THE MODERATING EFFECT OF PERSONALITY TRAITS ON ATTITUDES TOWARD ADVERTISEMENTS: A CONTINGENCY FRAMEWORK

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Abstract. *Because the meaning of an ad can be created in the person who receives the message, it is logical to suggest that different people may have unique preferences for different types of ads according to their characteristics, and that customers may react most positively when exposed to an advertising stream that matches their personality. The purpose of this research is to introduce the advertising literature to the use of the Big Five personality traits and to develop a contingency framework to study the moderating effects of personality traits on attitudes toward advertising messages. We also developed a set of empirically testable research propositions based on our extensive literature review. Finally, we discuss the advertising implications and future research opportunities of our propositions.*

Keywords: advertising, consumer preferences, Big Five personality traits, literature review.

1. Introduction

Advertising is a means of mass communication aimed at groups and populations, and it usually is assumed that people respond similarly - individual differences rarely are considered. Most of the research on advertising processing focuses on different hierarchies of effects (Zajonc, 1980; Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999), but rarely has considered the possibility that attitudes could depend on personal traits as well as on media (Krugman, 1965) and products (Vaughn, 1986; Ratchford, 1987). In this regard, in the era of transition from mass production to mass customization and the importance of relationship marketing, it is strange that the research on advertising has not investigated fully the option that different customers may react differently to advertising information. After all, the meaning of an ad is created in the person who receives the message, and it might be different from the advertiser's intended response (Stern, 1991; Mick and Buhl, 1992). It is logical to suggest that different people may have different preferences, and may react most positively when exposed to an advertising stream that matches their personality.

Personality traits have not been a major focus in marketing. The main way customers are distinguished is by their needs. Based on this, relationship marketing (Sheth, Parvatiyar, 1995), and more specifically, CRM, are based on the idea that an individual approach is needed for every customer (Winer, 2001; Verhoef, 2003). That is, marketing efforts are focused on what customers want, but not on what they are. The problem, which rises from this misconception, is that "economic motivations and firm-centric philosophies drive most of today's CRM initiatives", which leads to "artificial intimacy, rampant mailings, and lack of reciprocation" (Fournier, 2002, p. 6). The meaning of the relationship is missing, and we leap ahead to use it without proper understanding of the construct (Fournier, 1998a). Marketers have to consider not only what customers want, but also how it is sold. In order to achieve this they have to start "seeing through the eyes of the consumer" and find not what but how to sell it (Fournier, 1998b, p. 44). Market segmentation is rarely, if at all, based on personal traits. This omission in marketing could have great potential. After all, we distinguish people in society and our everyday communication mainly by their characters and personalities. If companies want to build more successful relationships and touch the heart of the customer, they have to consider the customer's human nature. Research on personality traits and their interaction with the marketing mix should be an important goal in our discipline.

The major argument against mass research on personalities is the difficulty of collecting data. People are reluctant to respond to long surveys and questions disclosing personal information. There are two issues that could alleviate this problem. First, the advances in information systems allow almost every big company to track their customers' behaviour individually. Databases contain huge masses of information, which could be used creatively to infer personal traits. What is more, discovering personal traits will be a part of a bigger project for revealing customer identity. Personality research could pave the way for an accountable and more precise

marketing in the future that would lead companies to know customers the same way customers know companies (Deighton, 2005). As Gupta (1993) suggested, combining attitudinal with objective (scanner) data should be a major focus of future marketing research. However, surprisingly little has been done since then. Second, there are commercial companies that collect any possible information about customers available in the public domain. Some claim that their information covers up to 85% of the customer base in the U.S., and although not widely disclosed, they sell this information. In the information age we are heading for, personal traits will be one of the many pieces of information available in electronic space. That is why marketing academics must await future applications and develop an appropriate body of knowledge.

Unfortunately, there is no consistent body of literature that examines customers' cognitive differences. Usually, fragments of the personality specter have been used as moderators and as an aside question for investigation. Some of the most used traits are the need for cognition (Martin, Lang, and Wong, 2004; Cacioppo and Petty, 1982), felt involvement (Celsi and Olson 1988), state versus action orientation (Bagozzi, Baumgartner and Yi, 1992), and gender in advertising (Stern, 1993). However, personal traits include many other factors, which have never been introduced to marketing. The so-called *Big Five*, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (Costa and McCrae, 1988) represent a complete set of traits that could capture personality differences. This has been used in psychology for a long time and there are developed scales, which could be readily used (Saucier, 1994; Dwight, Cummings and Glenar, 1998).

The goal of our paper is not to provide a thorough examination of the Big Five because it is widely accepted in personality research. The purpose of this research is to introduce the marketing field to the use of the Big Five personality traits. Specifically, we reason how personality can affect the effect of advertising. We believe that this paper is one of the first to include personality traits into a marketing research question.

2. Advertising and personality traits in practice

Advertising is one of the main communicators that a firm uses to expose consumers to its products and name. It can encompass a great deal of a company's marketing budget, which has to be allocated optimally. Managers are interested in the return on marketing expenditures and push harder for better resource allocation (Rust et al., 2004). Advertising, as a part of the marketing mix, is an expense and creates intangible market assets, which are vital for the functioning of the firm. These intangible assets are transformed into cash flow, which can be accelerated and enhanced with reduced volatility (Srivastava, Shervani, Fahey, 1998). There is a new trend in the marketing research concerned mainly with optimum marketing spending and resource allocation (Blattberg, Deighton, 1996; Venkatesan, Kumar, 2004; Reinartz, Thomas, and Kumar, 2005). It is believed that there is an *optimal marketing mix*, which leads to best results. This raises the bar for advertising as well. That is, it is

important for companies to utilize their advertising resources efficiently while portraying the best image. Understanding the individual traits o f the customer population can allow an organization to make better decisions about the types of ads that would best appeal to specific markets and the proper diversification of ads required to cater to the broad range of traits.

The effect of personality traits could have significant implications. First, the opportunity for personal advertising is enormous. Personal approaches to customers can be improved if the information in the advertising message is constructed in accordance with the individual's inherent preferences. If it is true that personal traits are a better predictor than demographic characteristics, then it opens a new highway for resource optimization and customer segmentation. Second, it has been known that different types of product categories are appealing to different types of customers. However, the only way the advertising message is adjusted is by managing the theme and the product. It is not known if different ad types would be more appealing to different personal traits. It has been assumed that brand personality (Aaker, 1997) attracts similar customers (Bhattacharya, Sen, 2003) because of the need for self-identification with the brand. This assumption is reflected in the design of the ads: sport brands promote extroversion, luxury brands promote self-centrism, and computer brands promote intelligence and need for cognition. Despite the evidence for the importance of personal traits, there is lack of formal research and a more general framework of how the organization of the advertising information affects attitudes toward the brand as a function of customers' personalities. For example, extroverted people may prefer transformational rather than informational ads, and conscientious customers could prefer ads that contain additional information. Third, marketing actions provoke customer reactions (Lehmann, 2004). If the types of ads are related to personal traits, then it will be possible to predict, partially, what kind of customers will respond to different types of ads. Because personal traits evoke specific and known behaviours, it will be possible to predict better the future behaviour of the customer group who responded to a specific marketing campaign. That is, the types of ads could be used as a probing instrument.

3. Conceptual foundation: the big five and personality

The first personality inventory, Woodworth's Personal Data Sheet (PDS), was published in 1917. Since then, many other measures to identify exactly how we are different have been developed. Trait theory is a genetically rooted concept that holds that individuals behave differently because they possess varying amounts of certain measurable traits (Goldberg, 1999). But personality can be a difficult and expensive construct to measure. Most personality inventories designed to measure traits or type combinations of traits (e.g., the Minnesota Multiphaseic Personality Inventory, California Psychological Inventory, 16 Personality Factors, and NEO Personality Inventory) are proprietary instruments, whose items are copyrighted. The inventories

are also very long, often consisting of several hundred questions. As a consequence, the instruments are difficult to use for research.

The five-factor model is a well-established framework for measuring personality traits. The Big Five were identified by searching for the smallest number of synonym clusters in the English language that could account for the greatest variation of personality differences. Replications of this process in other languages have identified the same five synonym clusters. This generally is referred to as the "lexical hypothesis," which assumes that natural language contains sufficient information to account for individual differences in personality (John, Angleitner, Ostendorf, 1988).

The factors in the Big Five model are meant to measure the underlying traits of *extraversion*, *agreeableness*, *conscientiousness*, *neuroticism*, and *openness to experience* by using personality markers to identify the degree of each of these factors that an individual possesses. Extraversion represents a preference to be around others. It is the trait that deals with a person's social behaviors, willingness to express opinions and leadership. Agreeableness describes how we relate to others including tolerance and acceptance. In addition, agreeableness represents an eagerness for communion. Conscientiousness refers to a tendency to push toward goals and act dutifully. It encompasses self-discipline and dependability. Neuroticism is the tendency to experience unpleasant emotions and often is referred to as the anxiety factor. Openness to experience describes the willingness to enjoy new experiences and ideas. It includes creativity, preference for the complex and willingness to accept change (De Raad, 2000).

The five-factor model (Costa and McRae, 1985) is one well-accepted measure used to evaluate the Big Five personality traits, but it does not overcome the length and cost restrictions of the typing instruments. The Big Five personality traits have been used widely in management to assess organizational fit (Lievens et al., 2001; Antonioni, 1998), performance (Tett and Burnett, 2003; Organ, 1994;) and success (Judge and Higgins, 1999; Gubman, 2004), but the cost and length considerations of the Costa and McRae model (NEO-Personality Inventory) are not as easy to justify in marketing research.

Goldberg (1992) and Saucier (1994) have worked to create scales to measure the Big Five personality traits in a way similar to McRae and Costa's five-factor model and the subsequent NEO scale (Costa and McRae, 1985). They developed 140 item markers, respectively, that capture the Big Five personality traits in a more efficient manner. An independent study (Dwight, Cummings, Glenar, 1998) found that there is little difference in the predictive validities of these two measures, so for the purpose of our research, we will use Saucier's (1994) abbreviated version of Goldberg's Unipolar Big-Five Markers.

Personality, per se, has not been left out of the marketing literature, but it has been studied mostly by using either very specific items from within the trait structure or a broader typing method to study the overall personality makeup of the individual. The Big Five have been used only sparsely by marketing academicians.

Mowen, Harris, and Bone (2004) investigated that different personality traits influence fear responses to print advertising appeals for two types of driver safety behaviour. Their results found that for the aggressive-driving ad, introversion and need to protect and enhance body resources positively predicted fear response. For the inattentive-driving ad, introversion and need to protect and enhance body resources again were positive predictors of fear, but so were emotional instability and agreeableness, whereas competitiveness, need for arousal, and the need for material resources were negative predictors. Bennet (1997) showed that personality factors and the esteem in which the message communicator is held may affect customer responsiveness to comparative advertising. The instrument used to assess participants' personality type was derived from a conventional Myers-Briggs indicator meant to measure a broad personality type.

Nairn and Berthon (2003) studied romanticism and classicism facets of personality in the context of segmentation through an advertising stimulus. Their finding lends some support to the interpretation of segmentation as a creation of advertising executions, as opposed to an antecedent of the advertising process. The results show that romantic advertising stimuli can have a significant impact on personality score in situations where corresponding classicist advertising stimuli do not indicate that the persuasive impact of advertising depends to some extent on the format of the advertising treatment. Cetola and Prinkey (1986) further confirmed that different levels of arousal would have different and possibly opposite effects on introverts and extraverts. Their study showed that, when exposed to radio commercials presented at a volume greater than the program in which it was imbedded, extraverts responded with a more favorable attitude toward both the commercial and the product than did introverts, which thus supported their prediction that extraverts respond more positively to higher arousal potentials. Furthermore, when the commercial was presented at the same volume as the program, there was no difference in attitudes between the two personalities. But, introverts did judge the commercials as more creative, hence confirming the study hypothesis that introverts respond more positively to lower arousal potentials. Extraverts derive greater hedonic value from the high levels of arousal than introverts (Cetola, Prinkey, 1986). Mooradian (1996) conducted studies and identified theoretically grounded relationships between global personality traits, ad-evoked feelings, and subsequent consumer attitudes. His research illustrated that extraversion was related to positive evoked feelings, while neuroticism was related to negative ad-evoked feelings and warm responses.

These studies illustrate that there are some innate consumer differences based upon some measure of personality. These differences can be interesting for marketers to research, both from the academic view of gaining knowledge about how advertising works and why it works differently for different people and from the managerial view of how to use advertising most efficiently.

4. Attitude toward the ad

Shimp (1981) and Mitchell and Olson (1981) introduced into the literature the idea that consumers' behaviour is likely to be influenced by attitudes toward the advertising stimulus. Many aspects of the ad content have demonstrated a relationship with respondent reported attitudes toward ads (Muehling, McCann, 1993). In addition, many variables have been shown to moderate attitude toward the ad, including involvement, relevance, familiarity, and prior attitudes (Muehling, McCann, 1993).

It is important to understand the relationships of antecedents and moderators of attitude toward the ad, partly because they identifies the customer's perceptions of a specific advertisement, but more importantly because of the relationship between attitude toward the ad and its consequences. These include cognitive consequences like brand attribute beliefs (Hastak, Olson, 1989), brand cognitions (Homer, 1990), brand recall, and brand recognition (Zinkhan, Locander, Leigh, 1986). In addition, there are affective consequences of attitude toward the ad, most notably brand attitude. At least 37 studies have supported the link between attitude toward the ad and brand attitudes (Muehling, McCann, 1993). Finally, the behaviour consequences of attitude toward the ad include behaviour/purchase intentions, as demonstrated by several studies (Muehling, McCann, 1993).

These consequences show a link that leads from the perceptions of the ad to the perceptions of the brand and to the purchase, and reinforce the importance that ads play as an organization's communicating device for both attracting customers and establishing a knowledge base to build long term relationships.

5. Advertisements: classification and research

The Madison Avenue executives have, for a long time, used advertising strategies, which exhibit different creative moods and flavours to persuade the audience to develop a positive belief about the advertised brand. But, it has been very recently, over the last 30 years, where marketing academics actually have pondered and tried to construct a more empirically validated taxonomy of advertisements, and their respective impacts on perceptions of the viewer. Advertising, in general, has seen a considerable body of research, based on parameters such as a humorous content or a content aimed to arouse fear or guilt. The source credibility of the claimant, or the claim in the advertising and its success in persuasion, also has been studied with considerable details in the advertising literature.

The milestone question is: how exactly do personality traits affect the attitudes formed through exposure to different types of advertisements? Where and how exactly are the traits expressed? Personal traits can be related to the hierarchy of effects. It was recognized that people might inherently like specific features of the product, which forms their personal *preferenda* (Zajonc, 1980). The preferendas allow individuals to express immediate affect toward objects even before any cognitive processing. Thus,

it is in our personality nature to look at ads with different eyes and form different opinions. No two people will have the same emotional responses or attitudes toward an ad. Some people will be more inclined to an *initial affective response*, and others to an *initial cognitive response*. Two of the Big Five traits suggest this notion. Conscientiousness is strongly related to information gathering and detailed processing. It is logical to assume that these types of customers will have more favorable attitudes toward ads when they analyze an ad before feeling it. On the other hand, openness to experience serves to capture, in part, intellect and creativity. These individuals are likely to appreciate imagination. Similarly, agreeableness implies the presence of strong initial affective effect. In a comprehensive study, Vakratsas and Ambler (1999) summarize more than 250 articles related to the hierarchy of effects. Their conclusion is that any kind of hierarchy, and even no hierarchy, is possible when processing ads. The affect, cognition, and experience are a space rather than a sequence and in this space context is the major factor, which determines the coordinates. They point out that target customers are diverse and should be one of the main objectives of future research in this area. This is a particularly important insight because different dimensions, as proposed by them, could be a function as much of personalities as they are of context.

For the purpose of our study, we use the following types of advertisements to illustrate the proposed relationships between the attitudes evoked by those types of ads and the different personality traits because they represent both affective and cognitive responses, leading to a behavioural intention. We focus on three pairs of ad types: (1) transformational vs. informational ads, (2) comparative vs. non-comparative ads, and (3) one sided vs. two-sided ads.

We felt that these types of ads provided a strong contrast in likely reactions. We chose transformational and informational ads because the comparison represents a strong contrast in affect and cognition. A transformation ad is likely to evoke strong affect, where an informational ad is likely to evoke a strong cognitive response. On the other hand, the comparative and non-comparative ads were chosen because of the difference in information levels and the presence of conflict. Comparative ads provide the customer with additional information, but more importantly, they contain conflict between the two competing brands. Both information gathering and conflict reaction are affected by personality (Tidwell, Sias, 2005; Sharlicki, Folger, Tesluk, 1999). Similarly, one-sided and two-sided ads were chosen because a two-sided ad provides a larger volume of information than a one sided ad, thus potentially influencing the attitudes toward the ad.

Transformational vs. informational ads: Transformational ads attach an experience to the advertised brand and informational ads provide information about the brand. Transformational advertising works by helping to develop associations with the use of experience, and thus transforming that experience into something different than it otherwise would have been (Aaker, Stayman, 1992). Transformational advertising makes the experience of using the brand richer, warmer, more expecting, and/or more enjoyable than it would have been otherwise

(Puto, Wells 1984). The proposed impact of transformational advertising is based on the premise that feelings during usage can have an impact on satisfaction, which is independent of prior expectations developed due to cognitive beliefs (Westbrook, 1987). Feelings can be aroused by transformational ads through: a) creating an emotional empathy or a vicarious experience; b) making the audience perceive a strong feeling response from the actors involved; and c) recalling past experience and stimulation of associated feelings. An advertisement will be transformational if its major objective is to generate a transformational effect regardless of whether the ad is informational, emotional or both (Aaker, Stayman, 1992).

Informational advertising, on the other hand, changes beliefs and attitudes by providing information about the product or brand. Shannon and Weaver (1949) conducted a classic study and actually measured the quantity of information in any message, and its dependent variable, the level of uncertainty present prior to the transmission of the message. Hunt (1976) even expressed the opinion that the information-persuasion dichotomy is phony, and the quantity of information in a message cannot be measured independently from the quality or usefulness of the information, and proposed a new high information-low information model.

Comparative vs. non-comparative ads: Comparative advertising is a message format, in which a competing brand attacks another brand(s) in the marketplace by making a direct or indirect comparison of one or more product attributes or benefits (Choi, Miracle, 2004). Comparative advertising is becoming very common and prevalent in the United States media (Grewal et al., 1997). Comparative ads have active support from the Federal Trade Commission, because they deliver information previously unavailable to the consumers (Wilkie, Farris, 1975). However, there has been mixed results from the extensive empirical research about the effectiveness of comparative ads. Researchers like Pechmann and Ratneshwar (1991) and Pechmann and Stewart (1990) concluded that comparative advertising has several advantages over non-comparative advertising, while Belch (1981), Swinyard (1981) and others reported that comparative advertising produced undesirable outcomes.

One of the significant achievements in finding the effectiveness of comparative advertising was the meta-analysis by Grewal et al. (1997). They found that comparative ads were more effective than non-comparative ads in generating attention, message and brand awareness, levels of message processing, favorable sponsored brand attitudes, and increased purchase intentions and purchase behaviour. Barrio-Garcia and Luque-Martinez (2003), further proposed and empirically validated a model, which indicated that the greater the comparative advertising intensity, the lower the consumer's perception believability. However, most of the research on comparative advertising seemed to agree that the less well known brands on the market benefit most from this strategy, when compared with the brand leader, increasing the audience's attention and purchase intentions. The study by Choi and Miracle (2004) further indicates not only that the national culture influences the effectiveness of comparative advertising, but also that self-construals have mediating

effects on attitudes toward advertisements for both indirect comparative advertising and non-comparative advertising.

One sided vs. two sided ads: A two-sided message points out both positive and negative product features, while a one-sided message presents only positive product features (Earl and Pride, 1980). It has been shown in previous research that a two-sided message was no better in increasing the viewer's perception of the advertisement's informativeness than a one-sided message (Earl, Pride, 1980). Swinyard (1981) further illustrated that the presence of two-sided claims in an advertisement evokes less counterarguing and facilitates advertising credibility, and when added to the comparative advertising message, their interaction has a significant effect on claim acceptance. Pechmann (1992) found that a two-sided ad was more effective than a one-sided ad only when negatively correlated attributes were featured.

6. Theoretical propositions

Extraversion: Extraversion is a dimension shared by nearly all personality inventories, and the construct has provided behavioural correlates from many studies (Watson and Clark, 1997). In addition to being talkative, bold and assertive (Goldberg, 1992), extraverts tend to attempt to influence others' behaviour or thinking and are interested in negotiating (Raymark, Schmit, Guion, 1997). In addition, extraverts prefer relatively high arousal levels (Costa and McCrae, 1988). Extraversion also has a positive relationship with need for affiliation (Donavan, Carlson, and Zimmerman, 2005). This need to relate to others will lead extraverts to exhibit more favorable attitudes toward transformational ads than informational ads. In addition, the behaviour component of extraversion should lead to stronger purchase intentions.

P1: Extraversion moderates the relationship between the type of ad exposure and attitude toward the ad. Individuals with a higher degree of extraversion will have a more favorable attitude toward transformational ads than informational ads.

P2: Extraversion moderates the relationship between the attitude toward the ad and purchase intentions. Those high in extraversion will show a stronger relationship between attitude toward the ad and purchase intentions.

Agreeableness: The agreeableness trait in personality research is most concerned with interpersonal relationships (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, Hair, 1996). It closely resembles the interpersonal dimension of love-hate or nurturance (McCrae, Costa, 1987). Agreeableness manifests as striving for intimacy, union and solidarity with that larger entity (De Raad, 2000). Therefore, those with a high degree of agreeableness may prefer a more experience-based transformational ad because it allows them to feel solidarity. In addition, those high in agreeableness may be less likely to demonstrate high emotion (Sharlicki, Folger, Tesluk, 1999) and tend to avoid

conflict; therefore, highly agreeable people may prefer non-comparative ads over comparative ads.

P3: Agreeableness moderates the relationship between the type of ad exposure and attitude toward the ad. Those high in agreeableness will show a more favorable attitude for: (a) transformational ads than informational ads, and (b) non-comparative ads than comparative ads.

Conscientiousness: Conscientious people may be characterized as responsible, dependable, organized, persistent, detail-oriented, and achievement-oriented (Costa and McCrae, 1992). Tidwell and Sias (2005) found that conscientious individuals are more likely to overtly seek out information to ensure high performance, and that they view information gathering as part of the process to success. It is the thoroughness displayed to achieve these characterizations that may lead individuals with a high degree of conscientiousness to form more favorable attitudes toward comparative ads and two-sided ads, because each of these ad types provides the reader with additional information for decision making. Additionally, they may prefer informational ads because they allow a thorough evaluation of the relevant product characteristics.

P4: Conscientiousness moderates the relationship between the type of ad exposure and attitude toward the ad. Those high in conscientiousness will show a more favorable attitude toward: (a) comparative ads than non-comparative ads, (b) two-sided ads than one-sided ads, and (c) informational ads than transformational ads.

Emotional Stability and Neuroticism: Individuals who are highly emotionally stable can be described as calm, content, and self-confident. Neuroticism lies on the opposite end of the measure, with individuals who likely are discontented, emotional, and angry. Those high in neuroticism also are sensitive to ridicule and easily embarrassed (Costa and McCrae, 1992). In addition, research shows that emotional people become more distressed than unemotional people when confronted with emotional stimuli and react with higher levels of emotional arousal (Buss, Plomin, 1984). This arousal is likely to lead to a better appraisal and stronger attitude toward ads with emotional content.

P5: Neuroticism moderates the relationship between the type of ad exposure and attitude toward the ad. Those high in neuroticism will show a more favorable attitude toward: (a) transformational ads than informational ads, and (b) comparative ads than non-comparative ads.

Openness to Experience: Those scoring high on the openness factor are characterized as imaginative, daring and intelligent (McCrae and Costa, 1985). They are likely to think of innovative or creative ways of performing or improving tasks (Raymark, Schmit, Guion, 1997). Because of the creative aspect, those high in openness to experience are likely to prefer a transformational ad that provides an experience for the viewer.

P6: Openness to experience moderates the relationship between the type of ad exposure and attitude toward the ad. Those high in openness to experience

will show a more favorable attitude for transformational ads than informational ads.

In addition, we investigate the possibility that the effect of personality traits depends on the involvement with the brand, which leads to different resource allocation for message processing. Meyers-Levy and Malaviya (1999) suggested that, depending on the amount of involvement and allocated processing resources (substantial, modest, and minimal), there are three different mechanisms to process an ad message: systematic processing strategy, heuristic processing strategy (Chaiken, 1980; Chaiken, Liberman, Eagly, 1989; Petty Cacioppo, Shumann, 1983), and experiential processing strategy (Strack, 1992). When customers process information systematically they devote resources, and the decisions are usually objective and rational. Ideally, the conclusions are dependent on the presented and processed information. When heuristic processes take place, customers use cognitive shortcuts, which may not be fully accurate, but are less time and resource consuming. There are different heuristic techniques, and people assign weights to different information attributes according to their preferences, experience, and inherent nature (Bettman, Luce, Payne, 1998). Experiential processing strategy includes barely any resources for message processing. Judgments result not on information processing, but on thoughts and feelings prompted by the message (Strack 1992; Meyers-Levy, Malaviya, 1999). It is more the sensation of past experience than active attitude formation. Experiential processing is a phenomenon close to mere exposure effect. We propose that under experiential processing, the personality traits will matter most because capturing the information on the ad is almost on a subconscious level and with low involvement. Thus, the first feelings and thoughts to emerge will be related closely to individual cognitive types.

P7: *The lower the involvement, the more expressed the effect of personality traits will be.*

Future research

It is important to note that the proposed contingencies exhibited by personality traits are neither exhaustive nor specific. Future research should not only confirm our general propositions, but also test specific hypotheses regarding how individuals who favour certain traits will react to specific types of advertising. Further studying the effects of dominant traits on resource allocation during processing may help explain why individuals are motivated to process a stimulus.

Very few empirical studies in the marketing literature look at the degree or combination of personality traits, which in turn, creates a void in developing a comprehensive awareness of who customers are and how they respond to persuasive communication. Looking within the consumer may provide opportunity for future

research to advance a broad understanding of the role that personality traits play in all arenas of marketing communications, including advertising, personal selling, and promotion. Personality traits also may be useful for marketing knowledge outside of the communications stream in determining purchase habits, innovation, brand loyalty, etc. It does not seem possible to communicate effectively or to build a relationship with a customer without looking at both the external environment and the individual characteristics in a holistic manner.

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Appendix

Big Five personality traits - Mini-markers (Saucier, 1994)

How Accurately Can You Describe Yourself?

Please use this list of common human traits to describe yourself as accurately as possible. Describe yourself as you see yourself at the present time, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you are generally or typically, as compared with other persons you know of the same sex and of roughly your same age.

Before each trait, please write a number indicating how accurately that trait describes you, using the following rating scale:

Inaccurate				?	Accurate			
Extremely	Very	Moderately	Slightly		Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

____Bashful	____Energetic	____Moody	____Systematic
____Bold	____Envious	____Organized	____Talkative
____Careless	____Extraverted	____Philosophical	____Temperamental
____Cold	____Fretful	____Practical	____Touchy
____Complex	____Harsh	____Quiet	____Uncreative
____Cooperative	____Imaginative	____Relaxed	____Unenvious
____Creative	____Inefficient	____Rude	____Unintellectual
____Deep	____Intellectual	____Shy	____Unsympathetic
____Disorganized	____Jealous	____Sloppy	____Warm
____Efficient	____Kind	____Sympathetic	____Withdrawn