

Final Project

Matthew Monroe

Consumer Behavior: MKTG 402

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Executive Summary

The research I have conducted has provided many insights on the topic of mindful consumption and its relation to consumer behavior. Furthermore, the information I've gathered can be applied to GlobeIn and aid in its quest to better understand its target market. With any marketing plan it is crucial that a company has a marketing mix that falls in line with its target market and their characteristics. Mindful consumers can be described as individuals, whose consumption patterns can be traced towards products related to personal health, sustaining the environment, and benefitting society as a whole. Therefore, my findings suggest that it is vital for companies who are targeting mindful consumers to create a product that has a connection to one of the three characteristics listed above. It is important for firms to make sure the core benefits of the product are just not related to its usage abilities, but its benefits toward the mindful consumer's worldview on consumption practices. In regards to price, I found that although mindful consumers are much more likely to be frugal with their money, they are also willing to spend more money on a product or service if they know the company practices sustainability and corporate social responsibility. When evaluating alternatives, they will most likely choose the product that fits most in line with mindful consumption regardless of the price. Place is also another component of the marketing mix that is essential to marketing a good or service. The research I conducted found that sensory experience is an important aspect of a consumer's shopping experience, especially in the case with mindful consumers. Since many mindful consumers value a clean environment, it is important to use the proper aesthetics on a website or a store design such as earth friendly colors like blue and green. Finally, promotion is another key part of the marketing mix. Although many appeals can be used in advertising, sex appeals would be the least effective method in promoting mindful consumption due to their limited ability to create actual brand awareness and recognition among consumers.

Research Question 1

Does the process of cognitive decision making differ for globe-in products from that of low-priced alternatives? Justify your answer using good sources

Globe-In offers a variety of products for its customers and monthly subscribers. Their website gives consumers the option of purchasing individual goods such as scarves and mugs, or becoming subscribers which in turn allows them to receive a bundle of goods for different monthly payments. In regards to price, individual products from Globe-In are a step above traditional lower priced products. For example, their Hand-Painted Mugs are \$15 which doesn't even include the taxes and shipping price (GlobeIn Shop, 2016)). The monthly subscriptions seem to be a better alternative if a consumer intends to shop on the website consistently. This subscription comes in a variety of forms from \$35 a month, \$99 every three months, and \$180 every six months ("The Artisan Box", 2016). When the individual consumer subscribes for a longer monthly period they are saving themselves a few dollars each month compared to just a one month subscription. However, in the end, Globe-In's products are not aimed at consumers with lower monetary resources. This is backed up by looking at the median household income of its customers which comes in at \$75k. (Nandakumar, 2016) Since the household incomes are significantly higher, price is not the driving force in the cognitive decision making process of these customers. The main driving force is their attitudes and beliefs in regards to the inherent value of the products and the people making them. In relation to Maslow's Theory, Globe-In customers are purchasing these products to fulfill their self-actualization needs.

Self-actualizing consumers can be seen as those consumers who "may take actions to satisfy the needs of others at the same time that individual's own needs are satisfied (Brooker, 1976, p. 107). In other words, these customers have an ethical standard when it comes to their

cognitive decision making process when purchasing goods and they are socially conscious. Since Globe-In markets itself as a company whose products are created by artisans who live beyond the touch of global economics, its customers are motivated to help reach out to these artisans so that they can make a living. Therefore, the problem recognition stage for Globe-In type customers is not solely focused on a product that would fulfill their needs, but a need to fulfill their altruistic viewpoints. This is backed up by the profile of these customers which are outlined on the PowerPoint which lists them as being, “interested in altruism: Christian missionary work, animal rescue (Nandakumar, 2016). Therefore, there is a notable difference when using the cognitive decision processes with Globe-In products compared to lower priced alternatives. This is most notably evident in the stage called evaluation of alternatives. If price was the determining factor when it came to a Globe- In customer making a purchase, then they would obviously choose the lower priced alternative of a similar product. However, the lower priced product may not offer the same quality and message that the Globe-In product has to offer so price is less of a determinant.

This is mainly due to the characteristics of the Globe-In customers who are more altruistic. Altruistic customers are, “inclined to pay the most. They might even pay more than the worth of the task” (Jennings & Lespérance, 2000). Therefore, the message being sent by the company that is most related to social responsibility will win over the customer who has altruistic principles. Self-interested customers “pay no more than the worth of the task” (Jennings & Lespérance, 2000). This builds upon my belief that there is a notable difference between Globe-In customers and those customers who are more self-interested in their own needs. Globe-In customers look beyond the product and their own needs and more to the overall benefit of their influence on society.

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Research Question 2

Discuss how American culture and values favor (or not favor) mindful consumption. Use the concepts and terms discussed in chapter 3.

Judging whether Americans are mindful consumers is dependent on the culture and values Americans share as a whole. Culture can be defined as a society's, "abstract ideas, such as values and ethics, and material objects and services, such as automobiles, clothing, food, art, and sports a society produces" (Solomon, 2015, p79). When analyzing a culture one must also look at the variations of it such as an individualist culture or a collectivist culture. When analyzing America's culture it is evident that it sways toward the direction of being an individualist culture. Members of this culture value independence and the freedom for the individual to succeed on their own. Their values, or, "beliefs that some condition is preferable to its opposite" (Solomon, 2015, p.80) are dependent on this type of culture. When viewing American consumer culture, an outsider can see that Americans place heavy value on materialistic goods and services to elevate their status and make them closer to their ideal state. Most Americans have a set of core values that include, "freedom, youthfulness, achievement, materialism, and activity" (Solomon, 2015, p.80) Therefore, heavy consumption is a characteristic of American culture. The best examples of this relate to automobiles and houses. In 2003, "the U.S. had more private cars than licensed drivers, and gas-guzzling sport utility vehicles were among the best-selling vehicles" ("The State of Consumption Today", 2013). My own personal experiences touch on this when I see massive Ford and Chevrolet trucks that are not being used for work purposes, but to elevate status. It also takes a toll on the environment with needless fossil fuels being burned. In relation to housing; in 2002 "New houses in the U.S. were 38 % bigger in 2002 than in 1975, despite having fewer people per household on average" ("The State of Consumption Today", 2013). What this says is

Americans are consuming more than what they really need and are not taking a mindful approach with their purchase decisions. Status, achievement, and outside appearance, still have a heavy influence on Americans purchase decisions regardless of whether or not it impacts the greater society or environment. As a result, companies will continue to advertise these status enhancing products as long as there is a demand for them.

Of course, there are exceptions and a growing trend towards mindful consumption amongst U.S. consumers. Mindful consumption amongst consumers can play a role in how they perceive the greater world and how their purchase decisions can affect it in a positive manner. New hybrid cars have been released on the market which shows a greater awareness on the effect cars can have on the environment. From 2011 to 2012, the sales of hybrid cars in the U.S. nearly doubled from \$269,178 to 470,383 in 2012(“Table 1-19”, n.d.). So there are in fact some consumers that have a responsible sense of direction in their purchasing decisions. The company we have been researching attracts consumers with mindful consumption as well. Rather than purchasing products from factories that mass produce similar goods, these consumers have a greater awareness of the positive impact their buying habits can have on global society.

In conclusion, America’s history shows a track record that doesn’t fall in line with mindful consumption. Since most Americans rely on products that show off their status such as luxury vehicles and large houses, mindful consumption is often put to the side. Important statistic such as the types of cars Americans buy and the size of the houses they purchase demonstrate this. However, there is a steady trend amongst Americans towards mindful consumption. Car companies like Ford and Mercedes have been developing and introducing new hybrid cars on to the market. They realize that there is an emerging market of consumers who are mindful of their purchasing decisions.

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Research Question 3

Using concepts and terms from chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4, discuss how you would promote a culture shift (refer to the culture production process on page 88) towards mindful consumption (or conscientious consumption). Discuss how you would use your understanding of consumer behavior (biases, heuristics, etc.) to achieve this objective. You can also discuss ideas involving public policy.

Mindful consumption is a growing trend within the United States and it is focused towards consumers purchasing products that have an ethical standard. This encompasses cars that use clean energy to help maintain a healthy environment to organic foods which included sustainable farming practices. To grow this trend amongst consumers, companies must understand the necessary steps that need to be taken that will lead to broader mindful consumption. One such model is the cultural production process, or culture production system. This system includes, “sets of individuals and organizations that create and market a cultural product (Solomon, 2015, p.89). In other words, companies formulate a plan to market their product to consumers based on cultural norms and values. This system is dependent on three major subsystems which all have their roles in creating the image, distribution, and promotion of the product in the market.

Before embarking on a campaign to shift a culture towards mindful consumption practices, companies need to understand who their present audience is. Most consumers today who practice mindful consumption are self-actualization consumers, or consumers that purchase products for self-fulfillment and enrichment (Solomon, 2015, p.22). For example, customers for

GlobeIn are not merely purchasing GlobeIn's artisan boxes for their function or sense of style, but to spread their resources to those producers who are left out of the global market. Other than being self-actualizing consumers, they are also more self-regulated, or they "deliberate efforts to change or maintain their actions over time" (Solomon, 2015, p.553) In other words, these consumers are able to hold off instant gratification to obtain their goals which leads them to be less impulsive buyers. Therefore, they have a more disciplined and cognitive approach when purchasing goods. This self-regulating concept can also aid in their consumer decision making process because they may have the need to change their possible unethical purchasing behavior and search out more products that fit with mindful consumption. However, to create a larger cultural shift towards mindful consumption companies need to sway other consumers who are not in this category to purchase these products. This is where the cultural production process comes in to play.

First, there needs to be a creative subsystem to design a product that mindful consumers would be attracted to. The company would first give the product, "intangible attributes" (Hirschman, n.d.). For example, idealized qualities such as reliability and aesthetic appeal would be conceived for that product. In the case of a hybrid car design which falls in line with mindful consumption, the creative element of the company would give it attributes that their target audience would want such as reliability, affordability, and mileage. Other factors that would need to be considered are the consumer heuristics or, "the mental rules of thumb that lead to a speedy decision" (Solomon, 2015, p.549). Heuristics are basically what consumers use to sort through vast quantities of advertisements and products in order to make a quicker purchasing decision. These heuristics must be broken down to different categories that consumers might use when it comes to their ultimate decision on what to purchase. For example, members of a target

audience and beyond may judge the product based on its country of origin which relates to ethnocentrism, the belief that the native country's product is superior. When faced with a product such as a couch, a consumer may automatically decide to buy the one that is made in their native country. Therefore, it is important to research the consumer behavior patterns of the target audience if the product is produced by a foreign company. However, if the target market is ethnocentric it may help a native company's marketing campaign toward a mindful consumption shift. For example, there are many companies that design and produce motorcycles, but Harley-Davidson are a traditional American motorcycle company. Harley-Davidson already is a company that is distinguished for its environmental friendly habits. For example, the company introduced its first electric motorcycle in 2014 (Ernst, 2014). If a well-known American brand and cultural icon such as Harley-Davidson introduces electric products, this could sway more American motor cycle companies to follow suit and start a new trend. On the other hand it could attract more mindful and self-actualizing consumers to purchase Harley motorcycles.

The next phase that makes up the cultural production process or system is called the managerial subsystem. In this phase a company brings the creative elements and symbols to fruition and begins producing the product. The next part is essential to the cultural shift for consumers to purchase product. This is the communications subsystem. Basically this is how the product will be advertised to relay the information to the consumers. An effective method to promote a cultural shift towards a product such as mindful consumption would be using an athlete or a respectable figure in pop culture to advertise that product. For example, Mercedes-Benz used Jon Hamm from the show *Mad Men* to endorse its S400 Hybrid (Flint, 2012). Product placement would also be a way to gain attention to the product the company is trying to

advertise. For example, a company can place a hybrid car in a movie, or music video hoping that it will catch the eye of the consumer. However, for the product placement to be truly effective it would need to be a movie that fits in with the correct target market such as the mindful and self-actualizing consumers. For example, Hollywood could develop a movie about the impacts of climate change similar to the movie *The Day After Tomorrow*, and allow a company such as Ford to place their hybrid car in the film. Hypothetically, The protagonist who warned the government about climate change could be the one who drives the car in the film.

Finally, another way to broaden consumer's awareness of mindful consumption which would help influence them to buy the company's product would be to get the product out on social media. In fact, today 90 percent of U.S. young adults use some form of social media (Perrin, 2015). This means young adults on these websites can be the informal gatekeepers who spread the product by word of mouth through other friends and people online.

In conclusion, creating a cultural movement or shift around a certain product is not an easy task. It usually starts as a small movement, but can later expand with right tools and planning. The greatest tools that can be used in today's world to start this shift would be through social media advertisements, product placement, and celebrity endorsements. These would be the best outlets to inform the native culture of the product and the benefits of mindful consumption.

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Research Question Chapter 4

Discuss two products that succeeded primarily because of their design. Discuss, in detail, which elements contributed towards success and how.

Which sensory appeals do you think work on you the most? Reflect on past purchases or your usual responses to ads.

Discuss at least one example of subliminal messaging from the past 3 years. Was it a success?

With the vast amount of products on the market today, marketers often find the need to set their product apart from their competitors. One of the best ways to achieve this product differentiation is through design. This design touches on a consumer's sensation about a product or their initial sensory reactions. This can include the basic senses that all humans have such as sight, smell, sound, and touch. Therefore, sensory reactions play a significant role when it comes to how a consumer perceives a product since these senses dictate the consumer's first impressions. There are numerous products on the market today that have achieved success as a result of their sensory design.

Most of the products in the 21st century appeal to the sense of vision. This is due to vision being the primary sensory tool that consumers use to judge a product's design. Danish author and branding expert Martin Lindstrom argues that, "sight often overrules the other senses, and has the power to persuade us against all logic" (as cited in Song, 2010, p.4). Therefore, it is important for product designers to take vision into consideration when they are creating a product and how a visual appeal may entice consumers to make favorable first impressions of it. One of the numerous products that take advantage of the visual sense of design is Nike's Air Jordan seen in figure 1.



Figure 1 Nike Air Jordan's taken from Nike.com

Some individuals may assume that the Nike (Harwell, 2015). However, to dispel this idea I will use a shoe design used by Kobe Bryant that retailers tried to sell in the early



Figure 2 Adidas Kobe 2 taken from bleacherreport.com

2000's that failed miserably seen in figure 2. In the early 2000's Kobe Bryant was perhaps the most popular basketball star on the planet winning championships after championships.

However, the new shoes that Adidas tried to market called the Kobe 2 was a disaster in terms of sales and popularity (Restivo & Bengston, 2011). This was primarily of the lack of visual appeal to the product and consumer reactions to it weren't positive. In fact, many sites have it ranked as one of the ugliest shoes of all times. Critics sarcastically stated they didn't know if it was "a shoe or a toaster" (Restivo & Bengston, 2011). The point I'm ultimately making is that celebrity endorsements and brand labeling is not enough for selling a product.

The Nike Air Jordan's success is derived from the clever visual appeal and design of the product. The greatest attribute that it has going for it is the symbol on the front of the shoe that represents Michael Jordan's famous dunking stance. This symbol taps in to a consumer's

perception of the shoe, or the way they make sense of their initial sensory reactions. For example, upon seeing the symbol of Jordan dunking on the shoe, the consumer may connect that show with their past experiences of watching Jordan dunking on the basketball court which will create greater attachment to the product. Visual sensory perception is not the only attribute that made Air Jordan's design so popular. With any shoe touch is a vital component when it comes to how a consumer feels about a shoes performance and comfort level. Nike's Air Jordan's were one of the first to develop a fully reinforced lace system which makes the shoes more secured around the foot allowing increased running ability(Engvall, 2013).

In conclusion, Nike's Air's success is derived from the logo design of the shoes featuring Michael Jordan. This gives it added branding power and allows the consumers to perceive the product as a design that is attached to one of the greatest basketball players of all time. On top of this, the comfort level of the shoe with the revolutionary air cushioning and lace system allows users to feel comfortable and athletic while wearing the shoe.

Another product that has seen success as a result of its design is Rolls-Royce. Like many companies of this day and age, Rolls-Royce practices sensory marketing to entice consumers to purchase their products. Sensory marketing is an effective tool for marketers because they are aware that humans use their senses to detect the world around them and if a company can offer a more appealing sensory reaction to a consumer, than that consumer may favor their product more compared to competitors. Rolls-Royce takes advantage of this concept and uses it in their product designs. However, it was more of a learning experience for Rolls-Royce when it came to realizing how important sensory details were to consumers. For example, the company started replacing the interior of their cars with more modern materials such as plastic. This didn't go over well with consumers who noticed that these new materials were not producing that old

fashion iconic Rolls- Royce smell. Smell can be vital to a consumer's decision on purchasing a car and the scent can have a, "consumer-aphrodisiac effect on consumers" (O'Reilly & Tennant, 2009, p.201). As a result the company scented its seats with, "eight hundred elements from its original 1965 Silver Cloud to give it the old wooden smell" (O'Reilly & Tennant, 2009, p.201). This simple fix aided in the context effects for the consumer because it brought back the initial sensations that customers felt for the traditional Rolls-Royce. This shows the power of scent and how it is incorporated in the design.

When it comes to the sensory details that work best on me it would depend on the actual product itself. For example, when it comes to food, the senses that appeal to me the most on first impression are smell. Usually if I smell something pleasant from a food I know it will taste good. Experiences from the past have led me to believe this. For example, when I first walked in to an Indian restaurant called Nawab I could smell a variety of pleasant spices in the air which I later found out was that distinct curry smell. Visually the curry didn't seem that appealing, but after tasting the Vindaloo curry I was very pleased. Therefore, the sense of smell works best on me when it comes to food. I have seen some visually unappealing food in my lifetime, but this doesn't always means it will smell or taste bad.

The sense of vision plays a vital role in my initial decision to purchase items that relate to shoes. It's what guides me to eventually pick up the shoe and analyze it out of the variety that is being offered. Most of my past purchases of shoes have been geared around the color that the retail outlet has of that shoe. For example, as I'm scanning the shelf my eyes will often be attracted to the shoe that has a color mixture of black and red. As the book discussed, red often stimulates feelings of arousal and appetite (Solomon,2015, p.175). This helps make sense of why I'm attracted to shoes that incorporate this color.

Before analyzing what subliminal messages have been effective over the past three years the concept of the term must be explored. Subliminal perception or subliminal messaging is those messages that contain a, “stimulus below the level of the consumer’s awareness”(Solomon, 2015, p.186). In other words, these messages are hidden and often not detected by the consciousness of the mind, but the unconscious aspect of it. There is a debate on whether subliminal messages in ads are ethical or truly work. Dr. Wilson Bryan Key, a specialist in communications, argued back in 1990 that subliminal messaging is used to manipulate the public(Chen, 1990). Advertisers don’t mistakenly place subliminal messages in their ads due to the amount of attention they place on detail when they are creating them. He concluded that subliminal messaging is not always effective, but it can influence some individuals depending on the circumstances(Chen, n.d.). For example, in one case, there was a controversy on whether the subliminal messages in a Judas Priest record led a depressed individual to commit suicide.

While subliminal messaging may be unethical and not always effective, there have been ads over the past that used it to their advantage. For example, in 2008 Skittles packaging had an individual skittle with the letter “S” right next to explosion on the bag seen in figure 3.



Figure 3 Skittles taken from subliminal messaging.com

Sex is often used in subliminal messaging since according to Dr. Wilson Bryan Key it is one of those senses that deeply arouses us(Reichert, Lambiase & Key, 2003, p.203). Therefore, a connection can be seen between a consumer’s arousal and how they attach that arousal to the

specific product or brand. However, whether this message was successful in creating more sales remains unknown. It certainly created a stir among many bloggers who were aware of the subliminal message on the package.

In conclusion, design, sensory marketing, and subliminal messages all play a role in how we perceive products on the market. Marketers can have a direct impact on our decision to purchase their products based on how well they influence our sensations. Since our senses are what we rely on through daily life, it is important for companies to use an ethical standard when creating a sensory experience for us when we are exposed to their products. If they achieve this in an ethical manner than they may be able to persuade our senses to favor their goods and services compared to the competition.

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Research Question 5

From your own experience (or someone you know), describe (in detail) how you have fallen for a brand or product that used classical or instrumental conditioning.

Mention how the stimuli, repetition, and/or reinforcements played a role.

Have you (or anyone you know) fallen for the stimulus generalization effect? Explain.

How was the experience and what was the effect of it on the parent brand/company?

Throughout my life I have been exposed to many brands and products that used classical and instrumental conditioning. Of course when I was exposed to these goods, I was unaware of the two conditioning theories that fall under behavioral learning and how they could influence my purchase decision. Before analyzing how these two theories impacted me as a consumer, I had to grasp the science behind each one. Both fall under what is called behavioral learning which emphasizes that individuals obtain knowledge only through their environment. In other words, everyone is given a blank slate at birth and influences from the outside world impact how the mind is shaped. Furthermore, behavioral learning maintains the idea that learning takes place through are reactions and perceptions of external stimuli or the events our minds react to coming from the external environment (Solomon, 2015). This relates heavily to consumer behavior since as consumers we are ingesting stimuli from advertisements which may influence how we perceive the product. For example, many advertisements have certain songs that are paired with the brand or product such as the McDonalds jingle and tune "I'm Loving it."

Within behavioral learning there are two theories that dominate this landscape, classical conditioning and instrumental conditioning. Both of these theories are distinctively different in their approaches to how we react to stimuli. In classical conditioning there is a pairing of a unconditioned stimulus that provokes a response and conditioned stimulus that normally can't

achieve a response on its own (Solomon, 2015). Eventually the conditioned stimulus is perceived and associated with the unconditioned stimulus as a result of this pairing. This is known as a conditioned response since there is now a connection between the two stimuli.

In relation to marketing we can see classical conditioning being used by companies around the globe especially with music. Numerous studies have shown a direct correlation between music and purchasing behavior when it came to the use of classical conditioning. For example, an experiment was conducted in 1982 on students at McGill University which included the effects of liked and disliked music as an unconditioned stimulus on the conditioned stimulus, the color of a pen. The experiment found that "79 percent of the students picked the color of the pen as associated with the liked music" (Foxall, 2002). In other words, music can affect how a consumer perceives a product and ultimately affect their choice decision.

From my own personal experiences I have been subjected and influenced by classical conditioning from advertisements. The most notable one is the ad that was used to promote Call of Duty: Black Ops. This was very similar to the experiment noted above in that the ad used music as an unconditioned stimulus and the game as the eventual conditioned stimulus. As soon as the ad started I could hear the Rolling Stone's song *Give Me Shelter*, playing in the background as bullets were whizzing by the actors in the advertisement. After seeing the ad numerous times through repetition I would begin associating that song with Call of Duty: Black Ops and eventually bought the game.

Other than classical conditioning, I have also been influenced by instrumental conditioning. Instrumental conditioning has a distinct difference in that our purchase decisions are influenced by the reinforcement we receive after purchasing a product. In other words, we learn that a certain behavior is favorable because it produces positive results. These positive

results can also be seen as positive reinforcement since as humans we enjoy being rewarded and receiving compliments based on a certain behavior. For example, if I were to buy a pair of new shoes and my friends told me how cool I look; I would be motivated to keep buying the same brand or type of shoe. However, another form of reinforcement could also play a role in my purchasing behavior. For example, with negative reinforcement the individual's behavior is can be influenced by preventing an undesirable result. For example, I may see an ad that shows two individuals wearing different brands of shoes during a race. The one who wins is wearing the brand that is being advertised in the commercial which would give me the impression that to prevent losing a race, I would need to purchase the winning shoes.

Research has shown that instrumental conditioning is effective in ads. For example, a study done by Chinese researchers measured how instrumental conditioning influenced online consumers on their purchase and repurchase decisions. Participants filled out a Likert scale with several questions pertaining to whether they would strongly agree to buy, or repurchase a good based on a monetary promotion. The study found that use of positive reinforcement as a stimulus influenced online consumers repurchasing of goods when there was a monetary promotion or reward (Chen & Jiang, 2013). Therefore, marketers should be aware of instrumental conditioning when it comes to promoting goods and services in order to obtain more sales.

From my own experience, instrumental conditioning has worked on me with certain companies. For example, Jersey Mike's uses fixed -ratio reinforcement to entice consumers to keep buying sandwiches from their store. With fixed ratio reinforcement, a reward is given only after a certain number of responses are achieved (Solomon, 2015). Jersey Mike's has a point reward system in which after a certain number of points are collected based off purchases; the

customer can obtain a free sandwich. This positive reinforcement based off the reward points has made me a brand loyal consumer. Although I am spending my resources on sandwiches at the restaurant, I'm also gaining something from it which makes it seem like a winning situation.

When it comes to stimulus generalization, the consumer associates another stimulus with a conditioned stimulus from past memories and experiences. This provokes a conditioned response to the consumers which means that it is an automatic response. Stimulus generalization has been studied by countless researchers and how it effects consumer's purchasing decisions. The whole concept of stimulus generalization is built around the idea that, "once the original association of response to stimulus is learned, it can be generalized to other stimuli through association and repetition so long as the stimuli are similar to the original stimulus"(Foxall, Goldsmith, & Brown, 1998).

So take for example companies that use family branding. Family branding is when a company has all of its products under the umbrella of the name brand. If a consumer has had a positive experience with one particular product with that brand name, they may have a similar response to the other items with the same name and associate that with their earlier positive experience.

In regards to my own purchasing behavior and its relation to stimulus generalization, many family branding techniques have worked on me. For example, when I first tried Heinz 57 sauce I loved it. I put it on hamburgers, chicken, steak and other food combinations. However, after a while I wanted to try a different sauce to add some taste to my dishes. Rather than seeking out new brands on the shelf, my eyes caught the many different types of other sauces that Heinz offers such as Worcestershire sauce and chili sauce. Since I had a positive experience with the Heinz 57 in the past I associated Heinz with quality and purchased the new items.

In conclusion, classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning, and stimulus generalization all play a role on how consumers make purchasing decisions. My own personal experiences attest to this. Whether it's classical conditioning from an advertisement for Call of Duty or stimulus generalization from Heinz's family branding strategy. As consumers and marketers it is important we are both aware of these processes in order to learn more about ourselves and why we behave in certain manners.

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Research Question 6

Describe a person's personality traits and consumption patterns (without identifying the person) and discuss whether they match or not. Discuss whether there is 'symbolic self-completion'.

Find someone who claims to be a highly mindful/conscientious consumer and describe his/her personality traits. Find links between the traits and their tendency to be mindful/conscientious.

An individual's self-concept and personality traits can play a significant role when it comes to what they purchase and how often they purchase a particular product. The self-concept is basically how individuals perceive themselves whether it's in physical or mental terms. For example, an individual's self-concept can be made up of areas such as how they view themselves in regards to attractiveness or their confidence level. All these factors are combined to form an individual's self-concept and this translates into what products or services they will purchase in order to maintain or improve their attributes.

When it comes to consumer behavior, there are two variables that influence a consumer's spending patterns, the ideal self and the actual self. Let's say a consumer is unsatisfied with their present self-concept in regards to their obesity and they envision themselves as being skinnier. In order to achieve this vision they order supplements that increase metabolism to help shred off the pounds. This would be an example of a consumer's ideal self since they are making a purchasing decision based off of how they want to be. The ideal self also impacts what brands we use on a daily basis. In the *Journal of Consumer Research*, scholars found a direct correlation between brand preference and ideal self-image. For example, even when it comes to products such as bar soap, research showed that the least preferred brands were disliked because they were not compatible with the ideal self-image (Kim, Lee, & Ulgado, 2005). Therefore, luxury goods are not the only products that are purchased just because of their contribution to an

ideal self-concept. Even the daily products we use that are of a specific brand relate to purchasing based on the ideal self.

The actual self is also another characteristic of self-concept. It can be defined as how we currently view ourselves or the attributes we realistically have. The actual self can also play a role on our consumer behavior since we purchase goods and services that fall in line with our personality. These products also act as a maintenance tool for an individual's actual self in that they purchase products that continue to uphold their image. This is why positive self-congruity is one of the best predictors when it comes to purchase behavior since there is a correlation between "positive product -image perception and positive self-image belief" (McLeod, 2008). In other words, consumers choose the product that best fits the positive attributes of their actual self. For example, if a consumer's actual self includes masculinity, they may purchase a truck in order to maintain that positive self-image.

Personality traits are also a factor than influence a consumer's spending patterns. The symbolic completion theory suggests that an individual will purchase goods and services that reflect and sustain their identity. Often times humans have a self-description tool that helps define themselves through titles they may have such as doctor, scientist, etc. A study done at the University of Texas by Robert A. Wicklund and Peter M. Gollwitzer showed how important titles were when it came to symbolic completion. For example, the study found that "positive self-descriptions can further the individual's sense of having a complete self-definition" (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, n.d.). In other words, if an individual feels that they are fulfilling these titles through the attainment of symbols that reflect this self-title, they are more likely to feel complete.

I have been able to connect this theory with some individuals I have encountered

throughout my life as well as with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. This is a personality test based on five dimensions that was created by psychologist Carl Jung (Solomon, 2015). One such close relative of mine fits in to the extroversion dimension and also fulfills the symbolic completion theory through this personality trait along with her consumption patterns. She effectively completes her self-concept. She is a single mom who has two children and has told me numerous times she is always a mother first before anything else. Therefore, her title can be defined as “mother.” Her personality includes being heavily extroverted and she often is very active in taking her kids to social events such as softball games. This way she can interact with the other parents while her children can also make new friends. Besides being extroverted, she also is very compulsive and lets her Id take the command in most of her purchasing decisions. In other words, she relies heavily on immediate gratification and will seek out symbols that will fulfill her needs in order to maintain her self-concept as a mother. For example, her consumption patterns match with the motherly title in that she purchases products such as minivans and digital cameras. The minivan is the most symbolic of her self-definition since it is the iconic vehicle of the “soccer mom.”

In conclusion, materialism is her most powerful trait and her consumption patterns demonstrate that products symbolizing motherhood are her main source of security when it comes to her self- concept. Therefore, the consumption patterns reflect her materialistic and extroverted personality traits. As an extrovert she has to rely more on impression management, or the way she uses products to manage her self-concept and its outward appearance to others (Solomon, 2015). Since she is constantly going to social events it is important for her self-concept as a mother to be noticeable to the outside world. This is why her purchase of a minivan helps reflect this since it is a product that she is constantly exposing to other people.

As we have discussed in class, a mindful consumer are those consumers whose purchasing behavior reflects their personality traits. This translates in to buying goods that are ethically produced or beneficial to the environment, or a service that helps reach those individuals that are less fortunate. It just so happens I live with an individual who practices mindful consumption on a daily basis. When analyzing her personality traits it makes sense that her consumer decisions are based on mindful consumption. For example, one of her major traits is frugality. She is essentially the opposite of materialism and only purchases goods that she needs and doesn't care about luxury items. For instance, she drives a used hybrid Smart Car that is priced fewer than 15 thousand dollars. The most significant trait of hers that fits in with mindful consumption is agreeableness. She will take the time out of her own life to volunteer and donate to companies that practice sustainable farming methods. Another trait of hers is openness to experience. Last summer she purchased solar panels for her house to reduce energy levels and the higher electric bills. In other words, she is the type of person that will find new alternatives of doing things that usually revolve around reducing consumption.

In conclusion, I have touched on how self-concept, personality traits, and symbolic completion have contributed to the purchasing behaviors of individuals that I have encountered in my life. While these tools are not always an accurate predictor on consumer behavior, they can be used as a general guideline to better understand how humans behave.

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Research Question 7

**How will you frame the message on promoting mindful/conscientious consumption?
(Answer the 6 questions)**

Describe an experience (of your own or someone else's) that exemplifies the foot in the door technique.

Apply the ELM and discuss which route is best suited for an ad promoting mindful/conscientious consumption given the personalities of such consumers.

For an ad on mindful/conscientious consumption which appeals would you use?

Discuss each of the appeal – would you use it? If yes, why and how? If not, why ?

When it comes to framing an advertising message towards a given target audience there are several considerations that must be made. For example, the amount of visuals the ad will contain, the level of emotional appeal to be used, and the frequency at which the message is delivered to the target audience. These same considerations can be applied when it comes to creating a message towards mindful consumption. However, in order for the message to be effective, it must contain the right elements that correlate with your objective.

The overall objective with creating an ad towards mindful consumption is to change the attitudes, or the feelings we have towards an object, issue, or advertisement (Solomon, 2015). Attitudes can be difficult to change especially if they are in the form of internalization. These attitudes often make up an individual's strongest values since they are internalized overtime. However, this doesn't mean that marketers can't use persuasion in an attempt to change one's attitudes. Adding the visual element to a mindful consumption advertisement could be a tool that would have the intended effect of persuading a consumer. For example, we have all heard the saying that a picture can speak a thousand words. In many cases they can because it forces the individual to come up with their own thoughts and interpretation of that visual. Scholars

researched that this is due to the fact that “two thirds of stimuli reach the brain through the visual system” (Dragoi, n.d.). Therefore, it would make sense to use visual elements in a message to allow the consumer to register more stimuli. This could be used to great effect for mindful consumption towards organic produce. The question is how would you use a visual in an advertisement to change attitudes towards eating organic? One way to achieve this is to draw a direct correlation between chemicals and food. In figure 1 we can see how the visuals in this ad could disgust a consumer in regards to their consumption of non-organic foods.



Figure 1 Chemically Altered Foods Taken from commodoreherbivore.wordpress.com

This visual does a beautiful job at showing the apple in its natural state, but then becoming contaminated by chemicals from a syringe. The visuals basically do the speaking for themselves and could make consumers second guess what they are consuming from the grocery store which may result in a change of attitude. An organic food company such as WhiteWave Foods could run an ad that compares their organic product in a clean pristine state vs. the non-organic product with a syringe in it.

Visuals don't have to be the only elements that are used in an advertisement. Verbal

communication can provide extra persuasion since it can accurately display facts and product features. One technique that can be used is communicating the verbal facts through the concept of authority. Authority is the overall concept that an advertisement can be persuasive if it's coming from a credible source. For example, if you design an ad with facts that show them coming from reputable source consumers may be more willing to trust the message. A great example of how authority has worked is with ads against tobacco use. Ads have been featured with the American Heart Association informing consumers of the negative impacts of consuming tobacco seen in figure 2.

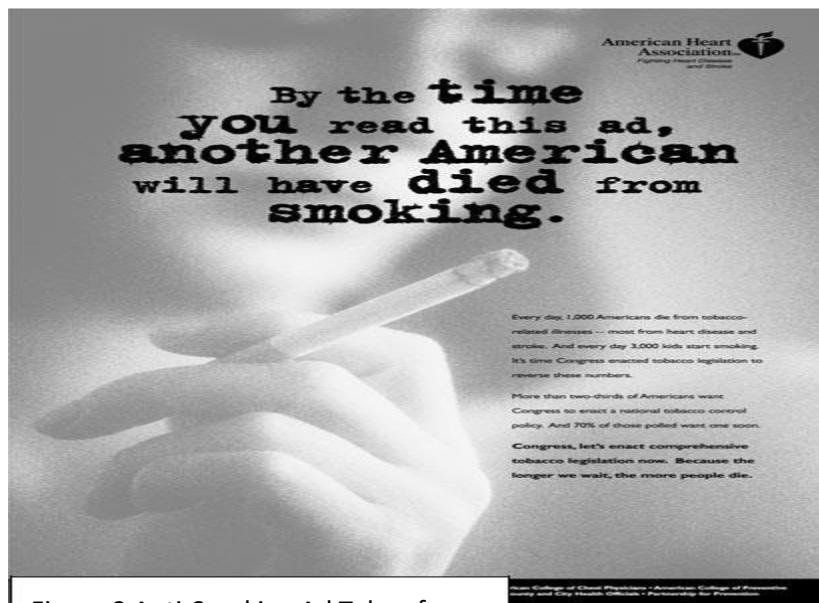


Figure 2 Anti-Smoking Ad Taken from redhendesign.com

A company that is advertising chewing gum to prevent smoking could run an informative ad such as this using fear appeal to persuade consumers to use their gum in order to avoid certain death. In conclusion I have demonstrated how visual and verbal elements in an advertisement could be effective in constructing a message towards mindful consumption.

Another element of advertising a message is the frequency of the message. In other words, how many times a message should be exposed to a consumer. The two-fact theory

suggests a double edged sword in regards to the frequency of a message. For example, while it is helpful for advertisement to be showed frequently to increase the information about a certain product or issue, it also can dull the senses of the viewer resulting in a lack of interest in the ad. This is why the company that is advertising a message towards mindful consumption must achieve an effective frequency. This basically means the number of times an audience must be exposed to an ad in order for them to acknowledge it without the message wearing out. Scholars have argued that there is a fine line when it comes to exposure, but most agree that between two and nine exposures is enough (O'Guinn, Allen, & Semenik, 2003). Therefore, it would be wise to make sure the audience isn't exposed to the message too many times or the intended effect will not be successful.

Another characteristic of message content in advertisements is whether they draw explicit conclusions or implicit ones. Explicit conclusions are more direct and to the point and are often just a straightforward statement. Implicit conclusions usually give the target audience the ability to make their own assumptions about an advertisement. For example, an implicit conclusion might use attractive looking women using a perfume which could make the audience draw their own conclusions such as "this perfume can make me sexy". On the other hand, an explicit conclusion would directly say "this perfume can make you sexy." I believe that both forms could be useful in an advertisement for mindful consumption. For example, you could have an advertisement that uses an implicit conclusion for an organic protein supplement by showing an athlete using it and then running as fast as a cheetah. With an explicit conclusion the ad could have more factual verbal communication that plainly states the benefits of drinking the organic protein supplement.

Also when constructing a message you may want to present an alternative argument to

your own. This way your message isn't coming off as too one sided. As I will discuss later in the paper, presenting an alternative argument may be useful given that your audience is made up of mindful individuals. For example, mindful individuals often are looking at arguments from multiple perspectives and are open to different suggestions. By presenting the competitors argument with your own argument you could basically do the work for them since they would most likely look up information on the counter-argument anyway. Refutational arguments can also be effective in this regards because they give the audience a level of trust for the company since it is willing to bring up negative attributes about its brand. This allows for their potential concerns about the product to decrease. The company can also use refutational arguments to their advantage in another way by refuting the negative issue with evidence (Solomon, 2015). For example, an advertisement for nicotine chewing gum may show that some studies demonstrate that their gum isn't effective. However, a company like Nicorette could then pull up more credible studies that prove the opposite. In conclusion, I would definitely consider using refutational arguments in an advertisement if my mindful consumption product or stance was subject to uncertainty or concern.

Comparative advertising is also a method I would consider in regards to a message structured towards mindful consumption. This is because with comparative advertising you can show how your products quality attributes are better than the competition. Quiznos did a great job of these years ago when comparing their meatier sandwiches against Subway's sandwiches. In the context of mindful consumption you could make a car advertisement for a hybrid vehicle vs. a non-hybrid and compare attributes in terms of gas mileage, energy consumption, etc. This way the consumer is seeing the full environmental benefit of your car's features.

One of the last things to consider is whether a mindful consumption advertisement should

arouse emotions or use imagery. When it comes to emotional appeal, it really depends on what product you are advertising. For instance, if a company is running an advertisement on going vegan, they may use visuals of slaughter houses to create a sense of guilt and sadness within the consumer. Also if a company is running an advertisement for a hybrid car they could use pictures or videos of oil spills with animals covered in oil to arouse emotions of sadness. In conclusion, creating emotions can be useful in advertisements, but it would really depend on the specific product that is being advertised. Emotional appeal may not work if it is a product that has specific technological attributes that a consumer may want to know more about through a more informational process.

Imagery could also be a useful way in making your message or advertisement more appealing. For example, a lot of car companies use landscapes as the backdrop for their ads to give their product a certain personality and quality. For a hybrid car ad I would use the backdrop of a jungle or a forest to convey an environmentally friendly message.

A marketing technique that is often used from a sales perspective is the foot-in-the-door technique. This concept stresses that larger requests are more likely to be agreed upon by the consumer if they first comply with a smaller requests (Solomon, 2015). In my life I have known individuals that have been subjected to this sales technique. A prime example was with one of my relatives who became a Christian about ten years ago. When she first became a Christian she was really big on watching the Televangelists deliver their sermons on cable TV. One such minister sparked her interest and she began buying his books and becoming interested in his message. The minister also had a website with a donation page in which he asked for a small amount for all new members to keep the ministry alive. She figured donating was a good cause and sent a small amount of money the first time. However, after her first donation she received a

letter from the ministry that thanked her for the donation, but asked for an even larger sum to be donated next time. She was naïve and continued to donate despite each return letter asking for more money. Eventually she realized she was being manipulated and ended her contributions. It's unfortunate that religion is capable of this, but it just goes to show that this technique is used by a wide array of individuals.

When it comes to consumer's behavior towards an ad, they may use the central route or peripheral route to lead them to make a final assumption on a product. Both these routes are components of the elaboration likelihood model. This model is centered on how consumers are persuaded to a message or product through the different routes of persuasion. The ELM is derived from two psychologists by the name of Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo. Their argument was that when consumer's use the central route of persuasion they are using more cognition in their thought process. In other words, they are more motivated to evaluate a particular ad or product and their attitude change is based on a "diligent consideration of the information central to what people feel are the true merits of the advocacy"(Petty & Cacioppo, n.d). Therefore, the external cues of a particular ad are less important than the information or facts that are actually being presented. One of the major benefits of this route is that if consumers are persuaded by the factual arguments presented in the ad it will induce lasting persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, n.d). Therefore, the advertiser would not have to continually expose the consumer to the same ad which may result in advertising wearout. However, the negative side of the central route is that it is typically used by "people that are high in their need for cognition and are motivated to scrutinize persuasive messages" (Petty & Cacioppo, n.d.). Therefore, it is important that the persuasive message has an argument that is structured around facts and credible information.

Another route that Petty and Cacioppo suggested was the peripheral route. With this route the consumer is less motivated to evaluate an ad based on its arguments or facts, and is more influenced by cues in the ad such as visual or social cues. Hence, they can be easily persuaded by factors that have nothing to do with the argument being persuaded. For example, one peripheral cue that is usually used by consumers using this route is authority. If an advertisement for a nutritional product has Dr. Oz endorsing it, Dr. Oz would be the peripheral cue since he is a doctor and medical expert. Rather than actually thoughtfully evaluating the ad, the consumer using the peripheral route would be persuaded just by picking up the authority cue.

When it comes to which route you would structure your advertisement around, you would first need to understand who these mindful consumers are. The name itself hints to the thought processes of these types of consumers in that they have a certain level of awareness on the activities going on around them. Psychologist Ellen Langer found that a “mindful person seeks out and produces novelty, is attentive to context, and is flexible in thought and behavior” (Haigh, Moore, Kashdan, & Fresco, 2010). The most important of these traits is that they are flexible with their thought process and their behavior. This essentially means that they would need less persuading than those consumers who are not mindful. However, this doesn’t mean that they are not thoughtful of a message. On the contrary, mindful consumers are more likely to use the central route to persuasion. This is due to mindful consumers using multiple perspectives and comprehending the context of a given situation to engage in a cognitive task (Haigh, Moore, Kashdan, & Fresco, 2010). Therefore, peripheral cues such as visual or social elements are not enough to persuade a mindful consumer towards purchasing a product or changing their attitude toward an issue. They want to engage in a more cognitive thought process and spend time contemplating different arguments. That is why it would be important to make an advertisement

with more verbal messaging rather than non-verbal backed with facts and strong attributes. In

the earlier part of the article I already mentioned one way appeals could be used to persuade an audience towards mindful consumption. For example, I used the anti-tobacco ad to show how the fear of death could be used to entice consumers to quit smoking. This would be an example of an emotional appeal since fear is not a rational thought process, but more of a human emotion. Companies that advertise nicotine chewing gum or other smoking aids such as the patch could use this to their advantage. For example, they could have a visual of a cigarette butt with a death skull marking to symbolize death. To add more factual verbal content the company could use facts from the FDA in their article about the number of people that die from lung cancer.

The fear appeal would be the only appeal I would consider in a mindful consumption ad. This is due to the serious nature of most advertisements that call for mindful consumption or center a product on the concept. Although sex appeals are used frequently in advertisements to appeal to that main biological driving force, I feel it would cheapen the message with its raunchiness. Also mindful consumption is really centered on the idea of getting everyone on the bandwagon for a more sustainable earth and a healthier individual life. If your advertising to younger audiences you wouldn't want them to be classically conditioned to think mindful consumption is associated with sex.

Finally, I wouldn't use humor appeal much for the same reasons as sex appeal. Again mindful consumption is often a serious matter whether it's driving hybrid cars to protect the planet from climate change, or buying a water bottle brand due to its recycled material to prevent ground contamination from plastic waste. Also as I pointed out earlier, research has shown that mindful individuals often use the central route to persuasion. Therefore, filling your ads with too

many emotional appeals will not make it any more effective.

In conclusion, I have discussed the certain characteristics that can make a mindful consumption ad effective. This ranges from visual and verbal elements to the use of imagery to align a product with your message. I've also discussed the sales technique known as the foot-in-the-door technique that was used on my aunt. While this method can be used ethically, I demonstrated that it can also be abused if it's in the wrong hands. When it came to the ELM model I showed how research has suggested that the central route to persuasion is often used by mindful consumers and why this technique should be furthered used in an advertising message. Finally, I touched on the appeals that one may want to use in a mindful consumption ad and I argued that the fear appeal would be the most beneficial due to it fitting in the context of the serious attitude that is often brought up with mindful consumption.

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Research Question Chapter 9

Which situational factors have the most effect in case of GlobeIn products?

Which social groups can influence decision making and make it more mindful?

Which family members will be influential in a shift towards more mindful consumption?

Situational Factors or situational effects can play a significant role when it comes to the consumer decision making process. However, in order for these factors to exist there has to be a consumption situation which is composed of three main elements, “a buyer, a seller, and a product or service” (Solomon, 2015). The consumption situation is basically the idea that a consumer’s purchasing decisions are not spontaneous, but come about due to external factors that guide the when, where, why, and how characteristics of the purchase. Situational factors fall under the antecedent states that direct a consumer’s behavior and represent the different environmental elements that influence the consumer before their initial purchase. These states are usually temporary and can include factors such as a consumer’s usage situation, temporal pressures, moods and shopping orientation. (Solomon, 2015). Antecedent states can determine whether a consumer will purchase one product over the other, or avoid a purchase all together. For the purpose of this study, I will examine which aspects of the antecedent states and situational factors will have the greatest impact for GlobeIn and its consumers.

The first of the antecedent states I would like to discuss in the usage situation. Usage situation can play a significant role in a consumer’s purchasing decision process, but it can also help marketers broaden a products usage occasions. For example, MilkPEP’s chocolate milk

campaign reframed chocolate milks usage situation by informing consumers that chocolate milk wasn't only a beverage to indulge in as a dessert after dinner, but it could also be used as a post recovery drink after a workout ("MilkPEP,"2016). In this case, the company changed the perception amongst consumers about how chocolate milk could be used.

In relation to GlobeIn, usage situations can play a pivotal role with its consumers in relation to its products. For example, on its website its artisan baskets and benefit boxes can be used in a variety of situations. The website itself informs its consumers of the different uses for these products such as for "decor, storage, gifting, or holding a potted plant" ("The GlobeIn," n.d). So for instance, a mindful consumer may decide for their friend's birthday that they want to give them a unique gift in the form of an artisan basket. GlobeIn breaks it down even further and has specific themes for its artisan boxes. For example, let's say a consumer is planning to have a spring time picnic with their friends for a special occasion. GlobeIn offers the picnic box to fulfill that consumer's usage situation and the product description states "We hope our Picnic Box empowers you to eat mindfully and live joyfully on special occasions" ("The GlobeIn," n.d.). By offering a variety of products for different occasions, GlobeIn effectively allows its products to be used anytime during the year and even recommends when these products should be used.

A second factor that can benefit GlobeIn is elevating the consumer's mood. Many marketing scholars agree that a consumer's mood can be the difference on whether they purchase a product or not. Findings have suggested that positive moods correlate with the desire to help others and cooperate (Alpert, J. & Alpert, M., 1989). Therefore, if A GlobeIn customer enters the website with a positive mood, they may feel more inclined to purchase the products since GlobeIn's message is to help remote artisans from around the world. However, let's say a

potential customer comes in with a negative mood. If this is the case, GlobeIn would need to make sure it contains stimuli within its website that can potentially elevate the mood of its customers.

It is well documented that consumers with a negative mood will often look for external stimuli that return them to a level of homeostasis (Wright, 2006). In other words, consumers seek out products, services, and even experiences to return to a normal internal balance in regards to their mood. This is important, because a company needs to make sure it can offer those products, services, and experiences to the consumer in order for them to associate their uplifted mood with that brand. GlobeIn fortunately has effective stimuli that evoke feelings of pleasure and arousal. Both of these concepts are the building blocks of mood where pleasure is connected with a state of happiness and arousal correlates with the level of response stimuli can create within the consumer. However, a high response to stimuli is not always a good thing since arousal can also be correlated with fear which in turn may lead to avoidance of a brand or product. However, high moments of positive arousal and pleasure lead to elation or a feeling of extreme happiness (Solomon, 2015). I find this to be the ultimate goal of companies with concern to mood change. If a consumer has a positive arousal to a stimuli and this in turn elevates pleasure, than the greater attachment they will have with the stimuli.

GlobeIn's website contains stimuli that can possibly give the consumer elation when they enter the site. A term that can describe the website's use of aesthetically pleasing stimuli is atmospherics. This relates to a shopping space that utilizes dimensions of sensory stimuli such as color, scent and sound (Solomon, 2015). Although GlobeIn utilizes just the element of color, it does it in a strategic manner. As soon as I entered the site, my eyes met aesthetically pleasing colors from the basket displays on the banner. They utilized colors such as yellow which carries

the positive connotation of sunshine and blue which evokes tranquility (Rodin, 2015). Blue can also be helpful as a color in that it can have a natural calming effect. For example, after an intense day at the office, a potential customer for GlobeIn may react to the blue colors of the baskets and allow them to settle down from work. With the range of aesthetically appealing colors this could prompt the consumer to stay on the website longer and in turn purchase a product.

Finally, GlobeIn offers consumers the ability to shop in a timely manner which can aid in those consumers whose purchasing decisions are pressured by temporal factors. Some consumers may feel the effects of time poverty, or the personal feeling that time is not on their side and that they have to make the most of it in order to come to a decisive purchasing decision. GlobeIn has kept these consumers in mind with their subscription based product offering. If a consumer subscribes for a certain amount of months, they automatically receive products every month that can be customized for their personal needs. So rather than spending time every month looking for new products, the subscription takes care of that process.

The next section of the study will discuss how social groups can influence others in the community to take the path toward mindful consumption. It is evident that social groups can have much more influence than individuals alone. For one, there is strength in numbers and humans tend to jump on the bandwagon if there is a group promoting a social movement. On the other hand, social groups offer an identity for the individual and make them feel like part of a family. Notable examples of social groups include church organizations, biker clubs, sports teams, etc. However, in order to promote mindful consumption, I find that aspirational reference groups to be the most effective in promoting mindful consumption. Aspirational reference groups often contain celebrities and sports stars to which the public looks up to in matters of

opinion and trends. If these are the people we look up to and aspire to be, then we will more likely trust their decisions on products or services. For example, if Leonardo DiCaprio is seen endorsing a hybrid car, we might associate his quality as an actor with his logic on why we should purchase this product.

Another topic that I would like to discuss is the individuals within a family that have the potential to drive mindful consumption. As I've discussed before, mindful consumers are less concerned with consuming products that are status symbols. In other words, their sense of achievement is derived not just from the products they purchase, but what these products are doing for their own personal health, global community, and the environment. The real question is which family members are essential to building around this new trend? In reality and based off of my findings, any family member that is a Millennial or part of Generation X would be the best candidates for promoting mindful consumption within a family. According to a Pepsi survey, Millennials have "positive associations with the word change and that they link the word to others like new, progress, hope, and excitement" (Zmuda, 2008). Therefore, Millennials are the perfect candidates for mindful consumption in that the trend itself has become more like a movement to change the way the industrialized world functions in regards to the environment, food, and people. However, Millennials are not the only age group that fit the bill. According to Nielsen, 25 percent of Generation X bases their purchasing decisions on whether a company is producing a sustainable product ("Doing Well By Doing Good," 2014). It appears from the Nielsen statistics that the older generations are less concern about issues such as these. To put this in a better light, let's say there is a family in which both parents are from the Baby Boomer Generation and the children are from Generation Y. In this case, the children would be the primary influencers and could make their parents more mindful by either informing them about

mindful consumption or demonstrating it through their purchasing habits. A family would be more likely to mindfully consume if there is a greater ratio of Generation X and Y within the family ranks.

In conclusion, this study has shown that situational factors and antecedent states can be a determining factor in a consumer's behavior towards a product and their ultimate purchasing decision. However, companies can utilize these factors to appeal to a consumer's usage situation through its product offering. GlobeIn achieves this with its descriptive unique product offerings that can be used for given situations. GlobeIn also makes use of sensory stimuli to potentially give the customer a mood enhancing shopping experience with a subscription based offering that can limit the overall time a customer would need to shop for new products. Other than situational factors I also described how aspirational reference groups would be the most potent in influencing members of society towards mindful consumption. Since many people aspire and worship these celebrities, they may follow their lead when it comes to product endorsements for mindfully consumed goods. Finally, I explained how Millennials and members of Generation X could influence other family members towards a path of mindful consumption due to their purchasing behavior in contrast with older generations.

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Research Question 9

Effect of Gender on mindful consumption tendencies

Like PETA, can mindful-consumption based products use sex appeals in advertising?

**How can GlobeIn move beyond the image of being a brand/product for women?
Will this affect its perception among women?**

Effects of religiosity on mindful consumption

Age groups and mindful consumption: Just for Millennials?

As a marketer, it is pertinent to understand who is in your target market so you can shape the overall marketing campaign towards that audience. Generally, marketers segment their markets by demographics, psychographics, behavior, and geography. However, even after the segmentation process a deeper analysis is still needed in order to better understand the different variables within these markets that contribute to their overall behavior. In this study, we will look at how one's gender can influence their behavioral patterns toward mindful consumption.

As I've discussed in previous writings, mindful consumption has been in increasing trend amongst U.S. consumers. Purchasing a product is no longer seen as serving just individual needs, but global needs as well. This is what has given rise to the hybrid cars which are designed to emit less harmful fossil fuels into the environment. Other than environmental concerns, mindful consumers also have a deep seated responsibility to improve the wellbeing of others on a global level. The consumers for GlobeIn are a perfect example of this and they have a sense of social responsibility when it comes to purchasing products in order to engage poorer people in

the global economy. When one is looking at the consumer base for GlobeIn, it is predominantly female. In fact, GlobeIn itself sells itself as a company that provides a lifestyle for altruistic women (“The GlobeIn,” n.d.). Although this is just one example of a female consumer base for mindful consumption, the real question is whether gender plays any role in creating these tendencies between men and women.

Before there is any in-depth analysis, we must look at the overall concept of gender identity. Gender identity is essentially how an individual perceives themselves as a male or female regardless of their actual sex. This is different when it comes to sex roles which our society’s deep seated cultural beliefs on what one’s specific gender should be composed of in terms of things like behavior and dress. For example, society in the U.S. and Western Europe largely expect women to look feminine and attractive. This explains why women make sure to always wear makeup and beauty products for their skin. When marketers are specifically designing products such as Maybelline cosmetics for women, they are promoting sex-typed products for women. These are products that are specifically marketed to females and males in order to fulfill their gender identity and sex roles.

When it comes to mindful consumption, gender identity, sex roles, and the marketing of sex-typed products can play a huge role in consumers purchasing decisions. However, mindful consumption as a whole is practiced by both men and women and the gender variable is only a factor when it comes to which type of product that individual is purchasing. For example, a study found that women were 21 percent more likely to consume organic produce than men (Curl, Beresford, Hajat, Kaufman, Moore, Nettleton, & Diez-Roux, 2013). Now of course there were many different reasons for this such as women wanting to eat healthier when they are pregnant. However, if we look at the sex roles of women in western society, there is an

emphasis on femininity which includes expectations such as being pretty. This idea of being pretty also relates to what we eat. The explanation for women purchasing more organic produce could reflect their desire to fulfill their sex roles. In other words, organic food is perceptually seen as being symbolic of purity without any chemicals and women may associate this with their outer appearance. The same concept of organic purity can go for cosmetics as well which is a sex-typed product more in line with women. In the book *Formulating, Packaging, and Marketing of Natural Cosmetic Products*, the author states that “45 percent of all women buy natural/organic beauty products because of their fear of chemicals” (Dayan & Kromidas, 2011). Again, western society demands that women fulfill their beauty roles and this in turn makes women obsess about their appearance and attractiveness level. Both these examples show mindful consumption on a more individual health basis and made up of more women consumers.

When it comes to men, their sex roles typically are defined as masculine, competitive, aggressive, and strong. However, this doesn't mean that men are not more likely to be mindful consumers. For example, despite a common stereotype that men are obsessed with fast or big cars, men also make up a significant portion of those consumers who buy hybrid cars. For example, “Toyota's statistics shows that men buy more hybrid cars than women” (Wernau, 2014). However, this doesn't mean that all men view this favorably. The *Chicago Tribune* picked up comments from other men such as “This guy just said he loves his Prius because when he accelerates it doesn't make a noise. Someone please buy him a skirt”(Wernau, 2014)). This example clearly shows that some men may be influenced not to be mindful consumers if it goes against their sex roles.

In conclusion, gender does play a significant role in mindful consumption. Both men and women practice mindful consumption overall. However, their gender dictates what sex-typed

products they will buy whether its cosmetics for women, or more hybrid cars for men. When it comes to GlobeIn, their products are more specifically geared towards women. It has obvious sex typed products such as pantry staples and beauty products. This fulfills the female sex type role of domesticity and beauty. Furthermore, GlobeIn builds on women's cultural communal goals. In other words, society in the West expects women to build relationships and establish affiliations (Solomon, 2015). GlobeIn allows this to happen through its ability to connect women with individuals from remote regions of the globe. This concept of communal goals is further seen as a feminine characteristic in regards to a feminine gender identity in that it focuses on the welfare of others. A study done by scholars at Rice University gives a great example of this in respect to contributions given to disaster victims. For example, in general, women had more concern for the welfare of people around the globe. In regards to donations, women gave equal donations to both Hurricane Katrina victims and Tsunami victims where men gave more to Katrina victims rather than Tsunami victims (Winterich, Mittal, & Ross, 2009). So in this regards, it makes sense that women would be more actively involved with GlobeIn's concept and product in that women are more likely to care more about the welfare of people around the globe equally rather than by a national basis.

When it comes to sex appeal being used in mindful consumption advertisements one has to look at past examples of their use and whether they were successful. PETA has used numerous sex appeal advertisements and in 2016 one was banned from the Super Bowl because it was too inappropriate for viewers. The advertisement's message was that vegan men last longer in bed. The thing with using sex appeal in ads is that it can draw greater attention. For example, PETA's ad racked in 2.5 million views on YouTube (Heilpern, 2016). However, even though an ad may take in a lot of attention and views, this doesn't necessarily mean that the message will be taken

seriously. The main reason people want to see the ad in the first place is because they are curious why it was banned.

In my previous writings I spoke out against using sex appeal in mindful consumption advertising and I still conclude that sex appeal not only tarnish the message, but they also can have limited effectiveness in terms of recall or positivity towards a brand. Like I said earlier, initial attention to an ad is different from whether the message is truly received and evokes a positive response. Another reason why mindful consumption advertisements shouldn't use sex appeal is that different cultures view sex in a different light compared to the West. If a mindful consumption ad is trying to spread a message globally, there may be some backlash from more conservative cultures like ones in the Middle East.

With the data that was made available to the class, it was obvious that GlobeIn's products were aimed at women rather than men. For example, it had the crafty baskets and products that fit in with domestic activities. Whether or not GlobeIn should expand its target market depends on how successful it is at this current stage of its development. There could also be significant backlash from its female consumers if GlobeIn started introducing products for men. For example, women may see GlobeIn as a company that fulfills their gender identity in a special way by allowing them to connect with producers from around the world and obtain unique feminine products. Once it sees the company deviating from that niche, its consumer base may look for other companies that have that feminine appeal. However, the best way to avoid this is to first establish brand loyal consumers. This means that GlobeIn would have to focus on its female audience for a certain amount of years. Rapidly introducing a male product line without establishes this female brand loyalty could prove disastrous. Companies that were able to successfully extend its product line to men had already had a firm feminine brand perception

among women for many years. The best example of this is Dove Skincare.

Dove first launched its men's skincare line in 2010. It had to make some adjustments to its website and home page. For example, its home page includes gender neutral colors with a white background and features both men and women. However, the site is still predominantly designed for women, as it has more products shown for women and has a separate link at the bottom for men's products. There organization mission at the top of the page is still centered around women and has two links that say "Girls Self Esteem" and "Real Beauty" ("Dove," n.d.).

Therefore, in order to prevent changing women's perception of GlobeIn, I find that there needs to be a ratio that still makes women the focal point of the company.

The real trick is getting men to be interested in coming to the site without feeling like they are losing their masculinity. In order to make men more comfortable there needs to be a separate link on GlobeIn's page that gives men their own space. Furthermore, there needs to be creative messages that touch on men's masculine side. For example, on Dove's page for men, there is a video ad at the bottom of the page that tells men that Dove Skin Care will make "Dad Stronger #Real Strength" ("Dove," n.d.). This is clever because it shapes the message around men's sex and gender roles as being strong masculine fathers who can take care of their family. GlobeIn could make a product line of hand crafted wallets from Columbia and have a message that states "handcrafted by the working man." That way it lets men know that it wasn't crafted by feminine hands and also touches on the mindful side of it with the statement "working man."

I have covered a wide array of topics in regards to mindful consumption and how gender can make an impact on consumer decisions. However, religion can also play a role as well. For the data set for GlobeIn, we saw that many of the consumers were interested in Christian missionary work. It appeared that altruism and Christianity had a connection with each other

when it came to GlobeIn consumers. However, does religion operate at a broader extent when it comes to the mindful consumer? In the book *Saving Desire: The Seduction of Christian Theology*, the authors suggest that Christianity does play a role in mindful consumption. They argue that overconsumption and careless consumption are a result of anxieties in our lives and when “the wounds of anxiety or guilt are integrated into our desire for God, we can inhabit our consumer world with a greater degree of freedom” (Shults & Henriksen, 2011). In other words, religion can have a psychological effect on people in regards to helping them cope with their anxieties. This is true especially with compulsive eaters who mainly overeat to fill some void in their life.

Other than the psychological effect of believing in God, the doctrines of some religions have mindful consumption beliefs within them. In Christianity, there are many doctrines that point towards not being overly materialistic and over consuming earthly goods. For example, in the New Testament, it states “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy” (“Good News Bible,” 1976). In other words, don’t be so focused on the materialistic objects of this earth. While not all Christians practice this belief, it still provides an ideology that can promote mindful consumption for those consumers that do practice the message.

While gender and religion can also play a role in mindful consumption, age is another factor that can be used to determine which age groups are more mindful. One way to group people by ages is using the age cohort. This puts consumers into age groups by their generations and the similar experiences they shared regarding political events, cultural symbols, and other norms of a certain time. For example, one age cohort is Generation Z and a hallmark of this cohort is that its members have never known a world without an internet. The real question is

whether mindful consumption is only a practice that Millennials take part in. Millennials tend to fit in the category of mindful consumers since some of their characteristics fall in line with progress and change. Also like I mentioned in research question nine, A Pepsi survey found Millennials have “positive associations with the word change and that they link the word to others like new, progress, hope, and excitement” (Zmuda, 2008). Generation X also has similar beliefs in relation to sustainability, but their survey results were lower than Millennials. Nielsen reported that, 25 percent of Generation X bases their purchasing decisions on whether a company is producing a sustainable product (“Doing Well By Doing Good,” 2014). It appears from the Nielsen statistics that the older generations are less concern about issues such as these. One reason could be the inherent values and characteristics of generations like Baby Boomers. For example, they can be described as optimistic, but they have a strong motivation for personal growth and have the spend now, worry later attitude. On the other hand Generation X and Millennials both think of things in global terms. This is why both these groups make up roughly 75 percent of all respondent from the Nielsen study that believed in purchasing products from companies that practiced sustainability (“Doing Well By Doing Good,” 2014). Therefore, these age cohorts will be the driving forces for mindful consumption.

In conclusion, this study covered a wide array of topics in regards to mindful consumption. Gender, age, and religion can all have effects on mindful consumption. With gender it just depends on the product’s ability to resonate with one’s gender identity when it comes to mindful consumption. Religion can also be a factor in terms of doctrine and psychological impacts on an individual’s world view towards mindful consumption. Finally, age is shown to be vital in segmenting who the mindful consumers are and it appears that Generation X and Y make up the vast amount of mindful consumers.

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Research Question 10

How has change in lifestyles (single households, etc.) affected consumption practices?

Which family member(s) do you believe have influential roles in creating a push towards mindful consumption?

How would you use the principle of cognitive consistency to promote mindful consumption?

When it comes to consumer behavior, lifestyle is an integral part of how consumers go about spending their money and what products they decide to purchase. A lifestyle in regards to consumer behavior can be defined as the consumption patterns of a consumer based on the subculture they are a part of in society. The subcultures are part from the mainstream culture and include a homogenous group of individuals that share similar values, norms and behavioral patterns. This can also be seen as the lifestyle marketing perspective, in which marketers understand that individuals within the culture will form groups based on common interests and how they spend their disposable income (Solomon, 2015). Lifestyles are different for each subculture within the U.S. For example, members of the hip-hop subculture will take on consumption patterns that are very similar with one another. There are men's clothing lines that directly reflect this subculture such as Polo and Tommy Hilfiger (Cutler, 2013). These are products that are unique to this particular subculture and may not apply to other ones. For example, consumers within the Harley-Davidson subculture will obviously have different consumption patterns which might include buying biking accessories and black leather jackets. What all subcultures have in common is that their consumption patterns form the basis for their

identity.

New subcultures and lifestyle changes can also emerge overtime within a country due to economic conditions and gradual social changes. A clear example of this is the rise of single-person households in the U.S. The nuclear family in the U.S. has been on the decline for a number of decades. The Pew Research Center in 2010 reported that only 20 percent of adults between 18-29 were married compared to 59 percent in 1960(Cohn, Passel, Wang, & Livingston, 2011). So what does this exactly mean in terms of consumption patterns for this particular growing lifestyle segment? In Dr. Eric Klinenberg's book *Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living*, he brings up a term called the "Solo Economy." Klinenberg explains that this term describes the overall transformation of the U.S. economy and market becoming geared toward single households at an increasing rate. In fact, in 2012 single households spent \$1.9 trillion on products that fit with their lifestyle ("Solo Nation," 2012). Klinenberg calls this growing consumer lifestyle group the Singletons and describes them as being people that are hesitant to settle down. In other words, they hold off marriage and having children for a later time in their lives. Without these variables in their lives, Singletons have more discretionary income, or money that is left over after basic necessities are taken care of. Compared to married couples, Singletons spent about six thousand more dollars in terms of discretionary income ("Solo Nation," 2012). With much more purchasing power, Singletons don't have to be tightwads and can spend more on their personal needs.

Consumption patterns amongst Singletons reflect this added purchasing power. For example, Singletons frequently eat out more than married couples and as a result, restaurants are adapting and making "smaller sampling menus and fitted single friendly bars ("A Singles Economy," 2015). Such adaptation is being seen on a worldwide basis and the phenomenon is

not unique to the U.S. For example, in the U.K., Singletons tend to consume more ready to eat meals which has led to £16.9 billion in terms of sales (“A Singles Economy,” 2015). In conclusion, this consumer segment doesn’t seem to be slowing down and it would be wise for marketers to adapt to the changing times.

As I have discussed in other studies, the principle of cognitive consistency is the concept that we are most comfortable with our identity when our attitudes are consistent with our behaviors. However, sometimes we lose this consistency if our attitudes fail to be consistent with our behaviors. This is when cognitive dissonance happens or when attitudes are not consistent with behaviors (Solomon, 2015). A great example of this is if a person has liver disease and knows that drinking alcohol is bad for them, but they continue to drink anyway. In regards to using cognitive consistency towards mindful consumption and avoiding dissonance I would use the balance theory to change attitudes. This theory suggests that people strive to achieve balance with a triad structure in the form of a pyramid with attitude objects or people. If the triad is unbalanced, people will possibly change their perceptions about a product based on their positive relation with another person or attitude object. The balance theory can be useful when trying to promote a change in an individual’s attitude towards a product. To promote mindful consumption, I would use a well-respected celebrity to endorse a mindful consumption product in order to change the attitude of a consumer that is not on that path. For example, I could use Oprah to endorse a sustainable fashion brand so individuals can change their attitudes towards the object. So let’s say Mary loves Oprah, but has a negative attitude towards sustainable brands because she thinks they are too expensive. However, she sees a commercial of Oprah talking about the benefits of sustainable fashion towards the environment. According to balance theory, if Mary has a strong positive attitude towards Oprah she would need to correct

her perception of the negative attitude object in order to create balance.

In conclusion, I have discussed multiple facets of subculture and how lifestyles can play a role in their respective consumption patterns. I also went into depth about the changing lifestyles in America and around the world in regards to the new consumer segment called Singletons.

Companies will have to adapt to this growing segment by creating products that fall in line with this lifestyle. Finally, I explained how the principle of cognitive consistency and balance theory can promote mindful consumption through the use of celebrity endorsements.

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Research Question 11

Identify an opinion leader who is influential among consumers (any product group). Investigate why he/she has influence.

Which cycle of fashion adoption do you think mindful consumption follows or will follow. Will it be a fad? Explain.

When it comes to reaching the consumer, opinion leaders can have a positive impact on a company's aim to have its brand have more credibility and popularity. Opinion leaders can range from church leaders to celebrities and may be very knowledgeable about a specific topic which in turn makes the community turn to them for advice. On the other hand, some opinion leaders are influencers, but not formal experts which are the case for many celebrities advocating the use of a product. In this example, consumers value their opinion not solely based on their expertise about a product, but the status they have within society.

A commercial I saw recently touches on the more formal expertise type of opinion leader in regards to dental health. For example, Sensodyne Toothpaste is famous for having Dentists in their TV advertisements advocating the use for the product and how Sensodyne is the toothpaste dentists recommend to their patients for sensitive teeth.

The example of an opinion leader I will use for this case is CNET. CNET is an organization that provides consumers with reviews, news, and prices for tech related products. CNET is a reputable and unbiased company that reviews a product's quality based on rigorous testing and through the careful evaluation done by its editors. ("Product Reviews," 2016). One of the hallmarks of their success is by engaging fellow tech lovers and forming a community to engage them by sponsoring events like the Consumer Electric Show and using multiple mediums of communication such as blogs and podcasts.

CNET can be seen not only as an opinion leader, but an opinion seeker. That is, they gather information about a product category while also sharing it and gathering other opinions as well. CNET effectively achieves this role by using its podcast and blogs as vehicles to get in touch with its target audience about tech products and their reviews. With all these activities this has led CNET to be the highest read source for tech news on the World Wide Web (“CNET Magazine,” 2016). As a result of their unbiased view towards tech products, their interaction with the community through podcasts, and their large audience base, CNET has solidified its position as an opinion leader in the field of tech products.

When it comes to the adoption of a new product or fashion trend, there is typically a gradual life cycle process in which consumers at different times along the bell curve adopt the product. Another way of looking at this is through the concept of diffusion of innovation. Basically, the point is that when an innovation or new product hits the market, it is adopted among the consumer population at different stages. This concept can be applied to products related to mindful conception as well. For this study I will use the example of the hybrid car’s early adoption in the United States to illustrate more clearly who innovators and early adopters are in relation to mindful consumption. Furthermore, I will explain how mindful consumption is following a moderate cycle of adoption.

When the hybrid car was first released in the market, there was an overwhelming concern about whether this vehicle could run as efficiently as gasoline driven vehicles. However, like many new innovations, there were some risk takers who were willing to try it out. Researchers at ETH Zurich conducted a study to compare the adoption of hybrid vehicles to that of gasoline powered vehicles. Their findings show that in the early stages the two main consumer segments that adopted the vehicle from the start were the innovators and early adopters. Both innovators

and early adopters can be seen as the kick starters of the adoption process and are willing to take the risk of adoption. The ETH study found that its innovators and early adopters fit the major characteristics that are commonly held with these groups such as higher income and educational level (Haan, n.d.). Their consumer decision process is also different than most car buyers. For example, when they are evaluating alternatives, price isn't so much of a factor compared with how environmentally friendly the vehicle is.

Despite the innovators and early adopters purchasing hybrid cars, the cycle has yet to capture the early majority. In the U.S. hybrid vehicle sales only make up 2.87 percent of the market (Muller, 2013). Therefore, hybrid cars are still in the innovators and early adoption stage of the cycle as a reflection of the sales figures. For hybrids to truly diffuse into the market they need to have incentives and benefits that the overall consumer base see as fitting. One of the ways hybrids can diffuse more easily is if more consumers understand the relative advantage of the vehicles compared to vehicles fueled by gasoline. So for instance, marketers can sell the aspect that hybrid cars may cost on average around 20 percent more than traditional vehicles, but they decrease the expenditure on fuel ("What You Should Know," 2016). For example, one study found that "five years of ownership at 15,000 miles in a hybrid car will result in an average fuel cost savings of \$3,371" (Duffer, 2014). Relative advantage is one attribute that could aid in the adoption cycle for mindful consumption products, but marketers must be able to make this clear to the consumers through informative advertising.

In the case of fashion adoption and mindful consumption, a moderate cycle is the most plausible form for adoption. Unlike a fad which is more short term and tends to have a higher turnover rate, like the iconic 70's bellbottoms. A moderate cycle of adoption suggests that a particular fashion steadily grows over months or even several years. This moderate cycle of

adoption is evident with the new movement for sustainable fashion or consumer's growing preference for fashion products that are made with sustainable materials in an eco-friendly manner. Fashion shows give an example of this moderate cycle taking shape over the course of years. For example, in 2005 designers for London Fashion Week only composed of 5 percent of the sustainable fashion brands compared to 2013's 30 percent (Annamma, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang, & Chan). Therefore, more companies are shaping their brands towards a more sustainable form of design and material use in response to a growing segment of mindful consumers. It is difficult to predict whether mindful consumption in regards to fashion will take on a more classic cycle since the movement is still growing.

In conclusion, this study identified how opinion leaders have a strong influence on the communities' perceptions towards product categories. Opinion leaders don't always have to be individuals, but can also take the form of organizations such as CNET. When it comes to the diffusion of innovations, normally the process begins with innovators and early adopters who are more likely to have higher education as well as wealth. Whether the innovation becomes more widespread depends on a number of factors such as its relative advantage compared to alternatives. Finally, fashion also has different cycles of adoption and longevity. I explained how mindful consumption will most likely take the form of a moderate cycle due to its steady increase over the years and its lingering qualities within Western culture.

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