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# Self-Monitoring and Advertising: Evaluations of Image- versus Quality-Oriented Advertisements for Public/Private and Public Luxury/Necessity Products

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Self-Monitoring and Advertising: Evaluations of Image- versus Quality-Oriented  
Advertisements for Public/Private and Public Luxury/Necessity Products

By

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## ABSTRACT

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High self-monitors tend to prefer image-oriented advertisements, whereas low self-monitors favor quality-oriented advertisements. Past research has found that image congruence had a stronger affect on product evaluations of high self-monitors relative to low self-monitors for public products, while this effect did not emerge for private products. Study 1 extended these findings by examining the effect of self-monitoring and public/private products on evaluations of image- versus quality-oriented advertisements. The participants were shown two sunglasses (public product) advertisements and two toilet paper (private product) advertisements; for each product, one advertisement was image-oriented and was quality-focused. The participants completed two questionnaires—one for each product type—and the self-monitoring scale. Study 2 employed a similar method but extended the self-monitoring propensity to different public products: Ice cream (luxury product) and a winter coat (necessity product). Past findings suggest that high self-monitors are influenced more when considering luxury, rather than necessity, products. Although not significant, analyses of Study 1 showed that high self-monitors preferred the image-oriented sunglasses advertisement, while low self-monitors preferred the quality-focused sunglasses advertisement. Both high and low self-monitors preferred the quality-oriented toilet paper advertisement. Although also not significant, the results of Study 2 illustrated that high self-monitors preferred the image-focused advertisement for both the luxury and necessity advertisements more than low

self-monitors. The results of both studies confirm that high self-monitors prefer image-oriented advertisements for public products more than low self-monitors. Possible limitations and future research directions are discussed.

*Keywords:* self-monitoring, public/private product, luxury/necessity product, image-oriented advertisement, quality-oriented advertisement

Self-Monitoring and Advertising: Evaluations of Image- versus Quality-Oriented  
Advertisements for Public/Private and Public Luxury/Necessity Products

Few people would argue that Americans are meager consumers. Much of this amplified consumptive behavior, it may be argued, is a result of the many advertisements we encounter daily. From magazines and newspapers, to television and the Internet, advertising fills our lives with persuasive messages that we cannot easily evade. Given the pervasiveness of advertising, it is no surprise that an abundance of psychological research has been devoted to understanding the effects of advertisements. For instance, past research has found that people evaluate products more positively when they are represented in humorous rather than non-humorous advertisements (Strick, van Baaren, Holland, & van Knippenberg, 2009; Perloff, 2008). Moreover, advertisements that show attractive models tend to be perceived as more persuasive than those that do not (Loken & Howard-Pitney, 1988; Perloff, 2008).

Another important factor that appears to affect advertisement responsiveness is personality. In particular, research has suggested that individual differences in the personality construct of self-monitoring moderates responses to different advertising strategies. High self-monitors, identified as such by their high scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder & Gangstead, 1986), alter their persona to fit the current situation and aspire to project a positive image in social situations. In contrast, low self-monitors seek congruence between their attitudes and explicit behaviors, and therefore their persona remains consistent across social situations (DeBono, 2000).

Research suggests that high and low self-monitors react differently to various advertising strategies. Specifically, high self-monitors tend to favor advertisements that

emphasize the image associated with a product, whereas low self-monitors prefer advertisements that highlight the quality of a product (Snyder & DeBono, 1985; DeBono & Packer, 1991). The functional differences between high and low self-monitors have become remarkably evident in the consumer psychology field. In particular, high self-monitors are most persuaded by “soft-sell” advertisements—those that emphasize the image associated with using the product. Conversely, low self-monitors are most influenced by “hard-sell” advertisements—those that highlight the quality of the product (DeBono, 2000).

Prior findings suggest that high self-monitors evaluate image-oriented advertisements more positively, while low self-monitors evaluate quality-based advertisements more positively (Snyder and DeBono, 1985). Snyder and DeBono conducted three studies to determine the effects of advertisements that stress product image or product quality on high versus low self-monitors’ evaluations and reactions to these advertisements. In Study 1, the participants were presented with a set of two advertisements (image-oriented and quality-oriented) for each of three products (Canadian Club whisky, Barclay cigarettes, Irish Mocha Mint coffee). Subsequently, their evaluations and reactions to each advertisement were assessed. The results supported the hypothesis; high self-monitors evaluated image-oriented advertisements more favorably than low self-monitors, and low self-monitors evaluated quality-oriented advertisements more favorably than high self-monitors. In Study 2, Snyder and DeBono sought to determine whether willingness to pay for a product advertised, with claims about its quality versus image, is moderated by self-monitoring. The participants were presented with either the quality- or image-oriented advertisements for the same three products as

in Study 1 and their willingness to pay for each product was assessed. Snyder and DeBono found that high self-monitors were willing to pay more than low self-monitors for products that were advertised with claims about their image rather than claims about their quality. Conversely, low self-monitors were willing to pay more than high self-monitors for products that were advertised with appeals to their quality rather than image. In Study 3, Snyder and DeBono examined the participants' willingness to consume a product as a function of self-monitoring and image- versus quality-oriented messages. The participants were contacted via telephone by the experimenter who was marketing a shampoo. The experimenter delivered to half the participants an image-oriented message (that the shampoo will make their hair look good), while the other half received a quality-oriented message (that the shampoo will make their hair clean). The experimenter then asked the participants to rate their willingness to use and try the shampoo. The results indicated that low self-monitors were more willing to try and use the shampoo when they were informed that it would make their hair clean, while high self-monitors were more willing to try and use it when they were told that it would make their hair look good. Evidently, high and low self-monitors respond differently to image- versus quality-oriented advertisements.

Similarly, past research has examined the effects of image- and quality-oriented product claims on evaluations of product quality for high and low self-monitors. DeBono and Packer (1991) examined evaluations of product quality as a function of advertisement type and self-monitoring in a series of three studies. In Study 1, some participants were informed that a new brand of cassette tape would be launched in the local area, while the other half were told that a new brand of cola would be introduced into the area.

Participants viewed either an image- or quality-oriented advertisement for either of the two products (cassette tape or cola). After exposure to the advertisement, the participants listened to music from the cassette tape or sampled the cola. The participants then completed a questionnaire that assessed their reactions to the product quality and the proposed advertisement. It was found that high self-monitors who viewed the image-oriented advertisements rated the product as higher in quality than their low self-monitoring counterparts. Conversely, low self-monitors rated product quality as higher than high self-monitors after being exposed to quality-oriented advertisements. Study 2 sought to extend these findings to determine if high and low self-monitors perceive advertisements as differentially self-relevant according to whether the advertisement is image- or quality-oriented. Participants rated 34 advertisements in terms of how of much they believed the advertisements reflected themselves. The results indicated that low self-monitors perceived advertisements that were more quality-oriented to be more self-relevant than high self-monitors. By contrast, high self-monitors perceived advertisements that were more image-oriented to be more self-relevant than low self-monitors. Study 3 extended these findings further by examining recognition errors as a function of self-monitoring and advertisement type (image- and quality-oriented). DeBono and Packer found that high self-monitors tended to correctly recognize image-oriented advertisements as old or new, while low self-monitors tended to accurately identify quality-oriented advertisements as old or new. The results of these three studies illustrate the robustness of findings regarding the different functional orientations of high and low-self monitors, particularly regarding image- versus quality-oriented advertisements.

High self-monitors preference for image and low self-monitors preference for quality extends beyond product advertisements. Past research has found that product and packaging attractiveness, spokesperson attractiveness, the prestige of the store in which the product was bought, and giving compliments regarding the product (i.e. "That [perfume] smells good on you.") all influence product evaluations for high self-monitors. Conversely, low self-monitors' product preference tended to be more influenced by the actual performance of the product (DeBono, Leavitt, & Backus, 2003; DeBono, Ruggeri, & Foster, 1997; DeBono & Pflaum, 1997; DeBono & Krim, 1997).

Although numerous studies have demonstrated reliable self-monitoring differences (high versus low self-monitors) in the context of people's reaction to particular advertising strategies (e.g., advertisements highlighting product-image versus product-quality) and product evaluations, there is a potential heretofore unresearched variable that may moderate these results; specifically, whether the product is publicly consumed or privately consumed (Graeff, 1996). Public products are those that are consumed or used in the presence of others, while private products are those that are not consumed or used in the presence of others.

Graeff (1996) proposes that individuals maintain their self-concept through the material items that they possess. More specifically, the image congruence hypothesis posits that individuals prefer particular brands that hold an image similar to their own self-image. Graeff indicated that public/private consumption in conjunction with self-monitoring may moderate image congruence effects on product evaluations. The main purpose of Graeff's study was to examine the effects of self-monitoring and public versus private consumption within the context of image congruence and product evaluations.

Participants in the study evaluated four products: two publicly consumed products (Chevy Camaro and Reebok) and two privately consumed products (Budweiser and Reader's Digest). The participants completed a Consumer Product Survey on which a product was printed at the top of the questionnaire. The participants' attitudes about the particular brands and purchase intentions were assessed and combined to create an overall evaluation of each product. Then, the participants were asked to evaluate the product according to 16 various image dimensions (e.g., rugged—delicate; excitable—calm; masculine—feminine). The participants evaluated each product in the same manner in turn. After evaluating the four products, the participants evaluated their real and ideal self-images along the same 16 image dimensions. The participants were then classified as either high or low self-monitors through their completion of the self-monitoring scale.

The results of Graeff's (1996) study indicated that image congruence had a stronger effect on product evaluations of high self-monitors relative to low self-monitors, however this was only true for publicly consumed products. Specifically, Graeff found that the congruence between the projected image of the public products and the participants' real and ideal self-image was a better predictor of the evaluations made by the high self-monitors than those made by the low self-monitors. For privately consumed items, however, there was no difference between high and low self-monitors in terms of self-image and product-image congruence as predictors of product evaluations. The general hypothesis that self-monitoring moderates the relationship between image congruence and product evaluations was therefore supported.

The present study attempts to extend Graeff's (1996) findings of the effect of self-monitoring and public/private products on individuals' own self-images to their

evaluations of image- versus quality-oriented advertisements. Graeff's research suggests that high self-monitors preference for image advertisements may be particularly evident for products that are publicly consumed. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to expand on past findings by examining self-monitoring differences in preferences for image- versus quality-oriented advertisements in conjunction with publicly versus privately consumed products. It was expected that high self-monitors would prefer the image-oriented advertisement and low self-monitors would favor the quality-oriented advertisement for public products, but that no such difference would emerge for private products.

To test the hypothesis, the participants completed the self-monitoring scale and were exposed to four advertisements; two were image-oriented and two were quality-oriented. The image- and quality-oriented advertisements marketed two products: (1) sunglasses (public product) and (2) toilet paper (private product). It was hypothesized that high self-monitors would favor the image-oriented advertisements and that low self-monitors would prefer the quality-oriented advertisements, but we expected this effect to only emerge for the public product advertisements (sunglasses). We expected that there would be no such difference for the private product advertisements (toilet paper); in this condition, we predicted that all participants would prefer the quality-oriented advertisement.

## **Study 1**

### **Pretest**

Derived from Graeff's (1996) study, a public product is defined as one that is generally consumed or used in the presence of others. In contrast, a private product is

defined as one that is not generally consumed or used in the presence of others. A pretest was conducted to determine a product that tends to be perceived as the most public and one that tends to be perceived as the most private. The pretest consisted of two questionnaires; one titled "Product Perception Survey" and one titled "Personal Reaction Inventory." The "Product Perception Survey" was a 16-item Semantic Differential Scale in which the participants rated on a 7-point scale the extent to which they believed each of 16 products is better described as a publicly consumed or privately consumed product (1 = *Public* and 7 = *Private*) (see Appendix 1). The "Personal Reaction Inventory," the Self-Monitoring Scale derived by Snyder and Gangestad (1986), consisted of 18 statements, each of which the participants answered as true (T) or false (F) as applied to them; they reported their gender and age at the bottom of this questionnaire (see Appendix 2). This questionnaire classified the participants as high or low-self monitors and was necessary to ensure that the results of the perceived most public and most private products were not related to self-monitoring differences. A total of 27 participants completed the pretest; however, only 20 were included in the analysis (7 participants skipped questions on one or both of the questionnaires). The results indicated that sunglasses were perceived as the most public product ( $M = 1.30$ ), while toilet paper was believed to be the most private product ( $M = 6.25$ ). A dependent groups t-test was conducted and revealed that the participants perceived sunglasses to be significantly more public than toilet paper,  $t(19) = 11.46, p < .05$ . These results were not due to self-monitoring differences. A 2 (self-monitoring: high or low) x 2 (product: sunglasses and toilet paper) mixed factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on

public/private product perception and revealed that there was not a significant self-monitoring x product interaction,  $F(1, 18) = .78, p > .05$ .

## **Method**

### **Participants.**

Eighty-seven Union College students participated for either four dollars or credit for an Introduction to Psychology or Research Methods course. Of the 87 students, 30 were male and 57 were female. Based on their scores on the self-monitoring scale, 28 were classified as high self-monitors and 59 were classified as low self-monitors.

### **Materials.**

Every participant viewed four advertisements, two sunglasses (public product, as determined by the pretest) advertisements and two toilet paper (private product, as determined by the pretest) advertisements. Fictitious brand names were given to the sunglasses and the toilet paper: BellaSol and Toilex, respectively. The two sunglasses advertisements were identical apart from the slogan; one was image-oriented and read, "How to enjoy the sun...in style.", and one was quality-focused and read, "The ultimate UV protection." (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The advertisements contained a picture of the sunglasses, a sunny beach, and a palm tree. Similarly, the two toilet paper advertisements were identical, except for the slogan. The image-oriented advertisement contained the slogan, "Add style. Add elegance. Make an impression.", while the quality-focused advertisement contained the slogan, "Extra thick. Ultra absorbent. Super soft." (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). The advertisements included a picture of a toilet paper roll with two pictures of powder rooms.

Two identical questionnaires (apart from the title) were used to assess the participants' evaluations of the advertisement pairs (see Appendix 3). The questionnaire for the sunglasses advertisements was titled "Sunglasses Ads," while the questionnaire for the toilet paper advertisements was titled, "Toilet Paper Ads". The questionnaires contained eight questions, each of which the participants answered by writing the appropriate letter, A or B, associated with the quality- and image-oriented advertisement, respectively (e.g., "Which ad appeals to you more?"; "Which ad do you think is more persuasive?"; "Which ad do you like better?").

A final questionnaire was used to assess each participant's self-monitoring level (e.g., high or low) (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986). The questionnaire was identical to that used in the pretest titled, "Personal Reaction Inventory." It contained 18 statements, each of which the participants answered as true (T) or false (F) as applied to them. This questionnaire also requested the participants' gender and age.

### **Procedure.**

Prior to participation, all the participants were informed that the study aims at determining their reactions to various advertisement strategies for identical products. They were told that all aspects of the study would not be explained beforehand, but that they would be debriefed at the end of the study. Then, all the participants completed an informed consent form.

Every participant was in both public and private product conditions; they viewed two advertisements of products that tend to be publicly consumed, and two that tend to be privately consumed. Every participant was also in both the image- and quality-focused

conditions; they viewed two advertisements that were image-oriented and two that were quality-oriented.

The participants were first presented with two advertisements of an identical product (sunglasses or toilet paper) and viewed them for 20 s. Then, they completed the evaluation questionnaire for the associated product. This process was repeated for the other product advertisements (sunglasses or toilet paper). Counterbalancing within counterbalancing was performed in which some participants viewed the sunglasses advertisements first, while others first viewed the toilet paper advertisements. Within product type, some participants viewed the image-oriented (quality-oriented) advertisement to the left, while others to the right. This ensured that the order that the products and the advertisement types were presented to the participants did not affect the results.

Subsequent to viewing the sunglasses and toilet paper advertisements and completing the associated evaluation questionnaires, the participants completed the self-monitoring scale (titled “Personal Reaction Inventory”). They were told that we are interested in learning more about them and therefore ask that they complete an additional questionnaire. The participants were then debriefed and thanked.

## **Results**

The eight questions for both the sunglasses and the toilet paper were coded in terms of the participants’ preference for image- versus quality-oriented advertisements. For each of the eight questions in both questionnaires, preference for the image-oriented advertisement was denoted by “1,” while preference for the quality-oriented advertisement was denoted by “0.” To assess overall evaluations, scores on the eight

items were added together. Higher numbers, therefore, represent greater preference for the image-oriented advertisement, while lower numbers represent greater preference for the quality-oriented advertisement. The participants' self-monitoring score was calculated using Snyder and Gangestad's (1986) scoring method. The score is calculated by adding up the participants' responses that match the key created by Snyder and Gangestad; high-self monitors tend to respond in the keyed direction. As recommended by Snyder and Gangestad, high-self monitors have a score of 11 or higher, while low self-monitors have a score of 10 or lower. The mean of the participants' evaluations of the advertisements as a function of self-monitoring and product type are presented in Table 1.

A 2 (self-monitoring: high or low) x 2 (product type: public and private) mixed factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on advertisement evaluations. The ANOVA revealed that the main effect of self-monitoring was not significant,  $F(1, 85) = 2.16, p > .05$ . However, the main effect of product type reached significance,  $F(1, 85) = 141.74, p < .05$ . Overall, this shows that the quality advertisement was most preferred for toilet paper, while the image advertisement was most preferred for sunglasses. The ANOVA revealed that the self-monitoring x product type interaction did not reach significance,  $F(1, 85) = 1.79, p > .05$ . The self-monitoring x product type interaction, however, was in the predicted direction. As can be seen, for the sunglasses advertisements, high self-monitors tended to prefer the image-oriented advertisement and low self-monitors tended to favor the quality-oriented advertisement. As expected, in the toilet paper condition, all the participants tended to prefer the quality-oriented advertisement.

**Discussion**

The present study was designed to test whether high self-monitors would favor image-oriented advertisements and low self-monitors would prefer quality-based advertisements of a public product (e.g., sunglasses). Additionally, the current study attempted to determine whether both high and low self-monitors would prefer the quality-based advertisement to the image-oriented advertisement of a private product (e.g., toilet paper). The results did support the hypothesis. Although the results did not reach significance, they were in the predicted direction—it was indicated that high self-monitors tended to prefer the image-focused version of the sunglasses advertisement and low self-monitors tended to prefer the quality-oriented advertisement, while there was no such difference for the toilet paper advertisements.

Because self-monitoring differences tended to emerge for public products (and did not for private products), the self-monitoring propensity for public products was extended in Study 2. The purpose of Study 2 was to examine self-monitoring differences in preferences for image- versus quality-oriented advertisements for public luxury versus public necessity products. Although the results of Study 1 were suggestive, one concern is that the public product was more of a luxury, while the private product was more of a necessity. This is a potential problematic confound because past research has suggested that high self-monitors are more likely to focus on the image associated with a product when it is a luxury rather than a necessity. Brinberg and Plimpton (1986) found evidence that high self-monitors—who are influenced by social cues—are more likely to comply with group norms when considering luxury products. These findings suggest that high

self-monitors, who tend to focus on the image associated with a product, may be more likely to do so when a product is a luxury rather than a necessity.

In Study 2, we examined whether self-monitoring in conjunction with publicly consumed luxury versus necessity products influence evaluations of image- versus quality-oriented advertisements. Similar to Study 1, the participants completed the self-monitoring scale and were shown four advertisements; two were image-oriented and two were quality-oriented. There was an image- and quality-oriented advertisement for each of the two products; ice cream (luxury product) and winter coat (necessity product). It was hypothesized that high self-monitors would prefer the image-focused advertisement and that low self-monitors will prefer the quality-oriented advertisement for the ice cream. For the winter coat, however, it was expected that there would be no self-monitoring difference; both high and low self-monitors were expected to prefer the quality-oriented advertisement.

## **Study 2**

### **Pretest**

In the present study, a luxury product is defined as one that is desired, but is not necessary for social or biological survival. Conversely, a necessity product is defined as one that is necessary for social or biological survival. Similar to Study 1, a pretest was conducted to determine a product that is typically believed to be a luxury and one that is typically believed to be a necessity. A total of 20 Union College students completed the pretest, which consisted of two questionnaires titled “Product Perception Survey” and “Personal Reaction Inventory.” The “Product Perception Survey” was a 12-item Semantic Differential Scale in which the participants rated on a 7-point scale the extent to

which they believed each of the 12 products is more of a luxury or a necessity (1 = *Luxury* and 7 = *Necessity*) (see Appendix 4). The “Personal Reaction Inventory” classified the participants as high or low self monitors and was identical to that used in Study 1. It contained 18 statements, each of which the participants answered as true (T) or false (F) as applied to them and requested the participants’ gender and age. This questionnaire was also used to ensure that the products that were mostly perceived as a luxury or necessity were not due to self-monitoring differences. The results indicated that ice cream was most often perceived as a luxury product ( $M = 2.05$ ), while a winter coat was most often believed to be a necessity ( $M = 6.45$ ). A dependent groups t-test was performed and revealed that the participants perceived ice cream to be significantly more of a luxury product than a winter coat,  $t(19) = 14.54, p < .05$ . These results were not related to self-monitoring differences. A 2 (self-monitoring: high or low) x 2 (product: ice cream and winter coat) mixed factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on luxury/necessity product perception and indicated that the self-monitoring x product interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 18) = .74, p > .05$ .

## **Method**

### **Participants.**

One-hundred Union College students participated in the current study for either four dollars or credit for an Introduction to Psychology or Research Methods course. However, only 99 were included in the analysis (one participants skipped a question on the Self-Monitoring questionnaire). Of the 99 students, 25 were male and 74 were female. Forty-seven of the participants were classified as high self-monitors and 52 were classified as low self-monitors.

**Materials.**

All the participants viewed four advertisements, two ice cream (luxury product, as determined by the pretest) advertisements and two winter coat (necessity product, as determined by the pretest) advertisements. Supreme Creamery and IceMeister were the fictitious brand names on the ice cream and winter coat advertisements, respectively. The two ice cream advertisements and the two winter coat advertisements were identical apart from the slogan. One of the ice cream advertisements was image-oriented (“Good fun. Good friends. Good times.”) and one was quality-focused (“Extra creamy. Ultra flavorful. Wonderfully delicious.”) (see Figure 5 and Figure 6). The advertisements contained a picture of five people laughing and eating ice cream cones and two identical pictures containing three soft serve ice cream cones. Similarly, one of the winter coat advertisements was image-oriented (“Be trendy. Be stylish. Make an impression.”) and one was quality-focused (“Extreme warmth. Ultimate comfort. Maximum moisture protection.”) (see Figure 7 and Figure 8). The advertisements included a picture of a winter coat with a snowflake background.

Two questionnaires, containing 8 identical questions, were used to examine the participants’ perceptions of the advertisement pairs (e.g., “Which ad appeals to you more?”; “Which ad do you think is more persuasive?”; “Which ad do you like better?”) (see Appendix 5). The questionnaire for the ice cream advertisements was titled “Ice Cream Ads,” while the questionnaire for the winter coat advertisements was titled, “Winter Coat Ads”. The participants answered each question by writing the appropriate letter associated with their preference for the quality- or image-oriented advertisement (A for the quality-oriented advertisement and B for the image-focused advertisement).

The same questionnaire that was used in the pretest, titled “Personal Reaction Inventory,” was used to assess the participants’ self-monitoring level (e.g., high or low) (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986). It included 18 statements, each of which the participants answered as true (T) or false (F) as applied to them. Additionally, this questionnaire requested the participants’ gender and age.

**Procedure.**

Before participation, participants were told that the study will examine their reactions to different advertisement strategies for identical products. They were informed that all aspects of the study would not be clarified prior to participation, but that they would be debriefed at the end of the study. Subsequently, every participant completed an informed consent form.

Every participant was in both luxury and necessity product conditions; they viewed two advertisements of products that are typically perceived as a luxury, and two that are typically perceived as a necessity. All the participants were in both the image- and quality-focused conditions; they viewed two advertisements that were image-oriented and two that were quality-oriented.

The participants were first shown two advertisements for the same product (either ice cream or winter coat) and viewed them for 20s. Then, they completed the evaluation questionnaire associated with the relevant product. This same procedure was replicated for the other product. Counterbalancing within counterbalancing was completed in which some participants first viewed the ice cream advertisements, while others first viewed the winter coat advertisements. Moreover, some participants viewed the image-oriented (quality-oriented) advertisement to the left, while others to the right. This ensured that the

order the participants viewed the different products and the quality- versus image-focused advertisements did not influence the results.

After the participants viewed the four advertisements and completed the two evaluation questionnaires, they were told that we would like to learn more about them through their completion of an additional questionnaire; they then completed the self-monitoring scale (titled “Personal Reaction Inventory”). The participants were then debriefed and thanked.

## **Results**

The eight questions for both the ice cream and the winter coat were scored in terms of the participants’ preference for image- versus quality-oriented advertisements. Preference for the image-oriented advertisement was scored with a “1,” while preference for the quality-focused advertisement was scored with a “0.” Responses were summed across the eight items. Thus, higher numbers signify participants’ greater preference for the image-oriented advertisement, while lower numbers signify greater preference for the quality-based advertisement. Similar to Study 1, Synder and Gangestad’s (1986) scoring technique, using the scoring key, was employed to determine the participants’ self-monitoring score. The mean of the participants’ advertisement assessments as a function of self-monitoring and product type are displayed in Table 2.

A 2 (self-monitoring: high or low) x 2 (product type: luxury and necessity) mixed factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on advertisement evaluations. The ANOVA revealed that the main effect of self-monitoring did not reach significance,  $F(1, 97) = 1.00, p > .05$ . Although not significant, the means suggest that high self-monitors preferred the image-oriented advertisement to low self-monitors for both the luxury and

necessity product advertisements. The main effect of product type reached significance,  $F(1, 97) = 41.88, p < .05$ . In general, this illustrates that the image-oriented advertisement was most preferred for ice cream, while the quality-based advertisement was most preferred for the winter coat. The ANOVA revealed that the self-monitoring x product type interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 97) = 0.05, p > .05$ . These results were not in the predicted direction. As is evident, high self-monitors tended to prefer the image-oriented advertisement more than low self-monitors for both the ice cream and winter coat advertisements.

### **Discussion**

The current study attempted to extend the results of Study 1 to determine the self-monitoring propensity for public luxury and necessity products. Specifically, it was designed to test whether high self-monitors would favor image-based advertisements and low self-monitors would prefer quality-oriented advertisements of a luxury product (e.g., ice cream). Additionally, the present study sought to determine whether both high and low self-monitors would prefer the quality- to the image-oriented advertisement of the necessity product (e.g., winter coat). The results did not support the hypothesis. Instead, the results indicated that high self-monitors, over low self-monitors, preferred the image-focused advertisement for both the ice cream and winter coat advertisements.

### **General Discussion**

The present experiments were designed to test whether evaluations of various advertising strategies are influenced by fundamental orientation differences in self-monitoring and product type. Specifically, Study 1 sought to determine whether public versus private products affect advertisement evaluations, while Study 2 attempted to

determine whether luxury versus necessity products affect advertisement preference. In Study 1, it was indicated that high self-monitors tended to prefer the image-oriented advertisements, while low self-monitors tended to favor the quality-oriented advertisements for the public product (e.g., sunglasses). There was not a self-monitoring difference for preference in advertisements for private products—both high and low self-monitors preferred the quality-oriented toilet paper advertisement. The results of Study 2 did not support the hypothesis that high-self monitors would prefer the image-based advertisement and low self-monitors would favor the quality-focused advertisement for luxury products, while no self-monitoring difference would emerge for necessity products. Rather, the results suggested that high self-monitors preferred the image-oriented advertisements for both the luxury and necessity products, more so than low self-monitors.

The results of Study 1 are consistent with past findings. Past research suggests that high self-monitors tend to prefer advertisements that emphasize the image associated with a product, whereas low self-monitors favor advertisements that highlight the quality of a product. For instance, Snyder and DeBono (1985) found that high self-monitors assessed image-based advertisements more positively and were willing to pay more for the product than low self-monitors, while low self-monitors perceived quality-focused advertisements as more favorable and were willing to pay more for the product than high self-monitors. Correspondingly, when the advertisement highlights the image associated with using the product, DeBono and Packer (1991) found that high self-monitors rate the product as higher in quality, as more self-relevant, and they more easily identify the advertisement as old or new than low self-monitors. However, when the advertisement

emphasizes the product's quality, low self-monitors rate products as higher in quality, as more self-relevant, and they more easily recognize the advertisement as old or new than high self-monitors (DeBono & Packer). Moreover, product and packaging attractiveness, spokesperson attractiveness, where a product was bought, and compliments associated with a product tend to influence high self-monitors' product evaluations (DeBono et al., 2003; DeBono et al., 1997; DeBono & Pflaum, 1997; DeBono & Krim, 1997).

The findings of Study 1 are also consistent with past research that examined self-monitoring differences involving publicly versus privately consumed products (Graeff, 1996). Graeff found that image congruence had a stronger effect on product evaluations of high self-monitors relative to low self-monitors, but this was only true for publicly consumed products. Although not significant, the general direction of the present results supports these past findings.

Previous research suggests that the results of Study 1 may not be due to the public/private dichotomy, but to the luxury/necessity dichotomy. Brinberg and Primpton (1986) found that high self-monitors are more likely to be influenced to comply with group norms when considering luxury, rather than necessity, products. This suggested that high self-monitors, who tend to focus on the image associated with a product, are more inclined to do so when a product is a luxury rather than a necessity. The results of Study 2 were not consistent with Brinberg and Primpton's findings; high self-monitors were not more likely to focus on the image associated with a product when it is a luxury rather than a necessity. Instead, the results suggested that high self-monitors respond more favorably to image-oriented advertisements for the public products—both ice cream and winter coats are publicly, rather than privately, consumed or used. The results of

Study 2, then, suggest that the results of Study 1 were not due to the public product (e.g., sunglasses) being a luxury and the private product (e.g., toilet paper) being a necessity. Overall, the results of Study 1 and Study 2 support the hypothesis of Study 1—high self-monitors prefer image-oriented advertisements for public products more than low self-monitors.

Limitations in the studies may have altered the accuracy of the results. The limited sample size in both Study 1 and Study 2 may have resulted in little statistical power. Specifically, in Study 1, the number of high and low self-monitors was disparate with 28 participants categorized as high self-monitors and 59 categorized as low. Because the trend of the data in Study 1 was as expected, perhaps the null result is a consequence of the limited participant sample. Moreover, although the main effect of self-monitoring in Study 2 was not significant, the trend suggested that high self-monitors preferred the image-oriented advertisement, more than low self-monitors, for both the luxury and necessity product advertisements. Therefore, a larger sample size in Study 2 would perhaps lead to a significant main effect of self-monitoring. Future research should replicate the current studies with a larger sample size in order to increase the probability of finding significant results. Furthermore, the participants only consisted of college-aged individuals who possibly do not make as many purchasing decisions (especially for products such as toilet paper), and thus tend not to frequently evaluate products, as do older adults. Thus, future research should replicate these studies with a more representative sample.

Although sunglasses were found to be public and toilet paper was found to be private, and ice cream was found to be a luxury and a winter coat was found to be a

necessity, as determined by the pretests, there may have been other differing variables associated with the different products. The Study 1 and Study 2 pretests ensured that the products were perceived as the most public/private and most luxury/necessity, respectively. There may, however, be other product variables (e.g., product attractiveness) not accounted for that perhaps affected the results. Future research, then, should use numerous public/private and luxury/necessity products, rather than just sunglasses/toilet paper and ice cream/winter coat, to test the current hypotheses.

Additionally, future research should look specifically at purchasing intentions and behavior, rather than just advertisement evaluations. This would provide insight into the effects of self-monitoring differences in conjunction with public/private and luxury/necessity products on actual purchasing behavior. Such a study would be more valuable to marketers attempting to increase the purchasing behavior of consumers. The present studies contribute to the numerous findings of the functional differences of self-monitoring; however, there is still much knowledge remaining to be acquired.

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Table 1

*Mean of advertisement evaluations as a function of self-monitoring and product type*

Product Type	Self-Monitoring	
	High	Low
Sunglasses	6.36 (2.00)	5.27 (2.81)
Toilet Paper	1.54 (2.10)	1.42 (2.19)

*Note.* Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Table 2

*Mean of advertisement evaluations as a function of self-monitoring and product type*

Product Type	Self-Monitoring	
	High	Low
Ice Cream	4.45 (3.10)	4.10 (3.20)
Winter Coat	2.19 (2.40)	1.67 (2.42)

*Note.* Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.



*Figure 1.* Image-oriented sunglasses advertisement.



*Figure 2.* Quality-oriented sunglasses advertisement.



Figure 3. Image-oriented toilet paper advertisement.



Figure 4. Quality-oriented toilet paper advertisement.

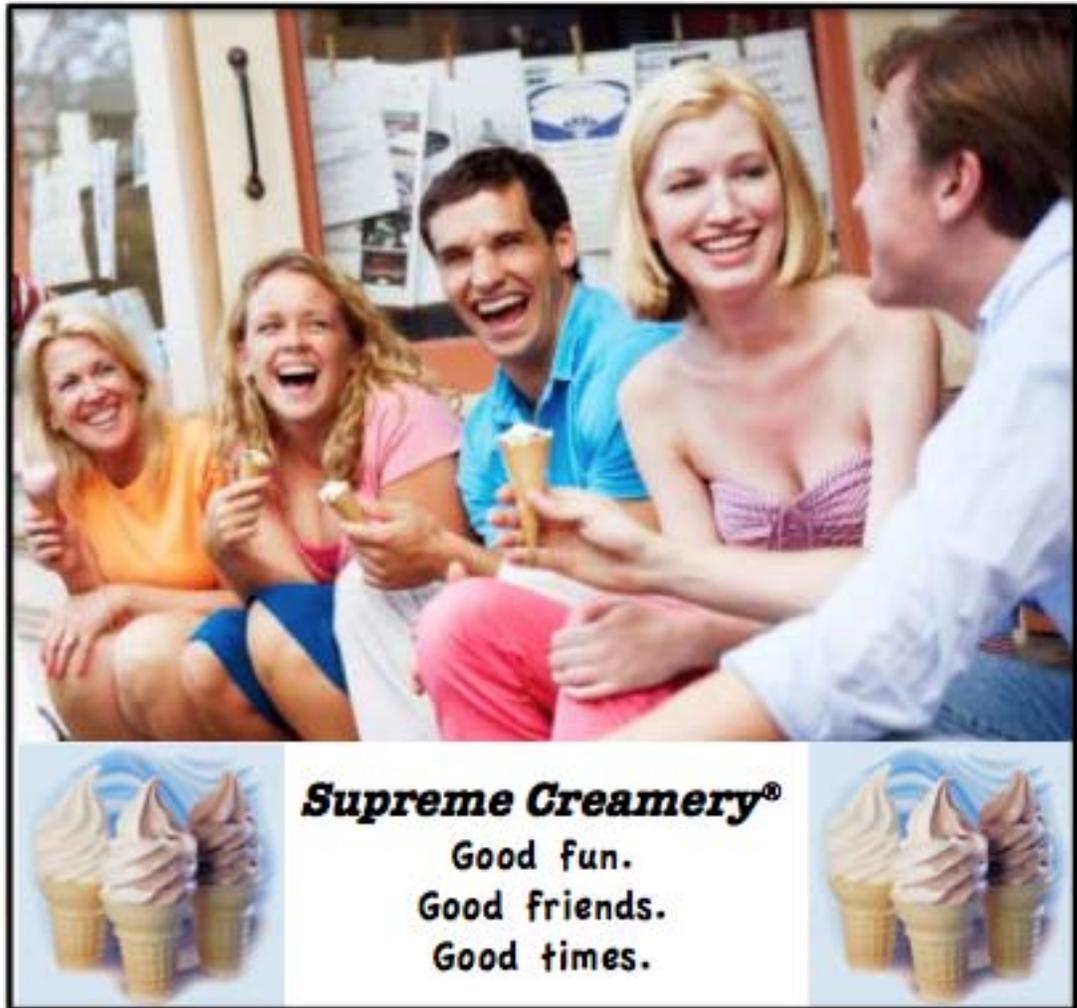


Figure 5. Image-oriented ice cream advertisement.



Figure 6. Quality-oriented ice cream advertisement.



*Figure 7.* Image-oriented winter coat advertisement.



*Figure 8.* Quality-oriented winter coat advertisement.

## Appendix 1

A public product is defined as one that is consumed or used in the presence of others, while a private product is one that is *not* consumed or used in the presence of others. On a scale of 1-7, please rate whether you believe each product is consumed in public or in private (1 = most public; 7 = most private).

**1) Body wash**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Public					Private

**2) Cigarettes**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Public					Private

**3) Razor**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Public					Private

**4) Chocolate**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Public					Private

**5) Sneakers**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Public					Private

**6) Sunglasses**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Public					Private

**7) Toothpaste**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Public					Private

**8) Toilet paper**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Public					Private

**9) Q-tips**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Public					Private

**10) Coffee**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Public					Private



## Appendix 2

**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. (T) (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.

## Appendix 3

## Sunglasses Ads

1. Which ad appeals to you more? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which ad do you think is more persuasive? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which ad do you like better? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which ad do you think makes the product look more desirable? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which ad do you think is more effective? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which ad do you think is more convincing? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which ad is more likely to make you purchase the product? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which ad do you think should be used to market this product? \_\_\_\_\_

## Toilet Paper Ads

1. Which ad appeals to you more? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which ad do you think is more persuasive? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which ad do you like better? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which ad do you think makes the product look more desirable? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which ad do you think is more effective? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which ad do you think is more convincing? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which ad is more likely to make you purchase the product? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which ad do you think should be used to market this product? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4

Individuals consider some products to be a luxury and others to be a necessity. On a scale of 1-7, please rate whether you believe each product is a luxury or a necessity (1 = mostly luxury; 7 = mostly necessity).

**1) Coffee**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**2) Rain Coat**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**3) iPod**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**4) Eye glasses**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**5) Shoes**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**6) Ice cream**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**7) Winter coat**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**8) Backpack**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**9) Beer**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**10) Pants**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**11) Chocolate**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

**12) Shirt**

1	3	4	5	6	7
Luxury					Necessity

## Appendix 5

## Ice Cream Ads

1. Which ad appeals to you more? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which ad do you think is more persuasive? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which ad do you like better? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which ad do you think makes the product look more desirable? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which ad do you think is more effective? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which ad do you think is more convincing? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which ad is more likely to make you purchase the product? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which ad do you think should be used to market this product? \_\_\_\_\_

## Winter Coat Ads

1. Which ad appeals to you more? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which ad do you think is more persuasive? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which ad do you like better? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which ad do you think makes the product look more desirable? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which ad do you think is more effective? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which ad do you think is more convincing? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which ad is more likely to make you purchase the product? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which ad do you think should be used to market this product? \_\_\_\_\_