

Running Title: Delay of Gratification

Do good things come to those who wait? The role of delayed gratification and individual
differences in consumer purchasing decisions

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ABSTRACT

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A common dilemma that occurs in life involves choosing between rewards available in the present and greater rewards that require willingness to wait or work (Funder & Block 1989). Delayed gratification is a learned behavior where the individual sets aside feelings of satisfaction or gratification until a pre-determined time (Hodges 2001). The current study investigates the relationship between the personality trait of self-monitoring (high vs. low), and one's ability to delay gratification. Previous research has found a relationship between impulse buying and self-monitoring, where high self-monitors are more likely to engage in impulse buying behaviors and the opposite for low self-monitors (Lazarus & DeBono 2009). In the current study, participants will receive four pairs of consumer product advertisements, two of which manipulate delay of gratification. One product will show immediate gratification with a smaller reward, while the other product will show delayed gratification with a larger reward. Based off previous findings, the current hypothesis is that high self-monitors and high impulse buyers are likely to prefer immediately gratifying products. Additionally, it is hypothesized that low self-monitors and low impulse buyers are likely to prefer products that delay gratification.

The results of the study found there was no significant difference between self-monitoring, delay of gratification, and impulse buying. These surprising findings create

opportunity for future research to investigate the type of product that consumers are exposed to in relation to immediate and delayed gratification as well as other measures of impulse buying.

Do good things come to those who wait? The role of delayed gratification and individual differences in consumer purchasing decisions

In a world filled with products promising immediate results, it's no wonder we have difficulty waiting patiently. With concepts such as instant coffee, fast-food restaurants, e-mail, and advertisements for products swearing that you will see "results in 3-5 days or your money back", we have become accustomed to getting what we want relatively quickly. A common dilemma that occurs in life involves choosing between rewards available in the present and greater rewards that require willingness to wait or work (Funder & Block 1989). The concept of delayed gratification is a learned behavior where the individual sets aside feelings of satisfaction or gratification until a pre-determined time, usually associated with an external achievement (Hodges 2001). The mental processes behind delaying gratification are as follows: an immediately available reward must be strongly desired before motivational tendencies related to the expression or containment of a motivational impulse become relevant. If there is a strong motivation towards immediate gratification, the individual must question how they will contain this impulse; do they grab the reward? Or do they instead inhibit the strong impulse towards gratification? The latter is the concept of delaying gratification. The ability to delay gratification is seen as a competency or skill that a person uses to gain positive outcomes in life.

Delay of gratification has been regarded as an important topic because it characterizes many important behaviors and situations that occur in adult life. Some examples include pursuing a troublesome job in order to receive pay later, staying at a mediocre college to receive a degree later, or denying oneself the pleasure of spending money immediately to later invest it so there will be larger amount (Funder & Block 1989). The frequency and importance of these various delay situations have helped make this type of behavior a focus of interest within

personality psychology (Funder & Block 1989; J.H. Block 1951; J. Block, 1950; among others).

Delay of gratification can be considered a key feature used to characterize older children and adults with self-regulatory problems (e.g., aggressiveness, conduct disorders, hyperactivity), and that many self-instructional, cognitive-behavioral procedures have been devised to treat problems of impulse control (Rodriguez, Mischel, Shoda 1989). Each delay situation seems to include two elements: (1) a task structure with contingencies that must be understood and implemented through cognitive strategies and processes and (2) a strongly desired, immediately accessible reward, the impulse toward which must somehow be contained if another more strongly desired but not immediately available reward is to be attained (Funder & Block 1989).

Based off the theory that delay of gratification is a learned concept and it requires self-control (which is learned later in life) the majority of research regarding delay of gratification has been with children. One of the most well-known studies regarding delay of gratification was by Mischel (1974). In this typical experiment, children were placed a room and taught that they can summon the experimenter by ringing a bell. They are then given a choice between an inferior reward (e.g. one marshmallow) or a delayed superior reward (e.g. two marshmallows). If the child was able to wait for the experimenter to come back in the room without ringing the bell, he or she would receive the larger reward. The amount of time the subject waited before ringing the bell determined their ability to delay gratification. Although this delay of gratification experiment is typically used with children, there is also research regarding the individual differences associated with delay of gratification in adults.

There are individual differences found in adults, in the degree to which one can delay gratification (Funder, Bock & Block 1983; J. Block 1950; J.H. Block 1951; J.H. Block & Martin 1955; Mischel, 1966,1974). Those who are able to set and achieve long-term goals, generally

have high levels of self-esteem, while those who are unable to do so deprive themselves of the satisfaction and pleasure that is derived from the eventual attainment of that goal (Hodges 2001). In a longitudinal study by Funder, Block & Block (1983) delay of gratification and personality correlates were investigated. The hypothesis of the Funder, Block and Block's (1983) longitudinal study was that a child's orientation to delay or not delay gratification would be indicative of their personality characteristics in adolescence. The results found gender differences as well as personality differences between those who delayed or not delayed gratification. Boys who delayed gratification in childhood were more likely to be attentive, cooperative, and able to concentrate in adolescence, while boys who did not delay gratification in childhood were more aggressive, fidgety and did not have self-control in adolescence. Girls who delayed gratification in childhood were described as independent, resourceful and content in adolescence, while those who did not delay gratification in childhood seemed to be sulky, whiney and seemed extremely upset when under stress in adolescence. These results indicate there are various personality components that can relate to the ability or inability to delay gratification.

The concept of delayed gratification can also be seen in the realm of consumer behavior. Consumers decide whether to make a purchase by weighing the costs and benefits of alternatives. Research on consumer behavior has found that some consumers mention feeling driven to buy a particular product against their better judgment, and as a result, they attempt to control their own behavior to avoid or resist instances of extreme impatience (Hoch & Loewenstein 1991). In early consumer behavior research, Marshall (1890) and Böhm-Bawerk (1898) postulated that people are influenced by both long-term rational concerns *and* by more short-term emotional factors (Hoch & Loewenstein 1991). According to Ainslie's (1975) theory

on impatience, people in general, are disproportionately attracted to immediately available rewards. When two rewards (e.g. the pleasure of a cigarette and the pleasure of a good health) are substantially delayed, the individual is able to make a rational trade-off between them. However, when one reward (the cigarette) is imminent, it exerts a disproportionate attraction (Hoch & Loewenstein 1991).

In their review on time-inconsistent behaviors and consumer self-control, Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) created a model of impatience. A time-inconsistent choice is one that would not have been made if it had been contemplated from a removed and dispassionate perspective. They theorized that time-inconsistent preferences are due to an increase in desire brought on by a shift in the consumers' reference point. According to Hoch and Loewenstein (1991), the reference point reflects the fact that people are less concerned with absolute achievements than with achievements relative to some psychologically relevant comparison point. Psychologists have been interested in the relationship between time inconsistent choices and issues such as impulsivity, addiction, dieting, and other self-regulation problems. One of the most effective inducers of reference-point shifts is physical proximity. Mischel and Grusec (1967) investigated this by using the same set-up as the Mischel (1974) using marshmallows but instead showed the two marshmallows in front of the children as they were waiting, increasing the amount of subjects that could not delay gratification.

Advertisements also use this concept when they vividly stimulate the experience of using a product so consumers visualize the experience, making it easier to pay attention to the advertisement and product (Hoch & Loewenstein 1991; MacInnis & Price 1987; Wells 1987). Marketing techniques such as "scratch and sniff perfume" and allowing customers to borrow the product to see how it looks in their home before purchase, are all drawing the consumer and the

product closer together to make it more difficult for them to turn away (Thaler 1980). In addition to physical proximity of an object having an effect on the desire to purchase a product, the temporal proximity (the immediate availability of a reward) also increases the likelihood of consumption. An example of temporal proximity is in a home shopping situation; one can experience temporal proximity to the ordering process and to the receipt of the product. Options such as toll-free order hot lines and express delivery are examples used by direct-mail catalogue companies to help increase temporal proximity. Research has also suggested that when increasing temporal proximity, it increases desirability as well as increases impatience. The willingness to delay gratification in exchange for greater rewards decreases as consumption objects become closer (Hoch & Loewenstein 1991; Ainslie and Haendel 1983; Benzion, Rapoport & Yagil 1987).

Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) believed that time-inconsistent preferences are due to sudden increases in desire when there is a shift in the consumer's reference point. Reference points can be shifted by various factors (for example, physical proximity to a product in a store), which causes the consumer to partially adapt the notion of owning or consuming that product. Once the reference point is shifted, the consumer will not only attach a positive utility (increased hedonic pleasure) to the product, they will also attach a negative utility (decreased hedonic pleasure) to failure of consuming the product. If the individual fails to consume the object, the individual will feel deprived. In their study, Hoch and Loewenstein present three different types of consumption that could occur when an individual is asked to choose between immediate and delayed consumption: constant deprivation, transient deprivation and intensifying deprivation. Constant deprivation is where the more deprived one feels while waiting, the greater the incentive to consume quickly so they can terminate the feeling of negative utility. In transient

deprivation, the consumer might choose the delayed option because they believe the delay is short lived and they can concentrate on other activities while they wait. In intensifying deprivation, the individual might feel that their desire intensifies over time and would be more satisfied with immediate consumption than delayed consumption.

The concept of delayed gratification and the ability to maintain self-control are closely related. If one chooses to delay gratification instead of giving in to a more immediate reward, he or she is demonstrating self-control. According to Hoch & Loewenstein (1991) the ability to maintain self-control and successfully implement long-run decisions is based on the relative strength of the opposing factors of desire and willpower. Willpower refers to the diverse tactics that people use to overcome, rather than reduce, their own impatience. If a consumer decides to not eat desserts for example, and has made this a relatively long-term goal, willpower will be greater than desire. If the consumer comes into direct contact with a previously dismissed alternative (e.g. passing an ice cream parlor), the increased proximity might increase their desire. If the desire is large enough, it might overpower willpower and there is a need for self-control. Research has found personality factors as a potential moderator in delay of gratification, one of which is impulsiveness. In terms of consumer psychology, this personality factor of impulsiveness is related to the irrational and spontaneous purchasing behavior known as impulse buying.

Consumers buy products for many others reasons besides being strictly necessities, such as to relieve stress or a depressed mood, to express an identity or simply just for fun. This type of 'irrational' purchasing styles is known as impulsive buying (Verplanken & Herabadi 2001). Impulsive behavior in general is a behavior that is not regulated and results from an unplanned, spontaneous impulse. Impulsive buying involves getting a sudden urge to buy something,

without advance intention or plan and then acting on that impulse without careful consideration of whether that purchase is consistent with one's long-term goals, ideals and plans (Baumeister 2002). Those who engage in impulse buying behaviors are more likely to do so with diminished regard for its consequences. In one study, impulse purchases accounted for approximately 40% of all department store purchases (Bellenger, Robertson & Hirschman 1978). Rook and Fisher (1995) define buying impulsiveness as a consumer's tendency to buy spontaneously, unreflectively and immediately.

It has been found that not all impulse buying represents time-inconsistent behavior, but time-inconsistency and consumer self-control (ability to control oneself from making an impulsive purchase) are closely linked to impulsive buying, the novelty or escape purchases, which break the normal buying patterns (Stern 1962). Individuals who have high self-control are found to have better interpersonal relationships, stronger and more cohesive families, fewer emotional problems and higher self-acceptance and self-esteem (Tangney and Baumeister 2001). These types of people are more likely to make purchases based on long-term values and benefits. Those who have low self-control may be vulnerable to being seduced by the moment and a sales pitch emphasizing immediate gratification would be more appealing and successful.

High impulsive buyers are more likely to have more "open" shopping lists and they are more receptive to unexpected buying plans. Their thinking is likely to be unreflective, prompted by physical proximity to a desired product, dominated by the emotional attraction to it and enthralled by the promise of immediate gratification (Rook & Fisher 1995; Hoch & Loewenstein 1991; Thompson, Locander & Pollio 1990). Compared to non-or low impulse buyers, high impulse buyers exhibit hedonic rather than utilitarian considerations for their purchases (Silvera, Lavack & Kropp 2008) The time interval between seeing the item and buying it is very short,

and decision to buy it is made quickly. The person performing the impulsive behavior is not likely to postpone the purchase to gather more information, seek advice or to “cool off” (Weun, Jones, & Beatty 1998). Economists view impulsive purchases as behavioral choices that would not have been made had they been considered in terms of their long-term consequences, rather than their immediate, gratifying benefits (Stingler & Becker 1977; Strotz 1956).

Impulsive buying is also influenced by person-related variables. Some consumers seem to have impulsive personalities, buying impulsively on a consistent basis (Rook & Fisher 1995). Wood (1998) found there was a relationship between impulse buying and educational experience. Rook and Gardner (1993) suggested that certain mood states might elicit impulsive purchase behavior in a more or less automatic fashion by activating themes associated to impulse buying (Verplanken & Herabadi 2001). In their study, Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) investigated the assumption that the impulse buying tendency is rooted in personality. They hypothesized that individuals, who do not plan and deliberate in areas of work or leisure, might do the same in purchasing situations. Additionally, those who usually act before thinking when communicating with others, might also have similar tendencies when shopping. Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) developed an impulse buying scale that included cognitive items (e.g. lack of planning and deliberation), as well as the affective items (e.g. feelings of pleasure, excitement, lack of control, regret) that are involved during an impulsive purchase. In their study, the authors looked at the relationship between the Big Five personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and autonomy) and the tendency to impulse buy. In order to evaluate both the cognitive and affective basis of the impulse buying tendency scale, these two facets were evaluated separately with the personality measures. The results of the study found that the cognitive facet was associated with low personal need for structure, low need to

evaluate, and lack of conscientiousness. The affective facet was found related to high action orientation (ability to regulate emotions) and lack of autonomy, where individuals are more likely to be influenced by others. The results also found a positive relationship between impulse buying tendency and extraversion. High impulse buyers might use the purchase of products to express themselves or express a group identity to make them feel as though they belong (Dittmar and Drury 2000). In addition to impulsiveness, other personality characteristics have been found to be moderating variables in consumer behavior research. A widely researched personality variable, self-monitoring, has been related to consumer behavior research.

According to research by Becherer and Richard (1978), self-monitoring is a moderating variable in consumer behavior. According to Snyder (1974), self-monitoring refers to a general disposition to perceive and guided one's behavior by cues found in ones' self or in the particular situation. High self-monitors, as indicated by their high scores on the Self-Monitoring scale (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986), adjust their behaviors and attitudes to fit the situation they find themselves at that moment. These types of individuals are mostly concerned with the image they portray to others in social situations. Comparatively, low self-monitors, who score lower on the Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986), generally do not adjust their behaviors and attitudes to fit the situation they are in and instead prefer to find correspondence between their attitudes, values and behaviors (DeBono, 2006). High self-monitors and low self-monitors tend to respond differently in regards to appearance-based stimuli.

Previous research has indicated a relationship between self-monitoring and interpersonal attraction. Snyder, Bersheid and Glick (1985) found that when presented with personality based information and a photo of a potential romantic partner, high self-monitors focused more of the time looking the photographs and rated that they preferred the photographs, compared to low

self-monitors who spent more time on the personality attributes and did not focus as much time on the photographs. Additionally, when presented with two potential partners: one of which had a attractive appearance and an undesirable personality and the other had a desirable personality and an unattractive appearance, high self-monitors preferred to the partner that was more attractive with an unattractive personality, compared to low self-monitors who preferred the opposite. The results of this study indicate that high self-monitors are concerned with the images of self they project to others in social situations and this concern might carry over with images conveyed by people whom they associate. Additionally, these results show that high self-monitors make relatively quick feature-based decisions, compared to low-self monitors who take more time. The results regarding low self-monitors reiterate that they strive for congruence between their personal characteristics (e.g. attitudes, beliefs, values) and therefore they are more likely to choose a romantic partner that incorporates similar characteristics (Snyder et al, 1985).

Additionally, self-monitoring differences have been found in the subject of consumer psychology. According to DeBono (2006) research has suggested that self-monitoring is a significant individual difference in relation to the specific types of advertising (Snyder & DeBono, 1985). In a study by DeBono and Packer (1991, Study 2), high-self monitors perceived image-oriented ads as more self-relevant than quality-based ads. The opposite was found for low self-monitor individuals. The image-oriented ads focus less on the product and more on the image associated with using or having the product. Quality-based ads tell primarily about the product itself and provide the consumer with information about the quality or durability of the product. Previous research has found that high self-monitors are more likely to rely on image variables when deciding the quality of a product (DeBono, 2000). In a study by DeBono and Rubin (1995), participants were presented with cheese samples; one had a more pleasant taste

while the other was not as pleasant tasting. Some of the participants were told that the cheese was from France (a pretested more appealing origin), while others were told the cheese was from Kansas (a pretested less appealing origin). Despite the taste of the cheese, high self-monitors preferred the cheese from France, compared to low self-monitors preferred the pleasant tasting cheese with no relation to the origin. In a related study, high self-monitors were also found to prefer products that were presented in more attractive packaging, regardless of the quality of the product. Low self-monitors, however, were more likely to choose the product that was more appealing, regardless of the packaging (DeBono, Leavitt, and Backus, 2003).

Since individuals who engage in impulse buying behaviors do so to express themselves or enhance his or her image in the eyes of others (Bearden, Netemeyer, Teel, 1989) it was hypothesized that there could be a relationship between impulse buying and self-monitoring, as high self-monitors are concerned with the way they portray themselves in social situations. High impulse buyers are also likely to make decisions on whim, even if these purchasing decisions are not consistent with their long-term goals and attitudes and also seek products that grant immediate gratification. Self-monitoring research has found that high self-monitors make quick feature-based decisions for both romantic partners and consumer products, while low self-monitors favor romantic partners and consumer products that have similar goals and concepts as themselves. In fact, previous research has found that there is a positive relationship between self-monitoring and impulse buying, where high self-monitors more often impulse buy compared to low self-monitors. Participants received an impulse buying scale, which was a combination of questions from Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) Impulse Buying Tendency Scale and Weun, Jones, & Beatty (1998) Impulse Buying Tendency Scale, as well as the Self Monitoring Scale (Snyder & Gangestad 1986). The results of this study were that high self-monitors tended to

exhibit impulse buying tendencies while low self-monitors were less likely to exhibit impulse buying tendencies (Lazarus & DeBono 2009). Research has found that individuals who are unable to delay gratification have low self-control (i.e. high impulse buyers), while those who are able to delay gratification have high self-control. From these findings, it is hypothesized that individuals who are high self-monitors and high impulse buyers are likely to seek immediate and attractive rewards, while low-self monitors and low impulse buyers are more likely to wait and receive a more beneficial reward because they prefer items that share the same goals and ideals as themselves.

The current study investigates the relationship between products that delay gratification, buying impulsiveness and self-monitoring. It is hypothesized that when presented with ads for two products: one that promises immediate gratification with average results and one that requires a delay in gratification but with greater results, high self-monitors and high impulse buyers are more likely to prefer the immediate product, while low self-monitors and low impulse buyers will more likely prefer the delayed product.

Method

Participants

132 (42 male, 90 female) undergraduate students at Union College in Schenectady, NY participated in the current study for either course credit or monetary compensation.

Materials and Procedure

Upon arrival, participants were told that they would be participating in a psychology study looking at the advertisements for consumer products. All participants were first given an informed consent form (See Appendix A), followed by a packet of advertisements and questionnaires. In the instructions, participants were told that they would be looking at

advertisements for two different products that share the same parent company. After viewing the advertisements, participants were instructed to fill out a questionnaire regarding their opinions of the different products and the ad strategies. To make these comparisons easier, the two product advertisements were printed on the same sheet. The participants were told that these were products typically marketed in the Midwest and the products names were not disclosed to prevent the products from being familiar (See Appendix B). The products were instead labeled “A” and “B”.

There were four sets of consumer product advertisements in total: toothpaste, acne crème, mouthwash and sunscreen (See Appendix C). The toothpaste and acne crème advertisements presented the delay and immediate gratification products. The immediate toothpaste product promised to “instantly remove surface stains for a whiter smile” and consumers would “start seeing whitening results after 3 days” while the delayed toothpaste product was a “long lasting and effective product” and consumers would “start seeing whitening results after 14 days”. The acne crème advertisements were similar, as the immediate product promised “results after 4 days and removes 50% of all visible acne” while the delayed product promises “results after 10 days and removes 80% of all visible acne”. The sunscreen advertisement and the mouthwash advertisements were added as filler ads. The order of the advertisements (delayed or immediate) were counterbalanced, In addition, to the order of the four advertisements was also counterbalanced, except for the toothpaste ad, which was always first due to the inclusion of participant questions such as gender and age on the toothpaste questionnaire. The questionnaires following each advertisement were identical. These questionnaires included questions such as how effective and influential the advertisement was, how often the participant uses that particular product, a 1-5 Likert scale of how likely they would purchase each product, and which of the two

products they would purchase (See Appendix D). The Likert scale ranged from 1 (*unlikely*) to 5 (*very likely*) if the participant would purchase the product if it were available in this area.

After the participants filled out the corresponding questionnaires, they were then asked to fill out two additional questionnaires, which they were told would help interpret their opinions of the advertisements. These two questionnaires were the scales that measure impulse buying and self-monitoring. The impulse buying scale that was used in the current study is a combination of questions from Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) Impulse Buying Tendency Scale and Weun, Jones, & Beatty (1998) Impulse Buying Tendency Scale (See Appendix E). Previous research has found that these two scales are strongly positively correlated (Lazarus & DeBono 2009). The impulse buying scale used the current study consisted of a twenty-five question 7 point-agree-disagree Likert scale that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The first twenty questions are from Verplanken and Herabadi (2001) while the remaining five questions are from Weun, Jones & Beatty (1998).

The last questionnaire the participants had to fill out was the Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder & Gangestad 1986), which consists of 18 True/False questions (See Appendix F). Participants that scored 10 or below on the self-monitoring scale were coded as low self monitors, while those who scored 11 or above were coded as high self-monitors. After participants completed the remaining two questionnaires they were debriefed and then left.

Results

In order to determine the likelihood that a participant would purchase one product over the other, each participant's difference score was created and analyzed for the toothpaste and acne crème products, as they were the immediate and delayed products. To create this score, the participant's Likert scale score for the immediate product (1-5) is subtracted by their Likert scale

score for the delayed product (1-5). The difference between these two numbers is known as the difference score, and each participant has a difference score for each immediate or delayed product (toothpaste and acne crème). The hypothesis for the current study was that high self-monitors would be more likely to purchase an immediately gratifying product, while low self-monitors would be more likely to purchase a delayed gratifying products. In relation to the difference scores, the hypothesis is that high self-monitors would have higher difference scores than low self-monitors because they would rate the immediate product higher on the Likert scale than the delayed product and would result in a higher difference than low self-monitors who would rate the immediate product lower than the delayed product which would result in a lower difference score. These difference scores for the toothpaste product were then examined with a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) with coded self-monitoring score (high vs. low) as the independent variable and the difference score as the dependent variable. Participants that scored 11 or above on the self-monitoring scale were coded as high self-monitors, while those who scored 10 or below were coded as low self-monitors. This ANOVA revealed that there was not a significant effect of difference scores of high and low self-monitors for the toothpaste product [$F(1,128) = .006, p > .05$]. In contrast to the hypothesis, high self-monitors ($M = -.52$) had lower difference scores for the toothpaste advertisements than low self-monitors ($M = -.388$). These results indicate the high self-monitors rated the delayed toothpaste product more favorably than the immediate toothpaste product, in comparison to low self-monitors.

The difference scores for the acne crème product were examined with a univariate analysis of variance with self-monitoring (high vs. low) as the independent variable and the difference scores as the dependent variable. This ANOVA revealed that there was not a significant effect of difference scores on self-monitoring for the acne crème product [$F(1,128) =$

.105, $p > .05$]. Consistent with the toothpaste advertisement results, high self-monitors ($M = -.77$) had lower difference scores for the acne crème advertisements than low self-monitors ($M = -.44$). These results indicate that high self-monitors rated the delayed acne crème product much more favorably than the immediate acne crème product, in comparison to low self-monitors.

To further analyze the differences between the immediate and delayed products, participant's overall score was analyzed. These overall consisted of four items regarding the participant's view of each immediate and delayed advertisement (toothpaste and acne crème). This overall score was created by adding up participant's rating of which product advertisement (immediate or delayed) was more preferable, appealing, influential and effective. The participant's scores of each of these four questions was added together; participants scored a 1 per question if they chose the immediate product and a 2 if they chose the delayed product. The scores for each of these questions were added up for each participant for the toothpaste and acne products, creating "overall scores" for the ads for the two products. In relation to these overall scores, the hypothesis for the current study is that high self-monitors should have lower overall scores than low self-monitors, as they would be more likely to prefer the immediate advertisement. A mixed factor analysis of variance was performed with the product overall score (toothpaste vs. acne) as the within subjects variable and the coded self monitor score (high vs. low) as the between subjects variable. There was no significant main effect for self-monitoring [$F(1,130) = .196, p > .05$]. For the toothpaste advertisement, similar to the previous ANOVA, high self monitors rated higher on the toothpaste advertisement overall ($M=6.62$) compared to the low self monitors ($M=6.32$). These results were similar for the acne crème advertisement, as high self-monitors rated the acne crème advertisement higher overall ($M=7.05$) than low self-

monitors ($M=6.93$). These results confirm the previous results found which indicate that high self-monitors prefer the delayed product rather than the immediate product.

The relationship between self-monitoring, delay of gratification and impulse buying were also investigated. Previous research indicated that the two impulse buying questionnaires that were used are highly correlated, and in the current study were also found to be highly correlated $r(130) = .752, p < .05$. Due to this high correlation, the scores on these two impulse buying scales were combined to create one overall measure of impulse buying. There was an insignificant negative correlation between the toothpaste difference scores and the impulse buying scale $r(130) = -.079, p > .05$. Similarly there was an insignificant negative correlation between the acne crème difference scores and the impulse buying scale $r(130) = -.004, p > .05$. These two correlations indicate that the participant's ratings of the two immediate and delayed products did not have any relationship with their tendency to impulse buy. Contrary to previous research, impulse buying and self-monitoring did not have a strong positive correlation, as $r(130) = .019, p > .05$.

Discussion

The results of the current study were not consistent with the hypothesis. The results showed that high self-monitors were more likely than low self-monitors to choose a delayed gratification product rather than an immediately gratifying product. Further investigation indicates that these results may be consistent with previous self-monitoring research. The two products that were chosen to demonstrate immediate and delay of gratification, toothpaste and acne crème, are products that are typically used to improve appearance. As mentioned before, previous research has found a relationship between self-monitoring and interpersonal attraction. Snyder, Bersheid & Glick (1985) found that high self-monitors, in comparison to low self-

monitors, when presented with information about a romantic partner, were more focused on the picture of the individual rather than the personality characteristics that were given about the romantic partner. Additionally, Snyder and Debono's (1985) study found that high self monitors perceived image-oriented ads more relevant than quality based ads and the opposite was found for low self-monitors. These studies indicate that high self-monitors are more image conscious, compared to low self-monitors. Sullivan & Harnish (1990) investigated the relationship between self-monitoring sex, and body image and found that high self monitors were associated with placing more importance on physical appearance, compared to low self monitors.

In relation to the current study, this previous research helps interpret these surprising results. Due to the cosmetic nature of the two immediate and delay of gratification products, it can be inferred that high self-monitors were less concerned with the time difference between the two products and instead focused their preference on which product would elicit the more appealing result, despite the delay in gratification. These results indicate that for a product that promises to enhance their appearance, even if it delays the gratification for a longer period of time than an alternative, high self-monitors are likely to choose it compared to a product with lesser overall results.

Limitations of the current study were that the products displayed in the advertisements were all cosmetic, which resulted in the high self-monitors preferring the delayed products because they impacted their appearance more positively than the immediate products, despite the time delay. Future research should investigate the relationship between immediate and delay of gratification products and self-monitoring using products that are less cosmetic and do not elicit thoughts of appearance in participants. If these types of products are used in future research, it can be inferred that high self-monitors would be likely to choose an immediate product,

supporting the hypothesis of the current study. Additionally, future research should investigate products that are used more universally. In the current study, one limitation is that it was found that very few of the participants use acne crème on a daily basis. This lack of use could explain why participants were more likely to prefer the delayed product much more than the immediate. If the product was not relevant to the participant's everyday life, it can be inferred that he or she would be more likely to choose a product with greater results and not even pay attention to the difference in time because the product in general is not pertinent to them. The toothpaste advertisement was found to be extremely pertinent to the participant's everyday life, as the vast majority of participants indicated that they use toothpaste on average twice a day. This constant usage of the product can explain why the ratings of the two toothpaste advertisements were more similar to each other than the ratings of the acne crème advertisements. Future research on this topic should investigate products that are used more frequently and more relevant to the participants than acne crème.

Since the results of the current study were not significant, there could be other possible explanations, besides the cosmetic nature of the products, that could explain the lack of significance between delay of gratification and self-monitoring. From these results one could infer that high self-monitors prefer products that promise large results, rather than smaller results, regardless of a time constraint. High self-monitors might be persuaded by advertisements that promise a greater result and are willing to wait for this result. Additionally, high self-monitors could see immediately gratifying products as lower quality, therefore choosing a delayed and seemingly more quality based product, which could be a limitation of the current study.

The results of the current study found an insignificant relationship between self-monitoring and impulse buying, which contrasts previous research. One reason for this lack of correlation between these two variables could be that the scales used to measure impulse buying are not accurate measures of impulse buying. Based on the overall shopping experience, which takes place in purchasing situation, it can be inferred that observational measures could be better than self-reports when looking at impulse buying. Future research should look at better methods of measuring impulse buying and determining if there is a relationship between impulse buying and self-monitoring.

Additionally, the results of the current study found an insignificant relationship between impulse buying and the participant's rating of the two immediate and delayed gratification advertisements. One reason for this insignificance is, as previously mentioned, that the impulse buying scales could not be adequate measures impulse buying. Another reason why there was an insignificant correlation is that perhaps the types of products that were given (toothpaste and acne crème) are not products that are typically bought on impulse. Perhaps consumers consider the brand and quality of these types of products and make more thought-based decisions when purchasing these products rather than purchasing them impulsively. The results of the current study found that overall participants preferred the delayed product better than the immediate. These results can relate to the impulse buying scores because one could infer that individuals are making more conscious purchasing decisions and taking time to make them and are exhibiting less spontaneous purchasing decisions.

The results of the current study add insight into self-monitoring research in the discipline of consumer psychology. Though these results did not support the overall hypothesis, they do shed some light on the consumer preferences of self-monitors in regards to the particular type of

product that the individual is purchasing. Perhaps the purpose of the product; cosmetic, informational, recreational, could impact the purchasing decision of a high or low self-monitor. If the purpose of the product is less focused on improving the individual's personal appearance and more focused on improving another aspect of the individual, perhaps then an immediate product would seem more appealing to a high self monitor. This interesting discovery regarding high self monitors' preference of delayed appearance enhancing products creates an opportunity for further investigation on self monitoring and non appearance enhancing immediate and delayed gratification products.

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Appendix A:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

My name is Rachel Lazarus, and I am a student at Union College. I am inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. A description of the study is written below.

I am interested in learning more about reactions to advertisements for the same type of consumer product. You will be asked to view four pairs of advertisements and fill out questionnaires regarding your opinions of these advertisements. Additionally you will be asked to fill out two questionnaires to assist in interpreting the comparisons of the advertisements. This will take approximately 30 minutes. If you no longer wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study, without penalty, at any time.

All information will be kept confidential.

I understand that even though all aspects of the experiment may not be explained to me beforehand (e.g., the entire purpose of the experiment), during the debriefing session I will be given information about the experiment and have the opportunity to ask questions.

All of my questions have been answered and I wish to participate in this research study.

Signature of participant

Date

Print name of participant

Name of investigator

Date

Appendix B:

Advertisements and Brand Preferences

Many consumer products companies advertise similar products under different brand names. You will be asked to look at advertisements for two different products that share the same parent company. After viewing these advertisements, you will then be asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding your opinions of the different products and the ad strategies. To make the comparison easier, the two product advertisements are printed on the same sheet. There will be four sets of advertisements in total. These are advertisements of products typically marketed in the Midwest. The product and company name have been removed to ensure they are not familiar. The essence of each original advertisement is presented on the sheet of paper. After viewing the four advertisements and filling out the corresponding questionnaires, you will then be asked to fill out two additional surveys to help interpret your opinions of the advertisements. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Appendix C:

Whitening Toothpaste A

Instantly removes surface stains for a whiter smile

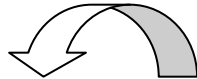
Same effective whitening ingredient dentist's use, is enamel safe

Use twice a day

Satisfaction guaranteed

Start seeing results after 3 days; you will go from a "7" to a "5"

"After only 3 days I saw noticeable results"-Consumer A



Whitening Toothpaste B

Enamel safe, twice a day treatment

Removes surface stains for a shining whiter smile

Dentists use this same whitening ingredient

Start seeing results after 14 days; you will go from a "7" to a "2"

Satisfaction guaranteed

"This is a great long lasting and effective product"-Consumer B



Acne Crème A

Acne fighting cleanser

Removes skin dryness and irritation

Use once a day

Start seeing results after 4 days and removes 50% of all visible acne

"I saw quick and instant results"-Consumer A

Acne Crème B

Smoothes skin, leaving a clean and fresh feeling

Start with one application daily

Eliminates all acne

Start seeing results after 10 days and removes 80% of all visible acne

"All of my acne is significantly reduced and has not come back"-Consumer B

Sunscreen A

Spray nozzle for easy application, great for on-the-go

Waterproof and sweat resistant

Broad spectrum UVA/UVB protection

Can spray at any angle

"This product is easy and so fun to use, my kids love it!"-Consumer A

Sunscreen B

Gentle, hypoallergenic formula

Free of alcohol, dyes and oils; non-greasy

Won't irritate or sting eyes

Absorbs across 100% of the UVA/UVB spectrum

"It makes my skin feel softer after each application"-Consumer B

Mouthwash A

Prevents build up of gingivitis

Kills bad breath germs

Use once a day before bed to prevent dry mouth

Protects against plaque

"I have definitely noticed a decrease in plaque after using this product"-Consumer A

Mouthwash B

After use, leaves mouth with a cleaner feeling

Promotes better health for your mouth

Best if used in the evening

Mouth will feel fresher right after use

"I noticed my breath is fresher and my mouth feels healthier"-Consumer B

Appendix D:

Gender: **Male** **Female**

Age:

Class Year:

Which ad do you like better? (Circle one)

Toothpaste A **Toothpaste B**

Which ad is more appealing? (Circle one)

Toothpaste A **Toothpaste B**

Which ad is more influential? (Circle one)

Toothpaste A **Toothpaste B**

Which ad is more effective? (Circle one)

Toothpaste A **Toothpaste B**

How many times a day do you use toothpaste?

Never Once a day Twice a day More than twice a day

If it was available in this area, how likely are you to purchase Toothpaste A?

1 (*unlikely*) 2 3 4 5 (*very likely*)

If it was available in this area, how likely are you to purchase Toothpaste B?

1 (*unlikely*) 2 3 4 5 (*very likely*)

Which of the two products would you prefer to purchase? (Circle one)

Toothpaste A **Toothpaste B**

Appendix E:

The following questionnaire asks about different aspects of your shopping and buying behaviors as well as more general aspects of yourself. Using the following scale, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer honestly and do not skip any statement. All answers to this questionnaire will be kept confidential and anonymous. All data will be analyzed at the group level and no one will be able to trace an individual questionnaire back to any particular person.

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly
Disagree | | | Neither agree
nor disagree | | | Strongly
Agree |
1. _____ I usually think carefully before I buy something.
 2. _____ I usually only buy things that I intended to buy.
 3. _____ If I buy something, I usually do that spontaneously.
 4. _____ Most of my purchases are planned in advance.
 5. _____ I only buy things I really need.
 6. _____ It is not my style to just buy things.
 7. _____ I like to compare different brands before I buy one.
 8. _____ Before I buy something I always carefully consider whether I need it.
 9. _____ I am used to buying things 'on the spot'.
 10. _____ I often buy things without thinking.
 11. _____ It is a struggle to leave nice things I see in a shop.
 12. _____ I sometimes cannot suppress the feelings of wanting to buy something.
 13. _____ I sometimes feel guilty after having bought something.
 14. _____ I'm not the kind of person who "falls in love at first sight" with things I see in shops.
 15. _____ I can become very excited if I see something I would like to buy.
 16. _____ I always see something nice whenever I pass by shops.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree			Strongly Agree	


17. _____ I find it difficult to pass up a bargain.
18. _____ If I see something new, I want to buy it.
19. _____ I am a bit reckless in buying things.
20. _____ I sometimes buy things because I like buying things, rather than because I need them.
21. _____ When I go shopping, I buy things that I had not intended to purchase
22. _____ I am a person who makes unplanned purchases.
23. _____ When I see something that really interests me, I buy it without considering the consequences.
24. _____ It is fun to buy spontaneously.
25. _____ I avoid buying things that are not on my shopping list.

Your gender: Female Male

Your age: _____

Appendix F:

Personal Reaction Inventory

Directions: The statements below concern your personal reactions to a number of different situations. No two statements are exactly alike, so consider each statement carefully before answering. If a statement is TRUE or MOSTLY TRUE as applied to you, fill in the T, and if the statement is FALSE or MOSTLY FALSE as applied to you, fill in the F, (e.g.  (F))

- (T) (F) 1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.
- (T) (F) 2. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things others will like.
- (T) (F) 3. I can only argue for ideas that I already believe.
- (T) (F) 4. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.
- (T) (F) 5. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others.
- (T) (F) 6. I would probably make a good actor or actress.
- (T) (F) 7. In a group of people, I am rarely the center of attention.
- (T) (F) 8. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.
- (T) (F) 9. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.
- (T) (F) 10. I'm not always the person I appear to be.
- (T) (F) 11. I would not change my opinion (or the way I do things) in order to please someone or win their favor.
- (T) (F) 12. I have considered being an entertainer.
- (T) (F) 13. I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.
- (T) (F) 14. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.
- (T) (F) 15. At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going.
- (T) (F) 16. I feel a bit awkward in public and do not show up quite as well as I should.
- (T) (F) 17. I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).
- (T) (F) 18. I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.