QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

THE EFFECT OF MESSAGE LEXICAL CONCRETENESS ON CUSTOMER INSPIRATION: THE

MODERATING ROLES OF PRODUCT CATEGORY AND REGULATORY FOCUS

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Title: <u>The Effect of Message Lexical Concreteness on Customer Inspiration: The Moderating Roles of Product Category and Regulatory Focus</u>

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The concept of customer inspiration has only recently been conceptualized in marketing. This thesis examines the impact of marketing communication on customer inspiration. More specifically, it attempts to ascertain whether message type (concrete or abstract) has a significant impact on customer inspiration, and whether the extent to which a message inspires customers depends on product category (hedonic versus utilitarian) and individual differences among them (promotion versus prevention foci). An experimental design has been used to examine: 1) the impact of message type on customer inspiration, 2) the interaction between message type and product type, and 3) the interaction between message type, product type and individuals' regulatory focus. Finding indicate that abstract messages are more inspiring than concrete messages, and that an abstract message has a greater impact on customer inspiration when the message is promoting a hedonic product, and promotion-oriented individuals are most likely to be inspired by abstract messages promoting hedonic products. Finding also reveal that there is no significant interaction between concrete messages, utilitarian products and a prevention regulatory focus. This study makes valuable theoretical and managerial implications in the bourgeoning area of customer inspiration.

DEDICATION

In the memory of May, my grandmother, who supported me through my toughest

times. May your beautiful soul rest in peace.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1.1 Overview

This chapter introduces the study, and the concepts involved (see Figure 1). Many years ago, when religious ideas were first developed, they were closely linked to the concept of inspiration. This, in turn, was related to revelation, or the process of revealing divine knowledge to an individual (Thrash & Elliot, 2003). During the 19th century, with the rise of psychology, theorists disclaimed religious sources of inspiration and focused on creative ones. These scholars wanted to explain these sources scientifically, focusing on the human psyche (Preminger, 1965).

Thrash and Elliot (2003, 2004 & 2010) reviewed the inspiration literature to conceptualize and develop a clear and consistent definition of the concept. They first developed the "tripartite conceptualization", setting out that inspiration has three core characteristics, evocation, motivation and transcendence. Then they developed the "the component process conceptualization", stating that inspiration arises from a process

with two components: the 'inspired *by*' component and the 'inspired *to*' component. And finally, provided a third conceptualization, the "the transmission model", which specifies that inspiration functions as a mediator because it motivates individuals to actualize a creative insight.

This means that inspiration is no longer a trait. The individual concerned can be characterized as being "inspired" or being in a state of inspiration.

The concept of inspiration has attracted researchers from different domains, including business. Recently, Böttger et al. (2017) conceptualized the concept of inspiration in marketing and developed a measurement scale. They realized that this understudied construct has the potential to support marketers in promoting their products and services and increasing sales. Böttger et al. (2017) identified components, antecedents and consequences of customer inspiration. Like the general conceptualizations of inspiration in psychology, marketing inspiration is also formed of two components, the epistemic activation component (the state of 'inspired by') and the intention component (the state of 'inspired to'). Both components are needed. Customer inspiration is also triggered by an external source, where marketing efforts are seen as the sources of inspiration if they stimulate new ideas and lead to consumption-related responses. Böttger et al. (2017) suggested that inspiration can lead to behavioral, emotional and attitudinal consumer responses.

1.2 Research Problem

The concept of customer inspiration has only recently been conceptualized in marketing. Böttger et al. (2017) investigated the drivers of inspiration, and found that for a source to be inspiring, it should have the three main characteristics: 1) its content must include a new idea, 2) the content must appeal to the customer's imagination and 3) the source must evoke approach motivation rather than avoidance motivation. The

researchers only identified two ways in which companies can inspire customers: 1) combining existing products in an unexpected way and 2) engaging in imagery that appeals to customers' imaginations. There is, however, a gap in understanding the universal drivers of customer inspiration. Specific sources of inspiration, for example, in the context of advertising, are needed to guide companies and help them to create sources of inspiration.

Böttger et al. (2017) argued that individual differences or characteristics play a major role in predicting the intensity and frequency of inspiration. In the context of consumption, they suggested that there was a particularly important individual characteristic: whether a customer has the idea of shopping in mind or the hedonic motivation to shop. Generally speaking, external stimuli tend to influence people differently. Similarly, marketing efforts may appeal to and inspire some people more than others. However, it is not clear if there are differences between individuals with the motivation to shop. For example, would marketing efforts still have a differential impact on customers' state of inspiration, because of more specific individual differences, particularly related the inner self or personality? This research aims to expand the inspiration literature, and fill this gap. It aims to explore the influence of specific marketing content on customer inspiration, and the theoretical boundary conditions for inspiration. In particular, the study investigates 1) whether message type (concrete or abstract) affects the triggering of customer inspiration, 2) under which specific conditions, i.e. utilitarian versus hedonic products, is the message most inspiring, while also considering 3) individual characteristics, i.e. individual promotion versus prevention goals. This will therefore contribute to the inspiration literature in the field of marketing.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research has several purposes. First the study aimed to establish whether the message type, particularly abstract or concrete, has an impact on customers' state of inspiration. Second, this research aimed to investigate the interaction between message type and product type. Third, this research aimed to investigate the interaction between message type, product type and individuals' regulatory focus. This research therefore aims to test the influence of messages' lexical concreteness on customers' state of inspiration towards two types of product categories, utilitarian and hedonic, across two individual orientations, promotion and prevention.

The study tested the moderating roles of product category and regulatory focus to assess whether they are a boundary condition to the relationship between the type of message and customer inspiration.

1.4 Research Contributions

This research contributes to the literature on inspiration in marketing. The concept of customer inspiration in marketing has only recently been introduced and conceptualized. This makes it intriguing for researchers, marketing managers, and other management practitioners. Böttger et al. (2017) defined the concept of customer inspiration, developed a ten-item measurement scale, and identified key drivers and consequences. This gave marketing a new perspective and provided new potential communication strategies and possibilities for companies. Although Böttger and colleagues (2017) identified a number of drivers of customer inspiration, there are still many more that deserve to be investigated.

This research investigated whether the type of message, and particularly its lexical concreteness, can affect customer inspiration. Understanding specific sources of inspiration can guide companies to create new communication strategies that allow

them to achieve their goals by inspiring their customers. This research also considers what moderates or strengthens the impact of messages on customers' state of inspiration. It contributes to the inspiration literature by examining the interaction between the type of message (abstract vs. concrete), the type of product (hedonic vs. utilitarian), and individuals' regulatory focus (promotion vs. prevention-oriented). This study has significant practical implications, because it provides managers with information about how to inspire customers and generate emotional, attitudinal and behavioral responses by using the appropriate promotional messages for the type of product and the target audience.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The thesis includes five chapters: 1) introduction, 2) theoretical background and conceptual   development, 3) research methodology, 4) data analysis and findings, and 5) conclusion.

This chapter, the introduction, began with an overview of the concept of inspiration, followed by the research problem and the gap to be addressed. This section also introduced the research objectives and the study's potential contribution to the inspiration literature in marketing. Chapter 2 includes a thorough literature review covering the four main constructs considered. This chapter is divided into two main subsections: 1) customer inspiration, discussing the concept in detail, and 2) the conceptual framework, which discusses the independent variable (type of message), the proposed moderators (type of product and regulatory focus), the relationship between the constructs, and the rationale behind the proposed hypotheses. Chapter 3, the methodology section, is also divided into two main subsections: 1) the research approach, which presents and justifies the methods used, and 2) the research method, which explains the experimental design, the sample used, the procedure followed, the

pretests conducted, the measurements used to test the hypotheses and results. Chapter 4, on data analysis and findings, is divided into three main subsections: 1) manipulation checks, which report the results of the experiment's stimuli manipulation, 2) the hypothesis testing, which describes the analytical tools used to test the hypotheses, and their results, and 3) a detailed discussion of the study results. Finally, Chapter 5 provides the study conclusions. This chapter is also divided into three main subsections: 1) theoretical implications, 2) managerial implications and 3) the research limitations and avenues for future research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical background to the study, and explains the concepts involved in more details (see Figure 2).
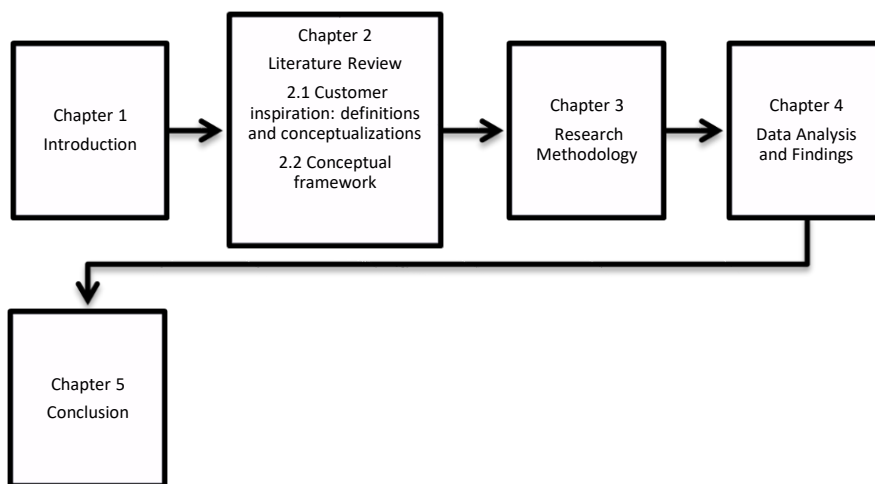
Figure 2. Chapter Outline

2.2 Customer Inspiration: Definitions and Conceptualizations

Motivation has been described as a psychological force that directs people towards achieving their goals (Lewin, 1935). It can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. According to the theory of self-determination, intrinsic motivation is when individuals carry out an activity because the activity itself is personally rewarding, and they are driven by the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Extrinsic motivation is when individuals carry out an activity to realize a specific outcome, mainly driven by external rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Inspiration is a type of intrinsic motivation because by definition, it is a "motivational state that compels individuals to bring ideas into fruition" (Oleynick, Thrash, LeFew, Moldovan & Kieffaber, 2014, p.1). It is evoked by an external source, but still associated with the realization of a new idea (Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash & Elliot, 2003). Inspiration is believed to be the means of transforming people, because it reinforces personal viability and the desire to do something unique or be someone special (Thrash, Moldovan, Oleynick & Marushkin, 2014; Thrash & Elliot 2003, 2004). As a result of its powerful influence, many scholars have tried to rationalize its causes and consequences. Inspiration has common features across various domains.

2.2.1 Inspiration is Everywhere

The concept of inspiration originated in religion (Thrash & Elliot, 2004). Prophets and their words inspired people, showing that sacred verses are considered to be inspirational, and have the power to transform intellect or emotions towards a deeper understanding of God (Heschel, 1962). However, with the rise of psychology, theorists moved away from religious sources of inspiration and focused on the human psyche (Preminger, 1965). Thrash and Elliot (2003, 2004) and Thrash et al. (2010) reviewed various studies to conceptualize and develop a clear and consistent definition of inspiration, and validate a measuring scale for the concept (see Appendix 1 and 2 for trait and state inspiration scales). They suggested that it has three core characteristics: evocation, motivation and transcendence. They noted that inspiration is evoked and does not simply arise through an act of will. It is also not initiated by individuals. Motivation is behind individual actions or feelings of obligation that drive them to actualize new ideas. Inspiration therefore triggers people to experience transcendence, concerned with fulfilling something better, being able to see beyond existing possibilities, and go beyond normal experiences. Inspiration arises from a process that

encompasses two components: the 'inspired *by*' component and the 'inspired *to*' component (Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash & Elliot, 2004). Individuals are 'inspired by' someone or something when they appreciate and accommodate the evocative object or person. They are 'inspired to' when they are motivated to extend the qualities demonstrated in the evocative object or person, known as the 'source of inspiration'. These two components are distinct, but individuals must experience both to be inspired. The two components jointly indicate the intensity level of the inspiration. Finally, Thrash and Elliot (2004) and Thrash et al. (2010) argued that inspiration has a unique function: it acts as a mediator, in a statistical sense, which motivates individuals to transmit the perceived value obtained from the evocative object and extend its qualities to a new one.

Some researchers have suggested that inspiration can be found in everything, including nature, music, poetry and people (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; McCutchan, 1999). Inspiration has also been viewed from a managerial perspective. Dess and Picken (2000) noted that managers and mentors are important for innovative employees and wealth creation, showing that managers have the capability to inspire other employees. Sources of inspiration exist in the external environment, and inspiration is always evoked by an external source, such as a person or an object (Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash & Elliot, 2003). Research emphasizes, however, that people need to be open to letting inspiration happen (Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash & Elliot, 2003). Individuals are influenced and motivated by what seems to be beneficial, good, beautiful or 'inspiring'. Some researchers have therefore stressed the importance of investigating the concept of "self-transcendent emotions". Carver and Scheier (1990) stated that transcendence is related to positive emotions, which in turn influence people and bring them closer to achieving their goals. When individuals witness something beautiful or virtuous and

experience positive feelings, they too might feel the desire to be beautiful or virtuous (Haidt, 2000). A well-known example from Greek mythology is the Muses. Muses were goddesses of arts including music, poetry and dance. They were said to be talented themselves, and also responsible to inspire gifted mankind and help them reach their artistic or intellectual potential. By whispering into a shepherd's ear, they were able to transform him into a glorious poet (Leavitt, 1997). This example clearly shows that inspiration is a type of a motivational state that is evoked by an external trigger or stimulus, which in turn leads to transcendence. When experiencing transcendence, the target feels positivity, clarity and self-enhancement (Thrash & Elliot, 2003).

Inspiration has intrapsychic and external sources, so the extent of inspiration therefore varies between and within individuals (Thrash & Elliot, 2003). It is not, however, known which specific individual differences influence the variation between individuals or to what extent individuals' personal characteristics affect how they are inspired by external stimuli. The nature of inspiration, and its origin in the external environment, make it attractive for researchers in various domains, including business. Marketing is a branch of business that is increasingly interested in the concept of inspiration. This is the result of the likely effect of inspirational marketing on people.

2.2.2 Inspiration: The Essence of Marketing

Inspiration has only recently been conceptualized in the context of marketing (Böttger et al., 2017). The concept is, however, very important to marketers because it predicts marketing outcomes and various consumer behaviors. Marketers continuously try to communicate their brands and products using various channels. Consumers, throughout their customer journey, continuously seek new information about products and services, using sources such as social websites. These social websites, such as FoodGawker, exist to inspire people. They aim to provide people with new ideas about products that are

new to them, and open doors to new consumption possibilities. Marketing is all about initiating needs and providing consumers with new ideas and possibilities that broaden their imaginations and influence their consumption goals. Marketers are therefore always trying to inspire their customers, through both brands and shopping experiences. In other words, inspiration and marketing are inseparable. Böttger et al. (2017) stated simply: "inspiring customers is the essence of marketing". Previous research on inspiration claimed that everyone is exposed to the possibility of encountering an inspiring experience (Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash & Elliot, 2003). Marketers should therefore make sure that they thoroughly understand the concept of inspiration, its antecedents and outcomes. Böttger et al. (2017) recently contributed to the marketing literature by introducing and conceptualizing customer inspiration, developing a measurement scale and identifying the key drivers and consequences. They conceptualized customer inspiration based on the three existing frameworks for inspiration (see Appendix 3). Böttger et al. (2017, p. 117) defined 'customer inspiration', drawing on the transmission model of Thrash et al. (2010), as: "a customer's temporary motivational state that facilitates the transition from the reception of a marketing-induced idea to the intrinsic pursuit of a consumption-related goal".

Like inspiration in theology and psychology, customer inspiration in marketing is evoked by an external stimulus. These external stimuli motivate customers to change certain consumption habits and are more effective when customers are willing to consider new ideas and open to new experiences (Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash & Elliot, 2003). Böttger and colleagues agreed that inspiration is a special type of intrinsic motivation because inspired individuals are most likely to realize new ideas in return for incentives inherent in those ideas.

In marketing, customers are considered to be recipients of inspiration (Böttger et al.,

2017). Marketing efforts are viewed as sources of inspiration and consumption-related goals are seen as the consequences of inspiration (Böttger et al., 2017). A full episode of customer inspiration still needs both components: the 'inspired by', also known as the activation component, and the 'inspired to', known as the intention component. Böttger et al. (2017) therefore saw customer inspiration as a second order construct. They suggested that the 'inspired by' component is associated with customers receiving new ideas from marketing efforts and their awareness of new possibilities, and the 'inspired to' component is associated with customers' motivation to actualize new consumption goals, such as purchasing.

Using the transmission model of general inspiration, Böttger et al. (2017) suggested that the 'inspired by' component mediates the effect of the marketing stimuli on the 'inspired to' component. Inspiration simplifies customers' transition from the state of 'being inspired by the marketing efforts' to the state of 'being inspired to actualize a certain idea'. This in turn results in a behavior that depends on the idea emphasized through the marketing effort. Customer inspiration relies on both the inspiring source and the characteristics of the recipient (Thrash & Elliot, 2003, 2004). Böttger and colleagues (2017) proposed that recipient characteristics played an important role in predicting the intensity and frequency of the customers' inspiring experience. A particularly important individual characteristic is whether the customer is open to new experiences and has the idea of shopping in mind. The individuals' characteristics play an important role in predicting the intensity and frequency of their inspiring experiences, so marketing content may appeal to and inspire some individuals more than others, depending on their characteristics. Exploring more specific individual differences therefore contributes to the inspiration literature by providing theoretical and managerial implications on how consumers behave when exposed to inspiring

marketing stimuli.

Marketing efforts can be considered as a source of inspiration if they have three main characteristics: 1) the content must include a new idea, 2) the content must appeal to the customer's imagination and 3) the source must evoke approach motivation rather than avoidance motivation (Böttger et al., 2017). Böttger et al. (2017, p. 129), however, also stated that many sources of inspiration "exist and deserve further exploration". This research will act on this call to further investigate specific sources of inspiration, and also test the effects of individual variables that may intensify customers' state of inspiration.

Böttger et al. (2017) noted that the consequences of customer inspiration are behavioral, emotional and attitudinal. These consequences prove that this concept is very important in the context of marketing, because the main objective of any marketing activity is to communicate brands or products to trigger responses. Böttger et al. (2017) focused on investigating the consequences of inspiration. They therefore only explored the characteristics of inspirational sources, and did not specify antecedents.

The concept of inspiration is therefore very important to marketers, and specifying precise antecedents is essential. Böttger and colleagues conceptualized, defined and developed a scale for inspiration. However, simply stating that sources of inspiration should have three main characteristics is not enough. Marketers have to consider the three key elements of effective advertising: the message, the mass media, and the target audience. The key to effective advertising is being able to communicate the best message via the most suitable mass media, targeted to the right audience (Broderick & Pickton, 2005).

2.2.3 Inspirational marketing communication

Effective communication lies at the heart of marketing, as effective marketing communication, consistent with the marketing and corporate objectives, allows businesses to reach their aim to be in a maintainable competitive position (Holm, 2006). Marketers are continuously seeking new ways to communicate with the market and try to build long-term customer relationships (Copulsky & Wolf, 1990). This is mainly because companies that communicate effectively with their customers are more likely to have customers with better perceptions of the brand/product, and be better able to achieve specific goals, such as loyalty and increasing sales (Barnes, 2003; Copulsky & Wolf, 1990).

The main purpose of marketing communication is to persuade consumers that the product is valuable and to influence consumers' perceptions of it, in terms of benefits vs. costs (Holm, 2006). The content of the message is therefore crucial. Marketers use messages to communicate with their customers and particularly to communicate the brand/product and show that it differs from other brands/products (Todorova, 2015). They must therefore make sure that the type of message used in advertisements has the power to influence consumer perceptions of the marketed product and inspire customers.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

2.3.1 Messages' Lexical Concreteness

Promotional messages have become an essential part of modern culture (Miller, Lane, Deatrick, Young & Potts, 2007). The vast advertising literature attempts to identify strategies to create effective messages and advertisements (Tellis, 2003; Vakratsas & Ambler; 1999). Studies on advertising and social influence have tried to develop strategies that might be used in designing influential messages. However, more research

is needed, especially when the aim is to influence consumers under certain conditions, because an ineffective promotional message may result in neutral or negative responses (Miller et al., 2007).

Advertising effectiveness has various dimensions, including brand awareness, recall, and recognition. However, using these dimensions to measure advertising effectiveness depend on the advertising medium used (i.e. print, online or TV) (Maheshwari, Seth & Gupta, 2014). The advertising literature has therefore placed a lot of emphasis on strategies to help marketers design messages that can attract consumers' attention towards the product or brand and achieve across several dimensions of advertising effectiveness. Communication has always been important to advertising effectiveness, but it is hard to evaluate effectiveness because of the complex nature of the advertising industry and its dependence on consumer responses (Tellis, 2003). Considering that inspiring messages are sources of inspiration, they result in emotional, attitudinal and behavioral responses that are likely to affect advertising effectiveness (Tellis, 2003; Böttger et al., 2017).

In designing advertisements, marketers examine both central and peripheral elements. Central elements include the argument or message, and play a central role in the persuasion process. Peripheral elements, such as celebrity endorsements, play a peripheral role in the same process (Schaefer & Keillor, 1997). Responses to both types of factor determine whether consumers are persuaded by the central or peripheral route. In other words, consumers are either influenced by central or peripheral cues in the advertisement. However, the concept of inspiration is new to the marketing literature, and neither central nor peripheral factors have been investigated in the context of inspiration. Tellis (2003) stated that a strong argument is one of the most effective advertising appeals, and that the most effective advertising is therefore one that

provides consumers with information including key attributes and product characteristics. Homer (2006) reported that many studies have considered the role of peripheral cues and peripheral processing, but most have still examined advertisements that contain information such as brand or product attributes (e.g., Homer, 2006; Miniard, Bhatla, Lord, Dickson & Unnava, 1991; Miniard, Sirdeshmukg, & Innis, 1992). Empirical evidence shows that studies in advertising favor central processing in their quest to continuously influence consumers (Homer, 2006). This research therefore seeks to focus on the central cues in advertising, specifically, the messages used (abstract vs. concrete) and to determine their effect on customer inspiration. Lexical concreteness of a message is to what extent the message uses abstract or concrete language (Miller et al., 2007).

To test which type of messages lead to positive marketing outcomes, researchers have compared various types of messages, such as specific vs. general, attribute vs. benefit, high vs. low control, and abstract vs. concrete. For instance, in the context of corporate social responsibility, Robinson and Eilert (2018) found that consumers responded more favorably to the specific message, "5% of the sales would be donated to five causes that support advancing health in the community: American Lung Association, American Heart Association, Foundation for AIDS Research, Kidney Foundation, and Multiple Sclerosis Society", rather than the general message, "5% of the sales would be donated to five causes that support advancing health in the community". Robinson and Eilert's (2018) study proved that specific messages can influence consumer perceptions of company trustworthiness and overall brand evaluations.

Miller et al. (2007) studied the effects of abstract and concrete messages using health promotional messages targeting a young adult population. This study used the psychological reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) to study the effects of the type of

message on the audience's cognitive responses. This theory suggests that when individuals feel that their behavioral freedom is threatened, they become psychologically aroused. Types of messages in health promotion are therefore critical. To assess the cognitive influence of different types of messages, the researchers evaluated the effect of both abstract and concrete messages on consumers' judgements and their overall attitude towards the message and the source. Both types of message advocated regular exercise in Miller et al's (2007) study. The abstract message included general information about why individuals should exercise regularly: "Exercising and participating in team sports regularly can help you take care of your body and maintain optimal health", but gave no specific details such as how many calories could be burned. The concrete message included specific information, including calories: "Because you can burn up to 440 calories an hour by exercising, you may want to consider more physical activity as a way of managing a more healthy weight". The concrete messages received more attention than the abstract ones, and were viewed more positively on two critical cognitive dimensions of source credibility: expertise and trustworthiness (Miller et al., 2007). This suggests that abstract and concrete messages can have different effects on consumers' cognitive responses.

To be consistent with the definitions of inspiration and motivation, and to inspire consumers, messages in advertisements should be strong enough to motivate the consumer to pursue a consumption-related goal or goal-directed behavior. This research aims to investigate the differential impact of concrete and abstract messages on a communication goal, i.e. 'customer inspiration'.

Previous research on concrete and abstract concepts indicates that there is a cognitive distinction between abstract concepts, such as 'healthy', and concrete concepts, such as 'protein bars' (Hill, Korhonen & Bentz, 2013; Miller et al., 2007). An advertisement

that includes a concrete message provides detailed and specific information about the advertised product or service. An advertisement with an abstract message contains less specific information and requires readers to interpret it and draw their own inferences (Miller et al., 2007).

The aim of concrete messages is to communicate the characteristics of a product, rather than its benefit, for example, that 'product X is 3% lower in fat'. Studies on concrete vs. abstract advertising show that marketers usually use concrete advertising because it is more likely to influence consumers' product choice and purchase intention (Xu & Wyer, 2008). The researchers argued that concrete product messages were more likely to have an immediate influence on consumers' product choice because they highlight product attributes that change consumers' views on a product or brand. For example, in the domain of promotional health messages, Miller et al. (2007) found that using concrete language attracted more attention and was considered "more important" by recipients than abstract language. Miller et al. (2007) also found that recipients of a concrete message tended to assess its source as more expert and trustworthy than a source using an abstract message. In other words, using concrete language seems to have a greater influence on consumers than abstract messages. Concrete messages can positively influence views on source expertise and trustworthiness, which are two critical dimensions of credibility. Hence, it is possible to predict that concrete messages are likely to trigger customer inspiration due to their powerful influence on consumers' product choice and consumers' perceptions towards source credibility. So, it is possible to predict that concrete messages are likely to inspire customers as a consequence of their influence on consumers' product choice or perception towards the product or brand, for instance.

Using abstract communication, however, is more likely to influence consumers' goals

and attitudes towards products (Bertrand, Karlan, Mullainathan, Shafir & Zinman, 2010; Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik, 2009; Edelman, 2010; Lee & Ariely, 2006; Payne, 1982; Van Ginkel-Beishaar 2012). Studies have argued that the purpose of an abstract message is to communicate or convey the benefit of a product, brand, or category (Van Ginkel-Beishaar, 2012). An example of this type of message is 'product X is nutritious'. One of marketers' main objectives is influencing and activating consumer consumption goals. Abstract messages fulfill that objective because they show the importance of owning a product/brand and therefore provoke need and positive purchase intention. Van Ginkel-Beishaar (2012) stated that abstract messages are important to marketers because they activate both consumption goals, and trigger consumers to think why they should consume the product and communicate that to others. Abstract messages can therefore lead to discussions between consumers, which are very important to marketers because of their strong influence on consumers' views on brands (Thompson, 1997; Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). It is also possible to predict that abstract messages are likely to activate consumers' imagination and creativity and therefore, inspire them.

Marketers use both types of messages to describe and promote their products, often in the same advertisement. For instance, an advertisement might state that 'product X is nutritious', but might also include the information that the product is 3% lower in fat than its rival or the previous version, and that it is now on sale (Vakratsas & Ambler 1999). It therefore seems likely that both concrete and abstract messages can influence and inspire customers. The following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: The type of message (concrete vs. abstract) has a significant impact on customer inspiration.

When customers are inspired, they feel the need to actualize a new idea, by purchasing

a product (Böttger et al., 2017). Being inspired by an evocative object motivates customers to extend the value represented in that object by purchasing a new one (Böttger et al., 2017; Thrash et al., 2010). It is, however, not clear what types of objects (utilitarian or hedonic) are most effective in inspiring customers, or what they represent for the customer. This research therefore suggests that product category will moderate the relationship between the source of inspiration and customers' state.

Böttger and colleagues (2017) argued that individual characteristics also play a significant role in predicting the intensity and frequency of customers' state of inspiration. Developing an understanding about individual characteristics that may influence the intensity and frequency of inspiration, such as whether the customer is promotion- or prevention-oriented, would contribute to the inspiration literature. This research therefore proposes that the extent to which a message inspires customers depends on several other factors, including product category and individual focus.

This study therefore aims to investigate the differential impact of abstract and concrete messages on customer inspiration, and the moderating roles of product category (utilitarian vs. hedonic) and individuals' focus (promotion vs. prevention). These issues are explored in more detail in the next two sections.

2.3.2 The Moderating Effect of Product Category (hedonic vs. utilitarian)

It seems likely that product type may influence the correlation between abstract or concrete messages in advertising, and customer inspiration. Consumer research suggests that there are two reasons why people consume products. The first is hedonic gratification, which is mainly concerned with the experiential effect of the product (Batra & Ahtola, 1991). This may include feelings and sensations that result from consuming the product (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Voss, Spangenberg & Grohmann, 2003). The second reason is utilitarian motives, which are concerned with the functions

performed by the product (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Voss et al., 2003). They are therefore focused on whether the product is useful and beneficial. Consumer choices result from both utilitarian and hedonic considerations, and consumers distinguish whether products are hedonic or utilitarian in nature (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000).

The literature emphasizes that product type, particularly its hedonic or utilitarian nature, influences consumer behavior (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Mort & Rose, 2004). Consumers perceive utilitarian products as practical and useful (Delbridge, Bernard, Blair, Peters & Butler, 2001), and usually purchase these products for functional reasons, such as problem-solving. These products, for example, microwaves, minivans, and personal computers, are mainly consumed to fulfill functional or practical tasks, and are either evaluated or perceived based on their functional performance (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Mort & Rose, 2004; Rintamäki, Kanto, Kuusela, & Spence, 2006). When consumers plan to purchase utilitarian products, they are most likely to approach the purchase by simply considering which product best fulfills their needs (Basaran & Buyukyilmaz, 2015; Mort & Rose, 2004; Rintamäki et al., 2006).

This means that when consumers aim to satisfy utilitarian needs, their focus is shifted towards solving a problem. Research suggests that consumers' information processing also depends on product type. MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) argued that when consumers seek to satisfy utilitarian needs, they tend to focus on concrete information, such as product attributes. Zaichkowsky (1987) argued that an advertisement for information-oriented products, such as automobiles, needs to provide consumers with concrete information about the product and its attributes. This suggests that when consumers are interested in purchasing a utilitarian product, they are more likely to be inspired by a concrete advertising message. This is probably because when consumers

seek to fulfill functional or practical tasks, they tend to evaluate products based on their functional performance. They are therefore eager to discover more about the product and to collect as much information as possible before purchasing it. Concrete messages might serve this need by providing consumers with facts about the product and attributes such as its usefulness and performance. This study therefore hypothesizes:

H2: The impact of a concrete message on customer inspiration is strengthened when promoting a utilitarian product, compared to when promoting a hedonic product.

Hedonic products provide consumers with special consumption experiences that fulfill their desire for fun, excitement, and pleasure (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Unlike utilitarian consumption, hedonic consumption is abstract and personal. In other words, it may vary between individuals (Eroglo, Machleit & Barr, 2005; Rintamäki et al., 2006). Individuals evaluate entertainment, pleasure, fun, and shopping experience differently. This is because of the degree of consumer perception about these products. Hedonic products, such as designer clothes, sports cars, and luxury watches, are labelled as 'luxury' because consumers aiming to purchase these products are most likely to think from a luxury point of view, and be looking for a pleasurable experience as a result of their purchase (Basaran & Buyukyilmaz, 2015; Mort & Rose, 2004; Rintamäki et al., 2006).

Consumers give hedonic products subjective meanings that cannot be described in terms of concrete product attributes. Consumers are more concerned with the experience that the product will provide than its functions and problem-solving abilities (Hirschman, 1980). Maclnnis and Jaworski (1989) pointed out that that when consumers seek to satisfy hedonic needs, they tend to focus on the symbolic and experiential value that the product delivers, and not the product attributes. Consumers evaluate a hedonic product using its holistic image, rather than its attributes

(Hirschman, 1983; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). In other words, consumers only evaluate a hedonic product positively if they are satisfied with the holistic image of the product, or perceive that the product image supports their self-image (Hirschman, 1983; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

It is therefore likely that when consumers are interested in purchasing a hedonic product, they are more likely to be inspired by abstract advertising messages. These messages can activate consumption goals and show consumers the importance of owning the product (Van Ginkel-Beishaar, 2012). In other words, they show the benefit of the product and encourage consumers to think why they should own it. Abstract messages also show hedonic aspects of the product and how they might fit with personal values (Batra, Myers & Aaker, 1996; Cohen, 1979). This study therefore hypothesizes:

H3: The impact of an abstract message on customer inspiration is strengthened when promoting a hedonic product, compare to when promoting a utilitarian product.

2.3.3 The Moderating Role of Individuals' Regulatory Focus (promotion vs. prevention)

L'Oréal Elvive is a range of hair shampoos for different uses. In promoting a new and improved shampoo, L'Oréal used "Fall Resist x 3" as the advertising message. This conveyed the message that this shampoo can prevent hair loss three times better than the previous version of the shampoo. This message is prevention-based because it describes how the product minimizes a negative outcome, hair loss. Another advertisement for the same product, however, used the message "Strong, stunning hair starts from the roots". This is a promotion-based message, because it describes the product maximizing a positive outcome, beautiful and strong hair. Both messages are promoting the same product, but the messages are so different that it seems likely that L'Oréal is targeting two different types of consumers here. The advertising

effectiveness literature considers that individual goals and foci are increasingly important (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Kim, 2006). There are two prominent types of regulatory goals: promotion and prevention (Higgins, 1997).

Marketers design their messages so that they become compatible with the type of product and its characteristics, but consumer preferences are shaped by both the messages delivered by marketers, and consumers' own characteristics (Fitzsimons, Chartrand, & Fitzsimons, 2008; Higgins, 1998). In other words, the influence of a marketing stimulus on a consumer also depends on that person's motivational state. Previous research suggests that advertising messages and consumer responses, along with behavioral and cognitive responses, are affected by consumer motivation i.e. individual promotion and prevention goals (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999).

- *The Regulatory Focus Theory*

Researchers in motivational science have argued that people have different regulatory foci, and this may affect the strategies they use to achieve their goals (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Cesario, Higgins & Scholer, 2008). The regulatory focus theory states that individuals with promotion goals aim to achieve positive outcomes, and individuals with prevention goals aim to reduce negative outcomes (Higgins, 1997). In other words, people with a promotional focus perceive their goals as a route that leads to something better, such as a gain or an advancement. People with a prevention focus perceive their goals as a way to prevent something harmful from happening. Their goals are perceived as responsibilities or obligations, such as personal security (Higgins, 1997; Song & Morton, 2016). The goals of promotion-focused people tend to represent their hopes, ideals and aspirations, which in turn relate to accomplishments. The goals of

prevention-focused people represent their concern about potential losses (Higgins, 1997; Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000).

Researchers in various fields, including psychology, organizational behavior, consumer behavior, and advertising have supported the significant distinction between a promotion and prevention focus (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Lee et al., 2000; Pennington & Roese, 2003; Pham & Chang, 2010; Shah & Higgins, 2001). According to Crowe and Higgins (1997), people with a promotional focus adopt strategies that lead to advancement, so are more likely to take advantage of as many opportunities as possible. They are therefore susceptible to vague, risky, and new options. Individuals' emotional experiences also depend on whether they are promotion- or prevention-focused. People who are promotion-focused tend to evaluate experiences as resulting in either elation or dejection (Higgins, Shah, & Friedman, 1997; Shah & Higgins, 2001). In contrast, prevention-focused people regard goals as duties and responsibilities concerning safety and security (Higgins, 1997), and tend to prefer clear and secure options. This is mainly because they strive to minimize losses and maximize gains (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004; Lee & Aaker, 2004).

Research suggests that information in advertisements should be compatible with the regulatory focus of consumers (Aaker & Lee, 2001). This means that an advertisement is more likely to persuade consumers when its message fits their regulatory focus. Similarly, sources of inspiration should evoke approach motivation rather than avoidance motivation.

Individuals are more interested in information that is consistent with their regulatory focus, and tend to carefully evaluate attributes that are compatible with their focus (Higgins, 2002). Chernev (2004) studied the relationship between regulatory orientation and assessment of hedonic and utilitarian attributes. Participants with

promotion-oriented goals were most likely to select hedonic attributes, and participants with prevention-oriented goals were most likely to select utilitarian attributes. Micu and Chowdhury (2010) came to a potential conclusion that the type of products may be specifically chosen to address regulatory goals, with utilitarian products used to achieve prevention goals, and hedonic products for promotional goals. They found that when hedonic products were advertised with a promotion-oriented focus, they tended to trigger more positive emotions, and be more persuasive and memorable, because they were compatible with individual goals. Participants also preferred prevention messages in promotions for utilitarian products (Micu & Chowdhury, 2010). It is therefore important to formulate advertising messages based on individuals' promotion versus prevention focus when promoting hedonic versus utilitarian products (Micu & Chowdhury, 2010).

2.3.4 Individuals' Regulatory Focus and the Type of Language

There is also a relationship between individual goal orientation and the type of language used (Semin, Higgins, de Montes, Estourget, & Valencia, 2005). Semin et al. (2005) questioned whether people with different regulatory goals tended to use or were influenced by certain types of language. People with a promotional focus are eager to reach their goals and their eagerness is characterized as inclusive, broad and general (Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Friedman & Förster, 2001; Liberman, Molden, Idson, & Higgins, 2001). When people are promotion-focused, they are oriented towards fulfilling growth opportunities and tend to go beyond concrete towards abstract (Semin et al., 2005). This suggests that the most suitable language to use when targeting people with a promotional focus is abstract, because this type of language focuses on aspirations and opportunities (Semin et al., 2005). In contrast, when people are prevention-focused, they want to ensure that they do not make mistakes, so they focus

on details (Semin et al., 2005). They therefore want concrete information to achieve maximum security and reach their goals, while also ensuring minimal losses (Semin et al., 2005). Semin et al. (2005) carried out a series of experiments, including one on the relationship between regulatory focus and linguistic strategies. They tried to construct messages to match individual regulatory focus, and examine the impact of these messages on persuasion, in the context of health and sports. They found that people who were promotion-oriented were more receptive to abstract messages and people who were prevention-oriented were more receptive to concrete messages. The study also showed that when an abstract message was viewed by promotion-focused individuals, they were more likely to engage in sports. When a concrete message was viewed by prevention-focused individuals, they too were more likely to engage in sports (Semin et al., 2005).

There is therefore an obvious connection between the type of message, the type of product and the individual's regulatory focus. This study will investigate the effects of these variables on customer inspiration. It proposes that the impact of an abstract message on customer inspiration is amplified when promoting a hedonic product and targeting individuals who are promotion-oriented. The impact of a concrete message on customer inspiration will be amplified when promoting a utilitarian product and targeting individuals who are prevention-oriented. Two hypotheses are proposed:

H4: There is an interaction between message type, product type and regulatory focus such that an abstract message promoting a hedonic product is more likely to inspire promotion-oriented individuals, rather than prevention-oriented individuals

H5: There is an interaction between message type, product type and regulatory focus such that a concrete message promoting a utilitarian product is more likely to inspire prevention-oriented individuals, rather than promotion-oriented individuals
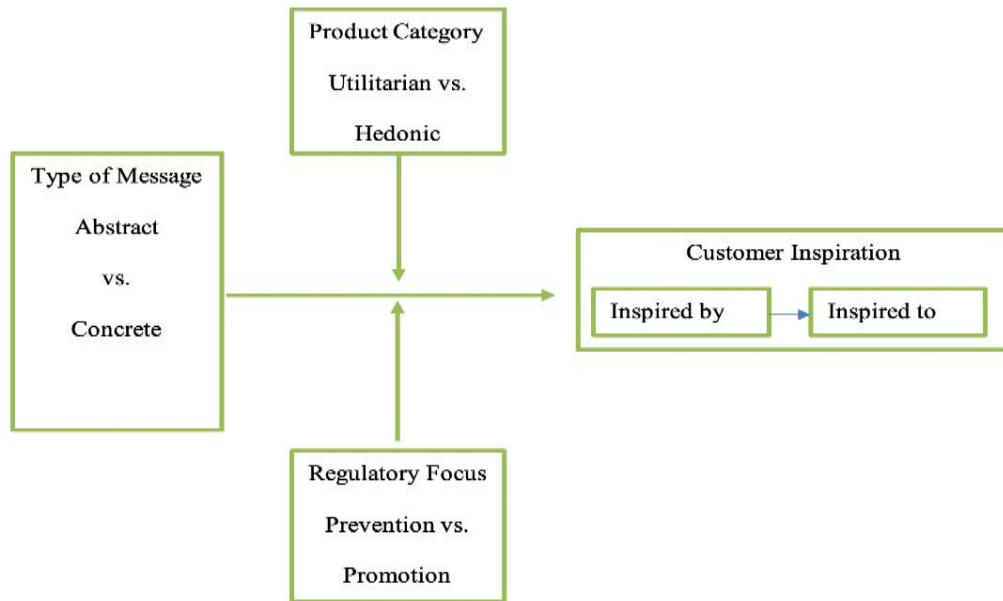
Figure 3. The Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction:

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the methodology and research design used in this study. This chapter consists of two main sections. The first section explains the research approach and design. The second section discusses the study's experimental design, including sample characteristics, procedure, pre-test procedure, and the measurements (see Figure 4).
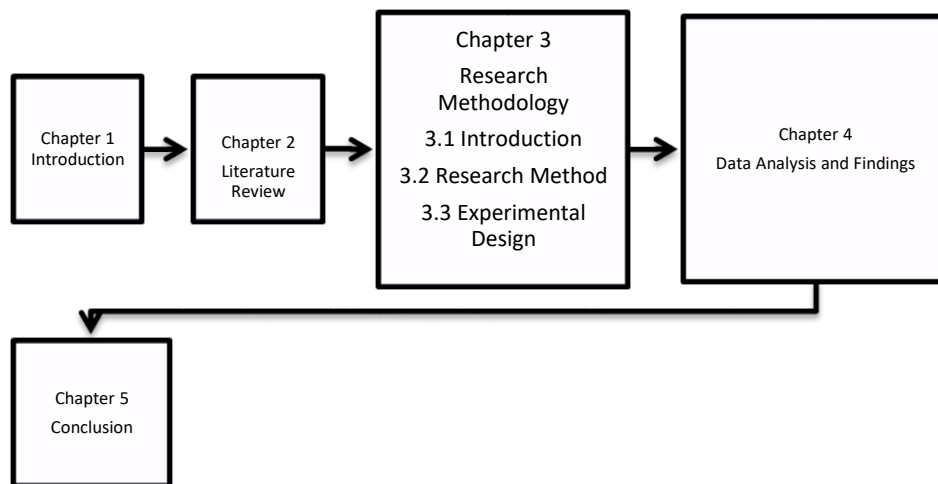
Figure 4. Chapter Outline

3.2. Research Method

This research aimed to examine which type of advertising messages best inspire consumers and under what conditions. It examined the influence of the type of advertising message, abstract or concrete, on customer inspiration, and the moderating

roles of product category and individuals' regulatory focus. The objective was to identify causal relationships between variables, so an explanatory research approach was considered suitable (Malhotra & Grover, 1998). An experimental design was used to examine the impact of message type on consumer inspiration and the moderating roles of product type and regulatory focus.

3.3. Experimental Design

A randomized 2 (lexical concreteness: concrete vs. abstract) × 2 (product category: utilitarian vs. hedonic) × 2 (regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) between-subjects experiment was designed to test the proposed hypotheses. Four print advertisements were used about two fictitious brands. Fictitious brand names were used to rule out any confounding effects arising from the participants' attitudes towards or familiarity with the brand. Two ads promoted a utilitarian product (vitamin water), branded as "Vitalicieux". The two ads wer identical in terms of design except that one included a concrete message to describe the product ("The healthy option: enhanced water with vitamins, mineral and natural flavors") and the other included an abstract message ("The healthy option: for a richer body and mind"). The other two ads promoted a hedonic product (chocolate), branded as "Delicieux". The two ads were again identical in terms of design but one included a concrete message ("Made with the finest cocoa beans, 70% cocoa content") and the other an abstract message ("The feeling of pure chocolate sensation") (see Appendix 4).

3.3.1 Sample

The questionnaire was distributed by Qualtrics to an existing panel through an online link to individuals' email addresses. Monetary compensation equivalent to 4.5 Euros was provided upon completion of the questionnaire. The study used a probability sampling strategy based on the stratified random sampling technique (Acharya,

Prakash, Saxena & Nigam, 2013). To enhance the generalizability of the study, the questionnaire was randomly sent to panels that included individuals of different nationalities, genders, ages and education levels. The researcher asked the Qualtrics administrators to make sure that the sample was equally divided by gender and ethnicity (see Table 1).

The experiment had eight conditions, so a sample of 400 respondents (50 respondents for each condition) was deemed appropriate (Israel,1992; Sudman, 1976). The initial sample size was 527, but only 424 questionnaires were usable, because the remaining 103 were either incomplete or were deemed unreliable by the Qualtrics administrators.

Table 1. Sample Demographics

| Sample Size 427 | | |
Variable	Options	Percent
Age	21–30	26.5
	31–40	26.2
	41–50	23.4
	Over 50	23.9
Gender	Male	48
	Female	52
Education	Less than a high school diploma	11
	High school degree or equivalent	33
	Bachelor's degree	41.2
	Master's degree	11.9
	Doctorate	2.8
Ethnicity	American	19.2
	Arab	20.8
	Asian	20.8
	European	39.1

3.3.2 Procedure

In total, 424 respondents completed an online questionnaire distributed by Qualtrics in exchange for monetary reward. Participants' age and gender were almost equally distributed: 52% female, 26.5% aged 21–30 years, 26.2% 31–40 years, 23.4% 41–50

years, and 23.9% over 50 years. Before being exposed to the ads, participants had to answer demographic questions and complete the regulatory focus questionnaire.

Next, participants were asked to imagine that they were planning to invite their close friends over to dinner in a few days, and realized that they needed to go to the grocery store to buy some missing items for the dinner gathering. While shopping, they came across an advertisement for a new and unfamiliar brand. This scenario created a condition where respondents had a high idea of shopping. When consumers already have the idea of going shopping or are motivated to shop, they will be more open to inspiration in the store (Böttger et al., 2017).

Participants were then informed that they would be shown the advertisement. They were instructed to carefully read the message provided in the ad write the message at the bottom of the ad and the advertised product type, on a piece of paper before going on to the next section. The reason for this was because participants were unable to go back and view the ad again. If the survey flow includes Branch Logic and Randomization, the back button on each page will automatically be disabled, even if the survey option that allows respondents to navigate to previous sections on Qualtrics, is enabled, which is the case in any experimental design.

Participants were then randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. To guard against any confounding effects, the ads in the four scenarios were identical: ads promoting the same product had the same design and the same brand name, and only the message was manipulated. After examining the print ads, participants were asked a number of questions to measure customer inspiration.

3.3.4 Pre-test

The materials were pretested with a separate group of participants, to make sure that the products and messages used in the experiment were suitable to manipulate the

different conditions. The pre-test consisted of a survey, distributed to a convenience sample of 42 individuals. The questionnaire was constructed on Qualtrics and distributed via a single reusable link. The pretest questionnaire included three sections covering 1) product type, 2) message type, and 3) demographics. The next sections describe this process and the findings in more detail. In the third section of the pre-test, respondents had to answer four questions about their age, gender, education and nationality. Of the sample of 42, 71.4 percent were women, and the majority (84.3%) were aged between 21 and 30 years.

- *Product Selection*

Two products were considered, chocolate and vitamin water. Micu and Chowdhury (2010) also used chocolate as a hedonic product, because it was perceived by participants to be more hedonic than functional. They used vitamin water as a utilitarian product, because it was perceived to be more functional than hedonic. A pre-test was used to check the product category manipulation, with the separate group of 42 participants. They were asked whether they perceived chocolate and vitamin water as hedonic and utilitarian using the single item scale of (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000), "Rate the extent to which you believe that the below mentioned product is utilitarian or hedonic".

The following definitions of hedonic and utilitarian products were provided to make sure that respondents understood the difference: "Hedonic products provide consumers with special consumption experiences that fulfill their desire for fun, excitement, and pleasure. It means that consumers are more involved with the experience that the product will provide, and not what the product can do in terms of functions and problem solving. On the other hand, consumers consider utilitarian products as practical and useful. People usually purchase these products to fulfill functional or practical tasks,

such solving a problem". The definitions of hedonic and utilitarian products were followed by a question asking participants to rate the product on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = definitely utilitarian and 5 = definitely hedonic). Ratings lower than 3 (scale midpoint) would show that the product was perceived as utilitarian. Ratings over 3 would show that the product was perceived as hedonic.

As expected, the pretest found that chocolate was perceived as hedonic (M = 4.45), and rated significantly higher than the midpoint. The vitamin water was perceived as functional (M = 2), significantly lower than the midpoint. The differences were also statistically significant (M = 3.64, t (42) = 9.51, p < 0.001).

- *Message Selection*

Lexical concreteness was manipulated by providing participants with concrete facts about the product (concrete message), or offering them abstract generalities (abstract message).

Four messages were used in the study, two for each product, one describing/promoting the product in a concrete manner and the other describing/promoting it in an abstract manner (see Table 2).

Table 2. Messages

Product	Abstract message	Concrete message
Chocolate	The feeling of pure chocolate sensation	Made with the finest cocoa beans, 70% cocoa content
Vitamin water	The healthy option: for a richer body and mind	The healthy option enhanced water with vitamins, minerals and natural flavors

To ensure that respondents would perceive the message as it was intended, the same pre-test sample were given a definition of the concept of concreteness consistent with that used by Miller et al. (2007) ("concreteness refers to how specific and particular a message is, or the extent to which a message reduces the guesswork needed by the reader. On the other hand, an abstract message is less concrete, with less precise information, giving the reader more freedom to interpret the message as he or she pleases"). Participants were also given two examples, an abstract message ("Exercise is good for you"), and a concrete message ("One hour of exercise can help burn up to 450 calories, strengthen your muscles, and boost your energy"). They were then asked to rate the chosen messages on a single item scale of lexical concreteness from Miller et al. (2007), "Rate the extent to which you believe that the below message is concrete". The answers were on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all concrete/abstract and 5 = very concrete). Ratings lower than 3 (scale midpoint) were considered to show that

the message was perceived as 'not at all concrete' (abstract). Ratings greater that 3 would show that the message was perceived as concrete.

The pretest showed that the message 'The feeling of pure chocolate sensation' was perceived as abstract (M = 2.02), and rated significantly lower than the midpoint. The message 'Made with the finest cocoa beans, 70% cocoa content', however, was perceived as concrete (M = 3.64), and rated significantly higher than the midpoint. The differences were statistically significant (M = 1.62, t (42) = 5.76, p < 0.001). Similarly, the message 'The healthy option: enhanced water with vitamins, minerals, and natural flavors' was perceived as concrete (M = 3.69), and the message "The healthy option: for a richer body and mind" as abstract (M = 2.10). The differences were statistically significant (M = 1.59, t (42) = 5.63, p < 0.001).

3.3.5 Measurements

- *Dependent variable: customer inspiration*

To measure customer inspiration, Böttger et al.'s (2017) two-component ten-item scale was used. Participants were asked to answer ten questions using a seven-point Likert-type scale measuring their state of inspiration. Customer inspiration was therefore conceptualized as a second-order construct with two components, the 'inspired by' and 'inspired to' states (Böttger et al., 2017). The scale includes five items to measure the 'inspired by' state ("my imagination was stimulated", "I was intrigued by a new idea", "I unexpectedly and spontaneously got new ideas", "my horizon was broadened" and "I discovered something new"). The remaining five items ("I was inspired to buy the product", "I felt a desire to buy the product", "I was motivated to buy the product", "My interest to buy the product was increased" and "I felt an urge to buy the product") were used to measure customers' 'inspired to' state (see Appendix 5). Scale reliability scores for the constructs were satisfactory, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 and 0.96 for

'inspired by' and 'inspired to', respectively.

Following Thurstone's (1935) procedure, a least squares regression approach was used to estimate factor scores for the 'inspired by' and 'inspired to' items, using SPSS Statistics (version 25), to help in interpreting the data. The computed factor scores in this process are standard scores with a mean equivalent to zero. A score above zero therefore corresponds to above four in a seven-point Likert-type scale, and a score below zero to one below four. Scores below zero therefore show low and scores above zero show high 'inspired by' or 'inspired to' states.

- *Moderating variable: regulatory focus*

To measure the regulatory focus of individuals, the regulatory focus questionnaire of Higgins et al. (2001) was used (see Appendix 5). Participants were asked to answer the 11-item scale using a five-point Likert-type scale, which aims to measure participants' orientations towards their goals. The scale includes two sub-scales, with six items measuring a promotion focus and five items measuring prevention. Items 1, 3, 7, 9, 10, and 11 are promotion scale items, and items 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8 are the prevention scale items (Higgins et al., 2001). The scale assesses whether individuals have succeeded or failed in promotion and prevention self-regulation, based on their histories (Higgins et al., 2001).

Scale reliability scores for the constructs were acceptable, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.69 for the scale as whole. A Cronbach's alpha of between 0.6 and 0.7 is considered to show an acceptable level of internal consistency (Ursachi, Horodnic, & Zait, 2015). Taber (2018) confirmed that many researchers have described and interpreted Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.67–0.87 as reasonable.

A least squares regression approach was used to estimate factor scores for the promotion and prevention regulatory focus scale. Every respondent answered both

scales. To characterize respondents as either promotion- or prevention-oriented, the factor score for prevention was subtracted from that for promotion. If the difference was above zero, then the respondent was classified as promotion-oriented. If the difference score was below zero, the respondent was classified as prevention-oriented (Higgins et al., 2001). This scoring key has been used in other studies to group respondents by regulatory focus (Higgins et al., 2001). Of the sample of 427, 55% or 235 individuals were characterized as prevention-focused, and 45% or 192 as promotion-focused.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes findings from the statistical techniques used to analyze the data and test the proposed hypotheses, followed by a general discussion of results. It has three main sections. The first shows the results of the manipulation checks to confirm that the experimental manipulation was successful. The second section describes the hypothesis testing, explaining the statistical and analytic techniques used to test each hypothesis and whether the findings support or reject the hypothesis. Finally, the third section provides a general discussion of the findings and their implications (see Figure 5).
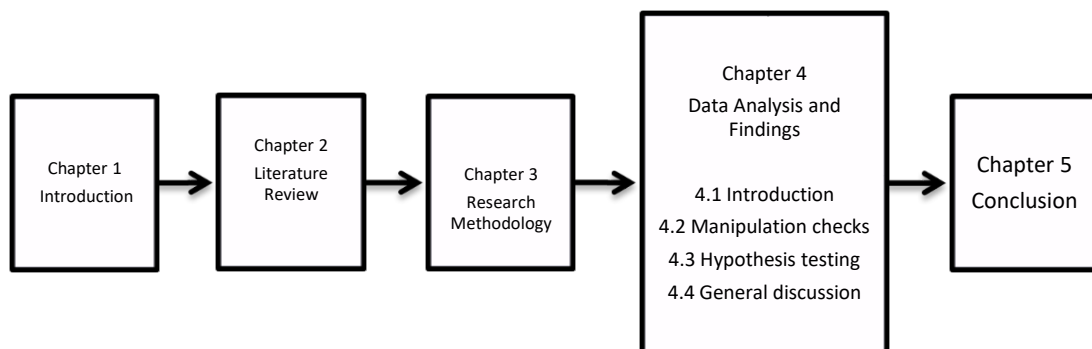
Figure 5. Chapter Outline

4.2 Manipulation Checks

To ensure that the perceptions of the nature of the products (utilitarian vs. hedonic) and the lexical concreteness of the messages (concrete vs. abstract) were appropriate, the procedure from the pretest was also used in the main experiment. As expected, participants viewing ads on chocolate perceived 'chocolate' as hedonic (M = 4.12, t (207) = 17.4, p < 0.001). Similarly, respondents perceived vitamin water as functional (M = 2.85, t (218) = −1,86, p < 0.05). Respondents who were given abstract messages perceived them as abstract (M = 2.44, t (214) = −6.95, p < 0.01). Those who were shown concrete messages perceived them as concrete (M = 3.78, t (211) = 10.39, p < 0.001). Table 3 shows the different blocks and scenarios.

Table 3. Scenarios

Blocks	Message Type	Product Type
Block 1	<u>Concrete</u>	<u>Hedonic</u>
	Made with the finest cocoa beans, 70% cocoa content	Chocolate
Block 2	<u>Abstract</u>	<u>Hedonic</u>
	The feeling of pure chocolate sensation	Chocolate
Block 3	<u>Concrete</u>	<u>Utilitarian</u>
	The healthy option: enhanced water with vitamins, minerals and natural flavors	Vitamin water
Block 4	<u>Abstract</u>	<u>Utilitarian</u>
	The healthy option: For a richer body and mind	Vitamin water

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Regression-based path analysis was used to test the hypotheses of this study, with PROCESS software, a computational technique designed for SPSS and SAS that performs moderation, mediation and a combination of moderation and mediation

analysis (i.e., mediated moderation and moderated mediation) (Hayes, 2012). This software allows the estimation of two- and three-way interactions and can generate direct and indirect effects in very critical models such as mediated moderation models (Hayes, 2012).

In the conceptualization of customer inspiration, the 'inspired by' component mediates the effect of marketing stimuli on the 'inspired to'. Two different models were therefore used on PROCESS to test the hypotheses, a mediation model and a mediated moderation model. To test Hypothesis 1, 'The type of message (concrete and abstract messages) has a significant impact on customer inspiration', PROCESS, was used to estimate a simple unmoderated mediation model, the impact of message type on 'inspired to' component via the 'inspired by' component, using 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals for the bootstrap sample. The output on the process provided three important pieces of information: 1) whether the type of message variable predicts the 'inspired to' component (Path b), 2) whether the type of message predicts the 'inspired by' component (Path a), and 3) whether message type predicts the 'inspired to' component via the 'inspired by' (Path c) (see Figure 6).
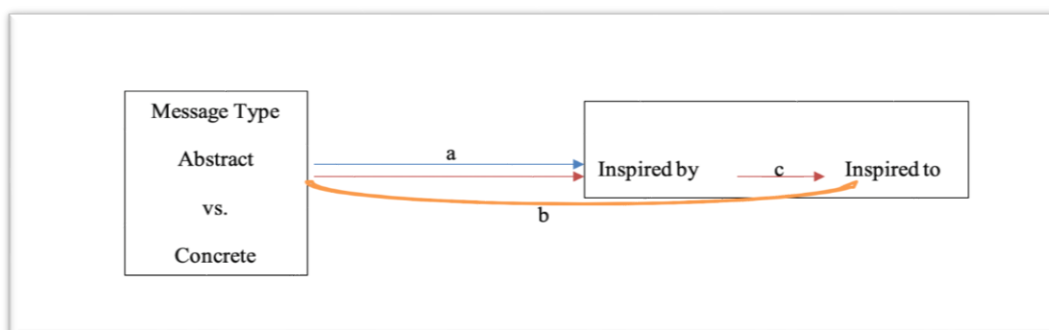

Figure 6. The Mediation Paths

The results indicated that Path a was significant with $p < 0.01$ for the overall model. The message type variable predicted the 'inspired by' component [$F_{(1, 425)} = 19.3$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.04$; $\beta = -0.42$, $t_{(425)} = -5.2$, $p < 0.01$]. The abstract message was coded 1 and the concrete message 2, so the negative beta value indicated that abstract messages have a greater effect on the 'inspired by' component than concrete messages. The 'inspired by' component was therefore higher for conditions with abstract messages. The results of a T- test confirmed that groups shown abstract messages had higher 'inspired by' scores ($M_{abstract} = 0.307$) than groups shown concrete messages ($M_{concrete} = -0.116$) (see Table 4).

Table 4. T-test of Abstract and Concrete Messages

'Inspired by'

T-value	P-value	Scenarios	Mean
4.398	0.000	Abstract	0.307
		Concrete	−0.116

Notes: Total n = 427

Path b was insignificant, with $p > 0.05$ for the overall model. The message type therefore did not predict the 'inspired to' component [$F_{(1, 425)} = 0.2$, $p > 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.0005$; $\beta = -0.04$, $t_{(425)} = -0.46$, $p > 0.05$]. Finally, and most importantly, there was no significant direct effect of message type and 'inspired to' component, supporting a full mediation and a significant indirect effect of message type on the 'inspired to' component via 'inspired by' component, because the lower and upper limits of the bootstrap confidence interval were both below zero [CI] = [−0.404, −0.127]. H1 was

therefore supported.

H2 predicted that the impact of a concrete message on customer inspiration is strengthened when promoting a utilitarian product, compared to when promoting a hedonic product. This hypothesis was tested in two consecutive steps. The effects on the 'inspired by' component were examined using an independent T-test, and then the effects on the 'inspired to' component were examined if the first test was significant. The second step used the mediated moderation procedure, with PROCESS, to account for the 'inspired to' component of customer inspiration. Step 2 was performed if the independent T-test showed that the mean for concrete/utilitarian was significantly greater than for concrete/ hedonic, with respect to the 'inspired by' component. The T-test showed that there was no significant difference in scores for the concrete/hedonic and concrete/utilitarian conditions [t (210) = 1.767, p > 0.05] (see Table 5) and H2 was therefore rejected.

Table 5. T-test of Concrete Scenarios

'Inspired by'

T-value	P-value	Scenarios
		Concrete
1.767	0.079	Hedonic
		Concrete
		Utilitarian

Note: Total n = 212

H3 predicted that the impact of an abstract message on customer inspiration is strengthened when promoting a hedonic product, compared to when promoting a utilitarian product. This hypothesis was tested in two consecutive steps. First, the effect on the 'inspired by' component was examined using an independent T-test, and second, the effects on the 'inspired to' component were examined if the first test was significant. This second step used the mediated moderation procedure with PROCESS, to account for the 'inspired to' component of customer inspiration. The independent T-test assessed whether there were significant differences between the means of two groups, in this case the means of the abstract and hedonic and abstract and utilitarian scenarios. Again step 2 was performed if the mean for abstract/hedonic was significantly greater than the mean of abstract/utilitarian, with respect to the 'inspired by' component. There was a significant difference in scores for the abstract/hedonic and abstract/utilitarian conditions ($M_{abstract/hedonic} = 0.672 > M_{abstract/utilitarian} = -0.054$; $t(213) = 5.683$, $p < 0.01$) (see Table 6).

Table 6. T-test of Abstract Scenarios

'Inspired by'			
T-value	P-value	Scenarios	Mean
5.683	0.000	Hedonic	0.672
		Utilitarian	−0.054

Notes: Total n = 215

A mediated moderation procedure was used to account for the 'inspired to' component of inspiration. The mediation analysis used a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 samples, and showed a significant relationship between the interaction term (message type × product type) and the 'inspired by' component [$F_{(3, 423)} = 18.249$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.114$; $\beta = 0.487$, $t_{(423)} = 2.618$, $p < 0.05$]. The indirect effect of an abstract message on 'inspired to' via 'inspired by' for a hedonic product was also significant ($\beta = -0.512$, 95% CI = [-0.604, -0.267, $p < 0.01$). H3 was therefore also supported.

H4 predicted that there is an interaction between message type, product type and regulatory focus such that an abstract message promoting a hedonic product is more likely to inspire promotion-oriented individuals, rather than prevention-oriented individuals. This hypothesis was tested in two consecutive steps. First the effects on the 'inspired by' component were examined using two-way ANOVA, and second, the effects on the 'inspired to' component were examined through the mediated moderation procedure, using PROCESS, to account for the 'inspired to' component of customer inspiration. Two-way ANOVA examined whether there was an interaction effect between abstract messages, product types and regulatory focus. Step 2 was performed if the interaction was significant and there was a difference between the means of different scenarios with respect to the 'inspired by' component.

To test whether hedonic product type and a promotion orientation act as a boundary condition, a two-way ANOVA was applied for groups who only received abstract messages. The overall two-way ANOVA model was significant [$F_{(3, 211)} = 35.64$, $p < 0.01$]. There was a statistically significant interaction effect between the effects of product type and regulatory focus on the 'inspired by' component [$F_{(1, 211)} = 4.625$, $p < 0.05$]. Comparing the means of the different scenarios showed that the mean of the interaction between abstract message, hedonic product type and promotion-oriented

individuals had the highest 'inspired by' mean of all abstract message scenarios, accounting to 1.05 (see Table 7).

Table 7. Two-way ANOVA – Abstract

Source	F-value	P-value	Scenarios	Mean
Model	35.640	0.000	He-Pre	0.417
	59.891[a]	0.000	Ut-Pre	−0.564
Main Effects	41.882[b]	0.000	He-Pro	1.052
Interaction Effect	4.625[c]	0.033	Ut-Pro	0.561

Notes: a: Group, b: Product type, c: Group* Product type

A mediated moderation procedure was therefore used to account for the 'inspired to' component of inspiration. The mediation analysis used a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 samples and showed a significant relationship between the interaction term (message type × product type × regulatory focus) and the 'inspired by' component [$F_{(3, 423)} = 27.064$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.161$; $\beta = -0.287$, $t_{(423)} = -3.543$, $p < 0.01$]. The indirect effect of an abstract message type on 'inspired to' via 'inspired by' for a hedonic product and promotion focus was also significant ($\beta = 0.55$, 95% CI = [−0.370, −0.183, $p < 0.01$). H4 was therefore supported.

H5 predicted that there is an interaction between message type, product type and regulatory focus such that a concrete message promoting a utilitarian product is more likely to inspire prevention-oriented individuals, rather than promotion-oriented

individuals. This hypothesis was also tested in two consecutive steps using first two-way ANOVA. If that was significant, the second step examined the effects on 'inspired to' through the mediated moderation procedure to account for the 'inspired to' component of customer inspiration. The overall two-way ANOVA model was insignificant [F (3, 208) = 1.219, p > 0.05]. There was no statistically significant interaction effect between the effects of product type and regulatory focus on the 'inspired by' component [F (1, 208) = 0.402, p = 0.527 > 0.05] (see Table 8).

Table 8. Two-Way ANOVA – Concrete

Source	F-value	P-value
Model	1.219	0.304
Main Effects	0.177[a]	0.674
	3.175[b]	0.076
Interaction Effect	0.402[c]	0.527

Notes: a: Group, b: Product type, c: Group* Product type

The two-way ANOVA showed that the effects of the four concrete scenarios on the 'inspired by' component were not statistically different. In other words, there was no statistical difference in 'inspired by' scores for the concrete/utilitarian/prevention scenario, the concrete/hedonic/prevention, the concrete/utilitarian/promotion and the concrete/ hedonic/ promotion. H5 was therefore rejected. (See Table 9 for summary of hypotheses testing results)

Table 9. Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Results
H1: The type of message (concrete vs. abstract) has a significant impact on customer inspiration.	Supported
H2: The impact of a concrete message on customer inspiration is strengthened when promoting a utilitarian product, compared to when promoting a hedonic product.	Rejected
H3: The impact of an abstract message on customer inspiration is strengthened when promoting a hedonic product, compared to when promoting a utilitarian product.	Supported
H4: There is an interaction between message type, product type and regulatory focus such that an abstract message promoting a hedonic product is more likely to inspire promotion-oriented individuals, rather than prevention-oriented individuals.	Supported
H5: There is an interaction between message type, product type and regulatory focus such that a concrete message promoting a utilitarian product is more likely to inspire prevention-oriented individuals, rather than promotion-oriented individuals.	Rejected

4.4 Discussion

The results show that message type influences consumers' state of inspiration. The type of message (concrete vs. abstract) has the ability to inspire customers and can be considered as a source of inspiration in marketing, so H1 was supported. A message can therefore inspire customers and trigger them to particular products. However, an abstract message had a greater effect on customer inspiration than a concrete one under all considered conditions. This may be because an abstract message triggers consumers' imagination and creativity and therefore has a stronger effect on inspiration.

This study hypothesized that product type would moderate the effect of message type on customers' state of inspiration. It was expected that a concrete message used to promote a utilitarian product would have a stronger effect on customers' state of inspiration than an concrete message used to promote a hedonic product (H2). Similarly, an abstract message was expected to have more effect when used to promote a hedonic product than a utilitarian product (H3). H3 was supported, suggesting that an abstract message is most suitable for use in promoting a hedonic product. This finding is consistent with the existing lexical concreteness and product types literatures. Hedonic products provide consumers with special consumption experiences, which are generally abstract and personal. For instance, the reason for consuming chocolate varies between individuals (Eroglo et al., 2005; Rintamäki et al., 2006). An abstract message tends to appeal consumers' imagination and creativity, since findings of this research reveal that abstract messages are inspiring (Böttger et al., 2017). So, the processing and understanding of this type of messages also varies between individuals. Hence, when promoting a hedonic product, an abstract message tends to have more effect on consumers' imagination than when it is used to promote a utilitarian product, leading to greater customer inspiration. H2, however, was rejected, because there was no statistical difference between the concrete scenarios. Product category did not have a moderating effect on the influence of a concrete message on customer inspiration. In other words, it does not matter whether a concrete message is promoting a hedonic product or a utilitarian product.

This study predicted a significant interaction between message type, product type and individuals' regulatory orientation, with product type and regulatory focus moderating the effect of message type on customers' state of inspiration. The prediction was that an abstract message used to promote a hedonic product to promotion-oriented

individuals would have a greater effect on customers' state of inspiration than when an abstract message is promoting 1) a utilitarian product to promotion-oriented individuals, 2) a utilitarian product to prevention-oriented individuals, and 3) a hedonic product to prevention-oriented individuals (H4). Similarly, a concrete message used to promote a utilitarian product to prevention-oriented individuals would have a greater effect on customers' state of inspiration than a concrete message used to promote 1) a hedonic product to promotion-oriented individuals, 2) a hedonic product to prevention-oriented individuals, and 3) a utilitarian product to promotion-oriented individuals (H5). H4 was supported, which means that an abstract message is most suitable to promote a hedonic product when targeting promotion-oriented individuals. This finding is consistent with the literature on lexical concreteness, product types, and regulatory focus. When people are promotion-focused, they are interested in fulfilling growth opportunities and tend to go beyond concrete towards abstract (Semin et al., 2005). There was also a significant interaction between hedonic product type and abstract message type with promotion orientation. The effect of an abstract message on customers' state of inspiration was intensified when the message was promoting a hedonic product and the recipients of the message were promotion-oriented. This result is mainly because an abstract message focuses on aspirations and opportunities (Semin et al., 2005). H5, however, was rejected, in contrast with the prediction. There were neither significant main effects nor an interaction effect of product type and regulatory focus on the 'inspired by' component. Like the results of the independent T-test of H2, this test also showed that the main effect of product type on the 'inspired by' component was insignificant. There was also no significant interaction effect between a utilitarian product and prevention orientation. The insignificant results may be attributed to the product level of involvement or price.
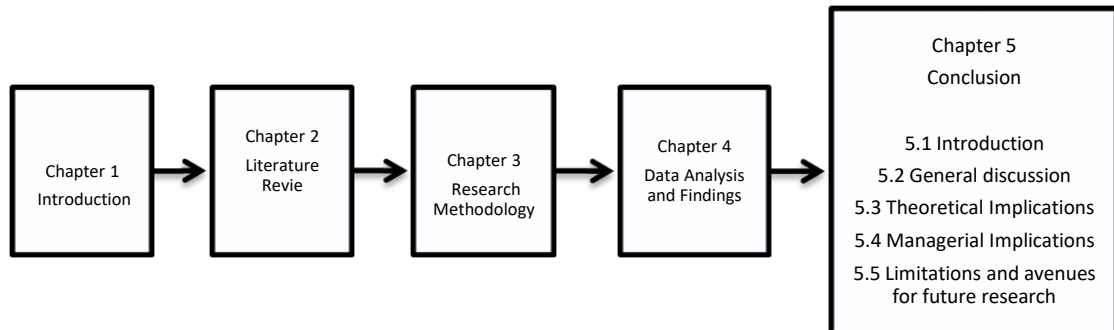
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Figure 7. Chapter Outline

This chapter starts by restating the research objectives, and setting out the findings and their potential theoretical contributions. It goes on to explain how the findings can be used by marketers and other managers to develop marketing communication strategies that can inspire customers. Finally, the chapter sets out the limitations of this research and identifies avenues for future research (see Figure 7).

5.2 General Discussion

This research aimed to extend previous work on the concept of inspiration in psychology and marketing, and shed light on its application in marketing. The findings showed that 1) messages have the ability to inspire customers, 2) compatibility between the type of product and the type of message triggers stronger customer inspiration, and 3) there is an interaction between product type, message type and individuals' regulatory focus. This study suggested that customer inspiration is stronger when an abstract message is used to promote a hedonic product, and a concrete message is used to promote a utilitarian product. An abstract message promoting a hedonic product is

most likely to inspire promotion-oriented individuals and a concrete message promoting a utilitarian product is most likely to inspire prevention-oriented individuals. This thesis contributes to the inspiration literature because it is among the first attempts to investigate the concept of inspiration in marketing since it was defined by Böttger et al. (2017).

Previous research that examined the effectiveness of promotional messages suggested that there is still a lack of clarity about the impact of abstract and concrete messages on the perceived effectiveness of a promotional message, in the context of its effect on consumers' behavioral responses (Miller et al., 2007). This work, however, highlights the importance of abstract messages to inspire customers and specifies what moderates the impact of an abstract message on customers' state of inspiration. In general, an abstract message was more inspiring than a concrete message, and therefore more likely to encourage customers to adopt particular consumption goals. Customer inspiration was intensified when the abstract message was promoting a hedonic product, suggesting that abstract messages work best for hedonic products. The impact of an abstract message on customers' state of inspiration was most intense for a hedonic product and a promotion-oriented individual. Previous research in the context of health messages showed that concrete messages have greater influence on customers than abstract messages, as they tend to impact customers perception regarding a brand's expertise trustworthiness (Miller et al., 2007). Also, concrete messages are believed to influence consumers' product choice and purchase intention (Xu & Wyer, 2008). Therefore, this research predicted that a concrete message promoting a utilitarian product would also inspire customers, with a greater impact on prevention-orientated individuals. However, this was not found in practice. This thesis therefore provides implications for both marketing theory and practice, especially in the domain of

marketing communication and advertising.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

Consumers tend to continuously explore new products and services to satisfy their needs (Felix, 2015). Marketers' ultimate goal is therefore to provide information that will influence consumers' attitude towards their products, create a desire for their products, and most importantly change consumers' purchase intentions or consumption goals (Kehinde, Adegbuyi & Akinbode, 2016). Böttger et al. (2017) realized that the concept of customer inspiration would add value to marketing theory, especially at a time when customers' journeys are shortened because of the increasing availability of purchase options and alternatives. This study has contributed to understanding the importance of the theoretical relevance of inspiration in marketing by empirically showing that it is associated with the types of messages used in advertisements. According to Böttger et al. (2017), customer inspiration leads to emotional, behavioral and attitudinal consequences, and therefore deserves to be further investigated. Böttger et al. (2017) defined customer inspiration as "a customer's temporary motivational state that facilitates the transition from the reception of a marketing-induced idea to the intrinsic pursuit of a consumption-related goal". Customer inspiration therefore contributes to customers' journeys, especially in the very early stages. This is mainly because seeing an inspiring marketing idea puts customers in a motivational state that encourages them to actualize the idea. The theoretical definition of customer inspiration and its consequences highlight the importance of identifying sources that can be characterized as inspirational.

This thesis extends previous research on customer inspiration by showing that an advertising message can be inspiring, and that its impact on customers' state of inspiration is stronger if the type of message is compatible with the type of product

advertised and the recipient's regulatory focus. Abstract messages are particularly inspiring and their impact are stronger when promoting a hedonic product to promotion-oriented individuals. It seems likely that abstract messages appeal to consumers' imaginations and trigger approach motivation. This research is among the very first attempts to examine universal drivers of inspiration, in the context of marketing. It therefore provides a foundation for other researchers to build upon in the future.

5.4 Managerial Implications

The concept of customer inspiration, in general, should be of interest to marketing practitioners and managers because it leads to behavioral, emotional and attitudinal customer responses, which are important to every organization (Kotler, 1991). This research investigated to what extent the lexical concreteness of the message affects customer inspiration. It considered in particular whether abstract or concrete messages can be characterized as sources of inspiration, and examined the factors that moderate their impact and make them more inspiring. The study found that an abstract message has the ability to inspire customers, particularly when it is promoting a hedonic product to promotion-oriented individuals. This directs marketers to more effective drivers of customer inspiration. To elicit customer inspiration, managers can be confident about using abstract messages to promote their products. The study also suggests that to inspire customers, marketing managers have to formulate promotional messages based on the type of product. They must also consider that there are two types of individuals, promotion-focused and prevention-focused. To trigger behavioral, emotional, and attitudinal responses to a hedonic product, managers must promote the product using abstract language. This type of message is most likely to inspire promotion-oriented customers. This also implies that marketers should frame messages to relate to promotion-focused goals when promoting a hedonic product. This is because these

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messages appeal to the imagination of promotion-oriented individuals, potentially influencing their state of inspiration. For example, to promote its skin care products, and consistent with its new "Because your Worth it" campaign, L'Oréal might want to use a message like "For bouncy radiant skin" rather than "Protect your skin. Protect your beauty. Protect your life". The campaign's tagline goes beyond concrete and is obviously abstract and personal. This is because the interpretation of the phrase "Because your Worth it", may vary between individuals. Hence, it seems likely that L'Oréal is trying to define its new skin care product line as hedonic in nature, rather than utilitarian.

Considering the hedonic nature of its new skin care products and consistent with the finding of this research, for L'Oréal to inspire consumers, it should use abstract messages as a promotional tool. Also, L'Oréal should frame the messages to relate to promotion-focused goals, making sure that the promotional message type is compatible with the type of the product and the characteristics of promotion-oriented individuals.

Identifying what drives or elicits customer inspiration is important for marketers and advertisers, because an advertisement that can inspire customers or potential customers is also likely to have the potential to influence consumers' behaviors, leading to better returns for the company. Böttger et al. (2017) noted that studying inspiration has the potential to change marketing strategies and help managers to successfully promote their products. They found that inspired customers were more likely to adopt exploration behavior and their intention to purchase increased. Inspired customers also tend to feel more connected to the brand, increasing their loyalty and satisfaction (Böttger et al., 2017). This study has built on those findings to identify a specific way in which companies can inspire customers and trigger consumer responses, leading to more demand and sales. It also showed that the intensity of the influence of marketing

on customers' state of inspiration varies between individuals, depending on the individuals' characters, and particularly their regulatory focus. This has important managerial implications, because it means that organizations must target both types of individual orientation in promoting their products.

5.5 Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

Despite its useful contributions, this research also had some limitations. First, it chose to test the impact of messages on customer inspiration using two types of products in the same category, convenience products (Kerin, Hartley & Rudelius, 2004). These products are relatively inexpensive and are widely distributed in convenient locations. They were chosen to emphasize that inspiration is not related to particular contexts or influenced by the perceived cost of the product. However, this choice might limit the generalizability of the findings to other product categories. Future research should consider replicating the study by testing the impact of abstract and concrete messages on customer inspiration using other types of products, such as those that are perceived as more expensive, or which use selective or exclusive distribution strategies (Kerin et al., 2004). Second, this research focused on tangible hedonic and utilitarian consumer goods. Nowadays, however, the exchange of intangibles is becoming more important, leading a shift from tangible towards intangible products and services (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). This limits the generalizability of the findings to intangible products, and the study did not consider the influence of messages on customer inspiration when promoting a service. Future research could examine the impact of 1) the type of message on customer inspiration in the context of service marketing and 2) the interaction of the type of message (abstract vs. concrete) and the type of service (hedonic vs. utilitarian) on customer inspiration. Third, this research did not consider product involvement as a variable that could influence customers' state of inspiration.

Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy (1990) showed that product involvement is a consumer characteristic that can influence consumer responses towards messages. A message could be more inspiring to highly involved individuals. However, this limitation is mitigated by the randomized experimental design used and by choosing products that belong to the same product category, generally having similar prices. Future research could replicate this study and consider personal involvement towards a product, as a variable that potentially influences the extent to which messages affect customers' state of inspiration.

This study's findings suggest that abstract messages are more inspiring and that abstract messages promoting hedonic products have the ability to inspire customers. A concrete message promoting a utilitarian product did not inspire customers in this study. However, a concrete message might be more inspiring to customers if it is promoting a relatively expensive utilitarian product, such as a washing machine or dishwasher. Future research could investigate whether perceived expensiveness acts as a boundary condition to the impact of a concrete message on customers' state of inspiration.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Trait Inspiration Scale

Trait Inspiration Scale (Thrash & Elliot, 2003)		
Statement/Item No.	Statements and Items	Subscale
Statement 1	I experience inspiration	
Item 1f	How often does this happen?	Frequency
Item 1i	How deeply or strongly (in general)?	Intensity
Statement 2	Something I encounter or experience inspires me	
Item 2f	How often does this happen?	Frequency
Item 2i	How deeply or strongly (in general)?	Intensity
Statement 3	I am inspired to do something	
Item 3f	How often does this happen?	Frequency
Item 3i	How deeply or strongly (in general)?	Intensity
Statement 4	I feel inspired	
Item 4f	How often does this happen?	Frequency
Item 4i	How deeply or strongly (in general)?	Intensity

Appendix 2: State Inspiration Scale

State Inspiration Scale (Thrash, Elliot, Maruskin & Cassidy, 2010).	
Item No.	Items
Item 1	I experienced inspiration
Item 2	Something in the film inspired me
Item 3	I was inspired to do something
Item 4	I felt inspired

Appendix 3: Existing Frameworks for "Inspiration"

Existing Frameworks for "Inspiration"		
Framework	Description of Framework	Inspiration Definition
Tripartite Conceptualization of Inspiration (Thrash & Elliot, 2003)	For trait and state inspiration, three core characteristics; evocation, transcendence and motivation	"Inspiration implies *motivation*; it involves the energization and direction of behavior (Elliot, 1997); inspiration is *evoked* rather than initiated directly through an act of will or arising without apparent cause; and inspiration involves *transcendence* of the ordinary preoccupations or limitations of human agency".
Component Process Conceptualization (Thrash & Elliot, 2004)	Inspiration has two distinct components, 'inspired *by*' and 'inspired *to*'	"Inspiration is a hybrid construct that emerges from the juxtaposition of two component processes, one involving an appreciation of and accommodation to an evocative object (hereafter referred to as being *inspired by*), the other involving motivation to extend the

		qualities exemplified in the evocative object (hereafter referred to as being *inspired to*)".
Transmission Model (Thrash, Elliot, Maruskin & Cassidy, 2010)	Inspiration plays the role of a mediator; inspiration motivates individuals to transmit the perceived value represented in the evocative object and extend its qualities to a new object	"Inspiration creates a motivational state that is evoked in response to getting a creative idea and that compels the individual to transform the creative idea into a creative product"
Conceptual Framework for Inspiration and Related Marketing Constructs (Böttger, Rudolph, Evanschitzky & Pfrang, 2017)	States the antecedents and consequences of inspiration. 'Inspired *by*' component mediates the effect of the marketing stimuli on the 'inspired *to*' component.	"Customer inspiration is a customer's temporary motivational state that facilitates the transition from the reception of a marketing-induced idea to the intrinsic pursuit of a consumption-related goal".

Appendix 4: Images and advertisements used in the study

Appendix 5: State Inspiration Scale

Item No.	Items
State Inspiration Scale (Böttger, Rudolph, Evanschitzky & Pfrang, 2017)	
Inspired "*by*"	
Item 1	My imagination was stimulated
Item 2	I was intrigued by a new idea
Item 3	I unexpectedly and spontaneously got a new idea
Item 4	My horizon was broadened
Item 5	I discovered something new
Inspired "*to*"	
Item 6	I was inspired to buy something
Item 7	I felt a desire to buy something
Item 8	My interest to buy something was increased
Item 9	I was motivated to buy something
Item 10	I felt an urge to buy something

Appendix 6: Event Reaction Questionnaire

Event Reaction Questionnaire (Higgins et al., 2001)

This set of questions asks you HOW FREQUENTLY specific events actually occur or have
 occurred in your life.

Please indicate your answer to each question by circling the appropriate number below it.

Compared to most people, are you typically unable to get what you want out of life?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

never
or seldom   sometimes   very
often

Growing up, would you ever "cross the line" by doing things that your parents would not tolerate?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

never
or seldom   sometimes   very
often

How often have you accomplished things that got you "psyched" to work even harder?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

never
or seldom   a few times   many
times

Did you get on your parents' nerves often when you were growing up?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

never
or seldom   sometimes   very
often

How often did you obey rules and regulations that were established by your parents?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

never
or seldom   sometimes   always

Growing up, did you ever act in ways that your parents thought were objectionable?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

never   sometimes   very
or seldom   often

Do you often do well at different things that you try?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

never   sometimes   very
or seldom   often

Not being careful enough has gotten me into trouble at times.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

never   sometimes   very
or seldom   often

When it comes to achieving things that are important to me, I find that I don't

 perform as well as I ideally would like to do.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

never   sometimes   very
  true   true.   often
                                  true

I feel like I have made progress toward being successful in my life.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

certainly   sometimes   certainly
   false   true   true

I have found very few hobbies or activities in my life that capture my interest or

motivate me to put effort into them.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

certainly false   certainly true