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TESTING THE BOUNDARY FOR SEQUENTIAL MITIGATION EFFECT USING AN INTERNATIONAL SAMPLE: AN INDIVIDUAL DIFERENCE IN SELF-MONITORING

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ABSTRACT

An experiment was conducted using an international sample to test the boundary for sequential mitigation effect (SME; Dholakia, Gopinath, and Bogozzi, 2005). The results from a sample of consumers in the Middle East established that SME worked in a different way for high and low self-monitoring individuals. That is, low self-monitors (compared to high self-monitors) had less desire to behave impulsively in a second impulsive choice following days of having engaged in the first impulsive choice. Also, the findings indicated that the SME boundary is robust across impulsive choices that are socially desirable (donation) and socially undesirable (purchase). Practical implications and directions for future research are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The main goal of the current research is to examine the boundary for sequential impulsive purchases on consumers' purchase intentions. Dholakia, Gopinath, and Bogozzi (2005) have found that impulse purchases decline when individuals engage in prior impulsive behaviors, which they referred to as sequential mitigation effect (SME). These researchers argue that "decision makers will become less likely to choose an impulsive option on account of having participated in a prior impulsive choice task" (Dholakia et al., 2005, p 180). They claim that the desire for impulsive options is a limited motivational resource and individuals may consume it after engaging in prior impulsive purchases, which accounts for the drop in sequential impulsive purchases. Given these researchers' findings, the current research contributes to the impulse buying literature by introducing a factor that may put a boundary for SME. In the current research, the author argues that SME works in a different way for low and high self-monitoring individuals. Also, the current research is different from Dholakia's et al. (2005) research in three-folds. First, this paper utilizes an international sample to expand on and test for the SME effect. Second, unlike Dholakia et al. (2005), the author of the current research examines the effect of SME over a longer period of time (days compared to minutes) in order to determine whether SME can be sustained after a longer time gap between two sequential tasks. Third, the author examines SME across different impulsive tasks to show the robustness of SME. In

particular, some materialistic tasks such as impulsive purchases (versus impulsive donation) may be viewed by some people as socially undesirable behaviors and thus these people will more likely avoid these tasks to maintain their image in society. Therefore, it is important to understand the boundary for SME and whether it works under different levels of impulsive tasks that are viewed positively or negatively by society.

From a managerial and practical standpoint, impulsive purchases have been estimated to account for more than \$4 billion in retail store sales (Dolliver, 1998; Mogelonsky, 1998). Retailers are continually trying to increase the number of impulsive purchases in stores through product displays and store and package designs (Hoyer and MacInnis, 1997; Jones et al., 2003). In addition, contemporary marketing innovations expand impulsive buying opportunities (Kacen and Lee, 2002) and repeated impulsive purchases. Hence, knowing whether SME will influence repeated-impulsive situations is vital to firms' revenues. In addition, most consumer behavior or decision-making is based on repeated decisions (Bagozzi, 1981; Betsch, Fiedler, and Brinkmann, 1998; Betsch et al., 2001; Betsch and Haberstroh, 2005; Bentler and Speckart, 1979; Norman and Smith, 1995; Verplanken, Aarts, and van Knippenberg, 1997). In these repeated buying situations, previous decisions can systematically influence later ones. By knowing the boundary for SME, managers can easily influence consumers' impulsive decisions. However, there is a gap in the literature as to how the influence of SME operates in making subsequent decisions. To fill this gap, this research will investigate the impact of previous impulsive decisions on subsequent ones and whether this impact is qualified by the individual difference in self-monitoring.

IMPULSE BUYING

In general, impulsive behaviors have been a target of philosophical discussion for many years. Specifically, extensive research on impulse buying behaviors began in the early 1950s and focused on investigating those purchase decisions that are made after the consumer enters a retail environment (Rook, 1987). Stern (1962) provides the foundation for defining impulse buying behavior, which classifies it as planned, unplanned, or impulse. Based on this classification, planned buying behavior involves a time-consuming information search followed by rational decision making (Piron, 1991; Stern, 1962). Whereas, unplanned buying refers to all purchases made without such advance planning and includes impulse buying.

Although impulsive behaviors can occur in any setting, consumer impulse buying, in particular, is an extensive everyday context for it. Rook (1987, p. 191) defines consumer impulse buying as "a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. Also, impulse buying is prone to occur with diminished regard for its consequences." In the same vein, Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) explain the impulse buying as a struggle between the psychological forces of desires and willpower. An impulse buying as described by Rook (1987) tends to disrupt the consumer's routine behavior and is more emotional than rational.

In a different vein, impulse buying is more likely to be perceived as "bad" than "good" (e.g., in the areas of personal finance, post-purchase satisfaction, social reaction, or overall self-esteem) (Rook, 1987; Rook and Hoch, 1985). In addition, consumers are more likely to feel out-of-control when buying impulsively than when making thoughtful purchases (Rook, 1987). Yet, it is possible to imagine situations in which impulse buying would be viewed as normatively neutral or even positively legitimate behavior (e.g., donating money, spontaneous gift of an ill person, taking advantage of a two-for-one in-store special, or a sudden decision to pick up the tab for a meal) (Rook and Fisher, 1995).

Beginning in the 1990s, researchers began taking a deeper look inside the consumers, especially in terms of whether his or her spending behavior was dictated by mood or generalized willpower. Among these studies, there is one recent stream of research that seems to be promising for understanding the causes of impulse buying. This stream of research examines the relationship between impulse buying and depletion of self resources. According to Hoch and Loewenstein (1991), consumer decisions represent an ever-shifting conflict between desire and willpower. That is, when the desire for a product surpasses consumers' intentions not to make the purchase, impulse buying can occur. For the most part, this view emphasizes the two separate mechanisms involved in impulsive spending: (1) the desire to buy and (2) the ability to exercise self-control over this urge (Vohs and Faber, 2007).

Similar to the previous stream of research, Dholakia et al. (2005) claims that the desire to engage in impulsive behaviors may be caused by individuals' consumption of motivational resources. Once these motivational resources are left unconsumed, individuals will feel the urge to engage in impulsive purchases. However, by the time these resources are consumed or depleted in the first impulsive choice, individuals will feel less motivated to engage in impulsive purchases in later tasks. With respect to Dholakia's et al. research, in the current research the author argues that SME works differently for high and low self-monitoring individuals. Also, supporting Dholakia's et al. findings, the author argues that SME still applies for sequential impulsive choices that are separated by a time gap; although, the author believes that SME can sustain a longer time gap (i.e., days compared to minutes) and is limited to low self-monitors. That is, the author believes that low self-monitors have less desire (compared to high self-monitors) to behave impulsively in the second choice following days of having engaged in the first impulsive choice, which is due to the depletion of their motivational resources.

SELF-MONITORING AND SME

Among the various personality traits that have been associated with marketplace behaviors, self-monitoring has attracted particular attention from marketing researchers (Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997). Self-monitoring is the tendency to notice cues for socially appropriate behaviors and modify one's behavior accordingly (Snyder, 1974). Snyder (1987) has argued that self-monitoring influences consumer behavior because it is linked with consumers' interest in

leaving a positive impression that convey an image of the self to other people. This interest make high self-monitor appear to be different people in different situations (Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997).

If high self-monitors emphasize leaving positive impressions, one might ask what relationship self-monitoring has to being an impulse buyer. Impulse buying is a behavior which the literature and consumers both state is normatively wrong (Hausman, 2000; Bellenger et al., 1978; Cobb and Hoyer, 1986; Han et al., 1991; Kollat and Willet, 1967; Rook and Fisher, 1995; Weinberg and Gottwald, 1982). These negative evaluations of impulse buying behaviors originate from psychological studies of impulsiveness that characterize impulse behaviors as signs of immaturity and lacking of behavioral control (Levy, 1976; Solnick et al., 1980; Vohs and Faber, 2007) or as irrational, risky, and wasteful (Ainslie, 1975; Levy, 1976; Rook and Fisher, 1995; Solnick, et al. 1980). Sharma, Sivakurmaran, and Marshal (2010) found that self-monitoring has a negative association with impulse buying. This personality trait leads low and high self-monitors to show different behaviors in various consumer behavior contexts, including impulsive behavior contexts. For instance, high self-monitors may have a desire to appear rational when they feel that their decisions may come under scrutiny by others (Lerner and Tetlock, 1999; Sharma et al., 2010). Since impulse buying is sometimes being perceived by society as normatively wrong, which results in post-purchase negative affect, guilt, and unfavorable evaluation of purchase decision (Dittmar and Drury, 2000; Rook, 1987; Trocchia and Swinder, 2002), high self-monitors might be less likely to give in to their impulses (Sharma et al., 2010). Also, high self-monitors may have greater motivation compared to low self-monitors to control their impulses simply because they want to appear rational (Luo, 2005).

Although tendencies to be either a high or low self-monitor have been related to attention to many marketing activities including materialism and impulse buying, in the current research the author argues that this personality trait may explain the boundary for SME. In their research, Dholakia et al. (2005) believe that the desire for impulsive options is a limited motivational resource of the decision maker. Meaning, participation in a prior impulsive task consumes this motivational resource, which results in its depletion. Therefore, individuals may experience less desire for impulsive options in the subsequent choice. Thus, in the current research, the author believes that SME works for low self-monitors, but not high self-monitors. For one thing, since high self-monitoring individuals care more about their external image and less about their personal value systems, they may not use up their motivational resources to buy impulsively at all simply because impulse buying could be a socially unacceptable behavior. Also, since these individuals have the tendencies to maintain a consistent self-presentation across situations that harm their image, they will maintain their impulsivity level in the second impulsive task. Furthermore, since high self-monitors have greater motivation compared to low self-monitors to control their impulses (Luo, 2005), they do not deplete their motivational resources for impulsivity in the first impulsive task and hence will sustain their urges in the second task as well.

On the other hand, low self-monitors are more interested in satisfying their personal value systems and private realities (Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997) and hence engaging in a prior impulsive tasks will fulfill their personal value systems and deplete some of their motivational resources for impulsivity. Therefore, unlike high self-monitors, low self-monitors will more likely experience SME and lesser desire for impulsive options in the second impulsive choice, supporting the notion that motivation resources for impulsivity may be consumed in the first choice for low self-monitors.

In the next experiment, the author examines this notion using hypothetical impulsive scenarios in two sequential tasks. As noted by Dholakia et al. (2005), SME applies to sequential impulsive choices where the options between the two choices themselves are not directly related to each other and does not apply to those gambling situations (see Dholakia et al., 2005 for SME constraints). Therefore, this experiment is designed to replicate SME using impulsive scenarios in two unrelated sequential tasks (i.e., impulsive donation and purchase) and show that SME works for low self-monitors, but not high self-monitors (see Research Framework). Also, as noted earlier, since impulse buying can have both negative and positive consequences for the consumers, one may argue that high self-monitors might act differently if they engage in a second impulsive task that has positive consequences, which makes them socially desirable. Therefore, the author shows that engaging in impulsive tasks that have positive social outcomes still result in no SME effect for high self-monitors because the motivational resources for impulsivity will not be consumed in the first impulsive choice; hence, it will not result in a drop in impulsivity in the second impulsive choice. As a result, the author proves that this SME boundary is robust to impulsive tasks that are socially desirable and socially undesirable. Furthermore, the author demonstrates that the effect of SME is maintained even after days of having engaged in the first impulsive task, but limited to low self-monitors.

Research Framework
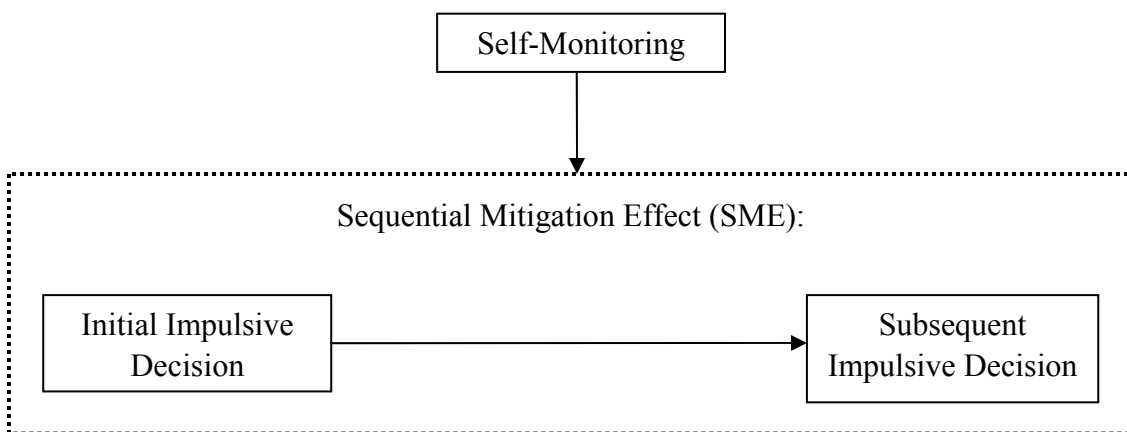
EXPERIMENT

Method

In this experiment, impulsive choices were operationalized using hypothetical scenarios developed by Dholakia et al. (2005). These scenarios were selected based on high levels of identification with such situations reported by American students of both genders in prior pretests and research (cf., Dholakia et al., 2005). For the current research, the scenarios were slightly altered to fit the study purpose and local culture (as detailed below). Participants were 118 undergraduate students from a large Middle Eastern university. They participated in exchange for partial course credit as a part of a principle of marketing course and were told that they were participating in a series of studies that were designed to better understand consumers' responses. Therefore, they were asked to participate in two research sessions. Each research session lasted for approximately twenty minutes. All questionnaires, including used scales, were translated into Arabic using back to back translations, and reviewed by two bilingual experts in the field for content validity. Translated versions of the questionnaires were agreed upon by the experts. Students were given the questionnaires in the language of their preference, English or Arabic. Both languages were made available because of the bilingual capabilities of the university population. Almost all participants chose the Arabic version (%96.61).

Pilot test

To verify the realism of the scenarios, the author asked a separate group of students from the same sample pool (N = 47) to read each scenario and (a) rate whether they believed the scenario was realistic (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree); (b) rate whether they believed the scenario was believable (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), and (c) indicate how likely they would be to encounter a situation similar to the one described in the scenarios (1 = very unlikely to 5 very likely). Reliability analysis indicated that the three items could be combined to form a scale (α = .85). Importantly, the mean on this three-item realism scale for the least realistic scenario (M = 3.35, SD = 0.99) was above the scale midpoint of 3, t (45) = 2.43, p < .05. Analysis of the other scenarios yielded identical results (all ps < .001). Taken together, these results suggest that participants viewed the scenarios as realistic.

First session

In the first research session, participants completed two individual difference measures, including the trait Buying Impulsiveness Scale (BIS; Rook and Fisher, 1995) and Self-Monitoring Scale (SMS; Lennox and Wolfe, 1984; O'Cass, 2000). Then, participants were assigned randomly to one of the two treatments (i.e., experimental and control). Participants in

the experimental treatment were asked to complete a section, which consisted of an impulsive scenario and some measures related to the scenario, while participants in the control treatment did not complete any task and were asked to stay silent until the session ended.

In keeping with Rook's original definition of impulsivity, in the current research, the author focuses on the urge to engage in impulsive choices, assuming it represents an important precursor of actual impulsive behavior (cf. Beatty and Ferrell, 1998; Dholakia, 2000; Dholakia et al., 2005; Herabadi, Verplanken, and van Knippenberg, 2009). Thus, participants in the experimental treatment were asked to imagine themselves in either one of these impulsive scenarios: impulsive donation or impulsive purchase (adapted from Dholakia et al., 2005). Two different impulsive scenarios were used to examine the robustness of SME boundary under high or low socially desirable impulsive contexts (impulsive donation, impulsive purchase).

> *Impulsive donation.* "Imagine that you have received a bonus of K.D. 200 (K.D.1 is equivalent to $3.5) from work. A few days later, you unexpectedly get a call from a well-known charity seeking contributions from you."

In response to the scenario, participants indicated their likelihood to give money to a charity with the following item: "What is the likelihood that you would donate to the charity?" with a 7-point scale (1 = Very Unlikely to 7 = Very Likely). Participants' impulsiveness to donate to the charity was measured using the item: "If you were in this situation, you would want to donate to the charity." using a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree).

> *Impulsive purchase.* "Imagine, on a weekend, after a busy and productive week at work, you go to the mall with your friend to buy a pair of shoes for an up-coming event. As you are walking in the mall, you see a great looking shirt on sale. The helpful salesperson tells you that this shirt is of the most recent style. You also find that the shirt is available in your size and in your favorite color."

In response to the scenario, participants indicated their likelihood to purchase the shirt with the following item: "What is the likelihood that you would purchase the shirt?" with a 7-point scale (1 = Very Unlikely to 7 = Very Likely). Then, participants indicated their impulsiveness to buy the shirt with the following measure: "If you were in this situation, you would want to purchase the shirt." using a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree).

Second session

Five days later, all participants were asked to complete the second research session in order to fulfill the research requirement. As noted by Dholakia et al. (2005), SME applies to

sequential impulsive choices where the options between the two choices themselves are not directly related to each other. Therefore, half of the participants in the control treatment and those in the experimental treatment who were given the impulsive donation scenario in the first session were given the following impulsive purchase scenario:

> *Impulsive purchase.* "Imagine that you enjoy exercising and running and like to eat health food. On a weekend, after a busy and productive week at work, you go to the mall with your friends to enjoy your time. Walking through the mall, you and your friends decide to buy dinner from the food court. You head to your favorite restaurant and as you are looking through the menu, you decide to buy a healthy meal and then you see a mouth-watering tray of sweet."

Participants indicated their likelihood to purchase the sweet with the following item: "What is the likelihood that you would purchase the sweet?" with a 7-point scale (1 = Very Unlikely to 7 = Very Likely). Then, participants indicated their impulsiveness to buy the sweet with the following measure: "If you were in this situation, you would want to purchase the sweet." using a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree).

For the other half of the control treatment participants and those in the experimental treatment who were given the impulsive purchase scenario in the first session were given the following impulsive donation scenario:

> *Impulsive donation.* "Imagine that you have received a letter from the General Manager asks whether you want to donate to the marathon walk, which will be held to help children with cancer. Donation will be made according to the number of kilometers, a half dinar per km. That is, you will donate 10 dinars if you walk 20 km."

In response to the scenario, participants indicated their likelihood to donate to the charity with the following item: "What is the likelihood that you would donate to the charity?" with a 7-point scale (1 = Very Unlikely to 7 = Very Likely). Participants' impulsiveness was measured using the item: "If you were in this situation, you would want to donate to the charity." using a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree).

Results

The trait BIS (α = .83) and SMS (α = .67) were found to be non-significant ($M_{Experimental}$ = 3.69, $M_{Control}$ = 3.92, t (1, 57) = .774, p = .442; $M_{Experimental}$ = 3.69, $M_{Control}$ = 3.92, t (1, 57) = .774, p = .442, respectively) across the two treatments.

Moderation Analyses.

It was expected that SME on participants' impulsivity would be qualified by the individual difference in self-monitoring. Moreover, the author anticipated that this moderation should hold under both socially desirable (e.g., impulsive donation) and socially undesirable behaviors (e.g., impulsive purchase). As noted above, to determine the robustness of the SME boundary, the author used two types of impulsive scenarios (impulsive purchase and impulsive donation) to test whether impulsivity type could impact the SME boundary. For each scenario, participants were randomly assigned to either the control or experimental treatment. To analyze the data, the author first conducted a 2 (Treatments: experimental versus control) x 2 (Self-monitoring: high versus low) x 2 (Impulsivity type: purchase versus donation) between-subjects MANOVA on the purchase likelihood and impulsiveness measures (see Table 1). The main goal in this analysis was to determine whether the treatments, self-monitoring, and impulsivity type interacted with one another. For the purchase likelihood and impulsiveness measures, results revealed a non-significant three-way interaction, F (1, 110) = .48, p = .49; F (1, 110) = .49, p = .48, respectively.

Table 1: Three-Way Interaction						
Source	*DV*	*Type III SS*	*Df*	*MS*	*F*	*P*
Corrected Model	Purchase Likelihood	79.52[a]	7	11.36	4.01	.001
	Impulsiveness	97.77[b]	7	13.97	4.58	.000
Intercept	Purchase Likelihood	2822.58	1	2822.58	996.30	.000
	Impulsiveness	2801.52	1	2801.52	919.86	.000
Self-Monitoring	Purchase Likelihood	2.87	1	2.87	1.01	.317
	Impulsiveness	.86	1	.85	.28	.597
Treatments	Purchase Likelihood	3.88	1	3.88	1.37	.244
	Impulsiveness	12.43	1	12.43	4.08	.046
Impulsivity Type	Purchase Likelihood	37.79	1	37.79	13.34	.000
	Impulsiveness	59.21	1	59.21	19.44	.000
Self-Monitoring * Treatments	Purchase Likelihood	10.69	1	10.69	3.77	.055
	Impulsiveness	15.71	1	15.71	5.16	.025
Self-Monitoring * Impulsivity Type	Purchase Likelihood	17.85	1	17.85	6.30	.014
	Impulsiveness	10.54	1	10.54	3.46	.065
Treatments * Impulsivity Type	Purchase Likelihood	1.17	1	1.17	.41	.521
	Impulsiveness	.03	1	.03	.01	.923
Self-Monitoring * Treatments * Impulsivity Type	Purchase Likelihood	1.37	1	1.37	.48	.488
	Impulsiveness	1.49	1	1.49	.49	.485
Error	Purchase Likelihood	311.64	110	2.83		
	Impulsiveness	335.02	110	3.05		
Total	Purchase Likelihood	3442.00	118			
	Impulsiveness	3433.00	118			
Corrected Total	Purchase Likelihood	391.15	117			
	Impulsiveness	432.79	117			

Results of the three-way interaction revealed that the SME boundary was not influenced by the impulsivity type. Accordingly, for the primary analysis, the author collapsed across impulsivity type and focused solely on the interaction effect of treatments and self-monitoring on purchase likelihood and impulsiveness measures using a 2 (Treatments: experimental versus control) x 2 (Self-monitoring: high versus low) between-subjects MANOVA on the purchase likelihood and impulsiveness measures (see Table 2).

For the purchase likelihood and impulsiveness measures, the results revealed a significant two-way interaction between treatments and self-monitoring, $F (1, 114) = 6.00$, $p < .05$; $F (1, 114) = 6.61$, $p < .01$, respectively. Furthermore, in order to understand the two-way interaction, a series of t-tests were conducted to compare low and high self-monitors under both treatments.

Table 2: Two-Way Interaction						
Source	*DV*	*Type III SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P*
Corrected Model	Purchase Likelihood	21.88[a]	3	7.29	2.25	.086
	Impulsiveness	26.99[b]	3	8.99	2.53	.061
Intercept	Purchase Likelihood	3047.24	1	3047.24	940.72	.000
	Impulsiveness	2998.17	1	2998.17	842.26	.000
Self-Monitoring	Purchase Likelihood	2.12	1	2.12	.66	.420
	Impulsiveness	.41	1	.41	.11	.736
Treatments	Purchase Likelihood	.23	1	.23	.07	.791
	Impulsiveness	2.78	1	2.78	.78	.379
Self-Monitoring * Treatments	Purchase Likelihood	19.45	1	19.45	6.00	.016
	Impulsiveness	23.52	1	23.52	6.61	.011
Error	Purchase Likelihood	369.27	114	3.24		
	Impulsiveness	405.80	114	3.56		
Total	Purchase Likelihood	3442.00	118			
	Impulsiveness	3433.00	118			
Corrected Total	Purchase Likelihood	391.15	117			
	Impulsiveness	432.79	117			

As illustrated in Figure 1, for low self-monitors, those in the experimental treatment had lower purchase likelihood than those in the control treatment, $M_{Experimental} = 4.77$, $M_{Control} = 5.67$, $t (58) = 2.23$, $p < .05$. However, for high self-monitors, the treatments did not differ in the purchase likelihood measure, $M_{Experimental} = 3.82$, $M_{Control} = 4.00$, $t (56) = 1.37$, $p = .18$.

Similarly, Figure 2 indicates that, for low self-monitors, those in the experimental treatment had lower impulsivity than those in the control treatment, $M_{Experimental} = 4.50$, $M_{Control} = 5.70$, $t (58) = 2.78$, $p < .01$; while, for high self-monitors, the treatments did not differ in the impulsiveness measure, $M_{Experimental} = 5.28$, $M_{Control} = 4.69$, $t (56) = 1.07$, $p = .29$.

Figure 1: Using self-monitoring to show the boundary for SME on purchase likelihood

Figure 2: Using self-monitoring to show the boundary for SME on impulsiveness
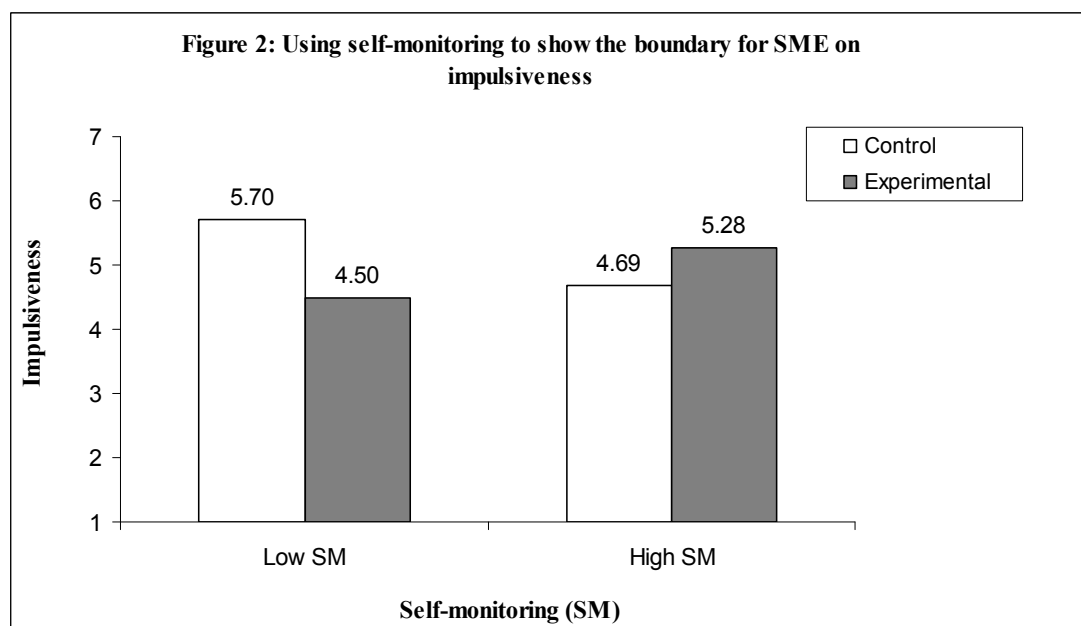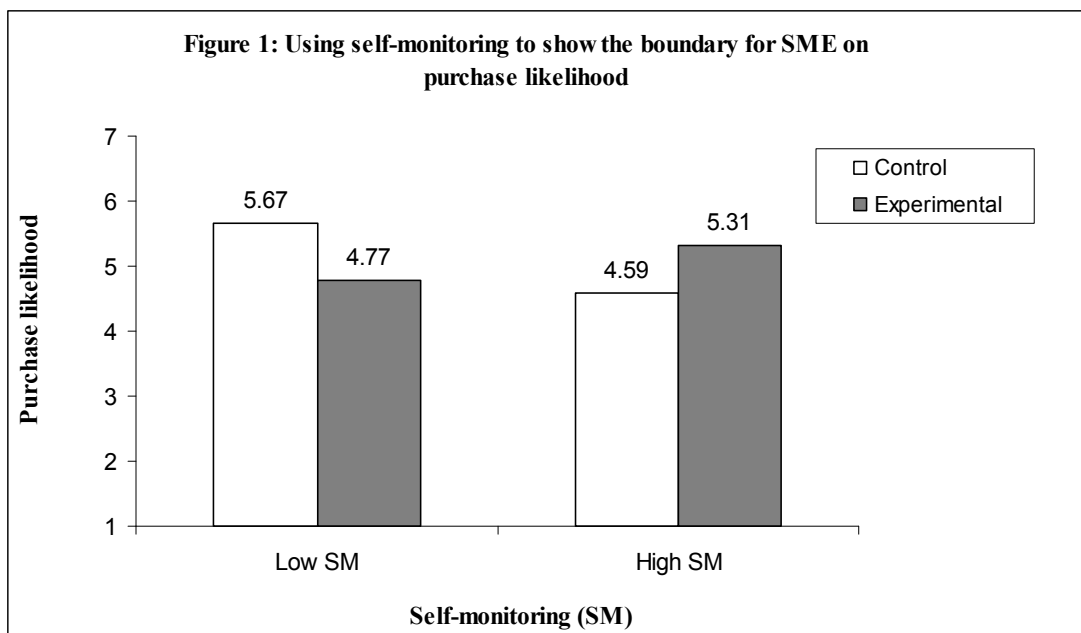
Ad-hoc Analysis.

An additional analysis was conducted to provide further empirical evidence that, in general, low self-monitors (compared to high self-monitors) are more likely to be under the influence of SME. In order to conduct this analysis, an index was created by computing the

difference in dependent measures (purchase likelihood and impulsiveness measures) between the first-session and second-session for participants in the experimental treatment. A one-sample t-test showed that the difference in dependent measures for low self-monitors was significantly different from zero for the purchase likelihood measure (t (28) = 2.47, $p < .05$) and impulsiveness measure (t (28) = 2.21, $p < .05$), while the difference in dependent measures for high self-monitors was non-significant for the purchase likelihood measure (t (26) = 0.00, p =1.00) and impulsiveness measure (t (26) = .19, $p = .85$). These results provide further support to the notion that SME is more likely to occur for low self-monitors than high self-monitors. That is, low self-monitors have less desire (compared to high self-monitors) to behave impulsively in the second choice following days of having engaged in the first impulsive choice, which is caused by the depletion of motivational resources.

DISCUSSION

The primary goal of this research was to evaluate the boundary for SME and examine whether the individual difference in self-monitoring would influence the occurrence of SME. Also, the secondary goal was to test the robustness of SME by showing that individuals are vulnerable to SME under different levels of socially desirable impulsive choices. Thus, the results indicated that, in different impulsive contexts, the difference in impulsivity between the treatments was significant for low self-monitors, while this difference was non-significant for high self-monitors. These findings provide empirical evidence that low self-monitors' motivational resources were in fact being depleted after engaging in a prior impulsive task and hence resulted in SME. However, the deletion of these resources requires that the person develops a goal to act impulsively in the first place. Meaning, if the person does not have tendencies or goals to engage in impulsive tasks, the person will not consume the motivational resources for impulsivity in the first place and hence SME will not occur. Since high self-monitors have greater motivation to control their urges under different social contexts and do not have tendencies to act impulsively simply because engaging in impulsive behaviors may have a negative representation in societies, these individuals attempt to appear normal and hence do not act impulsively in the first place to protect their image.

Possible explanation of the SME boundary

In general, motivation is defined as "the process of allocating personal resources in the form of time and energy to various acts in such a way that the anticipated affect resulting from these acts is maximized." (Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen, 1980; p. 7). Since low self-monitors are more likely to allocate personal resources to satisfy their personal value systems and private realities (Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997), engaging in a prior impulsive tasks will fulfill their

personal value systems and hence deplete some of their personal resources for impulsivity in subsequent impulsive tasks. On the other hand, since high self-monitors care more about their social image in the society, they have less motivation (compared to low self-monitors) to engage in impulsive purchases simply because impulsivity is sometimes viewed by society as normatively wrong (Dittmar and Drury, 2000; Rook, 1987; Trocchia and Swinder, 2002). Therefore, the different motivational directions that low and high self-monitors have toward impulsivity cause them to act differently when they encounter sequential impulsive tasks and hence results in the SME boundary.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research has important managerial and practical implications. First, most consumer behavior or decision-making is based on repeated decisions (Bagozzi, 1981; Betsch et al., 1998; Betsch et al., 2001; Betsch and Haberstroh, 2005; Bentler and Speckart, 1979; Norman and Smith, 1995; Verplanken et al., 1997). In these repeated-buying situations, previous decisions can systematically influence later ones. This repeated-decision situation can also occur frequently in impulsive purchases. Specifically, consumers are frequently exposed to repeated situations in retail stores that tempt them to buy things impulsively. If retailers create situations in which impulsive purchases occur in subsequent manners, they would want to know whether this could have an effect on consumers or whether there are limitations for this effect. In sum, this research can provide managerial implications for marketing activities, including price management, product positioning, and product display. With various marketing mix tools, marketing managers can easily influence consumers' decision experiences. These different experiences can then affect subsequent choices. Marketing managers can strategically use decision experiences to maximize their profits based on the findings of this research.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this research, the author attempted to show the boundary for and robustness of SME. Yet, like any other study, this research has a few limitations, which may impact the findings. For one thing, this paper used a hypothetical scenario to operationalize impulsive behaviors. Although this approach has been used in previous research (Dholakia et al., 2005), future researchers should look into this issue and test the concept in real-world settings. Also, while the present results were consistent with the author's predictions, the present study did not directly test for the mediating mechanism underlying the examined effect. The author believes that high self-monitors have the tendencies to maintain a consistent self-presentation across situations that harm their image and hence they do not engage in impulsive behaviors in the first place, which in turn makes them less susceptible to SME. Unlike high self-monitors, low self-monitors are more interested in satisfying their personal vales and hence engaging in a prior impulsive tasks fulfills

their personal value systems and depletes some of their motivational resources for impulsivity. Therefore, unlike high self-monitors, low self-monitors will more likely experience SME and lesser desire for impulsive options in the second impulsive choice. Future researchers could help provide empirical evidence to support the suggested mediating mechanism that causes low self-monitors to be under the influence of SME while high self-monitors to be less influenced by it.

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DOES THE CUSTOMER-FIRM RELATIONSHIP AFFECT CONSUMER RECOVERY EXPECTATIONS?

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ABSTRACT

This study examined three different types of relationships between consumer and service organizations: affective commitment and continuance commitment with service organization, and personal relationship with service employees. Building on the expectation-disconfirmation paradigm, we posit that both affective commitment and continuance commitment will have a positive impact on consumer recovery expectations. Based on interdependence theory from the field of psychology, we develop two competing hypotheses, referring to the counterbalancing relationship between commitment to a service organization and consumer recovery expectations.

A total of 617 service encounter incidents involving undergraduate students were collected. First, students described a recent service encounter that occurred with a service provider. This was followed by the measurements of the relationship between the student and the said service organization. The results from this study suggest that consumer affective commitment and continuance commitment are positively related to their recovery expectations. In addition, closeness to service employees is also positively related to consumer recovery expectations. The managerial implications of this study are significant. If consumers are more likely to forgive the mistakes made by service providers because of the close interpersonal relationship developed with their employees, it follows that encouraging their employees to build personal relationship with customers is likely to combat the negative effect of service failures.

INTRODUCTION

In the past century, exchanges of tangible goods dominated business- and customer-based relationships. After entering the twenty-first century, the marketing concept evolved into a new dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), also called the service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). According to the service-dominant logic, the fundamental unit of exchange is the application of specialized skills and knowledge. Goods are considered only the distribution mechanisms for service provisions. Likewise, the customer is always considered a co-producer. The service dominant logic focuses on the customer-firm relationship.

Once the importance of forming the relationship with customers is realized, companies design various forms of loyalty programs to build the customer-firm relationship. Since service is essentially the exchange between business and customer, providing a customer with a satisfied experience is the key to building loyal relationships between the service provider and the

customer. Quality relationships can bring about many advantages for service providers such as increased profitability, reduced service cost, and increase in positive word-of-mouth advertising (Ostrowski, O'Brien, & Gordon, 1993; Terrill & Middlebrooks, 2000). However, one characteristic of any service is that it involves human endeavor and that "zero defect" is virtually impossible. Once a service failure occurs, a service recovery provides organizations with an opportunity to resolve the problems that led to the service failure in the first place. As such, a service recovery strategy is a significant determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Mattila, 2001; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002; McCollough, 1995).

In order to recover appropriately from a service failure, service providers must be able to understand consumer recovery expectations. Previous studies have identified several antecedents of consumer recovery expectations such as consumer-perceived quality and customer organizational commitment (Kelley & Davis, 1994), severity of failure and service guarantee (Craighead, Karwan, & Miller, 2004; Hess, Ganesan, & Klein, 2003; Miller, Craighead, & Karwan, 2000), and attribution of failure (Hess et al., 2003). This study is focused on identifying various forms of relationship between the firm and the customer, and identifying various forms of relationships that affect consumer recovery expectations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Expectation-Disconfirmation Paradigm in the Service Failure and Recovery Context

The expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm is probably the most recognized model in consumer behavior literature for understanding customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (Bearden & Teel, 1983; Oliver, 1980, 1981, 1993; Oliver & Bearden, 1985; Swan & Trawick, 1981). The expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm states that consumers compare their prior expectations to post-performance perceptions (Bearden & Teel, 1983; Churchill, 1982; Oliver, 1980). Disconfirmation strongly determines consumer satisfaction. Even though support for the disconfirmation model is mixed, no study has shown convincing evidence to reject disconfirmation as a general model of customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction. It is generally agreed that disconfirmation is an antecedent of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

In service encounters involving failure and recovery, the service encounter satisfaction should include disconfirmation and expectations in both failure and recovery phases. Therefore, there are two sets of disconfirmation in failure/recovery encounters. Service encounter satisfaction is determined not only by the disconfirmation of service performance (failure), but also by the disconfirmation of service recovery (Smith & Bolton, 1998). In the first phase of service delivery, consumers hold pre-consumption expectations of service performance, and compare the perceived performance with their expectations. In the recovery phase of service encounters, consumers evaluate redress efforts against their expectations of appropriate recovery efforts, which results in a second disconfirmation judgment (Oliver, 1981). This is termed

"secondary satisfaction" and is combined with the original dissatisfaction in order to determine customers' overall satisfaction toward a service encounter. Singh and Widing (1991) suggest that service encounter satisfaction should be determined by consumers' perception of recovery efforts and their recovery expectations. Thus, recovery expectations should be modeled as a separate factor for service encounter satisfaction. Factors that affect recovery expectations should also be identified to help service providers to make recovery decisions for service failures.

Antecedents of Service Recovery Expectations

Several studies have examined antecedents of customer service recovery expectations. Kelley and Davis (1994) proposed that consumer-perceived service quality and customer organizational commitment are the determinants of consumer recovery expectations. In their study, organizational commitment is defined as an individual's identification with and involvement in an organization (Kelley & Davis, 1994). In addition to consumer-perceived service quality and customer organizational commitment, severity of failure and service guarantee were also identified as antecedents of service recovery expectations (Craighead et al., 2004; Miller et al., 2000). Hess et al. (2003) also found that consumer attribution of service failure affects consumer recovery expectations.

The aforementioned studies commonly agree that consumer organizational commitment is a factor that affects consumer recovery expectations (Craighead et al., 2004; Hess et al., 2003; Kelley & Davis, 1994; Miller et al., 2000). Consumers who have a strong commitment to an organization expect the relationship to be maintained. They are more likely to anticipate impressive responses to service failures as a means of maintaining the equity of the customer-organization relationship.

However, in aforementioned studies, consumer organizational commitment is operationalized as a unidimensional construct. These studies did not distinguish between different types of commitment with service providers, and the manner in which these different types of commitment affect consumer recovery expectations. Consumers choose to be committed to a service organization for different reasons. It is possible that consumers will have different levels of recovery expectations if they have different types of relationships with service providers.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Commitment

Commitment is an important concept that has been studied in various disciplines such as the interpersonal relationship in sociology, organizational commitment in management, and buyer-seller relationship in marketing. In relationship marketing, consumer commitment leads to

various types of loyal behaviors, which further benefit organizations in terms of profitability (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Gundlach, Achrol, & Mentzer, 1995; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Pritchard, Havitz, & Howard, 1999).

Morgan and Hunt (1994) define relationship commitment as "an exchange partner believing that an ongoing relationship with another is so important as to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it; that is, the committed party believes the relationship is worth working on to ensure that it endures indefinitely" (p. 23). Increasingly, marketing scholars recognize the multifaceted nature of commitment. Building on theories in organizational behavior, many marketing studies borrowed the structure of commitment from Allen and Meyer (1990), and treated commitment as a multidimensional construct (Brown, Lusch, & Nicholson, 1995; Fullerton, 2003; Gruen, Summers, & Acito, 2000; Gundlach et al., 1995; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Kim & Frazier, 1997; Kumar, Scheer, & Steenkamp, 1995). Based on Allen and Meyer (1990), there are at least three types of commitment in employment relationships: affective, continuance, and normative. Affective commitment refers to an affective or emotional attachment to the organization. Continuance commitment "is viewed as a tendency to 'engage in consistent lines of activity' based on the individual's recognition of the 'cost' (or lost side-bets) associated with discontinuing the activity" (Allen & John, 1990). The least common is normative commitment, which is viewed as a belief about one's responsibility to an organization.

In the customer-service provider relationship, affective commitment and continuance commitment are more salient than normative commitment when such a relationship is based on the exchange rather than employment relationship. Consumers are less likely to assume any responsibility to a service provider. Affective and continuance commitment also appear more in marketing studies than does normative commitment (Fullerton, 2003; Kumar et al., 1995).

Affective Commitment and Consumer Recovery Expectations

In this study, affective commitment is defined as an affective or emotional attachment to the service provider. The affective commitment represents an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Such emotions or attachment are built on trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Pritchard et al., 1999; Sargeant & Lee, 2004). In explaining the relationship between trust and commitment, Gabarino and Johnson (1999) stated that "Because commitment involves potential vulnerability and sacrifice, it follows that people are unlikely to be committed unless trust is already established" (p. 73). Building trust between customers and service providers requires service providers to provide high-quality services (Caceres & Paparoidamis, 2007; Chiou & Droge, 2006). In other words, service quality affects affective commitment. Customers are affectively committed to a service provider when they believe that the service provider has the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, is willing to help customers, provides prompt service, has knowledgeable employees who can inspire trust and confidence, and cares about and provides individualized attention to customers

(Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Therefore, if a service failure occurs, customers will expect the service provider to promptly take action to fix the problem. Therefore,

> *Hypothesis 1: Affective commitment is positively related to consumer recovery expectations.*

Continuance Commitment and Consumer Recovery Expectations

Continuance commitment is defined as the degree to which a customer is psychologically bonded to a service provider on the basis of the perceived costs associated with switching service provider (Gruen et al., 2000). From an economist's view, consumers enter the exchange relationship and choose to be committed to the relationship with the service provider because of utilitarian principles. Consumers' motivation to be committed is to seek an optimization of some deterministic utility function. In other words, the consumer is committed to the firm to avoid potential risks such as high switching cost (Aydin & Özer, 2006; Bell, Auh, & Smalley, 2005; Burnham, Frels, & Mahajan, 2003; Caruana, 2004; Lam, Shankar, Erramilli, & Murthy, 2004; Lee, Lee, & Feick, 2001; Neeru & Paul, 2000; Ruyter, Martin, & Josee, 1998; Yang & Peterson, 2004). Continuance commitment, which is attributed to high switching cost, dependence, and lack of choice, is more likely to create feelings of dependence and entrapment (Fullerton, 2003), which will lead to loyal firm behavior (Fullerton, 2003; Gruen et al., 2000).

Service failure in a service encounter, based on an economist's view, is defined as "cost" or "loss" to the customer in the form of money or time. Therefore, the subsequent recovery actions taken by the organization would be treated as "value" or "gain" to the customer's overall utility function. The "cost" or "loss" caused by service failure should lead to switching behavior if continuance commitment does not exist. Due to the high switching cost and/or lack of choice, the consumer would expect the service provider to restore "the justice" between the exchange parties (Smith, Bolton, & Wagner, 1999). To continue the relationship with the service provider, the committed customers are more likely to have higher recovery expectations.

> *Hypothesis 2: Continuance commitment is positively related to consumer recovery expectations.*

Interpersonal Relationship with Service Employees and Consumer Recovery Expectations

One type of relationship between service providers and customers is customers' interpersonal relationship with service employees. This type of interpersonal relationship could be attributed to social bond (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997), which is different from business-customer relationships. This type of interpersonal relationship allows service providers and customers to share a general sense of the content of what they label commercial friendship, for

which affection, intimacy, and loyalty constitute the substance of these friendships. However, whether this type of relationship is good for a business remains to be established. Previous studies have shown differing results. For example, Guenzi and Pelloni (2004) found that customer-to-employee relationship closeness promotes overall customer satisfaction and behavioral loyalty. However, Grayson (2007) found that combining friendship and the business relationship can also create conflict. This conflict is caused by incompatible relational expectations. Further, Grayson (2007) concludes that friendship can have both positive and negative influences on business. Hansen, Sandvik, and Selnes (2003) also examined the impact of the interpersonal relationship between customers and service employees on customer intention to stay. They suggested that such personal commitment is the antecedent of commitment to service firms. Nevertheless, commitment to service employees also leads to loyal behaviors (Hansen et al., 2003).

What is not clear is whether the interpersonal relationship and commitment to service employees will lead to forgiveness when a service failure occurs. Building on interdependence theory, this article provides evidence to help understand consumers' reaction to service failures if the customer has a close relationship with service employees.

Interdependence theory states that reactions to the close relationship depend on two matrices: given matrix and effective matrix (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). The given matrix represents partners' feelings about the joint outcomes. According to the norm of reciprocity viewpoint, given matrix leads to a similar action resulting in a destructive act (Gouldner, 1960). Social exchange theory also suggests that individuals who are involved in an exchange relationship obtain not only economic benefits but also social benefits, including esteem, respect, friendship, and love (Foa, Tornblorn, Foa, & John Converse, 1973; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

Based on interdependence theory, a close interpersonal relationship between customers and service employees may lead to a high level of consumer recovery expectation because consumers devoted not only economic efforts but also social efforts to the relationship. Therefore,

> *Hypothesis 3a:*   *The closeness of the interpersonal relationship between customers and service employees is positively related to consumer recovery expectations.*

However, the given matrix is only part of the interdependence theory. An individual does not necessarily behave according to the given matrix. The other matrix introduced in interdependence theory (mentioned earlier), the effective matrix, represents feelings about joint outcomes at the time that partners actually react to the situation. In such a close relationship, an individual's primitive impulse may be reacting destructively in turn, but she or he may consider the situation and decide not to react destructively toward the relationship. The effective matrix is the theoretical foundation of interpersonal forgiveness (McCullough, Worthington Jr., & Rachal,

1997). Rusbult and Verette (Rusbult & Verette, 1991) called it "accommodation". Rusbult and Verette (1991) also found that the less social concern a person has, and less interdependent the relationship is, the lower the willingness to accommodate will be. Further, partners' relationship satisfaction, overall relational functioning, and commitment to the relationship also promote forgiveness between partners (Rusbult & Verette, 1991). McCollough et al. (1997) defined interpersonal forgiveness as "a set of motivational changes that a person may become (1) decreasingly motivated to retaliate against an offending relationship partner, (b) decreasingly motivated to maintain estrangement from the offender, and (c) increasingly motivated by conciliation and goodwill for the offender, despite the offender's hurtful actions" (p. 321). Additionally, they proposed that empathy also facilitates forgiveness for the offending partner because empathy incorporates concepts such as sympathy, compassion, and tenderness (Batson, 1991; Batson & Shaw, 1991).

Based on the given matrix, a customer's first reaction to a service failure should boost a high level of recovery expectation. However, due to the closeness of the interpersonal relationship between the customer and service employee(s), the customer may consider other factors, such as the long-term relationships and affective commitment with service employee(s), and reduce the expectation of service recovery. Therefore, the competing hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 3b: *The closeness of the interpersonal relationship between customers and service employees is negatively related to consumer recovery expectations.*

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Procedure

This study utilized the survey approach to investigate the impact of customer relationship with service providers on consumer recovery expectations. Students from an undisclosed Midwest university were recruited to participate in the survey. The students were asked to record a detailed service encounter that occurred recently. They then subsequently evaluated their satisfaction level relating to that particular service encounter. Next, the students answered a series of questions regarding their relationship with that particular service provider, including their affective commitment, continuance commitment, and interpersonal relationship with employees of the service provider. At the end, the students were asked about their recovery expectation if a service failure occurs.

A total of 617 usable service encounters were collected. The students answered all questions regarding their relationship with that particular service provider.

Measurement of Variables

Affective commitment, continuance commitment, and closeness to service employees were measured in this study as independent variables. Consumer recovery expectation for service failure was measured as the dependent variable. Affective commitment was measured with three items adapted from Verhoef, Franses, and Hoekstra (2002). Continuance commitment was measured with three items adapted from Allen and Meyer (1990). The closeness to service employees was measured with three items previously employed by Guenzi and Pelloni (2004). Consumer recovery expectations for service failures were measured with three items employed by Hess et al. (2003). Table 1 provides the measures used in this study along with the scale reliabilities. All scales show acceptable reliabilities, ?>.80 (Nunnally, 1978). All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to evaluate the measures. The confirmatory factor analysis was completed with maximum likelihood estimation. The measurement model offered an acceptable fit to the data (?2 = 170.262; df=48; p<.05; AGFI= .930; CFI=.983; RMSEA=.065). Item factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) from the confirmatory factor analysis are also shown in Table 1.

Tables 1 and 2 provide support for discriminant and convergent validity of the study constructs. Without exception, the estimated loadings are large and significant (t-values >8, p<.05). All composite reliabilities are above .80, exceed .70, the commonly used norm for acceptable psychometrics. All constructs provide evidence of acceptable discriminant validity. The highest intercorrelation among the composites in Table 2 is .699, indicating that no two constructs share more than 49% of their variance.

Table 1: Results from the CFA of Study Constructs				
Items	Loadings a	t-Value	Reliability c	Variance Extracted d
Affective Commitment (AC)			.898	.751
▪ AC1. I am a loyal customer of this service provider.	.662	_b		
▪ AC2. I feel emotionally attached to this service provider.	.948	20.270		
▪ AC3. I feel a strong sense of belonging with this service provider.	.957	20.360		
Continuance Commitment (CC)			.848	.653
▪ CC1. It is very hard for me to switch from this service provider right now even if I wanted to.	.923	_b		
▪ CC2. My life would be disrupted if I switched from this service provider.	.795	22.463		
▪ CC3. It would be too costly to switch from this service provider right now.	.689	18.812		
Closeness with Service Employees (CE)			.977	.935
▪ CE1. The employees of this service provider know me well.	.959	_b		
▪ CE2. I have developed a good relationship with employees of this service provider.	.982	67.752		
▪ CE3. There is a friendship between me and employees of this service provider.	.960	58.426		

Table 1: Results from the CFA of Study Constructs				
Items	Loadings a	t-Value	Reliability c	Variance Extracted d
Service Recovery Expectations (SRE)			.908	.770
▪ SRE1. If I encounter a service problem, I expect the service provider to do something in its power to solve the problem.	.974	_b		
▪ SRE2. If I encounter a service problem, I do not expect the service provider to exert much effort to solve the problem.	.749	24.265		
▪ SRE3. If I encounter a service problem, I expect the service provider to try to make up for my loss.	.894	33.936		
a The estimates are standardized coefficients (all p<.05) and t-values from maximum likelihood solution using EQS.				
b The corresponding coefficient was fixed to set the metric of the latent construct.				
c Estimated composite reliability in line with Fornell and Larcker (1981).				
d Estimated variance extracted by the corresponding latent construct from its hypothesized indicators in line with Fornell and Larcker (1981).				

Table 2: Summary Statistics and Intercorrelations for the Study Constructs (AVE) (N=617)						
Constructs	Mean	(SD)	1	2	3	4
1 Affective Commitment	3.464	1.859	**.751**			
2 Continuance Commitment	2.458	1.639	.548	**.653**		
3 Closeness with Service Employees	2.499	2.014	.699	.462	**.935**	
4 Service Recovery Expectations	5.328	1.648	.286	.202	.214	**.770**

RESULTS

The hypotheses were tested using the Structural Equation Modeling approach. The SEM model allows us to account for the error terms of the measurements of continuous variables. The hypothesized model moderately fit the data shown in Figure 1 (χ^2=860.35, df=51, CFI=.886, AGFI=.719, RMSEA=.161). All hypothesized paths were significant at the .05 level.

The results from SEM analysis show that affective commitment and continuance commitment have a positive impact on service recovery expectations (β_{ac}=.108, β_{cc}=.092), which support hypotheses 1 and 2. The closeness between customers and service employees also has a positive impact on service recovery expectations (β_{ce}=.093), which supports hypothesis 3a. In other words, even though the consumer may develop, to a certain extent, an interpersonal relationship with service employees, they still expect the firm to recover their loss due to the failure.

Figure 1. Structural Equation Model Results
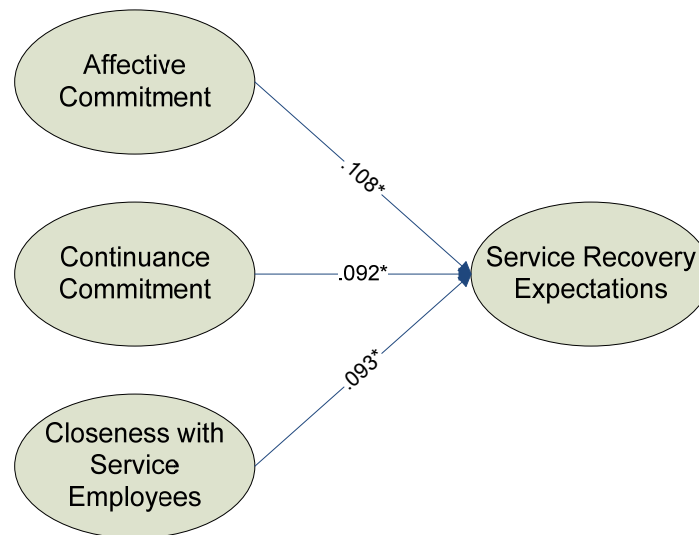
Note: * p<.05, Model fit index: ?2=860.35, df=51, CFI=.886, AGFI=.719, RMSEA=.161.
All coefficients are standardized.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the service-dominant economy, customer satisfaction is the focus of service organizations. However, service encounters involve human endeavors and service failures often occur. Service recovery becomes an important strategy to keep the customer satisfied. Based on the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, understanding and gauging customer recovery expectations is necessary in order to implement an appropriate recovery strategy. In addition to factors identified by previous studies, which may affect customer recovery expectations, we examine how various forms of customer relationships with service providers affect consumer recovery expectations. The results provide strong evidence that suggests that service providers need to make a decision concerning whether they should prioritize customers when recovering a service failure.

The results of this study show that consumers who have a higher level of affective commitment and continuance commitment will have a higher recovery expectation after a failure occurs. Even though consumers may develop a certain interpersonal relationship or friendship with service employees, they still expect the firm to recover their loss created by the failure. A closer relationship between the customer and the service employees will lead to higher recovery expectations on the part of the customer. This is also intuitively appealing, as the consumers who are committed to the firm will expect that relationship to continue. Once a failure occurs,

consumers are likely to expect the firm to restore the justice between the two parties regardless of how close they are with service employees.

The managerial implication of this study is also significant. To increase the customer retention rate and reduce customer switching behaviors, managers must treat loyal customers who are committed to the firm differently from disloyal customers, because loyal customers will have a higher recovery expectation than disloyal customers. If customer expectations are not accurately gauged and are disregarded, customers are likely to reduce their commitment level and eventually switch to competitors.

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THE TWEEN CONSUMER MARKETING MODEL: SIGNIFICANT VARIABLES AND RECOMMENDED RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the past decade of literature on tweens and presents future hypotheses to be examined based upon a review of the current academic research and current advertising practices. The authors also summarize the most important past research, its methodology, definition of tween and significant variables. Lastly, a comprehensive Tween Consumer Marketing Model for research is presents the state of the art of determinant factors involving tweens and their consumer behavior characteristics and trends.

INTRODUCTION

Generational differences have been commonly used in market segmentation and niche marketing for very successful marketing campaigns. A generation is defined by certain determinations such as dramatic events or shifts which form a common set of values within the generation. This paper is focused on the "Tween" segment, a subset of the X generation (Lindstrom & Seybold, 2003) or a subset of the Z generation (Williams, Page, Petrosky & Hernandez, 2009). The "tween" marketing segment has been gaining in popularity as a topic of study due to its phenomenal growth and buying power. The "tween" is a user of social media (some even call them the V or virtual generation since they are so involved in technology (Fraser & Dutta, 2008) and consider them to be a "global phenomenon" (Lindstrom & Seybold, 2003). Globalization of tween buying trends may be related to their watching TV, which many see as the creator of the global trend referred to as the "McDonaldization" effect (Chang, 2007, Lemish, 2007; Ritzer, 2009; Hawkins et al., 2010, Hamm, 2007). Tweens are a more powerful generation then past generations since they are a triple opportunity to marketers – "a primary market, an influencing market and a future market" (Norgaard, Bruns, Christensen & Mikkelsen 2007, 197). It is important to study the characteristics, values and attitudes of the "tween" segment to understand how these values influence purchasing decisions. When retailers and marketers capture the values of tweens and wed those to the buying of their products or the retail experience (such as the American Girl Place), it can be explosive (Borghini et al., 2009).

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review can be divided into the following areas: 1) definitions and characteristics of tweens; 2) global or localized trends for tweens; 3) negative impacts or ethics of advertising to tweens 4) branding of tweens and 5) tweens as influencers.

Definitions and Characteristics of Tweens

Tweens are defined as 9-12 year olds by marketing practitioners. Estimated at $1.5 billion in disposable income, tweens are a sizeable direct market and they are a market which companies hope to start early with brand loyalty. They are described as hyper brand conscious (in areas of cosmetics, music, apparel, consumer electronics, and film), spend a lot of time with peers and are peer influenced. They grow up faster, are more connected, more direct, more informed, have more personal power, more money, more influence and attention than previous generations (Lindstrom & Seybold, 2003, 1). Tweens do influence family buying patterns, for example, in grocery purchasing they influence parents to buy food products that the tweens can prepare for themselves since they are easy and quick. Tweens want to be catered to and they want a coupon or free gift or to be amused or entertained. Since tweens are on the computer and hit (click through rates high) banner ads more often than adults, marketers are beginning to capitalize on their behavior through social media advertising. As suggested by Sims (2000), to be effective companies need to get on net, offer free things and customize to tweens.

In the academic world, most researchers have defined "tweens" as 8-12 year olds (Andersen, Tufte, Rasmussen, & Chan, 2007), some describe them more widely as 8-14 year olds (Lindstrom, 2004; Maughan, 2002) and others narrowly as 11-12 year olds (Dibley & Baker, 2001). The "tween" term refers to the concept of being "in-between" a child and a teen, which is not necessarily tied to a particular age, but rather connected to a state of mind or behaviors. This schizophrenic existence causes a "split personality" between acting as a kid and taking on the actions and values of a teenager (Siegel et al., 2004). To complicate definitions further, some researchers note the "kids grow old younger" or KGOY phenomenon, which states that kids are maturing faster than in previous decades or generations (Cook & Kaiser, 2004). Some believe this is the result of different dietary patterns and could be influenced by greater use of hormones in food as well as more protein in the diet. Others blame the world of TV and media advertisement for giving more mature images to children at a younger age.

> *H1*   *Tweens have a stronger brand awareness than adults in the industry areas of their interest (such as music, apparel, electronics, film and cosmetics).*

> *H2*   *Tweens will increase their purchasing with increases in giveaways.*

H3   Tweens will purchase more often through banner ads than adults.

H4   Younger tweens (8-10 year olds) are more similar to older tweens (10-12 year olds)   than to younger children (7-9 year olds) in their characteristics such as use of the internet, influence role and product category purchases due to their growing maturity.

Global or Local Trends for Tweens

In the arena of globalization versus localization of "tween" buying behavior and values, some researchers believe the "tween" segment to be extremely global in nature (Giges, 1991; Lindstrom, 2004; Lindstrom & Seybold, 2003; Siegel et al. (2004); yet others have found differences by countries in the attitudes, usage of products and purchasing decisions that "tweens" make. In the Giges (1991) study, the consumption pattern of 14-34 year olds around the world were found to be extremely similar for products in the soft drinks, beer and footwear segments. However, Andersen et al. (2007) found that Danish "tweens" used the internet and social media for entertainment and communication with their peers (significantly more text messaging), whereas Hong Kong "tweens" had more limited media choices and used the media they had for more academic activities (such as homework and finding information) even though they may own similar devices. Mobile phones were owned by 75% of Danes and 47% of Hong Kong tweens, whereas the internet access for Danish tweens as compared to Hong Kong youth was 95% to 89%.

H5   Buying patterns and characteristics of tweens in individualist countries will be more homogenous (and therefore more global) to one another than when comparing to community oriented countries (local differences greater).

Negative Impacts or Ethical Considerations for Tweens

Consumerism is certainly at its zenith in America and brands are becoming globally known, but there are possible negative impacts of this materialistic emphasis in society that could be detrimental for our tweens. Goldberg et al., (2003) have found a disturbing link between tweens (9-14 year olds) who are preoccupied with materialism and low grades (interests and performance in school decreased). Singaporean youth (ages 13-18) were found to be influenced by peers and media celebrities as well as by the amount of advertising viewing and responses to marketing promotions (actually buying something seen in ad) in their overall materialism (La Ferla & Chan, 2006). The impact of celebrity adoration was also found in

Taiwanese adolescents when it came to increasing their purchasing intent (Chiou, Huang & Chung, 2005), thus making them more susceptible to the negative effects of materialism.

Possible early tendencies towards excessive or compulsive buying patterns were also shown in 46% of EU adolescents by Garces Prieto (2002). In addition, advertisers have been criticized by their over-sexualization of adolescents in their marketing campaigns (Brown, L'Engle, Pardun, Guo, Kenneavy & Jackson, 2006, Durham, 2008; Goodinm Van Denburg, Murnen, & Smolak, 2011). Some marketers have attempted to put ad breaks in their online content in order to let youth know that they are indeed advertising to them This practice does decrease the brand recall of the product for young people (An & Stern, 2011).

From the industry perspective, it is getting more difficult for marketers to find the sweet spot for tweens with the phenomenon of "KAGOY - Kids Are Getting Older Younger". In selling books, marketers have a tough time deciding what will be considered "age-appropriate" by young readers, their parents and their teachers. Tweens may have the "reading ability" to read teen or even adult novels but may not be emotionally prepared to handle the material (Maughan, 2002, 36). Tweens want to be teenagers, be sophisticated and treated as older. Ten years ago, tweens would have been 10-12 years old, but now the market segment of tweens has gone down to 8-12 year olds in the book publishing industry.

There is a well known effect called the "nag factor" or "purchase influence attempts" that shows hard sell media techniques do influence adolescent buying behavior, but the content of this research does not specifically deal with the sexualized appeal and its negative impact on children (Williams & Burns, 2000). Estimates in the research show that between 12 to 44% of young people in the US and UK today are experiencing compulsive buying as a dysfunctional behavior (Magee, 1994, Hassay & Smith, 1996, Dittmar, 2005). Young people seem to be more susceptible to the psychologically motivated buying spree as a way (often mistakenly) to achieve their goals of happiness, success and life satisfaction (Dittmar, 2005). Those who use consumer goods to mediate mood and seek identity creation are sadly disappointed at the outcome and adolescents are among the highest segment in this group (Gardarsdotir, Dittmar & Aspinall, 2005; Kasser & Kanner, 2004).

> *H6   Tweens, with a higher materialistic rating, will have increased negative life impacts such as poor school performance, dysfunctional compulsive buying, and over-sexualization.*

> *H7   Ad breaks in online advergames lower brand recall.*

Branding and market appeals of tweens

Tweens are a buying power all of their own. They are technologically savvy and have access to media in unprecedented ways. For example, the average American tween (defined as 9-

14 year olds), according to a Nickelodeon survey, has a TV in their bedroom (77%), cable or satellite access (50%), a video game system (59%), a DVD player (49%), and a computer connected to the Internet (22%) (Farhi & Frey, 2006). Due to the power of niche marketing, tweens can be targeted through cable and the internet very easily nowadays (Farhi & Frey, 2006). A 2001 Roper Youth Report Survey found 30 million consumers from age 8-12 with direct sales of $10 billion/year and influence sales of $74 billion by the family. The Packaged Facts group estimated direct sales to increase to $35 billion by 2002 (Maughan, 2002).

Branding for various segments is created from psychological and social needs of consumers (Franzen & Bowman, 2001). Experts agree that pre-teens and teens often have a high brand awareness due to the fact that they are adolescents who are in the formation stages of their own identity (Dittmar, 2005). In their research on catalog clothing purchases, Simpson, Douglas and Schimmel (1998) found that tweens were even more status conscious than teens in picking clothes that had the attributes of style, brand name and the latest fashions.

Some companies see tweens as a market of the future as well; for example, they are suggesting to tweens which cars are cool and fit with their identity. Even though tweens do not purchase new cars until they are in 30s, car manufacturers want to establish "early brand loyalty" (Business interview, 2000).

Toy companies are seeing tweens leaving the toy market earlier and earlier. To combat this trend, they are now marketing "youth electronics" products to both the tween and the parents. Appeals to the tween emphasize the technological sophistication of the product but the lower price and restrictions on usage (Examples are Mattel's My Scene cellphone and Mattel's Juice Box, a portable media player) are appeals made to parents (Kang, 2011). Publishing companies do not call this segment "tweens", instead they use the term "middle grade reader" when talking about 8-12 year olds. Some firms feel that tweens actually are going between the two stages of young girl or boy and adolescent; sometimes a younger reader may want a fantasy book and the older reader may look for a novel they can identify with more to find out who they are (Maughan, 2002, 32). Mary-Kate and Ashley books and the brand itself is estimated to bring in over $1 billion in sales and keeps increasing 15% per year (Maughan, 2002, 32). Marketers are keeping up with tween trends by observing current movies, TV and rock stars as well as what their own kids are into (Maughan, 2002). Some book projects are successfully tied into movie and television programming under the same umbrella, such as Disney books with the Disney Channel, Harper Collins with Fox TV and Twentieth Century Fox and S&S with Nickelodeon and Paramount (Maughan, 2002, 34). One of the new ways to reach tweens is throurgh mall shows and other event marketing. Older youth are being effectively targeted with online interactive content (free chapters and advance readers' copies), in-store promotions with direct benefits, targeted consumer catalogs, and point-of-purchase marketing materials (Maughan, 2002, 34).

H8   *Tweens will have higher brand awareness by identity construction than teens or adults.*

H9   *Tweens will have higher brand awareness if dual appeals are made to tweens and parents.*

H10   *Tweens will have higher brand awareness for products advertised online to them.*

H11   *Tweens will have higher brand recall if the brand is associated with other tweens or tween stars.*

H12   *Tweens will have higher brand recall if the brand has a free giveaway.*

Tweens as Influencers

As Siegel (2004) points out in his book *The Great Tween Buying Machine*, the buying power of tweens is amplified by their influence on the families' purchasing. Tweens and teens (here defined as 8-14) account for over $39 billion in buying power of their own and over $20 billion in purchases by the family. Others estimate even higher market totals for tweens. Young adults (15-24 year olds) account for $485 billion in sales (Farhi & Frey, 2006). Studies vary on what stage of decision making tweens are most influential. Some say they are most important in the initiation or idea generation stage (Belch, Belch & Ceresino, 1985); others believe the choice stage is when they dominate (Lee & Beatty; 2002). When considering buying of food, Danish tweens (10-12 year olds) were shown to be most influential on what to buy in-between meals and for breakfast (easier to make products) with least influence on purchasing for the dinner meal, they were most helpful as specific choice decision-maker (adding items to the shopping list) and an information collector (coupon finding) (Norgaard et al., 2007). Foods that children are most influential in are sweets and fruits (Norgaard et al., 2007). The decision is a joint one when it comes to food and it is important to include both parents and children in the family food decision making process (Belch et al., 1985; Caruana & Vassallo, 2003; Lee & Beatty, 2002; Norgaard et al., 2007).

H13   *Tweens influence parents more in products they consume such as groceries, choice of vacation/recreational spot, movies, gaming/personal computer or restaurant choice) than in products which are considered the family's (car, boat, TV, house).*

> *H14   Tweens influence parents more with positive communications such as negotiations, logical arguments and direct asks than with negative communications such as guilt and anger.*

RESEARCH SUMMARY AND MODEL

The researchers used a summary of the current literature in order to formulate a comprehensive model regarding tween consumer behavior. The summary chart explains the details of the past research including the authors' names, date of research, description of the tween segment (ages and country), methodology, significant variables and direction of the relationships (Please see Table 1 for complete listing). These factors are then combined into a comprehensive model to give future researchers the benefit of a wholistic approach to researching the marketing behaviors and patterns of tweens. Throughout the paper, hypotheses are recommended from previous research, suggestions for future research, and from current practices in marketing and advertising. This paper can add to the body of knowledge by giving details as to the "gaps" in the research. Many of the current research works have been conducted overseas and the authors believe there are definite opportunities for studies in the US and a wider selection of countries. Using Hofstede's dimensions, country differences in tweens could be examined as well to see if marketing practices and buy (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). The other limitation is in the product categories used in the research, primarily clothing, food, music, and electronics/toys, which could be broadened as well. Another possible gap is in finding ways to measure the variables.

The Tween Consumer Marketing Model for marketing of tweens includes the general categories of Customer Characteristics, Products Characteristics, Media and Appeals, Branding, Purchasing, Materialism and Negative Impact (Figure 1). The Customer Characteristics area spans the concepts of age, generation or age grouping, communication/persuasion style, country of the tween and the country dimension in the recommended hypotheses (H4, H5 and H14). These can be expanded to include gender, ethnic or regional differences of tweens and characteristics such as the technological savviness of tweens. Hypothesis 5 tests the relationship between consumer traits (country dimension) and teen purchasing whereas H14 examines the communication style of the tween with the parent purchasing variable. Product Characteristics include the product category, specific brand of the product or product details. In hypothesis H13, the product category influences the parent purchase and hypothesis 1 shows the relationship of product category to brand awareness. Next the model shows the Media and Appeals used for tweens. Under the category of the media, researchers could study online ads, banner ads, ad breaks, catalogs, print, TV ads or other media choices. For appeals, marketers may use a dual appeal to tweens and parents, identity construction appeal, eWOM (electronic word of mouth) and include peers or celebrities in ads.

Promotional items such as giveaways, two for one deals, coupons and games/contests could also be examined as they impact teen purchasing (H3). Various appeals can influence branding for tweens, which includes the concepts of brand awareness and brand recall. Hypotheses H7-H12 study the effects of various types of appeals and ads on brand recall or brand awareness. Purchasing decisions can be influenced by tweens as consumers as well. For instance, tweens often have a say in which breakfast foods and snacks they eat or where the family goes on vacation (Hypothesis 13). The way tweens talk to their parents can have an inpact on whether the parent listens to their appeal and influence when purchasing (Hypothesis 14).

Appeals such as giveaways and banner ads can influence tween purchases as well (Hypotheses 2 and 3). Research is needed to see the extent of the influence and to examine the types of giveaways and banner ads. Lastly, the subject of materialism is included in the model. The authors felt that this concept of materialism has been examined but could benefit from a more longitudinal study and a look at a combination of negative impact factors simultaneously such as school performance, moodiness, over-sexualized behaviors, and compulsive buying behaviors (Hypothesis 6). Also the topic has only been tangentially tied to branding and purchasing.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, this paper adds to the body of knowledge about tween consumer behavior and marketing to the tween segment. It comprehensively reviews the literature, recommends hypotheses for future research streams and presents a model with important variables to consider. This model gives a more wholistic approach to research for the tween niche than has been given in the piecemeal approach of previous researchers. It also attempts to review the practitioner literature and merge academic research with current business practices in marketing and advertising.

Table 1: Summary of Research on Tweens Consumer Behavior				
AUTHORS//DATE	AGES/ COUNTRY	METHODOLOGY	SIGNIFICANT VARIABLES	POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE
An & Stern/2011	8-11/ US	Open ended questions, 2 X 2 design, Chi Square	Ad break exposure would make children less likely to prefer the advertised brand.	+(CS=20.8, $p < .05$)
Andersen et al./2007	10-13/ Hong Kong and Denmark	Questionnaire, Chi Square, cross tabs.	Danish teens did not recall advertisements on TV (particularly humorous ones) as well as Hong Kong teens. Many Danish tweens disdain advertisements.	-(CS=64.5, p <0.001).

Table 1: Summary of Research on Tweens Consumer Behavior				
AUTHORS//DATE	AGES/ COUNTRY	METHODOLOGY	SIGNIFICANT VARIABLES	POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE
Andersen et al./2008	10-13/ Hong Kong and Denmark	Questionnaire, Chi Square, t tests	Danish teens have more access to cell phones, internet and websites. Danish tweens use them more for socializing (surfing for fun and chatting) than Hong Kong tweens who use for informational purposes.	+,(t=63, p=<.0001), +(CS= 5.8, p<.05) +(CS=121, p<.001) +(CS=59.2,p<.001) +(CS=14.1,p<.001) +(CS 21.4, p<.001)
Chan/2008	6-9 and 10-15/ Hong Kong	Questionnaire, chi squares, t tests	Younger tweens believe advertising to be truthful. Urban tweens and teens more skeptical on advertising than rural tweens and teens.	+(CS= 115.2, p<.001), -(CS=297.1, p<.001)
Chiou, Huang & Chung /2005	8-11/Taiwan	Questionnaire, chi square, t tests	Attitude (more adoration) toward a celebrity impacts purchase intention.	+(t=5.95,p=.0001)
Dittmar /2005	16-18/UK	Questionnaire, consumer panels, hierarchical multiple regression analysis	Compulsive buying was dependent on personal spending money and materialistic values.	+ (R2 = .02, B = .15) + (R2 = .08, B = 0.29
Jones & Reid/2010	NA/Australia	Website observations	8 food company websites were examined. 6/8 of companies had policies regarding children's advertising. 7/8 used eWOM (word or mouth) or viral advertising.	NA
LaFerle & Chan/2008	13-18 /Singapore	Questionnaire, regression analysis	Age, imitation of media celebrities and perceived peer influence together explained 40 percent of the variance in materialistic values.	(p=.0001, R2=.40) -(B= -.16) +(B=.42) +(B=.21)
Norgaard et al./2007	10-13/Denmark	Survey, t test, factor analysis, regression analysis	Children providing ideas and help at the shop are influencing parents purchasing decisions.	+ (R2 = 0.446) + (R2 = 0.137)

Preston & White/2004	Tweens and young adults, no ages given/US	Case study	TV networks (Fox and Nickelodeon) sell to advertisers on their brand and the depiction of kids as consumers	NA
Shoham & Dalakas /2006	10-18/Israel	Questionnaire, ANOVA	Tactics to influence parents were negotiation, logical arguments, and making a direct request despite product of cereal or shoes. Boys used persistence and guilt trips more than girls.	+ (p=.05) + (p= 0.10)
Simpson et al./1998	12-14 tweens compared to 15-18 teens	Questionnaire, ANOVA	Tweens are more concerned with style, brand names and latest fashion (status attributes) then teens.	+ (p=.007) + (p=.007) + (p=.001)

Figure 1. Tween Consumer Marketing Model
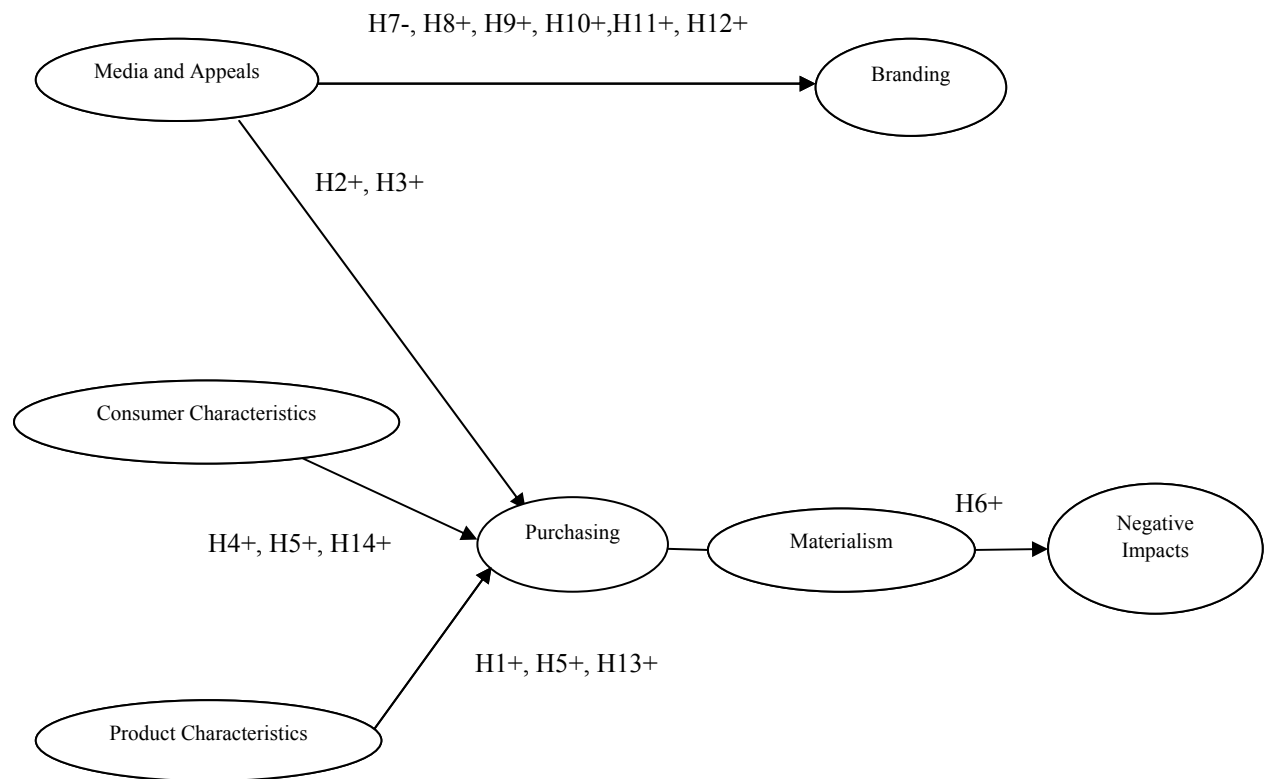
Note: + means a positive relationship between variables, - means a negative relationship.

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NET GENERATION:
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE
CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

Adolescents constitute a strong market segment these days. Consequently it is important for marketers to understand teenage consumer patterns. In recent times, consumer socialization theorists have explored the effect of socialization agents on adolescents, including television and music (Moschis & Moore, 1979; Gaddy, 1986; Butterbaugh, 1999). However, there is a gap in the socialization literature regarding adolescents and internet usage; given the increasing exposure to internet technology and the ubiquity of the internet in the lives the Net Generation this gap needs to be addressed. This paper explores the role of internet technology as an antecedent to consumer socialization agents of adolescents and, its effect on their social consciousness and purchase intensions.

The objectives of this research are to:

- *expand the consumers' socialization process to include internet technology*
- *assess the effects, of age and internet usage as antecedents to the consumer socialization agents of social ties and attitudes of others*
- *assess the influence of these socialization agents on consumer purchase intention*
- *assess the influence of these socialization agents on consumers' social conscience*

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

Consumers are intuitively social creatures and as such they engage in environmental learning (Har & Rahman, 2008). Brim and Wheeler define this type of learning as the process of socialization by which a person acquires knowledge and skills that enables them to become members of society. Research in consumer socialization is typically based on one of two theoretical models: a) the cognitive developmental model, and b) the social learning model. The cognitive developmental model focuses on learning as a cognitive-psychological process of acclimation to one's environment, emphasizing personal and environmental factors. The social learning model focuses on learning as a process of modeling and social interaction, emphasizing sources of influence known as "social agents" (Har & Rahman, 2008; Moschis & Churchill, 1978). According to Moschis and Churchill, social agents are defined as entities that "transmit

norms, attitudes, motivation and behaviors to the learner; socialization is assumed to be taking place during the course of the person's interaction with these agents in various social settings" (1978, p.600).

The theoretical concepts of socialization are used to adapt the general conceptual model originally presented by Moschis and Churchill, (1978). The three main elements of socialization theory are socialization agents, social structural variables, and outcomes. This paper looks at the Net Generation, individuals born between 1979 and 1997, and their internet usage as it relates to consumer purchase intentions and the formation of social consciousness. According to Tapscott, this is the first generation to be born into the digital age; they grew up with the internet, it has always been a constant in their lives. This generation prefers to be engaged, collaborate and share ideas (2006). Members of the Net Generation spend approximately 4 hours a day engaged in digital media either on their computers or accessing the internet through their phones or other media devices (Park & Lee, 2005). This paper proposes an adapted model that includes social ties and attitudes of others as socialization agents, internet usage as a social structure variable and the ensuing behavioral outcomes of increased social consciousness and consumer purchase intentions.

CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION

The key constructs of the consumer socialization process include cognition, attitudes, and value formation towards consumption (Har & Rahman, 2008). Knowledge is acquired by direct experience and related information from various sources (Schiffman et al., 2005). This paper proposes that the ubiquity of the internet in the lives of adolescent consumers provides them with knowledge that is acquired either by directly reading and processing information about a product or a social cause or acquired through the membership of on-line communities and peer to peer on-line communication. It is also proposes that the content and attitude of others that the Net Generation is exposed to affect their social consciousness and purchase intentions. People learn what beliefs are important through the association to a particular group and the more that they participate in a group the greater the chance that they will adopt these beliefs for themselves. Higher levels of involvement motivate consumers to act accordingly (Berkowitz & Lutterman, 1968). According to Dunfee (1998):

> Communities, particularly those with deeply embedded norms, may, in turn, affect the preferences of individual members who are influenced to adopt core community norms.... Individuals should understand that they reflect their preferences in most of their daily activities. When they buy stock, make any sort of purchase as a consumer, join clubs or organizations, choose jobs and so on, they reflect their preferences. (p.143)

MORAL PERSPECTIVE

The research stream of ethics equates consumer ethics with consumer responsibility and consumer social consciousness (Brinkman, 2004). Webster defines a socially conscious consumer as "a consumer who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social change" (1975, p.188). A common denominator between ethics literature and consumer behavior is the focus on decision making process models. First the consumer must recognize that there is a problem, so he must be informed. Second the consumer must beware of an opportunity to respond to the problem through purchase intentions and finally, he must feel that his actions as a consumer will make a difference (Webster, 1975). In ethics literature there is ideally a choice to be made between moral and immoral alternatives. This choice between alternatives leads to ethical shopping initiatives, which encourage consumers to consider how their purchases affect other people, animals and the environment. These types of groups usually share common goals to create awareness of consumers' social responsibilities, exploit potential political power by organizing activities, such as consumer boycotts, and increase companies' willingness to listen to consumer criticism (Brinkman, 2004). The proliferation of the internet has made it much easier for these types of groups to organize. Juris states that digital networks provide the technical infrastructure for the emergence of contemporary network-based social movements… social networks are profoundly transforming the nature of communities, sociality and interpersonal relations (2005).

CONCEPTUAL MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND
FORMULATION OF RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

Building on the theoretical concepts of socialization and the general conceptual model originally presented by Moschis and Churchill, this research explores the role of internet use by the Net Generation and its effect on their social consciousness and purchase intensions (1978). Some propositions, to guide research into the consumer socialization process, can be offered based on the preceding discussion. The following propositions are offered:

P1:   *Internet use as a vehicle and through its contents, influences adolescents in their acquisition of knowledge through direct experience.*

P2:   *Internet use as a vehicle and through its content, aides the formation of adolescents' attitudes towards consumption through the development of their consumption knowledge and skills.*

P3:   Internet use as a vehicle of social media influences adolescents through vicarious learning process through attitudes of others

P4:   Internet use as a vehicle of social media influences adolescents' consumption behavior intentions by influencing their beliefs.

P5:   Internet use as a vehicle of social media influences adolescents' consumer socialization processes by developing values through comparison with peers and on-line communities.

Figure 1. Net Generation: Conceptual Framework of Consumer Socialization Process
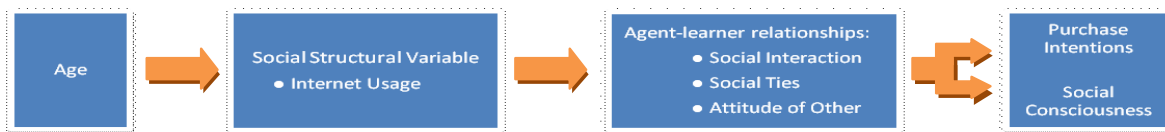
It is the premise of this paper that the age and internet usage will act as antecedents ultimately influencing consumers purchase intentions and social consciousness. It is proposed that consumers of the Net Generation will be affected by their internet usage to a greater degree than older consumers. According to Park and Lee, members of the Net Generation spend approximately one quarter of their day engaged in digital media usage (2005).

On-line communities provide access to social ties. It is proposed that these social ties will increase Net Generation consumers' exposure to different people and situations. It is also proposed that the on-line social interaction will engage consumers and increase their participation within groups. Higher levels of participation in a group increase the likelihood that consumers' values will reflect those of the groups' values. Moreover, values influence consumers' attitudes, and attitudes in turn influence consumer behavior (McCarty & Shrum, 1993). This increase in exposure and participation will affect the social consciousness of the consumer as well as their purchase intentions. Finally, it is proposed that attitude of others will influence the social consciousness of the consumer as well as their purchase intentions. Consumers' behavior and attitudes are influenced through group membership and peer to peer communications that they are involved with; higher levels of involvement motivate consumers to act accordingly (Berkowitz & Lutterman, 1968).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper provides a conceptual model that can serve as a basis for future empirical exploration of how internet usage of the Net Generations acts as an antecedent of consumer socialization agents and affects their social consciousness and purchase intensions. The Net Generation represents a newly emerging and powerful buying group. This generation's growing sensitivity to societal and environmental problems represents a shift in consumers' views and companies need to respond to this change. Cause related marketing may prove to be a useful strategy to engage these consumers. Future research will provide data and statistical testing of the overall conceptual model and the specific research propositions presented. Additionally, future research will differentiate between types of internet activities i.e., reading news blogs, keeping connected with organizations, social chatting, entertainment, and on-line communities.

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PARENTAL PERSPECTIVES ON BOOSTER SEAT USAGE: DO MOMS AND DADS SHARE COMMON GROUND?

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ABSTRACT

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, using booster seats versus adult seat belts alone lowers the risk of injury to children in crashes by 59 percent This study tests an attitudinal model of booster seat usage by using structural equation modeling based on a sample of 1320 respondents, representing fathers and mothers of K-4 students in Tennessee. Specifically, it compares mothers and fathers in terms of their approaches to booster seat usage. Since purchasing and regularly using booster seats involve the whole family, if mothers and fathers are not consistent with and positive about using booster seats, expecting a permanent positive change in children's view of booster seats is unrealistic despite educational efforts in classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2008, the use of seat belts in passenger vehicles saved an estimated 13,250 lives. Furthermore, using booster seats versus adult seat belts alone lowers the risk of children being injured in crashes by 59 percent. The number-one cause of serious injuries and deaths in children ages two to sixteen is related to automobile accidents and the lack or improper use of child-restraint systems or seatbelts (www.nhtsa.gov).

The Ollie Otter Booster Seat and Seat Belt Safety Program was developed by the Tennessee Road Builders Association and Tennessee Tech University (TTU) as an experimental solution to a serious problem: lack of booster seat and seatbelt education for youth at the critical age when good safety habits are formed. Ollie Otter, the spokes character for the Seat and Safety Program in Tennessee, seeks to be a role model for children regarding booster seat and seatbelt use. Choosing to use seatbelts and booster seats involves the following steps: recognizing the need for a booster seat or seatbelt, searching for more information on booster seats or seatbelts, evaluating the different alternatives for booster seats or seatbelts, and ultimately either purchasing a booster seat or using the seatbelt already in the vehicle. Therefore, to increase

booster seat and seatbelt use, safety programs, such as Ollie Otter's, need information on who influences the decision making process within the family.

Using survey information from parents whose children were part of an Ollie Otter Program presentation in Tennessee elementary schools, this research study seeks to couple consumer opinions about booster seat and seatbelt safety with implications of the family decision making process. Based on this research, suggestions can be made for influencing that process, thereby promoting use of booster seats and seatbelts.

In 2010, this study's authors reported preliminary results of booster seat use's attitudinal model. This new study confirms the preliminary results about the model's rigor and provides interesting differences between mothers' and fathers' attitudes and intentions regarding booster-seat use. A family must not only decide to buy, but also regularly use a booster seat for each child. From this perspective, both mothers' and fathers' attitudes are equally important. As can be easily seen from children's art about and letters to Ollie (http://www.seatbeltvolunteer.org/), Ollie Otter and booster seats were "cool" from children's perspective. However, all family members must cooperate to ensure children use their booster seats regularly. Therefore, the following review of family decision making in the literature on consumer behavior can be helpful for understanding behavior associated with using booster seats.

FAMILY DECISION MAKING RESEARCH

The decision making process can be as simple as a split-second impulse buy, or as complex as spending months researching alternatives before making a purchase. Decision making generally involves several phases: need recognition, information search, alternative evaluations, and purchase. This process becomes the family decision making process when two or more family members participate. When more than one person becomes involved, additional questions must be answered: Does everyone value the same attributes? Does everyone go through the same decision making phases? Does everyone take the same amount of time to go through the process? And, perhaps most importantly, who has the most influence over the decision? (Harcar, Spillan, and Kucukemiroglu, 2005). In addition, different family members can play different roles. Gatekeepers, for example, control the information flow from one family member to another. Purse holders control the flow of money from within the household. If a child expresses desire for a particular product to his or her mother but the mother (gatekeeper) never tells the father (purse holder), the child may not get the product. These decision-making roles can also change from one family type to another; therefore, understanding different family types is helpful.

Over the past several years, family types have drastically changed from "nuclear families" to much more diverse family types. These types include "fragmented" families that have a single parent; "blended" families that include step-parents and step-siblings; extended families that include extended family members (aunts, uncles, cousins) also living in the same

household; and "intact" families that consist of two parents and one or more children (Tinson, Nancarrow, Brace, 2008). Depending on the family type, each individual family member may have more influence (in the case of fragmented families) or less influence (in the case of extended families) the number of people weighing in on a particular decision.

The evolution of family decision making over time has been well researched. As women are spending more time outside the household and in the workplace, there has been a shift in who makes the purchase decisions in the household. Women have much more influence than they did in the past, specifically in areas that used to be male-dominated like the search for information, evaluation of alternatives, and final decision making. Furthermore, men are gaining influence within areas that used to be considered female-dominated, like childcare and grocery selection (Belch and Willis, 2001). Therefore, purchasing a booster seat, which may have traditionally been considered a female-dominated choice, may be more likely to be done by the man of the family.

While a woman's role in family decision making may have increased, so has the children's. Research shows several reasons for children's increased input when it comes to family decision making. First, parents are having fewer children, giving each child more influence. Second, the increase in single-parent families has resulted in children doing their own shopping. Third, more and more mothers are working outside the home, providing the family with more income to spend on their children. Finally, with working families' hectic lifestyles, children are forced to become more self-reliant (Caruana and Vassallo, 2003).

How can an organization or business use children as an influence within a family's decision-making process? Research shows that children have a greater impact when they are better informed and have more experience with consumer purchasing (Gram, 2007). This finding was also supported in a study done in the South Pacific. This study showed that one way children try to influence their parents' purchasing decisions is rational persuasion. They use information they have encountered as "real data" to support their request for a product or service (Wimalasiri, 2004). Therefore, organizations or movements interested in increasing booster-seat and seatbelt awareness may find it helpful to provide children with necessary information to take home and share with the rest of their family.

The purpose of this study is to test an attitudinal model of booster seat use and compare mothers and fathers in terms of their approaches to using booster seats. Purchasing and regularly using booster seats involve the whole family. If mothers and fathers are not consistent with and positive about using booster seats, expecting a permanent positive change in children's views of booster seats is unrealistic despite educational efforts in classrooms.

METHOD

Data for this research was collected from parents of K-4 students. The campaign directed to students encouraged them to use booster seats and learn about vehicle safety. They were also

encouraged to share their knowledge with their parents. While this program reached 95 counties of Tennessee, data was collected randomly throughout the year in multiple waves. Teachers of selected schools and classrooms distributed surveys in blank envelopes with no address or identity-related questions. Once surveys were returned in sealed envelops, teachers received vouchers to have pizza party for students. Pre-test data indicated that responses were coming mainly from mothers, so students were encouraged to engage their fathers more.

There were 1325 responses to this survey. Five of the questionnaires had to be removed from the database because they had more than 50 percent of the items missing. All other items had about 6 missing points that were replaced with the average value of the item. The 1320 questionnaire (256 from fathers and 1064 from mothers) were used for final data analysis. Before testing the theory presented in structural equation modeling (Figure 1), items were investigated for reliability; pre-test factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha values were found to be valid. The authors can provide details of validity and reliability checks upon request.

Figure 1: An Attitudinal Model of the Use of Booster Seat
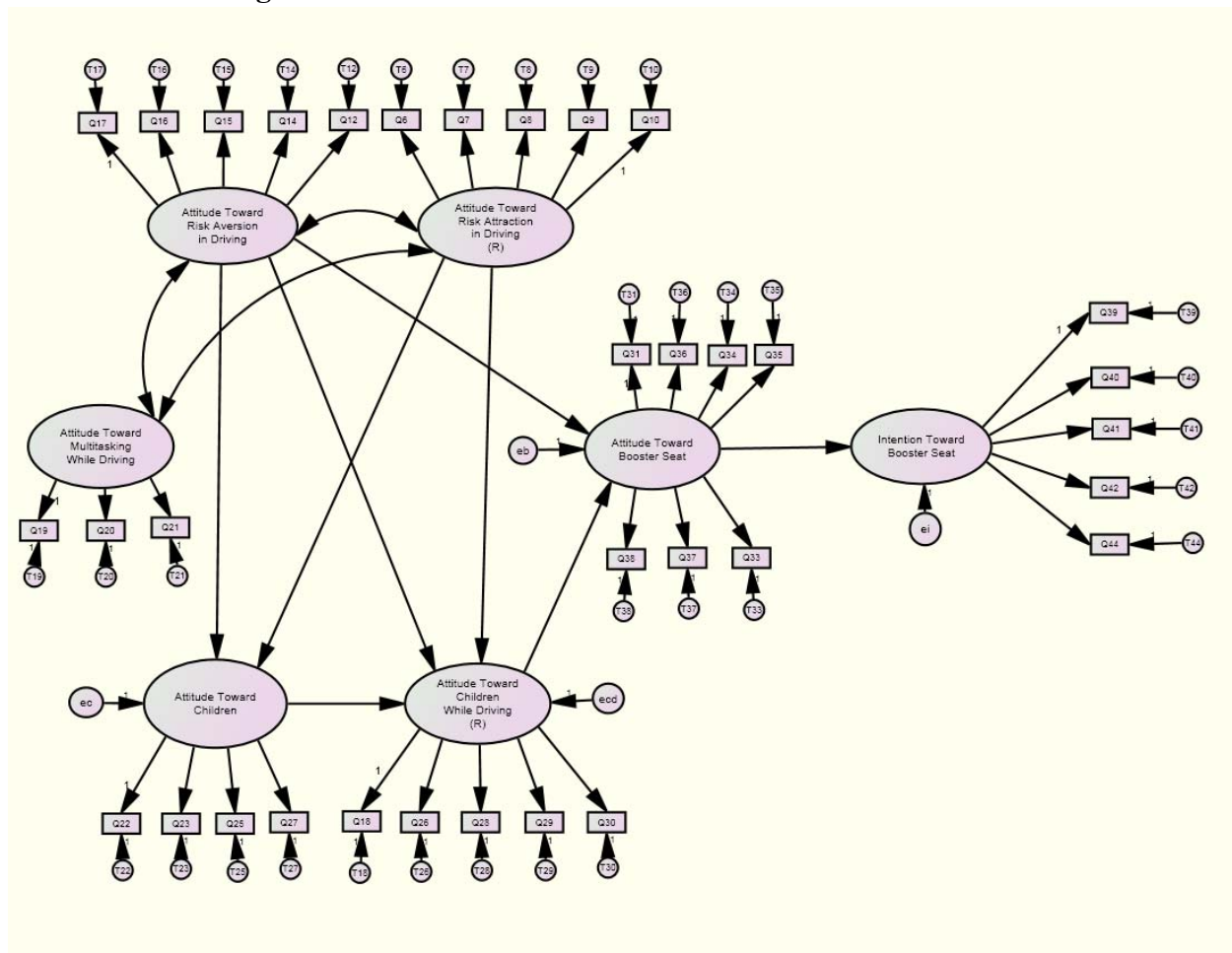
Demographics analysis showed that 80.6 percent of respondents were mothers and 19.4 percent were fathers. The average age range was 25-34. In terms of ethnic origin, 83.8 percent of the participants were Caucasian, 7.0 percent African American and 4.5 percent Hispanic. These numbers were close to those of Tennessee averages: 80.2 percent, 16.8 percent and 4.2 percent respectively. There were 2.3 vehicles per household with 46.9 percent having one car, 43.7 percent one truck, 33.4 percent one SUV, and 26.1 percent one minivan. In terms of education, 31% of the respondents had a high school diploma (compared to 33.5% of Tennessee residents). Of the respondents, 74.3% were married with at least one child between 5-9 years old. In terms of yearly income, 50.8% of the households had income of less than $40,000, compared to the median Tennessee income of $42.943.

Due to lack of research on attitudes toward using booster seats, authors combined constructs relevant to children and driving based on observations and informal discussions with parents (2010). Constructs identified in the preliminary research included attitude toward multi-tasking while driving, attitude toward *risk aversion* in driving, attitude toward *risk attraction* in driving, attitude toward children, attitude toward children while driving, attitude toward booster seats, and intention toward using booster seats.

Newly developed and existing scales used in the study were primarily 7-point Likert scales. Constructs of multi-tasking, attitude toward children and attitude toward children while driving were developed for this research. Attitude toward booster-seat use was adapted from Dabholkar (1994). Donthu and Gilliland's (1996) risk-aversion scale and Griffin, Babin and Attaway's (1996) risk-attraction scales were adapted to driving situations. Originally, these scales were developed separately and have not been tested simultaneously. Conchar et al (2004) hypothesized that risk aversion was a personality characteristic and that risk attraction was context-dependent. They are likely to correlate negatively. Multi-tasking is a new phenomenon observed with both males and females. Those who are in favor of banning multi-tasking are likely to be risk averse. As a result, attitude toward multi-tasking while driving and risk attraction are expected to negatively correlate. For this study, the following hypotheses are to be tested:

H1a: *Attitude toward multi-tasking while driving and attitude toward risk aversion are likely to positively correlate.*

H1b: *Attitude toward multi-tasking while driving and attitude toward risk attraction are likely to negatively correlate.*

H2: *Attitude toward risk aversion and attitude toward risk attraction are likely to negatively correlate.*

Risk-averse drivers are likely to pay more attention to rules and avoid risky moves while driving. They will not only use seatbelts even for short errands, but also make their children use booster seats regularly. In this study, the following hypotheses regarding attitude toward risk aversion while driving are to be verified or negated:

> *H3:   Attitude toward risk aversion while driving is likely to have a direct, positive effect on attitude toward children.*

> *H4:   Attitude toward risk aversion while driving is likely to have a direct, positive effect on attitude toward children while driving.*

Risk seekers in driving situations are likely to be more relaxed in terms of letting children do what they want in the vehicle. Even though they care for their children's well being, they may not stop actively seeking the fun of risk taking. They may also be more lax in buckling up when doing short errands or driving slowly on rural roads. Research is not available to predict risk-attraction behavior in the presence of one's children; hence, empirical evidence is necessary to support or falsify the following hypotheses:

> *H5:   Attitude toward risk attraction while driving is likely to have a direct, positive effect on attitude toward children.*

> *H6:   Attitude toward risk attraction while driving is likely to have a direct, negative effect on attitude toward children while driving.*

When driving, parents who feel good about their children are likely to try preventing them from doing potentially dangerous activities while riding in the car. Although booster seats can be cumbersome to install and uninstall, these parents are likely to have positive attitudes toward regularly using booster seats. They also spend more time on finding good booster seats and talking about benefits. These ideas lead to the following hypotheses:

> *H7:   Attitude toward children is likely to have a direct, positive effect on attitude toward children while driving.*

> *H8:   Attitude toward children while driving is likely to have a direct, positive effect on attitude toward booster seats.*

> *H9:   Attitude toward booster seats is likely have a direct, positive effect on intention towards using booster seats.*

Based on discriminant and convergent validity and reliability checks, one redundant item from attitude toward booster seat use and two items from intention toward booster seat use were removed. The updated model showed better fit than the preliminary model (2010). Chi-square was 2013 with 17 degrees of freedom. Model fit statistics—including CFI (0.934), RMSEA (0.047), AGFI (0.898) and GFI (0.911)—indicated a good fit of model and data. All items loaded significantly only to their related constructs, indicating adequate construct validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total sample was checked for model validity. When two groups—mothers and fathers—were fitted separately, fit indices were improved, indicating differences in both groups' attitudes (Table 1).

Table 1: The Model Fit - Two Groups	
Chi-Sq	4659.234
Degrees of freedom	1548
Chi-Sq Ratio	3.010
CFI	0.932
RMSEA	0.028
AGFI	0.885
GFI	0.901

Table 2 shows the hypotheses' test and resulting path weights. Eight out of ten hypotheses were supported, indicating a sound theoretical structure. As expected, risk aversion and risk attraction were related but separate constructs. Multi-tasking correlated positively and strongly with risk aversion. For females, risk attraction correlated negatively with multi-tasking. While this correlation provided partial support to H1b, the relationship was not significant for fathers.

Table 2: Test of Hypotheses					
Hypotheses	Path	Group	Standardized Regression Weights	P Value	Outcome
H1a	Attitude Toward Multi-Tasking ↔ Attitude Toward Risk Aversion	Total Male Female	0.223 0.324 0.224	0.000 0.000 0.000	Supported Supported Supported
H1b	Attitude Toward Multi-Tasking ↔ Attitude Toward Risk Attraction	Total Male Female	-0.064 -0.128 -0.090	0.066 0.125 0.024	Not Supported Not Supported Partially Supported
H2	Attitude Toward Risk Aversion ↔ Attitude Toward Risk Attraction	Total Male Female	-0.407 -0.420 -0.353	0.000 0.000 0.000	Supported Supported Supported

			Table 2: Test of Hypotheses			
Hypotheses	Path	Group	Standardized Regression Weights	P Value	Outcome
H3	Attitude Toward Risk Aversion → Attitude Toward Children	Total Male Female	0.437 0.411 0.447	0.000 0.000 0.000	Supported Supported Supported
H4	Attitude Toward Risk Aversion → Attitude Toward Children While Driving	Total Male Female	0.281 0.318 0.251	0.000 0.007 0.000	Supported Supported Supported
H5	Attitude Toward Risk Attraction → Attitude Toward Children	Total Male Female	-0.034 0.007 -0.077	0.352 0.934 0.057	Not Supported Not Supported Not Supported
H6	Attitude Toward Risk Attraction → Attitude Toward Children While Driving	Total Male Female	-0.136 0.024 -0.215	0.000 0.768 0.000	Supported Not Supported Supported
H7	Attitude Toward Children → Attitude Toward Children While Driving	Total Male Female	0.290 0.294 0.267	0.000 0.003 0.000	Supported Supported Supported
H8	Attitude Toward Children While Driving → Attitude Toward Booster Seat	Total Male Female	0.169 0.149 0.176	0.000 0.086 0.000	Supported Not Supported Supported
H9	Attitude Toward Booster Seat → Intention Toward Booster Seat	Total Male Female	0.309 0.375 0.285	0.000 0.000 0.000	Supported Supported Supported
New Path	Attitude Toward Risk Aversion→ Attitude Toward Booster Seat	Total Male Female	0.114 0.066 0.123	0.005 0.436 0.006	Significant Not Significant Significant

Respondents' attitudes toward risk aversion had strong and significant effects on attitudes toward children and toward children while driving. Both groups had approximately equal standardized regression weights for H3 and H4. Surprisingly, the path between risk attraction and attitude toward children constructs (H5) was found to be insignificant. Fathers and to some degree mothers did not seem to relate their preference for risk attraction (or avoidance) to their attitudes toward their children. Likewise, fathers did not seem to relate their risk attraction to their attitude toward children while driving. Parents with risk-attraction inclinations (H6) were more likely to let children unbuckle their seat belts for short errands.

For both fathers and mothers, attitude toward children was found to be a significant construct that influenced attitude toward children while driving together with attitude toward risk aversion (H7). Pre-test results indicated attitude toward children while driving was the only construct that affected attitudes toward booster seats. Even though still strong for the total sample, attitude towards risk aversion influenced mothers' attitudes toward booster seats as strongly as toward children while driving.

Another interesting result regarding fathers was that none of the paths leading to attitude toward booster seats was significant. That result may be due to the family decision making processes in which mothers make the final decisions regarding booster seat use. Fathers' attitudes, in contrast, may be based on their hands-on experience using, installing, and uninstalling booster seats. This result required further investigating both groups' responses. Comparison of mothers' and fathers' mean responses can be seen in Table 3.

Comparison of mean responses between mothers and fathers reveals statistically significant differences on multiple constructs. As expected, mothers seemed to have a more favorable attitude towards risk aversion during driving than fathers. This difference may be explained by the philosophy of being "safe rather than sorry" in every aspect of child care. For example, mothers tended to avoid aggressive drivers and risky moves and pay attention to cars' safety features more than fathers. They also claimed to buckle up more than fathers.

Fathers, on the other hand, seemed to have more a favorable attitude toward risk attraction in driving than mothers. They considered risky situations as fun and drove more aggressively. However, their risk loving behavior in driving did not necessarily mean that they would take risks that could potentially endanger their children's safety.

Multi-tasking was another interesting construct in the sense that mothers seemed to be more favorable than fathers toward multi-tasking while driving, even though mothers were significantly more risk averse than fathers. This finding may be explained by the perception that mothers were usually expected to do more in less time than fathers regarding their children. However, they did not perceive that their multi-tasking activities could actually endanger their children.

Both mothers and fathers seemed to have similar attitudes toward their children in general and also while driving. However, fathers were more likely to forget to tell their children to buckle up. They would more likely than mothers to feel that wearing a seat belt or using a booster seat for a short errand was unnecessary. Also for fathers, driving slowly on a rural road did not always necessitate using a booster seat. These two observations about multi-tasking and short errands on rural roads found in this study should alert educators to focus training kids and indirectly parents about the dangers of the above mentioned habits.

Construct	Items	Item Description	Mean		t-Value	P Value
			Mothers	Fathers		
Intention Toward Booster Seat	Q39	Look for information about booster seats.	5.08	4.82	1.895	0.058
	Q40	Spend your time to find a good booster seat.	5.63	4.43	1.721	0.086
	Q41	Compare the benefits of different booster seat brands.	5.41	5.25	1.308	0.191
	Q42	Buy a booster seat for each child in your household.	6.15	5.97	1.681	0.093
	Q43	Secure your child into a booster seat every time you drive.	6.44	6.31	1.448	0.148
	Q44	Discuss the importance of using booster seat with a friend.	5.56	5.08	3.707	0.000
	Q45	Recommend that your friends use a booster seat for their children.	5.85	5.51	2.714	0.007
Attitude Toward Booster Seat	Q31	Bad - Good	6.54	6.36	2.093	0.037
	Q32	Unpleasant - Pleasant	6.21	5.91	3.130	0.002
	Q33	Harmful - Beneficial	6.42	6.20	2.171	0.031
	Q34	Unfavorable - Favorable	6.72	6.16	2.174	0.030
	Q35	Unappealing - Appealing	6.15	5.84	3.078	0.002
	Q36	Inappropriate - Appropriate	6.45	6.27	2.019	0.044
	Q37	Foolish - Wise	6.49	6.30	1.854	0.065
	Q38	Unsafe - Safe	6.54	6.48	0.807	0.420
Attitude Toward Children	Q22	Children are enjoyment in life.	6.89	6.80	1.808	0.071
	Q23	I care about the well being of my children.	6.92	6.84	1.598	0.111
	Q25	I feel good about my children	6.86	6.84	1.541	0.588
	Q27	I try to protect my children from potential dangers.	6.80	6.83	-0.565	0.572
Attitude Toward Children While Driving (R)	Q18	Wearing a seat belt for a short errand is not always necessary.	1.92	2.31	-2.961	0.003
	Q26	Regardless of their age, my children can responsibly sit in any seat they choose in the car.	2.10	2.11	-0.107	0.914
	Q28	I can do anything to stop my children whining in the car even let them get out of the booster seat.	1.44	1.59	-1.540	0.124
	Q29	Sometimes I forget to tell my children to buckle up.	1.75	1.96	-1.788	0.075
	Q30	When I am driving slowly on a rural road, putting my child in his/her booster seat is unnecessary.	1.39	1.64	-2.395	0.017
Attitude Toward Multi-Tasking While Driving	Q19	Police should ticket those who drive while talking on cell phone.	4.23	4.66	-3.018	0.003
	Q20	Eating while driving is dangerous.	4.89	5.23	-3.038	0.002
	Q21	Drinking beverages while driving is dangerous.	4.10	4.53	-3.264	0.001
Attitude Toward Risk Attraction in Driving	Q6	Fast driving would make driving more pleasant.	2.21	2.50	-2.787	0.006
	Q7	I would like to drive a race car.	2.29	3.59	-7.906	0.000
	Q8	I sometimes do things I know are dangerous just for fun.	1.46	2.14	-5.986	0.000
	Q9	Taking risks can be fun.	1.67	2.22	-4.976	0.000
	Q10	I never hesitate to overtake those who drive very slowly.	2.97	3.52	-4.294	0.000
Attitude Toward Risk Aversion in Driving	Q12	I give the right of way to an aggressive driver if he or she endangers my safety.	6.32	5.98	3.207	0.001
	Q14	I always buckle up.	6.35	6.12	2.396	0.017
	Q15	I would rather be safe than sorry.	6.77	6.50	3.890	0.000
	Q16	I always avoid risky moves in traffic.	6.04	5.69	3.860	0.000
	Q17	I pay attention to safety features while buying a car.	5.93	5.57	3.350	0.001

Table 3: Comparison of Mean Responses: Mothers and Fathers

R = Item has been reverse coded.

In terms of securing their child in booster seats, fathers as well as mothers believed that booster seats were safe and that using them was wise. Fathers, on the other hand, were not as happy as mothers in terms of booster-seat characteristics. They tended to find them less pleasant, less appealing, and less appropriate to use in every occasion. This finding indicates that manufacturers of booster seats and cars must improve designs for easier installation. Informal talks with parents after this study revealed that installing and uninstalling seats were especially difficult if there were more than one child who needed more than one booster seat at home. Also, transfer of booster seats from vehicle to vehicle was a burden considering that households averaged 2 vehicles (most frequently a car and a truck).

This study provides information about family decision making regarding booster-seat use. The findings indicate that all family members' involvement is important to ensure child safety. Mothers seem to be the key decision makers in purchasing and using booster seats; also they talk more about booster seats and recommend them to their friends. Nevertheless, consistent use of the seats requires children's cooperation. That cooperation has been enhanced through the Ollie Otter's Child Booster Seat Program, which has generated awareness and the desire to use booster seats as can be seen from children's letters and art works to Ollie (Official Site for Ollie Otter's Child Booster Seat Program, 2011). However, mothers still need fathers' cooperation with and commitment to regularly using booster seats. Such cooperation also reinforces children's perception of safety in vehicles.

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INTERNATIONAL DESIGN CONCEPTS IN INTERNET TOURISM MARKETING: COMPARING WEB-DESIGN PRACTICES IN ATLANTIC CANADA AND NEW ENGLAND

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the web design practices of tourism authorities in Atlantic Canada and New England. Specifically the online tourism websites of the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont are compared with the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Examination is given to the design of web pages using a content analysis coding scheme and differences in emphasis between these two regions are noted. A discussion of the findings follows with a conclusion and recommendations that may be noteworthy for those studying online marketing, tourism marketing or experiential marketing applications.

INTRODUCTION

As online travel services such as Expedia.com and Travelocity.com continue to gain market share in the tourism industry and as travel agents become less critical for international tourists, travelers' reliance on information gathered via the Internet will continue to grow in the foreseeable future. As the growth in tourism has become a driver for national economies worldwide, nation-states and other political entities such as territories and other autonomous regions (e.g. principalities, states and provinces) must compete to gain attention, foster interest, create desire and encourage action among potential travelers. As noted by Sharma, Carson & DeLacy (2000): "State and federal governments see tourism as an economic driver to counter declining commodity prices and increased economic instability, particularly in regional and rural areas" (p. 160). The information provided to tourists through government-sponsored websites needs to be strategically marketed and properly defined to reach target audiences if these governments wish to charge that engine of their economies.

The North American tourism industry faces challenges that differ from the rest of the world in many ways. One of the most important considerations is that tourism in North America is centered on three nations: Canada, the United States and Mexico. All three nations are

established on a federal system of governance subdivided into smaller geographic districts (states in the USA and Mexico, provinces in Canada). When one considers that in visiting these nations one must visit individual states or provinces, the focus of tourism changes particularly in the cases of the USA and Canada where regional differences are clear and well-defined. As a result of the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) travel across North American borders increased both in terms of commerce and tourism. Until recently citizens of the United States, Canada and Mexico could transit the NAFTA borders without a passport, therefore the options for vacations were plentiful and North American citizens freely chose to vacation in different areas of the continent. Despite the new passport requirements, economic and political circumstances may lead to continued interest in travel opportunities on this continent that do not involve a trans-oceanic crossing but offer many exciting options for North American tourists.

This study seeks to examine the differences in online tourism marketing practices between two politically distinct yet culturally similar North American regions: the New England states of the USA (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont) and the Atlantic Provinces of Canada (New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island). As these areas are considered as vacation destinations, even in difficult economic times, it is beneficial to understand the differences in how these provinces and states promote their offerings to potential travelers. The focus of this study is to better understand how these states and provinces market themselves on the Internet in relation to their national and hence broader brand identities.

ONLINE TOURISM

As discussed by Sears (2003) tourism is an experiential product therefore it has become incumbent upon managers to create websites that effectively communicate tourism products in ways that are authentic and attractive to information seekers. However Morgan et al (2001) note that information overload and web complexity may be issues for consumers particularly in regards to translating homepage information. Yet the fact that information is readily available via the Internet may satisfy the desire for service convenience consumers seek in their searches. According to Berry, Seiders & Grewal (2002) consumers actively seek satisfaction related to time and effort savings. The Internet allows consumers to experience service satisfaction in terms of decision convenience, access convenience, transaction convenience, and benefit convenience.

Correia, Oom do Valle & Moco (2007) identified six motivating factors (Figure 1) among Portuguese tourists that were critical in destination selection and perception. These motivators identified as push and pull factors consisted of knowledge, leisure, socialization (all push factors) and facilities, core attractions and landscape features (all pull factors). Correia et al (2007) found in the case of Portuguese tourists "that the decision to travel to exotic places arises from the

desire of knowledge, having social status and intellectual leisure…since tourists were found to be more aware of facilities and core attractions, marketing of these destinations must be focused on these factors rather than on beautiful images of landscape." (p. 79). They also note importantly that tourists "do not understand leisure as 'doing nothing'. Knowing why people travel the way they do may lead to the offer of appropriated attractions and activities to the right tourist." (p. 79).

Figure 1 – Correia, do Valle and Moco's Push and Pull Factors in Tourism Decision Making
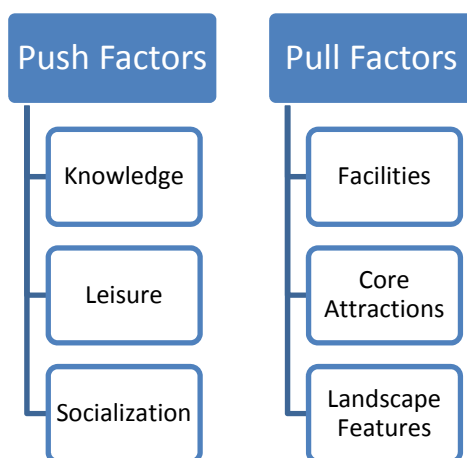
Morgan, Pritchard and Abbott (2001) argue that "technology and tourism are increasingly interdependent" and that effectively created websites are "critical in tourism because, as an intangible product, its marketing largely depends upon visual representation" (p. 111). Australia, in the late 20th century, sought to define a national online tourism policy. Of paramount concern in the Australian project was the proper design of websites to efficiently and effectively reach Internet consumers and understand their information needs. Given the distinct visual symbols (boomerangs, kangaroos, the Sydney Opera House) associated with Australia as one nation rather than a political entity divided into subunits, the idea of visiting Australia rather than New South Wales or Queensland makes more sense to tourists given the position Australia occupies in the mind. It should be noted that in the Australian model, the federal government sought to direct the tourism efforts for the entire nation (Sharma, Carson & DeLacy 2000) however in North America guidance from a centralized tourism authority in Canada or the USA is less obvious.

In a recent review of tourism marketing by Parker (2007) the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) sought to launch a new "brand Canada" strategy in 2005. This strategy was designed to focus consumers on the "experience" of Canada rather than on the natural environment of the country. The CTC had hoped the campaign would redefine Canada in terms other than moose and Mounties. Yet in a preliminary analysis of provincial and territorial

homepages Parker found that all subdivisions from the federal government of Canada continued to focus on the "great outdoors" image Canadian tourism had fostered among the traveling public for more than 50 years despite the initiative from Ottawa.

It seems that the CTC would agree with Correia et al (2007), that focus must lead to other places than "beautiful landscapes". Their theme for Canada of "Keep Exploring" seems to follow the argument of marketing core attractions as a central theme to boost tourism. However the individual provinces are still following suit regarding the status quo of Canada as a nature destination (Parker 2007). Correia et al (2007) suggest that "destination marketing must be focused on push motives to enhance the destination's competitiveness" (p. 79). If their conclusion is accurate, then how will similar regions in neighbouring countries compete online for tourists?

The design elements of a website are controlled by managers in their efforts to engineer the experiences that sustain their brand positioning. Interestingly, the links between objective product characteristics and more abstract consumer responses have been of interest to consumer behaviour researchers for some time. For instance, means-end theory and laddering techniques have been used to link product features to functional and psychosocial outcomes of the consumption experience (Reynolds & Gutman 1988). Moreover, strategies such as the House of Quality aim to translate consumer needs into concrete design or engineering characteristics such as usability or ease of use (c.f. Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw 1989). Founded on this stream of research, a coding scheme was developed that first considers the functional parameters of the website that are prerequisites before features can be added that will create pleasurable experiences.

Thus, consideration of best practices in website development is salient to this discussion. First and foremost, the creation of an effective website requires a clear understanding of the characteristics and values of the target audience (Brilliant design 2002) and the use of words, phrases, and concepts that are familiar to these users (Levi 2001). A minimalist design that is visually pleasing and avoids unnecessary text (Brilliant design 2002; Levi 2001) will be more appealing than one that overwhelms the visitor with busyness and reading.

While a cutting edge appearance is desirable (Carroll & Broadhead 1999), all users will appreciate judicious use of tools such as flash; media overkill such as excessive use of graphics, colour, sound, video, and other media will lead to excessive cognitive overhead for viewers (Brilliant design 2002; McNally & Bradley 2000; Levi 2001; Dalal, Quible, & Wyatt 1999). When sound is used, it should be designed so that visitors can control the volume or turn it off altogether (Brilliant design 2002).

Navigation through the site must be clear, with a consistent layout of pages and formatting, the navigation bar in expected locations (left and/or top of page), and with typefaces and labeling legible and consistent (Brilliant design 2002; McNally & Bradley 2000; Levi 2001; Adam & Deans 1998; Dalal, Quible, & Wyatt 1999). These factors will reduce frustration and enable visitors to visualize the overall architecture of the site (Dalal, Quible, & Wyatt 1999).

The front page of a website is like a store's window display (Carroll & Broadhead 1999) – it must convince the visitor to enter the shopping environment. Fresh updated content (Brilliant design 2002; Dholakia, & Rego 1998; Adam & Deans 1998) will encourage repeat visits. Credibility, trust, respect (Carroll & Broadhead 1999) and security (McNally & Bradley 2000) are necessary ingredients to inspire purchase.

One factor that is seen as key to the success of a web site is interactivity (Adam & Deans 2000; McNally & Bradley 2000; Levi 2001); as such web experiences are expected to help maintain customer loyalty (Adam & Deans 2000). Some of the other facets of the browsing experience which have been consistently identified as vital are stickyness (the site's ability to encourage long visits; Wolfinbarger & Gilly 2001), virtual reality (Steuer 1992), and download times – both perceived and objective. (Katterattanakul 2002) Overall, in keeping with the objective of staging an experience, the site must provoke the "willing suspension of disbelief" – a phrase coined by poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge and commonly used to describe a sense of flow that is usually inspired by a captivating book or theatre experience. Moe and Fader (2001) suggest that, "… e-marketers should target hedonic browsers with flashy and attractive promotions rather than with messages focused on objective product attributes" (pp. 115-116). A meta-analysis by Park & Gretzel (2007) shows that factors of success for destination marketing website include: information quality, ease of use, responsiveness, security/privacy, visual appearance, trust, interactivity, personalization and fulfillment. However, there is a need for empirical work that will examine and explain the design elements (or atmospheric qualities; Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis 2001) of web sites that lead to a memorable customer experience and which, in turn, translate into market outcomes for the brand. "We argue that, in the highly competitive Internet commerce environment, the companies that offer the best customer experience are the ones that will receive trusts from customers and are more likely to succeed on the web" (Katerattanakul 2002, p. 62).

It is important to understand best practices in website design when considering that marketers must appeal to sensory perception of audience members in order to attract their interest in a good or service. Both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators are often triggered by sensory perceptions such as sight and sound. Since potential visitors to a geographic area need to be pushed or pulled, both visual and auditory symbols can potentially be effective in marketing efforts. Internet marketers are able to utilize devices that appeal to sight and sound only – touch, taste and smell are at this point in technological development unattainable to the average Internet user. Hence, effective website development will continue to be critically important in competitive marketplaces. The tourism market is no exception. The use of visuals and the emphasis on credibility and trust will no doubt be key components in continuity programs of tourism marketers.

The tourism industry is unique in that the web provides substantial advantages over traditional methods of representing an experiential product that consumers must purchase

without seeing and cannot return if it does not suit them. This is no doubt one of the reasons for its early adoption as a means of both searching information and making bookings in this sector.

Figure 2 – Elements of Tourism Website Design
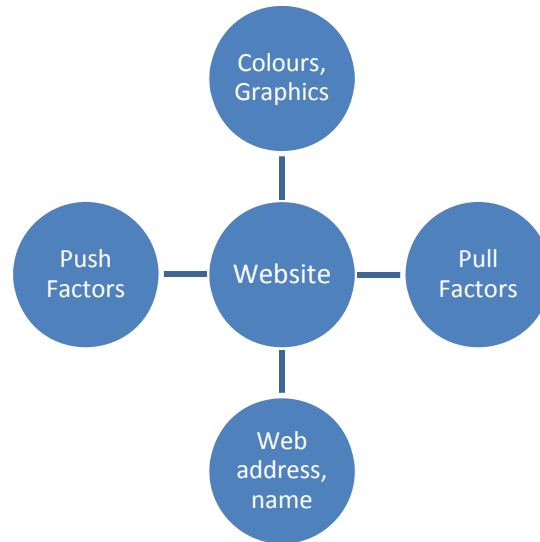
METHOD

Thus far, research has focused on a very narrow spectrum of site features, such as limited coding of the front page or levels of interactivity (Yoo & Donthu 2001; Chen & Wells 1999; Chen, Clifford & Wells 2002; Dreze & Zufryden 1997; Liu 2002; Szymanski & Hise 2000). To our knowledge, no study has taken a holistic and detailed view of all of the features of the site. As a foundation for developing a list of relevant design features, it is important to consider the unique challenges of the web environment, in contrast to the more well understood real-world environment. As suggested previously, in the real-world, consumers can rely upon all five senses, however, the web environment is limited to the senses of sight and sound. Yet, despite its inherent limitations, the web environment may be used to convey some of the sensory aspects of product consumption (Lynch & Ariely 2000). In fact Klein (1998) holds that via interactive media the consumer drastically lowers information search costs. Since time and space are compressed and the consumer has a central place in the virtual environment, communication may take on an immersive quality, creating a sense of telepresence (Hoffman & Novak 1996; Steuer 1992). Furthermore, interaction with the brand may also influence the consumer in online environments. Although the web still does not provide the same 'real-life' sense of interactivity exemplified by human-to-human interactions, tools such as intelligent agents and real-time chat have steadily improved interactivity (Dehn & van Mulken 2000).

The inherent characteristics of the web environment were used as a foundation to develop a list of objective parameters that are likely to be particularly important in designing and creating compelling online brand experiences. The coding scheme was developed with an eye to web best practice, concurrently considering the need to understand each state or province's depiction of push or pull factors. This goal was accomplished using an iterative approach that carefully examined best practice, interviews with commercial designers, and previous studies of tourism websites. First, a thorough search of pertinent literature on website design in consumer, psychology, engineering, and communications domains was conducted. Next, the search was then broadened to include domains such as advertising and psychophysics, all aimed at identifying the features that would be more directly tied to pleasurable or perhaps compelling experiences. The parameters considered in the coding scheme ultimately included: address of the site (URL); language options; presence (absence) of sound and moving pictures; and overall assessment of push/pull representation. For a full list of the parameters in the coding scheme, see Appendix A.

The sites were identified using a search engine (Google) aimed at locating the official government tourism agency of each state and province. Next, the website for each state (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont) and province (New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) was thoroughly examined to capture each region's use of design features to represent the brand characteristics and positioning strategy. Each site was analyzed and coded over a 60-day period in mid-2007. (Note – Subsequent to the 2007 analysis, the websites may have changed in design, content and layout to maintain up-to-date content for information seekers.)

FINDINGS

The domain names of the four Atlantic Provinces and the six New England state tourism websites illustrate differences in uniformity. (See Table I) New England state tourism websites, while not completely consistent, are more uniform than those of the four Atlantic Provinces. New England sites include "visit" or "vacation" in the name while just two of the four Canadian sites display "tourism". Moreover, two of the Canadian websites end with ".com" and two with ".ca". The New England sites list ".com" except for New Hampshire with ".gov". The Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island sites fail to even suggest they are portals for travel information. Another important consideration is that websites with names similar to the states' or provinces' travel sites, often direct visitors to portals that may or may not have anything to do with the primary travel website. The use of similarly named websites may be a topic of consideration for future research in this area or other areas of marketing that study naming conventions for websites.

Table I: Tourism Websites of the Atlantic Provinces of Canada and New England States			
CANADA		USA	
New Brunswick	http://www.tourismnewbrunswick.ca	Connecticut	http://www.ctvisit.com
Newfoundland and Labrador	http://newfoundlandandlabradortourism.com	Maine	http://visitmaine.com
Nova Scotia	http://novascotia.com	Massachusetts	http://www.mass-vacation.com
Prince Edward Island	http://www.gov.pe.ca	New Hampshire	http://visitnh.gov
		Rhode Island	http://www.visitrhodeisland.com
		Vermont	http://www.vermontvacation.com

The websites' languages reflect (Table II) the national identity of the two countries studied as well as the target markets for the New England states and Atlantic Provinces. The four Atlantic Province websites are available in at least English and French. Nova Scotia includes German while Prince Edward Island includes German and Japanese. (The latter of these languages thanks to *Anne of Green Gables*, which enjoys tremendous popularity in Japan.) The New England states' websites provide information only in English. Only the New Brunswick – Canada's lone bilingual province - web page required the visitor to make a language choice before entering the website.

Table II: Languages Offered on Websites			
CANADA		USA	
PROVINCE	LANGUAGE	STATE	LANGUAGE
New Brunswick	English, French	Connecticut	English
Newfoundland and Labrador	English, French	Maine	English
Nova Scotia	English, French, German	Massachusetts	English
Prince Edward Island	English, French, German, Japanese	New Hampshire	English
		Rhode Island	English
		Vermont	English

Table III: Sounds and Moving Pictures									
CANADA	COLOUR	SOUNDS	MOVING PICTURES	ROLL OVER PICTURE	USA	COLOUR	SOUNDS	MOVING PICTURES	ROLL OVER PICTURES
New Brunswick	Yes	No	No	No	Connecticut	Yes	No	No	No
Newfoundland and Labrador	Yes	No	No	Yes	Maine	Yes	No	Yes	No
Nova Scotia	Yes	No	No	Yes	Massachusetts	Yes	No	No	Yes
Prince Edward Island	Yes	No	No	Yes	New Hampshire	Yes	No	Yes	No
					Rhode Island	Yes	No	No	No
					Vermont	No	No	No	No

The Atlantic Province pages are similar in that none of the websites include sounds or moving pictures. Of the New England states only New Hampshire and Maine incorporate moving pictures. Like the Atlantic Provinces, no New England site has sound. In fact, none of the websites employs music or sound. Pictures (as noted in Table III in the column "Roll Over Picture") change, move or appear when a cursor is moved over a menu option for Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Massachusetts. Except for Vermont, New England states' and Atlantic Provinces' menu options and/or links change color when clicked or 'moused over'.

According to the preceding discussion, it seems reasonable that the Atlantic Province websites would emphasize push factors (knowledge, leisure and socialization) more than pull factors (facilities, core attractions and landscape features). However, Table IV reveals that the Canadian Atlantic Provinces emphasize pull factors more than push factors. All main pictures highlight a peaceful setting and only one features a non-nature theme. The Atlantic Province websites are consistent in that they stress the leisure and relaxation of a vacation. No people are included in any of the main pictures.

Table IV: Atlantic Provinces Main Picture on First Page		
PROVINCE	PHOTO DESCRIPTION	PUSH/PULL FACTOR
New Brunswick	Quiet place to relax, calming colors that make the scenery look peaceful.	Pull
Newfoundland and Labrador	Overlooking grassy hills in a late night setting. Nice view of calming river.	Pull
Nova Scotia	Cozy dining area by the fireplace for a relaxing dinner.	Pull
Prince Edward Island	Ocean, sky with clouds, mountain with a lighthouse.	Pull

Similarly, the New England state sites are consistent in their image of the area (Table V). The main pictures on the first page all emphasize action, outdoor activities -- mainly skiing but also horseback riding and the sea. The backgrounds encourage outdoor sports. Two of the websites focus on individuals whereas the other four focus on groups of people – emphasizing the socialization of a vacation, i.e. push factors. All of the New England sites include people.

Table V: New England States Main Picture on First Page		
STATE	PHOTO DESCRIPTION	PUSH/PULL FACTOR
Connecticut	Person skiing down a mountain.	Pull
Maine	Moving picture of a person skiing. Mountain, snow, trees, dogs, birds.	Pull
Massachusetts	Cluster of people skiing down a slope.	Push
New Hampshire	Group of people in ski outfits standing around a circle.	Push
Rhode Island	Man on horseback by the water with two other people in a seascape background.	Push
Vermont	Fireplace, kids on a sled, someone skiing down a mountain.	Push

DISCUSSION

With the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 many concerns were raised over the economic viability of such an agreement. However Globerman & Storer (2005) found that the economic integration of the US and Canadian economies created a stabilization that had been unforeseen by many analysts. This stabilizing factor may function as an equalizer in the tourism industry for the border regions discussed in this paper. For most of 2008, the Canadian dollar was at virtual parity with the American dollar; this may pose either an advantage or disadvantage depending upon the home country of tourists and the relative costs for lodging, souvenirs and consumable items such as food and fuel. If both Atlantic Canada and New England are relative equals in terms of cost for travel, then the push motives outlined by Correia et al (2007) become even more important to consider for two important reasons: (1) pull motives seem to be employed more persistently on the websites than push motives (see Tables IV and V); and (2) push motives are often more difficult to duplicate and, therefore, create more effective points of differentiation for destinations.

It seems clear from the review of websites that despite the CTC's desire for the image of Canada to go beyond a "nature destination" the Atlantic Provinces are still emphasizing the natural beauty of the area. The New England states, on the other hand, seem to be emphasizing a socialization element given their primary emphasis on people in their main photographic image found on their tourism homepages. The position that may be developing in the minds of travelers for these two regions is that New England is for playing while Atlantic Canada is for sight-seeing.

An important issue to consider is whether or not these regions will, in the future, seek to develop a unified regional brand identity as destinations. The fact that New England states have a somewhat uniform naming convention for their websites (e.g. containing the word "visit" or "vacation" and ending with a .com) will help in the establishment of a New England tourism brand. Given that Canada was the first nation to purchase a .travel domain for the country in 2005 (Parker, 2007) the provinces of Atlantic Canada could actually take advantage of that by renaming their websites to reflect some uniform regional identity. Since the coding of websites in this research project was performed in 2007, there has apparently been some movement in Canada to reflect uniformity of tourism websites in naming conventions; it must be assumed this is a recent development undertaken by tourism authorities after our research was conducted.

Another consideration centers around the available language choices found on state and provincial tourism homepages. It is interesting to note that none of the New England states offered tourism information in any language other than English. Is this a reflection that tourism officials in these states do not consider international tourists – including francophones from neighboring provinces - to be part of their target market? The failure of these states to provide visitors to websites a choice of languages when considering vacationing options may prove to be a handicapping factor in the future in competing with other regions for tourism dollars. The

Canadian provinces are not only encouraging tourists from Quebec with French language option but because German is offered on two provincial websites (Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) European tourists may feel more welcome in Atlantic Canada than in the New England states. As the United States continues to become a more diverse nation and more people around the world begin to rely on the Internet for information, website designers will most likely have to consider the development of multilingual sites for tourists, otherwise Canada and Mexico could become primary tourism destinations in North America for US residents whose first language is not English and for travelers from the rest of the non-English speaking world. It makes sense that tourism planners in the United States consider Spanish as a language option on their official government sponsored websites to appeal to the second-largest, and fastest growing, linguistic population in the United States.

While most people searching for information clearly seek to obtain what they need prior to arriving at a destination, Ortega & Rodriguez (2007) observed that travelers to Spain from the USA, Britain, Germany and France placed great importance on the availability of information at the actual tourist destinations. Given this new finding, one consideration website designers might take into account is the nature of information sought by travelers upon arrival. Knowing the exact information tourists are seeking with regard to dining, events, entertainment and other activities may help to draw visitors to locations. Perhaps an opportunity exists to study the means by which tourism authorities choose to disseminate information to travelers at specific tourism information locations (e.g. convention and visitors' bureaus, Internet kiosks, web-enabled mobile devices or tourist information offices).

Figure 3 – Utilization of Factors in Tourism Decision Making

Consumer Decision for Travel Destination
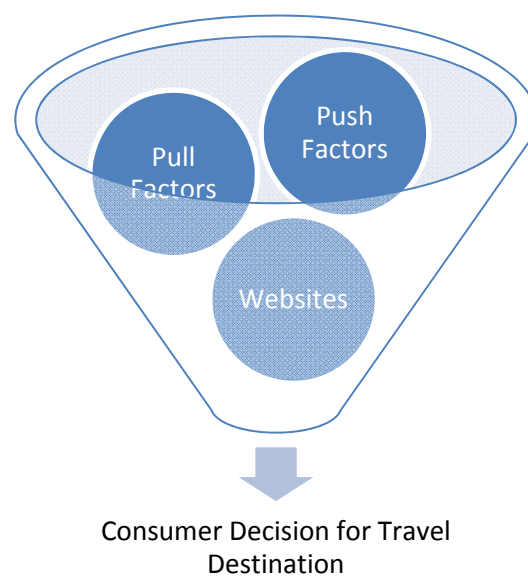
In light of the best practices discussion above, tourism marketing managers in both the USA and Canada would be wise to consider how they are addressing important issues relating to satisfying the sensory perception issues of visitors to their websites. If tourism is to fully become an experiential good then tourism marketers must consider the intrinsic rewards that occur from visiting a New England state or Atlantic Canadian province. Developing websites effectively will no doubt become something of a horse race for tourism marketers in these regions.

CONCLUSION

As we have noted at the beginning of this paper, the North American tourism industry faces challenges that are different from the rest of the world. Unlike Europe, Africa and Asia, only three vast nations govern the primary North American landmass but as these nations are subdivided into small autonomous geographical units, consumers have diverse options in choosing where to spend vacations. As the Internet continues to evolve into the primary source for information on vacation and holiday destinations the importance of understanding how tourism authorities develop and maintain their information portals, also known as websites, will be critical for marketers and other scholars seeking to understand consumer behaviour particularly in the area of experiential consumption.

This study has been designed to be an opening look at the differences between online tourism marketing in two distinct regions in the United States and Canada. It is by no means meant to be a final analysis into this area. We encourage discussion and further pursuit of research into the differences between New England and Atlantic Canada online tourism marketing efforts. We also feel there is room to study the regional differences in online tourism marketing in other parts of North America such as the Pacific Northwest or along the Gulf of Mexico where many beach resorts exist in both Mexico and the USA.

It is our hope that this paper will lead to further research in the area. There is room for a more in-depth examination of the website differences between the New England states and the provinces of Atlantic Canada. We are hopeful for further study in this area and for continued research on the development of effective tourism websites.

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APPENDIX A: CODING SCHEME PARAMETERS

Usability Parameters
Presence/absence of splash page
Interactivity: opportunities to enter user information
Appearance of brand logo
Dominant function of site
Booking available
Menu characteristics
Contact information on front page
Characteristics of pop ups/pop unders
Font is legible (size and color)

Site Mechanics
Bad links
HTML problems
Browser compatibility
Loading time (whole page)
Meaningful in 8 sec
Spell check

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
Number of links to site (Google)
Search engine position (Google)

Executional Framework Parameters
Color and texture
Background
Borders
Foreground
Sound
Type of sound
Loop
Control characteristics
Number of sounds
If music: tempo, genre, vocal/instrumental
Pictures
Number
Animation
Can be saved/copied
Picture content
People, landscape, animal, product, etc
If people, how many … relationship
If people, what are they doing
If setting, what
If product, how depicted
If animal, what one(s)

LESS IS MORE FOR ONLINE MARCOM IN EMERGING MARKETS: LINKING HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND HIGHER RELATIVE PREFERENCES FOR MICROBLOGGING IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study uses a series of simple linear regressions with the relative usage rate of microblogging to social networking as the dependent variable and each of Hofstede's cultural dimensions as the independent variable for each of 17 participating countries on five continents. After running the regressions against the dimensions using this approach, a strong correlation and moderate determination for the individualism dimension, or IDV, is established.

This study is significant because it provides critical information that is likely to be useful in teasing out a multiple regression model explaining the differences in the social networking adoption patterns between developing and developed nations. Firms marketing to developing countries must understand each country's unique cultural bias towards different types of marketing communication channels outside the traditional marketing channels. Microblogging, a potential form of electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) advertising, was shown to be more prevalent in emerging countries than in developed nations. This has potential implications for marketers who want to reach the masses in these powerful emerging markets. However, more research is needed about the motivations behind developing country usage of microblogs.

INTRODUCTION

Web based social interaction is taking root in a significant number of developing countries. The sheer size of the populations of developing nations, combined with the continued proliferation of mobile internet access within them, makes the growth potential for web based social broadcasting great in these countries. China, and other emerging markets throughout the world, will account for 75% of the world's total growth in the next two decades and beyond, according to U.S. Department of Commerce estimates (Cateora et. al 2009).

Global trends in the patterns of online social interactive behavior on the web are starting to be established in the academic literature. This paper is a follow-up to a study highlighting the higher relative rate of usage in microblogs such as Twitter, as compared social network profiles

such as Facebook, in developing nations (Jobs, 2011). Even though microblogging usage is much smaller than social networking, it is still significant and being adopted at a much higher relative rate in developing nations than it is in industrialized nations. Therefore, it is valuable to begin to understand what characteristics in these countries are behind this trend.

This study uses a series of simple linear regressions of the relative usage rate of microblogging to social networking as the dependent variable, and each of Hostede's Cultural dimensions as the independent variable, for seventeen countries across five continents. After running the regressions against Hofstede's dimensions using this approach, a strong correlation and moderate determination for the individualism dimension or IDV is established.

This study is significant because it provides critical information that is likely to be useful in teasing out a multiple regression model explaining the differences in the microblogging and social networking adoption patterns between developing and developed nations. Firms marketing to developing countries must understand each country's unique cultural bias towards different types of marketing communication channels outside the traditional marketing channels. Properly selected online social interaction services and applications may provide opportunities for companies to better promote their products and services within developing countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mikolaj Jan Piskorski of the Harvard Business School has collaborated with Tommy McCall, a prominent Information Graphics Editor and Designer, to construct a visual model of international usage patterns for social internet users. As the analyst on this project, Piskorski makes the following comment when he discusses this behavioral world map:

> *"Perhaps the most interesting developments are in emerging markets, where users are going online in ever growing numbers. Unlike Western users, many of whom established their patterns when the technology was fairly limited, users in the BRIC nations are joining a much more diverse social web. On four of the five broadcast behaviors, these countries demonstrate the most balanced use of various types of social platforms. And emerging markets have much more room to grow their internet populations, so the experimentation is likely to continue."*
> (Piskorski and McCall, 2010).

The current study builds on research analyzing the patterns of adoption in two of the five social broadcast behaviors in the Piskorski and McCall model. These behaviors are microblogging and social networking. An analysis of data published by Trendstream and Comshare clearly show a significantly higher rate of adoption of microblogging in BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and other developing countries when compared to social networking (Jobs, 2011). Trendstream and Comshare are both prominent market research

companies monitoring Web 2.0 activity worldwide.   Our goal, in this study, is to look closer at this emerging microblogging adoption trend and attempt to explain the possible causes for this pattern of adoption in developing nations. As already discussed, variations in key cultural dimensions may shed some light here.

Hofstede (1980, 1983) was one of the first to define and describe dimensions of cultures when he collected data from 50 countries and 3 regions about work-related value patterns of employees in IBM, a large multinational firm. By using data from one firm only, Hofstede controlled for a number of industry and company variables so that he could focus on cultural differences. Using correlation and factor analysis he revealed four largely independent dimensions of differences between national value systems: (1) power distance (large vs. small), (2) individualism vs. collectivism, (3) masculinity vs. femininity, and (4) uncertainty avoidance (strong vs. weak). Later Hofstede (1991) identified a fifth dimension, dealing with long versus short-term orientation.   This was done in response to those who criticized his cultural model to be biased toward Western culture. Descriptions of Hofstede's five cultural dimensions are listed in Table 1.

Table 1" Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Adapted from Hofstede (2001) and Kovacic (2005)		
Power Distance	PDI	"The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect, and accept, that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 2001). People in countries where power distance is large accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place that needs no further justification. Countries with small power distance allow upward social mobility of its citizens and their participation in the process of decision making.
Individualism	IDV	"Individualism stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: Everyone is expected to look after him/herself and her/his immediate family only. Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (Hofstede, 2001). People in countries with low individualism consider the group as the main source of their identity. A culture high in individualism would pay more attention to the performance of the individual.
Masculinity	MAS	"Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are assumed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life. Femininity stands for a society in which gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life" (Hofstede, 2001) When societies orient towards achievement, assertiveness, and material success, then the country is ranked high on masculinity. Societies that rank low on masculinity, i.e. high on femininity, prefer relationships, caring for the weak, and focus on quality of life.

Table 1" Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Adapted from Hofstede (2001) and Kovacic (2005)		
Uncertainty Avoidance Index	UAI	"The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations" (Hofstede, 2001). Societies with strong uncertainty avoidance would tend to avoid or reduce the risk induced by the unknown, i.e. unstructured situation, while people from societies with weak uncertainty avoidance could be described as 'risk takers'.
Long Term Orientation	LTO	"Long Term Orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular, perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, Short Term Orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and the present, in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of 'face' and fulfilling social obligations" [7] (Hofstede, 2001). Societies with strong Long Term Orientation value thrift and perseverance – overcoming obstacles with time, will, and strength; Societies with strong Short Term Orientation value respect for tradition, and fulfilling social obligations.

Some challenges to Hofstede's foundational work have been published. In Hofstede's original research, individualism and collectivism were treated as polar opposites. Hofstede defined increased individualism as the tendency to place one's own needs above the needs of one's in group, and decreased individualism as a tendency to place the needs of one's in-group above one's own needs. Subsequent research recently discussed by Rosen, Stefanone, and Lackaff (2010), has shown individualism to be multidimensional and identified key features of increased individualism - like tendencies toward self-reliance, self-promotion, competition, emotional distance from in-groups and hedonism. Collectivism is also a complex construct and can be characterized by closeness to family, family integrity, and sociability (Hui and Triandis, 1986; Triandis, 2001). More recent findings have pointed to a conclusion that these two concepts may indeed be related to different indicators, and should be studied independent of each other due to issues of imbalanced keying in the scale producing within subject standardization (Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener 2005). Schimmack et al. (2005) also point out that there have been more methodological issues, as well as national variation, when analyzing collectivism, whereas individualism has remained more constant over time.

There is also some criticism of using nation states as indicative of cultural identity in the literature (McSweeney, 2002; Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier, 2002). Oyserman et al. conducted a thorough meta-analysis and implied that there are measurement problems with both individualism and collectivism using traditional scales, claiming a lack of convergent validity when comparing their construct findings with that of Hofstede. Schimmack et al. (2005) however, present findings that point to the opposite, and propose that methodological issues with data collection, such as respondents having different semantic understanding of the scales, as well as the (school or business) context that the data is collected, produces widely different results across research findings. Schimmack et al. (2005) also point out that national differences in individualism have remained highly stable since Hofstede (1980) first measured individualism, and suggest that national differences in individualism will remain in the near

future. Rosen et al, (2010), most recently added to this evidence – they found that people who identify with Hofstede's different cultural orientations (not necessarily <u>living</u> in a particular nation state) behave and communicate differently when using Web 2.0 technologies. In spite of criticisms, the Hofstede model of culture is still widely used in the literature.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework was chosen as a tool to begin to explain why developing countries would adopt microblogging at higher rates than developed countries in this research. Recent work using the Hofstede dimensions explores areas such as cultural trust and acceptance in traditional, electronic, and mobile commerce (Hofstede, Jonker, and Verwaart, 2009; Harris, Rettie and Kwan, 2005; Chai and Pavlov, 2002). The Hofstede model lends itself well to empirical research because it quantifies the degree or amount of each cultural dimension on a per country basis. Stated differently, it assigns a standardized weight of each cultural dimension which can be readily compared against other countries.

METHODS

Sample

The data is based on a panel survey commissioned by Trendstream Research utilizing Lightspeed Online Research survey panelists around the world. Trendstream Research is a London based market research company offering advanced analysis of social networking trends. Lightspeed Online Research, Inc., is a private Market Research and Analysis firm located in Basking Ridge, NJ, with offices around the world. This study uses the first 3 panel survey waves released over a year period between July 2009 and July 2010. Wave 1 was released in July 2009, Wave 2 was collected in the second half of 2009 and subsequently released in January 2010, Wave 3 was collected between January 2010 and July 2010 when it was released. The number of respondents from each country is provided in Tables 2A, 2B, and 2C:

Table 2A: WAVE 1 - JULY 2009					
COUNTRY	SAMPLE SIZE	COUNTRY	SAMPLE SIZE	COUNTRY	SAMPLE SIZE
Australia	750	India	762	Russia	761
Brazil	755	Italy	1038	South Korea	755
Canada	1032	Japan	922	Spain	1004
China	1011	Malaysia	0	UK	2298
France	1007	Mexico	7524	USA	2129
Germany	1047	Netherlands	752		

Table 2B: WAVE 2 – JANUARY 2010					
COUNTRY	SAMPLE SIZE	COUNTRY	SAMPLE SIZE	COUNTRY	SAMPLE SIZE
Australia	751	India	768	Russia	747
Brazil	765	Italy	1005	South Korea	755
Canada	1014	Japan	751	Spain	1010
China	1002	Malaysia	0	UK	2009
France	1003	Mexico	756	USA	2004
Germany	1003	Netherlands	761		

able 2C: WAVE 3 - JULY 2010					
COUNTRY	SAMPLE SIZE	COUNTRY	SAMPLE SIZE	COUNTRY	SAMPLE SIZE
Australia	769	India	753	Russia	756
Brazil	756	Italy	1016	South Korea	754
Canada	1003	Japan	751	Spain	1008
China	1000	Malaysia	751	UK	2025
France	1026	Mexico	763	USA	2003
Germany	1002	Netherlands	776		

Data Collection

In order to prevent respondent fraud and ensure the quality of the panel data a series of real-time checkpoints were required.   New panel registrants had to pass all the checkpoints when completing the panel registration survey. Registrants who failed any of the checks are unable to join the panel were not allowed to participate in surveys. The checkpoints used are provided in table 3 (below).

Table 3	
Proxy Detection	Detect a proxy server used to mask the registrant's true IP address and past fraudulent activity
IP GeoFencing	Locates the registrant's country of origin through his/her IP address and determines their eligibility for registration based on country-specific rules
Postal Address Verification	Verify the registrant's postal address and zip/postal codes against a current country-specific address directory
CAPTCHA	Prevent automated programs from joining our site through a challenge-response test
Email Address Verification	Query our database to ensure the email address is unique (all panelists must verify their email address through a double opt-in registration process)

Once the panelists were registered, measures to identify and remove fraudulent survey data were taken through a series of quality checks. Respondents who did not participate in the survey to the best of their abilities were identified and all survey answers they provided are removed from the final data. Poor survey takers were removed from the panel. The participant quality checks are provided in table 4 (below).

Table 4	
Respondent Engagement	At the beginning of a survey, respondents must agree to provide honest, thoughtful answers to each question
Survey Speedsters	Respondents who rushed through the survey are identified by comparing survey completion times to the norm
Grid Speedsters	Respondents who rushed through grid questions are identified by comparing grid completion times to the norm
Trap Questions	Survey questions with obvious answers can determine whether a respondent is fully engaged with the survey
Respondent Satisfaction	At the end of a survey, feedback from respondents is gathered and assessed to help determine the quality of the survey

The measures taken and outlined above during the data collection process ensure the validity of the respondents and the quality of their responses.

The case that developing nations are using microblogging at a significantly greater rate than social networking services when compared to developed nations has been established in the literature (Jobs, 2011). Therefore, the same data set - showing proportional usage of microblogging to social networking for both developing and developed countries - is utilized for this analysis. This microblogging to social networking ratio is also the dependent variable in this study. The independent variable is the quantitative value for each of Hofestede's cultural dimensions for each country. A simple linear (LSR) regression is run for each of the six Hofstede dimensions to establish the level of correlation and determination of each dimension to the proportional usage of microblogging to social networking in each of the 17 participating countries. A matrix combining the independent proportional variable for each country, by panel wave (microblog ratio), and the respective quantitative value of each Hofstede cultural value, is supplied in Appendix 1.

Analysis

The microblogging to social networking proportions data from the combined 3 panel waves provided at least 2,100 observations per country for the dependent variable sample. The Hofstede scores are also derived from extremely large samples as reported in Hofsted's website. "Hofstede analyzed a large data base of employee values scores collected by IBM between 1967

and 1973 covering more than 70 countries, from which he first used the 40 largest only and afterwards extended the analysis to 50 countries and 3 regions. In the editions of Hofstede's work since 2001, scores are listed for 74 countries and regions, partly based on replications and extensions of the IBM study on different international populations. Subsequent studies validating the earlier results have included commercial airline pilots and students in 23 countries, civil service managers in 14 countries, 'up-market' consumers in 15 countries and 'elites' in 19 countries (http://www.geert-hofstede.com, 2011)".

The statistical tool used for this study is SPSS. The data is analyzed to remove cases with studentized residuals greater than 2 standard deviations. The outliers which were removed for each regression/dimension are presented in Appendix 2.

A linear regression is run for each of the following Hofstede cultural dimensions; Power Distance Index (PDI) , Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS) , Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), Long Term Orientation (LTO) and Indulgence vs. Restraint (IVR). Each regression uses a data set with the respective outliers shown in appendix 2 removed for the data set under analysis. It should be noted that, even if the outliers are included as input, the results are not materially impacted due to the strength, or lack thereof, for correlation and determination observed in each test.

RESULTS

PDI TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Model Summary				
MODEL	R	R SQUARE	ADJUSTED R SQUARE	STD. ERROR OF THE ESTIMATE
1	.471[a]	.222	.205	.13974
a. Predictors: (Constant), PDI				

PDI TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO ANOVA[b]					
MODEL	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.
1 REGRESSION RESIDUAL TOTAL	.251 .879 1.130	1 45 46	.251 .020	12.863	.001[a]
a. Predictors: (Constant), PDI					
b. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

PDI TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Coefficients[a]					
MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	t	SIG.
	B	STANDARD ERROR	BETA		
1 (CONSTANT)	.049	.063		.786	.436
PDI	.004	.001	.471	3.587	.001
a. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

IDV TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Model Summary				
MODEL	R	R SQUARE	ADJUSTED R SQUARE	STD. ERROR OF THE ESTIMATE
1	.759[a]	.576	.567	.10315
a. Predictors: (Constant), IDV				

IDV TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO ANOVA[b]					
MODEL	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.
1 REGRESSION	.651	1	.651	61.194	.000[a]
RESIDUAL	.479	45	.011		
TOTAL	1.130	46			
a. Predictors: (Constant), IDV b. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

IDV TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Coefficients[a]					
MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	t	SIG.
	B	STANDARD ERROR	BETA		
1 (CONSTANT)	.558	.041		13.739	.000
IDV	-.005	.001	-.759	-7.823	.000
a. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

MAS TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Model Summary				
MODEL	R	R SQUARE	ADJUSTED R SQUARE	STD. ERROR OF THE ESTIMATE
1	.483[a]	.233	.215	.11923
a. Predictors: (Constant), MAS				

MAS TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO ANOVA[b]					
MODEL	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.
1 REGRESSION RESIDUAL TOTAL	.186 .611 .797	1 43 44	.186 .014	13.071	.001[a]
a. Predictors: (Constant), MAS					
b. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

MAS TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Coefficients[a]					
MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	t	SIG.
	B	STANDARD ERROR	BETA		
1 (CONSTANT) MAS	.047 .004	.058 .001	.483	.823 3.615	.415 .001
a. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

UAI TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Model Summary				
MODEL	R	R SQUARE	ADJUSTED R SQUARE	STD. ERROR OF THE ESTIMATE
1	.350[a]	.123	.103	.13652
a. Predictors: (Constant), UAI				

UAI TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO ANOVA[b]					
MODEL	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.
1 REGRESSION	.115	1	.115	6.148	.017[a]
RESIDUAL	.820	44	.019		
TOTAL	.935	45			
a. Predictors: (Constant), UAI					
b. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

UAI TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Coefficients[a]					
MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	t	SIG.
	B	STANDARD ERROR	BETA		
1 (CONSTANT)	.094	.067		1.387	.172
UAI	.002	.001	.350	2.479	.017
a. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

LTO TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Model Summary				
MODEL	R	R SQUARE	ADJUSTED R SQUARE	STD. ERROR OF THE ESTIMATE
1	.484[a]	.234	.217	.13865
a. Predictors: (Constant), LTO				

LTO TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO ANOVA[b]					
MODEL	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.
1 REGRESSION	.265	1	.265	13.774	.001[a]
RESIDUAL	.865	45	.019		
TOTAL	1.130	46			
a. Predictors: (Constant), LTO					
b. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

LTO TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Coefficients[a]					
MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	t	SIG.
	B	STD. ERROR	BETA		
1 (CONSTANT)	.080	.053		1.511	.138
LTO	.003	.001	.484	3.711	.001
a. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

IVR TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Model Summary				
MODEL	R	R SQUARE	ADJUSTED R SQUARE	STD. ERROR OF THE ESTIMATE
1	.469[a]	.220	.203	.13994
a. Predictors: (Constant), IVR				

IVR TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO ANOVA[b]					
MODEL	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.
1 REGRESSION	.249	1	.249	12.699	.001[a]
RESIDUAL	.881	45	.020		
TOTAL	1.130	46			
a. Predictors: (Constant), IVR					
b. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

IVR TO MICROBLOGGING RATIO Coefficients[a]					
MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	t	SIG.
	B	STANDARD ERROR	BETA		
1 (CONSTANT)	.440	.054		8.186	.000
IVR	-.003	.001	-.469	-3.564	.001
a. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio					

DISCUSSION

It is clear from the above data that the IDV dimension stands out above the other dimensions as the most correlated, and most deterministic, independent variable driving higher relative usage of microblogging to social networking in our data set. By most commonly used

criteria, an R value of .759 is considered strongly correlated (Sheskin, 2004). Additionally, an adjusted R^2 of .567 supports our assertion that there is a moderate negative determination of this dimension to the adoption rates of microblogging to social networking across countries. The data set is extremely large, normally distributed, linear and independent. Additionally the high F values and low significance scores support the significance of the regressions. These facts make a strong statistical case for IDV to be included in more advanced models in future research should the relative adoption rates continue into the future.

The total number of users of interactive online services, social networking or other Web 2.0 applications in developing nations comprises a very small portion of the overall populations of these nations. The proliferation of mobile/wireless access is creating increased internet access opportunities in developing countries reducing the so called digital divide. Therefore the prospect for rapid growth in these locations is great.

Because we are in the early stage of adoption of online services in developing countries, more longitudinal data is needed and is currently being collected. However clear trends are developing which could produce refined models for understanding the motivations and adaptation habits of social broadcast behaviors in developing countries. Since these markets are considered by many to be the economic growth engines for this century, research providing information on the use of so called Web 2.0 behaviors should be of interest to firms engaged in international business.

As noted earlier in a previous study, the ratio of microblogging to social networking is much higher in developing nations than in industrialized countries (Jobs, 2011). Therefore, microblogging may lend itself better to some types of marketing communication in these countries provided the reasons can be identified and understood.

CONCLUSION

Our findings suggest that the IDV dimension has a high negative correlation and moderate negative determination in the adoption rates of two of Piskorski's so called broadcast behaviors – microblogging and social networking. This means that, in our research sample, developing countries (BRICS and Mexico) score significantly lower on Hofstede's Individualism – Collectivism dimension, than do participants from multiple developed or industrial countries in U.S, Canada, Europe, and Oceania, and that significant differences in these IDV scores explain higher usage of microblogging to social networking scores in those countries.

In Marketing circles, word of mouth (WOM) advertising is the process of conveying information from person to person and plays a major role in customer buying decisions (Richins and Root-Shaffer, 1988). In commercial situations, WOM involves consumers sharing attitudes, opinions, or reactions about businesses, products, or services with other people. The term eWOM has been defined as: "a statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet"

(Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, and Gremle, 2004, p. 39). In the current study, if one thinks about microblogging as a potential electronic, shortened version of traditional "word of mouth" marketing behavior, then "e-WOM" could be seen here as more prevalent in developing countries than in developed nations such as the U.S. most of Europe, and Australia.

What is needed, from the current study though, is a look at the motivations behind why participants were microblogging or what they were microblogging about. Jansen, Zhang, Sobel and Chowdury (2009) recently found microblogging to be an online tool for customer word of mouth communications and discuss the implications for corporations using microblogging as part of their overall marketing strategy. The current study clearly suggests that this potential marketing utility for microblogging is especially relevant for emerging economies (given reported usage here) and that further research on the motivational drivers of microblogging is called for before one can make definitive statements about the purposefulness of these behaviors.

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APPENDIX 1

HOFSTEDE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS PLUS RATIO OF MICROBLOGGING TO SOCIAL NETWORKING								
CASE NUMBER	COUNTRY	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	MICROBLOG RATIO
1	AUSTRALIA WAVE 1	36	90	61	51	21	71	0.15
2	AUSTRALIA WAVE 2	36	90	61	51	21	71	0.13
3	AUSTRALIA WAVE 3	36	90	61	51	21	71	0.2
4	BRAZIL WAVE 1	69	38	49	76	44	59	0.23
5	BRAZIL WAVE 2	69	38	49	76	44	59	0.28
6	BRAZIL WAVE 3	69	38	49	76	44	59	0.37
7	CANADA WAVE 1	39	80	52	48	36	68	0.11
8	CANADA WAVE 2	39	80	52	48	36	68	0.14
9	CANADA WAVE 3	39	80	52	48	36	68	0.16
10	CHINA WAVE 1	80	20	66	30	87	24	0.78
11	CHINA WAVE 2	80	20	66	30	87	24	0.5
12	CHINA WAVE 3	80	20	66	30	87	24	0.7
13	FRANCE WAVE 1	68	71	43	86	63	48	0.14
14	FRANCE WAVE 2	68	71	43	86	63	48	0.11
15	FRANCE WAVE 3	68	71	43	86	63	48	0.09
16	GERMANY WAVE 1	35	67	66	65	83	40	0.18
17	GERMANY WAVE 2	35	67	66	65	83	40	0.12
18	GERMANY WAVE 3	35	67	66	65	83	40	0.21
19	GREAT BRITAIN WAVE 1	35	89	66	35	51	69	0.12
20	GREAT BRITAIN WAVE 2	35	89	66	35	51	69	0.14
21	GREAT BRITAIN WAVE 3	35	89	66	35	51	69	0.14
22	INDIA WAVE 1	77	48	56	40	51	26	0.42
23	INDIA WAVE 2	77	48	56	40	51	26	0.36

CASE NUMBER	COUNTRY	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	MICROBLOG RATIO
24	INDIA WAVE 3	77	48	56	40	51	26	0.38
25	ITALY WAVE 1	50	76	70	75	61	30	0.33
26	ITALY WAVE 2	50	76	70	75	61	30	0.27
27	ITALY WAVE 3	50	76	70	75	61	30	0.24
28	JAPAN WAVE 1	54	46	95	92	88	42	0.53
29	JAPAN WAVE 2	54	46	95	92	88	42	0.47
30	JAPAN WAVE 3	54	46	95	92	88	42	0.59
31	KOREA SOUTH WAVE 1	60	18	39	85	100	29	0.88
32	KOREA SOUTH WAVE 2	60	18	39	85	100	29	0.52
33	KOREA SOUTH WAVE 3	60	18	39	85	100	29	0.62
34	MALAYSIA WAVE 3	104	26	50	36	41	57	0.24
35	MEXICO WAVE 1	81	30	69	82	24	97	0.35
36	MEXICO WAVE 2	81	30	69	82	24	97	0.31
37	MEXICO WAVE 3	81	30	69	82	24	97	0.31
38	NETHERLANDS WAVE 1	38	80	14	53	67	68	0.08
39	NETHERLANDS WAVE 2	38	80	14	53	67	68	0.11
40	NETHERLANDS WAVE 3	38	80	14	53	67	68	0.05
41	RUSSIA WAVE 1	93	39	36	95	81	20	0.25
42	RUSSIA WAVE 2	93	39	36	95	81	20	0.28
43	RUSSIA WAVE 3	93	39	36	95	81	20	0.31
44	SPAIN WAVE 1	57	51	42	86	48	44	0.19
45	SPAIN WAVE 2	57	51	42	86	48	44	0.19
46	SPAIN WAVE 3	57	51	42	86	48	44	0.29
47	U.S.A. WAVE 1	40	91	62	46	26	68	0.16
48	U.S.A. WAVE 2	40	91	62	46	26	68	0.14
49	U.S.A. WAVE 3	40	91	62	46	26	68	0.14

HOFSTEDE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS PLUS RATIO OF MICROBLOGGING TO SOCIAL NETWORKING

Dimensions Source: http://www.geerthofstede.nl/research--vsm/dimension-data-matrix.aspx

The above website is Geert and Jan Hofestede's personal website and the primary source of Cultural Dimension information for all their books and publications.

APPENDIX 2 – OUTLIERS

PDI OUTLIERS
Variables Entered/Removed[b]

MODEL	VARIABLES ENTERED	VARIABLES REMOVED	METHOD
1	PDI[a]	.	Enter

a. All requested variables entered.
b. Dependent Variable: Microblog Ratio

PDI OUTLIERS				
Casewise Diagnostics[a]				
CASE NUMBER	STD. RESIDUAL	MICROBLOG RATIO	PREDICTED VALUE	RESIDUAL
10	2.308	.78	.3805	.39951
31	3.382	.88	.2947	.58532
a. Dependent Variable: Microblog Ratio				

IDV OUTLIERS			
Variables Entered/Removed[b]			
MODEL	VARIABLES ENTERED	VARIABLES REMOVED	METHOD
1	IDV[a]	.	Enter
a. All requested variables entered.			
b. Dependent Variable: Microblog Ratio			

IDV OUTLIERS				
Casewise Diagnostics[a]				
CASE NUMBER	STD. RESIDUAL	MICROBLOG RATIO	PREDICTED VALUE	RESIDUAL
10	2.194	.78	.5097	.27033
31	2.910	.88	.5215	.35847
a. Dependent Variable: Microblog Ratio				

MAS OUTLIERS			
Variables Entered/Removed[b]			
MODEL	VARIABLES ENTERED	VARIABLES REMOVED	METHOD
1	MAS[a]	.	Enter
a. All requested variables entered.			
b. Dependent Variable: Microblog Ratio			

MAS OUTLIERS				
Casewise Diagnostics[a]				
CASE NUMBER	STD. RESIDUAL	MICROBLOG RATIO	PREDICTED VALUE	RESIDUAL
10	2.493	.78	.3182	.46177
12	2.061	.70	.3182	.38177
31	3.471	.88	.2370	.64304
33	2.068	.62	.2370	.38304
a. Dependent Variable: Microblog Ratio				

UAI OUTLIERS			
Variables Entered/Removed[b]			
MODEL	VARIABLES ENTERED	VARIABLES REMOVED	METHOD
1	UAI[a]	.	Enter
a. All requested variables entered.			
b. Dependent Variable: Microblog Ratio			

UAI OUTLIERS			
Casewise Diagnostics[a]			
CASE NUMBER	STD. RESIDUAL	MICROBLOG RATIO	PREDICTED VALUE	RESIDUAL
10	2.794	.78	.2453	.53471
12	2.376	.70	.2453	.45471
31	2.980	.88	.3097	.57034
a. Dependent Variable: Microblog Ratio				

LTO OUTLIERS			
Variables Entered/Removed[b]			
MODEL	VARIABLES ENTERED	VARIABLES REMOVED	METHOD
1	LTO[a]	.	Enter
a. All requested variables entered.			
b. Dependent Variable: MicroblogRatio			

IVR OUTLIERS			
Variables Entered/Removed[b]			
MODEL	VARIABLES ENTERED	VARIABLES REMOVED	METHOD
1	IVR[a]	.	Enter
a. All requested variables entered.			
b. Dependent Variable: Microblog Ratio			

IVR OUTLIERS			
Casewise Diagnostics[a]			
CASE NUMBER	STD. RESIDUAL	MICROBLOG RATIO	PREDICTED VALUE	RESIDUAL
10	2.244	.78	.4054	.37463
31	2.998	.88	.3794	.50055
a. Dependent Variable: Microblog Ratio				

WOMEN OF GENEROUS PROPORTIONS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF FULL-FIGURED BRANDS AND THE CONSUMER BONDING EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores the values "owned" by local plus – size brands and if these values are sought by plus – size consumers. According to recent studies, plus – size women had difficulty in finding well – fitting fashionable clothing in general, making then unhappy shoppers. The paper aimed to address the problem – determining if: plus – size consumers associate plus – size brands with attributes that differentiate them from competition, consumers connect a brand's "owned" attribute to consequent values and express a preference for the brand whose consequent value is most congruent with their own. The ever – changing lifestyle that led to a change in eating patterns resulted to the rise of hefty – sized consumer market called the "plus – size" – women with body and clothing measurements of 14 and larger. These plus – size consumers who give importance to specific values likely to prefer the brand with the attribute is its functional or psychosocial benefit. Furthermore, perceive each of the brands as owning an attribute entirely different from the brand's positioning. Perhaps, "Moda Plus' brand position is "providing clothes with styles that flatter the full – figured" being the value they offer, yet consumer perception dictates that "Moda Plus brand" owns an entirely different value. The paper presents the uniqueness of the Philippine market in comparison with its foreign counterparts. Existing researches anchored their study on various contexts such as: aesthetics, store image and perception, it somehow failed to explore consumer perception of brand value and its consistency with brand positioning. The paper provides relevant insights for plus – size brands about consumer perceptions of value and suggested marketing communication.

INTRODUCTION

Shopping for clothes has always been a part of an urban woman's lifestyle. The fashion need of women led to the emergence of a special segment that wears a size 14 or larger – the Plus Size.

Weight loss doesn't happen overnight and for some urban women, they want to look their best every day. Various studies about fashion, apparel and clothing mostly involve the regular sized segment. However, studies missed out on the buying behavior of the female market for clothing & apparel that provide information about a special female segment that was once a niche market.

Years ago, women who were size 14 and above were overlooked and ignored by fashion brands, which focused more on the slender market. These "generously proportioned" women settled for wearing oversized, unfashionable and undesirable clothing which made them feel less happy about themselves and inferior to their regular sized counterparts.

Clothing brands have since discovered the potential of the rising segment and now attempt to serve the size 14 and beyond. Due to the seemingly hefty eating patterns of women, obesity occurred at a faster rate in developing countries than in the developed ones. In Asia, the problem of obesity rose in the wake of economic development and nutrition transition. (Dugee, 2009). Specialty plus size clothing stores entered the Philippine market and catered to the hefty – sized segment to their advantage and addressed the rising markets' ignored needs. These stores tried to provide fashion - forward apparel that is a size larger than the clothes worn by the regular size. Yet, stores seem to have overlooked certain factors or attributes that better addressed the needs of this special market. Providing apparel that simply fits (literally) the consumer does not exactly address certain unmet needs.

This study aimed to discuss attributes and values "owned" by specific local plus size brands and determined if these attributes and values are sought by plus – size consumers that result in brand preference. The research banked on the uniqueness of the local Philippine market. Past researches concentrated on other culturally different markets such as the plus size American Market, Indian & South African female clothing markets and structured their study on different contexts such as role of aesthetics, store image, perception of store and customer loyalty.

Several plus size brands were cited in the study, with the attempt to validate the relationship(s) between "owned" attributes of particular plus size brands (independent variable), values (intervening variables), and brand preference (dependent variable) of female plus size consumers. Significant brand attributes were considered to aid in determining brand preference(s) of consumers on local plus size brands for women.

> *"The power of a brand derives from a curious mixture of how it performs and what it stands for. When a brand gets the mix right it makes us, the people who buy it, feel that it adds something to the idea of ourselves, (Olins, 2002)".*

HYPOTHESES

Research Problem:

To determine if Plus – size consumers:

a)   Associate specific brands with distinctive attributes that differentiate them from other brands?

b)   Connect a brand's "owned" attributes to consequent values or preferred modes of being or behavior?

c)   Express a preference for the brand whose consequent value or preferred mode of being or behavior is most congruent with their own?

RH1   *Plus size consumers who place a higher importance on self-actualization/beauty are more likely to prefer the brand whose "owned" attribute is <u>"style that flatters the full figured"</u> than "comfortable fit" and/or "size availability".*

RH2   *Plus size consumers who place a higher importance on personal gratification/comfortable life are more likely to prefer the brand whose "owned" attribute is <u>"comfortable fit"</u> than "style that flatters the full – figured" and/or "size availability".*

RH$_3$ *Plus size consumers who place a higher importance on responsible self – actualization/self - esteem are more likely to prefer the brand whose "owned" attribute is <u>"size availability"</u> than "style that flatters the full – figured" and/or "comfortable fit".*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies have been done by various researchers to further understand the relationship/s between brands, brand attributes and brand preference. This chapter focused on studies that established the relationship(s) among variables, which linked brand to brand attributes and eventually with brand preference. The following literature cited from previous researches that applied the means – end chain analysis was arranged according to different industries in chronological order to further establish the uniqueness of the proposed research.

Means – end chain theory was originally developed by Jonathan Gutman (1986) to provide a framework explaining how concrete attributes of a product or service (the means) were related to abstract personal values (the end) by eliciting the perceived consequences of these attributes for the consumer. It is a structure that identifies and describes the major elements, variables or constructs.

Kaciak and Cullen (2006) studied the analysis of means end chain data in marketing research on smokers' perceptions of cigarettes. Attributes mentioned were: cheap, quality, filter, strong, mild taste, and aroma. The consequences / benefits of the cited attributes were identified as: project good image, save money, smoke fewer cigarettes, less damage to health, kill nicotine hunger, feel pleasure, physically feel better and socially acceptable respectively. Social

recognition, benevolence, health, self direction, conformity, hedonism and achievement were the values of the mentioned consequences / benefits respectively. The research concluded that all attributes eventually lead to self direction.

The means – ends chain approach was used by researchers in the tourism industry to understand the important attributes that consumers value when enjoying leisure venues. Yueh-yun (2008) conducted a research on the analysis of visitors' perceived values of leisure farms in Taiwan. It identified the following attributes: artificial landscape, dining & accommodation, ecology facilities for leisure activities, personal interpretive services, atmosphere of rural living, and scenery. The consequences of visiting a leisure farm included: relaxing, awareness of the importance of environmental protection, enjoyment of family / friend gatherings, an increase of farming knowledge, appreciating natural beauty, arousing nostalgic feelings. The components of values included: act, feel, relate, sense and think. His research revealed that the concept of experiential marketing is applicable to the leisure industry. Both the experiential values "feel" and "sense", were considered to most important from visitors' viewpoints. According to Yueh-yun (2008), the perspective of "feel" was formed by the results of relaxing, scenery, artificial landscape and the atmosphere of rural living. "Sense" on the other hand, was derived from the results of feelings of appreciating natural beauty.

Mo Koo, Jin Kim and Hwan Lee (2007) investigated the motivational effects of personal values on benefits, attributes and re-patronage intention in the context of online shopping on 279 experienced online customers in South Korea. The study involved the following attributes: visual design, product assortment, information quality and after – sales service. Hedonic and utilitarian consequences / benefits lead to the values self – actualization and social affiliation respectively. Their research concluded that a personal value of "social affiliation" acts to motivate a customer to seek hedonic and utilitarian benefits, whereas as personal value of "self – actualization" produces motivation to seek only utilitarian benefits. The seeking of utilitarian and hedonic benefits leads customers to evaluate certain attributes of online stores (visual design, product assortment, information quality and after – sales service), which have a positive effect on re-patronage intention.

Chen's (2003) research identified the e-store loyalty drivers and examined the effects on consumers' e – store loyalty intention through a perceived value focus based on the means – end chain approach. She identified three value components: value for money, trust and shopping efficiency that have direct, positive effects on e – store loyalty intention. Her study identified eight e – store attributes: relative price, merchandise quality, e-retailer's reputation, customer service, safety, order fulfillment, information quality, and website navigation. Chen's (2003) study solicited data from 375 college students. Her study concluded that the three perceived value components (value-for-money, trust, and shopping efficiency) had significant positive effects on e-store loyalty intention. Seven of the thirteen proposed relationships between e-store attributes and perceived value components were supported. An examination of the total effect suggested that shopping efficiency had the biggest effect on loyalty intention among the three

perceived value components. Order fulfillment was the most influential e-store attribute on loyalty intention.

Studies on plus size clothing and purchases were written by scholars such Otieno, Harrow and Lea – Greenwood (2005). Their purpose was to explore fashion availability, fit and affordability in UK stores especially for those women who wear size 16 and over. Plus size womens' satisfaction/dissatisfaction with retail experiences was examined. Research findings conclude that a large percentage of females who wear size 16 and over were dissatisfied with retail environments, fashion and sizing provision among major UK market players. Larger women had great difficulty in finding well – fitting fashionable clothing in general, and with certain categories being most problematic. The study concluded that there are many unhappy shoppers across all sizes and age ranges. The shoppers who are most unhappy are those in the size 16 plus who have emotional responses to numerous issues concerning fashion shopping experience. The study revealed that size 16 women could not find clothes they perceive as fashionable, fit well, affordable do not make them feel inferior to their slender counterparts.

On the other hand, Meng's (2007) study explored how plus – size consumers perceive their bodies and themselves, how their body – esteem and self – concept may influence involvement with clothing, and how these factors may impact their perceptions of the importance of plus size store attributes. Some of the store attributes involved in the study were: merchandise price, merchandise assortment, responsiveness of sales personnel and store display. The results of the study concluded that consumers' body esteem and self – concept significantly affect their perceptions of merchandise quality, responsiveness of sales personnel and store display.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional descriptive type of research design was utilized in this study. The population of interest for this study was all full-figured individuals who bought in the past 3 months from these three brands – Moda Plus, Tubby, and Maxine and were part of their client database. The usership (i.e. bought at least once from the brands) was a requirement for more accurate results that were based not only on pure awareness but also on experience and/or referrals (as a result of positive feedback). A survey was conducted through telephone interviews as well as face – to – face interviews among the selected target buyers of the brands at a given period. In this process, customers were asked about their perceptions, feelings and attitudes toward the brands' "owned – attributes". A specific randomization process such as interval sampling method from a client database provided by each brand was implemented to ensure that the projection of the results was conclusive to the total population under study.

Probability sampling was used in the study. Specifically, a Systematic Interval Random Sampling design from a verified client database was employed. The client databases provided by the three brands were composed of those who manually signed up for each of the brands client database records. This was an appropriate design because the respondents can be randomly

selected from a sampling list of customers, i.e. all full-figured individuals who bought from these three brands in the past 3 months, including the immediate purchase.

Formula for sample size:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 [p(1-p)]}{MOE^2}$$

Plug in formula:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.25)}{(.0690)^2} = 200$$

Margin of Error

$$\pm MOE = Z * \sqrt{\{[p * (1-p)]/n\}}$$

Moda Plus

$$MOE = 1.96 * \sqrt{\{[0.5 * (1-0.5)]/60\}}$$
$$= \pm 12.6\%$$

Tubby

$$MOE = 1.96 * \sqrt{\{[0.5 * (1-0.5)]/100\}}$$
$$= \pm 9.8\%$$

Maxine

$$MOE = 1.96 * \sqrt{\{[0.5 * (1-0.5)]/40\}}$$
$$= \pm 15.4\%$$

Computing for the Interval Size

$$k = \frac{N}{n}$$

Plug in values

$$z = \frac{750}{200} = 3.75 \text{ or } 4$$

Standardized Residual Analysis

$$z_i = \frac{O_i - E_i}{\sqrt{E_i\left(1 - \frac{R_i}{N}\right)\left(1 - \frac{R_i}{N}\right)}}$$

Plug in values

$$\frac{686 - 714.5}{\sqrt{714.5\left(1 - \frac{934}{1706}\right)\left(1 - \frac{1305}{1706}\right)}} = -3.3$$

After filtering the brands preferred by the respondent groups, the table below reflects the summary of the hypotheses being tested:

Respondent group 1 (RG1) who gave more importance to <u>size availability</u> prefer Moda Plus, although the owner claimed their brand provides customers with "*style that flatters the full-figured*".

RG2 who gave more importance to <u>comfortable fit</u> prefer Tubby, although the brand claims to position itself as having "*size availability*.

RG3 who gave more importance to <u>style that flatters the full-figured</u> prefer Maxine, although the brand claimed that it provides customers clothes with "*comfortable fit*".

Based on these results, it can be initially summarized and concluded that all hypotheses are not supported as shown on the Table below:

Respondent Groups	Attributes	Brand Preferred	Claimed Owned Attribute of Brands	Is the Attribute Important to Respondent Group the same as the Claimed Attribute of Brand Preferred?	RH Supported / Not Supported
Respondent Group 1	Size Availability	Moda Plus	Style that flatters the full-figured	NO	RH3 Not Supported
Respondent Group 2	Comfortable Fit	Tubby	Size Availability	NO	RH2 Not Supported
Respondent Group 3	Style that flatters the full-figured	Maxine	Comfortable Fit	NO	RH1 Not Supported

Respondents think of each brand's attributes very differently from the proprietors' brand positioning as reflected below:

Proprietors / Brands:	The "owned attributes" that Brands claim:	What plus size customers perceive:
Moda Plus	"Style that flatters"	"Size Availability"
Tubby	"Size Availability"	"Comfortable fit"
Maxine	"Comfortable Fit"	"Style that flatters the full figure"

The brands' "owned attributes" are not the same as the consumers' perceptions. In the consumers' minds Moda Plus owns "size availability", Tubby "owns comfortable fit", and Maxine owns "style that flatters full-figured".

The findings are of importance particularly to the brand owners, in that the research paradigm assumed that:

Moda Plus	→	Style that flatters the full figured
Tubby	→	Size Availability
Maxine	→	Comfortable Fit
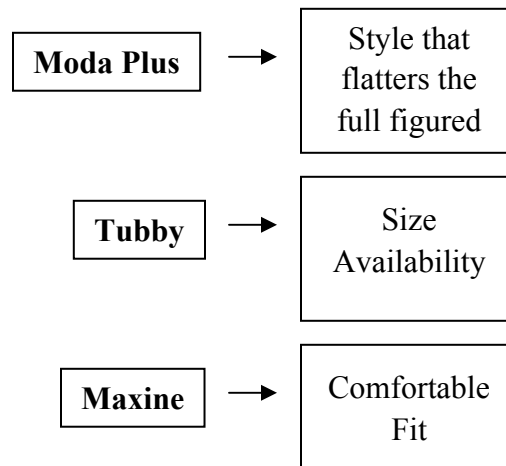
As it turns out, the assumptions are not validated, and so the hypotheses are not supported.

Hence the new results:

Respondent Groups	Attributes Important	Owned Attribute of Brands as per Consumers; Perspective	Is the Attribute Important to Respondent Group the same with the Owned Attribute of Brand Preferred?	RH Supported / Not Supported
1	Size Availability	Size Availability	YES	RH3 Supported
2	Comfortable Fit	Comfortable Fit	YES	RH2 Supported
3	Style that flatters the full-figured	Style that flatters the full-figured	YES	RH1 Supported

The research determines the attributes that plus size customers associate with the three (3) brands namely: Moda Plus, Tubby & Maxine ascertains if consumers are likely to prefer a brand whose consequent value or preferred mode of being or behavior is most congruent with their own.

It confirms that plus size consumers who place a high importance on self – actualization / beauty prefer the brand whose "owned attribute" is "style that flatters the full figure. Plus size consumers who place a high importance on personal gratification / comfortable life, prefer the brand whose "owned attribute" is "comfortable fit". Plus size consumers who place a high importance on self – actualization / self – esteem prefer the brand whose "owned attribute" is "size availability".

Based on plus size consumer responses obtained from the telephone assisted survey face – to – face interviews conducted, plus size customers perceive each of the three brands (Moda Plus, Tubby and Maxine) as owning an attribute very much different from the brands' positioning as seen below:

Proprietors / Brands:	The "owned attributes" that Brands claim:	What plus size customers perceive:
Moda Plus	"Style that flatters"	"Size Availability"
Tubby	"Size Availability"	"Comfortable fit"
Maxine	"Comfortable Fit"	"Style that flatters the full figure"

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BRAND COMMUNITY LOYALTY: A SELF DETERMINATION THEORY PERPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we introduce a Self-Determination Theory (SDT)-based framework to better understand the relationship that individuals have with their brand communities. In particular, we first introduce the concept of internalization from SDT, which describes the process by which an individual allows a brand community to become part of self. We then develop a conceptual model that addresses the impact that social influences, social comparisons, and self-determination have on brand community loyalty. Finally, we identify propositions that directly flow out of our conceptual model. This research represents an important extension to the brand community literature by considering not only the social but also the volitional aspects of brand community loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

Branding is an effective way for organizations to identify and differentiate their products in the market place. For example, few consumers will have difficulty identifying the brand symbols of well-known companies like Honda, Audi, and Lexus as well as the unique bottle shape of Coca-Cola. Interestingly, in addition to their usefulness as a differentiating tool, brands enable marketers to develop close and often enduring relationships with consumers. Fournier's (1998) research suggests that consumers frequently form emotional bonds with their favorite brands. Organizations such as Proctor and Gamble, Starbucks, and IBM that have successfully connected with consumers have experienced high levels of brand equity and shareholder value (Madden, Fehle & Fournier, 2006). Thus, the ability to create strong relationships between one's brands and consumers is an important source of success.

Brand communities represent an effective strategy to develop and maintain strong relationships with consumers (Fournier & Lee, 2009). A brand community is a specialized, non-geographically bound community which is built upon a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a branded good or service (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Companies such as Harley-Davidson and Jeep have been very successful in their efforts to create and maintain successful brand communities (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002). In fact, many members of these groups demonstrate almost zealot-like loyalty to the brand and the brand community that they belong too. But what makes brand communities so

successful at developing and maintaining committed and loyal customers? We will attempt to address this question by introducing a theoretical framework that links various social and volitional influences to the loyalty that an individual has toward his/her brand community.

Brand communities provide an ideal venue to fulfill an individual's needs. For example, a person may fulfill a need for affiliation by attending rallies or by chatting with other likeminded people on a brand related web page; moreover, a need for esteem maintenance or enhancement may be fulfilled through comparisons to others within the community or to others outside the community. Unfortunately, a widely accepted theoretical framework describing the process by which individuals come to identify with a brand community appears to be missing in the current literature. As a result, much of the research in brand community tends to be more descriptive in nature.

In this paper, we extend the current research by introducing a Self Determination Theory (SDT)-based framework (Deci & Ryan, 1985) to better understand the relationship that individuals have with their brand communities. In particular, we extend SDT's concept of internalization (Ryan & Connell, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2002; Ryan, Deci & Grolnick, 1995) to more completely describe the process by which an individual allows a particular brand community to become part of self (Ryan & Deci, 2002). We also examine the impact that social influences, social comparisons, and self-determination have on the internalization process or as will be further clarified in this paper, brand community loyalty. Thus, this research represents an important theoretical contribution to the brand community literature.

This paper is organized as follows. First, we briefly review the existing brand community research. We present SDT and justify its use as an appropriate framework with which to study brand community loyalty. We then introduce and describe the internalization process and develop a conceptual model that addresses the impact that social influences, social comparisons, and self-determination have on encouraging higher levels of brand community loyalty. Finally, we identify propositions that directly flow out of our conceptual model.

REVIEW OF BRAND COMMUNITY LITERATURE

Brand community is a concept that originated from community research in sociology. Fischer, Bristor, and Gainer (1994) argued that marketing researchers needed to push the boundaries beyond the individual level of analysis in order to study community and its relationship to consumption. Consistent with Fischer's et al. (1994) perspective, researchers (Sirsi, Ward & Reingen, 1994; Gainer & Fischer, 1994) have begun the process of developing more contemporary methods of defining communities through their shared consumption patterns.

The sociology literature identifies at least three core components of a community (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). The first component is referred to as community in kind (Gusfield, 1978) or the intrinsic connection that community members feel toward one another and the collective sense of difference from others not in the community. The second component is the presence of

rituals and traditions which tend to perpetuate the community's shared history, culture, and consciousness. The third component is a sense of moral responsibility or a felt sense of duty or obligation to the community as a whole and to its individual members. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) conclude that for any group to be considered a community, it must meet each of these three core concepts.

Muniz and O'Guinn (1996) first introduced the concept of brand communities based on their research regarding the Zima beverage brand. Their research suggests that brands come to stand for certain shared styles of human association, a community of consumers, that attract new members who want to participate in the norms and satisfaction shared by the other members. Kover (1996) argues that brand communities offer an alternate form of community for individuals who have become members by buying and owning a particular branded product. Essentially, the shared meanings invested in these brands and their collective significance is posited as another form of social construction of reality.

Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) define a brand community as a specialized, non-geographically bound community which is based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a branded good or service. In support of Anderson's (1983) notion of an imaginary community, the results from their ethnographic study suggest that it is possible for communities to form around any brand, but are most likely to form around those with a strong image, a rich and length history, and threatening competition. Their results indicate that publicly consumed products or services stand a better chance of producing communities than those consumed in private; furthermore, they find that brand communities are fairly stable with individuals being committed to both the brand and to each other. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) conclude that brands are undeniably social entities, created as much by consumers as by marketers in a complex process of social construction.

McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig (2002) extend the conceptualization of a brand community from a customer-customer-brand triad (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) to a customer-centric model involving owner-to-product, owner-to-brand, owner-to-company, and owner-to-other owner relationships. According to McAlexander et al. (2002), events like Jeep Jamborees, Camp Jeep, and HOG rallies bring people together who often share no connection other than an interest in a brand and its consumption. However, by sharing meaningful consumption experiences, interpersonal ties are strengthened and mutual appreciation for the product, the brand, and the facilitating marketers is increased. Greater integration in a brand community (IBC) results from the ties created between the individual brand owner and the company, the other brand owners, and the brand itself. Therefore, IBC is a more comprehensive concept than the earlier conceptualization of a brand community originally proposed by Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), and is grounded in a consumer's total-life experience with a brand. Essentially, it is posited that events like brand fests and rallies act as breeding grounds for the development of relationships between brand users and other members of the customer-centric model potentially facilitating the creation and maintenance of brand communities.

Though the notion of brand community needs further development, most of the perspectives regarding brand community (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005) suggest a process of increased levels of social identification (Tajfel, 1981). However, social identification is only one aspect of brand community loyalty. The volitional aspects of individuals should also be considered in order to gain a more complete picture of the process of increased loyalty to a brand community. For this reason, a theoretical model that addresses both the volitional and social aspects of brand community loyalty is a crucial foundation upon which to build a more comprehensive understanding of this important marketing phenomenon.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Individuals participate in brand communities for many different reasons (Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993). Some attend brand community events to socialize with people who share their interest in the brand while others participate because they view the brand community as an important part of their self-concept. Due to the wide range of motivational variations that are associated with brand community participation, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is an appropriate theory (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

SDT, as developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), is an organismic theory of motivation in that it views people as organisms that are actively looking for ways to satisfy needs. As Deci and Ryan (1985, pp. 7) explain, SDT is "motivational rather than cognitive because it addresses the energization and the direction of behavior and it uses motivational constructs to organize cognitive, affective, and behavioral variables." According to SDT, individuals are motivated to satisfy the three basic needs of relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Relatedness concerns our need for interaction and connectedness to others whereas competence refers to an individual's need to feel effective and capable in exercising and expressing his/her capabilities (Ryan & Deci, 2002). The final need state, autonomy, relates to our need to originate our own actions and behaviors (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

Shortly stated, SDT (Ryan, Deci & Grolnick, 1995) defines a process whereby an individual takes an object from the environment and allows that object to become part of self (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick & Leone, 1994; Ryan & Deci, 2002; Ryan, Deci & Grolnick, 1995). This process is called internalization. The target object is usually conceptual in nature and typically involves a rule, value, or possibly, a group. Deci and Ryan (1985) argue that the process of internalization reflects an individual's intrinsic tendencies to assimilate and integrate external objects into more self-determined ones and to move away from heteronomy toward autonomy.

The process of internalization, as defined by Grolnick, Deci, and Ryan (1997), involves three stages that are located on a linear continuum. The three stages of internalization are the introjection stage, identification stage, and reciprocal assimilation/internalization stage. The introjection stage is considered a sub-optimal form of internalization that is characterized by compliance to an object from a feeling of obligation to family, friends, or other such individuals.

Introjection typically results in stress and anxiety since one feels obligated to conform to objects that are not consistent with his/her values and beliefs. The identification stage is characterized by a realization that the object is important relative to achieving that individual's personal goals. Finally, reciprocal assimilation involves the process of allowing the object to become part of an individual's self-concept. In essence, the object becomes an integral part of that individual's identity. Regulation research involving varying age groups and domains, including religion (Ryan & King, 1993), sport (Pelletier et al., 1995), aging (Vallerand, O'Conner & Hamel, 1995), relationships (Blias, Sabourin, Boucher, & Vallerand, 1990), and health care (Ryan, Plant & O'Malley, 1995) supports the internalization process with more positive outcomes being associated with self-determined forms of regulation.

When extended to brand communities, SDT's internalization continuum (Grolnick, Deci & Ryan, 1997) may be operationalized as a continuum involving three distinct developmental stages: introduction stage, identification stage, and internalization stage. We call this the brand community development continuum. Consistent with the internalization process, an individual's level of loyalty to a brand community is hypothesized to increase as he/she moves from the introduction stage to the internalization stage. In the introduction stage, an individual has not selected a particular brand community with which to identify. As a result, the brand community has limited salience to the individual. In the identification stage, an individual has decided to be identified with a particular brand community because of its importance in achieving his/her goals. For example, one way that an individual may fulfill a need for affiliation is by participating in a brand community. In the internalization stage, an individual has decided to allow the community to become part of self. An individual in this stage demonstrates high, possible zealot-like, levels of loyalty to the brand community.

FACTORS IMPACTING BRAND COMMUNITY LOYALTY

So what factors influence individuals to become more loyal to brand communities? This question will be examined from the perspective of three basic influences; in particular, social influences, social comparisons, and self-determination. The resulting conceptual model is shown in Figure 1.

As shown in Figure 1, we propose that social influences and social comparisons tend to push individuals to higher levels of internalization with an object (i.e. a value, standard, or in this case, a brand community). In addition to social-related factors, self-determination is the volitional element of the model which describes an individual's desire to allow an object to be assimilated into his/her self-concept (e.g., to become part of self). The basic premise underlying this model is that by fulfilling the innate needs of its members, these three influences motivate them to become more loyal to the brand community. A brief discussion of each of these influences is provided in the following paragraphs.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model – Brand Community Loyalty
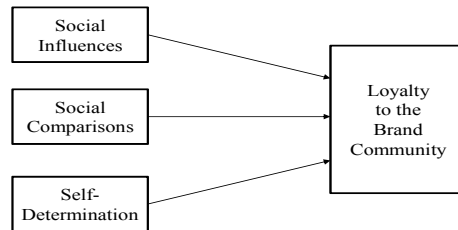
Social Influences

Family, friends, co-workers, and other such individuals have a major influence on the choices made by individuals. Such groups are called reference groups. A reference group is a person or group of people that significantly influences an individual's behavior (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). According to Park and Lessig (1977), there are three motivational influences of reference groups: informational influence, utilitarian influence, and value-expressive influence.

The informational influence occurs when an individual uses the values, norms, and behaviors of others as credible evidence about reality. Essentially, an individual will look to another whom they consider to be more knowledgeable to act as a guide for their own behavior. The utilitarian influence occurs when an individual fulfills the expectations of others to gain a direct reward or to avoid a punishment. Finally, the value-expressive influence occurs when individuals use the norms, values, and behaviors of others as a guide for their own attitudes, values, and behaviors. This type of influence operates because of an individual's need for psychological association with a person or group (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). One or more of these influences may be operating on an individual at any given point in time and are closely related to the desire for psychological association or social affiliation with others. Therefore, social influences may change as individuals become involved in new individual or group relationships.

Social Comparisons

Social comparison is the process by which individuals evaluate themselves based on how they fare relative to others on certain attributes, attitudes, or abilities. Social comparison was originally conceptualized by Festinger (1954) who postulated that individuals have a drive to evaluate their opinions and abilities through comparisons with similar others. However, the original work by Festinger is limited in that it applies to social comparisons involving opinions

and abilities only. Prior research (Wood, 1989) suggests that social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) also applies to personal attributes as well as to attitudes and opinions.

All individuals engage in social comparison to some extent; however, not everyone compares in the same way, with the same frequency, or on the same attributes or dimensions. Wheeler and Miyake (1992) suggest that there are three social comparison goals. The first comparison goal is accurate self-evaluation, which occurs when individuals seek to maintain their current level of self-esteem by confirming their perceptions of performance on an attribute of interest. Self-evaluation is most commonly achieved by comparing with others whose abilities are similar to those of the comparer (Festinger, 1954). The second comparison goal is self-improvement, which occurs when individuals seek to raise their base-level self-esteem by learning new techniques to improve their own performance on an attribute of interest. Self improvement is most commonly achieved by upward comparison (Wood, 1989) since by comparing oneself with an individual who is superior with respect to an attribute or ability of interest it is possible to be inspired by or to learn from social comparison.

The final comparison goal is self-enhancement, which occurs when an individual's self-esteem has been damaged and needs to be reestablished. Self-enhancement is most commonly achieved by downward comparison (Wood, 1989). Therefore, individuals may use upward, downward, or level comparisons depending on the situation; however, in all cases, the goal of these comparisons involves the regulation of an individual's self esteem. Social comparisons may occur between group members or between group members and non-group members.

Self-Determination

Self-determination is an outcome of autonomy. Autonomy describes a condition of being self-initiating as well as feeling a sense of freedom and volition (Ryan, Deci & Grolnick, 1995). In the case of intrinsically motivated activities, the experience is one of spontaneous interest and validity. According to SDT, contexts that enhance intrinsically motivated activity are those that afford autonomy and promote competence. When these affordances occur in conjunction with relational support, the conditions will be optimal for promoting intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comprises both behavioral and psychological activities that do not require external prompts or reinforcement contingencies. Individuals do these activities freely and for the inherent satisfaction that they derive from doing them.

From a psychological perspective, the maintenance of intrinsic motivation, and the vitality and effectiveness of the activity it encourages, is dependent on satisfaction of three primary psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan, Deci & Grolnick, 1995). Competence involves the desire to feel effectance in dealing with the environment and underlies a variety of selective, directed, and prolonged behaviors that result in mastery. Autonomy is the desire to experience an internal locus of initiation and regulation for one's behavior. According to deCharms (1968), people must experience a sense of choice to maintain

high intrinsic motivation (Zuckerman et al., 1978). Finally, relatedness, as argued by Harlow (1958), is a need to experience love and interpersonal contact. In essence, intrinsic motivation flourishes only when there is a backdrop of relatedness to others. The active tendency inherent in intrinsic motivation (i.e., to do, to assimilate, to seek and master challenges) is theorized to occur primarily under conditions that allow satisfaction of the intrinsic needs to feel competent, autonomous, and related. Ryan, Deci, and Grolnick (1995) suggest individuals become increasingly autonomous or self-determined as the process of internalization functions more fully and effectively to bring initially external objects into coherence with one's self.

PROPOSITIONS

The impact of social influences, social comparisons, and self-determination are expected to be different for people who are at different levels of internalization to a brand community. In this paper, we will look at the different levels of brand community internalization through the prism of the brand community development continuum identified earlier. In particular, the propositions identified here attempt to identify the impact that social influences, social comparisons, and self-determination will have on brand community members who are at different stages of the continuum (e.g., the introduction stage, the identification stage, and the internalization stage) or as discussed earlier, internalization.

Social Influences

For individuals in the introduction stage, the impact of brand community-related social influences should be minimal due to the limited salience of the brand community. However, it is important to recognize that some individuals in the introduction stage may be influenced by certain individuals within the brand community based on a prior relationship or a desire to be associated with that individual. In contrast, the impact of social influences should be significantly greater for individuals in the identification stage. In this stage, the magnitude and frequency of social influences should be at their highest level. Finally, individuals in the internalization stage should be less affected by social influences since their responses are more volitional in nature.

> *P1:   The influence of brand community-related social influences should start at a low level for individuals in the introductory stage, increase to a higher level for individuals in the identification stage, and then reduce for individuals in the internalization stage.*

Social Comparisons

For individuals in the introduction stage, the influence of brand community-related social comparisons should be minimal due to the limited salience of the brand community. In contrast, the influence of social comparisons should be significantly greater for individuals in the identification stage. In this stage, the magnitude and frequency of social comparisons should be at its highest level. Finally, individuals in the internalization stage should not be as heavily influenced by social comparisons since their responses are more volitional in nature.

> *P2: The influence of brand community-related social comparisons should start at a low level for individuals in the introductory stage, increase to a higher level for individuals in the identification stage, and then reduce for individuals in the internalization stage.*

Self-Determination

In addition to the impact of social influences, the self-determination of individuals to intrinsically act according with and to personally support the norms, values and beliefs of the brand community varies among the three stages of the brand community development. Individuals in the introductory stage should exhibit minimal self-determination relative to the brand community, whereas individuals in the identification stage may exhibit varying degrees of self-determination depending in large part on their disposition to act volitionally. Finally, individuals in the internalization stage should exhibit a high level of self-determination relative to the brand community. These individuals may behave in a zealot-like manner toward the brand community and its associated norms, values, and beliefs.

> *P3: The influence of self-determination should start at a low level for individuals in the introductory stage and increase to a high level only after an individual has reached a moderate to high level of internalization with the brand community and remain high for individuals in the internalization stage.*

DISCUSSION

In this paper, we identify a theoretical framework based on Self Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) that examines the impact that social influences, social comparisons, and self determination have on an individual's loyalty to a brand community. We also introduce SDT's concept of internalization in order to understand the process by which an individual allows the brand community to become part of self (Ryan & Deci, 2002). To capture an

individual's loyalty to a particular brand community, we extend the internalization process to the brand communities by developing the brand community development continuum.

The brand community development continuum identifies three different levels (e.g., stages) of attachment that an individual may have with a brand community ranging from introduction, to identification, and finally, internalization. Consistent with the internalization process, loyalty to the brand community is hypothesized to increase as a person moves from the introduction to the internalization stage. In the introduction stage, an individual has not selected a particular brand community with which to identify whereas in the identification stage, the individual has decided to be identified with a particular brand community because of its importance in achieving his/her goals. Finally, in the internalization stage, the individual has decided (through his/her own volition) to allow the brand community to become part of self and as such, may demonstrate almost zealot-like loyalty to the brand community.

Propositions were then developed that identify the influence that social influences, social comparisons, and self-determination have on brand community members as they move from the introduction stage, to the identification stage, and then, the internalization stage. Our research suggests that the impact that each of these influences has on brand community members depend on the degree to which a person has internalized the brand community as evaluated by his/her development stage. We further posit that these three influences encourage individuals to become more loyal to the brand community.

The conceptual model proposed in this paper represents a valuable theoretical contribution to the brand community literature by introducing an individual level, psychologically-based model with which to better understand the dynamics of brand community. Furthermore, the model provides marketers with a method of classifying individuals relative to their level of brand community loyalty (e.g., internalization) as well as an understanding of the impact that social influences, social comparisons, and self-determination for individuals at each stage of brand community development. As a result, marketers will be better to develop programs targeted at individuals in each specific stage of brand community development in order to encourage increased levels of brand community loyalty.

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INSTORE SOCIAL AND NONSOCIAL SHOPPING: A LEISURE PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how the leisure and social dimensions of shopping influence consumers' perception of shopping as a leisure experience and compares the leisure perceptions of four types of shoppers: 1) social recreational shoppers, 2) nonsocial recreational shoppers, 3) social nonrecreational shoppers, and 4) nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers. The results indicate that intrinsic satisfaction, involvement, arousal, and social shopping are significant predictors of consumers' perception of shopping as a leisure experience. Differences in perceptions of the leisure dimensions experienced while shopping were found across the four groups of shoppers. The different shopper groups can be considered different segments of shoppers, enabling retailers to develop more effective merchandising, store layout and design, and promotion strategies to target each group.

INTRODUCTION

Shopping with others or group shopping is commonly seen in shopping malls and retail stores. Consumers shop with others for a variety of reasons, including social motives, to make a common or joint purchase decision, and to help to reduce the risk associated with making an important purchase decision (Hartman & Kiecker, 1991; Kiecker & Hartman, 1993). The shopping companions that help satisfy these needs have been referred to as purchase pals in the consumer behavior literature (Hartman & Kiecker, 1991; Kiecker & Hartman, 1993; Woodside & Sims, 1976). Hartman and Kiecker (1991) define purchase pals as "individuals who accompany buyers on their shopping trips in order to assist them with their on-site purchase decisions" (p. 462). Consistent with this definition, research on purchase pals has focused on the use of purchase pals as information sources to help consumers reduce risk and uncertainty and increase their confidence when making purchase decisions. This perspective coincides with the traditional focus of shopping research on the utilitarian (functional or tangible) product-acquisition aspects of shopping activity as opposed to studying the hedonic (enjoyable or intangible) aspects of the shopping experience (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). As a result, little attention has been given to the role of purchase pals in helping to satisfy consumers' social motives while shopping or how shopping companions influence consumers' perceptions of their shopping experience, i.e., enjoyment and other hedonic motives. The renewed interest in examining and understanding the hedonic and experiential aspects of shopping that has occurred

in the last several years warrants this approach (e.g., Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2001). Continuing this line of reasoning, since shopping can have hedonic qualities and is a form of recreation or leisure for some consumers (Guiry, Mägi, & Lutz, 2006; Lehtonen & Mäenpää, 1997; Prus & Dawson, 1991), the present study will examine how the leisure and social dimensions of shopping influence consumers' perception of shopping as a leisure experience, and compare the leisure perceptions of four types of shoppers: 1) social recreational shoppers, 2) nonsocial recreational shoppers, 3) social nonrecreational shoppers, and 4) nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers. Clothing shopping was used as the context of this research since Campbell (1997) found that clothing shopping is a common focus of recreational shopping, and Hartman and Kiecker (1991) observed that purchase pals are commonly used when shopping for clothing.

A greater understanding of social shopping and how the social dimension of shopping influences consumers' perceptions of shopping as a leisure experience not only enriches our knowledge of social and nonsocial shoppers as well as recreational shopping, but also may help retailers develop more effective merchandising, store layout and design, and promotion strategies to target social and nonsocial shoppers as well as recreational and nonrecreational shoppers. In the following sections, the research framework is presented, hypotheses are developed, the research method is described, and the results are reported. Finally, the implications and limitations of the study are discussed and directions for future research are outlined.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Shopping as Leisure

The notion that shopping is a form of recreation or leisure for some consumers has been acknowledged in the marketing and sociology literature. In an early shopper typology study, Bellenger, Robertson, and Greenberg (1977) classified consumers as convenience or recreational shoppers based on their level of interest in shopping as a leisure activity. Recreational shoppers had "a very high level of interest in shopping as a leisure-time activity," whereas convenience shoppers' level of interest was "very low" (pp. 36-37). In subsequent research, Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980) defined recreational shoppers as "those who enjoy shopping as a leisure-time activity," contrasting them with "convenience shoppers" who experienced no pleasure from the shopping process per se (p. 78). Westbrook and Black (1985) performed a cluster analysis based on shopping motivations and identified a "shopping-process involved" cluster that they concluded corresponded to Bellenger and Korgaonkar's recreational shopper. In a qualitative study, Prus and Dawson (1991) identified recreational shopping orientations as embracing "notions of shopping as interesting, enjoyable, entertaining and leisurely activity" (p. 149). Lunt and Livingstone (1992) identified five shopping groups, one of which was leisure shoppers, who found shopping "pleasurable" (p. 90). In another qualitative study, Lehtonen and Mäenpää

(1997) differentiated recreational or pleasurable shopping from "shopping as a necessary maintenance activity," characterizing it as being "an end in itself, playful, hedonistic, and experiential" (p. 144). The work of Westbrook and Black, Prus and Dawson, and Lehtonen and Mäenpää are notable since they began to capture the idea that recreational shopping encompasses more than simple enjoyment.

In recent research that has focused on scale development to measure the hedonic and experiential aspects of shopping, a more complete picture of recreational shopping has emerged. Babin et al. (1994) developed a scale measuring hedonic and utilitarian shopping value, where the former captures such qualities as joy, excitement, intrinsic satisfaction, escape, adventure, fantasy, and sensory stimulation. Mathwick et al. (2001) developed a multidimensional measure of retail "experiential value," with one of the dimensions being "playfulness," which is related to the concept of recreational shopping. Arnold and Reynolds (2003) developed a six-dimensional measure of hedonic shopping motives including dimensions such as adventure, gratification, and idea shopping. Most recently, Guiry et al. (2006) found that recreational shopping as a leisure activity can be considered a form of "serious leisure" (Stebbins, 1982), and that those consumers with a strong recreational shopper identity realize higher levels of perceived leisure (e.g., intrinsic satisfaction, arousal, and mastery) when shopping. These latter studies support the notion that shopping as leisure or recreation invokes gratifications beyond simple enjoyment as a number of the identified components or dimensions have been found to constitute a leisure experience (e.g., Jackson, 1991; Shaw, 1985; Unger & Kernan, 1983). In addition, of interest to the present research, a number of studies highlighted in this section recognize the social characteristics of recreational shoppers (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980) and the social benefits associated with recreational or hedonic shopping (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Lehtonen & Mäenpää, 1997; Westbrook & Black, 1985). In the next section, prior research that addresses social motives for shopping is reviewed.

Social Shopping Motives

Past research on shopper typologies and shopping motivations has revealed social motives for shopping. Stone (1954) first identified a "personalizing" shopper, who seeks personal relationships with store personnel while shopping. A study by the *Chicago Tribune* (1955) found that some shoppers viewed shopping as an outing or all day affair to socialize with friends, while Downs (1961) proposed that consumers received a number of experiential benefits from shopping, including enjoyment from socializing with friends met at stores. Tauber (1972) also recognized that shopping provides opportunities for social interaction outside the home, communicating with others having similar interests, and affiliation with peer or aspirational groups. In addition, Westbrook and Black (1985) identified "affiliation," which included "shopping with friends as a social occasion" and "talking with salespeople and other shoppers" who have common interests, as a shopping motivation (p. 90). Of the six shopper clusters

identified in their research, the aforementioned "shopping-process involved" cluster realized the highest level of satisfaction from affiliation. As mentioned at the onset of this paper, research on purchase pals has recognized that purchase pals help satisfy social motives (Hartman & Kiecker, 1991; Kiecker & Hartman, 1993). In a study of mall shoppers, Bloch, Ridgway, and Dawson (1994) found that "Mall Enthusiasts," who are akin to recreational shoppers, are more likely to satisfy social needs when in a shopping mall than the other three groups of mall shoppers uncovered in their research. Lehtonen and Mäenpää (1997) discuss how shopping "provides a means for the creation and maintenance of social relations" since it is a way to spend time together and "makes possible the shared creation of taste and style" (p. 151). Most recently, Arnold and Reynolds (2003) developed a six-dimensional measure of hedonic shopping motives that includes "social shopping" as one of the motives. They defined social shopping as "the enjoyment of shopping with friends and family, socializing while shopping, and bonding with others while shopping" (p. 80). Of the five shopper segments identified in their research, "Enthusiasts," who appear similar to recreational shoppers, scored the highest on social shopping motivations.

While these studies acknowledge the pervasiveness of social motives for shopping, there is a lack of knowledge regarding how the realization of social motives influences or interacts with the experiential or hedonic aspects of a consumer's shopping experience, in particular the recreational shopper. Since "recreational shoppers" are more likely than "convenience shoppers" to enjoy social interaction and activities outside the home, in addition to being more likely to shop with others (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980), "shopping-process involved" shoppers realize the highest level of satisfaction from affiliation when compared to other types of shoppers (Westbrook & Black, 1985), "Mall Enthusiasts" are more likely to satisfy social needs while in a shopping mall than other types of mall patrons (Bloch et al., 1994), and "Enthusiasts" have the strongest social shopping motives among different shopper segments (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003), the social dimension of recreational shopping demands further attention. Moreover, social interaction may be the most important benefit of leisure participation (Iso-Ahola, 1999). As suggested by Prus (1993), it seems prudent to examine the social dimension of shopping within the context of recreational and nonrecreational shopping. Conceptualizing shopping as a leisure experience provides a context for examining how the social dimension of shopping influences the experiential or hedonic aspects of the recreational and nonrecreational shopping experience.

Dimensions of Leisure

Unger and Kernan (1983) identified six major determinants of the subjective leisure experience based on their review of the leisure literature: 1) intrinsic satisfaction, 2) perceived freedom, 3) involvement, 4) arousal, 5) mastery, and 6) spontaneity. As noted earlier, a number of these dimensions have been found to characterize hedonic shopping or are associated with

shopping as leisure (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Babin et al., 1994; Guiry et al., 2006). A brief description of each dimension follows which includes noting the overlap between the leisure and hedonic dimensions.

Unger and Kernan describe intrinsic satisfaction as the "essence of leisure" (p. 382) alluding to its purely pleasurable character. Within this dimension, leisure is seen as intrinsically motivated and as an end in itself. Three items in Babin et al.'s (1994, p. 651) scale, i.e., "The shopping trip was truly a joy," "Compared to other things I could have done, the time spent shopping was truly enjoyable," and "I enjoyed this shopping trip for its own sake, not just for the items I may have purchased," appear to tap this dimension of leisure.

Leisure is also described as being free or voluntary, i.e., one is not forced or obligated to participate in an activity. One of the items used by Unger and Kernan in the Perceived Freedom subscale to capture this dimension is "Not because I have to but because I want to would characterize it" (p. 387). Similarly, the following item in Babin et al.'s scale, "I continued to shop, not because I had to, but because I wanted to" (p. 651), seems to measure this aspect of leisure.

The third dimension, i.e., involvement, refers to the feelings of escape and total absorption within the activity. Stebbins (1982) has referred to this type of deep involvement in an activity as "serious leisure." This dimension of leisure is seen in three items in Babin et al.'s scale (p. 651), i.e., "This shopping trip truly felt like an escape," "I enjoyed being immersed in exciting new products." and "While shopping, I was able to forget my problems," as well as the adventure and gratification dimensions of Arnold and Reynolds' (2003) hedonic shopping motivations scale.

Arousal refers to the stimulation that occurs from the novelty-seeking, exploration, and risk-taking behavior in leisure. Two items in Babin et al.'s scale, "I enjoyed being immersed in exciting new products" (p. 651) and "During the trip, I felt the excitement of the hunt" (p. 651), correspond with this dimension as does Arnold and Reynolds' measure of idea shopping.

Closely related to arousal, is mastery (Unger & Kernan, 1983). Through leisure, one has the opportunity to test oneself, realize a sense of adventure, or conquer the environment by being an expert or developing outstanding ability. Babin et al. capture this dimension with the following item, "While shopping, I felt a sense of adventure" (p. 651), while elements of mastery are seen in Arnold and Reynolds' adventure shopping and value shopping scales.

The last dimension is spontaneity, which means that leisure is not an obligatory activity. It is characterized as being unplanned, spontaneous, and spur-of-the moment (Unger & Kernan, 1983). In Babin et al.'s scale, the item, "I had a good time because I was able to act on the spur-of-the-moment" (p. 561), represents this dimension of leisure.

To measure these six dimensions, Unger and Kernan (1983) developed a 26-item Leisure Dimensions scale. Using this scale, they found that three of these dimensions – intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, and involvement – were present across a variety of situational contexts, while the remaining three determinants were more activity specific. Although

shopping was not specifically included as a situational context in their research, other researchers (e.g., McKechnie, 1974; Unger, 1984) have classified it under one of the situations, i.e., "easy/social" used by Unger and Kernan. Providing credence to using the Leisure Dimensions scale to study recreational shopping, Guiry et al. (2006) applied the scale in their research and found that all six dimensions of leisure were positively correlated with recreational shopping. However, this research does not address social aspects of recreational shopping, e.g., differentiate social and nonsocial recreational shoppers.

Social Interaction and Leisure

Research in the field of leisure has documented the importance of social interaction as an intrinsic reward of leisure (e.g., Crandall, 1980; Iso-Ahola, 1999; Samdahl, 1992). More specifically, in studies analyzing the relationship between need satisfaction and leisure activity participation, affiliation is a frequently cited need (Hawes, 1978; London, Crandall, & Fitzgibbons, 1977; Tinsley, Barrett, & Kass, 1977). In support of this proposition, Unger (1984) found that leisure situations that offered companionship enhanced the experience compared to participating alone, while Unger and Kernan (1983) found that the nature of a leisure activity's social situation (i.e., parallel/convenient, relational, or role-determined) and the type of activity (i.e., easy/social or craft) affected the leisure dimensions experienced. Intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, and involvement were invariant across the different social situations and activities studied, while arousal, mastery, and spontaneity were more activity specific. Spontaneity was experienced in craft activities that are relational, while arousal and mastery were experienced in craft activities that are role-determined or parallel convenient. Of the social situations and activities studied by Unger and Kernan (1983) and Unger (1984), the relational social situation that is an easy/social activity appears to best describe a social shopping context from the point of view of the social shopper.

HYPOTHESES

This study is based on two premises: 1) shopping is a leisure activity for some consumers and not leisure for others, and 2) some consumers are social shoppers and others are nonsocial shoppers. The preceding discussion provides a framework for studying social shopping within the context of recreational shopping while at the same time differentiating social shoppers who are recreational shoppers from those who are not by conceptualizing shopping as a leisure experience to analyze the social dimension of shopping. Based on these two premises and the preceding discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Unger and Kernan's (1983) finding that three dimensions of leisure – intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, and involvement were invariant across situational contexts, leads to the following hypotheses depicted in Figure 1.

H1a   Intrinsic satisfaction is positively related to one's preference for shopping as a leisure activity.

H1b   Perceived freedom is positively related to one's preference for shopping as a leisure activity.

H1c   Involvement is positively related to one's preference for shopping as a leisure activity.
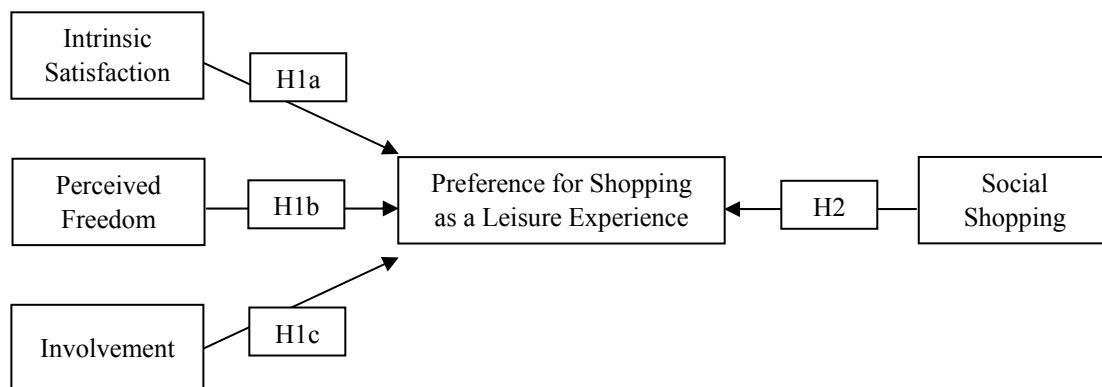
Figure 1

The next hypothesis, also shown in Figure 1, stems from Unger's (1984) finding that leisure situations that offered companionship enhanced the experience compared to participating alone and research that has acknowledged that social interaction is an intrinsic reward of leisure (e.g., Crandall, 1980; Iso-Ahola, 1999).

H2   Social shopping is positively related to one's preference for shopping as a leisure activity.

As a result of the positive correlation found between recreational shopping and the six leisure dimensions (Guiry et al., 2006) and the positive benefits of social interaction in a leisure context (Unger, 1984), the following hypotheses were tested.

H3a   Social recreational shoppers will experience higher levels of intrinsic satisfaction while shopping for clothing than recreational shoppers, social nonrecreational shoppers, and nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers respectively.

H3b   *Social recreational shoppers will experience higher levels of perceived freedom while shopping for clothing than recreational shoppers, social nonrecreational shoppers, and nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers respectively.*

H3c   *Social recreational shoppers will experience higher levels of arousal while shopping for clothing than recreational shoppers, social nonrecreational shoppers, and nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers respectively.*

H3d   *Social recreational shoppers will experience higher levels of mastery while shopping for clothing than recreational shoppers, social nonrecreational shoppers, and nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers respectively.*

H3e   *Social recreational shoppers will experience higher levels of involvement while shopping for clothing than recreational shoppers, social nonrecreational shoppers, and nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers respectively.*

H3f   *Social recreational shoppers will experience higher levels of spontaneity while shopping for clothing than recreational shoppers, social nonrecreational shoppers, and nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers respectively.*

In light of Guiry et al.'s (2006) and Unger's (1984) research findings, for each of the above hypotheses, it is expected that social recreational shoppers will experience the highest level of the respective leisure dimension followed by nonsocial recreational shoppers, social nonreceational shoppers, and nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers. The hypothesized relationship between type of shopper (NSNR = nonsocial nonrecreational shopper, SNR = social nonrecreational shopper, NSR = nonsocial recreational shopper, and SR = social recreational shopper) and leisure dimension strength is shown in Figure 2. The depicted relationship is expected to hold true for each leisure dimension.

Figure 2

METHOD

Data Collection

Survey questionnaires were distributed to a quota sample of consumers by undergraduate and MBA students in the author's classes at a medium size Northeastern university. In return for extra course credit and the opportunity to participate in a cash raffle, each student was asked to secure up to 10 respondents. Student participation was voluntary and each student was permitted to complete a survey him/herself. Firm guidelines on respondent eligibility were established to try to ensure a reasonable diversity of individuals and backgrounds.

Each questionnaire was accompanied by a blank envelope and cover letter describing the project as a study of consumer clothes shopping behavior. Anonymity was assured by instructing the respondent to seal the completed questionnaire in the envelope before returning it to the student and by assuring the respondent that the professor directing the project would be responsible for opening the envelope. The identity of approximately 10 percent of each interviewer's respondents was verified by the author through follow-up telephone calls. A total of 561 responses were obtained. A detailed profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Sociodemographics Descriptive Statistics			
Gender	**Percent**	**Number of Children**	**Percent**
Male	<u>43.3</u>	None	63.6
Female	<u>56.7</u>	One	15.7
Age		Two	10.9
19 or younger	8.8	Three	6.7
20 - 29	54.8	Four or More	3.1
30 - 39	15.4	**Education**	
40 - 49	10.2	High School	2.7
50 - 59	3.8	High School Graduate	15.2
60 or older	7.2	College	34.9
Race/Ethnic Group		College Degree	26.9
African-American	15.2	Graduate School	8.9
Asian	26.3	Graduate Degree	11.4
Caucasian	46.1	**Annual Household Income**	
Hispanic	5.7	Less than $20,000	15.6
Other	6.8	$20,000 - $39,999	25.2
Marital Status		$40,000 - $59,999	26.0
Never Married	61.2	$60,000 - $79,999	16.2
Married	29.5	$80,000 - $99,999	7.4
Separated/Divorced	4.1	$100,000 or more	9.7
Other	5.2		

Measures

The questionnaire consisted of a series of scales and questions addressing the study's specific research questions. The coefficient alphas, means, and standard deviations for the multi-item scales used in the research are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Coefficient Alphas, Means and Standard Deviations for Multi-Item Scales					
Social Shopping	N	Number of Items	α	Mean	Standard Deviation
Recreational Shopping	548	8	.83	39.00	6.00
Leisure Dimensions	546	5	.84	12.63	4.27
Intrinsic Satisfaction	549	3	.80	9.22	2.89
Perceived Freedom	544	5	.54	17.15	3.12
Arousal	550	4	.74	11.53	3.10
Mastery	548	4	.75	9.92	3.17
Involvement	537	5	.80	12.75	4.19
Spontaneity	540	5	.86	14.73	4.44

Social shopping

Social shopping was assessed via an eight item scale shown in Table 3. The items in the scale were drawn from the literature on social shopping motives, an unpublished qualitative

research study on shopping for clothing conducted by the author, and author intuition. A factor analysis of the scale showed that it is unidimensional, and Cronbach's alpha was computed to assess reliability. The factor scores for each item are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Social Shopping Scale	
Item	Factor Loadings
Shopping for clothing is most enjoyable when I go with another person.	.752
I enjoy going shopping for clothing with other people even if I do not plan to buy something.	.719
I enjoy helping a shopping companion while he/she is shopping for clothing.	.714
The best part of going shopping for clothing is being with my family and/or friends.	.705
I have a favorite shopping companion when I go shopping for clothing.	.663
I enjoy being complimented by a shopping companion when I am shopping for clothing.	.641
A central part of my friendship or relationship with another person is going shopping for clothing together.	.624
Shopping for clothing is a social event.	.612

Respondents indicated their level of agreement to each item on a 5-point scale anchored by "Strongly Agree" and "Strongly Disagree." In order to identify social shoppers and nonsocialshoppers, the sample was split into two groups using the midpoint of 24 of the eight item scale. The author reasoned that to be considered a social shopper, a respondent should score at least a 25 on the scale, indicating a tendency to agree more than disagree with the items. This procedure resulted in 43.6 percent of the 548 valid responses being classified as social shoppers and 56.4 percent being labeled nonsocial shoppers.

Recreational shopping

Recreational shopping was measured using Guiry et al.'s (2006) Recreational Shopper Identity scale. The 5 items were modified to reflect the behavioral context of shopping for clothing in a retail store and were measured on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = "Strongly Disagree" and 5 = "Strongly Agree." To identify recreational shoppers and nonrecreational shoppers, the sample was split into two groups using the midpoint of 15 of the five item scale. The author reasoned that to be considered a recreational shopper, a respondent should score at least a 16 on the scale, indicating a tendency to agree more than disagree with the items. This procedure resulted in 27.1 percent of the 546 valid responses being classified as recreational shoppers and 72.9 percent being labeled nonrecreational shoppers.

Leisure dimensions and leisure preference

Unger and Kernan's (1983) Leisure Dimensions Scale was used to measure the six dimensions of a leisure experience. The 26 items were modified to reflect the behavioral context of shopping for clothing in a retail store and were measured on a 5-point Likert scale anchored by "Strongly Agree" and "Strongly Disagree." Respondents also indicated on a 5-point scale their level of agreement with the statement "shopping for clothing is among my favorite leisure activities." This scale is a modification of a single-item scale used by Unger and Kernan (1983) to measure leisure preference, considered a subjective measure of leisure.

Sociodemographic variables

Respondents were asked to indicate their age, gender, race/ethnic group, marital status, number of children living in their household, highest level of education completed, and annual household income before taxes.

RESULTS

Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, and 2

Multiple regression analysis was used to test *H1a, H1b, H1c,* and *H2* to determine the effects of intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, involvement and the social shopping dimension on consumers' perception of shopping as a leisure activity. Additionally, from an exploratory perspective, the other three leisure dimensions (arousal, mastery, and spontaneity) were included as independent variables in the regression models to also test the effects of these dimensions on consumers' perceptions of shopping as a leisure activity. The regression results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis						
Dependent and Independent Variables	Stnd. Coeff. Beta	*t*	Sig.	Stnd. Coeff. Beta	*t*	Sig.
Dependent: Leisure Preference						
Independent:						
Intrinsic Satisfaction	.414	9.078	.000	.390	8.618	.000
Perceived Freedom	.053	1.627	.104	.054	1.680	.094
Arousal	.187	3.798	.000	.151	3.101	.002
Mastery	-.027	-.555	.579	-.038	-.797	.426
Involvement	.259	5.552	.000	.227	4.915	.000
Spontaneity	-.009	-.267	.790	-.020	-.596	.554
Social Shopping				.167	4.818	.000
R Square	.584			.603		

In the first model with the six dimensions of leisure as independent variables and Unger and Kernan's (1983) leisure preference scale as the dependent variable, intrinsic satisfaction, involvement, and arousal had significant positive effects on leisure preference, with intrinsic satisfaction having the strongest influence followed by involvement and arousal. Thus, there was support for *H1a* and *H1c* as intrinsic satisfaction and involvement were positively related to one's preference for shopping as a leisure activity. The other three leisure dimensions, including perceived freedom, were not significant predictors of leisure preference. Hence, *H1b* was not supported as perceived freedom did not have a significant effect on the dependent variable. This result may have been influenced by the low reliability of the perceived freedom scale. The findings regarding the effects of intrinsic satisfaction and involvement are consistent with Unger and Kernan's (1983) results.

Since Unger and Kernan (1983) found that feelings of arousal were present in craft activities, the significant effect of arousal suggests that when clothing shopping is a leisure activity, it may be perceived as a craft activity rather than an easy/social activity. This is also consistent with Tinsley et al.'s (1977) finding that feelings of arousal were not present in easy/social activities. Given clothing shopping may involve keeping up with trends and new fashions, putting outfits together, mixing and matching items, and accessorizing, it is reasonable to conclude that clothing shopping is considered a craft for some consumers. These aspects of clothing shopping are consistent with Arnold and Reynold's (2003) "idea shopping" motivation.

In support of *H2*, when social shopping was added to the previous model, it had a significant positive effect on leisure preference along with intrinsic satisfaction, involvement, and arousal. Intrinsic satisfaction still had the strongest effect on leisure preference in this model, followed by social shopping, involvement, and arousal. In this model, perceived freedom became marginally significant. The significant influence of social shopping on leisure preference is consistent with previous research that has recognized that companionship enhances the leisure experience (e.g., Iso-Ahola, 1999; Samdahl, 1992; Unger, 1984).

Hypotheses 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e, and 3f

Before testing *H3a*, *H3b*, *H3c*, *H3d*, *H3e*, and *H3f*, the survey respondents were categorized into four different shopper groups using the Social Shopping and Recreational Shopper Identity (RSI) scales. The four groups are: 1) Nonsocial Nonrecreational (NSNR) shoppers, 2) Social Nonrecreational (SNR) shoppers, 3) Nonsocial Recreational (NSR) shoppers, and 4) Social Recreational (SR) shoppers. Respondents were classified using the following criteria. Respondents scoring less than 25 on the Social Shopping scale and less than 16 on the RSI scale were classified as Nonsocial Nonrecreational shoppers, while respondents with scores greater than 24 on the Social Shopping scale and less than 16 on the RSI scale were labeled Social Nonrecreational shoppers. Respondents scoring less than 25 on the Social Shopping scale and greater than 15 on the RSI scale were classified as Nonsocial Recreational shoppers, and

respondents with scores greater than 24 on the Social Shopping scale and greater than 15 on the RSI scale were labeled Social Recreational shoppers.

After the shopper groups were identified, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with a least significance difference test was used to compare the four groups and test *H3a*, *H3b*, *H3c*, *H3d*, *H3e*, and *H3f*. The pertinent statistics for this analysis are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Means and Percentages for Key Variables for Types of Shoppers				
	NonSocial NonRec Shoppers	Social NonRec Shoppers	NonSocial Recreational Shoppers	Social Recreational Shoppers
N[a]	227-259	122-134	41-47	90-101
Leisure Dimensions				
Intrinsic Satisfaction	7.73	9.79	10.70	11.54
Perceived Freedom	16.58	17.03	18.21	18.17
Arousal	9.96	11.86	13.22	14.39
Mastery	8.41	10.19	11.87	12.56
Involvement	10.43	13.09	15.40	16.91
Spontaneity	13.29	15.14	16.43	16.94
Demographic/Socioeconomics				
Age[b]	4.55[d]	3.28[de]	3.11[de]	3.01[de]
Education	3.58[e]	3.59[e]	3.51[e]	3.65
Income[b]	5.96[d]	5.00[de]	5.46[e]	5.12[de]
Number of Children[b]	1.88[d]	1.56[de]	1.61[e]	1.55[de]
Percentage Married[c]	39.5	24.6	10.9	17.8
Percentage Caucasian[c]	60.2	39.8	37.8	20.0
Percentage female	51.0	63.4	59.6	61.4
a: N's vary because of missing date.				
b: One way ANOVA significant at $p < .05$				
c: Pearson Chi-Square significant at $p < .05$				
d: Pairwise comparisons significant at $p < .05$				
E: Pairwise comparisons are not significant at $p < .05$				

SR shoppers attain a significantly higher level of intrinsic satisfaction shopping for clothing than SNR shoppers and NSNR shoppers. However, since they only attain a marginally significant higher level of intrinsic satisfaction than NSR shoppers, *H3a* is not supported.

SR shoppers realize significantly higher levels of perceived freedom shopping for clothing than the two groups of nonrecreational shoppers. Conversely, there was not a significant difference in the perceptions of perceived freedom between SR shoppers and NSR shoppers. Therefore, *H3b* is not supported. Again, the low reliability of the perceived freedom scale may have played a role in this finding.

Table 6: ANOVA and Pairwise Comparison with LSD Results				
Dependent Variable	Type of Shopper[b] (A)	Type of Shopper[b] (B)	Mean Difference (A-B)	Sig.
Intrinsic Satisfaction[a]	NSNR Shoppers	SNR Shoppers	-2.07	.000
		NSR Shoppers	-2.97	.000
		SR Shoppers	-3.81	.000
	SNR Shoppers	NSR Shoppers	-91	.030
		SR Shoppers	-1.74	.000
	NSR Shoppers	SR Shoppers	-.83	.056
Perceived Freedom[a]	NSNR Shoppers	SNR Shoppers	-.45	.169
		NSR Shoppers	-1.63	.001
		SR Shoppers	-1.59	.000
	SNR Shoppers	NSR Shoppers	-1.18	.022
		SR Shoppers	-1.14	.005
	NSR Shoppers	SR Shoppers	.04	.942
Arousal[a]	NSNR Shoppers	SNR Shoppers	-1.91	.000
		NSR Shoppers	-3.26	.000
		SR Shoppers	-4.44	.000
	SNR Shoppers	NSR Shoppers	-1.35	.002
		SR Shoppers	-2.53	.000
	NSR Shoppers	SR Shoppers	-1.18	.010
	NSNR Shoppers	SNR Shoppers	-1.78	.000
		NSR Shoppers	-3.46	.000
		SR Shoppers	-4.15	.000
	SNR Shoppers	NSR Shoppers	-1.68	.000
		SR Shoppers	-2.37	.000
	NSR Shoppers	SR Shoppers	-.69	.154
Involvement[a]	NSNR Shoppers	SNR Shoppers	-2.66	.000
		NSR Shoppers	-4.97	.000
		SR Shoppers	-6.47	.000
	SNR Shoppers	NSR Shoppers	-2.31	.000
		SR Shoppers	-3.81	.000
	NSR Shoppers	SR Shoppers	-1.50	.012
Sponataneity[a]	NSNR Shoppers	SNR Shoppers	-1.84	.000
		NSR Shoppers	-3.13	.000
		SR Shoppers	-3.64	.000
	SNR Shoppers	NSR Shoppers	-1.29	.070
		SR Shoppers	-1.80	.002
	NSR Shoppers	SR Shoppers	-.51	.495
a: One way ANOPVA significant at p <.05				
b: NSNR=Nonsocial Nonrecreational; SNR=Social Nonrecreational; NSR= Nonsocial Recreational; SR=Social Recreational				

In support of *H3c*, SR shoppers experience significantly higher levels of arousal shopping for clothing than the other three groups of shoppers. NSR shoppers experience the second highest level followed by SNR shoppers and NSNR shoppers in descending order.

SR shoppers realize significantly higher levels of mastery shopping for clothing than the two nonrecreational shopping groups. Yet, there was not a significant difference in the perceptions of mastery between SR shoppers and NSR shoppers. Thus, *H3d* is not supported.

In support of *H3e,* SR shoppers realize significantly higher levels of involvement shopping for clothing than the other three groups of shoppers. NSR shoppers realize the second highest level followed by SNR shoppers and NSNR shoppers in descending order.

Lastly, SR shoppers experience significantly higher levels of spontaneity shopping for clothing than the SNR shoppers and NSNR shoppers. There was not a significant difference in the perceptions of spontaneity between SR shoppers and NSR shoppers. Consequently, *H3f* is not supported.

To summarize the results pertaining to *H3a*, *H3b*, *H3c*, *H3d*, *H3e*, and *H3f,* support was found for *H3c* and *H3e* as SR shoppers experience significantly higher levels of arousal and involvement shopping for clothing than the other three shopper groups. Additionally, for both leisure dimensions, NSR shoppers experience the second highest level of each dimension, followed by SNR shoppers and NSNR shoppers in descending order. The research results did not give support for *H3a*, *H3b*, *H3d,* and *H3f* since even though SR shoppers realize significantly higher levels of intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, mastery, and spontaneity than SNR and NSNR shoppers, SR shoppers and NSR shoppers did not significantly differ in their perceptions of these four leisure dimensions while shopping for clothing. In sum, when comparing the shopping experiences of SR shoppers and NSR shoppers, the social dimension of shopping seems to enhance the level of arousal and involvement experienced by SR shoppers.

Demographic Correlates

A limited number of differences were found among the four types of shoppers when comparing their demographic and socioeconomic profiles as shown in Table 5. A higher percentage of females than males were in each shopper group, although no differences were observed with respect to the gender makeup of each group. NSNR shoppers were older than the other three groups, but no differences in age were found across the other three shopper groups. The only difference found regarding income was NSNR shoppers had a higher level of income than SNR shoppers and SR shoppers. With regards to marital status, NSNR shoppers had the highest percentage of married couples, followed by SNR shoppers, SR shoppers, and NSR shoppers in descending order. The only difference found with respect to number of children was NSNR shoppers had more children than SNR shoppers and SR shoppers. This finding is consistent with the previously mentioned differences in age and marital status among the groups. NSNR shoppers were predominately Caucasian, whereas the other three shopping groups were

predominately non-Caucasian. SNR shoppers and NSR shoppers had a similar ethnic makeup, while SR shoppers had the lowest percentage of Caucasians. Lastly, no differences were observed across the four groups with respect to level of education.

CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study extends past research on recreational shopping and social motives for shopping by recognizing that social shopping may be part of both recreational shopping and nonrecreational shopping, identifying two groups of recreational shoppers: 1) social recreational shoppers and 2) nonsocial recreational shoppers and two groups of nonrecreational shoppers: 1) social nonrecreational shoppers and 2) nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers, and comparing the shopper groups' perceptions of leisure while shopping. In addition, the study examines the influence of the six major dimensions of subjective leisure and social shopping on consumers' preference for shopping as a leisure activity.

The results showed that social recreational shoppers experienced higher levels of involvement and arousal shopping for clothing than nonsocial recreational shoppers did. Nonsocial recreational shoppers realized higher levels of intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, involvement, arousal, and mastery than social nonrecreational shoppers did, and social nonrecreational shoppers perceived higher levels of intrinsic satisfaction, involvement, arousal, mastery, and spontaneity than nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers did.

The higher levels of involvement and arousal experienced by social recreational shoppers compared to nonsocial recreational shoppers suggest that social recreational shoppers have a more complete or rewarding leisure experience than nonsocial recreational shoppers. In support of this contention, a deeper level of involvement in a leisure activity corresponds to Stebbins' (1982) view of "serious leisure," and the novelty of the shopping experience as expressed through the arousal dimension may make the experience more interesting and challenging for the "serious leisure" shopper creating a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This also concurs with Iso-Ahola's (1999) view that intrinsic leisure motivation encompasses seeking optimum levels of sensory stimulation and arousal while at the same time avoiding or escaping everyday problems or routines. As noted in an earlier section of the paper, the involvement dimension incorporates elements of escape and absorption.

The differences in leisure dimension perceptions between nonsocial recreational shoppers and social nonrecreational shoppers is not surprising given recreational shoppers are being compared with nonrecreational shoppers. Yet when comparing the two groups of nonrecreational shoppers, the social dimension of shopping appears to enhance the shopping experience of social nonrecreational shoppers versus nonsocial nonrecreational shoppers.

The research also showed that three dimensions of leisure (intrinsic satisfaction, involvement, and arousal) as well as social shopping are significant predictors of consumers' perception of shopping as a leisure activity. With the exception of intrinsic satisfaction, which

had a marginally significant pairwise comparison difference, these results are consistent with the aforementioned differences observed between social recreational shoppers and nonsocial recreational shoppers.

The findings of this research suggest several implications for retailers. First, the different shopper groups identified in this study can be considered different segments of shoppers, enabling retailers to develop more effective merchandising, store layout and design, and promotion strategies to target the different types of social shoppers and the different types of recreational shoppers. For retailers to attract and retain recreational shoppers as customers, it is necessary to create a store environment that enables social and nonsocial recreational shoppers to experience the various leisure dimensions while shopping. In the case of social recreational shoppers, periodically altering floor layouts, modifying the store atmosphere, and updating the merchandise mix with new items should keep the shopping experience interesting and "challenging" to foster a deeper level of involvement. With respect to social recreational and social nonrecreational shoppers, retailers should consider ways to facilitate the social experience its customers can have by creating an inviting and communal atmosphere that encourages interaction and supports social shopping. Designing the store with wide aisles, ample shopping space, gathering/relaxation areas, and a decorative, stylish, and comfortable centralized fitting salon would seemingly enhance the social shopper's experience. An example of a store using this approach is TANGS (Toh, 2009).

Finally, advertising and other communication efforts designed to attract recreational shoppers should not only focus on the merchandise the store offers but also exclaim the experiential aspects of shopping at the store, with greater emphasis on involvement and arousal facilitating aspects of the store if the goal is to target social recreational shoppers. For both groups of social shoppers, communication should speak about and/or depict the affiliation/social aspects/benefits provided. For example, using advertising that shows two family members or friends enjoying each other's company while shopping together.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are several limitations to this research. First, social shopping and nonsocial shopping were investigated only in a clothing shopping context. Future research, should consider other product categories (e.g., home furnishings, personal care/grooming products, electronics) to examine variations at the product category level. Second, the study was not based on a representative sample of the population. As a result the sample was skewed towards younger consumers, who are single and well educated. Still, the 20-29 year old age group, which made up the majority of the sample, is an important segment for retailers to target given its size and spending power (Zhang, Carpenter, & Brosdahl, 2011). Nevertheless, a representative sample survey, should be used in future research. Third, the results reported here were based only on self-report data, which may have been subject to social desirability bias or other

"interview evaluation" concerns. Future research that augments survey methodology with observation and/ethnographic research is warranted. Finally, the study measured the social dimension of shopping and recreational shopping at one point in time. A longitudinal study would help determine if social/nonsocial shoppers and recreational/nonrecreational shoppers are static, change over time, or become static after a period of time.

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