Military Influence Operations:
Review of the Consumer Psychology Literature

by:

Barbara D. Adams, Andrea L. Brown, Courtney Tario

Human*systems*® Incorporated
111 Farquhar St.
Guelph, ON N1H 3N4

Project Manager:

Dr. Barbara Adams
(519) 836 5911 x. 249

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Defence Research and Development Canada Toronto
1133 Sheppard Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M3M 3B9

DRDC Scientific Authority

Keith Stewart
(416) 635-2130

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Author

Barbara D. Adams, Ph.D.
Human*systems*® Incorporated

Approved by

Keith Stewart
A/Head, Collaborative Performance and Learning Section

Approved for release by

K.C. Wulterkens
for Chair, Document Review and Library Committee

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Abstract

Following-up on a previous review of mainstream academic and scientific literature, this chapter reviews consumer psychology literature as it relates to persuasion and attitudes. Specifically, this chapter focuses on 2 prominent areas of persuasion research: 1. the creation of persuasive messages, and 2. the audience being targeted for the messages. With respect to the message, this chapter highlights a number of methods for increasing persuasiveness of the message. These include presenting both positive and negative information in a message, repeating messages, as well as using vivid imagery, narratives, and a personal approach. With respect to the target audience, there is considerable variety in the literature. That is, research in consumer psychology suggests that an individual's need for cognition, mood, motivation, and goals all impact on their ability to be persuaded. In addition, culture and the relevance of the message to the individual also impact persuasion. From a PSYOPS perspective, then, this chapter underlines the importance of using sound persuasion principles when creating persuasive messages and the criticality of the target audience analysis as a means to understanding how exactly target messages should be tailored.

Résume

Faisant suite à un examen de la littérature didactique et scientifique courante, le présent chapitre passe en revue la littérature sur la psychologie du consommateur dans la mesure où elle se rapporte à la persuasion et aux attitudes. Il porte plus précisément sur deux importants domaines de recherche sur la persuasion : 1) la création de messages persuasifs et 2) l'audience à laquelle les messages sont destinés. Il met en évidence un certain nombre de méthodes permettant de rendre le message plus persuasif, par exemple : présenter de l'information à la fois positive et négative dans un message, répéter les messages, et utiliser des images évocatrices, des descriptions narratives et une approche personnelle. En ce qui concerne l'audience-cible, la littérature est très variée. La recherche en psychologie du consommateur laisse supposer que le besoin cognitif d'une personne, son humeur, sa motivation et ses buts ont tous une incidence sur sa capacité d'être persuadée. La culture et la pertinence du message pour la personne influent également sur la persuasion. Du point de vue des opérations psychologiques (OPSPSY), ce chapitre souligne donc l'importance d'appliquer de solides principes de persuasion pour créer des messages persuasifs ainsi que le caractère essentiel de l'analyse de l'audience-cible comme moyen de comprendre la façon exacte dont les messages devraient être adaptés.

Executive Summary

This report follows-up a previous review of psychological research relevant to persuasion and attitudes (Adams, Sartori and Waldherr, 2007), in which adequate effort and attention could not be given to research in consumer psychology. Given the need to provide pragmatic and usable advice to Canadian Forces PSYOPS personnel, it was necessary to review the consumer psychology literature in case it could offer a more accessible literature than the more mainstream academic and scientific literature. This chapter addresses the issue by reviewing 20 articles from the domain of consumer psychology and consumer behaviour research.

Research in the area of consumer psychology is concerned with the relationship between people (either individuals or groups) and the products and services that they use. Our review focused on 2 prominent areas of persuasion research: 1. the creation of persuasive messages and/or arguments, and 2. features of the target audience shown to influence persuasion.

The studies reviewed in this report suggest that presenting both positive and negative information about a product or issue may make people more likely to trust the integrity of the source providing the information. Repetition can also be an effective strategy when presenting persuasive messages, but varying both the content as well as the cosmetics of the message is better than simply repeating the message. The research reviewed also showed the benefits of using highly vivid imagery when attempting to persuade people by asking them to "imagine themselves in the situation". Using a narrative approach when creating a persuasive message is also likely to be more effective, and this approach can even offset the impact of including negative information in a message. The research reviewed also suggests that attempting to pair a product or object with a high-interest item should be done carefully, and that it is important to ensure a high level of perceived fit between these two items, or the target audience may become suspicious of the attempt to persuade them. Lastly, the research also suggests that using a more personal approach when trying to get people to behave in a certain way is likely to be a more effective strategy than a less personal approach.

The research reviewed in this section shows considerable variety in the consumer psychology research relevant to understanding the target audience. It suggests that individual differences such as need for cognition, as well as the more temporal mood of the target, and the goals and motivation of the target will influence the effectiveness of persuasion attempts. One prominent finding in the literature is that understanding whether the individual is motivated to process systematically or not should guide the type of persuasive attempt used. For highly motivated individuals, strong and coherent arguments are likely to be most effective. Other relevant research reviewed shows the importance of creating self-relevant messages, and emphasizes the role of culture in determining the effectiveness of persuasive appeals. The goals of the target and the motivational level of the target within differing cultures will influence the information that they process and the thoroughness with which this occurs. It is also clear that culture can act as a lens through which people see the world, as well as a dynamic state that is made more salient under certain conditions (e.g., when asked to justify one's decisions).

From a PSYOPS perspective, then, this review underlines the importance of using sound persuasion principles when creating persuasive messages and the criticality of the target audience analysis as a means to understanding how exactly target messages should be tailored.

Sommaire

Le présent rapport fait suite à un examen de la recherche psychologique sur la persuasion et les attitudes (Adams, Sartori et Waldherr, 2007), dans le cadre duquel une attention et des efforts suffisants n'ont pu être consacrés à la recherche en psychologie du consommateur. Étant donné la nécessité de fournir des conseils pragmatiques et utilisables au personnel des OPSPSY des Forces canadiennes, il fallait examiner la littérature sur la psychologie du consommateur au cas où elle pourrait offrir une documentation plus accessible que la littérature didactique et scientifique courante. Dans le présent chapitre, les auteurs abordent la question en passant en revue 20 articles provenant du domaine de la recherche en psychologie et comportement du consommateur.

La recherche en psychologie du consommateur concerne la relation entre les individus (ou groupes) et les produits et services qu'ils utilisent. Notre examen a porté principalement sur deux importants domaines de recherche sur la persuasion : 1) la création de messages et/ou d'arguments persuasifs et 2) les caractéristiques de l'audience-cible qui influent sur la persuasion.

Les études examinées dans le rapport laissent supposer que le fait de présenter de l'information à la fois positive et négative sur un produit ou une question peut rendre les gens plus enclins à avoir confiance dans l'intégrité de la source d'où provient l'information. La répétition peut aussi être une stratégie efficace pour présenter des messages persuasifs, mais il est préférable de varier à la fois le contenu et l'aspect du message que de simplement le répéter. En outre, la recherche examinée a révélé les avantages de recourir à des images très évocatrices lorsqu'on essaie de persuader les gens en leur demandant de « s'imaginer dans la situation ». Une approche narrative pour créer un message persuasif est également susceptible d'être plus efficace, et elle peut même neutraliser l'impact de l'information négative incluse dans un message. La recherche examinée semble aussi indiquer qu'il faudrait faire attention lorsqu'on tente d'apparier un produit ou objet à un article de grand intérêt, et qu'il est important de veiller à ce que les deux soient perçus comme étant très bien adaptés l'un à l'autre, sinon l'audience-cible pourrait commencer à soupçonner qu'on essaie de le convaincre. Enfin, la recherche donne également à penser que le recours à une approche plus personnelle pour tenter d'amener les gens à se comporter d'une certaine façon est susceptible d'être une stratégie plus efficace qu'une approche moins personnelle.

La recherche examinée dans cette section montre une variété considérable dans la recherche en psychologie du consommateur qui s'avère utile pour comprendre l'audience-cible. Elle laisse entendre que des différences individuelles comme le besoin cognitif et l'humeur plus temporelle de la cible, de même que ses buts et sa motivation, influeront sur l'efficacité des tentatives de persuasion. L'une des principales constatations dans la littérature est que le fait de comprendre que la personne est motivée ou non à assimiler systématiquement le message devrait guider le type de tentative de persuasion utilisée. Dans le cas des individus très motivés, des arguments solides et cohérents seront sans doute le plus efficaces. D'autres recherches intéressantes qui ont été examinées révèlent l'importance de créer des messages pertinents pour la personne et soulignent le rôle de la culture lorsqu'il s'agit de déterminer l'efficacité des appels persuasifs. Les buts de la cible et son niveau de motivation dans différentes cultures auront une influence sur l'information assimilée et la profondeur du processus. En outre, il est clair que la culture peut agir comme une lentille à travers laquelle les gens voient le monde, de même qu'un état dynamique qui devient plus saillant dans certaines conditions (p. ex., lorsqu'une personne est priée de justifier ses décisions).

Du point de vue des OPSPSY, cette étude souligne donc l'importance d'appliquer de solides principes de persuasion pour créer des messages persuasifs ainsi que le caractère essentiel de l'analyse de l'audience-cible comme moyen de comprendre la façon exacte dont les messages devraient être adaptés.

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1　Introduction

1.1　Background

Although a previous review focused on psychological research relevant to persuasion and attitudes (Adams, Sartori and Waldherr, 2007), adequate effort and attention could not be given to research in consumer psychology.[1] Moreover, given the need to provide pragmatic and usable advice to Canadian Forces PSYOPS personnel, it was also unclear whether the consumer psychology literature would offer a more accessible literature than the more mainstream academic and scientific literature. This chapter attempts to answer this question by reviewing 20 articles from the domain of consumer psychology and consumer behaviour research.[2]

1.2　Search Strategies and Findings

In keeping with the previous review, similar keywords were used to explore articles in the consumer psychology literature. This process resulted in the identification of approximately 40-50 articles from a range of different sources. In the end, two journals emerged as most likely to contain high-quality research from the domain of consumer psychology, namely the Journal of Consumer Psychology and the Journal of Consumer Research. The typical content of these journals was explored in terms of the countries in which the research was conducted. .This was important in order to ensure that the articles reviewed included perspectives from beyond North America. This review showed a good cross-section of research from different countries, and more than 60 articles were chosen at the first phase for their potential relevance to this review. In addition, other sources of information were pursued. Key amongst these was the recently published Handbook of Consumer Psychology, edited by Haugtvedt, Herr and Kardes (2008). This book offers an excellent overview of the work in the field, as well as in-depth research articles on specific topics, and some of these articles were identified as important to review for this report. An additional source of information was a recent review by Loken (2008) in the Annual Review of Psychology. This review explored progress in specific areas of consumer psychology.

In narrowing the articles further, we focused first on articles of the highest possible scientific quality. We also worked to ensure coverage of a range of research that was distinct from that reviewed in the previous report. In terms of the content uncovered during this search, there was good deal of overlap with the general topics prominent in the larger review. These included characteristics of the source presenting the persuasive message, the message or argument itself, the receiver of the message (hereafter called the target audience) and the media or means through which a persuasive message is delivered. Unfortunately, research relevant to the effect of different types of media again proved the least available within the consumer psychology literature. Of course, it was not possible to review articles from each of the broad sections noted in the previous review, but the articles that were reviewed hopefully touch on all of the major themes, other than media.

At the next phase of narrowing down articles, our goal was to attempt to identify the articles likely to be most relevant to the PSYOPS personnel, based on our discussions with them. As such, the articles were chosen for their quality, as well as their coverage of specific topics likely to be particularly relevant to PSYOPS personnel. Based on these considerations, then, the larger set of articles was then further narrowed down to

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[1] A separate project exploring research relevant to marketing is being undertaken by DRDC Toronto.
[2] For parsimony, this research is hereafter called "consumer psychology" research

about 20 articles believed to be representative of consumer psychology literature as a whole, as well as responsive to the needs of the PSYOPS cell.

2   Review of Consumer Psychology Research

Consumer psychology is concerned with the relationship between people (either individuals or groups) and the products and services that they use. A prominent emphasis within the area of consumer psychology is the study of consumer behaviour. However, just as the broad field of psychology typically considers the thoughts, feelings, motivations and behaviours of people, these concepts also receive attention within the consumer psychology domain.

The consumer psychology area arose from and has continued to develop in accordance with the scientific study of human psychology. The literature notes a somewhat uneasy tension between the scientific study of consumer psychology, and the application of this knowledge to the domain of consumer behaviour. Within the United States, this tension was exemplified in a 1950 dispute among practitioners of consumer psychology and academics working in the field of consumer psychology (Schumann, Haugtvedt and Davidson, 2008). The resolution to this dispute was the creation of a new division within the American Psychological Association called the Division of Consumer Psychology. Although the majority of the members of this division work in university settings, the creation of this division was intended to promote a broad range of diverse perspectives from both academics and practitioners.

Our search of the consumer psychology literature showed a good deal of consistency between the literature in the mainstream psychology domain and the consumer psychology domain. The research reported in this review comes from a range of domains, either from experimental social psychologists working in university domains, and from business schools and other applied domains. Many of the researchers working in the field of consumer psychology seem to straddle the line between academic and pragmatic, conducting exactly the same type of research but presumably "packaging" research reports to reflect either an academic perspective or a more applied and pragmatic perspective to an audience more invested in "answers" than in theory.

There are obviously also many different streams of consumer psychology research. The organization of a recent Handbook of Consumer Psychology (2008) provides a helpful overview of how the research in this complex area can be simplified. The first major chapter explores the cognitive aspects of consumer behaviour, including issues related to knowledge accessibility, learning, memory and consumer inference. The second section relates to motivation, affect and consumer decisions, and focuses on the role of affect and emotions and the impact of goals on how consumer direct their attention and make decisions. The next section explores issues related to persuasion, attitudes and social influence, and represents the prototypic interests of persuasion researchers (e.g., elaboration likelihood model, etc.). Other relevant sections focus on consumer behaviour (i.e., behaviour decision theory and models of decision-making) rather than attitudes per say, and focus on product and brand preferences in people. Interestingly, these sections correlate relatively well with the focus in the more mainstream psychology domain.

The two main sections that follow discuss the two prominent streams of research evident in the consumer psychology literature. These relate to message or argument effects and to characteristics of the target audience that have been shown to relate to the effectiveness of persuasive messages. Reviews of each of the relevant articles are presented and then followed by a summary box, intended to provide easy-to-access advice for PSYOPS implementation.

2.1   Message/Argument Effects

Our review suggests that a good deal of attention within the consumer psychology research has been focused on the construction of persuasive messages and/or arguments. Research reviewed in this section addresses

repetition and spacing of persuasive messages, the use of imagery, the power of narratives in creating persuasive messages, and the potential limitations of some attention-getting techniques.

Work by German researchers (Bohner, Einwiller, Erb & Siebler, 2003) revisits the value of 2-sided messages in consumer research. Some research has indicated that balanced 2-sided messages (i.e., involving both positive and negative information) are likely to be more persuasive because they anticipate and then work to override potential resistance. As these researchers note, however, the majority of research has shown that although sources presenting these message are judged to be more credible, there is still sparse evidence that 2-sided messages promote more favourable attitudes or more favourable purchasing intentions. These researchers hypothesize that the impact of 2-sided messages may depend to some extent on the relatedness of the positive and negative elements of the message. If a message presents a negative attribute which is offset with a closely related positive attribute, for example, this message may be more effective than using a less related positive attribute in an attempt to override the negative element.

This research explored the impact of presenting 3 different variations of 2-sided messages, depicting a restaurant using only positive attributes (e.g., cozy atmosphere), positive attributes and some unrelated negative ones (e.g., the restaurant was cozy but did not have dedicated parking), or positive and negative features that were related (e.g., the restaurant was small, but had a cozy atmosphere). Results showed that the 2-sided ad depicting the related positive and negative attributes promoted the highest ratings of source credibility. This suggests that when attempting to create persuasive messages, the message will be more effective when the target sees the positive and negative attributes as being related. Interestingly, though, this balanced 2-sided ad did not carry over to more positive attitudes toward the product. Consistent with past research, then, balanced 2-sided messages with highly related attributes do improve source credibility, but do not necessarily promote the desired attitudes and behaviours.

> **Two Sided Messages – Sources will be seen to be more credible when two-sided messages have related rather than unrelated positive and negative attributes.**

Other research has explored the impact of the repetition of persuasive messages on attitudes toward products. In the literature, repetition has been defined as both high frequency of the same message, as well as repeated messages with only somewhat varied content. Haugtvedt, Schumann, Schneier and Warren (1994) examined the effects of ad repetition on customers' attitudes and these attitudes over time. Previous research has found that initial repetition can promote more positive attitudes (Appel, 1971, as cited in Haugtvedt et al., 1994). However, there is also some agreement in the literature that repetition may lead to negative attitudes (Calder and Sternthal, 1980; Gorn and Goldberg, 1980; Ronis, 1980, as cited in Haugtvedt et al., 1994) in some cases. As we noted in our previous review, repetition is less effective when it occurs at a rate sufficient to annoy the target audience (Adams et al., 2007).

To counter potentially negative repetition effects, advertisers have started using advertisement variation strategies. These strategies use repetition combined with subtle changes that are intended to circumvent the potentially negative impacts of repetition. These variations may alter the <u>content</u> of the message (affecting systematic processing) or the "<u>cosmetics</u>" of the message (Schumann et al., 1990, as cited in Haugtvedt et al., 1994), which is more likely to impact on peripheral route processing.

Study 1 explored the impact of four different advertising strategies using a single exposure to a target product, repetition without variation, content variation, or cosmetic variation. Undergraduate participants were told that a comic book represented a print version of a pilot show that included several commercials. They received a comic book with several sets of ads for a pen embedded in it. These ads paralleled the 4 different advertising strategies. Participants' attitudes toward the show and toward the ads were then gathered using questionnaires,

and participants were asked to recall information about the ads and about the show. Recall was measured because it is an indicator of memory for the product message, and a critical antecedent of persuasion.

Researchers predicted that ads using variation strategies (i.e., changing either the content or the cosmetics of the ad would promote more favourable attitudes. Results showed that varied repetition resulted in more favourable attitudes toward the product than single exposure or repetition without variation. And, although attitudes were equally favourable in both conditions, participants who saw the cosmetic variation recalled more attributes about the pen than participants who saw ads with varied content. Thus, participants who processed the message through the peripheral route remembered the message better than those who processed through the central route, but this enhanced recall did not promote more positive attitudes toward the product.

Although higher levels of elaboration yielded more positive attitudes toward the product in Study 1, the persistence of these attitudes over time was still unclear. Study 2 examined the factors that might influence resistance to counter attacks. Instead of filling out the product attitude questionnaire immediately after reading the comic book containing the ad for the pen, participants reported their confidence in their attitude, and then waited until one week later to rate the rest of the responses. After the week had elapsed, they were given negative information about the pen and then asked to rate their attitudes towards the pen. Results showed that for the varied ads, participants' initial attitudes were similar to later attitudes. For the non-varied ads, attitudes toward the pen were less positive after a week had elapsed. This suggests that exposure to varied ads may have made participants' attitudes more resistant to the negative information. In summary, ads that were repeated with variations received more favourable and persistent evaluations, with ads repeated but not varied being the next strongest. Memory for the ad was better for ads showing cosmetic variation in the short term, but content variation in the long term.

As a whole, then, this research argues that using either content or cosmetic variation when presenting repetitive ads may help to diminish the negative effects of repetition. Moreover, varied repetition may also promote attitude resistance over time, even in the face of negative information about the product. This research suggests that creating a series of persuasive messages with minor variations may help to hold audience attention better, and may promote more positive attitudes toward the message.

> **Repetition – When implementing a mass advertising campaign, it is better to create a number of ads that look slightly different and have slightly different content than to use only one ad presented multiple times.**

The use of imagery when presenting persuasive messages is prominent in many forms of advertising. Research by Petrova and Cialdini (2005) examined the impact of using imagery when presenting persuasive ads. These researchers argued that people naturally vary in their ability to visualize or to create a mental picture of an event or object. This natural difference, they argue, may make people high in imagery ability more susceptible to persuasion, and people low in ability less susceptible. Prior to the experiment, undergraduate students were given the Vividness of Visual Imagery Questionnaire (Marks, 1973, as cited in Petrova & Cialdini, 2005) as a test of their visual imagery ability. This test identified participants' natural level of dispositional imagery. During the experiment, some participants were presented with either a vacation ad and were asked to imagine themselves at the destination, and the others were presented with a vacation ad without the instruction to imagine themselves at the destination. Participants then rated their attitudes toward the brand (vacation) and rated their intention to purchase the vacation.

Results showed that for the ads inviting imagery, participants high in dispositional imagery had more positive attitudes and intentions to purchase the product while people low in dispositional imagery had more negative attitudes and intentions. This might have occurred, the authors argued, because the difficulty that people low in

imagery ability have in imagining the product impacts indirectly but negatively on their ultimate attitude and intentions to buy the product.

Given the clear effects of individual differences in visualization ability, the researchers then sought to understand whether simply making the product less vivid might also impact on targets' ability to visualize the product. This issue was explored in a second study. Participants in the high vividness condition saw the same vacation ads as in Study 1, while those in the low vividness condition saw a "muted version," which was a blurry, less detailed version of the ad. As in the previous study, in half of the trials, participants were asked to imagine themselves at the destination, and in the other half, they were not. Results showed a significant interaction between the vividness of the ad (high or low) and vividness instructions (imagining or not imagining), with a similar pattern for brand attitudes and purchasing intentions. More specifically, participants not asked to imagine the product had similar attitudes and buying intentions whether the ad was high or low in vividness. Participants who were asked to imagine the product, however, showed significantly more negative attitudes and purchasing intentions when the vividness of the product was degraded. This second study provides further evidence that presenting degraded imagery can have a very negative effect on attitudes toward products. This finding, however, is a very important one, as it suggests that using imagery appeals will only be helpful when the image presented is highly vivid. If people are asked to use imagery and that imagery is degraded in some way, persuasion is diminished. Although using imagery appeals have generally been shown to promote higher levels of persuasion, they can actually cause reverse effects in some cases, dependent on the inherent ability of the target audience and on the vividness of the persuasive appeals. This research suggests that if the target audience is likely to attempt to imagine themselves within the imagery presented, it is most advantageous if this image be highly vivid.

> **Imagery – Although imagery appeals ("imagine yourself…") appear to be effective, they must be combined with a vivid picture or vivid description of the product you are trying to sell.**

Persuasion theorists and researchers have also argued that one way to promote persuasion is to use narratives when creating persuasive messages. Among other things, these narratives have the potential to capture and hold the attention of the target audience, and hence, to promote the systematic processing of persuasive messages. Research by Adaval and Wyer (1998) examined consumer's preference for narratives (i.e., stories) in relation to three different dimensions. Previous research has shown that how information is organized in a persuasive message can influence its impact (Pennington and Hastie, 1988, as cited in Adaval & Wyer, 1998). This research showed that organizing information in a logical and coherent fashion can be more effective than presenting the same information in unorganized units, even if the same core information is presented in both cases. Extended to the domain of influence, this research hints that more coherent narrative may promote more careful attention to and more systematic processing of persuasive information.

One of the challenges in creating persuasive messages, however, is that messages often require the presentation of information that is both consistent with the overall goal of the message (i.e., about positive product attributes) and inconsistent with the goal of the message (i.e., about negative product attributes). One might expect, however, that presenting inconsistent information in the context of an otherwise logical and coherent narrative could lower the negative impact of this information. Adaval and Wyer (1998) explored the impact of inconsistent information when presented in conjunction with either highly coherent messages or more unorganized messages. Another possible way to promote the persuasive power of a message is to present information in pictorial rather than text format. Pictures provide a fuller depiction of a persuasive message, they are likely to offer more aid to the construction of a coherent narrative than the same information presented

in text format. The current study explores these issues in the context of a persuasive ad for a product such as a vacation.

Undergraduate participants reviewed two vacation brochures (about India and Thailand), one after another. One brochure was presented in narrative format and one in list format. Information presented in the ads was also varied to contain picture-dominant information or text-dominant information, as well as containing either uniformly positive features or a combination of both positive and negative features. Overall, then, the first study used a 2 (order: narrative, list or list, narrative) x 2 (dominant information: picture dominant or text dominant) x 2 (features: uniformly positive or both positive and negative) design using 2 different vacation destinations (i.e., India or Thailand), and presentation of all conditions was counterbalanced. Participants were then asked to rate how much they wanted to go on the trip, their preference for each destination and then to recall the places/situations described in the brochure. Results showed that people favoured vacations described in a narrative rather than a list. Moreover, when the description included both undesirable and desirable features, the undesirable information had less impact when presented in the narrative format rather when presented in the simple "listing" format. And, vivid pictures were also more helpful when presented in a narrative format rather than a listing format, but only for the first product encountered.

In the context of influence, using a pamphlet that uses narrative techniques in conjunction with rich images that help the reader to imagine themselves in the desired situation may be more influential than using a simple listing of product features. This suggests that when creating a persuasive message, if listing is necessary, it might be more effective to avoid enriched techniques such as pictures, or promoting the use of imagery, as these techniques could detract from cognitive processing. However, this research also argues that if inclusion of negative attributes cannot be avoided when creating a persuasive message, using enriched techniques in a narrative format can help to lessen the impact of negative information.

> **Narratives – When creating brochures or pamphlets, it is better to use a narrative description of the product, especially if you must include any negative information, than to use lists of product attributes. The narrative allows readers to imagine themselves in the desired situation and promotes higher levels of persuasion.**

Persuasion is dependent on attracting and maintaining the level of attention necessary to process a persuasive message. Some research explores the impact of different techniques for getting the attention of the target audience. Research by Campbell (1995) investigates how the techniques used to attract attention can affect consumers' perceptions of marketing manipulation.

The effects of two prominent forms of attention-getting techniques on consumer behaviour were explored. The first technique involved a "mystery ad" which strategically fails to identify the product until the end of the commercial (e.g., the Whiskas commercial, "Only cats can be cats"). This technique is intended to engage the target, and to create curiosity around what the mystery product will turn out to be. Such a technique is intended to heighten the target's perceived personal investment in the ad. The second technique commonly used in advertising is the "borrowed interest appeal" where objects which are inherently interesting or appealing to the consumer (e.g., beautiful women, cute puppies) are paired with the target product in an effort to bolster the appeal of the target product. Through this pairing, the appeal of the target product is enhanced because it "borrows" appeal from the interesting or attractive object. Intuitively, pairing the target product with a very appealing item should be effective at getting the audience's attention. However, these researchers argued that if the objects being paired are perceived to be too discrepant from each other, the target audience may become aware of the intent to persuade and be less amenable to the target message. In short, if these attention getting techniques are perceived to be manipulative, they are less likely to succeed.

To test these ideas, undergraduate students were shown one of 4 high-interest ads showing attractive people in enjoyable situations (e.g., leaning against an expensive car), presented in conjunction with products/services shown in pre-testing to represent either high or low "fit" with these enjoyable situations. The high fit item was a fitness club and the low fit item was a bank. They then completed several ratings, including their purchase intentions, ad and brand attitudes, as well as their inferences of manipulated intent. Results showed that when presented with ads with a low level of connection between the product and the high-interest item, participants perceived higher levels of advertiser manipulation, and they perceived the product to offer fewer personal benefits. However, using a "mystery ad" appeal (i.e., unveiling the product toward the end of the ad) did not significantly impact perceptions of manipulation. As a whole, then, this research argues that when consumers see an inherent "disconnect" between the content of the message and the attention-getting technique used in the message, they are more likely to feel manipulated. Hence, the ad will be less effective. This suggests that attention-getting techniques must be at least somewhat thematically consistent with the target message, or they risk triggering the target's suspicion and lowering the persuasive appeal of the message. People who believe they are being manipulated by a persuasive attempt are less likely to be amenable to persuasive influences.

> **Imagery – Images used in campaigns should be thematically consistent with the product being pitched. Images that don't logically fit with the product can raise suspicions and make people feel manipulated.**

Other research from the consumer psychology literature has shown an effective strategy to promote compliance behaviour. Innovative research by Garner (2005) explored the impact of using Post-Its or "sticky notes" in order to enhance compliance when requesting people to complete a survey. Researchers sent out a survey to a large sample of people, accompanied by either a handwritten sticky note requesting completion of the survey, a hand written message similar in content to the first but on a cover letter sheet, or a typed cover letter requesting completion.

Results showed that 75% of the people who received the Post-It note request complied with the request, completing and returning the survey, with 48% complying with the personal request on the cover letter and 36% responding to the typed cover letter request. At first glance, this may have been because the Post-It note was simply more attention grabbing (as the Post-It notes used were an eye-catching bright yellow). A follow-up study showed that what made gave the Post-It note its power was not its colour or ability to attract attention, but having included a handwritten request on the Post-It. Importantly, using a Post-It note not only made people more likely to respond, but also enhanced the quality of the response that they gave, showing more effort and detail in responding to the survey questions.

As a whole, this research illustrates the power of reciprocity norms. Making requests of others in a more personalized way (i.e., taking the time to write a handwritten note) seems to increase the "pressure" on them to reciprocate in kind, and makes them more likely to comply with requests.

Overall, then, the studies reviewed in this section provide a range of insights relevant to creating powerful persuasive message. They suggest that presenting both positive and negative information about a product or issue may make people more likely to trust the integrity of the source providing the information. Repetition can also be an effective strategy when presenting persuasive messages, but varying both the content as well as the cosmetics of the message are better than simply repeating the message. The research reviewed also showed the importance of people's individual visualization ability, as well as the need to use highly vivid objects when attempting to persuade people by asking them to "imagine themselves in the situation". If the image is not vivid, it could actually have the reverse effect, and lead to lessened persuasion. Using a narrative approach when creating a persuasive message is also likely to be more effective, and this kind of approach can even

offset the impact of including negative information in a message. The research reviewed also suggests that attempting to pair a product or object with a high-interest item should be done carefully, and that it is important to ensure a high level of perceived fit between these two items, or the target audience may become suspicious of the attempt to persuade them. Lastly, the research also suggests that using a more personal approach when trying to get people to behave in a certain way is likely to be a more effective strategy than a less personal approach.

2.2   Target Audience or Receiver Effects

This section explores characteristics of the target audience that have been shown to impact on persuasion within the consumer domain.

Some specific aspects of people's personality have been shown to be relevant to their consumer behaviour. Haughtvedt, Petty and Cacioppo (1992) studied the impact of a personality variable known as need for cognition. People who are high in their need for cognition enjoy thinking, while people who are low prefer to avoid the effort of thinking. These studies looked at consumers' attitude change as the result of exposure to an ad, even without specific instruction to evaluate the ads. Undergraduate students first filled out a questionnaire assessing their need for cognition and were then exposed to short, unfamiliar ads that were either paced by the participant or by the experimenter. These ads were designed to vary by argument strength (weak versus strong), and were followed by a questionnaire assessing participant's attitudes and memory for information contained in the ad.

Results of 2 variations of this study showed that participants high in need for cognition evaluated the product more systematically, based on the strength of the persuasive message, while those low in need for cognition showed no difference in attitudes as a product of argument strength. Likewise, participants with a high need for cognition recalled more negative attributes of the ad when the ad used a weak argument than when it used a strong argument. The researchers argued that this might have occurred because people low in need for cognition tend to use less effort when processing information, and may be more influenced by peripheral cues rather than the sheer quality of the argument. A subsequent study used either attractive or unattractive sources to endorse the target product. This attractiveness, of course, would serve as a peripheral cue. Results of this study showed that people low in need for cognition were not influenced by argument strength but were influenced by peripheral cues such as the attractiveness of the source. This study shows the power of tailoring one's persuasive message to the characteristics of the target audience when personalized information about the target audience is available. In the absence of such information, of course, the safest route is to use persuasive appeals with a strong argument and an attractive source. This would ensure that if the target is processing systematically, they would be persuaded, and if they were processing more peripherally, source attractiveness would also heighten persuasion.

An important part of persuasion involves designing persuasive messages that promote the best possible fit between the target message and the state of the target audience. One critical state-based factor is the goal of the target audience when receiving a persuasive message. Research by Pham and Avnet (2004) argues that people are naturally driven by different goals. At times, people are driven to reach their hopes and aspirations, and to be the person they would like to be (i.e., to reach their "ideal" self). Reaching toward one's desired self, they argue, has been shown to be creative and expansive. In this state, then, people are more likely to rely on peripheral cues such as the attractiveness of the message than on systematic cues such as the actual content of the message. Alternatively, people are sometimes motivated to be the person that relevant others (or their social groups) want them to be by meeting their obligations and responsibilities. The "ought" state requires more vigilance and the need to gain benefits while minimizing risks. This suggests that a more rational and systematic approach to processing is required. As such, people more driven by "oughts" are likely to rely more on the content of a persuasive message and less on the peripheral aspects of a persuasive message.

This study first primed people in favour of a specific goal. Participants in the primed-ideals condition were asked to list two past and two current hopes and dreams. Those in the primed-oughts condition were asked to list two past and two current obligations and responsibilities. After priming, undergraduate students were then asked to evaluate a dictionary as if they were interested in purchasing one. Attractiveness of the dictionary was varied by manipulating layout, colour and illustration of the ad. Dependent measures included attitudes toward the brand of the dictionary (e.g., good/bad, like/dislike), substantive assessments of the quality of the dictionary (e.g., compelling/not compelling, strong/weak), and participants' involvement in the task. Overall, then, Study 1 used a 2 (condition: primed-ideals or primed-oughts) x 2 (argument strength: strong or weak) x 2 (attractiveness: attractive or unattractive) design.

Results showed that participants evaluated the more attractive ads with strong arguments more favourably than unattractive ads and those with weak arguments. Participants in the primed-oughts condition were more influenced by strong arguments than those in the primed-ideals condition, which supports the claim that people who have oughts accessible in their minds are more likely to focus on the substance of a persuasive message. Participants in the primed-ideals conditions were more influenced by the attractiveness of the ad (i.e., had more favourable attitudes toward the ad) than those in the primed-oughts condition, which supports the claims that people who have ideals accessible in their minds, are more likely to be influenced by peripheral cues. Study 2 replicated the results of study 1 and extended it to conclude that involvement and duration of viewing the ad does not impact the effects of state-based goals.

Subsequent studies confirmed that participants thought their evaluations were based on the substance of the message when they were in the primed-oughts condition. Alternatively, participants in the primed-ideals condition reported their evaluations were based on their feelings. Also, temporary and chronic accessibility to ideals and oughts yielded similar results. The overall results show that when people are thinking about ideals (i.e., hopes), they tend to rely more on peripheral cues. When people are thinking about oughts (i.e., responsibilities), they tend to rely more on substantive information.

> **Personality & Goals – When attempting to persuade many people, use messages with a strong argument and an attractive endorser. Use a strong argument when trying to persuade an individual who enjoys thinking and is focused on responsibilities. Use messages with an attractive endorser when trying to persuade an individual who does not want to think about the message, for example, when people are busy or multi-tasking.**

Research by Isen (2008; 2001) has shown the potential impact of emotions on decision-making behaviour. Isen argues that positive affect has been consistently shown to have a positive impact on cognitive processes, decision-making and behaviour. For example, she argues that positive affect "…facilitates broader deployment of attention with no loss of accuracy or speed of processing" (Isen, 2008, p. 274). Other research has shown people with positive affect to be more flexible in their thinking, and to consider a broader range of options when making decisions about products. Positive emotions have also been shown to lead to more creative thinking that is productive and detailed. Specifically, studies have shown that people are more creative with words, making art, and solving problems when experiencing positive affect (Isen, 2001). In short, many aspects of information processing seem to be facilitated by positive affect.

In terms of behaviour, research has also shown that positive emotions also impact positively on decision-making. Positive affect can also improve interactions with other people, and studies have shown that people in a good mood are more likely to help others (Isen, 2008). Positive moods have been linked to higher levels of brand and product approval. Positive mood has also been shown to impact positively on negotiation and decision-making behaviour.

As a whole, then, the affect of the target audience can be an important influence on how they process information. The finding that people are more flexible when thinking, and are more likely to consider a broader range of options is an important one. This line of research, of course, has been implemented in many areas of consumer psychology, through the use of humour and other positive messages in persuasive ads.

> **Mood – People in a positive mood are more easily persuaded than people in a negative mood. Good moods can be induced by using humour or by receiving a valued gift (e.g., candy).**

Another way to promote persuasion involves helping people to make a link between the product or target message and their own experience. This can occur through self-referencing when people link the information about a persuasive product or message with personal experiences and other aspects of oneself (e.g., seeing an ad about coffee and remembering having coffee that morning with your partner). Research by Burnkrant and Unnava (1995) examined the relationship between self-referencing and attitudes toward persuasive messages. Although self-referencing is generally agreed to heighten the processing of persuasive messages, using it in conjunction with other high elaboration techniques may actually undermine these positive effects. For example, these researchers argue that using highly relevant pictures in conjunction with already high self-referencing messages may diminish or reverse the effects. This might occur, they hypothesize, because self-relevant elaboration requires a period of "habituation", in which thoughts consistent with the advocated message are promoted. Adding additional arguments at this point may actually lead to tedium as well as the promotion of higher levels of counterarguments.

Participants were exposed to an ad for an unspecified brand of calculator. One set of participants were provided with prompts intended to promote self-referent processing by addressing them directly and asking them to recall past experience with a calculator. The other set used more impersonal prompts, and had no reminder of past experience with a calculator. The picture presented to participants was also systematically varied to depict either a relevant colour picture of the calculator or a picture of an irrelevant setting (i.e., people relaxing on the beach). Dependent measures included attitudes toward the product, the ad, and the level of self-referencing that the ad promoted.

Results showed a significant interaction between self-referencing and picture relevance on attitudes toward the product. Specifically, ads that promoted self-referencing in conjunction with an irrelevant picture evoked more positive attitudes. However, ads that promoted self-referencing with a relevant picture had no significant impact on attitudes toward the product. Attitudes toward the ad, on the other hand, showed only a main effect of picture relevance, and additional analyses showed that attitudes toward the ad were stronger for high self-referencing participants than low self-referencing. This suggests that the positive effects of self-referencing on persuasion were negatively affected by the inclusion of a relevant picture. This work suggests that including a picture in the persuasive ad may actually undermine the influence of self-referencing. In order to understand the pervasiveness of this effect, a second study explored the impact of another variation.

A second study manipulated self-referencing, as well as the grammatical form of the persuasive appeal. Research has shown differences in the effect of using questions or statements within a persuasive message. Specifically, using a question (e.g., "Are there not several calculators sold in which if one makes a small mistake one has to repeat all calculations?") seems to promote more message elaboration than providing the same information in statement form (e.g., "There are several calculators sold in which if one makes a small mistake one has to repeat all calculations." This study explored whether the increased elaboration that might arise in response to questions embedded within the persuasive message would "undo" the impact of self-referencing messages. Results confirmed that attitudes toward the product were more positive in the high-

referencing condition than in the low referencing condition when participants were exposed to low elaboration statements. However, using questions in the persuasive message reversed the effects, presumably because the elaboration needed to manage questions diminished the self-referencing elaboration.

More generally, then, this research suggests that self-referencing can clearly promote more positive attitudes toward a product. On the other hand, this research suggests that it is important to be cautious about presenting other elements in conjunction with a persuasive message that are likely to require elaboration.

Personal Experience – People prefer products when persuasive messages invoke a positive personal memory. This can be enhanced by using images relevant to the product and making statements (rather than asking questions) about the product. However, it is also important to know that adding additional components to self-relevant messages could undermine persuasion attempts.

Haugtvedt and Wegener (1994) investigated the relationship between personal involvement and the effects of message order. Two prominent effects noted in the literature are primacy effects and recency effects. Primacy effects occur when the first message presented is stronger than subsequent messages, and recency effects show the opposite pattern. Previous research has shown primacy effects to be related to familiarity, controversy and interest (Lana 1961, 1963; Hovland & Mandell, 1957; Lund, 1925; Knower, 1936, as cited in Haugtvedt & Wegener, 1994), and to promote higher levels of message elaboration (Wood, Kallgren & Priesler, 1985; Petty & Cacioppo, 1979; Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983, as cited in Haugtvedt & Wegener, 1994). On the other hand, recency effects have been shown to occur more when participants are uninformed or uninterested (Lana 1961, 1963, as cited in Haugtvedt & Wegener, 1994).

Research predicts that the more relevant a message is to someone, the more they will process the message through systematic elaboration. However, the order in which they encounter positive or negative information may also influence attitudes toward a persuasive message. These researchers expected that participants' attitudes would be consistent with the valence of the first article they received (i.e., they would have more favourable attitudes for implementation when they encountered a pro article first, and vice versa). This research used a 2 (message order: pro/con or con/pro) x 2 (relevancy: high or low) design. The dependent measures assessed participant's attitudes toward implementing the exam, a recall all of their thoughts while reading the messages and a second recall of as many arguments as they could remember in the message.

Undergraduate students were first presented with either a pro or con argument related to whether or not comprehensive exams should be implemented in order to graduate. Personal relevancy was manipulated by telling participants that the implementation would apply at their school in the following year (high relevancy) or at another school in the future (low relevancy). Participants then read a second message that opposed the first and were asked to complete the dependent measures.

Results showed that participants reading an argument with high personal relevancy (i.e., when they believed the comprehensive exams were soon to be at their school) had more favourable attitudes toward the exam when they received a pro argument first and con argument last. On the other hand, participants reading an argument with low personal relevancy (i.e., when they believed the comprehensive exams would be at another school in the distant future) had more favourable attitudes toward the exam when they received the con argument first and pro argument last. Thus, the primacy effect occurred when relevance was high and the recency effect occurred when relevance was low. Other results found that participants who were in the high relevancy condition counter-argued the last message more than those in the low relevancy condition. Also, the

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more attributes participants in the low relevancy condition recalled, the more favourable their judgement. Study 2 replicated the first study and extended the results.

In summary, people who are motivated to elaborate on messages that they judge to be highly personally relevant seem to show primacy effects, and to show attitudes in line with the valence of the first message presented to them. If that first message is positive, they tend to develop more positive attitudes toward the message; if the first message is negative, they have less positive attitudes. On the other hand, unmotivated targets tend to show recency effects, and tend to side with the valence of the message that they hear last. However, these researchers note that if someone has an extreme prior opinion of a topic, message order effects are less likely. In the context of influence, when a persuasive message is likely to be highly personally relevant to the target audience, it may be beneficial to present the message early. However, if the message is not likely to be perceived as personally relevant, it may be more beneficial to present the message last.

> **Personal Relevance – When messages are personally relevant, people remember the first argument they hear. When messages are not personally relevant, people remember the last argument they hear. As such, when creating multi-stage messages, it is critical to know how relevant the message is likely to be to the target audience.**

A common persuasion technique within the consumer domain involves offering incentives for loyalty. One such method is frequent purchase programs, such as an incentive to buy 10 coffees and get the 11th free. Nunes and Drèze (2006) argue that such programs are effective because they motivate people to achieve the goal of getting a free purchase. They also believed that people would be even more motivated to purchase such items if they were given a head start on the goal. For example, giving them a "head start" by giving them 2 free purchase stamps with a requirement to buy 12 coffees should be more effective than a card requiring them to simply buy 10 coffees. This, of course, is a fascinating possibility, given that the customer is required to buy the same number of coffees in both conditions. This is called the "endowed progress effect" and occurs when people exhibit greater persistence for a goal after being given an artificial advancement toward that goal.

Over the course of three studies, the researchers found that, indeed, people who were endowed with progress toward a goal do increase the effort they exert in reaching the goal. In Study 1, 300 car wash customers were given loyalty cards to earn a free car wash. Half were given a card requiring 8 car wash stamps with no stamps attached, the other half were given a card requiring 10 car wash stamps with 2 stamps attached. After 4 months, 34% of the cards in the 2 stamp condition were redeemed but only 19% of the cards in the no stamp condition were redeemed. Moreover, consumers in the 2 stamp condition took less time to complete their 8 purchases. In subsequent studies, the researchers also found that people rated frequent purchase programs more positively if they felt they were closer to a goal. That is, people preferred a program when they were given 5 of 15 stamps than when they were given 2 of 12 stamps. In this case, then, even though people would still have to purchase 10 items, the ratio of "free" to purchased stamps made the first option appear more desirable. Also, the researchers found that people like to receive points more than having their purchases noted (e.g., stamps). Furthermore, endowment was found to work best when a reason for the endowment was provided, whether the reason made sense or not. These studies indicate that people are motivated to achieve goals and such motivation can be used to induce loyalty in customers.

> **Motivation – People are motivated to achieve their goals. People can be persuaded to use a product if they believe using the product will help them achieve their goals.**

Other research has studied how the groups most important to the target audience (i.e., reference groups) can influence purchase decisions (Bearden and Etzel, 1982). A reference group is defined as "a person or group of people that significantly influences an individual's behavior" (p. 184). Reference groups can perform different functions, including providing information (i.e., making an informed decision based on an expert), allowing the expression of core group values (i.e., need to be associated with a group to improve self image), or simply increasing the utility of a specific action (i.e., complying with others to receive rewards or avoid punishment). The power of reference groups will also depend on whether persuasive ads are presented in public or in private (Bearden and Etzel, 1982). In public forums where one's actions are in view of others, the reference group may exert more influence than when buying decisions are made privately. Similarly, another impact is whether the target product is perceived to be necessary (i.e., commonly owned by others) or is simply wanted (i.e., a private necessity). If other members of the reference group already own the item, there may be more implicit justification for having it.

The power of reference groups, however, is also likely to depend on culture. Research by Childers and Rao (1992) explored the impact of reference groups within nuclear (e.g., U.S.) and extended families (e.g., Thailand). University alumni from the U.S. and from Thailand were shown 4 products including a private luxury, public luxury, private necessity and public necessity. They were then asked to decide on each product and rate their intergenerational brand-loyalty, which was measured by indicating whether they had purchased the same brand as their parents. Results showed the impact of peer and familial influences on purchasing behaviour. Peers had more influence with public than private necessities and for private luxuries than public necessities. For participants in a nuclear family, peer influences were higher for public than private products. Family influences were higher for private products and necessities than public products and luxuries. For participants who were in either family type, family influences were higher for private than public products, but this was more pronounced for those in extended families. In the context of influence, this suggests that people in different cultures vary in their reliance on nuclear or extended families. People living within a nuclear family may be more inclined to follow what their friends do, while people living in extended families are more likely to follow what their family does. An important implication of this research, then, is that understanding the reference group most likely to impact on the target audience is critical.

> **Family & Friends – People who live in cultures where nuclear families are the norm (e.g., Canada) are more inclined to follow what their friends do, whereas people who live in cultures where extended families are the norm (e.g., Afghanistan) will follow what their family does.**

Most research related to persuasive advertising focuses on the content of the message, such as the number of positive product attributes that the message presents. Research by Schwarz (2004), however, argues that the subjective experiences associated with the key message or content may also shape our responses to persuasive ads. For example, the perceived accessibility of bringing information to mind can have an effect on people's attitudes. When thinking about a target product (or persuasive message more generally), if one can easily bring 12 positive attributes to mind, for example, people may be more likely to infer that the product must be a highly positive one. Because of their subjective experience in thinking about the product, then, people may assume themselves to have a more positive attitude toward the product. Reber and Schwarz (1999) also found that easy to read statements (i.e., dark blue) were accepted as true more than difficult to read statements (i.e., light blue, as cited in Schwarz, 2004). Similarly, McGlone and Tofighbakhsh (2000) found participants reported aphorisms to be true more often if they rhymed then when they did not (as cited in Schwarz, 2004). Judgements of preference are related to the mere exposure effect (Zajonc, 1968), which occurs when repeated exposure increases liking. For example, participants liked ketchup more when they were exposed to

mayonnaise than when they were exposed to vitamins. However, when people are aware that something may impact their judgement, influence efforts tend to be less effective.

The difficulty that people have when asked to recall issues relevant to a specific topic can also indirectly influence their attitudes. For example, students reported they liked Tony Blair more when they were asked to name a few things about him than when they were asked to name many favourable things about him (Haddock, 2002, as cited in Schwarz, 2004). Presumably, the increased difficulty in recall is interpreted by perceivers as a sign of their less positive attitudes. Asking people to think about how specific events might have turned out differently also shows the power of subjective experience. As a form of hindsight bias, when people have more difficulty generating their guesses about how things might have turned out, they are also more likely to believe that they foresaw the event happening (Fischhoff, 1975, as cited in Schwarz, 2004). Another naïve theory to which people fall prey is that the easier it is to recall an example from memory, the better people believe their memory to be. For example, participants asked to recall 4 events from their childhood rated their memory abilities as a young person to be higher than participants asked to recall 12 events (Winkielman, Schwarz and Belli, 1998 as cited in Schwarz, 2004). These are all examples of how the relevant ease or difficulty with which information is accessed or recalled can influence attitudes and perceptions about the target message or product. In summary, this review provides support that people's subjective experiences retrieving information about persuasive message can influence the impact of a persuasive message, quite independently of its actual content.

This line of research has many different implications for people working to create persuasive messages. The most simplistic message is that it is critical to understand the subjective experience of the individual exposed to a persuasive message. Clearly, the intended message is not necessarily consistent with the "take-away" message, and the target audience's attitude toward the message has the potential to be affected by many unforeseen characteristics. Being unable to properly understand a message that is too subtle and not easily grasped, for example, could not only fail to promote persuasion, but could have the opposite effect. This, of course, is one of the reasons that as much knowledge as possible about the target audience, combined with testing as early as possible in the product development cycle with a sample as close as possible to the target audience are critical.

> **Subjective Experiences - People's experience in working to process a persuasive message can influence the actual persuasiveness of the message.**

Some attention has also been devoted to the important issue of culture in the consumer psychology literature. The section that follows first explores some theoretical papers exploring the role of culture in persuasion before exploring several empirical papers that directly explore the relationship between influence and cultural factors.

A chapter by Shavitt, Lee, and Johnson (2008) in the Handbook of Consumer Psychology (Haugtvedt, Herr and Kardes, 2008) stresses that it is important to understand culture when creating marketing products because culture acts as the lens through which people view messages and products. They argue that "…culture consists of shared elements that provide the standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those who share a language, a historical period, and a geographic location" (p. 1103). Many different dimensions of culture are obvious in the literature. For example, Hofstede's well known typology (1980) focuses on individualism/collectivism, power distance (accepting inequality), uncertainty avoidance and masculinity/femininity (assertiveness vs. nurturing) work values (as cited in Shavitt et al., 2008).

Although each of these dimensions has implications for marketing, the individualism/collectivism distinction is the most widely used dimensions of cultural variability used in cross-cultural research (Shavitt et al., 2008). Members of individualistic cultures define the self in terms of unique attributes and characteristics. People in

these cultures tend to prefer independent relationships with others and to prioritize personal goals over the goals of their in-groups. Examples of countries with predominantly individualistic cultures are Canada, US, Germany, Denmark. Members of collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, define the self in terms of social roles and relationships with others. In such cultures, people prefer interdependent relationships to others and prioritize goals of their in-groups over personal goals. Examples of collectivistic cultures include Japan, China, Mexico, and Korea.

An additional nuance in more recent literature is the distinction between horizontal and vertical societies (Triandis and Gelfand, 1998; as cited in Maheswaran & Shavitt, 2000). Individualism and collectivism are also relevant to the horizontal and vertical distinction. Cultures said to be horizontal are seen as valuing equality, whereas vertical cultures are seen as emphasizing hierarchy (Shavitt et al., 2008). For example, people in horizontal individualist societies value equality as well as uniqueness (e.g., Sweden, Australia) and those who are collectivistic also value sociability (e.g., Israeli kibbutz). People in vertical individualist societies (e.g., Britain, USA) are concerned with improving their individual status and distinguishing themselves from others via competition. Vertical societies that value hierarchy but are individualistic, also value self improvement (e.g., U.S.), and those who are collectivistic also value in-group improvement (e.g., India). Given the differences in values between horizontal and vertical cultures, Shavitt et al. (2008) argue that advertising that uses messages with themes that emphasize status, prestige, hierarchy, and distinction may be more prevalent and persuasive in vertical cultural contexts but may be inappropriate for horizontal cultures.

A chapter by Williams, Lee and Henderson (2008) examined the issues relating to minorities in consumer psychology. One of their studies involved a content analysis of the main consumer psychology journals and found only 2.5% of articles focused on minorities. This is a potential problem because without established research knowledge about minority consumer behaviour, critical differences within and among diverse groups are likely to be overlooked. A critical antecedent, they argue, is having some way to conceptualize and categorize people in different ethnic groups. One proposed typology for capturing ethnic identification includes race (i.e., biological differences), ethnicity (i.e., cultural differences), natal (e.g., birthplace), subjective (i.e., self-identification), and behaviour (e.g., language and activities; Smith, 1980; Weinreich and Mason, 1986, as cited in Williams et al, 2008). The problem with categorization is that people often do not fit neatly into just one labeled category, and may self-identify in different ways and for different reasons.

Several major theories in the consumer psychology literature have been extended to minority groups. Distinctiveness Theory (Appiah, 2004; as cited in Williams et al., 2008) argues that "people define themselves on traits that are numerically rare in their local environment" (Williams et al., 2008, p. 882). As such, people in a racial group in the numeric minority will be more likely to have their own race as a salient aspect of their self-identity. Research has shown a strong impact of using sources that match the ethnicity of the target audience (Williams et al., 2008) with minority Hispanics in Austin (representing an ethnic minority) trusting a Hispanic spokesperson more that majority Hispanics in San Antonio (representing an ethnic majority) (Deshpande & Stayman, 1994, as cited in Williams et al., 2008). There is good evidence in the literature that matching the ethnicity of the source or spokesperson with the target audience can be effective. It is also clear, however, that these positive impacts are more likely in some situations than in others. They note work by Grier and Brumbaugh (2004; as cited in Williams et al. 2008, p. 883), which argues that "…cultural group membership alone is not sufficient to induce the target market effects advertisers desire". What they call "felt distinctiveness" is ultimately what impacts on responses to persuasive messages, and this can be multi-determined.

Consistent with the predictions of the ELM, perceived shared ethnicity may also make the target more amenable to a source's arguments. Work by Whittler and Spira (2002; as cited in Williams et al., 2008), for example, showed that Black people strongly identified with Black culture rated an advertisement to be stronger and were more influenced by it when it was presented by a Black spokesperson than a White spokesperson.

Black participants with weaker identification showed no difference in persuasion with either a Black or White spokesperson. This research suggests that the race of the source may function as a peripheral cue, but as one that also influences how the primary message is systematically processed. Williams et al. conclude the chapter by arguing that individuals can be multicultural, that diversity research needs to consider ethnicity as well as other critical forms of diversity (e.g., gender), and cultural differences are not guaranteed for every situation. Williams et al. recommends that it is critical for researchers to understand there are typically more differences within groups than between groups.

In addition to the theoretical work exploring the impact of culture on persuasion, there has also been a wide range of empirical research exploring this topic. A study by Aaker and Maheswaran (1997) explored the impact of cultural orientation on persuasion. This study focused on assessing the cross-cultural generalizability of persuasion effects. Specifically, this work explored whether members of collectivist cultures process new information using heuristic or systematic processing strategies. This work also explored the effects of consensus information and positive or negative attribute information on attitudes toward products. In collectivist cultures, for example, the consensual opinions of others may promote reliance on more heuristic than systematic processes. This may be the case whether the member is highly motivated or not. And, even when collectivists are surrounded by collectivist opinions which are wholly inconsistent with product attribute information, they are more likely to use consensus information as their guide. It is important to note that the findings for people from collectivist cultures were then compared with established findings from an extremely individualistic culture (United States).

Students from an undergraduate management program in Hong Kong were asked to give their opinions about a new camcorder. In the high motivation condition, participants were told either that they were part of a small and select group taking part in a very important survey. In the low motivation condition, participants were told they were taking part in a large opinion survey. They were then given a description of the camcorder in which test markets provided either a favourable (positive consensus) or unfavourable (negative consensus) opinion of the camcorder. Finally, participants were given feedback about the camcorder from a product testing agency describing the camcorder as superior to two leading competitors on five attributes (positive attributes) or inferior to two leading competitors on five attributes (negative attributes).

Participants in the positive consensus condition expressed significantly more favourable evaluations than participants in the negative consensus condition, regardless of motivation. Overall, this research shows that the processing strategies used by collectivist participants (i.e., heuristic and systematic processing) are the same as those used by individualist participants when processing information. However, consensus information guided the evaluations of collectivist participants in the high motivation condition. This stands in contrast to previous work showing that people from individualistic cultures are likely to be guided more by attribute information.

> **Impact of Culture – People from collectivist cultures are more likely to be guided by the views of others (i.e., consensus information) especially when they are highly motivated.**

The goals of the target have an important impact on how they process information. Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, as cited in Aaker & Lee, 2001), for example, argues that two prominent human drives or goals are the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain. Promotion goals are aimed at "attaining positive outcomes such as advancement, achievement, and aspirations" (Aaker and Lee, 2001, p. 33) and prevention goals are aimed at "avoiding negative outcomes such as responsibilities, obligations, and security (p. 33). These goals ensure that people with the same overarching goal may take 2 different approaches to achieving it.

Research by Aaker and Lee (2001) argues further that the accessibility of one's self-view also drives the choices that people make in persuasive situations. When the target message, for example, is consistent with one's goals at a given point in time, a person's attitudes toward this message will be more positive. Such goals

can be shaped by cultural norms. In highly independent cultures, for example, the focus is on distinguishing one's own unique attributes and characteristics and achievement orientation, creating oneself to be distinct from other people. This is more consistent with a promotion focus. In highly interdependent cultures, on the other hand, the focus is on being defined by membership in one's group, and the obligations and responsibilities to the group are more critical than one's own goals. This avoidance of inconsistency with the needs of one's group is more consistent with a prevention focus. Although specific self-views are likely to be chronically accessible within a given culture, there is also evidence that temporal shifts in self-views can also affect attitudes and possibly decision-making processes. The researchers hypothesized that a more independent frame of mind would be more amenable to promotion-based messages and an interdependent to more prevention-based messages.

To test these ideas, the target product was Welch's grape juice and 4 different versions of messages were created using both pictures and text. To create either independent or interdependent versions, either an individual or family was shown in pictures and associated text was changed. The content of the message was also varied to reflect either a promotion-based message highlighting the health benefits (e.g., increasing energy levels) while the prevention-based message focused on the health risks (e.g., reduced risk of heart disease). Messages were either matched (i.e., independent, promotion-focused) or not matched (i.e. independent, prevention-focused) with the self-view created by the pictures and text of the message. Participants were assigned to one of these 4 conditions. The dependent measures were participants' evaluation of the website as not at all effective/very effective or not at all impactful/very impactful (Website evaluation index), and their attraction toward and interest in the brand. This measure required participants to indicate their willingness to have further involvement with the product (e.g., to activate a link to recipes). A subsequent dependent measure told participants that the website was being revised and gave them an opportunity to view the new content of the website.

Results showed the predicted interaction, in that participants in the independent prime condition rated the promotion-based website more positively than they rated the prevention-based website, and participants in the interdependent prime condition rated the message more positively when it was prevention-based than promotion-based. In addition, the same expected interaction was also evidenced on the brand affinity index (both immediate and delayed), showing that they not only thought the message that matched their self-frame was more effective, but also showed more interest in continued involvement with the product. This research suggests that it might be possible to tailor persuasive messages to better match people's chronic or temporally activated self-views.

Subsequent studies shed further light on the mechanisms underlying these effects. These studies show that people do process the information more thoroughly (as evidenced by stronger recall data and an impact of argument strength) when this information is consistent with their situational frame because this information is more in line with their current goals. People who were primed with a sense of independence were more favourable to messages of individual achievement. However, participants primed with a sense of interdependence (e.g., part of a family) were more favourable to messages of avoiding. This shows that a match between current goal and salient self-view does promote more systematic processing of information.

Clearly, self-regulatory focus has been found to differ between individualist and collectivist cultures (Shavitt et al., 2008). Those in individualist cultures have promotion focused goals, whereas those in interdependent cultures have prevention focused goals. Promotion focused goals, often found in Western cultures, can regulate one's attitudes and behaviours toward the pursuit of growth and the achievement of hopes and aspirations. On the other hand, prevention-focused goals, often found in Eastern cultures, regulate one's attitudes and behaviours toward the pursuit of safety and the fulfilment of duties and obligations.

> **Impact of Culture** – People's current goals affect how they process information in accordance with their cultural stance. For example, more independent people will be more responsive to messages that favour individual achievement. More collectivist people will be more attentive to fulfilling duties and obligations.

Nelson, Brunel, Supphellen and Manchanda (2006) argue that other distinctions are also critical to explaining cultural behaviour. These researchers looked at potential differences in charity behaviour within individualistic cultures as a product of varying sex-role ideology (masculine-feminine). Canada and the United States were defined as masculine countries because there is a focus on masculine and assertive (or ego) interests, whereas Denmark and Norway were defined as individualistic cultures with a feminine sex-role ideological because they have more focus on feminine and nurturance (social, relational) interests. In terms of the values in play within these cultures, the state bears the responsibility for others' welfare in feminine cultures, whereas people are more responsible for their own welfare in masculine cultures. This suggests that creating ads that present self-focused messages may be more effective in masculine cultures, whereas other-focused ads may be more effective in feminine cultures, but may also shift responsibility from personal to governmental responsibility.

In Study 1, the researchers had students from Denmark (n = 82) and students from the United States (n=152) evaluate either two charity ads (one presenting an egoistic or self-focused for helping, and one presenting an altruistic or other-focused motive for helping) or two control ads. Other-focused appeals emphasize the desire to help others in need, whereas self-focused appeals emphasize the desire to donate money that will benefit others as well as oneself. Participants were also asked to rate their personal obligation to help and the government's obligation to help. Participants from Denmark (feminine culture) reported that the government had more of an obligation to help others than they did personally, and this tendency was greater among women than among men. In addition, exposure to charity ads that solicited their individual donations were associated with increased perceptions that the government should help others.

Nelson et al. (2006) then conducted second study in which business students from Canada (n=83), the United States (n=112), Denmark (n=90) and Norway (n=119) provided their evaluations of either a self-focused or other-focused charity ad. Again, individuals in feminine cultures were more likely to feel that the government was more responsible for helping others. As well, members of feminine cultures felt less obligated to help others when exposed to the other-focused ad.

Overall, results from these studies show that although cultural research tends to focus on the individualistic/collectivistic dimension, there is also critical variance within people in these dimensions that should not be overlooked. That is, members of individualistic cultures were found to respond differently to value-expressive charity appeals based on the sex-role ideology within their own cultures. Therefore, knowing whether the culture is individualistic or collectivistic does not provide an adequate view of its complexity.

Much of the existing cultural research makes an implicit assumption that culture represents a stable set of attributes that determine decision-making. Given the common cultural dimension of individualism/collectivism, for example, most models of culture seem to argue that a person in a collectivist culture is likely to behave somewhat consistently over time when making a decision. A paper by Briley, Morris and Simonson (2000), however, advances a more dynamic model of the relationship between culture and decision-making. Specifically, they argue that people are influenced by culture only when their cultural knowledge structures are activated. People's knowledge structures can be activated, they argue, when they are asked to provide explanations for the judgements they make. In short, culture is argued to provide "rules or principles that provide guidance for making decisions, and the need to provide reasons activates such cultural knowledge" (Briley et al., 2000, p. 157). This dynamic view of culture-based decision making, then, argues that when asked to give reasons, people would be more likely to make decisions based on their cultural norms,

because the process of providing explanations is likely to invoke cultural issues. People from East Asian cultures, then, would favour compromising while North Americans would be more extreme in their choice. On the other hand, people from North American culture would be more likely to pick sides and to sacrifice on one dimension in order to protect another.

Study 1 examines the influence of culture on product choice. Undergraduate students were exposed to ads that had either extreme attributes (i.e., high price and quality or low price and quality), or that presented a compromise between price and quality. They were asked to rate these ads in two conditions, one requiring them to provide a reason for their decision, and one not requiring a reason for the decision that they made. They were then asked to rate the attractiveness of the product.

Results showed that when participants were not asked to give reasons for the choices that they made, culture had no impact on decision-making. However, when asked to provide an explanation for their decision, people from East Asian culture were more likely to compromise between price and quality and people from North American culture were more likely not to compromise. Subsequent studies showed that participants from East Asian cultures had more favourable evaluations of messages promoting compromising and of people who chose to compromise than people from North American cultures. This research supports the view that culture has a dynamic influence on decision-making, and that its impact should be conceptualized not as a chronic dispositional trait, but as a "dynamic cognitive state". As such, rather than representing a pervasive lens through which people see the world, these authors argue that cultural knowledge can be activated by other factors such as the need to explain or justify one's decisions.

This view of culture is an interesting one, but given the wide range of cultural research, it seems somewhat premature to argue that culture is only dynamic, and that it does not have a stable and persistent component. It seems more reasonable to say that culture is both a lens through which people see the world, as well as an influence that is particularly likely to come into play when people are required to explain or justify their decisions.

> **Impact of Culture** – The impact of culture can depend on whether cultural knowledge structures have been activated. As such, culture has a dynamic as well as stable and consistent effect.

One of the papers reviewed in this report (Aaker and Maheswaran, 1998) provides a good overview of some of the key differences in individualistic vs. collectivistic cultures, as shown in Table 1.

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Table 1. Attitudinal and Behavioural Differences with Individualism/Collectivism

Relative Attitudinal and Behavioural Differences Associated with Individualism vs. Collectivism		
	Individualism (e.g., United States, Australia, Canada)	Collectivism (e.g., Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan)
Self-construal	Defined by internal attributes, personal traits	Defined by important others, family, friends
Role of others	Self-evaluation (e.g., standards of social comparison, sources of appraisal regarding self)	Self-definition (e.g., relationships with others define self and impact personal preferences)
Values	Emphasis on separateness, individuality	Emphasis on connectedness, relationships
Motivational drives	Focus on differentiation, relatively greater need to be unique	Focus on similarity, greater need to blend in
Behaviour	Reflective of personal preferences and needs	Influenced by preferences, needs of close others

Although somewhat helpful, however, one limitation of such categorization schemes from the influence perspective is that they provide only very broad information about specific countries (and tendencies within those countries), but tend to obscure important differences among and even within countries. The average Canadian, for example, might take offence to being "lumped together" with an American, and even within Canada, there are significant regional differences that would need to be considered in order to design maximally effective persuasion messages or materials. This suggests that PSYOPS personnel, no doubt, face the same level of complexity when attempting to work in a country as diverse as Afghanistan. The nuances of the tribal system, and the sheer number of different regional influences would make it very different to attempt to tailor the persuasive approach within such a country using simple heuristics.

The research reviewed in this section shows considerable variety in the consumer psychology research relevant to understanding the target audience. It suggests that individual differences such as need for cognition, as well as the more temporal mood of the target, and the goals and motivation of the target will influence the effectiveness of persuasion attempts. One important finding prominent in the literature is that understanding whether the individual is motivated to process systematically or not should guide the type of persuasive attempt used. For highly motivated individuals, strong and coherent arguments are likely to be most effective. For less motivated individuals, using more peripheral cues such as an expert presenting the message or an attractive expert presenting the message will help to promote less effortful processing while maximizing persuasive appeal. Another factor that promotes persuasion is ensuring a self-relevant component to a persuasive message. In short, people are more likely to resonate to a message that they perceive to be relevant to themselves. One important caveat to note, however, is that introducing other elements into the persuasive message (e.g., using a picture as well as a self-relevant reference) could undermine persuasion efforts. Self-relevance also influences what people remember when processing a persuasive message. For messages that are highly relevant, they are more likely to remember early parts of the message, but will recall latter parts of messages that are not self-relevant.

One critical factor prominent in the literature is the effect of culture on influence. Although there are many different theoretical stances toward influence, there is agreement on at least some of the common dimensions. Most prominent (and most researched) among these are individualism and collectivism. In accordance with research reviewed in other sections, the goals of the target and the motivational level of the target within differing cultures will influence the information that they process and the thoroughness with which this occurs. It is also clear that culture can act as a lens through which people see the world, as well as a dynamic state that is made more salient under certain conditions (e.g., when asked to justify one's decisions). From a PSYOPS

perspective, then, this section underlines the criticality of the target audience analysis as a means to understand exactly how target messages should be tailored.

2.3 Discussion

Our initial impetus for wanting to explore the consumer psychology literature was that it might offer more pragmatic and "hands-on" advice allowing for easier translation from research to pragmatic implementation of the advice offered in research. Unfortunately, our review of the literature suggests that an easier avenue for translation of complex results is no more available in the consumer psychology literature than in the literature reviewed previously (Adams et al., 2007). In fact, there is a clear sense that many researchers have simply reframed their academic research into consumer psychology domains with the promise that they will be presenting "pragmatic implications". A review of the Isen (2008) chapter entitled "Positive Affect and Decision Processes: Some Recent Theoretical Developments with Practical Implications", for example, seems to offer great promise in terms of providing practical and usable information. Indeed, this research provides an excellent academic overview of the extensive literature relevant to positive affect and persuasion. Despite the promise in its title, however, this review does not provide any truly pragmatic advice about how positive affect should or could actually be used by practitioners. Even from the summary at the end of this chapter, the most practical advice evident is simply that "….positive affect leads people to consider more aspects of situations and integrate that material is relevant for many fields, from consumer decision making to managerial decision making to physician diagnostic processes" (Isen, 2008, p. 292). Exactly how this finding should influence efforts within these fields, however, is not provided. The fact that this seems to be the state of the consumer psychology area suggests that the area will still require further time and research effort to more fully develop the pragmatic implications of the knowledge gained to this point.

As a whole, this review suggests that many of the same factors given attention in the mainstream psychology literature have received focus in the consumer psychology literature. In fact, the only substantive difference appears to be that while the context of the mainstream persuasion literature is typically broader, the consumer psychology literature uses stimuli specifically derived from the advertising domain. For example, within the mainstream psychology domain the dependent variables often involve attitudes toward a given persuasive message, whereas these attitudes are operationalized as "brand attitudes" or "product attitudes" in consumer psychology research. This suggests that many of the differences between the mainstream persuasion literature and the consumer psychology literature are more a matter of framing rather than core differences in how the research is conducted.

It is important to note that one of the best analogies of the practical advice that would be helpful comes from a recent book by Goldstein, Martin and Cialdini (2008) entitled "Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to be Persuasive". This book has the advantage of being extremely accessible to the average reader and presents concrete examples of persuasion principles in action. The limitation of this book, however, is that the scientific accuracy of the book is compromised slightly in efforts to maintain its narrative appeal. For example, although key findings are accurately reported, secondary findings that run against the "desired" story are not cited, making the end result (and the strength of the finding) seem somewhat more consistent than it actually is. In short, our review (and knowledge of the literature being cited) showed the shaping of research to fit the story with some compromising of the scientific rigor of the text. Nonetheless, this book remains a valuable resource and will be used to guide efforts in the creation of a practitioners' guide for PSYOPS personnel.

There are still a number of potential limitations that must be considered when attempting to apply consumer psychology research to the PSYOPS domain. First, the generalizability of the reviewed research to the domain of interest remains unclear. Our review suggests that the majority of the consumer psychology literature accessed was conducted in relatively sterile environments, mostly with undergraduate students. This criticism, of course, is not unique to the influence and persuasion domain. The ability to use the information gained in

the consumer psychology domain and to apply it within the area of PSYOPS depends on the perceived level of congruence between the psychological act of an individual considering or buying a product and being persuaded to undertake a more complex behaviour (e.g., being more critical of the Taliban, working to promote a democratic process). As we argued in our previous review, in the long term, need for pragmatic and empirically grounded information could be remedied with more realistic and higher fidelity persuasion research. This does not mean, of course, that this research is not generalizable to more complex contents, simply that it should ideally be treated with some caution before it can be validated in more challenging environments.

These limitations and caveats aside, this review has helped to broaden the scope of investigation into influence into the domain of consumer psychology, and provides new insights derived from research within two key areas (designing persuasive messages and arguments, and understanding how to tailor these messages to the target audience). Hopefully, this review and the additional of the "summary boxes" will provide meaningful information to PSYOPs personnel as they work in complex operations. For the longer term, additional effort should be placed on ensuring that emerging persuasion and influence research can be analyzed and integrated into the PSYOPs system. One particular area that should receive more focus as the level of sophistication of the messages and target audience analysis proceeds is the impact of varying forms of media and/or message delivery. As noted earlier, this area is relatively underdeveloped in the available existing literature, and this should be further elaborated as future work progresses.

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(U) Following–up on a previous review of mainstream academic and scientific literature, this chapter reviews consumer psychology literature as it relates to persuasion and attitudes. Specifically, this chapter focuses on 2 prominent areas of persuasion research: 1. the creation of persuasive messages, and 2. the audience being targeted for the messages. With respect to the message, this chapter highlights a number of methods for increasing persuasiveness of the message. These include presenting both positive and negative information in a message, repeating messages, as well as using vivid imagery, narratives, and a personal approach. With respect to the target audience, there is considerable variety in the literature. That is, research in consumer psychology suggests that an individual's need for cognition, mood, motivation, and goals all impact on their ability to be persuaded. In addition, culture and the relevance of the message to the individual also impact persuasion. From a PSYOPS perspective, then, this chapter underlines the importance of using sound persuasion principles when creating persuasive messages and the criticality of the target audience analysis as a means to understanding how exactly target messages should be tailored.

(U) Faisant suite à un examen de la littérature didactique et scientifique courante, le présent chapitre passe en revue la littérature sur la psychologie du consommateur dans la mesure où elle se rapporte à la persuasion et aux attitudes. Il porte plus précisément sur deux importants domaines de recherche sur la persuasion : 1) la création de messages persuasifs et 2) l'audience à laquelle les messages sont destinés. Il met en évidence un certain nombre de méthodes permettant de rendre le message plus persuasif, par exemple : présenter de l'information à la fois positive et négative dans un message, répéter les messages, et utiliser des images évocatrices, des descriptions narratives et une approche personnelle. En ce qui concerne l'audience–cible, la littérature est très variée. La recherche en psychologie du consommateur laisse supposer que le besoin cognitif d'une personne, son humeur, sa motivation et ses buts ont tous une incidence sur sa capacité d'être persuadée. La culture et la pertinence du message pour la personne influent également sur la persuasion. Du point de vue des opérations psychologiques (OPSPSY), ce chapitre souligne donc l'importance d'appliquer de solides principes de persuasion pour créer des messages persuasifs ainsi que le caractère essentiel de l'analyse de l'audience–cible comme moyen de comprendre la façon exacte dont les messages devraient être adaptés.

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(U) consumer psychology ; persuasive messages