects for self-expression, memories, and pleasure, whereas group affiliation had no significant effect on product attachment (see table 2). Several differences were found between the five regression analyses.

To test whether the different respondent groups (users, non-users, and non-respondents) differed with respect to the results from the regression analyses at T1, we performed t-tests on the $b$-coefficients. No significant effects were found between the users, the non-users, and the non-respondents at T1 ($p>0.05$). Although the effect of pleasure on product attachment is not significant for the non-users at T1, it does not differ significantly from that of the users or the non-respondents.

For T2, the t-tests revealed some interesting differences between the users and non-users for the variables memories ($t(116)=2.06, p<.05$) and pleasure ($t(116)=-2.17, p<.05$). For the backpack users, the coefficient of memories was significantly higher than for the non-users ($b_{\text{users} T2}=0.24, SE=0.07$ vs. $b_{\text{non-users} T2}=0.06, SE=0.05$), whereas the coefficient of pleasure was significantly lower ($b_{\text{users} T2}=0.22, SE=0.14$ vs. $b_{\text{non-users} T2}=0.62, SE=0.12$).

Next, we compared the regression coefficients over time for each separate usage-group. For the group of users, the regression coefficients were comparable at both time periods (see table 2). The effects of self-expression and memories were significant for both time periods, whereas the effect of group affiliation was not. Although the determinant pleasure only had a significant effect for T1, the regression coefficient was similar at T2 ($b_{\text{users} T1}=0.32, SE=0.11$ vs. $b_{\text{users} T2}=0.22, SE=0.14$).

For the group of non-users, however, shifts in the regression coefficients over time did occur. Whereas the effect of memories was significant at T1, the coefficient decreased to non-significance at T2 ($b_{\text{non-users} T1}=0.41, SE=0.07$ vs. $b_{\text{non-users} T2}=0.06, SE=0.05$). Furthermore, the coefficient of pleasure increased over time ($b_{\text{non-users} T1}=0.13, SE=0.14$ vs. $b_{\text{non-users} T2}=0.62, SE=0.12$). The determinants self-expression and group affiliation revealed similar results at both time periods.

DISCUSSION

This study contributes to the literature by investigating the experience of attachment to ordinary durables using a longitudinal

| TABLE 1 | Means of the Variables for the Different Respondent Groups |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                | Non-Resp Users | Respondents Non-users |
|                | (n=100) (n=63) | (n=121) (n=58) |
| **Construct**  |                |                  |                |                  |                |
| Product attachment | 2.28 | 2.89 | 2.98 | 2.20 | 2.53 |
| **Determinants** |                |                  |                |                  |                |
| Self-expression   | 2.27 | 2.64 | 2.76 | 2.05 | 2.22 |
| Group affiliation  | 3.97 | 4.26 | 4.25 | 3.73 | 3.91 |
| Memories           | 2.77 | 3.41 | 3.61 | 2.76 | 3.56 |
| Pleasure           | 2.53 | 3.16 | 3.14 | 2.44 | 2.27 |
| **Consequences**  |                |                  |                |                  |                |
| Disposal tendency  | 3.65 | 2.65 | 2.80 | 3.61 | 3.31 |
| Product care       | 3.68 | 4.56 | 4.26 | 3.82 | 3.91 |
| Expected life span | 3.41 | 4.55 | 4.20 | 3.08 | 2.92 |
| Irreplaceability   | 2.43 | 2.81 | 3.02 | 2.58 | 2.59 |
approach. This enabled us to investigate the dynamic character of the experience of an emotional bond with a product.

We found that product attachment is positively affected by the determinants self-expression, memories, and pleasure. These results support other work on product attachment in which a relationship between product attachment and defining the self was proposed (e.g., Ball and Tasaki 1992; Kleine et al. 1995). In addition, we extend and corroborate the study of Schifferstein, Mugge, and Hekkert (2004), who found significant effects for the determinants memories and enjoyment (= pleasure) on the degree of product attachment. The determinant group affiliation proved to be non-significant in our study. As the backpack was only given to freshmen of this university, we anticipated that the backpack symbolized the belonging to the group of students at our university. Probably, this specific social identity has insufficient importance to university freshmen to enhance the experience of attachment to the backpack. In contrast, it is likely that other more important social identities (e.g., one’s belonging to a fraternity or sports club) do influence the experience of product attachment.

This research provides quantitative support for the assumption that the degree of product attachment changes over time (Ball and Tasaki 1992; Kleine and Baker 2004). Specifically, we found that the dynamic character of product attachment can come about in two ways. First, the determinants can be added or lost. Table 1 shows that the determinant memories grows over time, probably because respondents developed a personal history with the backpack. Because product-related memories are positively related to the degree of product attachment (see table 2), the attachment will also increase in time (see table 1). These results are in line with the arguments of Baldwin et al. (1996) who stated that attachment changes over time as a result of recurring interactions with a product.

Second, the impact of the determinants on product attachment can change over time. For the group of users, the impact of the determinants remained stable. For the non-users, however, the impact of memories decreased over time, whereas the impact of pleasure increased (see table 2). This could suggest that product usage is essential to remain attached to ordinary durables through memories. For the group of non-users, pleasure-ratings were relatively low at both time periods (97% of the data points were below the scale’s midpoint). We believe that during the first encounters with the backpack in the orientation week, these students became irritated by the bad performance of the backpack and, therefore, discontinued using it. Although the number of memories increased, the absence of product usage reduced the importance of the product-related memories for the development of product attachment. Probably, interacting with the product is essential to constantly arouse the product-related memories and to keep its impact on product attachment intact. Whether product usage is also essential for special possessions with a deep, symbolic meaning, such as heirlooms is questionable. As discussed, the meaning of such possessions and the experience of attachment to them is relatively static over time, and, therefore, we believe that usage will only play a minor role. However, heirlooms are a very distinctive category of products for which other principles may hold than for ordinary possessions. Probably, usage is particularly relevant for experiencing attachment to relatively ordinary products.

In conclusion, as long as people keep using products, the impact of the product-related memories on the experience of attachment remains intact. However, if people stop using a product, the importance of these memories for the development of product attachment diminishes, whereas the lack of pleasure gains impact. These results corroborate McCracken (1986), who argued that individuals employ divestment rituals to empty goods of their special meaning, so that meaning-loss will not take place when the product is disposed of. Due to these divestment rituals (e.g., cleaning, continued storage without use), the product is distanced from the owner and emptied of its special meaning. Usage seems essential to prolong the impact of a product’s special meaning and thus for sustaining the consumer-product relationship. Stopping the usage of a product can be considered as breaking off this relationship and thus as a forerunner of the actual disposal of the product (Roster 2001).

**Limitations and Future Research**

A limitation of this study is that only two waves were obtained. To gain a full understanding of the process of product attachment, it is necessary to investigate consumers over the total life span of the product, from purchase to disposal. Due to the high attrition rate, the number of respondents decreased considerably after two waves. This made it unfeasible to perform a third wave.

Another limitation of our research is that we only investigate one specific product (i.e., a specially designed backpack) and sample (i.e., university freshmen). This limits the generalizability

### Table 2

Regression Analyses for the Determinants’ Effects on Product Attachment (b weights)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Non-Resp (n=100)</th>
<th>Users (n=63)</th>
<th>Respondents (n=121)</th>
<th>Non-users (n=58)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-expression</td>
<td>T1: .26**</td>
<td>T1: .29*</td>
<td>T1: .48**</td>
<td>T1: .35*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group affiliation</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memories</td>
<td>.32***</td>
<td>.30***</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.41***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *** p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05
APPENDIX

MEASURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product attachment</th>
<th>I am very attached to my backpack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My backpack has no special meaning to me*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My backpack is very dear to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have a bond with my backpack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-expression</th>
<th>My backpack reflects who I am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other people can tell by my backpack what kind of person I am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My backpack fits my identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My backpack suits me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My backpack says nothing about me as an individual*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group affiliation</th>
<th>My backpack indicates that I am a DUT student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Through my backpack I feel connected to other DUT students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Through my backpack I belong to the group of DUT students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memories</th>
<th>My backpack reminds me of people or events that are important to me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My backpack makes me think back of someone or something that has happened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I see my backpack as a reminder of certain people or events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Through my backpack I think back to certain people or events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pleasure</th>
<th>I enjoy my backpack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is a pleasure to use my backpack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel good when I use my backpack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates a reversed item

of our findings. However, we succeeded in showing that product attachment changes over time. Future research should substantiate the current findings with other samples and product categories.

REFERENCES


Inexperienced Consumers’ Judgment of the Quality of Major Household Appliances

Alet C. Erasmus, University of Pretoria, Republic of South Africa
Meriam M. Makgopa, University of Pretoria, Republic of South Africa
Mphetso G. Kachale, University of Pretoria, Republic of South Africa

ABSTRACT

When consumers with limited product related consumer socialization migrate to more affluent communities and adopt new life styles later in life, they have to deal with a choice explosion that manifests as the paradox of progress that creates fertile ground for exploitation in the market place. This research focused on major household appliances as a desirable household commodity. Limited evidence could be found of how inexperienced consumers judge the quality of products as an indication of product reliability. It was hypothesized that limited consumer socialization may result in a dependence on hedonics/surrogate indicators of quality to compromise for the absence of appropriate product knowledge and personal product experience. Supportive theory for this research included the theory of consumer socialization including product related consumer socialization, as well as the basic theory of consumer decision-making as it applies to quality judgment of major household appliances during pre-purchase evaluation.

A positivistic orientated research project that implemented a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques was designed to compare the quality judgment of major household appliances of consumers across different socio economic backgrounds.

The inexperience of consumers in two of the geographical areas was confirmed by their limited experience with electricity in their own households and limited ownership of appliances. A lamentable discrepancy was found between the anticipated and the reported service life figures for all three groups for a list of 13 appliances. Although replacement purchases may be influenced by socio-economic variables, product characteristics and time factors an upsetting low average service life for major appliances was calculated. Findings further revealed a remarkable incongruity with respect to participants’ personal rating of the importance of quality in terms of the evaluation of household appliances and their apparent ability to do so. When confronted with specific questions and tasks that related to product evaluation and quality judgment, it was found that irrespective of participants’ experience with electricity or their ownership of appliances, none of the consumer groups convinced that they had the relevant product knowledge to discriminate quality in order to conclude informed, responsible buyer decisions. Findings support the view of Erdem et al (1999) who reported that materialistic values and aspirations generally result in a dominance of social factors during product evaluation. It was also revealed that product experience not necessarily ensures informed buyer decisions: this confirmed Elias’s view (1987) that changes in household technology would shift consumer facilitation from “helping people to use technology” to “solving problems that are created by technology”.

INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

An impressive amount of research on the topic of consumer socialization (John 1999) has been reported to date. Interest in this topic may be attributed to the notion that consumer socialization largely determines consumers’ ability to function independently in the market place and to conclude informed, responsible buyer decisions (John 1999; Nelson 2002; Williams 2002). The bulk of research in this field addresses the effect of time (in terms of cognitive development, age, education level etc) on consumer socialization and concludes that it can be assumed that on average, older consumers are more experienced than the young because of more extensive exposure and learning opportunities over time. One of the exceptions is the effect of social context on consumers’ learning experiences. Adults from deprived backgrounds would for example, despite their age, have undergone limited consumer socialization (LCS) during their lifetime due to limited exposure and restricted access to certain products and services. Restricted resources further limit these consumers’ activity in the market place so that they eventually possess limited cognitive structure to facilitate choice processes (Bahn 1986).

When the socio economic conditions of these consumers improve, as has been the case in South Africa in recent years, they generally migrate to more affluent communities and adopt new life styles. Unfortunately their backgrounds then-in terms of exposure to consumer goods and services-impose pertinent limitations on their buyer behavior while they generally are subject to the same global pressures as those in developed countries. The expectations evoked by sophisticated media communication thus add to the insurmountable disadvantage of these consumers in terms of their ability to make informed buyer decisions (Hipkin 2004). Consumers who have undergone LCS are particularly vulnerable when they are confronted with complex buyer decisions. South Africa is an example of a country where consumers’ living conditions have improved considerably in a relatively short period in the past decade due to dramatic socio political changes. Relocation to larger cities and consequent improved living conditions has given access to home ownership and electricity as a household commodity to millions who have never had this luxury before in an effort to enlarge people’s choices and to raise their levels of well-being (Bennett 2001; Human Development Report 2000; Tatietsé et al 2002). Sales figures indicate that these consumers have become a lucrative target market for major household appliances such as refrigerators, stoves and washing machines (Euromonitor 2003; Holtz 1998) based on a growing belief that these appliances are essential for modern living conditions (Broadbridge et al 1995; LeBlanc 1998).

The paradox of progress thus applies: consumers gain access to consumer goods and services and are exposed to a choice explosion without the experience to deal with it. What may be considered mundanely obvious for experienced consumers, may thus pose a major threat to the inexperienced. Aspirations and enthusiasm to improve social status, to alter lifestyles and to buy, therefore challenge their ability to make informed buyer decisions. This creates fertile conditions for exploitation in the market place (Kamaruddin & Mokhli 2003; Moore-Shay 1996; Nelson 2002). This can basically be attributed to consumers acquiring symbolic knowledge without the relevant structural- and transaction knowledge (knowledge and skills regarding stores, products, brands, processes and pricing) that are required to cope (John 1999).

Little evidence exists of how inexperienced consumers judge the quality of products as an indication of product reliability during product evaluation, considering their LCS during the various developmental phases of childhood years where specific cognitive skills are developed (Rose 1999; Williams 2002). James (1983) refers to the so-called welfare effect of consumption and identifies consump-
tion efficiency as a necessary condition for maximum welfare. This may however be very idealistic in the case of inexperienced consumers considering their unrealistic expectations during product judgment (Erasmus 1997). Product choice becomes even more complex in the presence of many competing brands and a large number of diverse product characteristics (James 1983). It is thus hypothesized that LCS may result in, and even necessitate dependence on hedonics/surrogate indicators of quality such as price, brand name and store image to compromise for the absence of appropriate product knowledge and personal product experience (Dawar & Parker 1994; Kanwar & Pagavlas 1992; Williams 2002).

Previous research that tried to establish the relationship of specific indicators in terms of consumers’ perception of product reliability produced mixed results across a variety of products (Agrawal et al 1996; Kelly 1988), which supports the need to direct related research towards a specific product category. This research therefore focused on major household appliances as a desirable commodity in households across various socio-economic levels with the intent to identify the indicators that are used to discriminate the quality of appliances to reveal shortcomings that may be attributed to limited product knowledge. The findings would enable industry and retail to provide augmented customer service and appropriate post purchase service delivery. It would also provide guidelines for professionals who are involved with consumer education and -facilitation in an effort to enhance responsible consumer decision-making (Crie 2003; Phau & Sari 2004). The academic contribution of this research would in terms of a contribution to a limited body of knowledge on consumer socialization in different cultures and countries as indicated by John (1999) and Rose (1999) as well as limited evidence of the purchase criteria used across different social classes (Williams 2002).

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Evidence suggests that consumers from deprived backgrounds who acquire a higher socio-economic status later in life intentionally try to reflect their newly acquired lifestyles through their possessions (Hittman 1987). Considering their limited product related consumer socialization, it is hypothesized that they would consequently, as a result of limited product knowledge, not be in a position to formulate clear utilitarian evaluative criteria (e.g. rational, concrete purchase dimensions that would relate to product quality) and that product choices would probably be confirmed by hedonic measures, i.e. surrogate indicators such as price, brand name and aesthetics. While major household appliances are quite expensive and imply long term consequences in terms of maintenance, running costs and replacement, previously disadvantaged consumers’ ability to make informed buyer decisions should be regarded as a matter of concern and attended to (Williams 2002). For various reasons, it could however also be argued that consumers with extensive levels of exposure to commodities such as household appliances, would not necessarily have what it takes to make informed buyer decisions either. This suggests a more holistic approach to the problem to make any valid conclusions.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Consumers’ judgment of appliances was considered within a systems perspective. Product quality was thus considered as being signified by several interrelated, discernable product characteristics (inputs) that that may contribute towards the superiority of an appliance over others in terms of expected performance and durability so that a consumer accepts the product, or rejects it as inferior (Shiffman & Kanuk 2001; Thang & Tan 2003). It is thus postulated that these product characteristics are transformed through prioritization and a collective interpretation within an individual’s knowledge frameworks to eventually determine how quality is perceived (output) (Deacon & Firebaugh 1985). The transformation of stimuli inevitably requires cognitive activity: perceived product characteristics are interpreted in terms of what is familiar (existing schemata in memory). Thang and Tan (2003) describe the transformation process as a superseding internal process whereby consumers translate stimuli into meaningful information before making a judgment. A consumer thus relies on existing knowledge, however limited, to value a situation and to conclude a decision (Shiffman & Kanuk 2000). Previous experiences determine judgment of quality through external stimuli as positive or negative. The same conclusion (for example superior quality) might not necessarily result from the judgment of a single characteristic (e.g. extensive guarantee as a pre condition for quality) because the collective contribution of several characteristics is considered in terms of priority and hierarchy (Heylighen & Joslyn 2002; Whitchurch & Constantine 1993). Although each characteristic would evoke response, the collective contribution of the elements would eventually conclude one’s interpretation of quality. Equifinality refers to the fact that quality, when described on a continuum, may be described as being the same, via different routes. High price (which often signals good quality) plus a shorter guarantee might for example provoke the same reaction as lower prices supported by an extensive guarantee because the compensatory rule is applied where relative “weights” are allocated to certain product characteristics in terms of their perceived importance and eventually low and high counts could out balance each other in different product judgements (Shiffman & Kanuk 2000).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the research were to identify the indicators that are used by inexperienced consumers to differentiate suitability as well as the quality of major household appliances for personal use; to categorize quality indicators in terms of those that suggest an ability to make informed buyer decisions or hedonics/surrogate indicators that may contradict responsible decision-making behavior and to determine whether consumers’ product judgment could be ascribed to product related consumer socialization through a comparison of the results across different socio-economic groups.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Supportive theory for this research include the theory of consumer socialization including product related consumer socialization, as well as the basic theory of consumer decision-making as it applies to quality judgment of household appliances during pre-purchase evaluation.

Consumer socialization

Consumer socialization is the process whereby individuals acquire skills and knowledge relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace (Rose 1999, Schiffman & Kanuk 1994); it is also described as a complex environmental process (Rose 1999) that depends on a multitude of influences including family and household influences, availability of resources (that determine access to products and services and buying power) as well as exposure and involvement with consumer related issues over time. These are considered fundamental in terms of eventual buyer behavior (John 1999; Rose 1999). Consumer socialization is an ongoing process and may be directly related to consumption, e.g. the acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to budgeting, pricing and brand attitudes while consumer socialization that is indirectly related to consumption deals with the underlying motivations that
Inexperienced Consumers’ Judgment of the Quality of Major Household Appliances

The effect of consumer socialization during the decision-making process

Consumer decision-making is influenced by external and internal variables. Needs are created and stimulated during daily interaction. These needs are transformed in terms of prior knowledge and experience frameworks to conclude purchase decisions that best serve consumer’s expectations and preferences at a specific point in time. Previous experience provides a frame of reference to guide similar product decisions. Lack of experience limits one’s ability to evaluate products objectively and results in the use of alternative routes such as the use of surrogate indicators of quality to select the most suitable product (Day 1990; Loudon & Della Bitta 1993). Responsible buyer behavior refers to a decision that reflects a realization of the consequences of a purchase decision. In terms of the acquisition of household appliances, this would reflect an ability to display some form of maturity with respect to the price decision, quality indicators and service life expectancy and the ability to motivate or explain a product decision in terms of relevant criteria (Hornby 2000). LCS to a great extent leaves a consumer in an adverse position in this respect.

Evaluation of household appliances

Major household appliances include cooling, cooking, baking and laundry appliances that are generally referred to as white goods and are viewed as long-term purchases (durables) due to their expected service life (Cox et al 1983). The evaluation of major household appliances is considered complex because these products are relatively expensive, technologically complex and socially significant in terms of the symbolic meaning that may be attached to ownership of appliances. Ownership of certain appliances requires a significant discretionary income, which explains its association with wealth and financial well being (Hittman 1987). The evaluation of household appliances is generally done through a comparison of product characteristics that may include a combination of functional, financial, durability, status and aesthetic factors against a set of parameters that the individual anticipates or expects. Anticipated product characteristics may even be unrealistic (Hornby 2000). Functional characteristics relate to performance factors and refer to the ability of an appliance to perform as expected (e.g. the programs of a washing machine, temperature control of refrigerators and materials used during manufacture) (Remich 1991; Sabelli 1998). Financial characteristics refer to the

Product related consumer socialization

Product related consumer socialization refers to opportunities through out one’s life through which an individual acquires skills, knowledge and attitudes that are relevant to specific products. This would include the decision-making strategies implemented in a household and the participation and involvement of members of the household in decision-making with the use of appliances. This would realize in terms of personal expectations/anticipations about the products (Williams 2002). Product exposure refers an individual’s experience with major household appliances and will realize in terms of familiarity with a range of major household appliances (Engel et al 1990). The possessions in a household, for example ownership or non-ownership of appliances, will also influence a child’s learning experiences. Product involvement describes an individual’s personal experience with major household appliances through personal use and participation in buyer decisions and this eventually determines the perceived relevance of certain product features (Engel et al 1990). Product involvement may be affected by educational level, the mental and physical in/ability to operate appliances as well as socio-economic factors that will determine exposure to, and possession of appliances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>TRANSFORMATION</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td>Relevant quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Materials used</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informed, responsible buyer decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Guarantee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Operating principles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Technical information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic/Surrogate criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uninformed, risky buyer decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Price</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brand name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Style &amp; aesthetics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Country of origin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Product reputation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Marketing information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation and prioritization within existing knowledge and experience frameworks in memory

FIGURE 1
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
relative cost and affordability of appliances in the short and long-term and would include existing and realistic price categories as well as running- and maintenance cost (Perkins 2002). *Durability characteristics* describe the quality and the potential service of appliances until replacement. It includes after sales service. *Status factors* refer to product characteristics that may reflect social status or prestige such as brand names and price. This is also referred to as the halo effect: positing that consumers infer the quality of a product by its brand name or country of origin, assuming that certain labels are superior (Kaynak & Kara 2002). It has been reported that the most important values to consumers’ utility for consumer durable goods, are social values, stimulation and materialism (Erdem et al 1999). This supports the notion that previously disadvantaged consumers who are eager to improve their lifestyles, might focus on status factors during product evaluation. *Aesthetical factors* describe the style and attractiveness of appliances in terms of fashion trends at a specific point in time such as specific design features, materials and finishes that are used (Assael 1992).

**Quality**

According to Day and Castleberry (1990), quality should be viewed as a hypothetical construct that is instrumental in consumers’ efforts to minimize perceived risk. Quality is defined in various ways: as a conformance to certain requirements (Groby 1979 in Day & Castleberry 1990); as a rated ability of the brand to perform its function (Kotler 1983) or the extent to which a product conforms to tight manufacturing standards considering the various dimensions of quality that include performance, durability, reliability, serviceability and aesthetic properties (Garvin 1984). Quality can be evaluated both directly and indirectly: directly through the inspection of the product or indirectly through surrogate indicators such as the recommendation of significant others, brand name preference or the reputation of the brand (e.g. after sales service) (Day & Castleberry 1990). Surrogate indicators may be used in the absence of relevant indicators: consumers with limited product related knowledge and experience might for instance rely on cues such as store image, salespeople, friends and colleagues, advertisements and warranties to discriminate quality. Consumers with limited knowledge often opt for expensive products, assuming that higher prices signal better quality (Terblanche & Boshoff 2001).

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

**Research style**

The research followed a positivistic orientation and was conducted from a quantitative methodological paradigm. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were used to reduce error and to increase the validity and reliability of the data (Babbie & Mouton 2001).

**Sample and sampling**

Consumers over the broad spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds in the metropolitan of Tshwane, who own household appliances, formed the sample framework. Sampling was done in three phases to intentionally include participants with different levels of product related experience.

*Group A* Difficult access and safety issues necessitated the use of convenient sampling to recruit young adults between the ages of 20 and 25 years in Sunnyside—a high density residential area that is within reach of various retail outlets that sell household appliances. Specially trained assistants who were fluent in the relevant African language assisted with the recruitment of participants who have had limited experience and limited exposure to appliances in their homes during childhood years. It was assumed that they would, because of their present living conditions probably have elevated aspirations in terms of possessions for their future homes: 137 individuals eventually participated.

*Group B* A predominantly black township (Thembu Unit D: approx 1127 households) that was developed after 1994, was targeted. The majority of residents come from previously disadvantaged backgrounds and the assumption was made that most of them would not have had electricity in their homes prior to their occupation of these houses. Consequently personal experience with household appliances was limited until recent years. Purposive sampling was applied to identify at least ten percent of the households in the area: 124 eventually participated in the project. In order to participate, residents had to be over 30 years of age and had to own at least one major appliance.

*Group C* Second year under graduate students in Consumer Science assisted with the recruitment of 385 additional participants from various geographical areas in Tshwane who have had electricity in their homes for all, or most of their lives. A deliberate effort was made to include a diversity of households to include different age and socio economic levels.

**Data Collection**

**Phase 1: Projective techniques**

were applied to as a tool to enter into the private worlds of participants to uncover their inner perspectives on specific issues in a non-threatening manner (Donoghue 2000). While a thorough literature review was used to guide the initial content of the questionnaire, this technique was used to prompt consumers to provide information that could be used to finalise the content of the questionnaire through the inclusion of additional constructs that might have been overseen initially and to test the theoretical framework (Fern 1982).

In *Area A*, 25 willing households were asked to complete the following written task where they had to discriminate indicators/product features that are used by consumers to indicate quality: “Assume that your best friend has approached you to assist her to purchase a good quality washing machine from whatever would be available in the store. Give a detailed description of how you would advise her to identify and select an appliance that would last many years without giving her any hassles”.

In *Area B*, a similar exercise was carried out with the intent to discriminate *any criteria* (no reference was made to quality) that might be used by consumers to select appliances in a store: “Imagine that your friend wants you to assist her to select household appliances because she has been informed that she has won a competition that allows her to spend R15 000 (approximately $2500) on any major household appliances from any of the stores in a specific shopping complex. Identify and describe the appliances that you would recommend in as much detail as possible. Also identify the store(s) where you would go. Explain your recommendations”.

**Phase 2**

A questionnaire was designed to collect quantifiable data. The content was only finalized after interpretation of the data gathered in phase 1. The eventual questionnaire consisted of seven sections that covered demographics (socio demographic information); ownership, experience and involvement with major appliances; quality judgment; expected and reported service life figures for appliances and a test on product knowledge that included 20 basic questions. The questionnaire was pre tested on ten households from each area that complied with the specific preconditions to ensure that the questions were clear and to determine whether the length of the questionnaire was acceptable (Babbie & Mouton 2001; Leong et al 1997; Zikmund & d’Admico 2001). It was consequently decided
that it would be preferable for the questionnaires distributed to areas A and B to be completed under supervision in an interview format to assist inexperienced consumers to fill in the details correctly. Assistance was also offered in area C whenever it was required. Of the 654 questionnaires that were collected, 646 were useable; eight were neglected because they were either incomplete or tampered with.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

Projective techniques

Content analysis was done and open coding was used to organize the text in terms of coherent and relevant constructs. Codes were assigned to concepts and these were categorized to discriminate those indicative of informed decision-making behavior (relevant indicators) and surrogate indicators. Sub categories were formed through conceptual analysis to identify specific characteristics, e.g. functional, durability indicators, etc (Babbie & Mouton 2001) in accordance with extant literature, using content and typical word of mouth expressions that were identified through the projective techniques. These were used to finalize the questionnaire.

**Questionnaire**

**Section A: Demographic information**

Table 1 reveals that, as expected, participants’ comparative experience with electricity in their homes was lower for areas A (predominantly young group) and B (more mature group) than C (a diverse group that could later be split into smaller groups that could be compared to A and B respectively). Participants were predominantly female.

**Sections B and D: Ownership and experience with appliances**

Inexperience of consumers in areas A and B is evident from their experience with electricity in their own households (Table 1) as well as limited ownership of appliances (Table 2).

For areas A and B, ownership of refrigerators and freestanding stoves were the highest, although still below 50%; while ownership of microwave ovens seems noteworthy. This confirms the 2002 “World Major Household Appliances Report for Developing Countries”. Area C’s experience with electricity was confirmed by their extensive ownership of appliances.

**Section D: Reported versus expected service life of appliances**

Limited space prevents disclosure of figures obtained for all of the appliances. Tables 3 and 4 thus only reflect the data for selected appliances while Figure 2 reveals a lamentable discrepancy between anticipated and the reported service life figures and a disappointing low service life in general considering that the accepted average life span for household appliances is 10 to 15 years (stoves and refrigerators generally last longer while washing machines and dishwashers are replaced more often) (LeBlanc 1998). The same tendency manifested with the other appliances not listed here. Replacement purchases may be influenced by socio-economic variables, product characteristics and time factors. Higher income is generally associated with a higher probability of early replacement: households that can afford it may upgrade appliances that are still functional to acquire latest trends and new technology (Fernandez 2001). The significant difference between the expected and the reported service life figures may be indicative of several problems. Inexperienced consumers may for example be influenced by strong promotional messages and might develop unrealistic expectations, which are not met (Phau & Sari 2004). This could be investigated further keeping in mind that more than 75% of appliance purchases the world over, are indeed replacement purchases (LeBlanc 1998). Premature replacement in Area C may be done on the same grounds as in A an B as well as for other reasons such as a need to upgrade to eco efficient appliances (e.g. to replace top loader washers with front loaders and electric hobs with gas burners (Morelli 2001).

**Section C: Use of surrogate indicators for quality judgment**

Judged by the use of surrogate indicators for quality judgement by the majority (>50%) in the three areas, Table 5 reveals a proportionate larger reliance on surrogate indicators by inexperienced consumers in terms of the frequency of use of surrogate indicators (ALWAYS; SOMETIMES) as well as the prominence of specific indicators in the different groups. BRAND NAME was the only indicator apparently used ALWAYS to discriminate QUALITY by the majority in all three areas. This however not necessarily refers to locally manufactured products because preference for
IMPORTED APPLIANCES seemed significantly less important for C than for both A and B (p=0.0001). The importance of brand name in terms of product judgment confirms Dawar and Parker’s findings (1994) that certain criteria are of universal importance irrespective of the country, culture or social status of consumers. Their research found the mean for brand name to be ranked the highest; retailers’ reputation the lowest; price in between.

Using a chi square test, it was found that at p=<0.05, PRICE was significantly less important for C than for the less experienced groups (p=0.0001). A significant difference in the different areas’ use of certain indicators was also found for use of the GUARANTEE to indicate quality (p=0.0001); the use of DESIGN FACTORS (p=0.0001); TRENDINESS of the appliances (p=0.0001); ADVERTISEMENTS (p=0.0203); locally manufactured products

### TABLE 2
YEARS OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIFIC APPLIANCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appliances</th>
<th>Group A n=137 (indicated in %)</th>
<th>Group B n=124 (indicated in %)</th>
<th>Group C n=377 (indicated in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max 3 years</td>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>6-10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate freezer</td>
<td>*60.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stove: freestanding</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oven &amp; hob: separate</td>
<td>*83.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooker hood</td>
<td>*93.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washer: top loader</td>
<td>*54.6</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washer: front loader</td>
<td>*67.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washer: twin tub</td>
<td>*80.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishwasher</td>
<td>*89.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumble dryer</td>
<td>*55.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microw. oven</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum cleaner</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Majority for that area.
** Area C: When figures for different types of washing machines are combined, ownership is calculated at near 100%.

### TABLE 3
AVERAGE REPORTED SERVICE LIFE OF APPLIANCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appliances</th>
<th>Area A</th>
<th>Area B</th>
<th>Area C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Mean (years)</td>
<td>Std Dev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stove (integrated)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washer: front loader</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave oven</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum cleaner</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inexperienced Consumers’ Judgment of the Quality of Major Household Appliances

(p=0.0001); reliance of specific retailers (p=0.0001) or friends and family (p=0.0443). No significant difference could be found between the various groups’ reliance on salespeople (p=0.1069) to indicate the quality of appliances: friends and family are apparently used more frequently to assist with quality judgment than salespeople who should be in a better position to do so.

Section E: Consumers’ knowledge of functional and performance attributes of appliances

The mean scores for the three areas was calculated to give an indication of their potential to conclude informed buyer decisions in terms of certain basic functional and performance attributes of appliances.

The performance of the three areas was compared using the Kruskal-Wallis test. There was no significant difference between the mean scores of the inexperienced groups A and B (p<0.05). The experienced group C, however, performed significantly better than both areas A (Z stat 7.41; dif –140.15; SE 18.92) (p<0.05) and B (Z stat 10.01; dif –190.06; SE 18.98) (p<0.05). Unfortunately the mean average score for C was still disappointingly low (below 45%) in terms of the potential to make informed buyer decisions.

The procedure was repeated to indicate the influence of years of experience on their knowledge, irrespective of area of residence. The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that there was no significant difference in performance of any of the three groups for compara-

### TABLE 4

AVERAGE EXPECTED SERVICE LIFE OF APPLIANCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appliances</th>
<th>Area A</th>
<th>Area B</th>
<th>Area C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Mean (years)</td>
<td>Std Dev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>9.93</td>
<td>4.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stove (integrated)</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>9.92</td>
<td>6.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washer: front loader</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave oven</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum cleaner</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FIGURE 2

COMPARISON OF EXPECTED AND REPORTED SERVICE LIFE FIGURES FOR SELECTED APPLIANCES

![Comparison of expected and reported service life figures for selected appliances](image-url)
TABLE 5
USE OF SURROGATE INDICATORS FOR QUALITY JUDGMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>Area A: % of n=137</th>
<th>Area B: % of n=124</th>
<th>Area C: % of n=383</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price (more expensive considered better)</td>
<td>44.1 51.5 4.4</td>
<td>*64.5 35.5 0</td>
<td>18.2 *74.5 7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin (imported preferred)</td>
<td>22.1 *63.2 14.7</td>
<td>42.7 44.4 12.9</td>
<td>10.0 *73.7 16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salespeople’s recommendations</td>
<td>11.1 *60.7 28.2</td>
<td>15.3 *63.7 21.0</td>
<td>7.9 *69.7 22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand names</td>
<td>*62.5 32.4 5.2</td>
<td>*71.0 22.6 6.5</td>
<td>*59.8 37.6 2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends’ and family’s recommendations</td>
<td>32.4 *59.6 8.1</td>
<td>16.9 *75.0 8.1</td>
<td>22.4 *70.8 6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarantee/ warranty</td>
<td>*61.0 26.5 12.5</td>
<td>*79.0 16.9 4.1</td>
<td>46.3 45.9 7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design elements</td>
<td>14.0 *50.0 36.0</td>
<td>48.4 34.7 16.9</td>
<td>5.8 *60.7 33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trendy</td>
<td>6.6 48.5 44.9</td>
<td>*50.8 33.1 16.1</td>
<td>4.5 *72.3 23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widely advertised products</td>
<td>10.4 *64.4 25.2</td>
<td>14.6 *73.2 12.2</td>
<td>10.8 *63.1 26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally manufactured</td>
<td>27.9 *64.0 8.1</td>
<td>35.5 *55.7 8.9</td>
<td>14.3 *71.7 14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailers reputation/image</td>
<td>*66.9 26.5 6.6</td>
<td>*71.8 24.2 4.0</td>
<td>33.9 48.7 17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Majority in that area.

TABLE 6
MEAN SCORE FOR THE PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE TEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Mean % correct</th>
<th>Std dev</th>
<th>Rank sum</th>
<th>Maximum % correct</th>
<th>Years of experience with electricity irrespective of area</th>
<th>Mean % correct</th>
<th>Std dev</th>
<th>Rank sum</th>
<th>Maximum % correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area A (n=137)</td>
<td>32.21</td>
<td>10.4199</td>
<td>3 0618.0</td>
<td>52.38</td>
<td>5 years and less (n=32)</td>
<td>27.83</td>
<td>13.0331</td>
<td>61.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area B (n=124)</td>
<td>29.15</td>
<td>10.8825</td>
<td>24 184.5</td>
<td>61.90</td>
<td>6-10 years (n=105)</td>
<td>30.06</td>
<td>9.2994</td>
<td>57.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area C (n=383)</td>
<td>44.71</td>
<td>16.6515</td>
<td>150 958.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>11-15 years (n=92)</td>
<td>32.25</td>
<td>12.9422</td>
<td>61.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifelong (n=407)</td>
<td>44.17</td>
<td>16.3686</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following represent an example of the questions that were included in the questionnaire, which required TRUE/ FALSE/ DO NOT KNOW responses. In some instances TRUE was the correct response, while FALSE was the correct option for others. For all of the following questions, the correct answer was supposed to be “FALSE”. Figures in brackets indicate the mean scores for A, B and C respectively:

- The rotation speed of a tumble dryer will influence its effectiveness (8.9%; 3.3%; 28.1%).
- A ceramic glass hob will crack if cold water is spilt on the hot surface (39.0%; 38.7%; 53.0%).
- A dishwasher with a concealed element is less likely to produce an electric shock than one with a visible element (3.2%; 4.03%; 25.6%).
- 800 rpm is a particularly high rotation speed for a washing machine (16.3%; 5.7%; 22.8%).

Limited space prevents full disclosure of the statistical evidence of the reliability of the knowledge test. It could be stated, however, that a good distribution of scores was obtained for all three...
groups above and below the mean scores for each group, considering the unlikeliness that someone in area A or B would obtain a full score, while it did occur in area C. The younger consumers in group A probably scored better than group B, because of longer experience with electricity (Table 1) and opportunities through improved education in recent years.

The effect of product related consumer socialization on consumers’ knowledge of the properties of appliances was repeated using the Mann-Whitney test: the results of the young consumers with limited experience in area A was compared to a similar group using the Mann-Whitney test: the results of the young consumers from C. The procedure was repeated for Area B and a similar group drawn from C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 7</th>
<th>MEAN SCORES FOR THE PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE TEST FOR YOUNG CONSUMERS WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PRODUCT RELATED CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Mean score (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area A (n=124)</td>
<td>32.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area C same age as A (n=137)</td>
<td>44.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those in area C performed significantly better than the comparative younger age group in area A (p=0.0000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 8</th>
<th>MEAN SCORES FOR THE PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE TEST FOR OLDER CONSUMERS WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PRODUCT RELATED CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Mean score (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area B (n=104)</td>
<td>28.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area C same age as B (n=191)</td>
<td>44.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those in area C performed significantly better than the comparative older age group in area B (p=0.0000)

CONCLUSION

Findings revealed a remarkable incongruity with respect to participants’ personal rating of the importance of quality during the evaluation of household appliances and their apparent ability to do so (Only 12, 9% of the young inexperienced; 3.2% of the older inexperienced and 1.4% of the experienced consumers indicated quality per se to be of LITTLE or NO IMPORTANCE. The rest regarded it as very IMPORTANT or VERY IMPORTANT.) Specific questions and tasks relating to product evaluation and quality judgment revealed that, irrespective of participants’ experience with electricity or their ownership of appliances, none of the groups demonstrated an ability to conclude informed, responsible buyer decisions with respect to major household appliances. Although the experienced consumer group scored significantly higher in the knowledge test than the inexperienced groups, a mean score below 45% does not convince that they have the structural knowledge of functional and performance attributes of appliances to transform stimuli in terms of informed product choices that would represent informed, responsible buyer decisions. The mean scores for questions pertaining to specific performance and functional attributes of the most common appliances (refrigerators and vacuum cleaners), revealed that consumer decisions would probably not be based on rational utilitarian evaluative criteria (e.g. less than 41% of all the participants knew that most upright automatic washing machines draw hot water from the geyser and less than 32% knew that a vacuum cleaner’s wattage is higher than that of a refrigerator). Although reliance on surrogate indicators during quality judgment manifested stronger among the inexperienced consumer groups, more than two thirds of the group with extensive product related experience admitted to using all of the listed surrogate indicators on an ALWAYS or SOMETIMES basis. Brand names seem to be the single most important signifier of quality over all consumer groups which confirms Dawar and Parker’s (1994) findings regarding the importance of brand name during product evaluation. It also relates to Lancaster’s theory of consumer demand that postulates that it is not the products itself that are the objects of utility (traditional theory) but that certain properties that are embodied in the products, are of greater concern (for example status that is supported through owning a desirable, admirable branded appliance). Findings also support Erdem et al (1999) who reported that materialistic values and resultant aspirations generally result in a dominance of social factors during product evaluation. DeChernatony & McDonald (in Wu et al 2000) propose that consumers eventually rely on small bits of information (rather than an extensive information search) to confirm their brand choices and that the information that they use, is determined by time pressure, previous experience, advice from friends and level of involvement with the purchase. This is supported by evidence of Chernev (2003) that suggests confirmatory processing that is based on limited attributes derived from prior experience for experienced consumers and comparative processing using specific indicators for the inexperienced. The findings could unfortunately not conclude that consumers with elevated exposure and experience levels on average have the cognitive ability to transform stimuli in terms of responsible purchase decisions when selecting major household appliances. A dominance of surrogate indicators in terms of quality judgment suggests a strong reliance on...
brand image during quality judgment. This inevitably suggests

certain commendable implications for retail to retain their customers,
e.g. excellent after sales service and trusted service delivery

(Crie 2003).

Elias (1987), almost two decades ago, when discussing changes in
household technology, projected that consumer facilitation would
shift from “helping people to use technology” to “solving problems
that are created by technology”. Judging from the findings of this
study, these words have come true.

REFERENCES

between warranty and product reliability”, Journal of
Consumer Affairs, (Winter), 421-434.


Babbie, E & Mouton, J, 2001, “The Practice of Social Research,
SA Ed, Cape Town, Oxford.

Bahl, KD, 1986, “How and when do brand perceptions and
preferences first form? A cognitive development investiga-
tion”, Journal of Consumer Research, 13(3), 382-393.

Bennett, KF. 2001, “Energy Efficiency In Africa For Sustainable
Development: A South African Perspective”, UNESCO
Workshop on Sustainable Development, Nairobi.

behaviour: the case of electrical goods”, International
Journal of Retail & Distribution Management, 23(9), 8-18.

Cox, A, Granbois, DH & Summers, J, 1983, “Planning, search,
certainty and satisfaction among durables buyers: a longitudi-
nal study”, Advances in Consumer Research, X, 394-399.

Crie, D, 2003, “Consumers’ complaint behaviour, Taxonomy,
typology and determinants: towards a unified ontology”,
Journal of Database Marketing & Customer Strategy
Management, 11(1), 60.

use of brand name, price, physical appearance, and retailer
reputation as signals of quality”, Journal of Marketing 58(2),
81-83.

Dodds, W & Monroe, KB, 1985, “The effect of brand and price
information on subjective product evaluation”, Advances in
Consumer Research, 12(1), 85-90.

Du Plessis, PJ, Rousseau, GG & Blem, NH, 1995, Buyer
Behaviour, Strategic Marketing Applications, 1st Ed, Cape,
Southern.

of energy in the purchase household appliances in the US
and Thailand”, PhD dissertation, University of Delaware.

Elias, JG, 1987, “Home economics and the growth of household
technology”, Home Economics FORUM (Spring), 6-8.

Engel, JF, Blackwell, RD & Miniard, PW, 1990, Consumer

unattainable ideal?”, Journal of Family Economics and

Erasmus, AC, 1996, “Black consumers’ approach to acquisition
of electrical household appliances”, Journal of Family
Economy and Consumer Sciences, 25(2), 100-113.

consumers on the purchase of electrical appliances”, Journal

Erdem, O, Oumlil, AB & Tuncalp, S, 1999, “Consumer values
and the importance of store attributes”, International Journal
of Retail and Distribution Management, 27(4), 137-144.

European Advances in Consumer Research (Volume 7) / 657

Euromonitor, 2003, Domestic electrical appliances in South
Appliances in South Africa.

Fern, EF, 1983, “Focus-groups: a review of some contradictory
evidence, implications and suggestions for future research”,
Advances in Consumer Research, X, 121-129.

Fernandez, VP, 2001, “ Observable and unobservable determi-
nants of replacement of home appliances”, Energy Econom-
ics, 23,305-323.

Gerstner, E, 1985, “Do higher prices signal higher quality?”
Journal of Marketing Research, XXII (May), 205-215.

http://www.systemsthory.ac.cambridgeuniversity.com

Hippkin, I, 2004, “Determining technology strategy in developing
countries”, Omega 32(3), 245.

Hittman, L, 1987, “Family and technology: educating for the
1990’s and beyond”, Home Economics FORUM, (Spring), 3-
5.

Holtz, WH, 1998, “Energy and appliance usage after electrifica-

Hornby, AS, 2000, Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 6th
ed, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Development In South Africa: Key Indicators Of Develop-
ment And Transformation”.

James, J, 1983, Consumer Choice In The Third World, New
York, St Martin’s Press.

John, DR, 1999, “Consumer socialization of children, A
retrospective look at twenty-five years of research”, Journal
of Consumer Research 26(Dec), 183-213.

Kamaruddin, AR & Mokhills, S, 2003, “Consumer socialization,
social structural factors and decision making styles: a case
study of adolescents in Malaysia”, International Journal
of Consumer Studies, 27(2), 145-156.

Kanwar, R & Pagivlas, N, 1992, “When are higher social class
consumers more and less brand loyal than lower social class
consumers? The role of mediating variables”, Advances in
Consumer Research, (19), 589-595.

products: an analysis of product-country images and
ethnocentrism”, European Journal of Marketing, 36(7/8),
928-940.

Le Blanc, B, 1998, An Analysis Of The Major Household
inks227/appliance.htm.

environment and locus of control on service evaluation:
a replication an extension”, Journal of Retailing and Consumer
Services, 4(4), 231-237.

structure: brand loyalty and brand switching behaviours for
durable household appliances”. International Journal of
Market Research (Summer Autumn), 42(3), 277-294.


Moore, WM, 1995, Kitchens 2000, Journal of Property Manage-
mant,(July/August) 60(4),40-44.

Moore-Shay, ES, 1996, “The role of family environment in the
development of shared consumption values: an intergenerational study”, Advances in Consumer Research,
23,484-490.

Morelli, N, 2001, “Technical innovation and resource efficiency,
The Journal of Sustainable Product Design”, 1, 3-17.


Perkins, B, 2003, “Fix it or forget it: deciding whether to repair or replace major appliances can be a tough choice”, Journal of Property Management (Jan-Feb), 68(1), 67.


Remich, NC,1991, “CFC refrigerator that is highly energy efficient”, Appliance Manufacturer, 39(8), 52-55.


Sabelli, J, 1998, Time to truly internationalize energy standards for refrigerators, Appliance Manufacturer, 46(6), 88.


The Role of Exposure Frequency, Prominence, and Memory of Brand Placements in Effects on Brand Image

Eva van Reijmersdal, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Peter Neijens, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Edith Smit, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Although a considerable number of studies on brand placement—i.e. the purposeful incorporation of a brand into editorial content—have been conducted, very little is known about the effects of brand placement on brand image. This is very surprising, because image change is often mentioned as one of the benefits of brand placement for advertisers. Knowledge of the effects on brand image is not only useful for advertisers but may also give insight into the psychological mechanisms, such as conditioning and associative learning, underlying effects of mixing advertising with editorial content.

Two studies were conducted, both aimed at measuring the effects of exposure to brand placements in television programs. The first study (survey) focused on effects of brand placements in an informational television program named “Je Echte Leeftijd” (“Your Real Age”) in which a number of advertisers participated. This program was broadcast on the Dutch commercial channel RTL4. During the program, viewers were encouraged to visit the program’s website and have their real ages calculated based on an extensive test. This “real age” is based on lifestyle, medical history, relationships, nutrition, and on how well one has maintained ones body. In each of the seven episodes, two celebrities were present in the studio and talked about their lifestyle and what they did or did not do to keep their bodies young. Each episode also included special reports on issues such as sports clubs or cholesterol levels. The participation of the advertisers (i.e. the placed brands) became visible in several ways, each with different levels of prominence. A total of 655 respondents completed the online questionnaire of which 50.9% were non-viewers and 49.1% were viewers of the program.

In the second study (experiment), three fragments of approximately 25 minutes each were selected to manipulate exposure frequency. The fragments were natural parts of three episodes and each fragment included the same number and type of placements for each brand. The fragments included two different types of brand placements: prominent and subtle. A total of 139 undergraduates of two Dutch universities participated in the experiment. Both studies included brand measures, program measures and control variables.

Important finding from both studies was that especially the prominent brand placements affected brand image. These placements made a contribution to the story told in the program and were well-integrated in the content of the program. For these placements, the program image played an important role; brand images changed in the direction of the program image.

Our study also showed that image components that were not associated with the program were not affected and neither was brand attitude. Thus, the pairing of the brand with the program had effects that could not be explained by a general liking of the brand, as might be expected based on mere exposure theory (Zajonc 1968, 2001). This means that placing a brand in a television program can result in very specific image change. The program image is the determinant of the effects on the brand image.

The relationship between memory and image was examined in both studies. We found that memory was not related to brand image. Thus, respondents who remembered seeing the brand did not have a different image of that brand than respondents who could not remember seeing the brand. These results are in line with those of Law and Braun (2000), and Auty and Lewis (2004a; 2004b), who showed that brand placement effects on brand choice were unrelated to memory. Our results also indicate that brand image is influenced implicitly, which means that image is influenced without explicit memory of the exposure. Many studies into the working of implicit and explicit memory have shown that these two types of memory are unrelated (for an overview, see Schacter 1987). These findings have some important implications for our knowledge of brand placements. They support the idea that brand image and brand memory are processed differently. This is in agreement with the evolving view that different measures are needed to estimate effects of brand placements (Law and Braun 2000). Future research may provide more insight into the effects of brand placement on both implicit and explicit memory.

Our survey showed that exposure frequency is an important variable in the affecting brand image. Two or more exposures were needed to change brand image. This implies that there is a threshold for affecting images in natural viewing situations. The experiment did not show effects of exposure frequency: the exposure per se was enough to influence brand image. This difference between the experiment and the survey is probably due to higher levels of attention in the experiment. As opposed to the survey, we explicitly asked the respondents to watch the episodes attentively in the experiment.

The effects on brand image found in these studies are promising, because the creation of images is a long-term process that is influenced by both brand use and marketing communication. We showed that exposure to brand placement, even only three times, was able to change the brand image in the direction of the program.

REFERENCES


Author Index

Ahler, Dieter ............................................................. 516
Argo, Jennifer J. .................................................... 221, 308
Arnould, Eric .......................................................... 6, 605
Arthur, Damien .......................................................... 34
Bajde, Domen ............................................................. 176
Banister, Emma N. .................................................... 535, 453
Bardhi, Fleura ............................................................. 438
Bartmann, Benedikt ................................................... 467
Becker-Olsen, Karen .................................................. 136
Belk, Russell .............................................................. 1, 392
Bergvall, Sven ............................................................ 310
Beruchashvili, Mariam .............................................. 303
Blackwell, Kirsten ..................................................... 1
Borgerson, Janet L. ..................................................... 143
Bravo, Rafael .............................................................. 104
Brechan, Inge ............................................................ 367
Brembeck, Helene .................................................... 256, 390
Broback, Anna ............................................................ 170
Brownie, Douglas ..................................................... 623
Buchanan-Oliver, Margo ............................................ 477
Büttner, Oliver B. ....................................................... 557
Caldwell, Marylouise ............................................... 1, 38
Callow, Michael ........................................................ 153
Campbell, Norah ...................................................... 344
Capelli, Sonia .............................................................. 212
Carrigan, Marylyn ..................................................... 608
Caruana, Robert ........................................................ 582
Cassinger, Cecilia ....................................................... 27
Catterall, Miriam ....................................................... 577
Cayla, Julien .................................................................. 437
Chan, Tze Wee .......................................................... 51
Chang, Chun-Tuan ..................................................... 388
Chartered, Stephen ................................................... 635
Chatterjee, Subimal .................................................... 595
Christensen, Glenn L. ............................................... 440, 584
Chronis, Athinodoros ................................................. 208
Cismaru, Magdalena .................................................. 210
Cornwell, T. Bettina .................................................. 136
Cowley, Elizabeth ...................................................... 223, 597
Crane, Andrew .......................................................... 582
Creusen, Marielle E. H. .............................................. 502
Creyer, Elizabeth ....................................................... 533
Cumberla, Flemmng ................................................... 276
Curasi, Carolyn Folkman ............................................. 559
Dahl, Darren W. ........................................................ 221, 553
Dalli, Daniele ............................................................. 586
Darke, Peter R. .......................................................... 308, 553
Derbaix, Christian ...................................................... 444
Demody, Janine ........................................................ 360
Devinney, Timothy .................................................... 1
Dibb, Sally ................................................................. 518
Diehl, Kristin ............................................................. 605
Diehl, Sandra ............................................................ 268
Dimofte, Claudiu V. .................................................... 225
Domke, Anja .............................................................. 467
Downey, Hilary ........................................................... 577
Dunne, Andrew .......................................................... 138
Dymek, Mikolaj .......................................................... 310
Eadie, Douglas .......................................................... 536
Eccles, Sue ................................................................. 471
Eckhardt, Giana ........................................................ 1, 437
Edwardson, Michael ................................................. 597
Eisend, Martin ........................................................... 385
Ekström, Karin M. ...................................................... 391, 404

Elliott, Richard .......................................................... 471
Epp, Amber M. .......................................................... 155
Erasmus, Alet C. ....................................................... 648
Eyjólfsson, Brynjölfur ............................................... 19
Farrell, Colin ............................................................. 597
Ferguson, Shelagh .................................................... 317
Fernholm, Johanna .................................................... 614
Firat, Fuat ................................................................. 528
Foscht, Thomas .......................................................... 84
Fraj, Elena ................................................................. 104
Freeman, Olivia .......................................................... 138, 339
Gamble, Amelie ........................................................ 495
Garcia, Ercilia ............................................................. 70
Gentry, James W. ....................................................... 303
Giesler, Markus ......................................................... 10, 352, 498
Gistri, Giacomo .......................................................... 586
Goertz, Elisabeth ........................................................ 45
Gonzalez, Christine .................................................... 485
Gram, Malene ............................................................ 112
Greenwald, Anthony G. ............................................. 225
Grix, Marco ............................................................... 616
Groppel-Klein, Andrea ............................................... 467
Guido, Gianluiugi ....................................................... 168, 442
Gustafsson, Clara ....................................................... 522
Gärling, Tommy .......................................................... 44, 495
Hampton, Ronald ....................................................... 208
Hammer-Lloyd, Stuart ............................................... 360
Hannigan, Mcke ......................................................... 104
Hanssen, Lena ............................................................ 507
Havlena, William J. ...................................................... 195
Hedges, Ted Martin ..................................................... 44
Heiskanen, Eva ........................................................... 230
Hewer, Paul ............................................................... 623
Hibbert, Sally ............................................................. 285
Hjalmarsn, Hanna ...................................................... 170, 333
Hoffman, Esther ........................................................ 237
Hogg, Margaret K. ..................................................... 51, 453, 559
Holak, Susan L ........................................................... 195
Holmberg, Ulrika ....................................................... 418
Horbels, Chris ............................................................. 469
Hosea, James ............................................................. 19
Hota, Monali ............................................................... 119
Hughes, Nia ............................................................... 292
Ioannou, Christina ..................................................... 416
Isla, Britta ................................................................. 143
Isomursu, Minna ....................................................... 244
Isomursu, Pekka ........................................................ 244
Johansson, Barbro ...................................................... 327
Johnstone, Mical-Ee .................................................... 477
Juliusson, Asgeir ........................................................ 495
Jyrinki, Henna ............................................................ 543
Kachale, Mphato G. .................................................... 648
Kees, Jeremy ............................................................. 533
Kenning, Peter .......................................................... 516
Kimura, Junko ............................................................ 1
Kjeldgaard, Danni ....................................................... 431
Klepe, Ingeborg Astrid ................................................. 19, 227
Knowles, Eric ........................................................... 533
Korchia, Michaeł ........................................................ 485
Koskinen, Ilpo ............................................................. 66, 230
Kozinetz, Robert ........................................................ 1
Krishnamurthy, Parhasarathy ....................................... 210
Kyriaki-Ioanna, Balogianni ......................................... 535
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santos, Rubens da Costa</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross, William T.</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romani, Simona</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lerman, Dawn</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopez-Maciver, Liz</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luedicke, Marius K.</td>
<td>10, 520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luna, David</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lundsteen, Steen</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maclaren, Pauline</td>
<td>83, 559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main, Kelley J.</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makgopa, Meriam M.</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcoux, Jean-Sebastien</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall, Roger</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martinez, Eva</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matveev, Alexei V.</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazursky, David</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGuigian, Robyn</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKechnie, Sally</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McMellon, Charles A.</td>
<td>153, 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McQuarrie, Edward F.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meier-Pesti, Katja</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaelidou, Nina</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min, Junhong</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minowa, Yuko</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miosander, Johanna</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morales, Andrea</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morel, Kaj P.N.</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morschett, Dirk</td>
<td>160, 377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugge, Ruth</td>
<td>460, 641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukherjee, Sayantani</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulken, Margot Van</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mörc, Magnus</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neijens, Peter</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Driscoll, Aidan</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Malley, Lisa</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olson, Jerry C.</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paavola, Heli</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsons, Elizabeth</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pecheux, Claude</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peluso, Alessandro M.</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percy, Larry</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pettigrew, Simone</td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips, Barbara J.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piacentini, Maria G.</td>
<td>535, 536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plassmann, Hilke</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pohllmann, Mali</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poncin, Ingrid</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prado, Paulo Henrique Muller</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price, Linda L.</td>
<td>155, 303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rahman, A.M. Kaleel</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rauch, Manuel</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reijmersdal, Eva van</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repo, Petteri</td>
<td>66, 229, 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rindfleisch, Arie</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringberg, Torsten</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romani, Simona</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross, William T.</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samadi, Sara</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santos, Rubens da Costa</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saren, Michael</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schifferstein, Hendrik N.J.</td>
<td>460, 641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoormans, Jan P.L.</td>
<td>460, 502, 641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schramm-Klein, Hanna</td>
<td>160, 377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schroeder, Jonathan E.</td>
<td>143, 498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shankar, Avi</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharma, Piyush</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherlock, Roger</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimp, Terence A.</td>
<td>224, 409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siddiqui, Shakeel</td>
<td>72, 295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silberer, Günter</td>
<td>555, 557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sivakumaran, Bharadhwaj</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sjödin, Henrik</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smarandescu, Laura</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smit, Edith</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, Andre</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snelders, Dirk</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solgaard, Hans Stubbe</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparks, Leigh</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sprott, David E.</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinhart, Yael</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steul, Martina</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroëmsnes, Kristin</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sullivan, Michael</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svendsäter, Henrik</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swoboda, Bernhard</td>
<td>84, 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szmiñgin, Isabelle</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Söderlund, Magnus</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sørensen, Elin Brandi</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor, David W.</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terlutter, Ralf</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thegersen, John</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomsen, Thyra Uth</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorssén, Erika</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timonen, Päivi</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd, Sarah</td>
<td>317, 477, 616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker, Kieran</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulloch, Kirsty</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turley, Darach</td>
<td>72, 295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tynan, Caroline</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Üçok, Mine</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulver, Sofia</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valtonen, Anu</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varman, Rohit</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venkatesh, Alladi</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vikas, Ram Manohar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vosgerau, Joachim</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vries, Peter de</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakefield, Kirk L.</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weinberg, Peter</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whelan, Susan</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Katherine</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikström, Solveig R.</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wohlfeld, Markus</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood, Stacy</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodruffe-Burton, Helen</td>
<td>322, 471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsatschek, Herbert</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yalch, Richard F.</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yi, Sungwhan</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yip, Jeaney</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zlatevska, Natalina</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Öhman, Niclas</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olander, Folke</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Östberg, Jacob</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>