CHAPTER 38

Consumer Behavior and Marketing

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Whenever we make a decision to buy—or not to buy—something, there are short-term and often long-term consequences. In the short-term, we may consume a sandwich, go to a movie, or buy some clothing. We also have made a short-term decision to allocate resources, such as time and money, to that acquisition. That purchase may have long-term benefits and costs: That sandwich may contribute to being overweight; the movie may change the way we look at some aspect of the world; and the clothing may earn us a compliment or help us get a new job. Less obvious is that this decision involves tradeoffs. For example, the resources required to make the purchase will prevent us from pursuing other opportunities with the same resources, what economists call *opportunity costs.*

These kinds of decisions are at the heart of consumer behavior. Because they are not made in isolation, we must also be concerned how that environment is influenced by firms and marketing managers. Although this chapter concentrates on *consumers*, we also talk about *managers* because they help design the products, allocate the advertising budget, and shape the messages that influence consumers. Their lay and expert theories of consumer choice help establish the environment in which consumers behave. In addition, one important role of consumer behavior research is to help managers develop better theories and make better decisions. Finally, many of the principles we discuss have relevance to public policy and, in fact, social marketing, a field that would like to employ these principles in not-for-profit arenas.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AS AN ACADEMIC FIELD

Consumer research is located at the nexus of theory and practice and at the intersection of several different research traditions. Two of the primary source disciplines are psychology and economics, although methodology, particularly quantitative modeling from statistics and management science, also plays an important role.

One way of portraying the field and its relationship to social psychology is to look at the pattern of citations among major journals. Figure 38.1 shows the pattern of cross citation for three psychology journals and four of the leading journals in marketing. The numbers are the percentage of all citations in that journal that refer to papers published in another. For example, 7% of the citations in the *Journal of Consumer Research* (JCR) are to papers in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (JPSP), while 20% of JCR's citations are to its own papers. For clarity, we eliminated cross citations with frequencies of less than 2%.[1]

One strong conclusion that can be drawn is that the central journal in consumer research is a large consumer of social psychology: Seven out of every 100 citations are

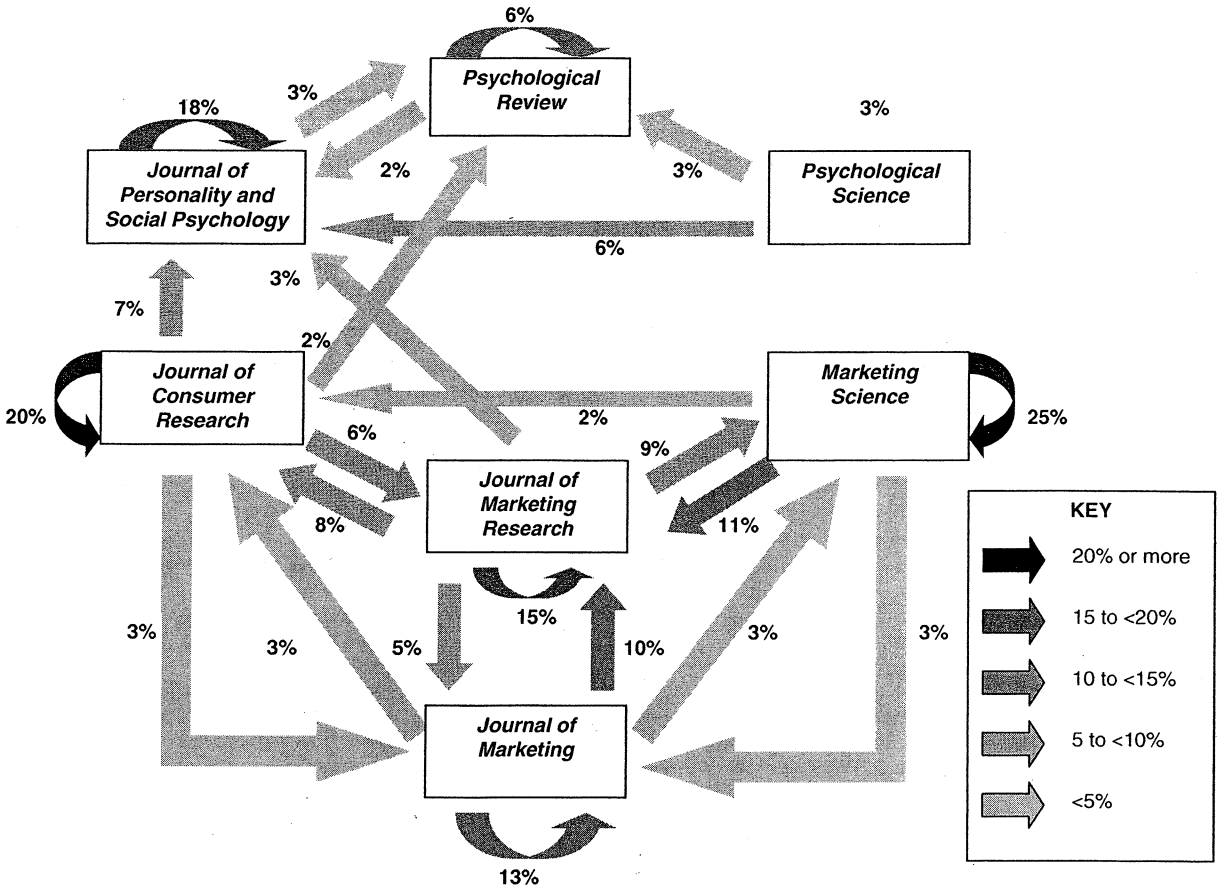

FIGURE 38.1. Cross-citations of journals, psychology and marketing, based on *ISI Web of Knowledge* data, 2004. Arrows indicate citations from one journal to papers published in another. Any cross-citations less than 2% have been deleted for clarity.

to JPSP. That is even more than to any of the marketing journals other than itself. A second conclusion is that authors in JPSP find little to cite in any marketing journal. It is as if the phenomena and findings of the world of commerce are of little relevance to social psychology. While that may be the fate of any applied discipline, we are convinced that this should not be the case. Many of the questions in consumer research are, in fact, of great relevance to social psychology, and many important empirical results should be of interest to students of fields such as persuasion and decision making. Consumer behavior provides an ideal laboratory, not just for the application of theories but also for the extending existing theoretical ideas and the development of new ones.

A third conclusion that might be drawn from this diagram is that consumer research and marketing have their own schisms. Roughly speaking, there is a limited flow of citations to and from the more quantitative journals, such as *Marketing Science*, and one might conclude that consumer research is fairly distant from either *Marketing Science* or the *Journal of Marketing*, the latter often seen as the most applied journal in the discipline. In sum, Figure 38.1 shows the reader that what may appear a monolithic field is, in reality, like many outgroups, less homogeneous than it appears, and that social psychology is an important source for, but not a user of, consumer-oriented research.

GOALS OF THE CHAPTER

Our goal in this chapter is to review for social psychologists some of the interesting research done in consumer behavior and marketing. This review must be incomplete in the usual sense, that is, many good papers and many worthwhile research areas are not covered because of space constraints and the lack of fit to a relatively arbitrary structure. However, it is incomplete in a more intentional and strategic way. Because many excellent chapters in this handbook describe the basic research underlying consumer and marketing research, we do not review those basic ideas and results here. Our goal, instead, is to review the results of the application of psychological ideas to consumer behavior and marketing and to highlight data and ideas that should inform social-psychological research. The emphasis is on research published outside the traditional mainstream of social psychology but within the mainstream of consumer research

and marketing, and it addresses concepts, theories, and methods relevant to social and cognitive psychology.

To organize this literature, and to give the reader a sense of the last few decades of the field, we have chosen to concentrate on four topics: two representing classic areas of inquiry, and two representing developing ones. Our "old school" classics are topics that have been central to consumer research for at least the last 50 years: decision making and persuasion. This is not to say that they are not hotbeds of current research but rather that they have a longer traditional history and more established methods. Our "new school" topics are affect and implicit processing, areas that have grown rapidly in consumer research, paralleling trends in social psychology.

DECISION PROCESSES

Consumer Decision Making: A View from Economics

Imagine a consumer in front of a typical American supermarket aisle, choosing a breakfast cereal. There are, by most counts, at least 120 different options in a typical American supermarket. How does a consumer choose? We start by introducing an "as-if" model, termed "value maximization," from economics (see Deaton & Muellbauer, 1980, for a classic perspective; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991, and Tversky & Simonson, 1993, for a psychological view; and Varian, 1992, for a more recent view). We do this both because (1) it stands as a normative benchmark for other decision processes, and (2) it is the source, in spirit at least, of many of the models that managers use to predict consumer choice and design new products. In this model, consumers behave as if they were examining all relevant attributes for all the cereals. That is, they choose as if they knew all available relevant information. Not only do they pick the "best" cereal according to these criteria from this large set, but they are also maximizing their choice across all possible consumption choices they are making, both now and given their best predictions about what will happen in the future. This maximization is not limited to the supermarket, but to *all possible* consumption decisions!

However unrealistic this may sound, the basic idea of value maximization has generated many useful tools such as discrete choice modeling, which managers use to design, price, and position products. Most attempts to make these models more realistic involve modifications to the idea of value maximization rather than the use of alternative frameworks that are based on other principles or assumptions.

Choice Heuristics and Representations

Heuristics for Choice

In response to the apparently unrealistic demands of value maximization, many scholars have developed descriptions of choice processes that simplify the decision process. These simplifications from value maximization, or *choice heuristics*, try to maintain the ability to make good choices at substantial savings of effort. One example of a choice heuristic in our cereal example would be if the consumer were to eliminate any cereal with added sugar. This corresponds to an elimination by aspects heuristic (Tversky, 1972), and it simplifies the choice because the brands that are eliminated are not examined further. Heuristics save effort by ignoring information. This savings comes with a potential cost because it is possible, if unlikely, that one of the eliminated cereals is so much better on the remaining attributes (e.g., lots of vitamins and very inexpensive) that it is better than the one finally chosen.

Many heuristics have been described (Svenson, 1979), including those that are based on comparisons of the alternatives, such as the lexicographic and additive differences heuristics, and those, like elimination by aspects (Tversky, 1972), that are based on the comparison of the alternatives to a standard, which are related to Simon's notion of satisficing (Simon, 1955). Do people use these heuristics? An extensive literature examines how people make choices, many using process tracing methods, such as talk-aloud protocols (Bettman, 1970), recording of consumers' head and eye movements (Russo & Leclerc, 1994; Russo & Rosen, 1974), and other ways of observing information acquisitions (Bettman & Kakkar, 1977; Jacoby, 1975; Jacoby et al., 1994). This literature clearly indicates that a large number of heuristics are used, that they depend on the characteristics of the choice, and that people switch heuristics, even in the course of a single decision. In fact, it has been argued that the research on choice processes should be conducted at a finer level of analysis, and that the concept of heuristics is too broad to use to understand consumer choice (Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1991) and that a lower level of analysis is appropriate. This plethora of potential strategies, while descriptively more accurate, poses a challenge for modeling consumer behavior: How can we try to predict what a consumer would want when we do not know how they will make a choice? This represents an active area of research in consumer choice modeling.

Mental Accounting

Recall that our shopper not only maximized, according to theory, across all breakfast cereals but across all choices. Thus, according to theory, shoppers are deciding between buying the brand-name corn flakes and the store-brand flakes in light of its implications for other purchases that may occur years in the future, such as buying a retirement home. A more psychologically realistic view is that people have much more restricted "mental" accounts in which trade-offs are made (Thaler, 1984, 1999; Thaler & Johnson, 1990). For our hypothetical cereal consumer, they may be making trade-offs within their mental accounts for breakfasts, trying to find the best possible combinations *within* that category, including hot breakfasts, the bagel bought at a corner kiosk, and so on.

While this psychologically plausible assumption markedly simplifies the consumer's task, it is not without its costs. One major concern is that consumers might be

maximizing within that account, but that this leads to over- or underconsumption in other accounts and that the quality of consumer's mental accounting depends on their ability to remember to "post" expenditures into each account and whether they compare expenditures in different accounts (Heath & Soll, 1996). One particularly nice application of this idea is studying how consumers make trade-offs between time and money (Leclerc, Schmitt, & Dube, 1995; Soman, 2001).

Another way in which mental accounting affects consumer choices is that mental accounting, like "real" accounting, occurs over time. That is, inflows of consumption and outflows of resources (like money) can occur at different times. We pay for cars over many years after we initially purchase them but usually pay for vacations before we take them. An interesting growth area in consumer research tries to understand how consumers would want these transactions framed, and how they might be manipulated by frames. Thus, studies have examined whether decision makers like to have the costs and benefits of decisions put together (integrated) or kept apart (segregated) (Prelec & Loewenstein, 1998; Read, Loewenstein, & Rabin, 1999; Thaler & Johnson, 1990).

An important application of this kind of mental accounting research is to look at how the way people pay for transactions affects their spending. The concept of payment decoupling (Soman & Gourville, 2001) suggests that if expenditures are in different accounts than consumption, consumers will spend more. This has been demonstrated in recent studies (Prelec & Simester, 2001; Soman, 2003) that show, for example, that people are willing to pay up to 100% more to purchase tickets to a basketball game when using a charge card than when paying in cash, and that people remember how much they spend better when they pay with cash than with a credit card. Soman and Cheema (2002) look at how mental accounting affects consumers' use of a line of credit.

Recent findings by Zhou and Pham (2004) suggest that nonprofessional consumer investors use two separate mental accounts to manage their investments: one account, associated with promotion-focused regulation (Higgins, 1997), is used to for the achievement of financial gains, and another account, associated with prevention-focused regulation, is used to for the prevention of financial losses. Because consumers learn to associate various financial products with either the achievement of gains or the prevention of losses, they tend to evaluate different investment products using different criteria, which violate standard finance and economics principles.

A major challenge in introducing the idea of mental accounts is identifying the boundaries of mental accounts. Does our hypothetical consumer include the bagel bought at work in the same account as the one for breakfast cereal, or maybe in an account of things bought to get to work early? Some initial work has looked at using natural categories as a starting point (Henderson & Peterson, 1992; McGraw, Tetlock, & Kristel, 2003), but much work remains to be done, particularly if mental accounting is to influence quantitative models of consumer choice.

Reference Dependence and Loss Aversion

Once consumers are seen as making decisions in more narrow accounts, it seems natural to adopt a different view of how they interpret attributes. Under value maximization, when our cereal consumer was judging calories, he or she was making trade-offs against all possible consumption decisions. For example, the calorie consumption of bagel might be compared to a crème brûlée the consumer might consume 2 weeks from Sunday. A more natural and cognitively economical assumption is to see the consumer as comparing the calories of a potential new cereal relative to the calories accompanying his or her current favorite brand.

This basic idea of a reference point is reflected most famously as the value function of prospect theory (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991). Along with the idea of loss aversion, the idea of reference dependence has had a major impact on consumer research. For example, imagine that our cereal consumer now sees that his favorite cereal has had a price increase (to him, a loss) of $0.10. How does that compare to a price decrease (to them a gain) of $0.10? According to the value function of prospect theory, the loss (price increase) will have much more impact; on average twice as much of an impact as would the same size price increase. In terms of economics, we would expect the *elasticity* to change: The decrease in consumption caused by the price increase should be twice the size of the increase in consumption caused by a price decrease.

Early work in studying consumer choice first examined, like our example, whether reactions to price were reference dependent (Kalyanaram & Little, 1994; Mayhew & Winer, 1992; Winer, 1986) and whether they exhibited loss aversion (Hardie, Johnson, & Fader, 1993; Putler, 1992). They provided evidence that reference dependence and loss aversion were useful in explaining the effect of price in consumer choice (see Mazumdar, Raj, & Sinha, 2005, for a recent review). Following the multiattribute extension of the prospect theory value function, Hardie and colleagues (1993) showed that there was loss aversion for both price and, to an even greater extent, quality (see also Bell & Lattin, 2000; Heath et al., 2000; Sen & Johnson, 1997). Subsequent work has looked at the amount of loss aversion for various attributes and whether there are systematic differences across individuals (Chernev, 2004; Erdem, Mayhew, & Sun, 2001; Klapper, Ebling, & Temme, 2005; Van Dijk & Van Knippenberg, 2005). Research has also examined how the pattern of purchases affects the reference point and preference (Sood, Rottenstreich, & Brenner, 2004; Wathieu, 2004). One interesting application examines reference effects and loss aversion in online auctions (Dholakia & Simonson, 2005).

Context Effects

Perhaps the best evidence against value maximization is the existence of context effects. A context effect occurs when adding alternatives to a choice set changes what is chosen, even when the added option seems largely irrelevant. To explore this, consider a website offering two air-

fares to the same city. One is a direct, more expensive flight, and the second a flight requiring a change of planes but significantly cheaper. Depending on one's tastes, one flight or the other might be chosen. Consider what happens if that site added another flight—one that is almost identical to the one-stop in every way but more expensive. Should this change peoples' choices?

Both common sense and value maximization say that choices should not change, but empirically they do. Adding the option that is the same in every way but more expensive typically increases the share of the better one-stop flight. This observation, termed "asymmetric dominance," or the *attraction effect* (Huber, Payne, & Puto, 1982), is one of the findings in consumer choice with the greatest impact throughout the social sciences. Other context effects exist, most notably a *compromise* effect. Here the option between two extreme options gets a greater share of choices than would be predicted by value maximization (Simonson, 1989). In our example, adding a fast, more expensive flight to our Web site would increase the share of the now less expensive nonstop flight. People have speculated whether these techniques could be used to manipulate consumers (Hamilton, 2003; Stewart, Chater, Stott, & Reimers, 2003).

What causes these rather bizarre effects? Answering this question seems to be particularly challenging as these effects have been found in other species such as honeybees and gray jays (Shafir, Bechar, & Weber, 2003; Shafir, Waite, & Smith, 2002). One common set of explanations makes use of loss aversion (Tversky & Simonson, 1993), suggesting that unfavorable comparisons have more impact on choice. Thus, the middle or compromise option has smaller disadvantages, relative to the two options. This leads to the middle option being more attractive, because its losses are smaller. In a very provocative paper, Kivetz, Netzer, and Srinivasan (2004a) develop several different models for the compromise effect and show one in which the middle option serving as a reference point provides a better account for the observed data. Importantly, they also generalize the result, extending it to choices where there are more than two alternatives and two attributes (Kivetz, Netzer, & Srinivasan, 2004b). While this is a major step forward, in part because it presents a managerially useful model of this particular context effect that can be estimated, the real challenge for further research is to develop theoretical mechanisms that unite a growing number of effects.

Task Effects

While context effects refer to the kinds of options presented to the consumer, task effects refer to the way in which the consumer must make these choices. One example might be the time pressure in the supermarket caused by an impatient young child; another might be the need to justify the decision to one's supervisor. The options remain the same, but the conditions of evaluation are different.

The classic task effect in psychology is the preference reversal between pairs of options, often two gambles. Here respondents will choose one option but be willing to pay more for the other, violating economic ideas of stable preferences (Lichtenstein & Slovic, 1971). Its close relative in consumer choice is the difference between joint and separate evaluations (Hsee, 1996; Hsee & Leclerc, 1998). In joint evaluation, two options are judged at the same time, while in separate evaluation, they are presented and judged one at a time. However, the mechanisms involved in both joint and separate evaluations are different than those involved in the classic reversal among gambles. For this type of reversal, the critical variable is the ease with which an attribute can be evaluated. Joint evaluation can make variables that are hard to evaluate easy to compare, thereby increasing their weight. One important question raised in this research is which gives better predictions of future experience? Hsee and Zhang (2004) argue that because most options are experienced in isolation, joint evaluation can yield to errors.

Another task factor that has a significant effect is the need to justify one's choice to others. This can change attribute weights for some attributes (Okada, 2005) and affects the frequency of some kinds of context effects and decision errors (Simonson, 1989, 1992; Simonson & Nye, 1992). Similarly, and somewhat counterintuitively, there are conditions in which being more thoughtful can increase a context effect (Priester, Dholakia, & Fleming, 2004). Thus, working harder does not mean working smarter.

WHERE DO VALUES COME FROM?: INFERENCE AND MEMORY

Until now, we have rather blithely assumed that consumers get the information needed to make a decision directly and immediately from the world around them, for example, from store shelves, or from websites. Of course, this is a gross simplification. In this section, we look at two very important sources of information about the options chosen by consumers—memory and inference. A third important source of value results from the fit between the decision maker and the choice process. We do not discuss this in depth here, because it is presented in the excellent review in this volume

Memory-Based versus External Search

It is clear that the use of the external environment can be expensive, in terms of effort, compared to retrieving information from memory. This has led consumer researchers to distinguish between information that comes from internal and external search (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Biehal & Chakravarti, 1986a; Johnson & Russo, 1984; Sanbonmatsu & Fazio, 1990)—a distinction that has close relations in the social cognition literature (Hastie & Park, 1986; Srull & Wyer, 1989). A significant literature in consumer research parallels similar queries in the social-psychological literature on person memory and social cognition more generally (e.g., Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Higgins, Kuiper, & Olson, 1981). Among the significant results in this area are the ideas that consumer knowl-

edge is organized mostly around brands (Biehal & Chakravarti, 1986b; Johnson & Russo, 1978) rather than attributes; that task goals play an important role in the encoding of information (Biehal & Chakravarti, 1982; Sujan, 1985); and that consumers tend to remember the results of decisions rather than the data on which they are based (Johnson & Russo, 1978; Park & Hastak, 1994). Research has also asked a question about the form of consumer's recall of chosen products: Is recall biased in favor of the chosen alternative? The data seem clear that such biases exist, and they follow from both cognitive and, perhaps, motivational factors. Because consumers often use heuristics like elimination by aspects, which focus on a few alternatives (Grether & Wilde, 1984; Wright, 1975), recall will naturally be better for chosen alternatives (Biehal & Chakravarti, 1986; Costley & Brucks, 1992; Dick, Chakravarti, & Biehal, 1990; Johnson & Russo, 1984). However, as it appears that choice often creates distortions in the valuation of the chosen alternatives (Posavac, Sanbonmatsu, Kardes, & Fitzsimons, 2004; Russo, Meloy, & Medvec, 1998; Simon, Krawczyk, & Holyoak, 2004) , memory is subsequently distorted as well (see Ross & Sicoly, 1979, for an analogy in the social psychological literature).

Category Inference

What happens when information needed to make a choice is not available, either in the environment or in memory? This can occur, for example, when one encounters a new product–for example, a new sport utility vehicle from a known manufacturer, say Saab. One stream of research in consumer behavior examines whether consumers use inferences in these situations. Consumers seem quite comfortable inferring characteristics of the product based on their categorization of the product. Early work in this area concentrated on potentially ambiguous new products, which could be characterized as belonging to two or more categories: Is a new fruit-flavored carbonated children's drink a healthy juice, or a soft drink? This work (Sujan & Dekleva, 1987) showed that consumers used two stages in inference, the first to determine how to categorize the new product ("It's a soft-drink") and the second to infer values ("The fruit flavor is probably artificial"). Similarity between the product and category seems to be an important mediator in determining how a product is categorized (Park, Milberg, & Lawson, 1991; Viswanathan & Childers, 1999), and it differs across age groups (John & Sujan, 1990). Sometimes these inference processes can lead us astray, when, for example, marketers add features that differentiate a product in a way that is meaningless to product performance but changes the way products are categorized (Carpenter, Glazer, & Nakamoto, 1994).

Brand Inference

A special type of inference that has attracted much attention is how consumers think about brands. Because brands are an important organizing principle in consumers' product knowledge, they would also seem to play an important role in product inference. In fact, a major theme of the last two decades of consumer and marketing research concerns the values of brands, termed "brand equity." Much work attempts to assess the economic value to the firm of consumers' awareness and associations with a brand (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Keller, 1993).

Brand Personality

One approach to conceptualizing consumers' knowledge about brands employs the notion of a brand personality, adapting many concepts, such as the Big 5 typology of personality, and applying them to brands (Aaker, 1997). Research here has also been concerned with people's relationships with brands (Fournier, 1998), how brand personalities might differ across cultures (Aaker, Benet-Martinez, & Garolera, 2001; Sung & Tinkham, 2005), and how they are updated (Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004; Johar, Sengupta, & Aaker, 2005). While this area of research remains a provocative metaphor, an open question is how closely processing of brand information, which evolutionarily must be a relatively recent event, resembles the processing of person information. A very recent functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) study indicates that the areas usually associated with the identification of individuals are not used in identifying brands (Yoon, Gutchess, Feinberg, & Polk, 2006).

Brand Extensions

A specific type of inference is required when a known brand introduces a product in a new product class, as in our Saab SUV example earlier. These *brand extensions* are particularly important to managers because they can reduce the cost of a new product introduction (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Boush & Loken, 1991). However, a major theme in this literature is that there must be a "fit" between the two. In fact, a bad brand extension not only fails but can hurt the core brand (John, Loken, & Joiner, 1998; Loken & John, 1993). The accessibility of the brand and the category also determine the success of a brand extension (Meyvis & Janiszewski, 2004).

The area of consumer inference and categorization continues to grow, and readers who want to pursue this area are directed to the excellent recent reviews by Kardes, Posavac, and Cronley (2004) and Loken (2006).

PERSUASION

Persuasion research has been a central concern to consumer and marketing research for decades. There seems to be a natural application of ideas from attitude research to advertising, and research in the area actively adapts paradigms and concepts from social psychology (for a review, see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) to questions that are raised by advertising as a marketing instrument. Typical of these are questions about frequency of advertising, the kind of message, execution, and medium that advertisers should use, and how to deal with competitive

advertising. The fact that the persuasive intent of advertising is known to consumers suggests that advertisements may be processed differently from other types of messages typically studied in social psychology; this "schemer schema" or "marketplace metacognition" has formed the focus of a compelling body of literature in consumer behavior (Friestad & Wright, 1995).

Most research on persuasion in marketing has used a dual-process approach, such as the elaboration likelihood model (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983), the MODE (Fazio, 1990), or the heuristic–systemic model (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Ratneshwar & Chaiken, 1991). Consumer research has challenged the prevailing view that peripheral cues are used blindly in the absence of motivation and ability and has shown that consumers sometimes (e.g., under high arousal) perform a check on the cue and use it if it is found to be diagnostic in the decision-making context (Pham, 1996).

The critical question addressed by persuasion research that is most relevant to consumer behavior concerns whether a less thorough and effortful process or a more thorough and effortful process will be used to process the message and the consequences of such processing. Consequences such as attitude persistence and resistance to future persuasion are especially meaningful in a consumer behavior context given the competitive nature of the marketplace. Because this volume contains excellent reviews of these theoretical issues, we concentrate on the application of these ideas to consumer and marketing settings. In essence, we concentrate on variables that determine the kind and level of processing an incoming communication will receive. These particularly relevant set of antecedents and their consequences are the focus of our review.

Antecedents of Message Processing

Clearly consumers face many decisions, some important ("which car to buy"), some truly trivial ("how would you like that burger?"). In some areas they may be more able to process information than others. But how do we measure and conceptualize motivation and ability, two important antecedents of our reactions to persuasive messages? Most research has organized around two themes: what message characteristics lead to more elaboration, and what person characteristics engender elaboration?

Message Characteristics

There is a long list of message characteristics that influence processing. For example, Ahluwalia and Burnkrant (2004) have examined the role of rhetorical questions on elaboration. Priester, Godek, Nayakankuppum, and Park (2004) have shown conditions under which comparative advertising (ads that compare one product to another) can lead to elaboration. The effect of message framing, emphasizing the product's advantages or the competing product's disadvantages, interacts with the amount of elaboration (Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran, 2004). Advertisements can mention the country of origin of a product, and Gurhan-Canli and Maheswaran (2000a) have examined how these effects might differ across different cultures. Similarly these authors (Gurhan-Canli & Maheswaran, 2000b) have examined how country of origin for products may change the consumer's motivation to process.

Person Characteristics

Among other factors that have been hypothesized to affect motivation to process and elaboration are a person's commitment to prior positions (Ahluwalia, 2000), involvement in the brand or product category (Johar, 1995), and his or her cognitive capacity (Johar & Simmons, 2000). Relating the communication to one's self can increase elaboration (Burnkrant & Unnava, 1995), but such effects are moderated by other variables that increase elaboration. Maheswaran and Sternthal (1990) examine the role of both knowledge and message type in the type of processing performed by a consumer.

Other person characteristic research examines how persuasive messages may be processed differently by those who are bilinguals (Luna & Peracchio, 2001), and gender differences appear to exist in processing strategies (Meyers-Levy, 1988; Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran, 1991). Given the evidence of individual differences, one might wonder whether standard dual-process theories generalize across cultures. However, an alternative perspective is that the theory itself may well be predictive but there may be differences in the perceptions of consumers about the inputs to the process. Most research suggests that dual-process models of persuasion are robust, once differences in perceptions are included. For example, Aaker and Maheswaran (1997) showed that advertising appeals that are compatible with the self-constructs (e.g., independent vs. interdependent) that are chronically accessible in a given culture are more effective. Advertising may also be effective if it reflects self-constructs that are made temporarily accessible via priming, as long as consumers have low levels of commitment to the brand (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005).

Message and Person Factors

A combination of person and message characteristics, such as the fit between the message and the current orientation of the consumer, can also influence persuasion: increasing persuasion when message recipients have positive thoughts about a message and decreasing persuasion when they have negative thoughts (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004). Appeals that urge consumers to imagine the product experience can similarly increase persuasion when consumers are high on imagery ability but can decrease persuasion when consumers are low on imagery ability (Petrova & Cialdini, 2005).

Competitive Effects

One situation that marks advertising as a unique environment for persuasion is the vast quantity of messages and the low level of attention in which exposure occurs. Researchers have suggested that these ingredients may lead

to circumstances in which ads will interfere with one another, leading to reduced recall for the entire product class. Nice empirical demonstrations of these effects (Burke & Srull, 1988) have shown that it is not just the number of ads but the share of advertising for a product that increases recall. Keller (1987) provides demonstrations that unique elements of advertising can be used to generate recall of ad content at the point of purchase. Under some conditions, however, such interference in memory can be helpful to some brand (Jewell & Unnava, 2003) by making some brands *relatively* easier to recall. Meyvis and Janiszewski (2004) examine the role of competitive interference in brand extending brand names to new products.

Consequences of Message Processing

Persuasion research in consumer behavior has typically examined effects of message processing on attitude valence and extremity. More recent research examining the role of consumers' goals has shown that messages may be selectively processed in the service of ego-defensive and impression-management goals (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; Ahluwalia, 2002; Jain & Maheswaran, 2000; Sengupta & Johar, 2001). Focus on motivated processing has resulted in the study of elaboration quality as a consequence of processing, rather than simply the amount or quantity of processing emphasized by early versions of the dual-process models.

Attitude Strength: Attitude–Behavior Correspondence

Sengupta and Johar (2002) showed that consumers who have the goal of forming an integrated attitude at the time of exposure to inconsistent information form strong attitudes that are predictive of later product choices. On the other hand, the goal of minimizing later embarrassment decreases attitude strength in terms of attitude-choice correspondence by increasing attitudinal ambivalence. Importantly, both goals result in the same high amount of elaboration; only elaboration quality differs.

Outcomes such as attitudinal ambivalence are important because they can in turn guide future information processing. For example, Zemborain and Johar (in press) found that consumers with ambivalent attitudes tend to be more susceptible to interpersonal influence (even from potentially unreliable sources) than less ambivalent consumers. This finding is particularly relevant given the plethora of information regarding others' opinion and attitudes that consumers have access to in today's marketing environment. The variety of recommendations and gratuitous advice on the Internet is just one example.

Attitude Persistence and Resistance

Other aspects of attitude include how long-lasting the attitude is and how resistant it is to future attack (Sengupta, Goodstein, & Boninger, 1997). These aspects are particularly relevant in the competitive marketing environment where devices such as comparative advertising are used to change consumers' attitudes positively toward the advertised brand and negatively toward the comparison brand. For example, Ahluwalia (2002) demonstrated that negative information about a brand has less impact on consumers committed to that brand than others. Sengupta and Fitzsimmons (2004) found that thinking about reasons why a consumer likes or dislikes a brand does not necessarily disrupt the formation of attitudes and reduce attitude persistence and predictive power, as has been suggested in the past. Instead, attitudes formed by a reasons analysis can be strong in the sense of being persistent if the cues underlying attitude formation are also present at a later point in time.

Summary

One observation that can be made about the consumer literature on persuasion is that it is theoretically quite sophisticated, with most studies typically showing interactions between the variables of interest and their combined impact on attitude extremity as well as strength. A shared theoretical framework has allowed researchers to produce predictions that are highly interactive in nature, suggesting that multiple factors *must* be taken into account to understand the effectiveness of a persuasive marketing communication. However, from a manager's perspective, this complexity may be a bit daunting. Research in this area seldom generates simple advice and suggests instead that answers will depend on the interaction of message, person and competitive factors.

Another observation concerns the separation of work in persuasion and decision making. Interestingly, these two established research areas in consumer research have not been tightly integrated. As much as the decision making and attitudinal literatures have remained apart in social psychology, so have they in consumer research. There are some exceptions (Priester, Nayakankuppam, Fleming, & Godek, 2004), but this separation in an applied field such as consumer research is unfortunate.

AFFECT

Research on affect and consumer behavior has grown dramatically. A search of the ISI Web of Knowledge (a social science database) for the terms "consumer" and "affect" returned 136 articles for the 1985–1994 period and 841 articles for the 1995–2004 period. This interest in affect, of course, parallels the one observed in social psychology. It also reflects the fact that marketing and consumption stimuli (e.g., products, services, and TV commercials) are often emotionally rich. For example, over half of the advertisements appearing on American television contain no facts at all about the product advertised (Resnik & Stern, 1977). Advertisers instead often rely on emotionally arousing cues (attractive models, pleasant music, powerful imagery, etc.). Not surprisingly, consumers' descriptions of their consumption experiences often reveal a substantial degree of emotional richness (Derbaix & Pham, 1991; Havlena & Holbrook, 1986; Richins, 1997).

Types of Affect

It is useful to distinguish among three types of affect in consumer judgment and decision making: integral affect, incidental affect, and task affect (Bodenhausen, 1993; Cohen, Pham, & Andrade, in press). *Integral affect* refers to affective responses that are directly linked to the object of judgment or decision. These include momentary feelings experienced through direct exposure to the object itself (e.g., the pleasant feeling of tasting a fine wine) and those experienced in response to some representation of the object–representation that may be externally provided (e.g., viewing a TV commercial for a product) or internally generated (e.g., thinking about a product). *Incidental affect* refers to affective experiences whose source is clearly unrelated to the object to be evaluated. These include mood states, emotional dispositions (e.g., chronic anxiety or depression), and contextual stimuli that are affect eliciting (e.g., background music and pleasant scent). Finally, *task affect* refers to affective responses that are elicited by the judgment or decision task itself. For example, a choice between two integrally pleasant alternatives, such as two attractive vacation destinations, may generate negative task affect because one of the options must be forgone.

Integral Affect

INTEGRAL AFFECT INFLUENCES JUDGMENT AND BEHAVIOR

A major theme of research in social psychology has been that integral affective responses to various objects (e.g., people, issues, and messages) predict judgment, choice, and behavior toward these objects over and above more descriptive ("cognitive") bases of judgments such as beliefs, stereotypes, base rates, prior attitudes, and so on (e.g., Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1982; Breckler & Wiggins, 1989). In marketing and consumer research, this theme was pursued most extensively in the advertising domain. A large number of studies have documented that affective responses to advertisements have direct effects on consumers' attitudes toward the ad (A_{ad}) and at least indirect effects on consumers' attitudes toward the brand (A_b) through the effects on A_{ad} (e.g., Aaker, Stayman, & Hagerty, 1986; Brown, Homer, & Inman, 1998; Edell & Burke, 1987; Holbrook & Batra, 1987). Some studies suggest that integral affective responses to the ad may also influence A_b directly, independently of A_{ad} (Burke & Edell, 1989; Derbaix, 1995; Stayman & Aaker, 1988).

Conceptually related results have been obtained in a variety of other consumption domains. For instance, Bodur, Brinberg, and Coupey (2000) found that affect toward various AIDS prevention behaviors such as abstinence or condom usage predicted attitudes and intentions toward these behaviors over and above personal beliefs about these behaviors. Similarly, MacGregor, Slovic, Dreman, and Berry (2000) found that investment banking students' feelings toward various industry sectors (e.g., electronics and managed health care) were strongly predictive of their intentions to invest in these sectors, independent of the sectors' financial fundamentals. Integral affective responses have also been found to have direct effects on product satisfaction (Oliver, 1993), blood donation behavior (Allen, Machleit, & Kleine, 1992), and pricing of gambles (Peters, Slovic, & Gregory, 2003).

Two main explanations have been proposed for these direct effects of integral affect. The first is simple evaluative conditioning (De Houwer, Thomas, & Baeyens, 2001). A close proximity between a target and an integral feeling experience may result in the evaluative meaning of the feelings (mostly their valence) being carried over to the target–a mechanism sometimes called "affect transfer" in consumer research and marketing (e.g., Mackenzie, 1986). The second mechanism is an affect-as-information process (Schwarz & Clore, 1983, 1996). A number of studies (Pham, 1998; Pham, Cohen, Pracejus, & Hughes, 2001) indicate that consumers often evaluate objects by monitoring and interpreting their integral feeling responses to these objects, a process known as the "how-do-I-feel-about-it?" heuristic (Schwarz & Clore, 1988). Regardless of the actual explanation, there is substantial evidence that integral affect has a marked influence on judgments and decisions (see also Finucane, Alhakami, Slovic, & Johnson, 2000). For example, the mere fact of being lightly touched on the arm by a waiter or waitress in a restaurant results in dramatic increases in tipping and restaurant satisfaction, presumably because being touched makes the patron feel good toward the waiter or waitress and restaurant (Hornik, 1992).

AFFECT-BASED JUDGMENTS ARE DIFFERENT

Judgments based on integral affect seem to differ from judgments based on descriptive inputs in systematic ways. Because integral affective responses often arise quickly (LeDoux, 1996; Zajonc, 1980), can enter evaluations through simple associations, and usually have unambiguous interpretations (Strack, 1992), judgment and decisions based on integral affect tend to be reached more rapidly, whether online (Pham et al., 2001) or memory based (Verplanken, Hofstee, & Janssen, 1998). Similarly, because affect-based judgments and decisions seem to require less processing resources, consumers tend to rely on integral affect more when their processing resources are constrained (Pham et al., 2001). For example, when given a choice between a tempting piece of chocolate cake (an affectively attractive option) and a healthier fruit salad (a "cognitively" attractive option), consumers whose cognitive resources were not constrained tended to choose the healthier fruit salad. However, when cognitive resources were constrained, consumers tended to choose the more tempting cake, presumably because affective drivers of preference still operated while the more cognitive drivers could not (Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999).

Judgments and decisions based on integral affect also seem to be myopic in that immediate affective rewards and punishments are weighted much more heavily, compared to delayed affective consequences (see Loewenstein, 1996). This property is very obvious in impulse control situations where people have to trade off

the immediate hedonic consequences of an option (e.g., the pleasure of eating junk food or the pain of visiting the dentist) against its long-term consequences (e.g., high cholesterol and obesity; healthy teeth and gums). According to Loewenstein (1996), the myopia of affect-based judgments and decisions is caused by the differential accessibility of current and delayed affective states. Whereas the experience of immediate integral affect has strong drive properties, it is very difficult to vividly picture future affective states. Consistent with this proposition, recent brain-imaging studies indicate that preferences for immediate rewards are associated with greater activation in parts of the limbic system associated with affect (McClure, Laibson, Loewenstein, & Cohen, 2004).

Contrary to popular beliefs that affect is highly subjective, a growing body of evidence suggests that affective judgments are, in fact, quite consensual, sometimes even more so than cognitive judgments. For instance, it has been found that consumers are more likely to agree on their affective responses to various stimuli (e.g., magazine pictures and television commercials) than they are to agree on their reason-based assessments of the same stimuli (Pham et al., 2001). According to Pham and colleagues (2001), affect-based judgments will be highly consensual whenever they are based on hardwired programs involved in bioregulation or emotional schemas acquired through socialization. The inherent consensuality of affective responses explains why juries can agree strongly on how outraged they feel in response to legal cases even when they disagree widely on the amount of punitive damages they are willing to award (Kahneman, Schkade, & Sunstein, 1998).

Affect-based judgments and decision also seem to be insensitive to quantity. In an interesting study, Hsee and Rottenstreich (2004) manipulated the number of pandas that might be saved by donations to a rescue effort and how this number was represented. In one condition, the number of saved pandas was simply represented by one or four dots; in the other, it was represented by one or four cute pictures of pandas. As predicted, respondents' donations were much more sensitive to the number of pandas saved in the affect-poor (dot) condition than in the affect-rich (picture) condition. In a similar vein, it has been observed that affect-based evaluations are insensitive to probabilities (Loewenstein, Weber, Hsee, & Welch, 2001). For example, it was found that people were willing to pay much more to avoid a high probability of losing a certain amount of money than to avoid a low probability of losing the same amount, consistent with economic theory. However, people were *not* willing to pay much more to avoid a high probability of receiving an electric shock (a prospect rich in negative affect) than to avoid a low probability of receiving the same shock (Rottenstreich & Hsee, 2001).

A final property of evaluations and decisions based on integral affect is that they tend to have a *high degree of internal coherence* (Pham, 2004). This is because integral affective responses to a target, which are often immediate and highly accessible, usually trigger a confirmatory search for information that supports or helps explain the initial feelings (Pham et al., 2001; Yeung & Wyer, 2004). This confirmatory search results in a strong correlation between the immediate affective response elicited by a target and the spontaneous thoughts that people associate with the target.

Incidental Affect

As in social psychology (e.g., Isen, Shalker, Clark, & Karp, 1978; Johnson & Tversky, 1983), numerous consumer research and marketing studies have shown that mood states and other forms of incidental affect generally have assimilative (affect-congruent) influences on evaluations, decisions, and behaviors (e.g., Adaval, 2001; Fedorikhin & Cole, 2004; Gorn, Goldberg, & Basu, 1993; Miniard, Bhatla, & Sirdeshmukh, 1992; Pham, 1998; Yi, 1990a). In fact, some of the earliest demonstrations of this phenomenon appeared in marketing. For example, Axelrod (1963) found that consumers who had viewed a depressing television documentary gave more negative evaluations to a variety of products than they had prior to seeing the documentary. Similarly, Dommermuth and Millard (1967) showed that viewing a pleasant or unpleasant movie later produced product ratings that were consistent with the mood induced by the film.

Consumer and marketing researchers have been particularly interested in studying marketplace implications of this phenomenon. There has been significant interest in assessing how consumers' responses to advertisements are influenced by the affective tone of the media context in which the ads appear (e.g., TV programs or magazines). It is generally found that incidental affect elicited by the media context has a congruent influence on evaluations of the ad but less influence on evaluations of the advertised brand (e.g., Goldberg & Gorn, 1987; Mathur & Chattopadhyay, 1991; Murry & Dacin, 1996). It has also been found that gift wrapping can enhance the recipient's evaluation of the gift by elevating the recipient's mood (Howard, 1992). Even browsing a series of attractive products may elevate a consumer's mood, which may become assimilated into subsequent evaluations (Raghunathan & Irwin, 2001). It has also been found that if a product that consumers find disgusting (e.g., hygienic napkins) incidentally touches another product in a shopping cart, consumers' attitudes toward the latter product become more unfavorable, even if the products are in their original, unopened packages with no real chance of physical contamination (Morales & Fitzsimons, in press).

The explanations offered for these assimilative effects of incidental affect are essentially the same as those offered to explain the direct effects of integral affect: evaluative conditioning (Gorn, 1982) and reliance on the "how-do-I-feel-about-it?" heuristic. Pham (1998) proposed that the "how-do-I-feel-about-it?" heuristic is a widely used decision strategy among consumers. His findings indicate that this strategy is more likely to be used when the consumers have experiential (hedonic) motives than when they have instrumental (utilitarian) motives. It is also more prevalent among consumers who favor a visual or sensory style of processing as opposed to a more verbal or propositional style. Pham and Avnet

(2004) observed that reliance on the "how-do-I-feel-about-it?" heuristic appears to be greater when consumers are under regulatory states of promotion focus as opposed to states of prevention focus (Higgins, 1997). Other studies suggest that incidental-affect-congruent evaluations are more likely when the target is evaluatived as ambiguous and does not elicit strong integral affect (Miniard et al., 1992).

Because affective states are characterized not only by their valence but also by their arousal, consumer researchers have also examined the effects of incidental arousal on evaluations and decisions. When valence and emotional content are held constant, intense incidental arousal seems to increase risk seeking in decision making (Leith & Baumeister, 1996; Mano, 1992, 1994). Intense incidental arousal also increases consumers' reliance on diagnostic information in evaluations (Pham, 1996). Milder residual arousal has been found to interact with the integral affective tone of advertisements to amplify evaluations of these ads (Gorn, Pham, & Sin, 2001), a finding consistent with the excitation transfer hypothesis (Zillmann, 1971). It has also been found that consumers' states of relaxation versus activation are very sensitive to various retail environmental factors, which can then influence their judgments and behaviors. For example, fast-paced background music in a supermarket was found to increase in-store traffic flow and sales volumes compared to slow-paced music or no music, presumably because the fast-paced music increases the shopper's level of activation (Milliman, 1982). On the other hand, *slower*-paced music in a restaurant increased the amount of time patrons spent at the dinner table and how much they ordered from the bar, presumably because slower-paced music induces feelings of relaxation (Milliman, 1986). It has also been found that the use of blue colors in Web pages produces feelings of relaxation that decrease perceived download time, whereas the use of red colors produces feelings of tension that increase perceived download time (Gorn, Chattopadhyay, Sengupta, & Tripathi, 2004).

A recent theme both in consumer research and in social psychology has been to examine the differential effects of specific incidental emotions (e.g., Raghunathan & Pham, 1999; Tiedens & Linton, 2001). Raghunathan and Pham (1999) found that, in choices between high-risk/high-reward and low-risk/low-reward options, sad individuals consistently favor the former, whereas anxious individuals consistently favor the latter. This is presumably because, even though their states are incidental, sad individuals tend to infer that they have lost something of value (a typical cause of sadness), which activates a goal of reward acquisition that shifts preferences toward high-reward options. In contrast, anxious individuals tend to infer that the situation is uncertain and beyond control (typical causes of anxiety), which activates a goal of risk avoidance that shifts preferences toward low-risk options. Similarly, Lerner, Small, and Loewenstein (2004) found that incidental states of sadness amplify the endowment effect—the tendency to overvalue one's possessions—whereas incidental states of disgust attenuate this effect. This is presumably because sadness, even if incidental, triggers an impulse to hold on to sources of rewards, whereas disgust triggers an impulse to expulse sources of discomfort. Raghunathan, Pham, and Corfman (2006) recently showed that the effects of specific incidental emotions are more pronounced if there is a surface similarity between the true source of the incidental emotion and the target decision—a phenomenon they call displaced coping. Finally, Mukhopadhyay and Johar (in press) found that feelings of pride or happiness engendered by recent shopping history (i.e., giving in vs. restraining from temptations) carry over to influence the effectiveness of advertising appeals viewed subsequently so that pride (happiness) appeals are more effective after restraint (giving in).

Task-Related Affect

Finally, the process of making a decision may itself induce affect. For example, difficult choices are often those that involve trade-offs on important attributes (Bettman, Johnson, Luce, & Payne, 1993), such as deciding how much quality to surrender in order to save money. One means of minimizing such negative affects is to maintain the status quo and not make an active choice (Luce, 1998; Nowlis, Kahn, & Dhar, 2002). Although one might expect consumers to work harder when faced with difficult choices, they instead seem to shift to simplifying choice heuristics that minimize task-related negative affect (Luce, Bettman, & Payne, 1997). Similar effects have been observed for another aspect of decision tasks that can generate negative affect: time pressure (Dhar & Nowlis, 1999; Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1988). It has also been found that the more consumers deliberate about their choices, the more they become emotionally attached to the options, which leads to decision-related discomfort once one option has been chosen (Carmon, Wertenbroch, & Zeelenberg, 2003).

A particularly important outcome of a task-related affect is the transfer of that affect to the valuation of the alternative chosen. Garbarino and Edell (1997) demonstrate that reducing the effort involved in selecting an alternative can increase the price respondents are willing to pay for that option. Similarly, Higgins and colleagues have shown that a fit between the manner in which a decision is made and the current orientation of a decision maker can produce positive task-induced feelings that increase the perceived value for a chosen object (Avnet & Higgins, 2003; Higgins, 2000; Higgins, Idson, Freitas, Spiegel, & Molden, 2003).

IMPLICIT P. OCESSES

For decades, researchers have, almost by force of habit, asked participants whether they were aware of a given manipulation in an experiment. The lack of awareness of the manipulation was prima facie evidence that demand characteristics did not operate. More recently, questions surrounding consumers' awareness of the causes of their behavior have generated significant controversy and interest in consumer research.

Before proceeding, we need to clarify the meaning of "implicit processes," a term that is borrowed, at least in part, from memory research (Fazio & Olson, 2003). As our opening example suggests, one important characteristic attributed to implicit processes is a lack of awareness (Bargh, 2002), but the exact definition of awareness can be more complicated (Chartrand, 2005). Does awareness mean that a respondent is aware of the possibility that some factor may influence someone's behavior in some task, or does it require a respondent to know the exact influence in that task? A second characteristic associated with implicit processes is automaticity: requiring less effort or intentionality (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). However, while automaticity is well defined in the cognitive literature (Shiffrin & Schneider, 1977), most studies in consumer behavior tend to assess this property more casually.

Priming

Priming is one of the earliest areas of consumer research to exploit the idea of implicit processes—an area that has received considerable attention from social psychologists (for a review, see Higgins, 1996). A particularly innovative study by Nedungadi (1990) manipulated the accessibility of brand names in memory and established an increased likelihood of choice, even when these effects were outside the awareness of the respondent. Herr (1989) showed that priming a category can change choices, while Yi (1990b) demonstrated that the priming of a product feature can increase the weight given to that feature.

Priming cultural knowledge has also been shown to affect choices. Mandel (2003) primed either independent or dependent identities by having Americans read a very simple description of others' motives changed by both hypothetical and actual purchases. Chen, Ng, and Rao (2005) demonstrated that priming one of two cultural identities in bicultural Singaporeans had a significant affect on their preference for accelerated consumption, which the authors attribute to cultural difference in regulatory focus. Johar, Moreau, and Schwarz (2003) used advertisements to prime cultural stereotypes of women as homemakers and found that these ads lead to stereotypical judgments of women encountered in a subsequent "study." Priming either cultural identity (Forehand & Deshpande, 2001) or particular goals (Strahan, Spencer, & Zanna, 2002) can also have an effect on the processing of subsequent persuasive communication. Even the presence of familiar objects can serve as a prime. Shrum, Wyer, and O'Guinn (1998) demonstrated that the mere presence of a television can prime beliefs that are consistent with most television content, such as increased perceptions of violence and crime.

Two studies demonstrated how priming can affect consumer behavior in actual consumption settings (North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick, 1997, 1999). The authors manipulated the background music in a store selling both German and French wine, predicting that pleasant music from the country of origin would increase sales of that country's products. Not only did this occur, but the background music accounted for about a quarter of the variance in choice between the two products. Similarly, Mandel and Johnson (2002) manipulated the background of a website, or wallpaper, using embedded designs shown to prime either quality attributes (safety for cars, comfort for couches) or price. They found marked differences in choice between the two products, cars and couches consistent with the prime, and that the prime affected both novices and experts in the product class, although through different mechanisms. In both studies, respondents specifically denied being influenced by the manipulation.

Mere Measurement

One application from social psychology that serves as an interesting case is the mere measurement effect. Using ideas from the social literature on the self-fulfilling nature of prediction errors (Greenwald, 1987; Sherman, 1980), Morwitz, Johnson, and Schmittlein (1993) hypothesized that merely asking questions about future behaviors could, in fact, change those behaviors. They examined data from two large commercial market research surveys and found that the mere asking of an intent question, such as "Do you intend to buy a personal computer in the next six months?" actually influenced purchases. Both those who answered yes and no behaved in ways that were more consistent with the request than groups that had not been asked. Subsequently, such effects have been shown to increase repurchases of one's current brand of car (Fitzsimons & Morwitz, 1996), and to accelerate purchases of supermarket goods for up to 3 months (Chandon, Morwitz, & Reinartz, 2004). In financial services, Dholika and Morwitz (2002) demonstrated the effect lasts up to a year when the question is asked as part of a consumer satisfaction survey. A similar effect has been shown in blood donation (Godin, Conner, Sheeran, & Germain, 2005) and can be shown to occur with mass communication requests (Spangenberg, Sprott, Grohmann, & Smith, 2003). Current explanations for these kinds of effects indicate that a general-intent question makes attitudes about specific items in the category more accessible (Morwitz & Fitzsimons, 2004), although some argue for a role of dissonance reduction (Spangenberg et al., 2003). However, because these effects last many months and occur without consumer awareness, they are unlikely to result from conscious processing of the question and its effect.

What makes this interesting as an implicit process is whether or not people are aware of the effect. Williams, Fitzsimons, and Block (2004) show that awareness of the persuasive nature of these effects can limit their effectiveness, but in experimental studies, it appears that such awareness is rare (Fitzsimons & Shiv, 2001). Thus, a particularly subtle interaction, occurring frequently as part of a market survey research encounter, seems to be able to have long-term behavioral consequences, which for the most part are unforeseen by both consumer and marketer.

Theoretical and Empirical Issues

One element of work in implicit processes has only started to impact consumer research—the idea of automatic goal activation. From a theoretical perspective, a study by Brendl, Markman, and Messner (2003) demonstrates an important point. In that study, the authors show that activating one need (e.g., the need to smoke) serves to lower the value of other objects, even when those objects are fungible, such as cash, and can be used to fulfill that need. The exact nature of goals, procedures for measuring their strength, and the relationships between goals will be an important item on the agenda for research into implicit processes (see Janiszewski & van Osselaer, 2005).

As a practical issue, in an applied area such as consumer research, much work in measurement and validation remains. Examination of the applicability of techniques such as the Implicit Attitude Test (Brunel, Tietje, & Greenwald, 2004; Maison, Greenwald, & Bruin, 2004) have started, but much more work needs to be done (Fazio & Olson, 2003).

An active, lively debate concerning the relative role of conscious and unconscious processes in consumer choice continues (see Dijksterhuis, Smith, van Baaren, & Wigboldus, 2005; Simonson, 2005, and other articles in this issue for examples).

Awareness and Subliminal Effects Reloaded

In 1980, a review of subliminal effects published in the *Journal of Marketing* (Moore, 1982) concluded, "The idea that subliminal directives can affect motives or actions is contradicted by much research and is incompatible with theoretical conceptions of perception and motivation. . . ." (p. 46). Has the research we have reviewed in this section done much to change this conclusion? Clearly, the focus has changed. The question no longer is whether stimuli are perceived or not but, rather, whether the effects of such stimuli, whether subliminal or supraliminal, are known to consumers. Awareness of the manipulations and a correct mental model of their effects seem necessary for any attempt by consumers to counteract their effects. As an applied area of research, questions do arise about the robustness and size of these effects, which, if answered, have implications for public policy and the ethics of marketing practice. Most important, a strong theoretical framework consistent with "conceptions of perception and motivation" would be useful.

CONCLUSION

Our goal in writing this chapter was to convince the reader that work in consumer behavior and marketing should be of great interest to social psychologists. In closing, it is then potentially helpful to outline some of the reasons social psychologists should be interested. The movement toward social cognition was motivated, in part, by the feeling that the same cognitive system that categorized, learned about, and navigated the physical world also operated in the social world. Similarly, the same systems are involved in the world of transactions, goods, and services. Just as social cognition research hoped to be more than just a source of interesting examples and applications of cognitive concepts, consumer behavior and marketing should be more than a source of interesting examples of social psychological concepts. This realm should be, more fundamentally, a source of new ideas, concepts, and data. Much of what we have reviewed is research that, so far, has not been central to discussions in social psychology, but that, to us at least, seems to be quite relevant. It is our hope that this chapter will serve to change the picture in Figure 38.1 to one in which ideas flow more freely in both directions.

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NOTE

1. While these data are from 2004, the picture would be similar for other recent years. Similarly, the inclusion of a more complete list of consumer research journals particularly the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, or a more complete list of psychology journals, would only serve to make the same point.

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