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**Chapter 12: Applying Universal Dimensions of Social Perception to Consumer Context: An extension of the SCM/BIAF models with the Relevance Principle**

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In 2010, the year of their 100th anniversary, BP experienced serious troubles: The explosion at their Deepwater Horizon platform resulted in some estimated 200 million gallons of oil spilling over the Gulf of Mexico. The initial attitude of finger pointing and downplaying the problem seriously dented the brand image of this leading oil company. The brand was seen as neither caring (to its consumers and the environment) nor competent (in managing their technology and the disaster itself, Kervyn, Chan, Malone, Korpusik & Ybarra, 2014). Following the disaster, sales and brand loyalty dropped to 40% below that of Shell (Malone & Fiske, 2013). The BP example illustrates the importance of two dimensions of social perception within a consumer context: warmth and competence. This chapter will first introduce these dimensions alongside related social psychological theories: e.g. Stereotype Content Model (SCM, Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) and its extension (- Behaviours form Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes - the BIAS Map, Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2007). In doing so, it will also discuss the issue of primacy of warmth over competence in human perception alongside a competing model, the Double Interest Account (DIA, Wojciszke & Abelel, 2008). Having set the scene, the chapter will then move on to overview and evaluate the attempts made to apply the SCM model to brand perception: the BIAF model (Brands as Intentional Agents Framework, Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012). Furthermore, the chapter will identify the contradictions that have already emerged from the very recent empirical literature. This will provide background to the main argument of the chapter: that such contradictions do not necessary undermine the SCM/BIAF model – instead they point to the need for extending the model by incorporating a *relevance principle* (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). Within this chapter the following two key questions will be discussed: To what extent do the universal dimensions of social perception apply to perception of brands? and Does the importance of warmth and competence differ depending on variables present in consumer context but absent in social perception of humans? The chapter will end by discussing directions for future research and practical implications.

**The Universal Dimensions of Social Perception**

A vast body of research in social psychology has identified warmth (W) and competence (C) as universal dimensions of social judgement which determine perception of groups, individuals and the self (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt & Kashima, 2005; Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). While they are referred to by different names (e.g. agency vs communion, other- vs self-profitability, socially vs intellectually good or bad, morality vs competence) they share similarities: The W dimension pertains to social relations and the C dimension to task orientation and goal achievement (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). Together they are said to explain 82% of social perception (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2008; Wojciszke, Bazinska & Jaworski, 1998) and are therefore often referred to as the Big Two (Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011). Adjectives which describe W are warm, kind, helpful and honest while C is described by characteristics such as efficient, competent, and active. Negative manifestations of warmth (i.e. lack of warmth) are captured by adjectives such as deceitful, unkind and abusive while lack of competence is described by traits such as uneducated, sloppy and lazy (Kenworthy & Taush, 2008). The roots of these two dimensions are argued to be socio-structural and evolutionary (Fiske et al., 2002): The basic ‘friend vs. foe’ distinction helps us navigate the social world with warmth informing us of the other’s intentions and competence informing us of their ability to enact these intentions.

Arguably one of the most condensed forms of social perception is encapsulated in stereotypes. Fiske et al. (2002) have developed a mixed Stereotype Content Model (SCM) which proposes that the content of most stereotypes is ambivalent – that is, it is literally a mix of warmth and competence. According to the model the social structure of the in- and out-groups and the nature of their interdependence jointly define not only the content of stereotypes but also the emotional and behavioural responses to the stereotyped groups. For example, status defines competence and the nature of interdependence between the groups defines warmth (e.g. an out-group which is deemed cooperative is perceived as warm while a competitive one as cold). Warmth refers to orientation toward (or against) others while competence refers to (in)ability to achieve status. It is often the case that social groups are stereotyped as high on warmth but low on competence and vice versa. These two core dimensions of stereotypes are orthogonal and allow for classification of stereotypes into four types depending on their content: paternalistic (low on competence and high on warmth), envious (high on competence and low on warmth), contemptuous (low-low) and admiration (high-high). SCM gained empirical support, both when tested on different global stereotypes (Fiske et al., 2002), as well as on subgroups of global stereotypes such as Asians (Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999), Blacks (Fiske et al., 2002), gay (Clausell & Fiske, 2005), elderly (Cuddy, Norton, & Fiske, 2005), nationalities (Lee & Fiske, 2006) and women and men (Eckes, 2002). For example, housewives are seen as high on W and low on C (people like them but do not respect them) while business people (be it women or men) are seen as competent but cold (people respect them bud do not necessary like them; Eckes, 2002). In fact, the two dimensions have been argued to be universal – data from surveys spanning 36 countries across five continents confirmed that perception of social groups is organised along the two key dimensions of warmth and competence (Cuddy et al., 2007; Cuddy, et al. 2008).

Importantly, the stereotype content has consequences. Specifically, it influences the affective and behavioural response to the stereotyped social groups (Cuddy, et al., 2008). According to SCM extension - the BIAS Map (Cuddy, et al. 2007) - specific stereotype content elicits specific emotions. For example, paternalistic stereotypes elicit feelings of pity (e.g. the said housewives), groups which are high on C and low on W are envied (e.g. the rich), those perceived as neither warm nor competent are treated with contempt (e.g. the homeless) and admiration is the emotional response reserved for groups perceived as high on both W and C (e.g. celebrities, in-groups). Moreover, the BIAS Map further proposes that these emotions lead to specific behaviours towards the targets of the stereotypes (Cuddy, et al., 2007). For example, pity, being an ambivalent emotion, triggers either helping behaviour (i.e. active facilitation) or avoidance and neglect (i.e. passive harm). Similar behavioural ambivalence is elicited by envious stereotypes. Since envy combines both respect and resentment the behavioural outcome of this emotion can be twofold: cooperation for convenience (i.e. passive facilitation) or scapegoating (i.e. active harm) – the latter being particularly likely in times of social instability. Contempt or disgust, being univalenced emotions, activate harming behaviours – both active and passive ones (e.g. forcefully expelling individuals or exclusion). On the other hand, admiration, which is a uniformly positive emotion, motivates both active and passive positive behaviours (e.g. positive contact and cooperation).

This transference of stereotype content into emotions and then behaviours makes the SCM and BIAS models promising for the context of consumer behaviour. From that perspective it would be useful to know which of the two, competence or warmth, presides over the cognitive, affective and behavioural reactions to the stereotyped groups. SCM proposes that a ‘friend or foe’ decision is more important, from an evolutionary point of view (e.g. survival), than determining how capable others are as friends or foes (Fiske, et al. 2007). Indeed primacy of W over C has been shown in various socio-psychological studies involving: (a) identification on lexical decision tasks; (b) forming global impressions of groups or individuals; and (c) meaning stability across cultures (see Judd et al., 2005; Wojciszke & Abele, 2008 for overviews). However, according to Wojciszke’s (2005) Double Interest Account (DIA) the primary role of either of these two dimension (i.e. the primacy effect) depends on social distance (e.g. whether we evaluate a close friend or a distant other). Specifically, in various social situations individuals take the roles of either actors or observers. Observers assume the perspective of the receiver of an action and thus are interested in the actor’s W (aka communion or other-profitability), more than in their C (aka agency or self-profitability). However, those acting have a greater interest in C (self-profitability). Moreover, others are differentially related to the self. For example, in situations of interdependence people will evaluate the others similarly to themselves (greater emphasis on C than W). So the typical primacy effect of W over C proposed by SCM reverses in evaluations of close friends where C matters more than W (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). Indeed, the primacy of W over C has been shown to be moderated by social distance between the self and others: Wojciszke and Abele (2008) found that changes in a target’s evaluation were dependent on the observer’s perspective - there was a ‘W over C’ advantage in forming perceptions of socially distant others (i.e. interest in their other-profitability), but information about C (i.e. interest in self-profitability) was more important in forming evaluations of close friends or the self.

As discussed thus far, and despite the debate surrounding the primacy of warmth, the notion of W and C have been firmly established in social psychological literature and the dimensions have gained the status of universal in the realm of social perception (Cuddy, et al., 2007). The question here is however: To what extent could they inform perception in consumer context? Initial attempts to apply the SCM framework to brand perception have already been made and, as will be noted next, they do show promise. However, not all the theoretical nuances already outlined here found their recognition in the proposed adaptation of the SCM model to consumer context – the focus of the following sections.

**Warmth and Competence in Consumer Setting – the BIAF model**

The idea that humans and brands may be perceived similarly is not new (Aaker et al., 1999; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Fournier, 1998). However, consumer psychologists have only recently started to test if, and how, the dimensions of warmth and competence apply to consumer context (Kervyn et al., 2012; Zawisza, Cinnirella, & Zawadzka, 2006; Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; Zawisza & Pittard, 2015; Infanger & Sczesny, 2015; Zawadzka, 2015). Kervyn et al. (2012) have extended SCM formally to the perception of brands and have proposed the BIAF model. They take the view that ‘people were the first brands and that branded trade and commerce have simply adapted human interaction processes to simplify and aid human choices’ (Kervyn, et al., 2012, p. 207). In other words social perception principles should apply to the perception of brands. Specifically, Kervyn and colleagues argue that actions of corporations behind the brands are not perceived as outcomes of the underlying human activity (e.g. coordinated behaviours and decisions of teams of individuals such as the management). Instead the brands themselves are perceived as so called ‘intentional agents’ (Kervyn, et al., 2014). Thus, perceivers (in this case consumers) apply similar questions to such intentional agents (i.e. brands or corporations) as to individuals or groups they encounter in their social world. Importantly, this includes the questions of warmth and competence. Brands become social objects, and thus are considered by consumers in terms of their intentions and abilities in enacting these intentions. The intentions determine perceived brand W and the abilities determine perceived brand C. These dimensions of intentions and ability are arguably synonymous with the original W and C dimensions in SCM (Bennett & Hill, 2012) or may be inferred from brands’ W and C (MacInnis, 2012).

Both experimental and correlational data have supported the model (Kervyn et al., 2012). For example, perception of fictitious brand’s C and W differed as a function of their manipulated intentions and ability in line with SCM. Moreover, different types of real brands clustered in accordance with the intentions and ability dimensions as predicted: Popular brands such as Campbell and Hershey, were seen as able and well-intentioned (high on W and C), subsidized brands (e.g. Amtrack or NGOs) were seen as well-intentioned but less able (high on W but low C), luxury brands (e.g. Porche and Rolex) were perceived as able but less well-intentioned (high C but low W) and, lastly, troubled brands such as BP, were seen as low on both intentions and ability (low on both C and W). Thus, these four types of brand stereotypes resemble the envious, paternalistic, contemptuous and admiration stereotypes of social groups form SCM. Further, W and C predicted purchase intent and brand loyalty independently of each other (Kervyn et al., 2012). More recently, Ivens, Leischnig, Miuller and Valta (2015) have provided further support for the proposition that brands are stereotyped in a similar fashion to people. They found that the brand stereotypes (troubled, subsidized, popular and luxury types) have consequences for emotional and behavioural reactions to these brands, which are in line with the BIAS framework applied to social perception (Cuddy, et al., 2007). For example, both W and C predict specific feelings about brands (e.g. admiration) and both W and C mediate the relationship between brand personality (the basis for the brand stereotypes) and consumer emotions to the brands (e.g. admiration, envy, pity or contempt). Moreover, univalent emotions (contempt and admiration) had stronger effect on brand responses such as attitude to brand and behavioural intentions than ambivalent emotions (e.g. envy or pity).

However, emerging research generally provides more consistent support for the applicability of SCM in consumer context at the level of brand perception but less so at the level of determining purchase intent (PI). For example, Zawisza et al. (2006) showed that non-traditional male portrayals and traditional female portrayals, both of which represent the warm paternalistic stereotypes, resulted in a greater effectiveness of mock print ads for vitamin products. Zawisza and Cinnirella (2010) replicated this finding for advertisements for mineral water and showed, in two experiments, that paternalistic female (housewife) and male (househusband) portrayals were more effective than envious ones (businesswoman and businessman respectively) irrespective of whether they broke or followed the traditional gender roles. The authors attributed their findings mainly to the warmth (liking) component of the paternalistic stereotypes and the primacy of warmth over competence (Fiske, et al., 2007). They also noted that ad liking has been identified as one of the strongest predictors of ad effectiveness (Du Plessis, 2005) and thus it may have been the liking of the models used in the ads which translated into the observed advertising effectiveness. This has in fact recently been confirmed directly by Infanger and Sczesny (2015) on similar adverts. That is, irrespectively of whether the product advertised (baby food and financial service) matched the W or C dimensions of the endorser, the endorser’s warmth predicted the ad effectiveness (attitude to ad and brand) better than their competence. Moreover, this effect was indeed mediated by endorser’s likeability.

Interestingly, this primacy of W over C in explaining advertising effectiveness seems to also apply cross-culturally. Using a different product and brand (orange juice) Zawisza, Luyt and Zawadzka (in preparation a & b) found that in countries as diverse as the UK, Poland and SA the paternalistic housewife portrayals triggered significantly more positive thoughts and feelings about the adverts than the envious businesswoman. These responses also correlated positively and significantly with purchase intent for the advertised orange juice (Zawisza et al., in preparation a). In the same countries, adverts which used the paternalistic portrayal of househusbands were also more effective than those which used the envious stereotypes of businessman (Zawisza, et al., in preparation b). Individual gender attitudes had little influence over these preferences and mattered only in the most gender conservative country of the three: SA. That is, the greater the gender-conservativeness of the South-African participants the more they preferred the traditional stereotype of businessman (Zawisza, et al., in preparation b) and housewife (Zawisza, et al., in preparation a) compared to the non-traditional alternatives of a househusband and businesswoman respectively. Furthermore, Xu et al. (2013) showed that brands varying in country of origin which were named as warm versus cold and competent versus incompetent largely scored as expected on the W and C dimension. Of relevance, purchase intent, in this case for fruit juice and disposable batteries, was, again, determined more by W than C – a finding similar to that reported by Zawisza and colleagues (2010, in preparation a and b) on different low-involving products (mineral water and orange juice) and in different countries.

SCM has also been successfully applied to perception of firms. For example, Yang and Aggarwal (2014) provide indirect evidence that small firms are perceived as warmer but less competent than bigger firms. Aaker et al. (2010), on the other hand, showed that non-profit companies were perceived as warmer but less competent than for-profit ones. However, contrary to the studies cited above, they also reported that it was the non-profit firms’ perceived lack of *competence* which contributed to diminished purchase intent (for products such as laptop bag and physical activity tracker). Boosting non-profit firms’ perceived competence (by manipulating the source’s credibility or priming competence with visuals of money), neutralised differences in purchase intent between the for- and non-profit brands. The authors thus concluded that utilising admiration stereotype (high W and C) may be the most successful marketing strategy – the so called ‘golden quadrant’. However, the ‘admiration’ (or competence boost) strategy applied to non-profit firms in this study still did not result in purchase intent higher than that of for-profit firms. Indeed, the authors stated that C is more important than W in determining purchase intent and briefly speculated that W may be more important for services that require trust (e.g. hospitals). In their further work Aaker et al. (2012) have attempted to provide additional support for the ‘golden quadrant’ hypothesis: They reported that purchase intent was boosted by brand’s C and the CxW interaction across various brands and product categories (fast food, fuel, orange juice and pain killers). Thus, as in their previous study, the ‘golden quadrant’ actually appeared to be skewed towards the C dimension even though competence’s influence on purchase intent was partially mediated by admiration.

However, their findings were averaged across different products and thus no insight is provided into whether the ‘golden quadrant’ applies equally to all products. One study which kept the (hedonic) product constant (bear) was that of Zawadzka (2015). She also found that the competent positioning of that product was somewhat preferred over the warm one. It is not clear however, if this difference was down to the mere W and C content of these ads or other elements of the graphical content manipulated there. Bratanova, Kervyn and Klein (2015) on the other hand found an independent influence of W and C on perceived taste of water and a new chocolate brand as well as on purchase intent, brand loyalty and brand engagement of the latter product.

**Developing the BIAF/SCM Model for Use in Consumer Context**

The emerging research shows promise for advertisers, but it is not free of contradictions. As seen above, SCM/BIAF seems to hold for the perception of gendered ads, non-profit versus for-profit firms, various types of brands (luxury, troubled, subsidised, popular) and products from different countries of origin. However, there is less agreement when it comes to the importance of W and C in determining purchase intent for these brands. For example, some studies suggest greater importance of warmth over competence (Xu, Leung, & Yan, 2013; Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010, Zawisza et al., 2006, Zawisza et al., in prep a & b; Infanger & Sczesny, 2015) or the reverse (Aaker, Vohs, & Mogilner, 2010; Zawadzka, 2015). Others advocate independent (Bennett & Hill, 2012; Kervyn, et al., 2012; Kervyn, et al. 2015) or combined (Aaker, Garbinsky, & Vohs, 2012) importance of both high warmth and competence - the already mentioned ‘golden quadrant’ (though in Aaker et al. 2012 the ‘golden quadrant’ is somewhat skewed towards greater importance of competence).

Arguably, such contradictions do not undermine the applicability of these two dimensions to consumer context. Rather, they indicate that the importance of W and C for purchase intent may differently depend on other variables present, for example, in advertising but absent in social perception. In other words, they point at the need to extend the SCM/BIAF model for use in consumer context (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). In order to take a closer look at these consumer-specific variables, the chapter now turns to an overview of the major factors which have been identified as needed additions to the model and then proposes a more integrated model which includes the *relevance principle*. Specifically, it is proposed here that variables such as product type (Aaker, et al., 2012; Fiske, Malone, & Kervyn, 2012), targets’ individual differences (Bennett & Hill, 2012; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012) and advertising appeal type (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015) may influence the relative importance of warmth and competence in determining advertising effectiveness. These three types of variables are key factors relevant to advertising context and thus are the focus of the following discussion.

***Product Type and SCM/BIAF***

Most of the studies overviewed neglect the importance of product type. Even those which do look at various types of products (Aaker, et al., 2012; Bennett & Hill, 2012; Kervyn, et al., 2012) provide only cumulative data without analysing the effects of product or brand category on purchase intent. While, Aaker et al. (2010) do speculate that W may be more important than C for products requiring trust relationships, they did not test this possibility. To date the only investigations which looked into product type explicitly within the SCM/BIAF framework are those by Xu et al. (2013) and Infanger and Sczesny (2015). Infanger and Sczesny (2015) looked at the match between the endorser’s warmth vs competence and warm vs comment products (baby food vs financial services respectively). While these authors did not measure purchase intent they found the advantage of the endorser’s W (over C) in determining ad effectiveness although the C dimension did matter for the effectiveness of the competent product. Moreover, they also speculated that the C dimension may be particularly important in determining the effectiveness of high-status products as C is determined by perceived status in social perception (Cuddy et al., 2008). Xu et al. (2013) on the other hand looked at hedonistic (fruit juice) and utilitarian (disposable batteries) products and reported that purchase intent for both products was predicted by both W and C, though the predictive power of W was the stronger of the two. Moreover, C (but not W) ceased to be a significant predictor of purchase intent after product failure in both cases. The authors called for more research to establish if the same would apply to high-involving products.

Keller (2012) speculates that brand credibility (W and C) may be especially important in low involving situations, when people rely on heuristics in their decisions, as well as in high-involving situations. This may be particularly relevant to product type. While various product classifications exist (credence vs. search, hedonistic vs. utilitarian, gendered vs. gender neutral), product involvement is recognised as one of the most important factors determining advertising effectiveness (McGrath & Mahood, 2004; Te’eni-Harari, Lehman-Wilzig, & Lampert, 2009). Following Petty and Cacioppo’s (1983) rationale high-involving products (e.g. cars), as opposed to low-involving ones (e.g. juice or tooth paste), are those which require careful pre-purchase consideration as they carry significant financial or other consequences. Arguably, as high-involving products require competence in evaluating the product’s properties to diminish possible risk, it is possible that an appeal which stresses C (over W) would be more effective for such products than one which stresses W (over C). For low-involving products on the other hand, a simple affective positivity heuristic may be in operation where the likeable warm strategy may be more effective than the competent one. Indeed, studies which used low-involving products (e.g. vitamin products, Zawisza et al., 2006; mineral water, Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; fruit juice or disposable batteries, Xu et al., 2013; orange juice, Zawisza, et al., in prep a & b; unisex perfume, baby food Infanger & Sczesny, 2015) tend to report greater importance of W over C in determining purchase intent. On the other hand, studies which use somewhat higher involving products such as eco-friendly laptop bags or activity tracker or financial services report greater predictive power of C (over W) for purchase intent (Aaker et al., 2010; Infanger & Sczesny, 2015). Interestingly, studies which combine data across various categories of products tend to return findings suggesting the combined (Aaker et al., 2012) or independent (Bennett & Hill, 2012; Kervyn, et al., 2012) importance of both W and C in predicting purchase intent.

Zawisza and Pittard (2015, Experiment 1) provide thus far the only empirical investigation of the possibility that the level of product involvement may determine the importance of warmth vs competence for purchase intent. Specifically, they predicted that: High-involving products (smartphones) would trigger higher purchase intent when advertised using a competent (vs warm) ad strategy and low-involving products (toothpaste) will trigger higher purchase intent when advertised using a warm (vs competent) ad strategy. Their findings confirmed these hypotheses providing direct evidence for the argument that the ‘golden quadrant’ shifts according to product type. That is, it is, in some situations (e.g. for low-involving products) it is the W dimension which is more important for purchase intent and in others (e.g. for high-involving products) it is the C dimension which plays greater role. However, it is also possible that the effectiveness of the W versus- C approaches differs further as a function of personal characteristics – another factor present in consumer context but not included in the SCM/BIAF models. As explained later, for some people a W ad strategy may be more effective (than C) even when the product is high-involving (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015).

***Consumer Individual Differences and SCM***

Both demographic and psychological individual differences are arguably a crucial aspect of marketing research (Bennett & Hill, 2012; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012) and thus in need of analysing alongside the dimensions of W and C. Indeed, Bennett and Hill (2012) showed that consumers’ demographic profile influences the perception of W but not C: Brands were generally perceived as less warm by older and better-educated consumers. The authors attribute the lack of effects on competence dimension to its cognitive and, thus, objective (as opposed to affective and, thus, subjective) nature. Fournier and Alvares (2012), on the other hand, discuss the role of psychological characteristics in determining brands’ perceived W and C. They note that people vary in the degree to which they anthropomorphise brands, and thus, in the extent to which they may attribute intentional agency to them. Zawadzka (2015) on the other hand has recently shown that the match between consumers’ self-perceptions as warm and competent and the brands’ W and C scores affect brand preferences: the more participants perceived themselves as competent the more they favoured a competent bear brand as opposed to a warm one and vice versa (those who thought themselves as warm preferred warm rather than competent brand of bear). An individual’s commercial attachment style, akin to attachment style in human relations, may also influence a brand’s perceived W and C. For example, MacInnis (2012) proposes that W may be particularly important (and more so than C) for individuals who are high (vs. low) on anxiety in their brand relationship style. Such consumers, it is argued, are insecure in their relationship with the brand and thus need reassurance. While this refers to brand attachment styles, indirect evidence for a more generalised need for W in situations of consumer threat and uncertainty comes from Xu et al. (2013). They report greater importance of W (over C) in determining purchase intent in cases of product failure (salmonella contamination in case of fruit juice, or fire hazard due to faulty disposable batteries). Both of their products were also low-involving. As seen from the above both low-involving and anxiety-provoking nature of the product should make the W dimension more relevant to advertising effectiveness. What would happen, however, if the product was anxiety-provoking and high-involving?

Thus far, the only piece of research which has investigated high-involving but anxiety-provoking products within the SCM/BIAF framework explicitly is that of Zawisza and Pittard (2015, Experiment 2). The authors manipulated the ad type in terms of its warmth and competence (e.g. via using a paternalistic househusband vs envious businessman portrayals in their ads for smartphones) and measured participants’ mobile smartphone anxiety. They expected that the greater effectiveness of C (over W) ad strategy for high-involving smartphone products, as predicted in Experiment 1, will not hold for consumers high on smartphone anxiety. Instead, they expected and found that consumers’ anxiety would overwrite this effect. Specifically, the competent advert strategy was less effective for individuals who had high smartphone anxiety than for those who were less anxious. Instead, high smartphone anxious individuals preferred the warm ad type strategy over the competent one. These findings provided evidence that individual differences in anxiety levels shift the ‘golden quadrant’ yet again: They determine which of the two advertising strategies, W or C, are more effective, even in the case of high-involving product type which typically (e.g. for non-anxious individuals) would be more desired when coupled with a competent ad content (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015).

However, there may be other factors which may shift the ‘golden quadrant’ in case of high-involving products or services (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). As explained later, framing the advertising message in terms of self- versus other- profitability, may be particularly relevant in determining the importance of W and C for PI and thus could shift the ‘golden quadrant’ again.

***Self- versus Other-Profitable Appeal Type and SCM***

If the primacy of W over C proposed by SCM (Fiske, et al. 2007) applied uniformly to consumer context we should see a consistent advantage of W over C in brand context as well. However, this is not the case. As mentioned earlier, when it comes to purchase intent, both Kervyn et al. (2012) and Bennett and Hill (2012) report equal predictive power of W and C, Aaker et al. (2010) report greater importance of C over W and their interaction, while Xu et al. (2013) as well as Zawisza and colleagues (2006, 2010) report greater importance of W over C which applied even across cultures (Zawisza et al., in preparation a and b). While, as already argued here, product type and individual differences may be at least in part responsible for these inconsistencies, a third possibility exists.

Fiske et al. (2012, p. 206) suggest that ‘brands may have a more personal contact than many out-groups do, [and] so people might differ more systematically’ in their perception of brands than in the perception of social groups. This statement implies that the distance (closeness or lack of it) between the brand and the consumer’s self may determine the importance of W and C in brand evaluation. Although Fiske et al. (2012) speculate that this may be unique to human-brand relationships, social psychological research indicates otherwise (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). Indeed, as discussed, in the realm of social perception, the primacy of W over C has been shown to be moderated by the (social) distance between self and others (the DIA model, Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). Specifically, there was a ‘W over C’ advantage in perception of others (i.e. interest in their others-profitability), but a ‘C over W’ advantage in the case of evaluating close friends or the self (i.e. interest in self-profitability). Thus, the typical primacy of W over C reverses in evaluations of close friends.

When extrapolated back to consumer context the DIA model offers interesting possibilities which are not acknowledged in SCM/BIAF. For example, the optimal level of W vs. C from purchase intent perspective may vary depending on whether the advertising appeal emphasises self- versus other-profitability of the product or service to the consumer. This is because such framing may influence the perceived relevance of W and C to the product advertised. Surprisingly, the issue of self- versus other-profitable advertising appeal type has not been investigated widely despite its relevance to many social or charitable advertising campaigns. While a similar agentic versus communal ad strategy has been studied in the context of blood donation services (Hupfer, 2006), it has not been linked to W and C there. The only study thus far which tested this possibility directly is that by Zawisza and Pittard (2015, Experiment 3). They investigated the question of whether an advertising appeal which stresses other-profitability would be more effective when using warm ad strategy than when using a competent one, even if the service advertised was high-involving (blood donation services). Based on the DIA model (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008) they predicted that the competent ad strategy would perform better (than the warm one) in the self-profitable appeal condition. At the same time the warm ad strategy would perform better in the other-profitable appeal condition (as compared to self-profitable condition). They manipulated the self- vs. other profitability of the ad by stressing the benefits of blood donation for oneself or for others respectively while the warmth and competence of the ads was manipulated by employing paternalistic vs envious male gender roles of the endorser in the ads. While generally the other-profitable ad appeal for blood donation services was more effective than the self-profitable one this main effect was indeed qualified by the expected interaction: in the self-profitable condition the service use intent was higher when the competent (vs. warm) ad content was used. The warm content (vs. competent) on the other hand was more effective in case of the other-profitable appeal. These findings provided support for the DIA (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008) and illustrated again that the ‘golden quadrant’ shifted as a function of the appeal type. That is, even when the service was high involving the relevance of W and C for purchase intent was determined by the framing used in the ad (self- vs. other-profitable).

The overview of the literature thus far shows that while the perception of the brands seem to follow the BIAF/SCM framework robustly according to the two key dimensions of warmth and competence the answer to the question of how these affect purchase intent is somewhat mixed. The initially proposed ‘golden quadrant’, understood as an admiration strategy (i.e. high W and C, Aaker, et al., 2012) may not always apply in consumer context. In fact, given the above literature, it seems that the content of the ‘golden quadrant’ shifts as a function of variables present in consumer context but absent in the SCM/BIAF model: product type, individual differences and appeal type (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). Thus, arguably, the meaning of the ‘golden quadrant’ should therefore be revised to indicate the ‘optimal level of W and C’ rather than high level of both (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). The findings also indicate that the BIAF/SCM model needs to be extended. However, the observation that the ‘golden quadrant’ shifts is only useful if we can predict the nature of such shift. How could we integrate the findings thus far? What is the overall principle which determines the shifts? The chapter now turns to presenting an argument for addressing these questions by proposing an extension of the BIAF/SCM model by adding the relevance principle. Bratanove, Kervyn and Klein (2015) recently have called for research on questions relevant to this point although they do not relate them to the ‘golden quadrant’ or the relevance propositions explicitly: ‘Does one of the two dimensions have more importance? Does the relative importance change for different outcome variables (e.g. attitudinal vs. behavioural) and/or product categories.’ (p. 67).

**The Relevance Principle**

The principle of relevance, (a.k.a. congruence, match-up, fit, similarity or compatibility), has been observed across as diverse contexts as that of persuasion (Wells & Petty, 1980), occupational setting (Koening & Eagly, 2014) and judicial verdicts (Jones & Kaplan, 2003), and has been identified as a factor which aids brands’ and advertising success (Fleck & Quester, 2007). In consumer context it has been found to apply to brand extension (Fleck & Quester, 2007), sponsoring (Deitz, Myers & Stafford, 2012), celebrity endorsement (Choi & Rifton, 2012; Fleck, Korchia, & Le Roy, 2012) or cross-modal sensory marketing with its synesthetic correspondence principle (Spence & Gallace, 2011; Spence, 2012). The definition of the phenomenon proves illusive (Fleck & Quester, 2007) and may not acknowledge the underlying element of relevance explicitly. Yet one may argue that it is the relevance of any given components to each other which determines what fits or is perceived as congruent or synesthetic. Thus, here congruence is understood explicitly in terms of relevance of the universal but orthogonal concepts of W and C to variables present in advertising context discussed above: product type, audience characteristics and advertising appeal type (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015). These variables represent the three key aspects of advertising context which have not been linked to W and C systematically or directly (with the exception of Zawisza & Pittard, 2015 and the current chapter). As has been argued earlier the ‘golden quadrant’ (Aaker et al., 2012) or, more precisely, the importance of W and C for PI, may ‘shift’ as a function of the relevance of these variables to the concepts of W and C encapsulated by the endorser’s image in the ad.

While the relevance principle is not a factor formally included in the original SCM/BIAF models, research on job applications, which involve self-advertising, points at the potential importance of the relevance of W and C to contextual factors. For example, compatibility between the warmth of the candidate’s name and the nature of the job (e.g. requiring W vs. C) resulted in higher job suitability judgements (Copley & Brownlow, 1995). Moreover, appearing both warm and competent was especially important for out-group job applicants (e.g. of Arab origin; Agerström, Björklund, Carlsson & Rooth, 2012).

Interestingly, the principle of relevance does, though implicitly, underlie the DIA model which competes with the SCM. That is, the DIA’s principles may be reinterpreted in terms of the relevance rule as follows: The typical primacy of W over C postulated by SCM reverses when C becomes more *relevant* (than W) to the subject’s position. This happens in situations of social interdependence when our typical interest in self-profitability (that is competence) is extrapolated to the others we depend on. This is, we value C over W in the case of close others and friend. Thus social distance determines the *relevance* of W and C in our social perceptions. While, as discussed earlier, Fiske et al. (2012, p. 206) implicitly allude to the possibility that that the distance (closeness or lack of it) between the brand and the consumer’s self may determine the importance of the perceived brand W and C for purchase intent they do not incorporate it in the BIAF model formally and do not propose an overarching principle which would help predict *when* W and when C is more important for purchase intent.

As already discussed , Zawisza and Pittard (2015) are the first to offer, and test, an extension of the SCM/BIAF framework by adding the relevance principle in order to predict the optimal level of W and C in an advertising campaign to stimulate purchase intent. In their three experiments they have shown that the importance of W and C for purchase intent – the newly defined ‘golden quadrant’ - does indeed shift as a function of product type, individual differences and appeal type. Specifically, competence was more important (resulted in higher purchase intent) in the case of a high-involving product (a smartphone) than in the case of a low-involving one (toothpaste), and the smartphone triggered greater purchase intent when advertised using the competent (vs. warm) ad strategy. This is in line with previous studies which, taken together, indicate that competence is indeed more important for high- than for low-involving products (Aaker et al., 2010). While, warmth is more effective than competence for the low-involving product (Infanger & Sczesny, 2015; Xu, et al., 2013; Zawisza et al., 2006; Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; Zawisza et al., in preparation, a, b;).

However, while non-anxious consumers still preferred competent (vs. warm) advertising strategy for the high-involving smartphones, smartphone-anxious individuals preferred the competent ad for this product less (than non-anxious consumers). In fact they found the warm ad strategy more effective than the competent one. Thus the preference for C over W typical of high-involving products reverses for highly smartphone-anxious customers. By extension it is possible that the W dimension may be particularly important for individuals who are high (vs. low) on anxiety in their brand relationship style (MacInnis, 2012) or in situations of product failure (Xu et al., 2013) which may be argued to be anxiety-provoking (e.g. fire hazard and salmonella contamination). It is thus possible that any type of anxiety or insecurity related to the product (whether residing in the consumer individual differences or the product context) may require greater emphasis on W (than C), even further if the product is high-involving.

Zawisza and Pittard (2015) showed further that the need for W triggered by anxiety may be reversed again. While the ‘W over C’ pattern held for other-profitable advertising appeals (where the warm ad strategy triggered greater blood donation service use intent), it reversed for self-profitable ones (which were more effective when using a competent than a warm advertising strategy). In the latter case, the superiority of W over C proposed by SCM (Fiske et al., 2007) was reversed in line with the competing DIA approach (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). That is, self-profitability, in the shape of blood storage for one’s own use (as opposed to use by others in the other-profitability scenario) required greater emphasis on C over W even though the blood donation service may be considered anxiety-provoking.

Thus, the ‘golden quadrant’, i.e. the optimal combination of C and W, may not always require equal emphasis on both elements, or greater emphasis on C, as previously suggested (Aaker, et al., 2012). As discussed, the ‘golden quadrant’ shifts, or changes its content, from greater emphasis on C to greater emphasis on W, depending on variables present in consumer context but absent in social perception. On a theoretical level, this evidences the need to extend SCM/BIAF by adding not so much additional variables to the model - e.g. product type or individual difference variables as suggested by some (Aaker, et al., 2012; Bennett & Hill, 2012; Fournier & Alvarez, 2012) – but by recognising that the principle of relevance operates and determines the optimal level of W and C in a particular consumer context (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015).

**Directions for Future Research**

The proposed extension of the SCM/BIAF framework by inclusion of the relevance principle for use in consumer context is an exciting possibility which would enable the model to be more predictive rather than descriptive. However, thus far this proposal rests on one direct empirical study (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015) and on an overview of relevant literature as discussed. Thus, more research is needed to address the surrounding gaps in the literature. For example although similar patterns of greater importance of W over C for purchase intent were found for various low-involving products (e.g. vitamin pills, Zawisza et al., 2006; mineral water, Zawisza & Cinnirella, 2010; or fruit juice and disposable batteries, Xu, et al., 2013; orange juice, Zawisza et al., 2015 and toothpaste, Zawisza & Pittard, 2015; unisex perfume and baby food, Infanger & Sczesny, 2015), there is lack of research on high-involving products (e.g. cars, housing, etc.) other than that on smartphones (Zawisza & Pittard, 2015).

Other research may fruitfully explore product-category comparisons such as hedonic versus utilitarian, credence versus search and gendered versus gender-neutral products. Technological products for example lend themselves especially well to anthropomorphism, as do tools, transportation devices, food and drink, clothing and weapons (Mick & Fournier, 1998) and thus could be perceived especially readily in terms of W and C (Fournier & Alvares, 2012). Anxiety provoking goods or services, particularly if the anxiety results from the brand’s involvement in a disaster of ambiguous cause (neither natural nor human-related), require further and careful investigation. Kervyn et al. (2014) found that the ‘negativity effect on warmth’ observed in social perception (negative warmth information being more damaging than negative competence information) applies also to brand’s reputation management in the face of a disaster. Specifically, when the disaster is attributed to lack of warmth (as opposed to lack of competence) attempts to restore the brand’s reputation by focusing on emphasising warmth are likely to backfire even though it is warmth which is deficient in such troubled brand. In such situations it is the competence focused restoration campaign which is likely to be more effective. This would suggest that the relevance principle is moderated by the ‘negativity effect on warmth’ in scenarios of managing post-disaster brand reputation. The negativity effect on warmth was also shown in cases of transgressing the stereotype-based expectations related to firm size (Yang & Aggarwal, 2014): Generally violations of warmth expectations had more negative consequences for purchase intent than violations of competence expectations but this was particularly evident in the case of small (vs. bigger) firms as their stereotype implies higher warmth and thus makes such a transgression especially unexpected. Further research is needed to identify when warmth and competence are more important in determining the perception and behaviours towards products, services and brands which may be subject to the negativity effect on warmth.

Consumer psychological characteristics other than smartphone- (or technology-) anxiety should also be investigated. For example, consumers with high need for cognition may prefer C over W for various products. Moreover, the W versus C manipulation may have less of an effect on consumers who are low on brand anthropomorphism as they would not attribute intention/W or ability/C to brands (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012). Demographic variables may also be of importance. While gender and race were not identified by Bennett and Hill (2012) as factors differentiating the perception of brands’ W and C, this was not the same for age and education: Older and more educated people perceive brands in general as colder and thus there may be a need to offset this perception by boosting the brands’ warmth when they are targeted to such demographics. Moreover, Fiske et al. (2008) does list gender among moderators of the primacy of W over C phenomenon. For example, Wojciszke et al. (1998) found that women, perhaps due to their socialisation, which emphasises warm (communal) traits (as opposed to competent ones), show stronger primacy of warmth over competence in detecting these traits. However, whether this would make them more receptive to warm (vs. competent) brands and advertising content (generally or in comparison to men) remains still untested.

In the increasingly globalised markets cross-cultural differences become an especially important consideration. While the dimensions of W and C have been shown to apply cross-culturally in social perception of groups (Cuddy et al., 2007) and brands of different origin (Xu et al., 2013) less is known about how culture may affect the relative importance of the W and C dimensions in determining consumer behaviours. Although preferences for the W and C advertising content in countries such as SA, UK and Poland were similar (Zawisza et al. 2015, in preparation a & b) these were rather individualistic cultures and thus research on collectivist cultures is needed. For example, Wojciszke (1997) pointed out that collectivist cultures place more emphasis on the social-moral dimension (akin to warmth) while individualist cultures emphasise competence. It is possible that people from collectivist cultures will prefer advertising campaigns or brand placements which emphasise warmth. This possibility awaits further research.

Importantly, an admiration (high W and C) ad strategy has not been tested within the relevance paradigm proposed here. Such strategy would have both W and C elements and may therefore be optimal across all types of products, individuals and appeals. However, attempts to boost the ‘deficit’ dimension of C in non-profit firms (Aaker, et al., 2010) still did not result in significantly higher purchase intent compared to that of for-profit companies. Nevertheless, future research could fruitfully add a third condition, admiration, when testing the relevance principle extension of the SCM/BIAF models. Other methodological considerations include the need for more experimental studies to balance the current domination of correlational studies in the emerging field of research on the application of SCM to consumer context.

On a theoretical level more work is needed to investigate the mechanisms via which brand personality transfers to brand stereotypes (their perceived W and C) and how the latter affects emotional and behavioural reactions to the brands (Ivens, et al., 2015). For example, it is not yet know if the transference patterns supporting SCM/BIAS models found by Ivens et al. (2015) apply also to non-profit brands which are not perceived as higher on C than on W. The relevance principle allows for making predictions for many contextual or individual variables. Further studies could focus on investigating the interactions between such variables and their effect on determining the importance of W and C for purchase intent.

**Conclusions**

In summary, even if the same (warm vs. competent) advertising strategy is used, its effectiveness depends on variables, which determine the relevance of W and C to purchase intent. These are present in consumer context but absent in social perception. Specifically, product involvement level, participants’ levels of technology anxiety and self- versus other-profitable advertising appeal type were identified as such. Thus the relevance principle could fruitfully extend theoretical frameworks such as SCM or BIAF. On a practical level, in deciding whether to use a warm or competent advertising strategy, marketers need to take into account the issue of the relevance of these dimensions to the product, the advertising campaign type and their audience or in fact any other relevant variables and their potential interactions. In the world of brand perception, unlike in the social world, the ‘golden quadrant’ shifts according to a broader marketing context.

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