THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF ADVERTISING: AUTHENTICITY, SOCIAL IDENTITY, AND REFLECTED APPRAISALS

By

Tandy Dayle Chalmers

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As members of the Dissertation Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Tandy Dayle Chalmers entitled The Social Context of Advertising: Authenticity, Social Identity, and Reflected Appraisals and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Linda L. Price
Date: April 16, 2009

Hope Jensen Schau
Date: April 16, 2009

Jeff Greenberg
Date: April 16, 2009

Robin Coulter
Date: April 16, 2009

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate’s submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Dissertation Director: Linda L. Price
Date: April 16, 2009
STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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SIGNED: Tandy Dayle Chalmers
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the role of social context in advertisement responses, specifically focusing on how the interaction between the social identities to which a person ascribes influence the manner in which they respond to advertisements. The first essay explores how social context and social identity influence perceptions of an advertisement’s authenticity. A multi-method, four-study inquiry into perceptions of advertising authenticity combining depth interview, survey, and experimental techniques finds consumer perceptions of authenticity play a key role in attitudes toward advertisements. Findings show consumers naturally assess ads in terms of authenticity and that these perceptions are entwined with self-referencing. In addition, other-referencing is shown to also be linked to authenticity perceptions and ad liking. Finally, a boundary condition on the relationship between authenticity perceptions, self-referencing, and ad liking is discussed, where consumers’ reflected appraisals of how they think others will view an advertisement moderates the relationship between self-referencing and attitude towards the ad.

The second essay explores, using three experiments, the relationship between reflected appraisals, self-referencing, and ad liking in more detail. Specifically, this essay determines the conditions under which negative reflected appraisals do and not decrease attitude towards the ad. First, this essay shows that when identity and self-referencing are primed, consumers resist negative appraisals about an identity congruent advertisement such that negative appraisals do not decrease ad attitudes. This effect however, does not hold when the target market for an advertisement is external to the social identity and
negative appraisals are attributed to out-group members. Here, consumers pay attention to the negative appraisals and decease their attitude toward the ad. This effect, referred to as the dirty laundry effect, occurs because consumers conceptualize identity congruent advertisements as a type of self-presentation. Thus, instead of engaging in defensive behaviors in the face of negative appraisals, consumers become concerned with how they think other people will view them based on the content of the advertisement.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Social embeddedness, and its influence on consumers, presents both a practical and theoretical challenge for marketing practitioners and researchers. Achrol and Kotler (1999) proclaimed that the combination of consumer collectives and strategic marketing efforts “represent the most dramatic scenario of change for marketing in the next millennium.” They identified studying how consumers behave in social contexts as important because this is where consumption happens: individuals cannot be separated from their social surroundings. In fact, not considering the social contexts in which consumers are embedded has been described as a detrimental artifact of methodological individualism that calls into question the external validity of much marketing work because consumers naturally think about their social contexts, whether researchers instruct them to or not (Puntoni and Tavassoli 2007). In a world where peer reactions, influences, and interactions are omnipresent and individuals strive to achieve a sense of community and identity with family, neighbors, online avatars, social groups, and anything else to which they feel connected, understanding the nature of these interactions and their implications for marketing practice and consumer theory is paramount.

This dissertation consists of two essays that examine research topics related to the social context of consumption and how embeddedness within groups impacts responses to advertising. The theoretical underpinning of both these essays is social identity theory, the basic premise of which is that people define themselves in terms of the groups in which they are embedded (Tajfel and Turner 1979). A person’s social identity is compromised of multiple self-relevant social categories (Markus and Kunda 1986;
Markus and Nurius 1987). These multiple identities differ in terms of their overall level of importance for an individual and they can take on different levels of importance depending on contextual factors (Charters and Newcomb 1952; Reed and Forehand 2007; Stryker and Serpe 1994). Importantly, social identities function to create both a sense of belonging to those within a group and a sense of distinctiveness from those outside the group (Reed and Forehand 2007). This is particularly important in the context of this dissertation as I examine the manner in which social identity congruent advertisements are evaluated, specifically looking at the interplay between associating with the identity (highlighting a sense of belongingness to a group) and thinking about the reactions of those who do not ascribe to the identity (thinking about those that are different from the social identity).

The first essay explores how social context influences responses to advertisements designed to be authentic that capture the realism of a lifestyle associated with a social identity. The focus of this study is on authenticity perceptions: a concept deeply rooted in social judgments about what is or is not authentic and closely linked to social identity. This essay is comprised of four separate studies. The first study, utilizing stimuli based depth interviews, explores how individuals who ascribe to a particular social identity respond to advertisements featuring scenes related to the identity. The findings from this study show that authenticity judgments play a large role in developing attitudes about advertisements and that these judgments are closely tied to self-referencing. Moreover, despite the close relationship between authenticity perceptions and the self, ad evaluations are still socially dependent, with other-referencing and reflected appraisals
(i.e. how an individual thinks others will view an ad featuring a social identity) emerging as important in the process linking authenticity perceptions to ad liking. The second study builds the foundation for future work by developing measures for perceived authenticity of advertisements and reflected appraisals of advertisements. Using these measures, the next study explores the relationship between self- and other-referencing, finding that other-referencing compensates for a lack of self-referencing in bringing about ad liking. The final study in this essay, utilizing structural equations modeling, tests the relationships between authenticity perceptions, self-referencing, other-referencing, reflected appraisals, and attitude towards the ad. One of the outcomes of these tests is a finding showing that reflected appraisals about an ad moderate the relationship between self-referencing and ad liking.

The second essay provides a detailed analysis of an emergent finding in essay 2: the role of reflected appraisals in the ad evaluation process. The theoretical foundation of this essay is Cooley’s (1902/1922) theory of the looking-glass self that describes how individuals incorporate how they think others view them into their self-concepts. In this essay, I experimentally examine how reflected appraisals are related to social identity and ad responses and I identify conditions under which reflected appraisals do and do not impact ad liking. First, I show that negative reflected appraisals do not impact ad liking when both self-referencing and identity salience is primed. In these situations, consumers resist the negative information from the appraisal through the use of strategies such as counterarguing and source derogation. Second, I show that negative reflected appraisals about ads do decrease ad liking when the negative appraisal is from an out-group member
and is about an ad that has a broad target market that extends beyond the boundaries of the social identity. This effect, what I refer to as the dirty laundry effect, occurs because individuals conceptualize social identity congruent advertisements as a kind of self-presentation over which they do not have control.

Overall, this dissertation makes several contributions to marketing and consumer research. First, the multi-method approach combining interpretive techniques with both survey and experimental methodologies brings to light multiple perspectives on the relationship between advertisements, social identity, and social context, showing how individuals use advertisements to enhance their identities, how an individual’s social identity impacts responses to advertisements, and how perceptions of others’ views play an important role in ad responses. Second, the important role of social context in advertisement responses is illuminated through an examination of the role of other-referencing in ad responses as well as how reflected appraisals affect ad responses. Third, these studies demonstrate the importance of both perceived authenticity and reflected appraisals in advertisement responses, enhancing theoretical knowledge of how consumers evaluate advertisements and making a methodological contribution by developing measures of these constructions and documenting their effects.
CHAPTER 2: ESSAY 1 - CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF ADVERTISING AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is argued to be the new business imperative and the ‘buzz word’ of the 21st century (Gilmore and Pine 2007). Advertisements are a powerful tool through which companies can communicate authenticity to their stakeholders. The use of advertising as an authenticity communication tool has been heralded as one of the top trends in advertising (Cloud 2008) and is conceptualized as “a new rule in advertising” (Hanna 2007). These accolades for authenticity are mirrored in the practices of marketers and advertisers who rely on authenticity-driven marketing strategies (Lauro 2004). In 1995, Coke proclaimed a return to their roots and implemented an authentic marketing strategy (Taylor 1995). In 1998, Advertising Age declared the key to marketing success is communicating brand authenticity (Jensen 1998). In 2002, Coke pursued a new authenticity-based advertising campaign (Sampey 2002). In 2004, Reebok declared authenticity to be the secret to marketing prowess (Williams 2004) and in 2005, Coke once again focused on an authenticity driven brand strategy (Hein 2005). Finally, in 2007 Fast Company magazine argued that authenticity is the cornerstone of brand success (Breen 2007).

Successful communication of authenticity to consumers is thought to be linked to positive downstream outcomes such as brand identification, loyalty, and sales (Botterill 2007). These positive outcomes are presumed to occur because consumers have an insatiable desire for authenticity (Welch 2008), with “consumers’ search for authenticity
[being] one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing” (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry Jr. 2003, 21). Despite consuming and communicating authenticity being recurrent themes in academic research, with authenticity considered important in several domains, advertising authenticity, while theorized, has received sparse empirical treatment and marketers and consumer researchers have little understanding of what constitutes authenticity in advertising. Further, little is known about consumers’ perceptions of and responses to advertising authenticity or if authenticity is even important in an ad context.

The purpose of this research is threefold: (1) to examine perceptions of and responses to authenticity in advertising, (2) to demonstrate a link between authenticity perceptions and ad liking, and (3) to uncover the process underlying this link. The findings, derived from a multi-method inquiry using depth interview, experimental, and survey methodologies show consumers evaluate ads in terms of authenticity, that self-referencing plays a key role in the process of authenticating ads, and that authenticity perceptions significantly influence ad liking. These findings also demonstrate that other-referencing plays a role in linking authenticity and ad liking and that consumer generated reflected appraisals (where consumers think about the image an ad portrays of them to the outside world) moderates the relationship between self-referencing and ad liking.

Study 1, consisting of stimuli based depth interviews, uncovers a relationship between authenticity perceptions, self- and other-referencing, and ad liking. It also uncovers conditions under which authenticity perceptions and self-referencing do not lead to ad liking: when consumers generate reflected appraisals indicating that others will form unfavorable perceptions of them by associating them with what is shown in the ad.
Study 2 develops and validates measures of perceived authenticity and reflected appraisals. Study 3 experimentally explores the relationship between authenticity, self- and other-referencing, and ad liking, showing other-referencing compensates for a lack of self-referencing. Finally, study 4 tests a structural model examining the interplay between authenticity perceptions, self- and other-referencing, emotional arousal, and ad attitude. The model shows a reciprocal, non-recursive relationship between authenticity and self-referencing and authenticity and other-referencing. It also shows reflected appraisals moderating the relationship between self-referencing and ad attitude.

Theoretical Background

Authenticity in Marketing and Consumer Research

Marketing research has examined the authenticity of non-advertising phenomena including objects (Grayson and Martinec 2004), brands (Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel 2006), persons (Arnould and Price 1999), lifestyles (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), experiences (Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993), emotions (Hennig-Thurai et al. 2006), cultural meanings (Penaloza 2000), and television (Rose and Wood 2005). Collectively, this research focuses on both the production and perception of authenticity in these contexts (Benjamin 1969; Grayson and Martinec 2004). When assessing the authenticity of actual objects/persons/experiences, consumers tend to identify cues indicating the indexical authenticity of the referent (Grayson and Martinec 2004). For example, they
assess the authenticity of a famous painting by determining if it was actually painted by the famous artist. In cases where the referent in question is perceived as a reproduction (and therefore not the original), consumers develop strategies to assess the iconicity of the representation’s authenticity, determining how well the reproduction captures qualities of the original (Grayson and Martinec 2004).

Marketing research on ad authenticity looks at authenticity as both a theme of an ad as well as a characteristic of the ad itself. On the one hand, research discusses how themes of authenticity are presented in advertising. Botterill (2007), for example, discusses how authenticity is portrayed in advertising through the use of rhetoric traditionally associated with authenticity, such as separation from the commercial sphere. Similarly, Holt (2004) discusses how ads showing those who exhibit authentic lifestyles (i.e. those outside the commercial sphere) convey a message of authenticity. Both these works focus primarily on authenticity as an ad theme or topic, centering their discussion on the ad’s content more than on the perceptions of those viewing the ads (although the presumed consumer responses are theorized).

Stern (1994), focusing on authenticity as a characteristic of the ad, defines authentic advertisements as those that “convey the illusion of the reality of ordinary life in reference to a consumption situation” (388). Stern’s conceptualization of authenticity focuses on the representation of realness and verisimilitude: how well the ad communicates genuineness, conceptualized as having the characteristics of real life, and verisimilitude, conceptualized as the conveyance of general truth and the realness of a
situation. Stern’s view of authenticity relies more on judgments made by the consumer about an ad’s authenticity than on the content of the ad.

The focus of my research is on perceptions of advertisement authenticity: focusing attention on consumer perceptions of authenticity, without making claims about the objective authenticity of the advertisements. I utilize Stern’s conceptualization of authenticity in advertisements as the representation of realness and verisimilitude to guide this examination of consumer perceptions of authenticity, heeding Stern’s call for empirical examinations of advertising authenticity to determine if authenticity is important in an advertising context and if the depiction of life experiences in ads resonates with consumers as representing their realities.

Process Underlying Authenticity Perceptions: Self-Referencing

While marketing research has not empirically examined consumer perceptions of authenticity in ads, work examining the relationship between self-referencing, the process through which a consumer relates the content of an ad to their experiences, and ad liking guides the understanding of the processes underlying authenticity perceptions. Stern’s (1994) conceptualization of ad authenticity is based on the notion that successfully depicting users’ life experiences in advertisements results in positive assessments of authenticity. She proposes that someone will perceive an ad to be authentic if they are able to: (1) utilize ‘suspension of disbelief,’ choosing to believe that the illusion in the ad is real and (2) create an imagined link between the experiences depicted in the ad and
their own life: in other words, they engage in self-referencing. The findings of Deighton, Romer, and McQueen (1989), showing consumers engage in empathetic processes, thinking about themselves within the content of an ad, when viewing advertising dramas perceived to be high in verisimilitude provides support for the link between authenticity perceptions and self-referencing. Further, Rose and Wood (2005) empirically examine the link between consumers’ self-concepts and perceptions of authenticity in mediated communications and find reality television viewers negotiate between inauthentic and authentic elements of reality television by engaging in a self-referential process where they find ways to relate what they are viewing to their own lives. In doing so, they evaluate if the representation of ‘reality’ is authentic enough for them to overlook the contrived elements of the show. These findings provide evidence in support of self-referencing playing a role in the process through which ads come to be perceived as authentic.

Self-referencing occurs when consumers process information by relating it to their personal experiences (Burnkrant and Unnava 1989, 1995). Self-referencing usually takes the form of remembering past experiences but can also involve imagining oneself in a scenario (Escalas 2007; Krishnamurthy and Sujan 1999; Noriega and Blair 2008; Sujan, Bettman, and Baumgartner 1993). In general, when self-referencing results in congruence between ad content and an individual’s experiences, ad liking increases (Meyers-Levy and Peracchio 1996; Reed 2002). This increase is often mediated by emotional arousal (Stayman and Unnava 1997; Sujan et al. 1993). Importantly, to induce self-referencing, ad content should reflect a relevant social identity for the viewer to allow them to
realistically imagine themself in the situation or draw upon their memory structures when thinking about the ad (Celsi and Olson 1988; Higie and Feick 1989; Meyers-Levy and Peracchio 1996; Symons and Johnson 1997).

In summary, authenticity is an important appeal in marketing, with ad authenticity conceptualized as closely tied to consumers’ life experiences and authenticity viewed as the pillar upon which successful businesses communications are built (Gilmore and Pine 2007). Extant research, however, has not examined consumer perceptions of authentic ads or the interplay between authenticity perceptions, self-referencing, and ad liking. It is not known how, or even if, consumers view authenticity in corporate communications, especially ads. Nor is it known if there is a relationship between authenticity perceptions and ad liking. To explore these issues, I conducted four studies designed to examine perceptions of ad authenticity as well as the complex interplay between these perceptions, self-referencing, and ad liking.

Study 1: Understanding Authenticity Perceptions, Self-referencing, and Ad Liking

Perceptions of authenticity and self-referencing are theoretically closely tied (Rose and Wood 2005; Stern 1994) with self-referencing also having a positive impact on ad attitudes. The purpose of this study is to examine consumers’ unprompted appraisals of ads to determine if authenticity perceptions emerge naturally in ad evaluations and to explore the nuances of the relationships between these perceptions, self-referencing, and ad liking.
Method

I conducted stimuli based in-depth interviews with 28 distance runners recruited in two cities with large running communities (McCracken 1988). Depth interviews are uniquely suited to addressing this study’s research objectives: (1) they allow for the observation of the natural unfolding of advertisement evaluations (Mick and Buhl 1992), (2) they bring to the surface details of processes and outcomes (Arnould, Price, and Moisio 2006), (3) they are an exceptional tool for uncovering self-referencing nuances embedded in the lived experiences of individuals (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989), and (4) they allow for boundary conditions to emerge through an examination of extreme and negative cases (Arnould et al. 2006).

Research Setting and Stimuli

The research setting and stimuli for this study needed to meet three methodological requirements. First, the context needed an abundance of ads depicting consumers’ experiences so adequate stimuli could be used in the study. Second, these ads needed to represent a product or activity to which consumers could relate their own life-experiences to allow for the emergence of self-referencing. Third, ads needed to be linked to a relevant social identity for all members of the sample so that informants would be motivated to elaborate upon the ads (Boller and Olson 1991). The context of distance running meets all these requirements. Running is a popular activity at both a competitive and recreational level, increasing the likelihood of being able to recruit an adequate
sample. In addition, regardless of level of participation in running, running shoes are a relevant product category for a wide range of consumers (Brucks 1986; Escalas 2007). It is also a highly competitive market, rich with ads making identity appeals and depicting running experiences. Finally, several brands compete in the market, allowing for the use of ads sponsored by different companies, placing the research focus on the ad, not the brand.

To select the ads used in this study, eight runners varying in their level of involvement with running evaluated 25 real print ads from the last 15 years. The runners evaluated the ads according to how well they depicted moments consistent with their running and racing experiences. These runners also assessed the advertisements’ authenticity and how much they liked the ads. Based on these assessments, 15 ads were selected to represent a spectrum of authenticity perceptions and levels of liking, both across ads and within ads. In other words, as a whole the collection of ads included some ads that were generally liked, some that were generally disliked, some that were generally thought to be authentic, and some that were generally thought to be inauthentic. At the same time, several of the ads also elicited a range of responses: with a single ad being liked by some, disliked by others, thought to be authentic by some, and thought to be inauthentic by others. The ads were all designed for the running shoe market; however, some were geared towards advertising a specific shoe while others advertised the activity. The ads, shown in appendix C, depict both genders and a variety of brands.
Sample

I purposefully sought runners with varying degrees and types of involvement with running, also identifying individuals who might serve as negative cases. For example, I interviewed runners new to the activity as well as Olympic athletes. I also interviewed those involved in the administration of the sport, including leaders of running organizations, employees of charity running programs, and individuals involved in the commercial side of the sport, such as running store owners and race directors. Informants represented both genders (16 male, 12 female) and varied in age (range = 21 to 68). Table 1 profiles the informants.

---------- Insert table 1 about here ----------

Interview Structure and Analysis

Interviews lasted from 60-120 minutes during which informants were shown the 15 selected ads and asked to evaluate them (Mick and Buhl 1992). Informants were told the purpose of the research was to understand runners’ perceptions of advertising. After this introduction, they were shown one ad at a time (in a random order) and simply asked, “What do you think?” Informants discussed their perceptions of the ads without interruption and were later probed on their responses. This delayed probing approach, consistent with verbal protocol analysis recommendations (Ericsson and Simon 1984), was used to gain an understanding of how informants naturally thought about the ads. After discussing the ad, informants were questioned about their experiences with running.
Interviews were transcribed, resulting in approximately 600 pages of single spaced data, coded using free coding and QSR NVivo, and analyzed using standard data analysis and interpretation procedures (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Spiggle 1994; Thompson 1997). Important themes were uncovered using an iterative ‘back and forth’ reading process to uncover patterns both within and between informants (Thompson 1997). In addition, responses to the 15 ads across the informants were separately analyzed. The interest here was to describe the natural process of ad evaluation as it unfolded in informants’ accounts (Ericsson 2006). The responses to each ad were temporally recorded, separating out each individual statement to capture the temporal flow of the evaluation process.

Findings

Several important findings emerged in this study. First, authenticity perceptions occur naturally in ad evaluations and are linked to both self-referencing and ad liking. Second, an unanticipated finding shows the importance of other-referencing in the ad evaluation process. Third, analyses revealed a counterintuitive pattern of relationships where informants perceived ads to be authentic, related their experiences to the ad, but developed negative overall evaluations of the ad.
Natural Emergence of Authenticity Perceptions Linked to Self-Referencing and Ad Liking

Authenticity perceptions emerged naturally across informants’ discussions, with these perceptions entwined with self-referencing and ad evaluations. Consider Anthony’s statements:

I’ve done that! Oh and these people over here! Oh, I understand that completely. Oh yeah I do. I like it. I like the humor of it and it’s real. I’ve done that. That makes sense to me. [M45 in response to ‘Naked Man’]

Anthony’s reaction to this ad epitomizes how ads perceived as authentic resonate with consumers as real, induce self-referencing and emotional arousal, and result in ad liking. Aidan’s response to ‘Roadside Speed’ also illustrates this pattern:

I love this ad. I can personally relate to it because every time I run by one of those things, I do the same thing. [M25]

Aidan relates his own experiences to the advertisement, deems it authentic, and “loves” the ad. Similarly, Brayden discusses ‘Track:’

I like this one. This is what happens after a race, always, or a hard workout. It’s the same expression if I won or if I did horribly because you’re tired and pensive and thinking about what you just did. [M21]
Finally, Daniel evaluating ‘Pre Spirit,’ demonstrates the complex interplay between authenticity perceptions and self-referencing, first noting the historical accuracy of the ad and then relating it to his experiences:

I like this one a lot. It’s kind of old school. Steve Prefontaine and his cheesy mustache: that 70s look. I like the crazed look in his eyes too.

There is something really crazy about running: it gets in your soul. Sometimes you feel a little bit crazy. I’ll come home from a hard run and sometimes my wife will tell me, ‘Daniel, you have that look on your face.’ Running kind of does that to you. So I can relate a lot to him. [M41]

Daniel’s assessment of the historical accuracy of the image indicates that some authenticity judgments can happen in the absence of self-referencing. This finding also emerged in other informant discussions. Consider, for example, Paige’s comments about ‘Track:’

I think that’s kind of cool. I like it because it’s on a track. It’s clear that he’s a runner. I guess that really matters to me. I get a little frustrated when it’s just models in ads. Before I even looked at the name, I could tell he was a runner. He has the musculature in his arms and that kind of thing. [F32]
Paige’s comments indicate her perceptions of the ad’s authenticity are dependent upon the use of real runners in the ad and the depiction of reality: she does not explicitly relate the ad to her experiences.

The link between authenticity perceptions and ad liking is also illustrated by ads viewed as not being authentic and disliked. For example, Kerry expresses her disdain for ‘Dirty Car:’

I don’t like this one at all. This one totally bothers me because of the way she is stretching. It’s just wrong. All I see is the fact that she’s totally bent over and pulling her leg back like that. But “inner drive” is cool. But I don’t even think about that. When I see this, all I see is a girl doing a bad stretch on a dirty car. This is just ridiculous. [F30]

In summary, the findings outlined in this section illustrate the natural emergence of comments related to authenticity. Further, these authenticity perceptions are often closely tied to self-referencing, but can also emerge in the absence of self-referencing.

**Other-Referencing**

An emergent finding in this study is informants, in addition to engaging in self-referencing, engaged in other-referencing: inferring advertisements might be self-relevant for someone else. Consider this discussion:
This is alright. I think the people that run every single day might be attracted to this but most runners don’t really run every single day. So I think this would appeal to the real hard-core athletes that are training at least once a day, but from my point of view, I usually only train five or six days a week. So it doesn’t really appeal to me, but I see this appealing to the people that definitely have to run every single day. [Evan M45 in response to ‘Ran Today’]

When engaging in the authentication process, Evan is unable to engage in self-referencing, so he engages in other-referencing to see if this ad might represent the experiences of someone else. He determines that this ad would resonate with others and develops a somewhat favorable evaluation of the ad. This example illustrates informants inferring that an ad might relate to someone with running experiences that differ from their own.

Other-referencing also occurred when informants evaluated ads depicting scenes that related to the opposite gender. Kerry’s response to ‘Band-Aids’ illustrates this situation:

It looks like this at a race. He’s just getting ready. I’ve known people to do that. And I’ve seen people not do it and get blood on their shirts. It’s realistic. It’s fine. It’s funny. It’s not a bad ad. [F30].
Thus, as with self-referencing, other-referencing plays an important role in the authentication and evaluation of advertisements.

*Authentic, Self-Referent, yet Disliked Advertisements*

While the majority of ad responses fit the patterns described previously, an interesting finding emerged showing a counterintuitive pattern of relationships: an informant perceived an ad to be authentic, engaged in self-referencing, but do not like the ad. Informants, aware of the ability of ads to communicate to those both within and outside the running community, express concern for how ads represent runners, and themselves by association, to the outside world. This was especially pronounced for the “Runners. Yeah, we’re different.” campaign (‘Queue,’ ‘Bandaids,’ and ‘Naked Man’). Paige’s comments illustrate how she thinks about how she is perceived by others:

I like that! It’s true. You see runners out doing stuff you would never expect. How many times have I been standing in line and I’m stretching or my pelvis hurts and I’m rubbing my pelvis, and sometimes I step outside myself and think, ‘I wonder what the people in the area are thinking of me?’ because I’m sure what I’m doing looks odd. I think that’s true. [F32 in response to ‘Queue’]

Paige’s response illustrates how she imagines herself being viewed by others and theorizes about their judgments of her. She, however, did not react negatively to the ad as
she felt the image portrayed to the outside world was suitable. On the other hand, Aidan’s comments about ‘Naked Man’ demonstrate how this same thought process can lead to a negative evaluation of an ad:

This is a bit rude. In your face. Off color. But it is realistic. We can relate to this, as a runner, if you’ve been on a trail run. If you have run on the trails, you know what it feels like to look like that and you know what it is like to have to get in your car and drive some place when you’re all muddy. But, the part I don’t like is these people looking at this guy saying, ‘This guy is completely obscene. I can’t believe he’s doing this.’ [M25]

Aidan acknowledges the authenticity and realism of the ad, relates it to his own experiences, but does not like the ad because he thinks others will view runners (and him) badly after seeing it.

Similarly, Kerry and Logan dislike ‘Queue’ and ‘Bandaids’ because the ads present an image of running with which they do not want to be associated and with which they disagree:

Runners, yeah we’re different? I don’t really like it. I’ve never seen or known anyone to do that in line at a bank. I mean, I’ve done it on the side walk waiting to cross the street, but not going so far as to put my foot up
on a post…I think every sport is different… so runners aren’t that different from any other athlete. [Kerry F30]

I think it relates to the fact that running, especially competitive running, is more exclusive than it really is. We’re passionate about it, but people are passionate about different things and I’m not sure that’s being different from anyone else. [Logan M30]

Both Kerry and Logan are uncomfortable with others viewing them as different simply because they are runners. Both informants argue with the ad’s content, presenting reasons why runners are not different from others. Here, they determined that they did not like the judgments others would make of them based on the ads, even though the ads resonated with their experiences.

These patterns also emerged in response to other ads, not part of the ‘We’re Different’ campaign. For example:

I hate this ad. Anytime you show up for a race, this is definitely how everybody is in the race and how it feels. But right here, in the midst of everybody, is not what I want to see when I’m looking at an ad. [Aidan M25 in response to ‘Two Strides’]

Alexis, a running store owner, in discussing the same advertisement states:
I don’t get this one. The thing about running to me, and what I try to capture in our logo, is the freedom of running. And certainly at the beginning of a crowded race you don’t get that feeling. I guess for me, running is a solitary experience most of the time so running in a crowd can be frustrating. [F30s]

Both Alexis and Aidan dislike this ad because it communicates disliked realities of running as opposed to idealized, meaning-laden, images. While both acknowledge the authenticity and verisimilitude of the ad, this is not how they want others to see running: they want an idealized view of running to be communicated to the outside world.

In summary, while not a common response pattern, there were several instances when informants disliked ads even though they perceived the ad to be authentic, engaged in self-referencing, and related their own experiences to the ad. A driver behind this pattern of relationships is informants’ concerns that they would be looked upon with disfavor because the ads communicate something authentic but undesirable to those outside the running community.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine if authenticity judgments emerge naturally in ad evaluation processes and to develop a better understanding of the
relationships between these perceptions, self-referencing, and ad liking. Findings show authenticity judgments do emerge naturally and quickly in the evaluation process and are linked to self-referencing and ad liking. In addition, informants engage in other-referencing where, instead of drawing on their own experiences, they draw upon the experiences of imagined others.

Finally, the communicative nature of advertisements resulted in the emergence of a counterintuitive finding where informants disliked ads they perceived to be authentic and to which they could relate because they did not like the image this portrayed of runners, and themselves by association, to others. The thought process informants went through when forming these judgments is consistent with the looking-glass self theory developed by Cooley (1902/1922) that states that individuals first imagine how they appear to others, then imagine how others judge them, and then develop a self-feeling in relation to that judgment, such as pride or mortification (Cooley 1902/1922). The judgments of others inferred by individuals are referred to as ‘reflected appraisals’ and have consistently been shown to affect the manner in which people view themselves (McNulty and Swann 1994; Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979), their social identities (Laverie, Kleine, and Kleine 2002), and their goals and motivations (Bouchey and Harter 2005; Shah 2003b). The findings from the current study indicate reflected appraisals about ads, referring to how individuals think others will view them based on the content of an advertisement, might also change consumers’ evaluations of ads.
Study 2: Development of Measures of Perceived Authenticity and Reflected Appraisals of Advertisements

Study 1 findings provide some insights into the interplay between authenticity perceptions, self-referencing, and ad liking. However, many questions remain unanswered, such as the nature of the relationship between self- and other-referencing, the structure of the interaction between self-referencing and reflected appraisals, and the nuances of the relationship between authenticity perceptions and ad liking. Before conducting studies to answer these questions, I developed measures for perceived authenticity of ads and reflected appraisals of ads.

Perceived Authenticity Measure Development

Item Development

In thinking about how to best measure perceived authenticity, I first examined Deighton, Romer, and McQueen’s (1989) verisimilitude measure to determine if it would suffice as a measure of perceived authenticity. Despite the theoretical similarities between authenticity and verisimilitude, Deighton et al.’s (1989) measure confounds verisimilitude and authenticity with emotional arousal and self-referencing, with items such as ‘the actions depicted in the advertisement seemed authentic’ and ‘the advertisement portrayed feelings to which I could relate’ included in the measure. This measure would not suffice for the purposes of this study as I wanted to differentiate each
of these components from one another to determine their independent effects on ad liking. After determining that the verisimilitude measure was inadequate, I developed a measure for perceived authenticity. To do this, I conducted an exploratory analysis where I showed 127 undergraduate students several ads and asked them to describe authentic and inauthentic aspects of the ads. Next, I coded their open-ended responses to develop items designed to measure perceptions of ad authenticity. The open-ended responses suggested that an ad is considered authentic when it captures something that is perceived to be realistic and resonates with the viewers’ personal experiences with, and knowledge about, a consumption domain. Using these comments as a guide, I developed 10 items designed to measure perceptions of advertisement authenticity, defined as the degree to which an advertisement is perceived as portraying an image that communicates verisimilitude, realness, and general truth in relation to a consumption situation.

Data Collection, Sample Characteristics, and Measures

To test the items, I conducted an online survey using an undergraduate student sample. I sent an email to 3000 students, randomly selected from the University of Arizona undergraduate student population, asking them to participate in the study. Twenty-four emails were returned due to incorrect addresses. A total of 554 people opened the survey and 399 started the survey. Of those who started the survey, 147 did not complete it. This resulted in a final sample size of 252, corresponding to a completion rate of 45% and a response rate of 8%. The sample was 65% female, aged 17 to 69 (M = 22.32, SD = 7.32, median = 20).
Each participant was shown one of four advertisements representing various aspects of student life: attending football games, studying, attending class, and going to parties. Next, they answered several questions about what they thought of the ad. Specifically, I asked about perceived authenticity, verisimilitude, self-referencing, other-referencing, reflected appraisals, and emotional arousal. All items were measured on seven-point scales and items averaged to form overall scores.

The verisimilitude measure consisted of five items adapted from Deighton et al. (1989) and Boyd (2006): I felt drawn into the advertisement; The actions depicted in the advertisement seemed authentic; The advertisement portrayed feelings to which I could relate; The advertisement made me want to join the action; and Overall the ad did ring true.

Self-referencing was measured using Burnkrant and Unnava’s (1989) four-item scale. Other-referencing, the degree to which an individual thinks about other people’s experiences when viewing an ad, was measured using a four-item scale adapted from Burnkrant and Unnava’s (1989) self-referencing scale. The items used to measure other-referencing were: Seemed to be made with someone else I know in mind; Seemed to relate to someone else I know; Made me think about other people’s experiences; and Thought about other people’s experiences when I was viewing it. This treatment of other-referencing is consistent with other research that measures the construct using items worded similarly to self-referencing measures (Aaker and Williams 1998; Krishnamurthy and Sujan 1999).
Reflected appraisals were measured using a nine item scale, the development of which is described later in this section. Finally, emotional arousal was measured using a nine-item scale (Holbrook and Batra 1987). Items used for all measures in this study are outlined in appendix D.

Item Refinement

An exploratory factor analysis using principal factors extraction with varimax rotation was performed on the 10 authenticity items (Churchill 1979). Two factors emerged in the analysis explaining 66% of variance. The first factor contained eight items and corresponded to how well the ad represented reality. The two items comprising the second factor captured symbolic, as opposed to realistic, associations with the ad. I, therefore, focused only on the first factor. One item’s loading was below .600 and was dropped from the measure. All other items, with loadings of .653 to .845, were retained (Hulland 1999).

The final scale consisted of seven items: This could be a real college experience; This captures a real experience; This is a real portrayal of a college experience; This advertisement is unrealistic; This advertisement is phony; This is the kind of thing a college student would do; and The advertisement was very realistic—that is, true to life. To confirm the adequacy of the measure, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using Amos 16. The model’s fit was deemed acceptable ($X^2 = 19.91$, d.f. = 11, $p = .047$; NFI = .984; CFI = .993; GFI = .978; AGFI = .943; TLI = .986; IFI = .993; RMSEA = .057; SRMR = .02). The measure also showed excellent internal reliability with a coefficient
alpha of .90. Convergent validity was further assessed using composite scale reliability and average variance extracted (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Composite reliability for perceived authenticity was .93. Composite reliabilities for the other measures in the study ranged from .90 to .97, exceeding the recommended cutoff value of .70 (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). Average variance extracted scores ranged from .64 to .74, with perceived authenticity’s score being .67, exceeding the suggested cutoff value of .50 (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

**Authenticity versus Verisimilitude**

Before proceeding with further analyses, I tested whether the perceived authenticity measure better represented the construct of authenticity, separate from self-referencing and emotional arousal, compared to the Deighton et al. (1989) verisimilitude measure. To do this, I performed an exploratory factor analysis using principal components extraction and a varimax rotation on the following measures: verisimilitude, perceived authenticity, self- and other-referencing, and emotional arousal. Results from this analysis are shown in table 2.

--------- Insert table 2 about here ---------

Five factors with eigenvalues over one emerged in the analysis, accounting for 72% of the variance. Importantly, the authenticity items, self-referencing items, other-referencing items, and emotional arousal items all loaded on separate factors but the
verisimilitude items loaded across three of the measures: authenticity, self-referencing, and emotional arousal. The fifth factor in the analysis did not adequately represent any of the constructs and seems to represent three arousal items with cross-loadings of .520, .544, and .565. The manner in which the verisimilitude items spread across the other constructs confirmed the previously mentioned concerns about the measure.

Reflected Appraisals Measure Development

*Item Development*

The looking-glass self and reflected appraisals are not empirically well established in marketing research and have not previously been used in an ad-response domain. I, therefore, generated an initial item pool for this construct by examining how it is operationalized in other academic areas. The looking-glass self is traditionally operationalized as an individual changing their self-concept in response to reflected appraisals (Bouchey and Harter 2005; Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979). For this study, I am interested in how an individual’s attitude about an ad is affected by what they think others think about the way the social identity is depicted in an ad. This is similar to the conceptualization used by Laverie, Kleine, and Kleine (2002) when they assessed the role of reflected appraisals in the importance a person attributes to a social identity. They operationalized this by prompting participants to think about the kinds of comments others would make about their possessions and performances related to a social identity and then asked participants to indicate how they think others think about them.
To measure reflected appraisals in an advertising context, defined as the degree to which an individual thinks others will like the person and social identity depicted in an advertisement, and attribute the perceived judgments to themselves, I developed an initial list of 22 items designed to capture the construct. Specifically, I designed items that assessed how an individual thinks others will view the user of the product depicted in the advertisement, how that reflects upon the social identity associated with the person in the ad, and how those judgments are linked to the ad viewer’s social identities. Five experts then evaluated the items in terms of how well they captured the reflected appraisals concept. Based on their assessments, three items were removed and the remaining 19 items were included in the measure development survey.

**Item Refinement**

An exploratory factor analysis using principal components extraction and a varimax rotation resulted in the emergence of two factors corresponding perfectly to items worded positively and items worded negatively. I, therefore, performed a second exploratory factor analysis in which all items were forced to load on one factor. This single factor explained 60% of the variance. Three items had loadings below .7 and were dropped from further analysis. All the remaining items loaded well on the factor, with loadings ranging from .738 to .861. To narrow down the remaining 16 items into a more parsimonious measure, I selected items with the highest loadings that represented the theoretical range of the construct and included both positively and negatively worded items. The final scale consists of nine items: Other people will think the students are
presented in a favorable way; Other people will like the students in this ad; Other people will think poorly of the students in this ad; Other people will think these students are people with whom they want to be associated; Other people will form negative views of the students; Other people will think the image portrayed of the students is good; I want people to think of me the same way they think about these students; I like how the students are represented; and This is how I want to see University of Arizona students portrayed.

To confirm the structure of this measure, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 16. Results indicate an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 35.13$, d.f. = 20, p = .019; NFI = .981; CFI = .992; GFI = .972; AGFI = .937; TLI = .985; IFI = .992; RMSEA = .055; SRMR = .02). The measure also showed good internal reliability with a coefficient alpha of .94. Scores for composite reliability and average variance extracted were 0.95 and .69, respectively, exceeding their respective benchmarks (Fornell and Larcker 1981; Nunnally and Bernstein 1994).

Discriminant Validity

The final step in the development of the perceived authenticity and reflected appraisals measures was to differentiate them from the other variables that emerged as relevant in study 1: self-referencing, other-referencing, and emotional arousal. Discriminant validity was examined for each construct in three ways. First, I compared the square root of the average variance extracted with the correlations between each pair
of latent constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Discriminant validity is supported when
the square root of the average variance extracted exceeds the correlation. All constructs
met this criterion. Second, each correlation should be less than one by an amount greater
than twice its respective standard error (Bagozzi and Warshaw 1990). Again, all
constructs met this criterion. Finally, I constrained the estimated correlation parameter
between each pair of constructs to 1.0 and performed chi-square difference tests between
the values obtained for the constrained and unconstrained models (Anderson and Gerbing
1988). For each pair of constructs, the unconstrained model showed a statistically
significant ($p < .05$) improvement over the constrained model, supporting discriminant
validity. Composite reliabilities, average variance extracted, and correlations between
constructs are summarized in table 3.

-------- Insert table 3 about here --------

Study 3: Examining the Relationship Between Authenticity Perceptions and Self- and
Other-Referencing

Utilizing the measures developed previously, I now return to the theoretical
questions remaining from study 1. An important finding in study 1 is that individuals
engage in both self- and other-referencing. This unanticipated finding poses some
interesting questions: (1) What is the relationship between authenticity and self- and
other-referencing?; (2) Under what conditions do consumers engage in self-referencing,
other-referencing, or both?; and (3) How do self- and other-referencing relate to ad liking? In this study, I explore these questions using an experiment that manipulates levels of self- and other-referencing.

The first research question I address concerns the relationship between authenticity perceptions and both kinds of referencing. Based on study 1 findings, I hypothesize that authenticity perceptions are linked to both self-and other-referencing, with higher authenticity perceptions corresponding to higher levels of both self- and other-referencing:

H1a: The more authentic a person perceives an ad, the higher their level of self-referencing.

H1b: The more authentic a person perceives an ad, the higher their level of other-referencing.

The second issue I address is the conditions under which a person engages in self-versus other-referencing. Previous work comparing self- and other-referencing demonstrates that the effect of self-referencing on message recall and persuasiveness is much larger than that of other-referencing (Symons and Johnson 1997), although this difference is diminished when referencing an intimate other (Symons and Johnson 1997) and reversed when the task involves imagining oneself in a scenario (Block 2005; Lord 1980). In addition, while research has shown that the effects of self-referencing are heightened when message or ad content is congruent with a person’s identity (Chang 2001; Lee, Fernandez, and Martin 2002; Morrison and Shaffer 2003), the findings from study 1 show individuals tend to engage in more other-referencing when they cannot self-
reference due to an ad being incongruent with their identity or experiences. Together, these findings indicate that when an ad is identity congruent, self-referencing should have a greater positive impact on ad attitudes compared to when an ad is not identity congruent. In contrast, when an ad is identity incongruent, other-referencing should have a greater positive impact on ad attitudes compared to when an ad is identity congruent.

H2a: Self-referencing will be higher (lower) when a consumer is exposed to an ad that is identity congruent (incongruent).

H2b: Other-referencing will be higher (lower) when a consumer is exposed to an ad that is identity incongruent (congruent).

The final objective for this study was to assess the relationship between self- and other-referencing and ad liking. The findings from the first study, as well as the findings from other research (Aaker and Williams 1998; Symons and Johnson 1997), indicate that both self- and other-referencing should be independently and positively related to attitude towards the ad. Study 1 findings, however, allude to there also being an interaction between self- and other-referencing, with other-referencing only being important in the ad evaluation process when a person cannot engage in self-referencing. Based on this finding, I hypothesize that when consumers engage in high levels of self-referencing, also engaging in other-referencing will not impact the degree to which they like an ad. On the other hand, when consumers show low levels of self-referencing, engaging in high levels of other-referencing will result in higher ad liking.

H3: Other-referencing will have a larger (smaller) compensating effect on attitude towards the ad when self-referencing is low (high).
Method

To test these hypotheses, I conducted an experiment where I manipulated the identity congruence of ads and assessed the degree to which participants engaged in self- and other-referencing, as well as their perceptions of the ad’s authenticity and how much they liked the ad. I manipulated the identity congruence of ads so that, in the identity congruent condition, it would be easy for participants to self-reference and in the incongruent condition, it would be easy for participants to engage in other-referencing. This makes it possible to assess the differential impact of self- and other-referencing on authenticity perceptions and ad attitudes.

Participants and Design

Participants in this study were 239 students enrolled in an upper level marketing class at the University of Arizona. Participants were aged 19 to 32 ($M = 21.39$, $SD = 1.44$) and were 45% male. The study was a one-way between subjects design in which the ad congruency condition had two levels: identity congruent and identity incongruent.

Stimuli and Procedure

The stimuli consisted of four real ads from two different campaigns: Axe Body Wash and Wonderbra. The ads, described in appendix E, show experiences stereotypically related to males and females. The ads were chosen because the Axe ads are congruent with a male social identity and the Wonderbra ads are congruent with a
female social identity. Gender identity was chosen as the focal social identity as both males and females have a vast set of knowledge of both genders, allowing for both self- and other-referencing to occur.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the ad conditions. Participants were told I was interested in college students’ views of ads and were given a folder containing one ad and a response booklet, and told to view the ad and complete the booklet. Participant gender was recorded and used to code for whether or not the ad was identity congruent or incongruent.

**Measures**

The measures used for self- and other-referencing and perceived authenticity were the same as those used and developed in study 2. Attitude towards the ad was measured using Holbrook and Batra’s (1987) four-item, seven-point scale, with the items averaged to form an overall score. The adequacy of the measures was assessed by examining both convergent and discriminant validity with the requirements for both validities being met (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Bagozzi and Warshaw 1990; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Table 4 shows the composite reliabilities, average variance extracted, and correlations between constructs for all the measures used in this study.

-------- Insert table 4 about here --------
Results

First, I conducted a manipulation check for ad congruency. If the manipulation was successful, I expected to find higher self-referencing levels for males seeing Axe ads versus Wonderbra ads, and the opposite for females. Results from two separate one-way ANOVAs show this to be the case, with males engaging in significantly more self-referencing when viewing the Axe ads (Axe = 3.68, Wonderbra = 2.53; F(1,106) = 12.64, p < .001) and females engaging in significantly more self-referencing with the Wonderbra ads (Axe = 2.10, Wonderbra = 3.49; F(1,129) = 30.37, p < .001).

The first hypothesis stated that both self and other-referencing would be positively related to authenticity perceptions. To test this, I regressed both self- and other-referencing on authenticity perceptions, controlling for the impact of ad congruity. The results were significant, with both variables contributing significantly to authenticity perceptions (adjusted $R^2 = .23; \beta_{other-referencing} = .26, p < .05; \beta_{self-referencing} = .37, p < .05$), supporting hypothesis 1. Authenticity perceptions were not impacted by the identity congruency manipulation, with the congruence term being not significant ($\beta_{congruence} = -.05, p > .20$). This effect was confirmed with a separate ANOVA showing no significant differences in authenticity perceptions across the congruence conditions (congruent = 3.84, incongruent = 3.73; F(1,237) = .58, p > .20).

Next, I proposed that identity congruence would increase self-referencing and incongruence would increase other-referencing. I conducted two one-way ANOVAs testing the difference between levels of self- and other-referencing across the congruency
conditions. Results show self-referencing levels were significantly higher when identity was congruent (congruent = 3.58; incongruent = 2.29; $F(1,237) = 40.81, p < .001$), while other-referencing was significantly higher when identity was incongruent (congruent = 3.72, incongruent = 4.21; $F(1,237) = 5.46, p < .05$), supporting hypothesis 2.

To test the final hypotheses, examining the combined effects of self- and other-referencing on ad attitudes, I used moderated multiple regression to test the interaction effect (Jones and Reynolds 2006; Ramani and Kumar 2008). Following the procedures of Aiken and West (1991), I mean centered the variables to reduce multicollinearity. Variance inflation factors were acceptable at less than 3. Next, I ran a regression in which only self- and other-referencing were regressed on attitude towards the ad. Results of this analysis show significant main effects for both self- and other-referencing (adjusted $R^2 = .31$; $\beta_{\text{other-referencing}} = .25, p < .001$; $\beta_{\text{self-referencing}} = .45, p < .001$). Next, I conducted a second regression where the interaction term was included as a third predictor variable (Aiken and West 1991). Results of this analysis show the interaction term having a significant effect on attitude towards the ad (adjusted $R^2 = .34$; $\beta_{\text{other-referencing}} = .19, p < .01$; $\beta_{\text{self-referencing}} = .46, p < .001$; $\beta_{\text{interaction}} = -.12, p < .01$).

To further explore the interaction, I conducted a 2 (High Self-Referencing/Low Self-Referencing) x 2 (High Other-Referencing/Low Other-Referencing) ANOVA with attitude towards the ad as the dependent variable, using a median split to create the dichotomous referencing variables (Median$_{\text{SR}} = 2.75$; Median$_{\text{OR}} = 4.00$). Results show a significant main effect for both self- ($F(1,235) = 41.33, p < .001$) and other-referencing ($F(1,235) = 9.64, p < .05$), which are qualified by a significant interaction effect.
These results are shown in figure 1. Follow-up comparisons using a Bonferroni adjustment support the assertion that other-referencing has a larger compensating effect when self-referencing is low compared to when self-referencing is high, with there being a significant difference between high and low other-referencing when self-referencing is low (OR high = 4.57, OR low = 3.39; $F(1,235) = 23.47, p < .01$) but not when self-referencing is high (OR high = 5.06, OR low = 5.15, $F(1,235) = .14, p > .20$). This pattern of results supports the assertion that other-referencing serves as a compensating mechanism for self-referencing such that when consumers are not able to self-reference, they engage in other-referencing, which has a positive effect on ad attitudes.

Discussion

This study shows authenticity perceptions are linked to both self- and other-referencing, as suggested in study 1. Other-referencing becomes especially important in increasing ad attitudes when self-referencing is low, with other-referencing compensating for low levels of self-referencing. A limitation of this study, however, is that the stimuli were selected because participants could easily reference an other in the identity incongruent condition. In situations without a readily accessible other, other-referencing may not be able to compensate for a lack of self-referencing.
Study 4: Assessing the Relationships Between Authenticity Perceptions, Self- and Other-Referencing, Reflected Appraisals, and Attitude Towards the Ad

The purpose of this study is to extend the findings from studies 1, 2, and 3 by exploring the relationships between authenticity perceptions, self-referencing, other-referencing, reflected appraisals, and attitude towards the ad. As discussed previously, authenticity and self-referencing appear to be closely related constructs. Rose and Wood (2004) indicate that self-referencing occurs during the process through which consumers authenticate reality TV. Stern’s (1994) theorizing also implies that an individual engages in self-referencing when judging an ad’s authenticity. Further, the findings from study 1 and 3 show authenticity judgments and self-referencing processes to be linked. Given that the two constructs are conceptually distinct but also appear to be temporally entwined, I propose that authenticity perceptions and self-referencing likely have a reciprocal relationship that is best modeled as non-recursive. This modeling approach is consistent with other work showing that “the non-recursive model is a good representation of reality for synchronous reciprocal effects” (Wong and Law 1999, 71).

**H4a:** The more authentic a person perceives an ad, the higher their level of self-referencing.

**H4b:** The more a person engages in self-referencing, the higher their perceptions of an ad’s authenticity.

I also propose the same kind of relationship for other-referencing and authenticity perceptions.
**H5a:** The more authentic a person perceives an ad, the higher their level of other-referencing.

**H5b:** The more a person engages in other-referencing, the higher their perceptions of an ad’s authenticity.

The impact of authenticity perceptions and self- and other-referencing on attitude towards the ad also needs to be tested. In addition to impacting self- and other-referencing, I also propose that authenticity perceptions have a direct effect on ad liking. Evaluations of authentic referents are often based on criteria not related to the individual, such as object origin or spokesperson legitimacy (Grayson and Martinec 2004; Till and Shimp 1998), suggesting the possibility of a direct path from authenticity perceptions to ad liking. Study 1 findings showing informants determining an ad is authentic because it showed real runners or captured an historical event supports this notion.

**H6:** Authenticity perceptions positively influence attitude towards the advertisement.

Self-referencing has also been shown to have both a direct effect on attitude towards the ad, through cognitive evaluations, and a mediated effect working through emotional arousal (Burnkrant and Unnava 1995; Escalas, Moore, and Britton 2004; Stayman and Unnava 1997; Sujan et al. 1993). Emotional arousal has also been strongly linked to ad liking (Burnkrant and Unnava 1989, 1995; Escalas 2007). Thus, I propose a direct link between self-referencing and ad attitudes, as well as a mediated effect through emotional arousal:

**H7a:** Self-referencing has a positive relationship with attitude towards the ad.
H7b: Self-referencing has a positive relationship with emotional arousal.

H7c: Emotional arousal has a positive relationship with attitude towards the ad.

In terms of other-referencing, I propose that other-referencing will also impact ad attitudes, through both a direct path and a mediated path through emotional arousal. This hypothesis is consistent with research on other-referencing that finds a positive link between other-referencing and ad attitudes (Aaker and Williams 1998) and shows other-referencing operating in a similar fashion to self-referencing, only in smaller magnitude (Symons and Johnson 1997).

H8a: Other-referencing has a positive relationship with attitude towards the ad.

H8b: Other-referencing has a positive relationship with emotional arousal.

The final emergent finding in study 1 was the role of the reflected appraisals in ad evaluations. Here, individuals engaged in self-referencing and generated reflected appraisals about ads where they inferred what other people might think about the ads, and associated those judgments with themselves. The valance of these appraisals impacted the degree to which individuals liked the ads, consistent with other research on reflected appraisals that shows individuals change their views based on reflected appraisals (Felson 1985; Lundgren 2004; Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979). I propose that reflected appraisals will moderate the relationship between self-referencing and attitude towards the ad. Specifically, when a person engages in self-referencing and generates low reflected appraisals (i.e. when an individual thinks others will view the social identity in the ad unfavorably), ad attitudes will be lower than in cases where an individual engages in self-referencing and generates favorable reflected appraisals.
H9: When self-referencing is high, unfavorable (favorable) reflected appraisals will decrease (increase) attitude towards the ad. When self-referencing is low, reflected appraisals will have little impact on attitudes towards the ad.

In summary, I propose a reciprocal relationship between authenticity perceptions and self-referencing and authenticity perceptions and other-referencing, with authenticity perceptions also having a direct effect on ad attitudes. I also propose that both self- and other-referencing will have a direct and indirect, mediated through emotional arousal, effect on attitude towards the ad. Self-referencing’s direct effect, however, will be moderated by reflected appraisals.

Method

Research Setting and Stimuli

To test these hypotheses, I conducted an online survey assessing perceptions of and responses to advertisements reflecting various levels of authenticity. To provide contextual consistency with study 1, I returned to the distance running research site. To select the ads used in the survey, the 15 ads used in the first study were pretested with 127 undergraduate students who assessed each ad’s authenticity and rated how much they liked the ad. The results of this analysis were used to select three ads that varied in content, ad liking, and perceived authenticity, with some participants viewing an ad as more authentic and others viewing the same ad as less authentic. The selected ads were ‘Band-Aids,’ ‘Roadside Speed,’ and ‘Keep Running.’ These ads each depict different
running experiences: ‘Band-Aids’ highlights racing, ‘Roadside Speed’ highlights training, and ‘Keep Running’ depicts recreational involvement. Results confirm the ads differed in perceived authenticity, with all differences being statistically significant ($p < .001$) (Bandaids: $n = 126$, $M = 5.57$, $SD = 1.28$; Roadside Speed: $n = 128$, $M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.38$; Keep Running: $n = 127$, $M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.45$). The ads also differed significantly in terms of attitude towards the ad ($p < .001$) (Bandaids: $M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.62$; Roadside Speed: $M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.37$; Keep Running: $M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.63$).

Procedure

A cross-sectional survey administered online to runners assessed reactions to and perceptions of the ads. Each survey included one ad. Participants visited a website directing them to one of the three survey versions based on their birth month. Participants first answered a series of questions assessing their responses to the ads and then answered questions about their involvement with running, including questions assessing their level of enduring involvement (Bloch, Sherrell, and Ridgway 1986; Higie and Feick 1989), subjective knowledge (Flynn and Goldsmith 1999), and strength of identification with the running identity (Sellers et al. 1997). Analysis of variance showed no significant differences across survey versions for any of these variables or for other measures assessing participants’ running experiences and behaviors. Subsequent analyses combined responses from all surveys. Also, a pretest of the survey rotated question order and showed no differences based on question order.
Sample

Participants were recruited from a local US running group. An email was sent to all club members (approximately 3500 email addresses) requesting their participation in the study. In total, 806 individuals responded to the request and viewed the survey, 618 of those started the survey, and 381 completed the survey, representing a completion rate of 47% and a response rate of 11%. An analysis of differences between early and late responders indicated no statistically significant differences at the .05 level. The sample was 43% male and aged 18 to 78 ($M = 42.24$, $SD = 12.23$). Participants varied in the number of years they had been involved with running ($M = 16.28$, range = 0.5 to 56, $SD = 12.34$) and the age they started running ($M = 24.91$, range = 5 to 62, $SD = 12.30$). On average, participants ran 24 miles per week (range = 0 to 95, $SD = 14.62$) and covered this distance in an average of 4 runs per week (range = 0 to 9, $SD = 1.43$). All but four participants had participated in a race at some point in their life, however participants varied in how much they race: the number of races in which participants competed during the last 12 months and five years ranged from zero to 85 ($M = 6.19$, $SD = 8.78$, median = 4) and zero to 400 ($M = 27.37$, $SD = 42.47$, median = 15), respectively. Running is also self-relevant for this sample, with scores for enduring involvement ($M = 5.58$, range = 1.55 to 7.00, $SD = .77$), subjective knowledge ($M = 5.46$, range = 1.8 to 7.00, $SD = 1.15$), and strength of identification with running ($M = 4.55$, range = 1.13 to 7.00, $SD = .77$) being relatively high.
Measures

Perceptions of authenticity, self- and other-referencing, emotional arousal, reflected-appraisals, and attitude towards the advertisement were measured using the same scales as in study 2 and 3. The items assessing authenticity perceptions were adjusted to reflect the relevant social identity for this study: runners. All measures showed sufficient internal reliability and convergent validity, with coefficient alpha values ranging from .91 to .96, composite reliabilities ranging from .94 to .97, and average variance extracted values ranging from .65 to .90. Correlations, as well as convergent validity scores, are shown in Table 5.

In terms of discriminant validity, the square root of the average variance extracted exceeded the correlation between all pairs of constructs and the correlation between each pair of variables was less than 1 by an amount greater than twice its respective error for all pairs of constructs (Bagozzi and Warshaw 1990; Fornell and Larcker 1981). Further, all chi-square difference tests between models where each pair of variables was allowed to correlate freely and models where the correlation was constrained to one were significant (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Together, these results indicate that the measures in this study showed excellent discriminant validity.
Analysis and Results

**Measurement Model**

Using AMOS 16 and maximum-likelihood estimation techniques, I tested the proposed relationships between authenticity perceptions, self- and other-referencing, emotional arousal, and attitude towards the ad (hypotheses 4-8). Adopting a two-step approach to model estimation, I first estimated the measurement model, and then tested the combined measurement and structural models (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Results from the measurement model estimation, a five-factor CFA, showed a good fit ($\chi^2 = 515.75$, d.f. = 288, $p < .001$; NFI = .957; CFI = .981; GFI = .909; AGFI = .872; TLI = .974; IFI = .981; RMSEA = .046; SRMR = .03). The standardized factor loadings were all significant ($p < .05$) and ranged from .509 to .975, with only three loadings below .700, all from the emotional arousal measure.

I also tested for evidence of common method bias. First, I used Harmon’s one-factor test to determine if common method bias posed a threat to the interpretability of the analysis results (Podsakoff and Organ 1986). The premise behind this test is that if a single factor does a better job explaining the structure of the data than the proposed five-factor model, then common method bias may be a problem. The one-factor model yielded a chi-square value of 281.66 (d.f. = 587). The difference between this model and the five-factor model was significant ($\Delta \chi^2 = 1852.531$, $\Delta$ d.f. = 67, $p < .001$), indicating that common method bias is not a problem.
To confirm these results, I used the procedure designed by Lindell and Whitney (2001) to more comprehensively test for common method bias. In this test, a marker variable unrelated to the dependent variable provides a baseline level of common method variance. This value is used to adjust the correlations between all other variables in the study. If the correlations between these variables are still significant after accounting for method variance, common method bias does not pose a threat to the interpretability of the results. For this study, I used collective self esteem (Luhtanen and Crocker 1992) as the marker variable. The non-significant correlation between this construct and ad attitude is .07. The results of the analysis, shown in table 6, show the partial correlations between all pairs of constructs remaining significant after accounting for common method variance. Further, results from a 95% sensitivity analysis show all correlations significant, validating the conclusion that common method bias is not a concern.

---------- Insert table 6 about here ----------

**Structural Model**

Next, I simultaneously tested the measurement and structural models. The model met both the rank and order conditions for identification (Berry 1984). In addition, the measurement and structural models met all identification criteria (Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger 1998). Instrumental variables were included for all variables in the reciprocal relationships to ensure the non-recursive model was adequately identified (Wong and Law 1999). The stability index (a measure of equilibrium for non-recursive models) for
the model was .386, meeting the criteria of being less than one (Kline 2005). The proposed model, shown in figure 2 with standardized regression coefficients, resulted in a good fit between the model and the data ($\chi^2 = 674.91$, d.f. = 364, $p < .001$; NFI = .951; CFI = .977; GFI = .898; AGFI = .862; TLI = .970; IFI = .977; RMSEA = .047; SRMR = .04). All paths were significant, with the exception of the path from other-referencing to attitude towards the ad, supporting hypotheses 4-8 with the exception of hypothesis 8a. Results of the analysis are shown in table 7 panel A.

To test the theoretical integrity of the model, I explored several different model structures. First, given the non-recursive relationship between authenticity perceptions and self- and other-referencing, I tested a recursive model to determine if it would provide a better fit. I first tested a model with authenticity perceptions influencing self- and other-referencing (without self- or other-referencing influencing authenticity perceptions). This resulted in a worse fit ($\chi^2 = 710.47$, d.f. = 366, $p < .001$; NFI = .948; CFI = .974; GFI = .893; AGFI = .855; TLI = .967; IFI = .947; RMSEA = .050; SRMR = .05; $\Delta\chi^2 = 35.56$, $\Delta$d.f. = 2, $p < .001$). Similarly, I tested a model with self- and other-referencing leading to authenticity perceptions, without the reciprocal relationships. This model also provided a worse fit ($\chi^2 = 739.46$, d.f. = 366, $p < .001$; NFI = .946; CFI = .972; GFI = .889; AGFI = .850; TLI = .964; IFI = .920; RMSEA = .052; SRMR = .06;
Finally, I tested a model where the impact of authenticity perceptions on ad attitude worked through emotional arousal instead of having a direct effect. This model also showed a relatively worse fit than the proposed model ($X^2 = 688.59$, d.f. = 365, $p < .001$; NFI = .950; CFI = .976; GFI = .867; AGFI = .859; TLI = .969; IFI = .976; RMSEA = .048; SRMR = .04; $\Delta X^2 = 13.68$, $\Delta d.f. = 1$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, the path from authenticity perceptions to other-referencing was not significant ($\beta = -.03$, $p > .20$).

**Moderator Regression Analysis**

To test hypothesis 9 proposing that reflected-appraisals moderates the relationship between self-referencing and attitude towards the ad, I used moderated regression to test the interaction effect (Jones and Reynolds 2006; Ramani and Kumar 2008). Following the procedure outlined by Aiken and West (1991), I mean-centered the independent variables (self-referencing and reflected appraisals) to reduce multicollinearity. The variance inflation factors were below 2 in the regression, indicating that multicollinearity was not a problem. Next, I ran a regression in which only the two independent variables were regressed on the dependent variable. I then added the interaction term (the product of self-referencing and reflected appraisals) as a third predictor variable and repeated the analysis. The results of this analysis are shown in table 7 panel B. Results from the first regression show significant main effects for both self-referencing ($\beta = .27$, $p < .001$) and reflected appraisals ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$). The second regression, showing a slightly improved R-square value of the magnitude consistent with moderated regression analyses
(Aiken and West 1991), shows significant main effects and a significant interaction effect \((\beta = -.12, p < .001)\).

Figure 3 shows a plot of predicted values using low, medium, and high values of self-referencing and reflected appraisals. \(^1\) These groups were created by dividing the data into three equal groups using cut-points at the 33\(^{rd}\) percentile (SR = 2.00, RA = 3.04) and 66\(^{th}\) percentile (SR = 4.25, RA = 4.44) points. The figure shows the main effects and illuminates the nuances of the interaction effect. Specifically, consistent with the negative coefficient for the interaction term, in situations where there are high levels of self-referencing, attitude towards the ad was less affected by unfavorable reflected appraisals, compared to situations where participants engaged in low and moderate levels of self-referencing.

\[\text{---------- Insert figure 3 about here ----------}\]

In a post-hoc analysis, I explored what differentiates the high self-referencing group from the low and medium groups by analyzing the individual differences between participants in terms of both psychological (enduring involvement, subjective knowledge, and strength of identification with the social identity) and behavioral (amount the person runs and the number of races they participated in during the past 12 months) characteristics. Results show there are significant differences between self-referencing

\(^1\) Using two groups, instead of three, to explore the nature of the interaction also demonstrates the effects. However, the differences between the medium and high self-referencing groups are lost with this visualization of the data. I, therefore, choose to present the data using a three-group comparison as it better presents the nuances of the interaction effect.
groups for all three psychological variables (EI: SR low = 5.50, SR medium = 5.46, SR high = 5.76; F(2, 379) = 5.50, p < .01) (SK: SR low = 5.32, SR medium = 5.33, SR high = 5.71; F(2, 379) = 4.39, p < .05) (SI: SR low = 4.42, SR medium = 4.35, SR high = 4.88; F(2, 379) = 6.44, p < .01) but not for the behavioral variables (Run: SR low = 24.37, SR medium = 22.29, SR high = 25.16; F(2, 379) = 1.05, p > .20) (Races: SR low = 5.88, SR medium = 6.85, SR high = 5.98; F(2, 379) = .38, p > .20). Post-hoc follow-up comparisons show the low and medium self-referencing groups did not differ significantly from each other for the psychological variables, but both groups had significantly lower means than that of the high group (p < .05).

Discussion

The results from this study support and extend the findings from studies 1 and 3. As hypothesized by Stern (1994) and others and demonstrated in the depth-interview study (study 1), authenticity evaluations are strongly linked to self-referencing and attitude toward the ad. Specifically, authenticity perceptions and self-referencing demonstrate a non-recursive, reciprocal relationship where they are temporally entwined. In addition, other-referencing is shown to have a non-recursive relationship with authenticity perceptions. Both self- and other-referencing are shown to have a mediated relationship with attitude towards the ad, working through emotional arousal. Authenticity perceptions, in addition to the mediated impact on ad attitudes, has a direct effect on attitude towards the ad while self-referencing has a relationship with attitude
towards the ad that is moderated by reflected appraisals where high levels of self-referencing insulate against the negative effects of unfavorable reflected appraisals. Interestingly, while finding a significant interaction between self-referencing and reflected appraisals supports hypothesis 9, the nature of the interaction differs from what was predicted based on study 1 findings. I predicted that unfavorable appraisals would decrease attitude towards the ad, however, these findings show this to not always be the case.

General Discussion and Managerial Implications

The findings from these studies build upon large amounts of hype and rhetoric about the importance of authenticity and demonstrate not only that perceptions of authenticity are important but also how they operate and where they fit in a broader understanding of responses to ads. In addition to placing authenticity perceptions of advertising within the nomological net, I place authenticity within a social context where consumers actively think about the role of others when evaluating and authenticating advertisements.

Study 1 shows that consumers naturally engage in authentication processes when evaluating ads: they readily and quickly assesses ads in terms how well they match their views of what is or is not authentic. Moreover, these naturally emerging authenticity judgments are entwined with self- and other-referencing processes and ad liking. This study also demonstrates that authenticity perceptions in an advertising context are
grounded in consumer experiences and are less related to the company sponsoring the ad. In fact, there were surprisingly few references made to brands or companies in informant responses. This indicates that marketers and advertising professionals should shift their focus from communicating a company’s authenticity to communicating experiences that consumers view as authentic.

Building upon the findings from the first study, the second study develops a measure for authenticity that differentiates it from other related constructs, such as emotional arousal and self-referencing. The development of this measure allowed for further testing of the themes that emerged in study 1, resulting in the uncovering of several important findings related to authenticity perceptions, self- and other-referencing, and ad liking.

One of these findings is that other referencing compensates for a lack of self-referencing in bringing about positive ad liking. An interesting implication of this for marketing managers is that they need to consider the social context in which a person is embedded, and the people in that context, to increase the likelihood of inducing positive ad responses. While self-referencing still seems to be the strongest route to ad liking, other-referencing is an important tool to be used when developing ad strategy. The findings, however, do not tell the whole story about other-referencing as they provide only limited information about how this occurs or under what conditions it would not occur. For example, differences in outcomes that would occur if someone thought about a close other, a distant other, or an imagined other when processing an ad are still
unknown. In addition, whether the other is liked or disliked might affect the manner in which other-referencing works. Future research should explore these issues.

The findings from the fourth study also provide interesting insights into ad authenticity and evaluation. Specifically, in addition to verifying the finding from the first and third studies showing that consumers engage in self- and other-referencing when authenticating ads, I show that authenticity perceptions also have a direct effect on attitude towards the ad. In contrast to other work on consumer judgments of authenticity in mediated environments, I show authenticity judgments happening without self-referencing. While this direct path from authenticity perceptions to ad liking has been established in other domains, this study empirically demonstrates how this process unfolds in an advertising context. Relatedly, an important future research question that should be addressed is how authenticity perceptions operate for ads that do not show user experiences and what implications this would have for overall ad judgments.

I also show that self-referencing has a direct effect on attitude to the ad; however, this effect is moderated by reflected appraisals, with high levels of self-referencing decreasing the magnitude of the effect of negative reflected appraisals. While symbolic interactionism, of which the looking-glass self is a foundational theory, is well theorized, little empirical work in marketing examines the role of reflected appraisals in consumption phenomena nor have reflected appraisals in an ad context being measured or explored. The present work greatly expands knowledge of reflected appraisals in an ad context by showing consumers naturally generate reflected appraisals when evaluating advertisements. These findings indicate that consumers might be viewing advertisements
that relate to their social identities as forms of self-presentation, internalizing the perceived views of others into their ad attitudes. This demonstrates the importance of not only considering the target markets’ response to an ad but also the target markets’ perceptions of the non-target markets’ response.

Finally, I show that reflected appraisals are strongly tied to ad liking and are related to the degree to which a person engages in self-referencing. Interestingly, this relationship manifested in two ways in this essay. First, in the depth interview study, negative reflected appraisals negatively affected ad attitudes, while in the fourth study, high levels of self-referencing insulated attitudes from the negative effects of unfavorable reflected appraisals. This later finding may indicate that when consumers cannot readily relate something to their own experiences, they rely more on others’ perceived perceptions when evaluating ads. Alternatively, this finding could be explained by individuals for whom an identity is very important protecting themselves from negative information and ignoring unfavorable appraisals. These contentions, however, need to be empirically tested. Future research should work to deepen understandings of how reflected appraisals operate in advertising contexts, not only examining the process in more detail, but also exploring the conflicting findings that emerged in this work.
CHAPTER 3: ESSAY 2 - THE DIRTY LAUNDRY EFFECT: THE ROLE OF REFLECTED APPRAISALS IN ADVERTISEMENT RESPONSES

Advertising is a powerful form of mass communication that is important in a variety of social situations (Ritson and Elliot 1999). While consumer researchers know that advertising can be used to communicate to both target and non-target audiences (Grier and Brumbaugh 1999), we have little understanding of how individuals feel about their social identities being communicated to others through a forum that is not under their control. For example, a graduate student, who does not want others to view them as a nerd, may dislike an ad portraying graduate students as nerds. On the other hand, professors might like an ad portraying professors as the most popular people on campus because they like how people will see them after viewing the ad. Advertising serves as a type of self-presentation that is not under the control of the individual. This differs from forums like personal web-spaces, which have similar communicative abilities to ads, but are under the control of the individual (Schau and Gilly 2003). The ability of ads to communicate images to a mass audience forces individuals to consider the reflected appraisals of both those within and outside their social groups.

The findings from essay 1 reveal two interesting patterns of relationships between reflected appraisals and ad liking. On the one hand, the depth interview study (study 1) showed a pattern where informants thought an ad was authentic, engaged in self-referencing, but disliked the advertisement. On the other hand, the final study in the essay showed that high self-referencing, combined with high levels of enduring involvement,
subjective knowledge, and importance of the social identity to the individual, seems to insulate an individual’s attitude towards an ad from the negative effects of unfavorable reflected appraisals. The purpose of this essay is to examine these findings in more detail: determining how reflected appraisals influence ad attitudes and ascertaining the conditions under which negative appraisals do and do not decrease ad liking.

Previous research has shown that individuals’ self-concepts, as well as their motivations and goals, are influenced by others, by what other people think of them (actual appraisals), and by what they think other people think of them (reflected appraisals) (Bouchey and Harter 2005; Drigotas et al. 1999; Kernis and Johnson 1990; Shah 2003b; Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979). These findings empirically verify part of the theories posited by Cooley (1902/1922) and Mead (1934) who both believed that individuals incorporate others and the social world into their self-concepts by thinking about how they are viewed by others and adjusting their behaviors and views so that they perceive themselves as being viewed favorably. Despite the prevalence of work examining the influence of reflected appraisals on the self, there is still only a limited understanding of how they influence attitudes and other responses to marketing stimuli. The findings from essay 1 provide some evidence that reflected appraisals are important in the development of advertisement evaluations; however, how this process manifests is unknown. In this essay, I combine theories related to reflected appraisals, advertising, and social identity to uncover the role of reflected appraisals in advertising evaluations.

In the sections that follow, I present findings from three experiments designed to explore these issues. In the first experiment, I replicate the insulating effect found in
essay 1 and show this effect only occurs when both self-referencing is high and when the focal identity is salient. In the second experiment, I build upon this finding, manipulating the nature of the reflected appraisals as well as self-referencing. This experiment also highlights some of the affective processes underlying the insulating effect. Finally, in the third experiment, I uncover conditions under which the insulating effect does and does not occur. Specifically, I show that the insulating effect occurs when the target market for an ad is restricted to those within the social identity and a negative appraisal is attributed to an out-group member. I also show that this process is driven by defensive behaviors and resistance strategies, such as counterarguing and source derogation. In addition, I uncover conditions when the insulating effect does not occur, with participants decreasing their attitudes in the face of negative reflected appraisals. This occurs when the target market for an ad is external to the social identity and the appraisal comes from an out-group member. Here, the process is driven by self-presentation concerns.

Throughout this essay, my primary focus is on how consumers respond to negative reflected appraisals, with positive appraisals only used as contrasts to demonstrate the manner in which negative appraisals are processed.

Theoretical Foundations

This essay is built upon two theoretical traditions. The first deals with the social nature of the self, with an emphasis on how the social world, through reflected appraisals, influences an individual’s self-concept. The second deals with how the self is related to
consumption and advertising. In the sections that follow, I detail these theoretical streams and describe how they relate to the manner in which reflected appraisals influence responses to advertisements.

Reflected Appraisals and the Self-Concept

In this section, I outline research showing how reflected appraisals influence the manner in which people think about themselves. First, I present the foundations of theories related to reflected appraisals and how they influence the self. Next, I describe how reflected appraisals are more influential in changing the self than are actual appraisals. This is followed by a discussion of why reflected appraisals are thought to surpass actual appraisals and how the relationship between reflected appraisals and the self-concept is moderated by various individual, situational, and contextual variables. Together, this literature provides the theoretical underpinnings for how I conceptualize advertisements triggering reflected appraisals that may influence attitudes towards ads as well as determining (using the literature on moderators as a guide) the conditions under which reflected appraisals about ads do and do not influence ad attitudes.

Theoretical Foundations of Reflected Appraisals

While a formal, universally accepted definition of the self-concept eludes researchers, most agree that the self-concept is the “organization of qualities that the individual attributes to them self. It should be understood that the word “qualities” is used
in a broad sense to include both attributes that the individual might express in terms of adjectives (ambitious, intelligent) and also the roles they see themselves in (father, doctor, etc)” (Kinch 1963, 481). This conceptualization has been adopted across a range of disciplines, including social psychology (Schlenker 1985) and consumer research (Schouten 1991). An individual’s social identities, based on the groups to which they belong, are also included in their overall self-concept (Tajfel 1981).²

The social world in which an individual is embedded is thought to influence their self-concept. Cooley (1902/1922), the first to formalize this notion, believed that individuals come to see themselves as others see them, referring to this as the looking-glass self. Mead (1934), like Cooley, believed that individuals incorporate the social world into their self-concepts. These theorists posited that the self is inseparable from social life, and, therefore, any discussion of the self, its components, and its development should include reference to others.

The general assertion of the looking-glass self theory is that “one’s self-concept is a reflection of one’s perceptions about how one appears to others” (Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979). Cooley states that this process has three key elements: “the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance; and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification” (Cooley 1902/1922, 184). Mead (1934) discusses a similar process whereby individuals incorporate the attitudes of other individuals towards oneself into their self-concept.

² Throughout this essay, the primary focus is on reflected appraisals related to an individual’s social identity, thus, the use of the term ‘identity’ in this essay refers specifically to social identity unless otherwise stated.
Mead also notes that individuals incorporate the attitudes of “the generalized other or the social group as a whole to which he belongs” into his self-concept (158). This implies that it is not just actual others that influence the self-concept, but also imagined others who are viewed as important to the individual, such as those who share a particular social identity. Both Cooley and Mead assert that a person actively thinks about how others view them, interpreting the actions of others, rather than merely responding to them (Blumer 1969, 1962; Solomon 1983).

*Empirical Examinations of Reflected Appraisals*

The influence of reflected appraisals on the self-concept has been empirically tested in a variety of ways. Experimental work in this area has focused on testing whether individuals change their self appraisals based on reflected and actual appraisals. In general, the findings from these studies support the looking-glass self theory, with individuals changing their self appraisals based on reflected and actual appraisals (De Laere, Lundgren, and Howe 1998; Kernis and Johnson 1990; Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979). A variety of correlational studies also test the impact of reflected appraisals on self appraisals. Findings from these studies also show general support for the looking-glass self, however, reflected appraisals are consistently found to have a greater influence on self appraisals than do actual appraisals (Brown and Lohr 1987; Felson 1981; Ichiyama 1993; Kwan et al. 2003; Murray and Holmes 2000; Schafer and Keith 1985; Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979). In other words, how people *think* other people view them is more important to their self-concepts than how people actually view them.
One explanation for why reflected appraisals are more influential than actual appraisals is that individuals are not good at predicting how others actually view them. A primary reason for this is that there are substantial barriers to communication. Specifically, Felson (1980) found that in naturally occurring settings, individuals rarely provide feedback to others about how they view them and, when feedback is provided, it is often biased and incomplete. This lack of communication makes it very difficult for individuals to develop accurate perceptions of actual appraisals (O'Conner and Dyce 1993).

In addition to the communication barrier explanation for why reflected and actual appraisals are so poorly correlated, other research has tried to determine why reflected appraisals are so closely linked to self appraisals. Drawing upon self-perception theory (Bem 1972), Kenny and DePaulo (1993) state that individuals look to their own behavior and use that as a guide as to how others view them, just as they do when developing views of their themselves. In a similar vein, other researchers have proposed that self-presentation theories (Goffman 1959) may explain why self and reflected appraisals are so closely aligned (Tice and Wallace 2003). Tice and Wallace (2003) argue that as individuals try to create images of themselves, they come to believe that they are doing this successfully and, therefore, come to believe that others view them according to the image they try to create. This process would lead to self-perceptions and reflected appraisals being highly correlated, but not necessarily indicative of actual appraisals. Similarly, Ichiyama (1993) proposes that a process of reciprocal projection is occurring.
Here, reflected appraisals do impact self appraisals, but self appraisals also impact reflected appraisals.

*Moderators of the Reflected Appraisals — Self-Concept Relationship*

In addition to work examining the general strength of the relationship between reflected appraisals and self appraisals, four categories of moderators of these effects have been identified: individual differences, situational characteristics, feedback characteristics, and relationship characteristics. These moderators are used later in this essay to determine the conditions under which reflected appraisals about advertisements do and do not influence ad attitudes. Individual differences are examined in experiments 1 and 2. Feedback characteristics are controlled in experiment 2 and 3. While situational characteristics and relationship characteristics are tested in experiment 3.

Several individual differences have been examined in the literature on the looking-glass self, however, the most prevalent moderator identified is self-esteem. Self-esteem has consistently been shown to impact the manner in which individuals respond to reflected and actual appraisals. In general, individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to adjust their self appraisals in response to reflected and actual appraisals, while high self-esteem individuals exhibit less malleable self appraisals (Harter, Stocker, and Robinson 1996; Murray, Holmes, and Griffin 2000). In addition, level of self-esteem has been shown to change the type of reflected appraisals that an individual creates, with low self-esteem individuals generating worse reflected appraisals than high self-esteem individuals. Murray et al. (1998), for example, found that relationship partners with high
self-esteem, when confronted with a threat to their relationship, developed reflected appraisals that reaffirmed the status of their relationship, while those with low-self esteem developed appraisals that called into question the stability of the relationship.

The second category of moderators relates to the characteristics of the situation. The moderator identified as most important in this regard is whether or not the situation is public or private. Schlenker, Dlugolecki, and Doherty (1994) and Tice (1992) experimentally show that individuals only change their self appraisals when they perceive there to be an audience. Schlenker et al. (1994) also show that making a public commitment to a particular view impacts the degree of change in self appraisals. Thus, if individuals perceive themselves to be in a private situation, where changes in self appraisals have no consequence in terms of social implications, they are less likely to change their self appraisals in response to reflected or actual appraisals.

Characteristics of the feedback given to individuals also moderate the impact of reflected and actual appraisals on self appraisals. Lundgren (2004) notes that the importance of the topic changes the degree to which it is incorporated into self appraisals. Further, if the feedback is favorable or positive, it is more likely to bring about changes in self appraisals (Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979). Jussim et al. (1992) and Felson (1985) also find that whether or not the feedback is based on interpersonal subjective evaluations about attributes defined in terms of the views of others, such as attractiveness, or objective feedback, such as intelligence based on measured test scores, impacts the degree to which the information is incorporated into self appraisals.
The final set of moderators concerns the characteristics of the relationship between the individual and the source of the appraisal. Cast, Stets, and Burke (1999) found that the status of the individuals in the relationship impacts the degree to which self appraisals change. If the individual in question is of lower status than the person to whom the appraisal is attributed, they are more likely to change their self appraisals in response to reflected and actual appraisals. Similarly, Turner and Onorato (1999) found that only feedback from those within an individual’s in-group was incorporated into self appraisals: feedback from out-group members was rejected. Finally, the closeness of the relationship impacts the degree to which self appraisals change, with numerous studies showing that the closer the relationship between an individual and the person giving the appraisal, the more likely adjustments will be made to self appraisals (Murray et al. 1998; Shah 2003a).

In summary, the overall body of literature addressing the looking-glass self presents mixed results as to the specific details of the processes. What is consistent, however, is the importance of social interactions in the development of the self-concept. Individuals do seem to incorporate how they think others view them into their self-concepts. The accuracy of these perceptions, as well as their source, however, is unclear. Finally, the complexities of social situations and social feedback cannot be ignored, with every element of the looking-glass self process potentially being influenced by individual, situational, and contextual moderators. Table 8 summarizes this information.

---------- Insert table 8 about here ---------
The Self-Concept, Social Identity, Consumption, and Advertising

This section outlines research related to how consumption and advertising are linked to individuals, their self-concepts, and their social identities. This research serves to create a link between reflected appraisals, that are known to influence the self, and consumption and advertising, that are also known to influence the self. This conceptualization sets the stage for the remainder of this essay as it demonstrates how advertisements operate as an identity-relevant artifact, linked to the self-concept and social identities, that should induce the generation of reflected appraisals when they are related to an identity that is important to an individual. To do this, I first outline how the self is connected to consumption. Next, I show how advertisements are linked to the self, with ads congruent with an individuals social identity being liked more.

Consumption, Advertising, and the Self-Concept

Consumer research demonstrates a variety of ways that the self-concept is linked to consumption and advertising. First, research shows that consumers incorporate both objects and perceived meanings associated with goods and activities into their self-concepts. For example, consumers incorporate inanimate objects into their self-concepts (e.g. Belk 1988) and frequently use products and other marketing artifacts to communicate their identities to others (Donnelly and Young 1988; Escalas and Bettman 2005; Gentry, Baker, and Kraft 1995; Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan 1993; McCracken 1986; Schau and Gilly 2003). Consumers also incorporate the cultural meanings of
products into their self-concepts (McCracken 1986), using consumption as a tool to alleviate tensions in their lives and create a desired self-concept (Holt and Thompson 2004; Thompson 1996). Finally, the perceived views of others about a person’s possessions related to an identity, operationalized as reflected appraisals, also influence the importance the individual places on the social identity, with positive reflected appraisals increasing the importance accorded the identity (Laverie et al. 2002).

Consumers also respond more favorably to products and advertisements that are congruent with their self-concepts and social identities (Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier 2000; Brumbaugh 2002; Dimofte, Forehand, and Deshpande 2004; Reed 2002, 2004; Reed and Bolton 2005; Reed and Forehand 2007). In addition to research showing favorable responses for identity-congruent advertisements, research also demonstrates that identity-congruent advertisements for one target market are ineffective for other, non-target, markets (Aaker et al. 2000). These individuals view, process, and form judgments about the advertisements, however, these views and judgments are often quite different from those of the target market (Aaker et al. 2000; Grier and Brumbaugh 1999). An important implication of the mass nature of media is that advertisements do reach non-target markets, with marketers needing to think about how these groups respond to advertisements, even when the ad is not targeted towards them.

In summary, consumer research has shown that the self-concept is linked to both consumption and advertising. In terms of consumption, consumers incorporate products, brands, activities, and other marketing stimuli into their self-concepts and use these artifacts as tools to communicate their identities to others. Consumers also incorporate
the social meaning associated with goods into their self-concepts and the reflected
appraisals of others associated with an individual’s products influence how they view
themselves. With regards to advertising, consumers generally respond more favorably to
ads that are identity congruent. Further, identity congruent advertisements are viewed by
non-target markets and these groups form judgments of the ad that are different from
those of target markets.

However, an important question remains unanswered: how do the perceived
views of non-target market members affect the views of target market members?
Advertisements displaying a particular social identity can be conceptualized as a kind of
self-presentation for an individual as they communicate something about an individual to
the outside world. This self-presentation, however, is one over which the individual does
not have control. The ability of advertisements to communicate identity relevant
information to those both within and outside a social group poses an interesting question:
how do the views of others about the social identity portrayed in an advertisement
influence the views of the target market? In other words, do reflected appraisals influence
consumers’ responses to advertisements? If so, under what conditions does this take
place? Previous research shows that consumers’ views of the self are influenced by
reflected appraisals and that the self is linked to consumption and advertising responses.
There is little knowledge, however, of the manner in which reflected appraisals influence
advertisement responses. The purpose of this essay is to explore these issues, addressing
two primary research questions: (1) Do reflected appraisals influence attitudes towards
advertisements and (2) Under what conditions does this occur and not occur?
In the sections that follow, I describe three experiments that examine the role of reflected appraisals and advertising responses by incorporating existing knowledge of reflected appraisals into ad response theories. The first two experiments focus primarily on the first research question for this essay. The first experiment extends the findings from the last study in essay 1, replicating the study’s results and demonstrating the role of identity salience in this process. Experiment 2, refines the first experiment’s findings by removing the effects of self-esteem on reflected appraisals from the design and controlling the nature of the reflected appraisal. Finally, the third experiment, focusing on the conditions under which reflected appraisals do and do not influence ad attitudes, manipulates two of the moderators of the reflected appraisal effects, appraisal source and public versus private context, within an advertising domain.

Experiment 1

The purpose of this experiment is to replicate and extend the finding from essay 1 showing that individuals who engaged in high levels of self-referencing appeared insulated from the impact of unfavorable reflected appraisals about advertisements. Those individuals who demonstrated this pattern of results were found to differ from other participants in that they had higher levels of enduring involvement, subjective knowledge, and strength of identification with the social identity portrayed in the ad. These findings indicate that the combination of a social identity being important to an
individual and an advertisement inducing high levels of self-referencing results in a person being more inclined to resist the influence of negative information.

The relationship between self-referencing, social identity, and advertising is both complicated and underexplored. First, the strength of identification with a particular identity influences consumer responses to marketing stimuli, with consumers generally liking ads more when they are identity congruent (Forehand, Deshpande, and Reed II 2002; Hirschman 1981; Reed 2002, 2004). This occurs because consumers process self-relevant information more easily and differently, with increased self-relevance increasing the degree to which consumers pay attention to and elaborate upon identity-congruent advertisements (Celsi and Olson 1988; Deshpande, Hoyer, and Donthu 1986; Hirschman 1981; Zinkhan, Haytko, and Ward 1996).

Consumers possess several social identities that comprise their self-concepts, with the importance attributed to each identity differing both overall and across situations (Markus and Kunda 1986; Markus and Nurius 1987). An identity can be made salient in a particular situation in several ways. It could be experimentally primed (Reed 2004), triggered by an identity relevant stimuli (such as an advertisement) (Forehand et al. 2002), or triggered by contextual factors such as being distinct in a group (Forehand et al. 2002). Importantly, being exposed to multiple identity primes makes an identity more salient, with higher levels of salience resulting in more positive ad responses (Forehand et al. 2002).

Similarly, engaging in self-referencing has also been linked to more positive ad responses (Escalas 2007; Meyers-Levy and Peracchio 1996; Reed 2002). As discussed in
essay 1, self-referencing occurs when consumers process information by relating it to their self or personal experiences (Burnkrant and Unnava 1989, 1995; Escalas 2007; Lee et al. 2002; Sujan et al. 1993). As with identity salience, self-referencing can also be situationally induced through the use of self-referencing primes and prompts (Burnkrant and Unnava 1989, 1995).

While most research on identity congruent ads and self-referencing treats the concepts independently, they are naturally linked. Self-referencing has been shown to mediate the relationship between identity congruent ads and ad liking (Boller and Olson 1991; Chang 2001; Lee et al. 2002). Consumers first note the identity congruence of an advertisement and then engage in self-referencing, which increases ad liking. The identity congruent advertisement acts as an identity prime that makes the particular identity salient, which induces increased elaboration of the advertisement in the form of self-referencing. Other work shows that self-referencing prompts can override the negative effects of identity incongruent ads (Morrison and Shaffer 2003). Here, when encouraged to relate an advertisement to personal experiences, participants were able to find ways to elaborate upon the advertisement and make it personally relevant, despite the fact that the ad was identity incongruent.

Taken together, this body of research indicates that both identity primes, making an identity salient, and self-referencing primes, prompting a person to engage in self-referencing, increase the degree to which a person engages in self-referencing, relating their own experiences to the ad, and increasing its personal relevance. This, in turn, increases ad liking. Multiple primes also appear to additively increase the level of identity
salience and resulting self-referencing. Based on this theoretical reasoning, and the findings from essay 1, I propose that the insulating effect will only occur when both self-referencing and identity salience are high.

The insulating effect is consistent with a variety of research showing that individuals insulate themselves from external threats to the self, often through dissonance reduction strategies (Festinger 1957), and from threats to brands to which they are committed (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, and Unnava 2000). High levels of self-referencing have also been associated with defensive behaviors that occur when a person is exposed to advertisements using negative appeals (Block 2005). Similarly, high levels of identity salience have been shown to induce defensiveness in an individual when they are faced with negative information about a relevant identity (Schwinghammer, Stapel, and Blanton 2006). As discussed previously, reflected appraisals research also indicates individuals are more likely to respond to reflected appraisals when they are favorable (Shrauger and Schoeneman 1979), implying that negative reflected appraisals are either resisted or ignored. Individuals are also more likely to respond to a reflected appraisal when it is about something important to them (Lundgren 2004), indicating that high self relevance, possibly manifested as identity salience or high self-referencing, influences the manner in which appraisals are treated.

I predict that when a particular social identity is salient and when an advertisement induces a high level of self-referencing, consumers will resist any negative information about the advertisement and associated social identity. This will manifest as a more positive attitude towards the ad in the face of unfavorable reflected appraisals than
would be found in situations where either the identity is not primed or self-referencing is low.

**H1:** Unfavorable reflected appraisals will result in higher attitude towards the ad when both the relevant social identity is primed and self-referencing is high, compared to when either the social identity is not primed or self-referencing is low.

Hypothesis 1 proposes differences across the unfavorable appraisals conditions. Another way of looking at the insulating effect is to compare ad attitudes of those who generated favorable and unfavorable reflected appraisals within each combination of self-referencing and the identity prime conditions. Given that I only expect the insulating effect to occur when self-referencing is high and identity is primed, I predict that there will not be a difference in ad attitudes for favorable and unfavorable reflected appraisals when these conditions are met. There, should, however, be differences in ad attitudes between favorable and unfavorable reflected appraisals for each of the other three combinations of self-referencing and identity prime where either self-referencing is low or identity is not primed.

**H2:** When either the relevant social identity is not primed or self-referencing is low, unfavorable reflected appraisals will result in lower attitudes towards the ad than will favorable reflected appraisals. However, when the relevant social identity is primed and self-referencing is high, the result of unfavorable reflected appraisals on attitudes towards the ad will mimic
those of favorable appraisals, mitigating the difference between attitudes toward the ad for unfavorable versus favorable reflected appraisals.

Method

To test these hypotheses, I conducted an experiment where I manipulated whether participants did or did not receive an identity prime and measured both self-referencing and reflected appraisals, later categorizing them into dichotomous variables, creating a 2 (Identity primed/not primed) x 2 (High/Low self-referencing) x 2 (Favorable/Unfavorable reflected appraisals) design. In this experiment, the focal identity was being a University of Arizona student.

Stimuli

The advertisement used in this experiment was created to reflect the focal social identity: being a University of Arizona student. The ad was designed to show the experiences of University of Arizona students in such a way that they perceived the ad to be authentic and related their experiences to the ad (Reed and Forehand 2007). To do this, the advertisement featured a real picture of real University of Arizona students at a social event. All the students were wearing University of Arizona colors or shirts, implying that the students were at a sporting event related party, such as a pre-football game tailgate. The advertisement, shown in appendix F, has the slogan “The University of Arizona: There is more to college than just going to class.” The advertisement was
purposefully designed to be ambiguous in terms of setting (i.e. it is unclear if the students are at a University sanctioned event or at a private party) and meaning (i.e. it could be interrupted as promoting partying behavior or promoting extracurricular activities and valuable social connections) so that it would elicit a wide range of reflected appraisals. Pretests indicated the advertisement did meet this criteria, generating scores on reflected appraisals (measured on a seven point scale) ranging from 1.40 to 7 with a mean of 4.50 and standard deviation of 1.27.

Participants and Procedure

One-hundred-fifty-seven introductory marketing students from the University of Arizona completed this experiment in exchange for course credit. The sample was 50% male and ranged in age from 19 to 33 ($M = 20.70$, $SD = 1.74$, median = 20, 4 people over 25). Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: identity primed or identity not primed. Participants were told they were completing several short, unrelated surveys for various researchers in the marketing department. All surveys were paper based. Participants first completed a survey asking them several demographic questions and questions assessing self-esteem. Next, they completed a survey in which the identity prime manipulation was embedded. Following was a filler task. The last survey focused on assessing responses to the focal advertisement. Participants were given a copy of the ad and asked to complete a response booklet in which the ad was evaluated.
Independent Variables

The first independent variable, the identity prime, was manipulated using a handwriting task. In the prime present group, participants were asked to provide a handwriting sample by writing a few sentences about “what it is like being a University of Arizona student” (Reed 2004). In the no prime condition, participants were asked to write about a recently watched television show. The second independent variable, self-referencing, was measured using Burnkrant and Unnava’s (1989) four-item measure, measured on a seven point scale anchored with ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘strongly agree’. The four items were averaged to form a single score ($\alpha = .85$) and a median split (median = 4.25) was used to create a dichotomous variable. The second independent variable, reflected appraisals, was measured using the nine-item measure developed in essay 1, also measured on a seven-point agree-disagree scale. The items were averaged to form a single score ($\alpha = .92$) and a median split (median = 3.67) was used to create a dichotomous variable.

Dependent and Other Measures

The dependent variable in this experiment was attitude towards the ad, measured using Holbrook and Batra’s (1987) four-item, seven-point semantic differential scale. As with self-referencing and reflected appraisals, the items were averaged to form a single score ($\alpha = .91$). In addition to this variable, I also measured two control variables related to advertisement perceptions: perceived authenticity of the advertisement, measured using the seven-item measure developed in the first essay ($\alpha = .84$), and perceived
attractiveness of the people in the ad, measured using a four-item adaptation of Ohanian’s (1990) semantic differential perceived celebrity attractiveness scale ($\alpha = .85$). Perceived authenticity was measured to ensure that the identity prime was not impacting the degree to which the advertisement was perceived as being authentic and realistic. The attractiveness of the people in the ad was measured because perceived attractiveness has been shown to influence how much participants like the advertisements, independent of the manipulations. Finally, I measured each participants’ level of self-esteem using Rosenberg’s (1965) 10-item scale ($\alpha = .88$) as self-esteem has been shown to influence both the impact of reflected appraisals and the kinds of reflected appraisals that are generated (Harter et al. 1996; Murray et al. 2000). Items for all the measures used in this experiment are presented in appendix G and correlations between items are shown in table 9.

Manipulation and Covariate Checks

To assess the effectiveness of the identity salience manipulation, a pre-test was conducted where participants completed the handwriting task and then indicated, on a seven-point scale, the degree to which they agreed with the statement: “I have a strong attachment to other University of Arizona students.” This question, adapted from Sellers et al.’s (1997) strength of identification scale, assesses the degree to which an individual associates themselves with being a University of Arizona student and views other
University of Arizona students as connected to them. Results show the manipulation was significant (prime = 5.48, not primed = 4.41; $F(1,41) = 5.00, p < .05$).

Also, as expected, the perceived attractiveness of the people in the advertisement impacted how much the people liked the ad, with those with high scores on the attractiveness scale liking the ad significantly more than those low on the attractiveness scale (dichotomous attractiveness variable created using median split; median = 4.25; high attractiveness = 4.63, low attractiveness = 3.49; $F(1,149) = 15.95, p < .01$). Perceived attractiveness was, therefore, included as a covariate in subsequent analyses.

Those high and low in self-esteem also differed in their attitude towards the ad (dichotomous variable created using median split; median = 6.20; low self-esteem = 3.72, high self-esteem = 4.33; $F(1,146) = 6.25, p < .05$). Furthermore, those in the favorable reflected appraisals condition differed in terms of self-esteem from those in the unfavorable reflected appraisals condition (unfavorable appraisals = 5.83, favorable appraisals = 6.14; $F(1,143) = 6.21, p < .05$). To account for these effects, I included self-esteem as a covariate in subsequent analyses. The ad was perceived as being highly authentic ($M = 5.36, SD = 1.03$).

Finally, to confirm that the identity prime manipulation did not unduly influence self-referencing, I examined the number of participants in each of the four groups created by crossing the self-referencing groups with the identity prime groups. If the identity prime manipulation had unduly influenced self-referencing, I would expect to see substantially more people in the low self-referencing/identity not primed and high self-referencing/identity primed conditions than in the high self-referencing/identity not
primed and low self-referencing/identity primed conditions. This, however, was not the case with cell sizes being approximately equal across all four groups: 44 (prime, low self-referencing), 35 (prime, high self-referencing), 40 (not primed, high self-referencing), and 37 respectively (not primed, low self-referencing).

Results

Hypotheses for this experiment proposed a three-way interaction between identity salience, reflected appraisals, and self-referencing. Results from a three-factor analysis of variance with self-esteem and attractiveness as covariates and attitude towards the ad as the dependent variable, showed significant ($p < .05$) main effects for the identity prime manipulation, reflected appraisals, and self-referencing which were qualified by a significant three-way interaction ($F(1,133) = 10.86, p < .001$). Results of this analysis are shown in figure 4.

Follow-up comparisons using a Bonferroni adjustment assessed the nature of the interaction, testing hypotheses 1 and 2, with a primary focus on the effects of unfavorable appraisals. These hypotheses propose that when identity is primed and self-referencing is high, participants will insulate their ad attitudes from the negative effects of unfavorable reflected appraisals. Hypothesis 1 is supported. First, comparing across the identity prime
conditions, when self-referencing is high, attitude towards the ad is higher in the identity primed versus the identity not primed condition (comparing cells 3 and 7 in figure 4) (primed = 4.73, not primed = 3.60; \( F(1,133) = 9.58, p < .01 \)). In addition, comparing across the self-referencing conditions when identity is primed (cells 1 and 3 in figure 4) shows attitude towards the ad is higher when self-referencing is high compared to when self-referencing is low (SR high = 4.73, SR low = 2.77; \( F(1,133) = 34.16, p < .001 \)).

Hypothesis 2 proposed that the insulating effect would also manifest when comparing ad attitudes across the favorable and unfavorable reflected appraisals conditions. I expected to find differences in ad attitudes between those in the favorable and unfavorable conditions across all conditions (i.e. comparing cells 1 and 2, 5 and 6, and 7 and 8), except for when identity is primed and self-referencing is high (comparing cells 3 and 4). Results partially support this hypothesis. As expected, there were significant differences between favorable and unfavorable reflected appraisals conditions when identity was primed and self-referencing was low (favorable = 4.35, unfavorable = 2.71; \( F(1,133) = 18.92, p < .001 \)) and when identity was not primed and self-referencing was high (favorable = 5.13, unfavorable = 3.56; \( F(1,133) = 14.25, p < .001 \)). Also as expected, there is not a significant difference between favorable and unfavorable reflected appraisals conditions when identity is primed and self-referencing is high (favorable = 5.31, unfavorable = 4.73; \( F(1,133) = .13, p > .20 \)). An unexpected finding, however, showed that there also was not a difference when identity was not primed and self-referencing was low (favorable = 3.53, unfavorable = 2.90; \( F(1,133) = .63, p > .20 \)).
Finally, to test whether the identity prime promotes an insulating effect without high self-referencing I compared ad attitudes when self-referencing was low across the identity prime conditions (comparing cells 1 and 5). Results suggest that the identity prime does not induce an insulating effect without high self-referencing (primed = 2.71, not primed = 2.90, $F(1,133) = 1.80, p > .20$). Similarly, high self-referencing does not promote an insulating effect without the identity prime (comparing cells 1 and 3) (SR high = 3.56, SR low = 2.90; $F(1,133) = 1.43, p > .20$).

Discussion

The findings from this experiment provide interesting insights into the role of reflected appraisals in the advertisement evaluation process. First, these results once again show that reflected appraisals do impact attitudes towards advertisements. These findings also show that identity primes and self-referencing insulate attitudes from unfavorable appraisals, and that this does not happen when either self-referencing is low or when identity is not primed: both high self-referencing and the identity prime are necessary to induce the insulating effect. An unexpected finding in this experiment was that there were not differences in ad attitudes across appraisal conditions when identity was not primed and self-referencing was low. This finding is likely the result of participants in this condition not being motivated enough to elaborate upon the ad.
Experiment 2

The previous experiment demonstrates that the combination of identity primes and self-referencing moderates the impact of negative reflected appraisals on attitudes towards advertisements. The purpose of this experiment is to extend these findings by examining the impact of self-referencing, identity primes, and reflected appraisals in more detail, as well as assessing some of the underlying emotional processes driving the insulating effect.

In this experiment, I manipulate both self-referencing and reflected appraisals, in addition to using the identity prime manipulation. I also measure the affective reactions associated with threats to the self and defensive behavior to determine if individuals are treating the negative appraisals, and the associated ad, as a threat to the self. Importantly, a goal for the reflected appraisals manipulation is to design it in such a way that it is not affected by self-esteem. When individuals naturally generate reflected appraisals, those low in self-esteem are more likely to generate negative reflected appraisals (Harter et al. 1996; Murray et al. 2000). By manipulating reflected appraisals, the confounding effect of self-esteem should be eliminated thereby allowing for a better and more precise understanding of the independent impact of reflected appraisals on ad attitudes. In terms of impact on attitude towards the ad, I expect the results of this experiment to replicate those of experiment 1, with a three-way interaction where the identity prime combined with a self-referencing prime insulates attitudes from the negative impact of negative reflected appraisals.
The primary objective of this experiment is to gain a better understanding of the affective processes underlying the insulating effect. The insulating effect shows a pattern of results consistent with consumers engaging in defensive behaviors and resisting negative information (Ahluwalia et al. 2000). Previous research has shown that consumers engage in biased processing (Frey 1986; Kunda 1990; Petty and Cacioppo 1986) and use defensive strategies when exposed to information that is inconsistent with their prior attitudes (Biek, Wood, and Chaiken 1996; Eagly and Chaiken 1995; Lundgren and Prislin 1998; Pomerantz, Chaiken, and Tordesillas 1995). For example, consumers ignore relevant health messages when they feel that they are threatened by the information (Sherman, Nelson, and Steele 2000) and employ defensive strategies when they are faced with negative social comparison information (Schwinghammer et al. 2006). Defense strategies that are often employed to resist persuasion, also referred to as resistance strategies, include counterarguing, message distortion, attitude bolstering, source derogation, and selective exposure (Jacks and Cameron 2003). Of these defense strategies, counterarguing has been found to be the most common strategy for resisting persuasion (Jacks and Cameron 2003). Consumer behavior research has affirmed this, showing that consumers counterargue with information presented in advertisements (Ahluwalia et al. 2000; Ahluwalia, Unnava, and Burnkrant 2001; Raju and Unnava 2006).

Resistance to persuasion is more likely to occur when an individual is committed to a particular position as this heightened commitment increases the likelihood of the person adopting a defense motivation (Ahluwalia et al. 2001; Liberman and Chaiken...
Previous research has also shown that when a particular identity is salient, negative information about an in-group member is treated as a threat to self (McCoy and Major 2003). This finding shows that identity salience results in a close alignment between an individual and the group associated with a social identity. When a person experiences a threat to their self, as I am proposing happens when a person generates negative reflected appraisals about an identity congruent advertisement, they should experience negative affect (Festinger 1957). This should motivate them to reduce the negative affect and engage in behaviors to restore a positive sense of self (Festinger 1957; Raju and Unnava 2006). Engaging in defensive behaviors is one way to restore a positive affective state (Raju and Unnava 2006). Hence, I propose that when identity is primed and self-referencing is primed (i.e. when individuals are in a heightened state of commitment), consumers will exhibit higher levels of positive affect when presented with negative reflected appraisals as they will engage in defensive behaviors. This defensive behavior should not manifest when the identity is not primed or when self-referencing is not primed. In these cases, participants should exhibit higher levels of negative affect as they process the negative appraisals in an objective manner.

**H3:** Negative reflected appraisals will result in higher (lower) positive (negative) affect when the relevant social identity is primed and self-referencing is primed, compared to when either the relevant social identity is not primed or self-referencing is not primed.

Similar to hypothesis 2, I also propose that there will be differences in positive and negative affect when comparing positive and negative reflected appraisals conditions.
within each combination of the identity and self-referencing conditions. Specifically, when both self-referencing and identity are primed, I propose that there will not be a difference in levels of positive and negative affect. For all other combinations of identity and self-referencing primes, there should be a difference between positive and negative reflected appraisals such that positive appraisals increase positive affect while negative appraisals increase negative affect.

**H4:** When either the relevant social identity is not primed or self-referencing is not primed, negative reflected appraisals will result in higher (lower) levels of negative (positive) affect than will positive reflected appraisals. However, when the relevant social identity is primed and self-referencing is primed, the result of negative reflected appraisals on levels of positive and negative affect should mimic those of positive reflected appraisals, mitigating the difference in affect levels for positive versus negative reflected appraisals.

**Method**

To test these hypotheses, I conducted an experiment where I manipulated identity salience, self-referencing, and reflected appraisals, creating a 2 (Identity primed/not primed) x 2 (Self-referencing primed/not primed) x 2 (Positive/Negative reflected appraisals) design. The focal identity was being a University of Arizona student.
Participants and Procedure

Two-hundred-twenty-three introductory marketing students from the University of Arizona completed this study in exchange for course credit. The sample was 60% male and ranged in age from 19 to 37 ($M = 21.82$, $SD = 2.91$, median = 21, 17 people over 25). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions. Each student was given a copy of an advertisement and a newspaper article (containing the appraisals manipulation) and asked to complete a computer based survey evaluating the ad.

Independent Variable

The identity prime manipulation was the same as in experiment 1, however, instead of writing about a television show in the not primed condition, participants wrote about what it was like being a young man or young woman (Reed 2004). This was done to ensure that the effects are driven by the primed identity being congruent with the advertisement, and not just by any social identity being primed.

Self-referencing was manipulated within the slogan of the advertisement. Two versions of the advertisement used as stimuli in the first experiment were created to correspond to each of the self-referencing conditions. Both ads contained the same image as the first experiment; however, in the high self-referencing condition, the slogan on the advertisement said, “The University of Arizona: You know there is more to college than just going to class.” In contrast, in the low self-referencing condition, the slogan said, “The University of Arizona: Everyone knows there is more to college than just going to class” (Burnkrant and Unnava 1989, 1995). The advertisements are shown in appendix H.
Reflected appraisals were manipulated using a newspaper article (Elder, Sutton, and Douglas 2005; Raju and Unnava 2006). I created a fictitious newspaper story about the advertisements in which the people quoted in the article either presented a favorable or unfavorable view of University of Arizona students based on the advertisement. The premise of the article was that the University of Arizona had created a new advertising campaign to boost the University’s image and the article’s author was soliciting feedback from various university stakeholders about the campaign. The appraisals presented in the advertisement were based on subjective characteristics of students as these kinds of appraisals are more likely to be impactful (Felson 1985). In the positive appraisals scenario, a current University of Arizona student and a University of Arizona alumni who now recruits from the university both say that the advertisement reflects well on the university and its students:

Feedback on the campaign from various university stakeholders has generally been positive. Timothy Jones, a 3rd year mechanical engineering major at UA comments, “The advertisements make UA students look good. This will definitely make people think University of Arizona students are exceptional and that being a University of Arizona student will be a good experience.”

Jeffrey Wright, an executive at Dial Soap and UA alumni who recruits from UA, notes that “The campaign creates an image of a University of Arizona as individuals who are both intelligent and fun people to be around. If we didn’t already recruit from UA, this campaign would make me want to do so.”

In the negative scenario, the same two people say the advertisement makes the students look like they are only interested in partying:
Feedback on the campaign from various university stakeholders has been less positive than the university had hoped. Timothy Jones, a 3rd year mechanical engineering major at UA comments, “The advertisements make UA students look like they’re not interested in school and only want to party.”

Jeffrey Wright, an executive at Dial Soap and UA alumni who recruits from UA, notes that, “The campaign falls short of creating an image of UA students that makes me comfortable recruiting here. I want to hire people who work hard and are dedicated. This ad creates an image of students as being less concerned about working hard and more concerned about after-work drinks.”

The full articles are shown in appendix I.

**Dependent Variables**

The first dependent variable, attitude towards the ad, was once again measured using Holbrook and Batra’s (1987) scale ($\alpha = .91$). The second dependent variable, positive affect was measured using a combination of items from three measures (Escalas 2007): positive emotional arousal (Holbrook and Batra 1987), optimism (Richins 1997), and pride, measured using items adapted from Laverie et al (2002) and Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes (2002). The final scale consisted of 16 items ($\alpha = 95$) with all items measured on seven-point scales indicating the degree to which the participant experienced each emotion while viewing the ad. The last dependent measure, negative affect, was measured using items from two scales: anger (Richins 1997) and shame (Richins 1997). The final scale consisted of 6 items, again measured on seven-point scales indicating the degree to which the person experienced each of the emotions ($\alpha = 96$). Items for all measures used in this experiment are outlined in appendix G and correlations between all items are presented in table 10.
**Other Measures**

As in experiment 1, I measured perceived authenticity of the advertisement (α = .88) and perceived attractiveness of the people in the ad using the adapted Ohanian (1990) measure (α = .83). Self-esteem was also measured using Rosenberg’s (1965) 10-item scale (α = .87).

**Manipulation and Covariate Checks**

To assess the effectiveness of the manipulations used in this experiment, I conducted two manipulation checks. The reflected appraisals measure was used to test the effectiveness of the appraisal manipulation. The result of this analysis was significant, suggesting the manipulation worked as expected (positive = 3.98, negative = 3.14; \(F(1, 213) = 21.58, p < .001\)). To assess the effectiveness of the self-referencing prime and identity prime in increasing the degree to which the ad was elaborated upon and the participant related to the ad, I measured the degree to which each participant engaged in self-referencing (measured using Burnkrant and Unnava’s (1989) measure) and other-referencing (measured using an adapted version of Burnkrant and Unnava’s (1989) self-referencing measure), additively combining the two measures to form an overall referencing score (α = .87). Results indicate the manipulations were successful with those who received two primes differing significantly form those that received either one or no primes (2 primes = 4.86, 1 prime = 4.25, 0 primes = 4.37; \(F(1,12) = 3.46, p < .05\)) I also
tested for differences in perceived authenticity across the two ads. Results indicate that authenticity perceptions were both high and equal across the ads (SR prime ad = 5.26, SR no prime ad = 5.34, $F(1,213) = .321, p > .20$).

I also assessed the impact of self-esteem. First, I assessed the impact of self-esteem on attitude towards the ad, again using a dichotomous variable created using a median split (median = 6.20). Results indicate that there is not a significant difference in attitudes towards the ad for those high and low in self-esteem (high = 3.85, low = 3.59; $F(1,221) = 1.35, p > .20$). Furthermore, there were no differences in self-esteem across the two reflected appraisals conditions (positive = 6.05, negative = 5.93; $F(1,213) = 1.32, p > .20$). Thus, the reflected appraisals manipulation used in this experiment appears to have attenuated the confounding effects of self-esteem. Attitude towards the ad was, however, still impacted by the perceived attractiveness of the people in the ad as those with high attractiveness scores liked the ad more than those with low attractiveness scores (dichotomous variable created using a median split, median = 4.25; high = 4.16, low = 3.26; $F(1,216) = 17.30, p < .001$). To account for this effect, perceived attractiveness was included as a covariate in subsequent analyses.

Results

As in experiment 1, I proposed a three-way interaction between the identity prime manipulation, the self-referencing prime manipulation, and reflected appraisals. Analysis of variance tests showed only a significant main effect for reflected appraisals ($p < .05$),
however, results showed a significant three-way interaction as expected ($F(1,201) = 6.49, p < .05$). Results of this analysis are shown in figure 5.

![Figure 5 about here](image-url)

To examine the nature of the interaction effect, I conducted a series of follow-up comparisons with a Bonferroni adjustment. The goals of these comparisons was to assess whether the identity and self-referencing primes insulate ad attitudes from negative reflected appraisals. This prediction is supported. First, when presented with negative appraisals, attitude towards the ad is higher when self-referencing is primed and identity is primed compared to when self-referencing is primed and identity is not primed (comparing cells 3 and 7 in figure 5) (identity primed = 4.00, identity not primed = 2.91; $F(1,201) = 5.85, p < .05$). In addition, ad attitudes are also higher when identity and self-referencing are primed compared to when identity is primed and self-referencing is not primed (comparing cells 1 and 3) (SR primed = 4.00, SR not primed = 2.78; $F(1,201) = 7.15, p < .01$).

For the insulating effect to be supported, I would expect to see no difference in ad attitudes between positive and negative reflected appraisals only when self-referencing and identity are primed (comparing cells 3 and 4). This proposition is supported. There is not a significant difference between positive and negative reflected appraisals when self-referencing and identity are primed (positive = 3.73, negative = 4.00; $F(1,201) = 1.01, p > .20$). There are, however, significant differences in each of the other combinations of
self-referencing and identity primes: (1) when identity is primed and self-referencing is not primed (comparing cells 1 and 2) (positive = 4.17, negative = 2.78; \(F(1,201) = 10.77, p < .001\)), (2) when identity is not primed and self-referencing is not primed (comparing cells 5 and 6) (positive = 4.31, negative = 3.15; \(F(1,201) = 4.27, p < .05\)), and (3) when identity is not primed and self-referencing is primed (comparing cells 7 and 8) (positive = 4.42, negative = 2.91; \(F(1,201) = 9.20, p < .01\)).

These results replicate the findings from experiment 1, showing full support for hypothesis 2. Next, I conducted comparisons to test hypotheses 3 and 4 that propose differences in the degree to which participants experience positive and negative affect. Hypothesis 3 proposes that higher levels of positive affect and lower levels of negative affect will accompany the insulating effect occurring when identity and self-referencing are primed. These results would indicate that participants might be engaging in defensive behaviors. This hypotheses is supported for positive affect with participants demonstrating the insulating effect in response to negative appraisals also having higher levels of positive affect compared to those who’s identity is not primed (comparing cells 3 and 7) (identity primed = 4.16, identity not primed = 3.28; \(F(1,201) = 5.88, p < .05\)) and those for whom self-referencing was not primed (comparing cells 1 and 3) (SR primed = 4.16, SR not primed = 3.16, \(F(1,201) = 7.26, p < .01\)). The hypothesis, however, is not supported for negative affect, across either the identity conditions (cells 3 and 7) (identity primed = 2.81, identity not primed = 3.52; \(F(1,201) = 2.06, p > .10\)) or the self-referencing conditions (cells 1 and 3) (SR primed = 2.81, SR not primed = 2.78, \(F(1,201) = .10, p > .20\)).
Comparing between positive and negative appraisals conditions provides partial support for hypothesis 4. To test this, I first assessed the impact of the manipulations on positive affect. As expected, there was not a significant difference in positive affect for those in the two prime condition (cells 3 and 4) (positive = 4.01, negative = 4.16, $F(1,201) = .887, p > .20$). Also, as expected, there were significant differences for those in the identity primed/self-referencing not primed condition (cells 1 and 2) (positive = 4.03, negative = 3.16; $F(1,201) = 4.543, p < .05$) and the self-referencing not primed/identity not primed (cells 5 and 6) (positive = 4.21, negative = 3.06; $F(1,201) = 9.21, p < .01$). In contrast, an unexpected finding shows there to not be a difference for those in the self-referencing primed/identity not primed condition (cells 7 and 8) (positive = 3.67, negative = 3.28; $F(1,201) = 1.62, p > .20$).

With regard to negative affect, results also provide only partial support for the hypothesis. The pattern of results supports the hypothesis for all conditions except those in the self-referencing not primed/identity primed condition (cells 1 and 2). Here, there was no difference in level of negative affect across positive and negative appraisals conditions (positive = 2.06, negative = 2.78; $F(1,201) = 1.53, p > .20$). As expected, this was also the case for those in the identity primed/self-referencing primed condition (cells 3 and 4) (positive = 2.17, negative = 2.81; $F(1,201) = .94, p > .20$). Also as expected, there were significant differences when identity was not primed and self-referencing was not primed (cells 5 and 6) (positive = 1.90, negative = 2.30; $F(1,201) = 4.55, p < .05$) and when identity was not primed and self-referencing was primed (cells 7 and 8) (positive = 2.31, negative = 3.52; $F(1,201) = 7.37, p < .01$).
Discussion

This experiment enriches our understandings of how reflected appraisals influence advertisement attitudes. First, this experiment once again demonstrates the interactive effect of identity and self-referencing in protecting attitudes from negative information. Importantly, in this experiment both the nature of the reflected appraisal and self-referencing were controlled, reducing the impact of self-esteem on reflected appraisals, providing a better understanding of the reflected appraisal process.

Second, this experiment provides some insights into the process underlying the insulating effect. Findings show there was a boost in positive affect for those demonstrating the insulating effect, indicating that they may be engaging in defensive behaviors. The pattern of results across all conditions, however, was not as expected with those in the primed self-referencing/identity not primed condition exhibiting equal levels of positive affect across the appraisal condition. Similarly, the hypotheses for negative affect were also only partially supported, with negative affect operating as expected across three of the four combinations of self-referencing and identity primes (including the condition where the insulating effect occurred), but no difference in negative affect was found across appraisal conditions when self-referencing was not primed and identity was primed. Thus, while this experiment does provide some insights into the affective processes underlying the insulating effect, these mixed results make it hard to draw definitive conclusions.
Experiment 3

The findings from the first two experiments demonstrate an insulating effect where participants do not decrease their attitudes about ads in the face of negative reflected appraisals. This effect only occurs when both identity and self-referencing are primed. Experiment 2 also suggests that defensive behavior, such as individuals actively resisting the negative information by engaging in counterarguing and source derogation, could be the underlying cause of this insulating effect. Despite some interesting results regarding the affective responses associated with the insulating effect, the results from experiment 2 did not provide a complete picture of what is driving the impact of reflected appraisals on ad attitudes. Furthermore, neither experiment provides insights into the finding from the depth interview study in essay 1 showing that a person may dislike an advertisement even though they ascribe to the social identity and relate their own experiences to the advertisement: showing a decreased attitude effect, not an insulating effect. The purpose of this experiment is to understand these paradoxical findings by determining the conditions under which the insulating effect does and does not occur. This experiment also explores in more detail the processes underlying both the insulating and decreased attitude effects.

In this experiment, I specifically focus on situations where identity is primed and self-referencing is primed given that I am interested in understanding the insulating effect that only occurs under these conditions. I also focus the analysis on two specific
conditions that may influence the manner in which negative appraisals influence ad attitudes. First, I examine the impact of whether appraisals are attributed to in- or out-group members. Second, I manipulate the target market for the advertisement to assess differential responses to ads for whom the target market is isolated to those within the social identity (i.e. targeted to an internal audience) and those targeted towards individuals both within and outside the social identity (i.e. targeted to an external audience).

First, I expect to find a three-way interaction between reflected appraisals, appraisal source (in- or out-group member), and ad target market (internal or external). The person to whom appraisals, and other kinds of information, are attributed has been shown to have an important impact on the extent to which information is believed and incorporated into attitudes, as well as the extent to which reflected appraisals induce self-concept changes. Individuals tend to shift their beliefs and values in line with positively viewed in-groups and disassociate themselves from negative groups (Brewer and Roccas 2001; Dahl and White 2007; Pool, Wood, and Leck 1998). This is thought to occur because people categorize themselves as part of a particular group, ascribing to the social identity, and using the in-group as a reference point. Individuals then become motivated to adopt the behaviors and beliefs of the in-group (Tajfel 1981, 1982). Even in the face of counterattitudinal information, individuals are still inclined to change their beliefs when the information is from credible in-group members (Norton et al. 2000; Wood et al. 1996). With regards to reflected appraisals, Turner and Onoato (1999) find that only appraisals from in-group members influence an individual’s self-concept.
A variety of research also demonstrates that the out-group is rarely listened to when they present counterattitudinal information (Alvaro and Crano 1997; David and Turner 1996). These findings indicate that individuals are usually concerned only with the views of those who are part of their in-group, with in-group criticism tolerated and listened to and out-group criticism met with hostility (Glasford, Dovidio, and Pratto 2009; Grant 1992; Hogg and van Knippenberg 2003; Hornsey, Oppes, and Svensson 2002). Thus, individuals tend to behave defensively in the face of negative information from out-group members, but are not defensive with in-group criticism. This implies that negative reflected appraisals from out-group members should be disregarded and should not influence attitudes.

This pattern of behavior, however, is called into question when one considers that reflected appraisals are more influential when given in a public as opposed to private setting (Schlenker et al. 1994; Tice 1992). This occurs because individuals, when placed in public situations, develop self-presentation motives where they become concerned with how they are presenting themselves to others (Goffman 1959; Schlenker et al. 1994; Tice 1992). In general, people are more likely to generate self-presentation motives when they think they are in the public eye and when the audience, which could be actual, imagined, or implied (Allport 1985), has some level of perceived control over their goals (Bohra and Pandey 1984; Goffman 1959). This self-presentation becomes increasingly important when individuals think that the audience will generate undesirable impressions of them (Leary and Kowalski 1990). For example, individuals have been found to engage in compensatory behaviors when they fail in public situations, but not in private
situations (Greenberg and Pyszczynski 1985). Elder, Sutton, and Douglas (2005) even find that criticism from in-group members is not tolerated in public settings, even though it is tolerated in private settings.

Thus, if identity congruent advertisements are conceptualized as a kind of self-presentation over which individuals do not have control, then when identity congruent advertisements are shown to an external target market (akin to a public setting), individuals should generate self-presentation motives where they are concerned about the image being portrayed of them to the public. If an individual thinks the image portrayed to others will be perceived as good, they are likely to support the advertisement. On the other hand, if the person thinks others will view the image portrayed in the advertisement negatively, the person will likely dislike the ad. In other words, with a public ad (i.e. external target market), an individual should change their attitude towards an ad in the direction of a reflected appraisal attributed to an out-group member. In contrast, when an ad has an internal target market, negative criticism from out-group members should be met with hostility and defensive behaviors. With in-group criticism, when an advertisement is targeted towards an internal market, the criticism should be listened to. On the other hand, when an ad is targeted to an external market, in-group criticism should result in defensive behaviors.

Concerns about self-presentation resulting from negative out-group appraisals for a public ad should trigger what I refer to as the dirty laundry effect. This occurs when an advertisement is disliked because it portrays something to the outside world about an individual that they do not want portrayed, violating a normative concern held by most
individuals where they want others to view them favorably (Wood 2000). I propose that these self-presentation concerns are what is driving the pattern of findings that emerged in essay 1 where informants deemed an advertisement to be authentic, related to the advertisement, but still did not like it. Therefore, the primary hypothesis for this experiment, demonstrating the dirty laundry effect, asserts that when an advertisement has an external target market, negative appraisals from out-group members will result in lower attitude towards the advertisement. On the other hand, negative appraisals from out-group members with an advertisement with an internal target market will result in an insulating effect where participants engage in defensive behavior and have higher attitudes toward the ad. I also propose that in-group negative appraisals will generate either an insulating response or a decreased attitude effect. The insulating effect will occur when the target market is external and the decreased attitude effect should occur when the target market is internal.

Hence, for both in-group and out-group appraisals, I expect to find an insulating effect, consistent with defensive behavior, when there is a mismatch between the target market and the source of the appraisal and a decreased attitude effect when there is a match between the target market and the source of the negative appraisal.

**H5:** Negative appraisals will result in lower (higher) attitude towards the ad when there is a match (mismatch) between the source of the appraisal and the target market for the ad.
Similarly, when comparing the impacts of positive and negative appraisals, I expect to find differences only when there is a decreased attitude effect (i.e. when there is a match between appraisals source and target market).

**H6:** When there is a match between the source of the appraisal and the target market for the ad, negative reflected appraisals will result in lower attitude towards the ad than will positive reflected appraisals. However, when there is a mismatch between the source of the appraisal and the target market for the ad, the result of negative reflected appraisals on attitude towards the ad will mimic those of positive appraisals, mitigating the difference between attitude towards the ad for negative versus positive reflected appraisals.

In addition to hypotheses relating to differences in attitude towards the ad, I also propose that the process underlying these effects is a combination of participants resisting the negative appraisal by engaging in defensive behaviors and listening to the negative appraisal, changing their attitudes because they are concerned with the image the advertisement portrays of them to the public. If a participant chooses to resist the negative information, they should generate more comments indicative of persuasion resistance, such as counterarguing and source derogation (Jacks and Cameron 2003). These resistance strategies should be accompanied by higher levels of positive affect, consistent with experiment 2 findings (Raju and Unnava 2006). On the other hand, if a participant listens to and believes the negative appraisal, changing their attitude towards the ad, they should generate more comments indicative of being concerned with self-
presentation and the image the ad creates of the social identity. These comments should be accompanied by increased negative affect, consistent with a threat to self (Festinger 1957).

An important implication of hypotheses 5 and 6 is that the out-group is only listened to when the target market for the ad is external (i.e. when the out-group is the target market). This proposition contradicts previous work showing that out-group negative appraisals are unlikely to bring about attitude changes, regardless of whether the appraisal happens in public or private (Elder et al. 2005). The reason why I propose a decreased attitude effect with out-group appraisals is the key premise underlying the dirty laundry effect: consumers view advertisements as a type of self-presentation. When the target market for an ad is external, the out-group is no longer viewed as not credible and unimportant: their views become more important than those of the in-group and self-presentation concerns override the defensive behaviors that characterize responses to negative information from out-group members when the target market is internal. Thus, when comparing out-group appraisals across the two advertisements, I expect to find significantly more self-presentation concerns, accompanied by higher negative affect, and significantly less resistance strategies, accompanied by lower positive affect, when the target market is external. In contrast, with negative appraisals from in-group members, I expect to find more resistance, accompanied by higher positive affect, and fewer self-presentation concerns, accompanied by lower negative affect, when the target market is external.
H7: When there is a mismatch (match) between the source of the appraisal and the target market for the ad, negative reflected appraisals will result in an insulating effect (decreased attitude effect) characterized by:

   i. higher (lower) amounts of resistance statements

   ii. higher (lower) positive affect

   iii. lower (higher) amounts of self-presentation concern statements

   iv. lower (higher) negative affect

Method

To test these hypotheses, I conducted an experiment where I manipulated reflected appraisals, whether the appraisal was attributed to an in-group or an out-group member, and whether the target market for the ad was internal or external, utilizing a 2 (Positive/Negative reflected appraisals) x 2 (In-group/Out-group source) x 2 (Internal/External target market) design. In addition, all participants received the same identity and self-referencing primes that were used in experiment 2. Self-referencing and identity were primed for all participants to ensure they were all in a state where the focal identity of being a University of Arizona student was salient and they engaged in high levels of self-referencing as this is the context in which the effects of interest are likely to occur.
Participants and Procedure

Two-hundred-eighty-seven introductory marketing students from the University of Arizona completed this experiment in exchange for course credit. The sample was 48% male and ranged in age from 19 to 44 ($M = 21.66$, $SD = 3.01$, median = 21, 16 people over 25). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions. At the start of the session, all participants completed the identity salience task. Next, they read a sheet of background information describing the advertising campaign and its purpose. This was followed by a newspaper article about the ad campaign and the ad. Immediately after viewing the advertisement and reading the article, participants were asked to write down all the thoughts and feelings they had while viewing the ad and reading the article (Ahluwalia et al. 2000; Ahluwalia et al. 2001; Brucks, Armstrong, and Goldberg 1988; Forehand et al. 2002; Raju and Unnava 2006). After completing this task, participants filled out a response booklet asking questions about the advertisement.

Independent Variables

The first independent variable in this experiment is whether the appraisal was positive or negative. Newspaper articles, similar to those used in experiment 2, were created to manipulate the appraisal (Elder et al. 2005; Raju and Unnava 2006). The created article was written about a University of Arizona advertising campaign and included quotes from interviewed people that were either positive or negative. Once again, the quotes reflected information about subjective characteristics of the social identity (Felson 1985).
The second independent variable is the person to whom the appraisal is attributed: an in- or out-group member. This manipulation was embedded in the newspaper article, with the quoted people either being part of the University of Arizona (i.e. two current University of Arizona students) or external to the University (i.e. a student and a recruiter from two large, urban northeast US universities). Table 11 presents these manipulations.

---------- Insert table 11 about here ----------

The final independent variable is the target market for the advertisement: either internal or external to the University of Arizona. To manipulate this, participants were given a piece of paper containing background information about the advertising campaign. They were told that the ad was either intended to boost morale for University of Arizona students and is only intended to be used with University of Arizona students or that the ads were to be used to promote the University in general. For the internal campaign, the background information stated:

Over the past few weeks, University of Arizona student leaders have become concerned about the decreasing sense of camaraderie and morale among students at the University. To rectify this situation, they designed a campaign to remind students about what bonds UA students together. The ad campaign features UA students engaged in activities that are unique to life at the University of Arizona.

This campaign is made by UA students for UA students and the messages are designed to communicate aspects of university life that are central to students, but are not the kinds of things that would be seen in a widespread marketing campaign.
For the external campaign, the background information stated:

Over the past few weeks, University of Arizona student leaders have become concerned about the reputation of the University. To rectify this situation, they designed a campaign to help promote the university and student life. The ad campaign features UA students engaged in activities indicative of university life.

This theme was carried forward in the article that also summarized the purpose of the campaign. For the internal condition, the article stated:

The campaign consists of three separate advertisements featuring pictures of various University of Arizona students engaged in activities that highlight different aspects of student life. Interestingly, the campaign highlights what can best be described as ‘private moments of student life’: the kinds of things that only UA students would know about and would rarely be included in public advertising campaigns.

Stephanie Ellis, the coordinator for the campaign, noted, “The campaign is designed to remind students about why we are special: remind us about the kinds of things only we know about. This will hopefully help students form a supportive and strong bond during these difficult financial times.”

For the external condition, the article stated:

The campaign consists of three separate advertisements featuring pictures of various University of Arizona students engaged in activities that highlight different aspects of student life. The three ads show aspects of both the academic and social side of being at a university.

Stephanie Ellis, the coordinator for the campaign, noted, “The campaign is designed to enhance the image of the University of Arizona so we can continue to attract the best students, the best professors, and the best corporate partners and make current students proud of their university. The goal of this campaign is to push the university to the next level of excellence in terms of recruitment and endowments.”
Finally, the ads used as stimuli also contained markers for this manipulation. The advertisement used to communicate an external target market was identical to that used in the self-referencing condition in experiment 2 with a slogan saying “The University of Arizona: You know there is more to college than just going to class.” In contrast, the advertisement used to communicate an internal target market included an additional slogan saying, “This is our world. Remember what makes us special. An ad by UA students for UA students.”

In summary, this experiment consisted of three sets of stimuli: a sheet of background information containing the target market manipulation; an ad that also contained the target market manipulation; and a newspaper article reinforcing the target market manipulation and manipulating whether the appraisal was positive or negative. The news article also manipulated whether the appraisal was attributed to in- or out-group members. The ads used in this experiment are shown in appendix J, the background information sheets are shown in appendix K, and sample newspaper articles are shown in appendix L.

**Dependent Variables**

This experiment used the same dependent variables as experiment 2: attitude towards the ad ($\alpha = .93$), positive affect ($\alpha = .95$), and negative affect ($\alpha = .95$). In addition, thought protocol measures were collected. Two coders blind to conditions from which the thoughts came coded the protocols (Rucker and Petty 2004). The thoughts were coded into five categories: resistance statements, negative self-presentation
concerns statements, positive self-presentation statements, positive valance towards the ad, and negative valance towards the ad. Resistance statements represented any statement indicative of a persuasion resistance strategy including counterarguing, attitude bolstering, message distortion, source derogation, and direct compensation (Jacks and Cameron 2003). Self-presentation concern statements represented those statements that made reference to the advertisement portraying an image of the social identity that is negative and with which the participant does not wish to be associated. Positive self-presentation statements are those that indicate that the participant likes the image the advertisement portrays of the social identity. Positive and negative valance statements are those where the participants indicated either a like or dislike for the advertisement. Any statements that did not correspond to the previous categories were coded as ‘other.’ The coding scheme and exemplars from each category are presented in table 12.

In total, 1767 comments were coded where 15% represented resistance statements, 11% represented negative image statements, 1% represented positive image statements, 30% were general positive statements about the ad, 15% were general negative statements about the ad, and 28% were categorized as ‘other.’ Interrater agreement was .90 and disagreements were resolved through discussion. Items for all measures used in this experiment are outlined in appendix G and correlations between all items are presented in table 13.
Manipulation and Covariate Checks

The effectiveness of the reflected appraisals manipulation was assessed using the reflected appraisals measure developed in essay 1. Results of this analysis indicate the manipulation was successful (positive = 3.98, negative = 3.08; \( F(1,280) = 35.42, p < .001 \)). The manipulation for whether the appraisal was attributed to an in-group or out-group member was assessed using two items. The questions asked participants to indicate the degree to which they agreed with each of the following statements: (1) “The newspaper article included quotes from only people associated with the University of Arizona” and (2) “All the people interviewed for the article are people I would consider somehow related to my world.” Scores for the two items were averaged. Results indicate that the manipulation was successful (in-group = 5.08, out-group = 2.83, \( F(1,251) = 186.73, p < .001 \)). The target market manipulation was assessed using the item: “The advertisement is designed to be used with just University of Arizona students.” This manipulation was also successful (internal = 4.98, external = 3.92; \( F(1,253) = 17.91, p < .001 \)).

Next, to ensure that there were no differences across the ad target market conditions in terms of identity salience or self-referencing, I used Brunkrant and Unnava’s (1989) self-referencing measure and Sellers et al’s (1997) measure for identity salience to determine if there were differences across the ad conditions. Results indicate that there are no significant differences in terms of self-referencing (internal = 4.01,
external = 3.69; *F*(1,282) = 2.54, *p* > .10) or identity salience (internal = 4.57, external = 4.75; *F*(1,275) = 1.27, *p* > .20).

The influence of perceived attractiveness was also tested. As in the first two experiments, attitude towards the ad was higher for those with higher perceived attractiveness scores (dichotomous variable created using a median split, median = 4.00; high attractiveness = 4.12, low attractiveness = 3.37, *F*(1,268) = 14.28, *p* < .001). To account for this effect, perceived attractiveness of the people in the ad was included as a covariate in subsequent analyses.

Finally, the authenticity of the two advertisements was also assessed to ensure perceptions of authenticity did not vary across the ad conditions. Results indicate this is the case with relatively high and equal means across both ads (internal = 5.18, external = 5.40; *F*(1,256) = 2.12, *p* > .10).

Results

ANOVA results with attitude towards the ad as a dependent variable show significant main effects for reflected appraisals, appraisal source, and ad target market (*p* < .05). These findings are qualified by a significant three-way interaction (*F*(1,261) = 5.00, *p* < .05). Figure 6 shows these results.
Hypotheses 5 described the nature of the interaction, proposing an insulating effect when appraisals are negative and there is a mismatch between appraisal source and ad target market and a decreased attitude effect when appraisals are negative and there is a match between appraisal source and ad target market. This hypotheses was tested using comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments.

First, I compared out-group negative appraisals across the target market conditions, expecting attitude towards the ad to be lower with the external target market (i.e. in a matched scenario). This assertion is supported (comparing cells 3 and 7 in figure 6) \( (\text{internal} = 4.01, \text{external} = 2.87; F(1,261) = 9.20, p < .01) \). Next, I compared in-group negative appraisals across the target market conditions, expecting attitude towards the ad to be lower with the internal target market (a matched scenario). This was not supported (comparing cells 1 and 5) \( (\text{internal} = 3.09, \text{external} = 3.59; F(1,261) = 2.10, p > .10) \). As expected, comparing in-group and out-group negative appraisals within each target market condition supported hypothesis 5, with attitude towards the ad being lower within the external target market condition when negative appraisals were from the out-group (comparing cells 1 and 3) \( (\text{in-group} = 3.59, \text{out-group} = 2.87; F(1,261) = 3.92, p < .05) \) and lower within the internal target market condition when negative appraisals were from the in-group (comparing cells 5 and 7) \( (\text{in-group} = 3.09, \text{out-group} = 4.01; F(1,261) = 3.20, p < .05) \).

Hypothesis 6, comparing positive and negative appraisals, proposes that negative appraisals will result in lower attitude towards the ad when there is a match between target market and appraisal source and that there will not be differences in attitude
towards the ad between positive and negative appraisal conditions when there is a mismatch between appraisals source and target market. This hypotheses is fully supported. First, there is no difference between positive and negative appraisals when the target market is external and the appraisal is from an in-group member (comparing cells 1 and 2) (positive = 3.74, negative = 3.59; $F(1,261) = .00, p > .20$). Similarly, there is no difference between positive and negative appraisals when the target market is internal and the appraisal is from an out-group member (comparing cells 7 and 8) (positive = 4.38, negative = 4.01; $F(1,261) = .27, p > .20$).

In contrast, there is a significant difference between positive and negative appraisals when the target market is external and the appraisal is attributed to an out-group member (comparing cells 3 and 4) (positive = 3.79, negative = 2.87; $F(1,261) = 4.58, p < .05$). Finally, there is also a difference between positive and negative appraisals when the target market is internal and the appraisal is attributed to an in-group member (comparing cells 5 and 6) (positive = 4.17, negative = 3.09; $F(1,261) = 7.80, p < .01$).

The final hypothesis for this experiment discusses the processes underlying the insulating effects and decreased attitude effects, proposing that the insulating effect is driven by resistance strategies and the decreased attitude effect is driven by self-presentation concerns. First, I compared negative appraisals from in-group and out-group members within each target market condition. In the internal target market condition, I expected out-group negative appraisals to be met with resistance, while in-group appraisals are accepted with higher levels of self-presentation concerns. This hypothesis (comparing cells 5 and 7) was supported for resistance statements (in-group = .81, out-
group = 1.97; $F(1,260) = 11.68, p < .001$), self-presentation concerns (in-group = 1.39, out-group = .62; $F(1,260) = 5.42, p < .05$), and positive affect (in-group = 2.89, out-group = 3.53; $F(1,260) = 4.79, p < .05$). The hypotheses for negative affect was not supported (in-group = 3.03, out-group = 2.58; $F(1,260) = 1.47, p > .20$).

Comparing within the external target market condition (cells 1 and 3), I expected out-group negative appraisals to be accepted, generating more self-presentation concerns, while in-group negative appraisals are resisted. Here, the hypothesis for resistance statements was not supported, with in-group and out-group appraisals resulting in similar levels of resistance statements (in-group = .89, out-group = 1.03; $F(1,260) = .15, p > .20$). The hypothesis was supported for the other three dependent variables: self-presentation concerns (in-group = 1.29, out-group = 2.27; $F(1,260) = 9.26, p < .01$), positive affect (in-group = 3.68, out-group = 2.69; $F(1,260) = 11.87, p < .001$), and negative affect (in-group = 3.04, out-group = 4.11; $F(1,260) = 7.95, p < .01$).

Next, I compared negative appraisals within the source conditions. First, I compared out-group appraisals across the target market conditions, expecting higher self-presentation concerns with an external target market and higher resistance statements with an internal target market, with the corresponding levels of negative and positive affect (comparing cells 3 and 7). All four parts of this hypothesis were supported: resistance statements (internal = 1.97, external = 1.03; $F(1,260) = 7.84, p < .01$), self-presentation concerns (internal = .62, external = 2.27; $F(1,260) = 25.26, p < .001$), positive affect (internal = 3.53, external = 2.69; $F(1,260) = 8.14, p < .01$), and negative affect (internal = 2.58, external = 4.11; $F(1,260) = 15.26, p < .001$).
Finally, I compared in-group negative appraisals across the target market conditions, expecting increased resistance when the target market was external and increased self-presentation concerns when the target market was internal (comparing cells 1 and 5). This hypothesis was only supported for positive affect: positive affect (internal = 2.89, external = 3.68; $F(1,260) = 7.73, p < .01$), resistance (internal = .81, external = .89; $F(1,260) = .06, p > .20$), self-presentation concerns (internal = 1.39, external = 1.29; $F(1,260) = .13, p > .20$), and negative affect (internal = 3.03, external = 3.04; $F(1,260) = .02, p > .20$). Results for hypotheses 7 are shown in figure 7.

To explore the process underlying the insulating and dirty laundry effects in more detail, I conducted a series of regressions to determine if self-presentation concerns and resistance statements mediated the relationship between the independent variables’ interaction term and attitude towards the ad. Following the procedures outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986), I first tested the role of self-presentation concerns as a mediator. When self-presentation concerns were modeled as a mediator, the independent variable interaction term was no longer significant ($p > .10$). This suggests that self-presentation concerns operate as a full mediator of the effects between the independent variables and attitude towards the ad. A similar set of analyses were conducted for resistance statements. Resistance statements did not operate as a mediator, with the relationship between the independent variable interaction term and resistance statements being not
significant \((p > .20)\). The results from these analyses are shown in table 14. Together, these results suggest that only self-presentation concerns operate as a mediator of the relationship between the independent variables and attitude towards the advertisement.

Discussion

The purpose of this experiment was two-fold: (1) determine the conditions under which negative appraisals lead to an insulating effect, with attitudes unaffected by negative information, or a decreased attitude effect and (2) to uncover the process underling these effects. First, the findings from this experiment show that an insulating effect occurs when there is a mismatch between the target market for an advertisement and the source of the negative appraisal. In contrast, a decreased attitude effect is more likely to occur when there is a match between target market and appraisal source. Thus, when the target market is internal, negative appraisals from in-group members have more of an effect on ad attitudes than negative appraisals from out-groups, with the opposite being true when the target market is external. Importantly, out-group appraisals impact attitudes differently across the two target markets, however, this is not the case with in-group appraisals. This indicates that consumers only think about the target market when dealing with out-group appraisals. Even though this was not a hypothesized result, it does
provide support for the dirty laundry effect, demonstrating the importance of out-group appraisals when the target market is external.

The dirty laundry effect was also supported through the analysis of thought protocol data. When the target market was external and the negative appraisal was attributed to an out-group member, participants were more concerned with self-presentation than they were with resisting the negative information. Moreover, this was also accompanied by a high level of negative affect, indicating that the advertisement is operating as a threat to the self. Interestingly, participants still generated resistance statements, however, self-presentation concerns were substantially higher. Mediation analyses also show self-presentation concerns playing a key role in linking the independent variables to attitude towards the ad.

The insulating effect taking place when the target market is internal and the appraisal is attributed to an out-group member is driven by defensive behavior where consumers use strategies to resist the negative information. This is accompanied by less concern for self-presentation and increased positive affect. Thus, as illustrated in figures 6 and 7, in general, negative appraisals from in-group members tend to not differ as a result of the target market. On the other hand, responses to negative appraisals from out-group members differ substantially, with defensive behaviors driving responses when the target market is internal and self-presentation concerns driving responses when the target market is external.
General Discussion

The purpose of this essay was to explore the role of reflected appraisals in ad attitudes and, at the same time, explain the conflicting findings from the first essay that showed negative reflected appraisals operating in two different ways: decreasing attitudes in one study and not decreasing attitudes in another. This essay, through three experiments, explored the impact reflected appraisals have on ad attitudes and determined the conditions under which they do and do not bring about attitude changes. The findings from these experiments make several contributions to marketing and consumer research.

First, these studies provide a better understanding of how self-referencing and identity salience primes work together. Both experiments 1 and 2 show that the insulating effect only occurs when both self-referencing and identity are primed. This finding demonstrates that the insulating effect only occurs when advertisements are highly personally relevant for consumers.

Second, this essay demonstrates the importance of reflected appraisals in the ad evaluation process, showing that reflected appraisals, and negative appraisals in particular, have a nuanced and substantial impact on ad liking. This essay not only demonstrates the importance of reflected appraisals, but also shows how they work. Experiment 3, focusing only on situations where self-referencing and identity are primed, demonstrates that an insulating effect occurs when the target market for an advertisement is internal and reflected appraisals are attributed to an out-group member. Here, consumers engage in defensive behaviors where they resist the negative
information from members of the out-group. This defensive behavior explains the finding from the last study in the first essay where the insulating effect was first demonstrated. Experiment 3 also reversed the insulating effect, presenting a situation where negative appraisals from out-group members negatively affected attitudes: when the target market for an ad is external.

This finding, the dirty laundry effect, shows an important condition under which the out-group is given credence: when advertisements are viewed as a form of self-presentation. Here, even though consumers are still motivated to maintain a positive self-image, as evidenced by the use of resistance strategies, they are more concerned with being viewed well by the outside world. Thus, their self-presentation concerns and desire to portray a positive image to others overrides the impact of their ego-defensive tendencies. This explains the finding from the depth-interview study in essay 1 showing authentic, self-referent yet disliked ads.

Conceptualizing advertisements as a type of self-presentation, and demonstrating how this changes the manner in which out-groups are treated in the minds of consumers, has important implications for both marketing theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, this essay incorporates an important aspect of an individuals’ social context into their ad evaluation process. Traditionally, research has focused on the link between an individual, their identities, their self-referencing processes, and advertisement responses. This work extends these ideas by also incorporating other people into the ad evaluation process, specifically focusing on imagined others who are incorporated into the process through reflected appraisals. By doing this we gain a better understanding of
how consumers respond to advertisements: it is not just enough for an ad to be authentic or reflect a relevant social identity or prompt self-referencing. An advertisement must also generate positive reflected appraisals as consumers think about how an advertisement presents them to other people.

This finding has important implications for how researchers and practitioners think about non-target markets and media placement. In addition to thinking about secondary markets and how the non-target market will respond to an advertisement, the manner in which the target market thinks the non-target market will respond (regardless how accurate this perception is) needs to be taken into account. If this is not considered, and if the target market thinks someone will view them badly because of the advertisement, then an advertisement that is perfectly aligned with consumers’ social identities and resonates strongly with them could be an ineffective campaign. This also has implications for media placement. If consumers think an advertisement has a targeted media strategy and is only going to be viewed by select groups, then the impact of negative reflected appraisals will be quite different from the impact when the target market is broad. Thus, it is not only important to place ads in media where it will reach the target market, but they should also be placed in media where the target market does not think the non-target market will see them.

Limitations and Future Research

This essay moves closer to understanding the role of reflected appraisals in advertising responses, however, there are still several areas where future research can
develop knowledge and build upon the limitations of this work. These limitations can be grouped into three categories: unexpected or unclear findings, methodological limitations, and unexplored theoretical areas.

First, the findings from this essay regarding negative affect were mixed. In some situations, negative affect played only a small role in driving responses while in other situations, negative affect played a large role in driving responses. Examining the role of negative affect in advertisement responses is a fruitful avenue for future research. An additional area for future research stemming from this essay involves the impact of negative appraisals from in-group members. This work found few differences in the impact of negative in-group appraisals across the target market conditions. This contradicts previous work which showed that there are differences in how in-group criticism is treated in public versus private situations (Elder et al. 2005). One possible reason for these divergent findings is that Elder et al. (2005) manipulated the setting where the appraisal was given, whereas I manipulated the setting (i.e. target market) for the appraisal object (i.e. the ad). Future research should explore this issue in more detail to shed light on the reasons behind the contradictory findings as well as differences in whether the appraisal object is public or private or whether the appraisal is public or private.

Second, the experimental designs used in this study provide important, but limited insights into the broader issues surrounding the dirty laundry effect and reflected appraisals. First, experiments 2 and 3 manipulated appraisals through news articles. While this does provide some insights into how appraisals affect ad responses, this is not
a true manipulation for reflected appraisals: it is closer to a manipulation for actual appraisals as the views of others are given to participants. Future research should work to develop better manipulations of reflected appraisals so the differential effects of reflected and actual appraisals in an ad context, if any, can be assessed.

Second, the out-group manipulation used out-group members who could be considered important to the target market. It is likely that University of Arizona students want to look good in the eyes of both recruiters and students at other universities. Future research should explore the role of appraisals attributed to other types of out-groups, specifically looking at dissociative out-groups as well as out-groups who are considered unimportant to the in-group (Dahl and White 2007).

Next, the dependent variable in these experiments, attitude towards the ad, is limited in what it can tell us about behaviors. While research has linked positive ad attitudes to favorable downstream outcomes like brand liking and purchase intent, a more thorough examination of the impact of reflected appraisals on behaviors and other more concrete dependent variables would enhance knowledge about the role of reflected appraisals in the ad evaluation process.

Finally, another limitation of this work relates to self-esteem and the samples used for all three experiments. These samples had relatively high levels of self-esteem, making it difficult to assess how reflected appraisals about ads are influenced by self-esteem. Future research should explore the role of self-esteem and reflected appraisals in the ad evaluation context using a sample with more variance in terms of self-esteem.
Finally, this study leaves several important theoretical questions unexplored. First, this work provides some insights into how identity salience and self-referencing primes work together. While I do show that both primes are necessary to bring about certain effects, the process underlying this is unknown. Specifically, this research cannot answer the question of whether it is merely multiple primes increasing personal relevance and self-referencing that bring about the effects, or the combination of an identity prime and a self-referencing prime. Also, whether the primes are working additively or whether a threshold effect is occurring is unknown. Future research should explore whether multiple identity primes and/or multiple self-referencing primes bring about the insulating effect, as well as whether multiple primes work additively, with effects getting stronger and stronger with more primes, or if a threshold effect is occurring where participants merely need to be brought to a critical level of personal relevance.

Another theoretical area for future research concerns self-affirmation. An assertion made in this essay is that negative appraisals about an identity congruent ad operate as a threat to self. This threat to self manifests in the insulating effect, with resistance statements, as well as the dirty laundry effect, with self-presentation concerns. Research on self-affirmation shows that if you give participants an opportunity to self-affirm, the threat to self is removed. This experimental paradigm could be used to assess the degree to which the negative appraisals are operating as a threat to self. It would also be interesting to see if this returns consumers to a base state of liking the ad, or not liking the ad. In other words, if the ad is operating as a threat to self, then the ad should be liked when self-affirmation occurs. However, if the appraisal is operating as a threat to self,
then the ad should be disliked when participants are given the chance to self-affirm. This should be explored in future research.

Last, the research presented in this essay focused on a social identity where members of the group wanted to be viewed well by others. Some groups, such as deviant subcultures, might not want to be viewed well by others. In this situation, maintaining a public identity of deviance and disdain for social norms might be the desired outcome. Future research should explore the role of the dirty laundry effect and ads as self-presentation in these kinds of situations where the motives of the social group are to be disliked by out-group members.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Type of Runner</th>
<th>Races</th>
<th>Other Running Activities</th>
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<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Professional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexis</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>Running store owner</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>45</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Part of charity running organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barb</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Runs professional training organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brayden</td>
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<td>Collegiate</td>
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<td>Brighton</td>
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<td>Involved with local running organization; Race Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Involved with local running organization; Former international competitor</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Coaches for charity running organization.</td>
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<td>M</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Evan</td>
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<td>--</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>Director of charity running organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan</td>
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<td>Megan</td>
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<td>Former collegiate runner</td>
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<td>Noah</td>
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<td>68</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
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<td>Former competitive runner/race-walker; Coaches for charity running organization</td>
</tr>
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<td>Involved with local running organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paige</td>
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<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Former collegiate runner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Former collegiate runner; Manages running store</td>
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<td>Other-Referencing</td>
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Notes: Principal components extraction with varimax rotation; Verisimilitude items are bolded.
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Notes: All ps < .05; CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted; Numbers in bold on the diagonal denote the square root of the average variance extracted.
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Notes: All ps < .05; CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted; Numbers in bold on the diagonal denote the square root of the average variance extracted.
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Notes: All $ps < .05$; CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted; Numbers in bold on the diagonal denote the square root of the average variance extracted.
### TABLE 6: ESSAY 1 – STUDY 4 COMMON METHOD BIAS ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Auth</th>
<th>SR</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>Arousal</th>
<th>RA</th>
<th>Collect. SE (MV)</th>
<th>Ad Attitude</th>
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<td>.17</td>
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<td>.49</td>
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<td>.07 (MV)</td>
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Notes: MV = Marker Variable, Auth = Perceived Authenticity, SR = Self-Referencing, OR = Other-Referencing, Arousal = Positive Emotional Arousal, RA = Reflected Appraisals, Collect. SE = Collective Self-Esteem; All correlations are significant at $p < .05$ except for values in italics. The first value in each cell is the correlation between constructs, the second value is the correlation corrected for method bias, and the third value is the correlation value for a 95% sensitivity analysis.
TABLE 7: ESSAY 1 – STUDY 4 RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

A – Structural Model (H1-H5)

<table>
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<th>Direction</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Standardized Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
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B- Moderator Regression (H9)

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<th>t-Value</th>
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Notes: Auth = Perceived Authenticity, SR = Self-Referencing, OR = Other-Referencing, Arousal = Positive Emotional Arousal, Ad Attitude = Attitude Towards the Ad, RA = Reflected Appraisals; VIF = variance inflation factor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Category</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
<th>Example Citations</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflected appraisals of private audiences (i.e. imagined significant others) also change self appraisals.</td>
<td>Baldwin and Holmes (1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>Self, reflected, and actual appraisals are correlated.</td>
<td>Shrauger and Schoeneman (1979)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in self appraisals take place for personal attributes as well as goals and motivations.</td>
<td>Bouchey and Harter (2005) Shah (2003a, b)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reflected and actual appraisals are weakly correlated.</td>
<td>Kenny and DePaulo (1993)</td>
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<td>Communication barriers may explain why reflected appraisals are not reflective of actual appraisals.</td>
<td>Felson (1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in self appraisals are more likely to occur in a public versus private</td>
<td>Tice (1992) Schlenker, Dlugolecki, and</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Changes in self appraisals are more likely if: reflected and actual appraisals are favorable, the topic is important, feedback is subjective, and if it is about attributes intrinsically linked to the views of others.

Changes in self appraisals are more likely to occur if the significant other is of a higher status than the individual in question.

The closer the relationship, the more likely it is that changes in self appraisals will occur.

Only feedback from in-group members will be incorporated into the self-concept.

References:
- Doherty (1994)
- Shrauger and Schoeneman (1979)
- Felson (1985)
- Bohrnstedt and Felson (1983)
- Cast, Stets, and Burke (1999)
- Murray, Holmes, Griffin (1996)
- Turner and Onorato (1999)
<table>
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<td>.85</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reflected appraisals</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Authenticity</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Attractiveness</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Self-esteem</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.132a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All ps < .05 except those denoted by a.
TABLE 10: ESSAY 2 - EXPERIMENT 2 SCALE PROPERTIES AND CORRELATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attitude towards the ad</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Positive affect</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Negative affect</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>-.54</td>
<td>-.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Authenticity</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Attractiveness</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Self-esteem</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.05a</td>
<td>.10a</td>
<td>-.10a</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.025a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All ps < .05 except those denoted by a.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appraisal</th>
<th>In-Group</th>
<th>Out-Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Feedback on the campaign from various university stakeholders has generally been positive. Timothy Jones, a 3rd year mechanical engineering major at UA, comments, “The advertisements make UA students look good. This will definitely make people think University of Arizona students are exceptional and that being a University of Arizona student will be a good experience.”</td>
<td>Feedback on the campaign from those outside the university has generally been positive. Timothy Jones, a 3rd year mechanical engineering major at Boston College, comments, “The advertisements make UA students look good. This will definitely make people think University of Arizona students are exceptional and that being a University of Arizona student will be a good experience.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Feedback on the campaign from various university stakeholders has been less positive than hoped for by the campaign coordinators. Timothy Jones, a 3rd year mechanical engineering major at UA, comments, “The advertisements make UA students look like they’re not interested in school and only want to party.”</td>
<td>Feedback on the campaign from those outside the university, however, has been less positive than hoped for by the campaign coordinators. Timothy Jones, a 3rd year mechanical engineering major at Boston College, comments, “The advertisements make UA students look like they’re not interested in school and only want to party.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, Jeffrey Wright, a senior in the Eller College who recently accepted a position with Dial Soap to commence after he graduates in May, notes, “The campaign creates an image of University of Arizona students as individuals who are both intelligent and good people to be around. I am sure that it is this kind of image that contributed to my getting a great job.”

Similarly, Jeffrey Wright, an alumni of NYU law school who frequently recruits students from NYU’s business school, commented that, “The campaign creates an image of University of Arizona students as individuals who are both intelligent and good people to be around. This makes me want to recruit from UA.”

Similarly, Jeffrey Wright, a senior in the Eller College who recently accepted a position with Dial Soap to commence after he graduates in May, notes, “The campaign falls short of creating an image of University of Arizona students that makes me comfortable associating myself with the school. If this is how the world thought about UA students, I doubt I would have a job right now.”

Similarly, Jeffrey Wright, an alumni of NYU law school who frequently recruits students from NYU’s business school, commented that, “The campaign falls short of creating an image of the kind of students we’re interested in. We want students who value work, not after-work drinks.”
TABLE 12: ESSAY 2 - EXPERIMENT 3 THOUGHT PROTOCOL CODING SCHEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resistance</td>
<td>Statements indicating that the person is engaging in resistance strategies such as counterarguing, direct rebuttal of arguments, and source derogation in response to the negative appraisal.</td>
<td>As far as the article goes, I feel it is a little harsh. The ad has a group of students, wearing UA shirts having a fun time. The picture was probably taken before a game which is a big part of college life. It’s not like there are bad things in the picture. The article states that no one would even want to be associated with these people and that’s just ridiculous. Isn’t having fun part of going to college too? Thought the ideas and quotes were typical of people who are ignorant to what is really going on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Self-Presentation</td>
<td>Statements indicating the person is concerned about the image the advertisements presents of the social identity to others.</td>
<td>The ad makes UA students look like they are drunk party animals and don't care about succeeding. This would be the part of UA that I am embarrassed to be associated with. I hoped my parents (who are funding my education) would not see this ad. It is not something I would want to show professionals in business world to associate with what my peers are like. I thought the ad was realistic here and at all colleges, but it is the unspoken lifestyle that should not be marketed to potential students/parents etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Self-Presentation</td>
<td>Statements indicating liking of the image the ad presents of the social identity to others.</td>
<td>It was an interesting ad. It puts the UA in a good light. It shows that we can have fun outside of class. The people in it look very happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Valance</td>
<td>Statements indicating ad liking.</td>
<td>I believe that the ad showed many aspects of unity by color and pride by wearing Arizona shirts. It also showed the simplest message which is UA is fun. This is what university life should be like as it is supposed to revolve around education and social environment, which is projected by the ad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Valance</td>
<td>Statements indicating ad dislike.</td>
<td>I didn't really like the advertisement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Attitude towards the ad</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Resistance</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-presentation concerns</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Positive Affect</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Negative Affect</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Authenticity</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Attractiveness</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All *p* < .05 except those denoted by a.
TABLE 14: ESSAY 2 - EXPERIMENT 3 MEDIATION ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator</th>
<th>Step 1: IV $\rightarrow$ DV</th>
<th>Step 2: IV $\rightarrow$ MV</th>
<th>Step 3: IV, MV $\rightarrow$ DV</th>
<th>Step 4: Sobel Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Presentation</td>
<td>$\beta_{interaction} = .329$</td>
<td>$\beta_{interaction} = -.326$</td>
<td>$\beta_{interaction} = .230$</td>
<td>$z = 2.05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>$p &gt; .10$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance Statements</td>
<td>$\beta_{interaction} = .329$</td>
<td>$\beta_{interaction} = .158$</td>
<td>$\beta_{interaction} = .305$</td>
<td>$z = .10$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>$p &gt; .20$</td>
<td>$p &lt; .05$</td>
<td>$p &gt; .05$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\beta_{self-presentation} = -.305$

$\beta_{resistance} = .155$

$p < .001$

$p < .05$

Notes: IV = independent variable; DV = dependent variable; MV = mediator variable. IV is always the three-way interaction term. DV is always attitude towards the ad. Main effects, two-way interaction terms, and attractiveness measure included as control variables in all regression equations.
APPENDIX B: FIGURES

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FIGURE 1: ESSAY 1 - STUDY 3 SELF- AND OTHER-REFERENCING INTERACTION EFFECT
FIGURE 2: ESSAY 1 - STUDY 4 MODEL

Notes: * p < .05, ** p < .01, --- path not significant
a interaction tested using moderated multiple regression
FIGURE 3: ESSAY 1 - STUDY 4 SELF-REFERENCING AND REFLECTED APPRAISALS INTERACTION EFFECT PLOT

Low Self-Referencing | Medium Self-Referencing | High Self-Referencing
---|---|---
Low Reflected Appraisals | Medium Reflected Appraisals | High Reflected Appraisals

0.00 | 1.00 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 5.00 | 6.00
Attitude Towards Ad
Low Self-Referencing | 1.90 | 3.42 | 5.14 | 4.83 | 4.69 | 5.57
Medium Self-Referencing | 4.75 | 3.82 | 5.14 | 4.83 | 4.69 | 5.57
High Self-Referencing | 6.00 | 5.00 | 4.00 | 3.00 | 2.00 | 1.00 | 0.00
FIGURE 4: ESSAY 2 - EXPERIMENT 1 RESULTS - ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ADVERTISEMENT

Identity Primed

Identity Not Primed

Unfavorable Reflected Appraisals
Favorable Reflected Appraisals

Unfavorable Reflected Appraisals
Favorable Reflected Appraisals
FIGURE 5: ESSAY 2 - EXPERIMENT 2 RESULTS - ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ADVERTISEMENT

Identity Primed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Referencing Not Primed</th>
<th>Self-Referencing Primed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identity Not Primed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Referencing Not Primed</th>
<th>Self-Referencing Primed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- ■ Negative Reflected Appraisal
- ■ Positive Reflected Appraisal
FIGURE 6: ESSAY 2 - EXPERIMENT 3 RESULTS - ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ADVERTISEMENT

External Target Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In-Group</th>
<th>Out-Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to Ad</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Internal Target Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In-Group</th>
<th>Out-Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to Ad</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 7: ESSAY 2 - EXPERIMENT 3 RESULTS – RESISTANCE AND SELF-PRESENTATION CONCERNS STATEMENTS

Resistance Statements

External Target Market

Internal Target Market

Self-Presentation Concern Statements

External Target Market

Internal Target Market
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad Name</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band-Aids*</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Male runner placing band-aids over his nipples: Slogan: “Runners. Yeah, we’re different.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leap Year</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Two scenic images of runners along the ocean shoreline and past a rustic church are accompanied by the slogan, “Good news: It’s a leap year. You can run 366 days.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep Running*</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Woman in sweatshirt with MP3 player. Slogan: “I’ll keep running because it gives me a legitimate excuse for looking in the neighbor’s windows at night. Nice sofa.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Run</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Woman running upstairs (left); 28 pairs of shoes (right). Slogan: “Day 5 of 28. 100 steps felt like 10.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Spirit</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Steve Prefontaine running. Slogan: “Steve Prefontaine is the insatiable spirit of Nike Running. We made our first pair of shoes for him, we’ll make our last pair of shoes for him” and goes on to describe the shoe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Strides</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Mid-pack of runners at start of a race with hundreds of runners crammed together. Slogan says, “Where your world becomes the next two strides.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Professional runner Michael Johnson squatting in the middle of a track. Text in bottom right corner: “Michael Johnson, Austin Texas 6/4/92.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naked Man</td>
<td>Muddied naked man standing at the back of his truck changing out of running clothes. Passersby give him a strange look. Slogan: “Runners. Yeah, we’re different.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queue</td>
<td>Man in a suit stretching in a bank line. Slogan: “Runners. Yeah, we’re different”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couch</td>
<td>Woman on a couch, wrapped in a foil blanket (framed race number on table, running shoes on ground). Slogan: “Your passion is our obsession.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Professional runner, Michael Johnson. Slogan: “If you’re on the track team, high school will be the best four years of your life. Football players get to enjoy five.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Silhouette of man running in front of a dark cloudy sky. Slogan: “Test your faith daily.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirty Car</td>
<td>Woman in running clothes stretching against a car covered in dirt and displaying a ‘for sale’ sign. Slogan: “Inner Drive.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ran Today</td>
<td>Man standing in running clothes. Slogan: “You either ran today or you didn’t.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadside Speed*</td>
<td>Woman running along desert road, passing a roadside speed measurement machine (speed = 10 miles/hr)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ad included as stimuli in essay 1 study 4 survey
### APPENDIX D: ESSAY 1 – MEASURES USED IN STUDY 2, 3, AND 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Authenticity</td>
<td>1. This could be a real college experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. This captures a real experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. This is a real portrayal of a college experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. This advertisement is unrealistic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. This advertisement is phony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. This is the kind of thing a college student would do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. The advertisement was very realistic—that is, true to life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Referencing</td>
<td>1. Seemed to be made with me in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Seemed to relate to me personally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Made me think about my personal experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Thought about my own experiences when I was viewing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Referencing</td>
<td>1. Seemed to be made with someone else I know in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Seemed to relate to someone else I know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Made me think about other people’s experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Thought about other people’s experiences when I was viewing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Arousal</td>
<td>1. Attentive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Curious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Interested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Aroused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Active.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Excited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Playful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Entertained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Lighthearted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflected Appraisals</td>
<td>1. Think University of Arizona students are presented in a favorable way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Like the University of Arizona students in this ad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Think poorly of the students in this ad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Think these students are people with whom they want to be associated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Form negative views of University of Arizona students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Think the image portrayed of University of Arizona students is good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. I want people to think of me the same way they think about these University of Arizona students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. I like how University of Arizona students are represented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. This is how I want to see University of Arizona students portrayed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Towards the Ad</td>
<td>1. Do you like the advertisement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Is the advertisement interesting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Is the advertisement good?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Is the advertisement appealing?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX E: ESSAY 1 – STUDY 3 EXPERIMENTAL STIMULI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad Name</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male Congruent/Female Incongruent Ads</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axe Legs</td>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Axe Legs Image" /></td>
<td>Young man standing in front of bathroom mirror, wearing only a towel. Towel depicts a pair of woman’s legs, creating the illusion of a woman wrapping her legs around the man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axe Hands</td>
<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Axe Hands Image" /></td>
<td>Young man stands in front of a dormitory shower wearing only a towel. The towel depicts a pair of woman’s hands wrapped around the man, creating the illusion of a woman embracing the man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female Congruent/Male Incongruent Ads</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonder-bra Restaurant</td>
<td><img src="image3.jpg" alt="Wonder-bra Restaurant Image" /></td>
<td>A woman (implied but not depicted in the ad) walks into a restaurant and everyone in the room stares at her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonder-bra Escalator</td>
<td><img src="image4.jpg" alt="Wonder-bra Escalator Image" /></td>
<td>A woman (implied but not depicted in the ad) rides up an escalator as everyone around stares at her.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX G: ESSAY 2 – MEASURES USED IN EXPERIMENTS 1, 2, AND 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
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</table>
| Attitude towards the ad | 1. Do you like the advertisement?  
2. Is the advertisement interesting?  
3. Is the advertisement good?  
4. Is the advertisement appealing? |
| Self-referencing        | 1. Seemed to be made with me in mind.  
2. Seemed to relate to me personally.  
3. Made me think about my personal experiences.  
4. Thought about my own experiences when I was viewing it. |
| Reflected appraisals    | 1. Think University of Arizona students are presented in a favorable way.  
2. Like the University of Arizona students in this ad.  
3. Think poorly of the students in this ad.  
4. Think these students are people with whom they want to be associated.  
5. Form negative views of University of Arizona students.  
6. Think the image portrayed of University of Arizona students is good.  
7. I want people to think of me the same way they think about these University of Arizona students.  
8. I like how University of Arizona students are represented.  
9. This is how I want to see University of Arizona students portrayed. |
| Positive Affect         | 1. Attentive.  
2. Curious.  
3. Interested.  
4. Aroused.  
5. Active.  
6. Excited.  
7. Playful.  
8. Entertained.  
9. Lighthearted.  
10. Optimistic  
11. Encouraged  
12. Hopeful  
13. Proud  
14. Confident  
15. Self-assured  
16. Distinguished |
| Negative Affect         | 1. Frustrated  
2. Angry  
3. Irritated  
4. Embarrassed  
5. Ashamed  
6. Humiliated |
| Perceived authenticity | 1. This could be a real college experience.  
2. This captures a real experience.  
3. This is a real portrayal of a college experience.  
4. This advertisement is unrealistic.  
5. This advertisement is phony.  
6. This is the kind of thing a college student would do.  
7. The advertisement was very realistic—that is, true to life. |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Perceived attractiveness | 1. Unattractive – Attractive  
2. Ugly – Beautiful  
4. Plain – Elegant  
5. Not Sexy – Sexy |
| Self-esteem | 1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.  
2. At times, I think I am no good at all.  
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.  
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.  
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.  
6. I certainly feel useless at times.  
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.  
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.  
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.  
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself. |
| Strength of Association With the Identity | 1. Overall, being a University of Arizona student has very little to do with how I feel about myself.  
2. In general, being a University of Arizona student is an important part of my self-image.  
3. My destiny is tied to other University of Arizona students.  
4. Being a University of Arizona student is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.  
5. I have a strong sense of belonging to the University of Arizona.  
6. I have a strong attachment to other University of Arizona students.  
7. Being a University of Arizona student is an important reflection of who I am.  
9. Being a University of Arizona student is not a major factor in my social relationships. |
APPENDIX H: ESSAY 2 – EXPERIMENT 2 ADVERTISEMENT STIMULI

Self-Referencing Ad

No Self-Referencing Ad
New UA Advertising Campaign Garners Attention

By: Steve Warner
updated 9:52 a.m. MT, Tues., Oct. 21, 2008

TUCSON, AZ. - The University of Arizona, in the midst of transforming the university from a top 20 school to a lean and efficient top 10 school, has initiated a new advertising campaign in the hope that it will attract high quality students and corporate partners to the university.

The campaign consists of three separate advertisements featuring pictures of various University of Arizona students engaged in activities that highlight both the academic and social aspects of life as a University of Arizona student.

Stephanie Ellis, the marketing coordinator for the campaign noted that, “The campaign is designed to enhance the image of the University of Arizona so we can continue to attract the best students, the best professors, and the best corporate partners. The goal of this campaign is to push the University to the next level of excellence in terms of recruitment and endowments.”

Feedback on the campaign from various university stakeholders has generally been positive. Timothy Jones, a 3rd year mechanical engineering major at UA comments, “The advertisements make UA students look good. This will definitely make people think University of Arizona students are exceptional and that being a University of Arizona student will be a good experience.”

Jeffrey Wright, an executive at Dial Soap and UA alumni who recruits from UA, notes that “The campaign creates an image of a University of Arizona as individuals who are both intelligent and fun people to be around. If we didn’t already recruit from UA, this campaign would make me want to do so.”

Overall, the success of the campaign will be judged by how well it helps the university enhance their image. The campaign, currently only being run in select markets, will be rolled out across the country over the next few months with its impact being closely monitored. The full campaign can be viewed at www.arizona.edu/newimage.
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Feedback on the campaign from various university stakeholders has been less positive than the university had hoped. Timothy Jones, a 3rd year mechanical engineering major at UA comments, “The advertisements make UA students look like they’re not interested in school and only want to party.”

Jeffrey Wright, an executive at Dial Soap and UA alumni who recruits from UA, notes that, “The campaign falls short of creating an image of UA students that makes me comfortable recruiting here. I want to hire people who work hard and are dedicated. This ad creates an image of students as being less concerned about working hard and more concerned about after-work drinks.”

Overall, the success of the campaign will be judged by how well it helps the university enhance their image. The campaign, currently only being run in select markets, will be rolled out across the country over the next few months with its impact being closely monitored. The full campaign can be viewed at www.arizona.edu/newimage.
APPENDIX J: ESSAY 2 – EXPERIMENT 3 ADVERTISEMENT STIMULI

External Target Market Ad

Internal Target Market Ad
External Target Market

Background Information

Over the past few weeks, University of Arizona student leaders have become concerned about the reputation of the University. To rectify this situation, they designed a campaign to help promote the university and student life. The ad campaign features UA students engaged in activities indicative of university life.

A reporter from the Tucson Times recently published an article about this campaign. Even though the campaign is still being tested, the reporter accidentally found out about the campaign when conducting interviews for an unrelated story on campus.

We are interested in determining what students think about these advertisements.

Internal Target Market

Background Information

Over the past few weeks, University of Arizona student leaders have become concerned about the decreasing sense of camaraderie and morale among students at the University. To rectify this situation, they designed a campaign to remind students about what bonds UA students together. The ad campaign features UA students engaged in activities that are unique to life at the University of Arizona.

This campaign is made by UA students for UA students and the messages are designed to communicate aspects of university life that are central to students, but are not the kinds of things that would be seen in a wide-spread marketing campaign.

A reporter from the Tucson Times recently published an article about this campaign. Even though the campaign was designed to only be seen by UA students, the reporter accidentally found out about the campaign when conducting interviews for an unrelated story on campus.

We are interested in determining what students think about these advertisements.
New UA Advertising Campaign Garners Attention

By: Steve Warner
updated 9:52 a.m. MT, Tues., Feb 03, 2009

TUCSON, AZ. – The University of Arizona, in an attempt to increase morale amongst students, designed a new advertising campaign in the hope that it will remind students about what makes life at UA special and unique.

The campaign consists of three separate advertisements featuring pictures of various University of Arizona students engaged in activities that highlight different aspects of student life. Interestingly, the campaign highlights what can best be described as ‘private moments of student life’: the kinds of things that only UA students would know about and would rarely be included in public advertising campaigns.

Stephanie Ellis, the coordinator for the campaign, noted, “The campaign is designed to remind students about why we are special: remind us about the kinds of things only we know about. This will hopefully help students form a supportive and strong bond during these difficult financial times.”

Feedback on the campaign from those outside the university, however, has been less positive than hoped for by the campaign coordinators. Timothy Jones, a 3rd year mechanical engineering major at Boston College, comments, “The advertisements make UA students look like they’re not interested in school and only want to party.”

Similarly, Jeffrey Wright, an alumni of NYU law school who frequently recruits students from NYU’s business school, commented that, “The campaign falls short of creating an image of the kind of students we’re interested in. We want students who value work, not after-work drinks.”

Overall, the success of the campaign will be judged by how well it helps the university enhance their image and improve morale amongst students. The full campaign can be viewed at www.arizona.edu/newimage.
New UA Advertising Campaign Garners Attention

By: Steve Warner
updated 9:52 a.m. MT, Tues., Feb 03, 2009

TUCSON, AZ. – The University of Arizona, in an attempt to increase morale amongst students, designed a new advertising campaign in the hope that it will remind students about what makes life at UA great.

The campaign consists of three separate advertisements featuring pictures of various University of Arizona students engaged in activities that highlight different aspects of student life. The three ads show aspects of both the academic and social side of being at a university.

Stephanie Ellis, the coordinator for the campaign, noted, “The campaign is designed to enhance the image of the University of Arizona so we can continue to attract the best students, the best professors, and the best corporate partners and make current students proud of their university. The goal of this campaign is to push the university to the next level of excellence in terms of recruitment and endowments.”

Feedback on the campaign from various university stakeholders has generally been positive. Timothy Jones, a 3rd year mechanical engineering major at UA, comments, “The advertisements make UA students look good. This will definitely make people think University of Arizona students are exceptional and that being a University of Arizona student will be a good experience.”

Similarly, Jeffrey Wright, a senior in the Eller College who recently accepted a position with Dial Soap to commence after he graduates in May, notes, “The campaign creates an image of University of Arizona students as individuals who are both intelligent and good people to be around. I am sure that it is this kind of image that contributed to my getting a great job.”

Overall, the success of the campaign will be judged by how well it helps the university enhance their image and improve morale amongst students. The full campaign can be viewed at www.arizona.edu/newimage.
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