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THE EXAMINATION OF THREAT AND AFFILIATIVE TENDENCIES THROUGH  
PRONOUN USAGE IN RELATION TO CONSUMER EVALUATIONS

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# THE EXAMINATION OF THREAT AND AFFILIATIVE TENDENCIES THROUGH PRONOUN USAGE IN RELATION TO CONSUMER EVALUATIONS

SARAH M. DIGIOIA

## ABSTRACT

This study further examines the relationship between threat and affiliative tendencies. Under threat, there is a tendency to embrace others in efforts to reduce threat and uncertainty. This study explores whether product advertisements that use inclusive pronouns (e.g., we, our) lead products to be perceived as more attractive/valuable under threat (compared to low threat). Therefore, this study employs a 2 (threat: low vs. high) X 2 (ad reference frame: inclusive pronouns vs. 3<sup>rd</sup> person) between-subjects design. Data from 145 university student participants were collected. To manipulate threat, participants were told they would be taking part in a learning exercise and were “randomly” assigned the role of the “learner”, while a participant in another room would act as the “teacher” who would administer the punishment/reinforcement (e.g., sound blasts) to the “learner”. Participants viewed one of two versions of an advertisement for a hypothetical product. We expect that participants in the inclusive pronoun condition will evaluate the product more positively and that the positive impact of inclusive pronoun use will be stronger under high levels of threat. Analyses for the primary hypotheses revealed some support and many exploratory analyses revealed significant results.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Consumer Behavior*

The goal of consumer behavior research is to understand the processes that are involved when people select, purchase, or use products, services, or experiences to satisfy desires or needs (Solomon, 2004). This is an important goal for marketers who aim to create effective market strategies and wish to apply this type of knowledge to help consumers make optimal decisions. Accomplishing this goal may not be as straightforward as it sounds because interestingly, theories and research suggest that the evaluations and decisions that consumers make are not always consciously guided (Solomon, 2004). In fact, it's common for consumers to be unsure about what they want, and even if this is known, they may still be unsure about why they want it or why they ended up purchasing it (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006). If consumer behavior operated purely on a conscious level, there would be no difficulty accurately reporting such things. This does not mean consumers are always mindless and acting and spending in a random fashion. Many decisions and judgments outside the realm of consumer behavior, even important and self-relevant ones are susceptible to influences outside of one's conscious awareness (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). This notion can be unsettling for some because

people generally feel and believe their attitudes, decisions, and actions result from intention, deliberation, and volition. But on another level, this notion emphasizes the importance and need for research related to consumer behavior.

Research on consumer behavior has made great strides in understanding how situational influences that operate outside of awareness impact preferences and behaviors. Studies have shown that product evaluations are derived from more than just the product features themselves, and can be shaped by a range of “irrelevant” things such as the temperature of the room, rarity of the product, popularity of the product, positioning/display of the product, and so forth (Solomon, 2004). A recent study has even shown that people judge orange juice to taste sweeter when a tasteless dye has been added to make the color of the juice a brighter shade of orange (Hoegg & Alba, 2007). These studies (along with many others) demonstrate that evaluations are not driven solely by aspects of the products themselves (such as ingredients of the juice, etc), and highlight the need for consumer behavior researchers to creatively identify and explore the various factors that shape attitudes and decisions. Since many influences may be outside of one’s conscious awareness, researchers and theorists who are equipped with proper knowledge, skills, and ability play a valuable role in accurately deconstructing consumer tendencies.

There are a number of reasons why people themselves are often inaccurate or incapable of properly deconstructing their experiences. One reason is the nature of the human brain and how it works. Scientists across a number of disciplines (biology, neuropsychology, cognitive psychology, social psychology, etc.) have demonstrated that the brain operates on multiple levels. One is an “adaptive unconscious” level and the other is the more familiar “conscious” level (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). In the book,

“Blink” (Gladwell, 2005), the metaphor of an internal computer is applied to describe the workings of the nonconscious mind. As such, this adaptive unconscious is described as a giant computer that speedily, quietly, and efficiently processes a lot of the data people need to function as human beings. Imagine a woman driving to work each morning. Her unconscious mind is likely to be encoding a wealth of information. This part of her mind may be processing information about the cars driving next to her, details of the scenery that she passes as she commutes, etc. but the conscious part of her mind is unaware of all of this type of information that is being gathered. Imagine what would happen if she was aware of all of the information that her mind is processing. Her conscious mind would probably be so overwhelmed she wouldn’t be able to drive very far without crashing.

There are functional reasons the mind operates how it does, even if that means people will be subject to decisions that are beyond their conscious control, and decisions that are fast and hasty. If a person is crossing the street and suddenly realizes a truck is recklessly approaching, does the pedestrian have time to think and deliberate all of his or her options? If all of mental life was deliberate, humans would not survive or thrive. Presumably, the only way humans could survive as a species is by developing an adaptive decision-making apparatus that’s capable of making quick judgments based on very little information. This information processing apparatus (adaptive unconscious) must inherently be outside of awareness, otherwise, conscious mental life would be filled with too many distracting pieces of information, and would get bogged down and inhibit humans from properly functioning. And because the mind engages in rapid nonconscious processing, by nature, the conscious mind is unable to access this mental activity. So the result of nonconscious operations may be consciously experienced (e.g., “I like the taste

of this Coke”), however, the processes leading to this outcome remain elusive from awareness (e.g., why do I like the taste of this Coke?) and one can only speculate or apply a priori theories to explain the situation (e.g., “The ingredients of Coke are just right”).

On a related note, another reason people are not always accurate when explaining themselves is because people are generally unaware of the different ways in which they process information. How information is processed impacts judgments and decisions. As the name indicates, dual-process models state that there are two distinct forms of information processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). One style is a deliberate and controlled manner of information processing, labeled as central processing. When people engage in central processing, they pay close attention to the content of information and are deliberative in how they think. This form of processing is consciously guided, effortful, and thus requires mental resources and motivation. Attitudes that are formed via central processing are generally stable because they are based on information content, and the quality and strength of arguments.

The other style of information processing is peripheral processing (also known as heuristic processing), and this form is more automatic and nonconscious. Heuristics are simple mental shortcuts that people use when making judgments under uncertainty (Kahneman & Tversky, 1973). Because peripheral processing is automatic, uncontrolled, and nonconscious, it is not dependent on mental resources. Peripheral processing leads people to incorporate information that is “less central” to the issue at hand. Thus, when one is engaged in peripheral processing, attitudes about a persuasive message may be influenced by “peripheral” cues such as the quality of paper that the message is written on, rather than the content and quality of the message itself (Petty & Wegener, 1999).

Peripheral processing is a fast and frugal way to organize and use information, thus it is an efficient way to think, but one trade-off of the benefit of speed is accuracy. While it seems counterintuitive to think people commonly engage in mental processes that may lead to inaccurate judgments, peripheral processing is necessary because it helps people conserve mental resources, which are limited in supply. Like the adaptive unconscious, peripheral processing allows one to conserve mental energy so that the conscious mind can be clear and use that energy to focus on important goals and tasks. Integrating dual-process models of information processing have led to advances in understanding consumer behavior (Petty & Wegener, 1999). Much of this research has focused on identifying when people are likely to engage in peripheral processing, and how various peripheral cues (also known as heuristics) subsequently guide product evaluations (Petty & Wegener, 1999).

The way a message is interpreted by consumers can affect their judgments or evaluations of a product (Solomon, 2004). For example, a consumer may think a message or words on a package are clever and therefore view the product as likable. During times of low involvement purchases, evaluations may be influenced by factors that are not directly relevant to the product or its features. So, a message may influence how a person feels about a product. In turn, psychological feelings and states can influence a person's perceptions. One reason this occurs is because mood states have direct and indirect effects on behavior, evaluations, and recall (Gardner, 1985).

The mood-congruency hypothesis states that when people experience a specific affective state, the corresponding emotion node is activated in the associative memory network and cognitions associated with that emotion node become more accessible, or

come to mind more quickly (Pereg & Mikulincer, 2004). As a result, positive affect is thought to increase the accessibility of positive cognitions, whereas negative affect should heighten the accessibility of negative cognitions. For example, if a person is in a positive mood, then positive memories and thoughts will be more salient or prominent. This person will also be motivated to maintain his or her positive mood, and will nonconsciously direct his or her attention to positive information and cues. So, if a woman in a good mood is evaluating shoes, she will focus more on the positive aspects of the shoes, such as things she likes rather than dislikes. Therefore, in this way, mood influences evaluations.

A mood-congruency effect has been revealed in social judgments wherein people evaluate others more favorably when they are in a good mood than when they are in a bad mood (McFarland, White & Newth, 2003). For example, if a person is in a good mood when meeting a new neighbor, he or she will more likely think more positively about him or her. To support this notion, research indicates that moods may automatically prime mood-congruent thoughts that are then used in impression formation or may be used in a heuristic fashion to aid people in estimating how they feel about a person (McFarland et. al., 2003). So, mood may also influence our processing style in regards to how a person might utilize a systematic or heuristic approach (McFarland et. al., 2003). For example, when in a negative mood a consumer might systematically process the information more thoroughly and deliberately because a negative mood signals that something may be wrong or potentially threatening. So, a person will think more carefully and critically to see what is wrong in order to avoid mistakes or negative outcomes. On the other hand, when people are in a positive mood they use heuristic



shortcuts and stereotypes because there is no need to expend energy since they feel good, making them think that things are fine.

While it is clear that affective states influence an individual's evaluations, there are still different potential influences that need to be explored. One promising avenue involves a motivational approach to exploring mood influences rather than a purely information processing one (e.g., mood-congruency). Affective states serve as salient forms of information that may signal the presence of threats or opportunities in the environment (Maner & Gerend, 2007). Emotions promote motivational tendencies aimed at the avoidance of threat or engagement of opportunity (Maner & Gerend, 2007). For example, the emotion a person is feeling at a given time has a strong effect on whether he/she decides to conform or not (Griskevicius, et. al., in press). Self-presentation strategies can be effective and dramatically altered by fear and romantic desire, which are two primitive concepts. Fear leads people to conform, while romance activates a desire to be unique (Griskevicius, et. al., in press). These types of findings suggest that certain psychological mindsets (fear/sexual attraction) can trigger corresponding needs (need for affiliation/distinctiveness) and resultant tendencies (conformity/uniqueness) that are exhibited to satisfy these heightened needs. The purpose of the current study, which will be discussed later, is to consider how threat influences consumer attitudes toward a product. Furthermore, how responses to threat and the presentation of messages impact consumer attitudes.

### *Threat/Uncertainty*

Threat is a negative consequence that is proposed to elicit a response and is also an indication or warning of probable trouble (Maheswaran & Agrawal, 2004). Threat

produces uncertainty which creates a psychological state of nervousness and anxiety. Therefore, threat is considered to be an obstacle or challenge for a person. Threat is experienced on an individual level. There are different types of threat a person may experience in their daily life, such as a highly threatening situation that may produce immediate anxiety (e.g., close call accident during rush hour traffic) or a low threat situation in which a person may not directly experience the consequences of the situation. For example, people may fear death during the end of their lifecycle or may experience threat throughout different stages of their life. A person may experience uncertainty by being rejected by a romantic partner or discovering that a family member has cancer. On the other hand, as a society people may experience threat when the country is at a state of war, or from watching current news events. For these reasons, threat is important to study because people experience it and have a desire to escape it.

A common threat that most people have experienced is thinking about death or mourning from a death. In particular, the thought of one's own death is frightening because it is ultimately inevitable and people are bound to think about dying. People think about the finality of their life which causes them to feel afraid and apprehensive, so people look for answers. One way this can be illustrated is through religion. For example, a person's religion helps to provide answers for uncertainty that surrounds thoughts of death. Therefore, people try to defuse the threat of death by seeking symbolic immortality by adopting a cultural worldview that is shared by others (Gailliot, Schmeichel & Maner, 2007). Embracing a popular cultural worldview reduces uncertainty by providing social validation from others, making one feel more certain. So,

the more others confirm what a person believes, he/she will feel less uncertain. Thus, how a person feels can effect how they think about a particular topic.

Feelings might relate to concepts like threat, which is why this topic has been considered. When something is felt (threat), it heightens a need (safety via affiliation), and then response (affiliation via conformity or socially desirable responses that make one “fit in”). In consumer research threat has been studied through a framework of terror management theory. Terror Management Theory (TMT) explains the implicit emotional reactions of people when confronted with the psychological terror of knowing they will eventually die. TMT states that when people are confronted with thoughts of their own mortality, they experience X (e.g. a particular feeling). Since this is an aversive experience and feels negative, people are motivated to do Y (e.g. think about the present). This theory helps to explain how people deal with and alleviate terror that they experience.

Threat and mortality relates to terror management theory, which states that when people are made aware of their mortality, they feel the need to uphold a cultural worldview that provides them with an anxiety buffer (Moskalenko, McCauley & Rozin, 2006). Mortality salience has been found to increase desires for social acceptance (Gailliot, Stillman, Schmeichel, Maner & Plant, 2008). One way people can defuse the psychological threat of death is to adhere to social norms and values to cope with the awareness of death (Gailliot et. al., 2008). Fear may lead people to reprioritize their goals and thus, seek out others who can help reduce their distress and feeling of vulnerability (Li, Halterman, Cason, Knight & Maner, 2007).

Researchers have used TMT as a way to understand how the awareness of death affects materialism, conspicuous consumption, and consumer decisions. People may feel that in order to protect themselves from the negative thoughts and feelings that arise from thinking about death they should focus on their present life. Therefore, materialism and death may be connected on a subconscious level because people may engage in material spending to direct and focus their thoughts and attention on aspects of their present life, ultimately serving to distract themselves from thoughts of mortality (Rindfleisch & Burroughs, 2004). Past research has also shown that there is evidence that a link between death anxiety and materialism exists (Rindfleisch & Burroughs, 2004). One application of TMT illustrates the possibility of materialism as a pathway to securing existential meaning (Arndt, Solomon, Kasser & Sheldon, 2004). Furthermore, its application was used to explain how suggestions of mortality increase materialism as a way to enhance self-esteem and affect consumer decisions that support one's cultural worldview (Arndt et. al., 2004). Furthermore, on a subconscious level people may think of their reproductive worth and want their genes to pass on. Thus, people want to make themselves as attractive as possible which can be improved in a materialistic sense, thereby making their physical appearance more attractive to increase reproduction opportunities.

In a similar vein to TMT, the current study will look at the influence of threat on consumer spending. When people feel threat they want to escape it and people are sensitive to cues in order to escape threat. A message presented in an advertisement can influence a way a consumer feels about a product (e.g. sad, happy, excited, uninterested, turned-off, etc.). This study looks at other ways an ad and message interacts with threat.

For example, the emotion of fear motivates a desire to protect oneself from harm. One purpose for studying threat is reflected by consumer behavior, which was discussed in the previous section. In terms of consumer research, there is a lot of potential future direction in considering threat or uncertainty. Threat or the thought that something bad could happen may increase consumption of goods or products by providing something to decrease the thought of uncertainty. Affiliation decreases anxiety and the sense of threat/uncertainty.

In addition to the tendency to affiliate with others to alleviate uncertainty, a person experiences further motivation when experiencing threat. For example, empirical evidence has shown that participants seek to interact with those who are experienced so they may learn to cope with an impending threat or to gain insight into their own situation (Li et. al., 2007). Another common pattern is that people seek emotional similarity from those undergoing a similar threatening situation. Seeking emotional similarity helps a person by providing information about a particular situation. In a threatening situation, we might not know how we are “supposed” to feel or react. Therefore we look to others, and then use their responses/reactions as information to inform us. So we use their responses as cues, and “copy” and “conform” because we feel unsure about our own judgment of how to act. By looking to others and conforming, uncertainty about how to behave is reduced. For example, those in a doctor’s office prefer to wait with others who are experiencing the same situation or emotional state over waiting by themselves. Another way to illustrate this point is to consider that people prefer to watch scary movies with others so that they can reduce their anxiety of being afraid. Wisman and Koole (2003) examined the unconscious desire of people to avoid being isolated by

others and the correlation to seating positions. They found that mortality salience led participants to sit in a group of clustered chairs rather than a single chair. Several reasons have been attributed to why people affiliate under threat and what function affiliation serves. These are just some examples. There are other reasons too. Nevertheless, it is apparent that a typical response to threat or danger is affiliation, which is seeking the proximity of familiar people even if it involves remaining in a threatening situation.

### *Affiliation*

As humans, we feel pleasure or positive affect from social contact. Previous research has shown that there is evidence of a basic desire to form social attachments and that forming these attachments generally produces positive emotion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Real, imagined, or potential threats to social bonds generate a variety of unpleasant emotional states (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Human beings are driven toward establishing belongingness. The need to belong is the desire for interpersonal attachments that is a fundamental human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). An evolutionary basis states that this desire has survival and reproductive benefits (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Attachment behavior frequently takes place over escape, and there is an evolutionary-adaptive function to seek protection from natural predators (Mawson, 2005). This can help to explain that when a disaster occurs residents tend to remain in the area, and when they do evacuate they do so in a group (Mawson, 2005).

The need to belong has important consequences for social functioning. Cues in the environment signal both potential belonging and potential rejection, which can assist an individual in navigating the environment in a way that will produce greater social inclusion (Pickett, Gardner & Knowles, 2004). Group membership drives basic aspects

of psychology, such as feelings, thoughts, judgments, and behaviors. Groups are so powerful that inclusion in them changes the emotional experiences of their members, which influences cognitive processing and judgmental tendencies (Rydell et. al., 2008). Research has shown that mere activation of group membership produces convergence of emotional experience, without the explicit presence of a sudden event or object (Rydell et. al., 2008). Groups are a principal component of affiliation because people have a need to feel a sense of involvement and belonging within a social group.

Affiliation involves seeking the proximity of familiar persons and places. People who are high in affiliation spend more of their time interacting with others than do people with low affiliative motivation (Smith, Atkinson, McClelland, & Veroff, 1992). People high in affiliation are more likely to be found interacting with someone or if alone, to report wishing that they were with someone (Smith et. al., 1992). Therefore, people's scores on affiliation may primarily reflect their level of fear of rejection (Smith et. al., 1992). The response to affiliate entails escaping from a certain situation and moving toward a similarly perceived situation even though it may not be objectively safe (Mawson, 2005). Thus, in order to reduce or escape threat, people have an increased tendency to affiliate because uncertainty motivates affiliation with similarly threatened others. Also emotional comparison needs are greater under high threat, rather than low threat, and are met specifically by affiliation with someone facing a similar high threat situation (Gump & Kulik, 1997). As an example, after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, Americans increased their identification with their country. This stressful situation caused a greater need for affiliation because it allowed individuals to respond to the same

stressor by coming together to find security in one another. It is clear that fear and affiliation can be linked to one another.

Fear and affiliation research stem from Leon Festinger's social comparison theory. Festinger argued that people need to have appraisals of their opinions and abilities and therefore, evaluate their opinions and abilities in comparison to other people. A similarity hypothesis indicates that people prefer to compare themselves with others who are similar in ability or those with similar opinions because it is believed that they will provide a more accurate judgment of their relative standing (Kulik, Mahler & Earnest, 1994). Thus, people compare themselves to others in an attempt to determine whether their emotional reactions under stressful circumstances are normal or not (Lodewijkx, Van Zomeren & Syroit, 2005). Under social comparison, people interact with similar versus dissimilar others because it provides useful information for assessing one's own feelings or abilities, thereby reducing uncertainty (Mehrabian & Ksionzky, 1974). The opportunity for self-enhancement through comparisons with others increases affiliation. This theory was tested by Rabbie (1963), who conducted a study in which participants under a high uncertainty condition (uncertain if they would receive an electrical shock) desired to affiliate more than those who were certain that they would receive an electrical shock.

One interesting comparison that has been made is between males and females under threat. Taylor et al. (2000) found that gender differences exist in affiliation under threat. It was shown that males display a fight-or-flight response to threat, in contrast to females who show a tend-and-befriend response. Tending involves nurturant activities designed to protect the self and offspring that promote safety and reduce distress, and



befriending is the creation and maintenance of social networks that may aid in this process (Taylor, Klein, Lewis, Gruenewald, Gurung, & Updegraff, 2000). A female response to threat includes nurturing and soothing but is also related to the formation and maintenance of social bonds and alliances with other females. Hence, in threat-arousing conditions females seek and depend on affiliation and social support more than males (Taylor et. al., 2000). Regardless of gender differences, the tendency to seek the proximity of others is extremely powerful.

Empirical research has shown that the mere presence of another person is beneficial. Schnall, Harber, Stefanucci, & Proffitt (2008) conducted a study in which participants accompanied by a friend, compared to those participants that were alone, estimated a hill to be less steep. Furthermore, participants in this study who simply thought of a supportive friend during an imaginary task saw a hill as less steep, than participants who thought of a disliked or neutral person. This example suggests that social support, a psychological resource, moderates visual perception of the physical world. This provides an explanation as to why the physical world appeared less challenging to these participants, and why a hill in particular seemed less steep. In addition to this study, past research has shown that even when participants could not directly interact or communicate with other participants, an affiliation tendency occurred in which the anticipation that a participant would face a threatening situation was sufficient to induce a strong need for affiliation (Lodewijkx et. al., 2005). Affiliation activates a person's social identity because they are identifying with other people.

Intergroup relations consist of groups that people feel they belong to, which also help to define and evaluate who they are. Thus, they reveal their collective self-concept

and social identity. Being a member of a group is advantageous for an individual. Groups may be formed because of a motivation for self-enhancement or uncertainty reduction. As certainty develops, people then consider their status (Reid & Hogg, 2005). Subsequently, group identification is at least partly directed toward enhancing one's social status and self-esteem. One way in particular that a person might do this is through association with a successful group. A threat to self-esteem can lead an individual to increase identification with a group that offers high status and support (Moskalenko et al., 2006). The motivation to seek out groups with high status is one reason why groups are considered to be desirable. People want acceptance by a group, which can account for why groups are attractive. Research has also revealed that stronger affiliation tendencies are associated with stronger group attraction (Lodewijkx et al., 2005). The urge to be accepted by a group stems from the concept of social comparison.

The purpose of the study is to further examine the known relationship between threat and affiliation tendencies. Theorists suggest that, as social animals, humans have evolved to depend on one another to overcome challenges and threats. Under threat and uncertainty, humans also turn to one another as sources of information to shape their subjective reality (e.g., pluralistic ignorance; social tuning processes). This belief in “strength in numbers” is not unique to humans, but can be evidenced across a range of social species (e.g., herd mentality). Historically, psychologists have examined affiliative behaviors under threat, and have explored ways that humans group, ingratiate, and conform under these conditions. Essentially, under threat, there is a strong tendency to embrace others in efforts to reduce threat and uncertainty. The current study takes a novel approach to this century-old topic, and aims to explore more subtle, yet still

social/affiliative, responses to potentially threatening situations. To examine the boundaries of the threat-affiliation relationship, we have designed a study to test if people are more receptive to affiliative/inclusive “words” under threat. Evaluations can be shaped by social information and social cues.

### *The Meaning of a Message*

Consumer evaluations of products can be impacted in several ways (e.g. consciously or nonconsciously). At a nonconscious level, subtle social cues can affect brand choices. For example, researchers demonstrated that when participants viewed pictures of a brand accompanied by the presence of others, participants were more likely to choose that brand over other brands even if they were unaware that they had seen the brand logo (Ferraro, Bettman, & Chartrand, in press). Researchers also showed that repeated exposure of a brand increased the likelihood that an observer will select that brand (Ferraro et. al., in press). There are several components of an advertisement that influence product evaluation and the willingness to purchase a product.

Communication and more specifically, words, presented in an advertisement provide one example of influential factors. Even subtle effects such as framing of a message can alter mindsets and behavior in important ways. Message framing impacts consumers in many significant ways. For example, previous research has shown that tailored messages are perceived more positively than untailored messages (Updegraff, Sherman, Luyster, & Mann, 2007). There are several studies that explore message framing in the consumer realm. For example, one study examines health messages and the congruency effect. In this study, participants’ motivational orientation was measured and then they viewed either a gain-framed or a loss-framed message on dental flossing.

Results indicated that information framed to be congruent with motivational orientations lead people to form intentions to perform the health behavior (Sherman, Mann, & Updegraff, 2006).

It has been established that how a person feels may influence how he or she thinks (Chang, 2002). Individuals in different affective states process information in different modes. One way that consumer behavior is influenced is by threatening consequences included in fear-appeal communications, which make a message more persuasive (Shehryar & Hunt, 2005). Several psychological constructs can have different implications for how a person processes information. Word usage may be psychologically meaningful, whether it is processed nonconsciously or not. This is what is being tested in this study. For example, people may not be consciously aware of pronouns, but can be sensitive to their representations and meaning. This study is examining whether word usage is impactful or not. If so, then this is the important contribution of the study's results. People will then know that word usage, and in particular, usage of pronouns which imply inclusion, impact people's evaluations. Furthermore, results may show that this is particularly the case under threat.

The interpretation of pronouns is mediated by a variety of social and personal factors producing a range of possible uses and interpretations (Wilson, 1990). We use pronouns to define ourselves in relation to others, and there is implied inclusion of pronouns. Furthermore, there is implicit affiliation in some messages. One way affiliation is implied, is from using reference groups. In one particular experiment researchers primed participants to activate either "we-us" concepts or "they-them" concepts, then asked participants to circle pronouns in a story text. Results revealed that

the pronouns “we” and “us” carry positive emotional significance, and primes social representations of the self that are more inclusive than that of the personal self-concept (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Therefore, collective self-identifications were activated in the we-prime condition. Thus, different levels of inclusiveness conceptually define distinct construals of the self. This example illustrates that certain pronouns can be associated with inclusion.

To further demonstrate this idea, the tendency to “bask in reflected glory” (BIRG) is relevant. By publicly announcing one’s association with successful others is the tendency to BIRG. Cialdini et al. (1976) showed that university students have a greater tendency to wear school-identifying apparel after their school’s football team had been victorious rather than nonvictorious. It was also demonstrated that students used the pronoun “we” more when describing a victory rather than nonvictory of their school’s football team. Sports fans take pride in their team’s accomplishments and proclaim their affiliation by wearing clothing that represents their team, having bumper stickers on their car, and displaying banners or flags in their yard. Fans show this tendency in order to claim for themselves part of the team’s glory. This may explain why chants are often phrased as “We’re number one” and never “They’re number one”. Therefore, pronouns have psychological meaning and connection to a group of people. When a fan says, “We won”, it denotes affiliation as opposed to saying “They won” when their team loses.

Another good example of how people consider the abstract usage and meaning of particular pronouns can be observed from the recent presidential election on November 4<sup>th</sup> 2008. In some states people waited in long lines to vote. One CNN reporter, Madison Park, said, “There was a light-hearted crowd despite weather conditions, and no one was

complaining. There's a lot of collective energy that goes on." (As reported on CNN.com on 11-16-2008 by Madison Park). Robert Cialdini, a psychology professor at Arizona State University said that a long line to vote creates the sense of "we" and not "me". He also said, "inside the boundaries of 'we', people treat each other well" (As reported on CNN.com on 11-16-2008 by Madison Park). Another psychology professor, Shawn Rosenberg from the University of California said that voting "symbolizes their commitment to a larger role" (As reported on CNN.com on 11-16-2008 by Madison park). Barack Obama's pre-presidential rhetoric and its connection to his political success is beneficial to examine.

Candidates for public office choose certain strategies in order to achieve certain ends. Certain imperatives may include the need to identify themselves with symbols of national identity to be considered patriotic, to unite diverse groups, and to prove their ability for the job in question (Stuckey, 1989). Every candidate for public office articulates a particular vision of America through specific rhetorical appeals to our history, our national symbols, and our current national self-identification (Stuckey, 1989). The use of pronouns that have suggested meaning of inclusion were used by Senator Obama in his "A more perfect union" speech. For example, Barack Obama said, "...we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together-unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories, but hold common hopes..." (from the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2008/as transcribed from politico.com). In Obama's president-elect speech in Grant Park, he said, "...that out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope, and where we are met with cynicism, and doubt, and those who tell us that we can't, we still

respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of the people: Yes We Can.” (from Grant Park in Chicago, Illinois on November 4<sup>th</sup> 2008 (as transcribed from abcnews.go.com). By examining these speeches, it is obvious that “we, us and our” concepts were used to activate collective self-identities. Using such pronouns makes people feel included as Americans and a common identity is activated which produces positive thoughts and feelings.

Affiliation increases in situations where positive reinforcement increases or negative reinforcement decreases. Affiliation is desired more with targets that are more reinforcing and are more attractive when they can help reduce fear or uncertainty (Mehrabian & Ksionzky, 1974). Positive social reinforcers are examples of people who express positive attitude communication. Positive affiliators communicate more positive attitudes. This can be demonstrated by using pronouns in which “I” indicates greater separation of the target from the self and implies a less positive attitude than “we” usage (Mehrabian & Ksionzky, 1974). Individuals who have a general disposition to view interpersonal relationships as being more positively reinforcing would, on average, exhibit a greater degree of affiliation with any target (Mehrabian & Ksionzky, 1974).

Research has found that people respond differently when social or personal aspects of their identity are evoked (Donald & Dube, 1986). The personal self is at the individual level motivated by self-interest. These different self-construals can be activated at different times or in different contexts. Individuals have a desire to define themselves with larger collectives and are better able to self-evaluate as a result of having social identities. A collective social identity is a common identity in which the perception of the self as a unique person is washed out and the perception of the self

becomes an exemplar of some social category (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Even though one's self-concept is not being activated in this study, this premise is relevant to the conceptual framework of the study and its predicted effects. By raising the notion of a collective self-concept, it will help to understand the predicted effects and hypotheses that are conveyed within the idea of word usage and framing of an advertisement. When the collective self is activated, it reflects norms and characteristics of reference groups and salient features of the self-concept become those that are part of the in-group. Therefore, in-groups provide the frame of reference for self-evaluation at the individual level. Thus, in-group membership is a relevant source of social comparison.

By understanding the motivations of individuals versus groups, a potential connection can be made between products and acceptance by groups. People identify and associate themselves with certain groups to gain self-esteem. People are often motivated by a desire to feel good about themselves. A person may believe that they will be accepted by a group if they buy products similar to those that their desired group uses or possesses. This can be illustrated by consumer wants among teenage high school students. Imagine a popular product is associated with a certain group of students and a person desires to be part of that group. A person might be more inclined to purchase that product and think that their likelihood of being seen as an in-group member will increase.

Communication is important in order to conceptualize the process by which people navigate and assign meaning. Exchanging of understanding consists of transmitting information from one person to another. In a psychological view, communication is the act of sending a message to a receiver and the feelings and thoughts of the receiver upon interpreting the message (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006). The



elaboration likelihood model (ELM) involves message processing as an aspect of communication. Based on the elaboration likelihood model it has been determined that tailored messages are more effective than untailored messages because they have a greater relevance to the recipient, thereby increasing the chance that the recipient will process the message centrally rather than peripherally (Updegraff et. al., 2007). This theory can be used to understand how a variable has an impact on some evaluative or nonevaluative judgment (Petty & Wegener, 1999). The ELM examines the processes underlying changes in judgments of objects, the variables that induce these processes, and the strength of the judgments resulting from these processes (Petty & Wegener, 1999).

Several variables impact a person's attitude toward various objects, issues, and people. A source, message, and contextual factors are examples of variables that can be influential. For example, Cameron & DeJoy (2006) studied the composition of communication and found that warning communication messages are meant to persuade people to use protective or precautionary behaviors when encountering potentially dangerous products or situations. There is more than just the content of a message that is influential. We are aware that people seldom process information deeply, instead relying on quick mental shortcuts to guide their behaviors. Several different theoretical models provide implications for effective persuasion techniques. An example is a motivational theory, which is a conformity-based shortcut of following the crowd. An arousal based model suggests that arousal increases the influence of peripheral cues and decreases the influence of central arguments (Pham, 1996). Therefore, consumers are more likely to process less complex information as the amount of processing capacity decreases (Sanbonmatsu & Kardes, 1988). An evolutionary approach suggests that different

emotions may lead people to be persuaded by certain heuristic cues and interpretive persuasive appeals in different ways (Griskevicius, et. al., in press).

Psycholinguists and communication scholars have made much progress in demonstrating the powerful nature of words, and have shown that the differential framing of messages can result in the activation of different psychological states of mind. The rationale for the current study follows similar principles and assumptions. More specifically, the study will explore whether messages, in the form of product advertisements, that use inclusive pronouns (e.g., we, our, us) lead products to be perceived as more attractive/valuable under threat (compared to low threat). This is an important area of study because if our hypotheses are supported, we will have identified a theoretical framework (with empirical evidence) that can be used as a foundation for strategically framing a wide range of persuasive communications (e.g., health-related messages; political speeches; advertisements) so the audience is more receptive.

Given events that have unfolded over the last decade, we believe it is critical for scientists to examine the psychological responses and tendencies that occur under threat. According to the Homeland Security Agency's security advisory system, the country has been in a state of elevated risk for terrorist attacks since 2002. The country's economy is often characterized as being in a state of "crisis," and is expected to continue to be so for some time. Thus, studying the psychological impact of threat is a timely topic, as is research on communicative strategies for increasing message receptiveness under states of threat/uncertainty. While the current proposal is much inspired by President Obama's use of the slogan, "Yes We Can," the theoretical framework of interest will be tested within a framework of consumer behavior research. There are a number of advantages to

using product advertisements as our medium to test the predictions of our psychological framework. Compared to having to read political speeches or health-related persuasive communications, we believe participants who have to look over ads will be more engaged and will maintain their interest and focus for a longer period of time. By using contrived products ads as stimuli, we can also collect data on the continuous variable of monetary value, which will be a novel and sensitive evaluation measure.

### *Rationale and Hypotheses*

Previous research has shown that mood states influence a person's judgments and behavior. When a psychological threat is present, people want to escape the situation or emotional state. Therefore, a typical response to threat is affiliation. Several reasons for this motivational response have been explained. One way this has been achieved has been observed by pronoun usage. The combination of these theories has resulted in the formulation of my hypotheses. Therefore, I predict that the positive evaluation of a product will increase when an advertisement for the product is presented and framed in a collective sense, using particular pronouns rather than when it is presented with 3<sup>rd</sup> person, and this pattern should be even more pronounced when participants are experiencing threat.

*Hypothesis 1:* I predict that ad framing will have an impact on participants. More specifically, that participants in the inclusive pronoun condition will evaluate the product more positively compared to those in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun condition.

*Hypothesis 2:* I predict that there will be an interaction effect between ad framing and threat. More specifically, that this predicted effect of inclusive pronouns on product attractiveness will be significantly stronger in the high threat condition.

Tolerance for ambiguity, attachment style, and affiliative tendency are three individual difference measure questionnaires used as materials in this study. These

individual difference constructs are of interest to this study because they may moderate potential effects and therefore are secondary hypotheses. Because threatening situations involve uncertainty and ambiguity, those who can tolerate ambiguity may experience lower levels of psychological threat than others. If this is the case, the high threat manipulation may not be effective for those with a high tolerance for ambiguity.

Attachment styles can be construed as a measure of people's tendencies to seek others during times of distress (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Those with an avoidant attachment style prefer to be alone rather than with close others when they are distressed. Therefore, it is possible avoidants in the high threat condition will not respond as hypothesized. And lastly, affiliative tendency scores will be collected because it is plausible that the hypothesized results will not emerge for those who score low on this measure. By administering these scales, more detailed analyses can be conducted if needed or desired.

Furthermore, I believe that the need for affiliation will be higher for those who feel more threatened. When an advertisement is framed by using pronouns such as "we" and "our", I think it will act as a cue in signaling that this is a way to be accepted by a collective and cause him or her to have a more positive attitude toward a product. So, the predicted effects may be due to what they represent, which is potential inclusion in some group. When viewing the product advertisement, participants may see that "Our drivers love it!", then perhaps what goes through the consumer's mind is "if this group loves it, then if I love it, then they (or people like them) would accept me. Therefore, they seem like a group and the product is associated with that group, which could lead the consumer to think that if he or she associates with the product then his or her affiliation needs will be better met.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### *Participants and Design*

The study employs a 2 (threat: low vs. high) X 2 (ad reference frame: inclusive pronouns vs. 3<sup>rd</sup> person; see Table 1) between-subjects design. Therefore, there were a total of four conditions which are as follows: low threat/"RAH" pronoun (N = 37), low threat/"we" pronoun (N = 35), high threat/"RAH" pronoun (N = 25), and high threat/"we" pronoun (N = 48). Data from 145 participants (both male and female) from Cleveland State University who were at least 18 years of age was collected. The majority of the sample was female (69%) and White/Caucasian (68.28%). Since the majority of these students were from the introductory psychology subject pool, they signed up to participant in this study through the online Sona system. Course credit and automatic entry into a raffle to win a \$20.00 gas card was provided as an incentive for participation. All participants were treated in accordance with the American Psychological Association ethical guidelines.

### *Measures and Materials*

The first individual difference measure presented was Budner's (1962) tolerance for ambiguity scale (see Appendix A). This included 16 items with a reported reliability of 0.64, and in this study the  $\alpha = .34$ . Participants rated each statement using a 7-point Likert scale. The response options ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Some examples of statements are, "There is really no such thing as a problem that can't be solved" and "A good job is one where what is to be done and how it is to be done are always clear".

The attachment style (see Appendix B) of each participant was measured using a conventional scale provided in Hazan and Shaver (1987). Participants were asked to select one of the three items that best describes them. Attachment style is assigned by examining which response was chosen. For example, someone with a secure attachment style would select the following item from the list, "I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me".

Kuder and Richardson's (1937) measure of affiliative tendency (see Appendix C) was also used in this study. The internal reliability coefficient that was reported for this measure was 0.80, and in this study the composite's reliability was roughly the same ( $\alpha = .74$ ). Participants responded to a series of statements using a 9-point Likert scale, with anchors ranging from "very strong agreement" to "very strong disagreement". Some of these example statements are "When I'm not feeling well, I would rather be with others than alone" and "I enjoy a good movie more than a big party".

To manipulate threat level, participants were given fabricated information about their alleged partner (see Appendixes D and E), the person supposedly assigned to be their “teacher”. In the high threat condition, participants were provided with a profile of a person who scores high on aggression measures. They were also shown the “teacher’s” response to an open-ended question that asks the “teacher” to describe him/herself (e.g., likes and dislikes). In the high threat condition, the response implied the “teacher” is easily frustrated (“One of my dislikes are slow drivers. I hate being stuck behind idiots. It REALLY pisses me off when I honk my horn and they slow down. It’s like they’re looking for fights and want to annoy me.”). In the low threat condition, aggression scores were very low, and the open-ended response suggested the “teacher” is patient and empathetic (“I dislike traffic, but I try not to let it get to me because I know there’s nothing I can do about it. I don’t understand aggressive drivers and think people who tailgate just make traffic situations worse. I guess everyone has their own way of dealing with things. I prefer just listening to the radio.”).

Participants were asked to use their computer to complete a survey of affective states (see Appendix F). This survey assessed their feelings and psychological state (e.g., perceived threat) and served as a manipulation check. This measure consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions and uses a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. In this study the reliability was .81. Examples of some of the words that are included are scared, nervous, afraid, and uneasy.

All participants viewed a product advertisement for an iPod (see Appendixes G and H). They were told to view the ad carefully enough so they could provide their impression of the product. The ad that participants viewed differed depending on the ad

frame condition. Participants in the inclusive pronoun condition were exposed to an ad that includes pronouns such as “we” and “our”, accompanied with a picture of a cohesive group of people endorsing the product in the advertisement. The use of pronouns such as “we” and “our” are intended to promote a sense of inclusiveness and belonging, and this assumption will be investigated in this study. For example, if a company uses the phrase “our drivers are satisfied” (compared to “Ford drivers are satisfied”), it is suspected that this framing will induce a sense of group membership and subtly help to address affiliation needs. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> person frame condition, the ad references the name of the “iPod manufacturer” instead of pronouns such as “we” and “our”, and the ad includes separate pictures of individual people who are endorsing the product (the number of individuals in this condition matches the number of people that are in the group in the “inclusive pronoun” condition).

Participants responded to statements about the product and advertisement, evaluating the iPod based on their attitude towards it. They also rated their willingness to purchase the device. These questions are available in Appendix I for ease of interpretation. Cronbach’s Alpha for this composite was .86. Participants rated each statement using a 7- point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Some example statements are “I would want to use this iPod” and “I think this iPod has an attractive design”.

Participants were also asked to respond to a few items for ad recognition purposes (see Appendix J). Participants rated each statement based on a 7-point Likert scale, and the response options range from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Some of the statements include items such as, “This advertisement had a picture of a close knit group



of people in it” and “When describing the iPod, the advertisement used (1) a lot of “we” statements (such as, “We know you’re going to love it! Our customers certainly do!”) or (2) a lot of “RAH” statements (such as, “RAH knows you’re going to love it! Customers certainly do!”)”.

Lastly, demographic questions (see Appendix I) were asked for descriptive purposes. Questions include the participant’s sex, age, race, academic year at Cleveland State University, and major.

### *Procedure*

This study was conducted in a psychology lab at the University, and sessions lasted for approximately one half-hour. Participants reported to the lab, were provided with an informed consent form, and were asked to sign it. Those who agreed to participate were seated at an individual cubicle in front of a computer where their responses were not visible to other participants. The study was conducted via computer, using a software program called MediaLab. All materials were presented to participants via computer, and responses were made and collected via computer. The majority of instructions were also presented to participants on their computer screen, but an experimenter was present to address any issues or answer any questions. Participants were able to work and respond at their own pace.

Upon arrival, participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. After signed consent forms were collected and participants received a copy of the consent form, all participants completed three individual difference measures. These included (in the order that the participants filled out) a tolerance for ambiguity

measure, an attachment style measure, and a measure for affiliative tendency (see Appendices A-C). These individual difference constructs are of interest to this study because they may moderate potential effects, and by administering these scales more detailed analyses can be conducted if needed or desired.

After the individual difference measures were completed, the threat manipulation was then administered and participants were given their partner profiles (see Appendices D and E). Participants were told that they were being given this information so they know more about one another before interacting. They were told that they would also be asked to fill out similar surveys *prior to the learning exercise* so that the “teacher” has access to this information about the “learner” as well.

Participants in the high threat condition were instructed that they would engage in a task for the study which concerns *learning and punishment*, while those in the low threat condition were instructed that the study concerns *learning and reinforcement* (note: italics in this section are used to indicate threat condition differences). Participants were led to believe they would eventually be taking part in a learning exercise, and had been “randomly” assigned the role of the “learner” who will be asked to complete a memorization task. They were told another participant who was in another room was randomly chosen to act as the “teacher”, and this participant would be responsible for administering the *punishment/reinforcement* to the “learner” *as/if* mistakes are made. In actuality, participants did not engage in the learning task, and were not paired with another participant.

After participants were told their role and given a profile of their alleged partner (see Appendices D and E), they were informed that the punishment would consist of

sound blasts. *When/if* the “learner” makes mistakes, the “teacher” will determine the level and duration of sound blasts to administer to facilitate performance by the “learner”. Participants were told that the sound blast could range from 1-150 decibels (dBs), with a duration ranging from 1-4 seconds, depending on what the “teacher” decides. To provide a basis of reference, participants were told normal conversation (3-5’) usually occurs at a level of 60-70dBs, a loud rock concert registers at 115dBs, pain begins at 125dBs, and a gun blast is typically 140dBs. Participants were also “ensured” that permanent hearing loss and death of hearing tissue would not occur because those outcomes require exposure to 180dBs of noise.

In addressing the concerns of the APA, we believe the use of deception in this study is absolutely necessary to preserve the naturalness of the participants’ behavior and would not cause more risk to the participant than everyday life events. In this study, the use of deception increases the impact of the experimental environment; making the experimental situation more realistic, in turn, increasing internal validity of a study (Association, A. P., 2003). It is more ethical to deceive participants than to actually expose them to a punishment of sound blasts.

Following the threat manipulation, participants completed the affective states measure (see Appendix F), viewed the iPod advertisement (see Appendixes G and H), evaluated the product (see Appendix I), completed an ad recognition measure (see Appendix J), and answered demographic questions (see Appendix K).

After all questions were answered, participants were informed that due to a computer malfunction that occurred with the “teacher’s computer”, the last task of the

study (learning exercise) had been canceled. Participants were told they would still receive full credit for their participation, were then thanked and debriefed.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

#### *Manipulation Checks*

Two factors were manipulated in this study, threat level and use of pronoun in the product advertisement. It is important to note the scale anchors since these might be counter intuitive. For example, the anchors for this statement ranged from “strongly agree” with an anchor of one to “strongly disagree” with an anchor of seven. This is a notable detail to remember when understanding the results. To test participant’s sensitivity to the use of different pronouns in the advertisement, a manipulation check was performed. A Chi-Square test was conducted to determine whether those in the “we” pronoun condition were more likely to respond more accurately than those in the “RAH” pronoun condition to the item “When describing the iPod, (1) a lot of we statements were used or (2) a lot of RAH statements were used”. The test was significant  $X^2(1, N = 145) = 29.14, p < .01$ , which suggests that those in the “we” pronoun condition were more likely to respond more accurately than those in the “RAH” pronoun condition (see Table 2 and Table 3). Therefore, participants were sensitive to the manipulation check and it was relatively successful. None of the subsequent analyses differed using a filter for

those who responded to this item correctly, so in all of the following analyses the full sample was used.

Each advertisement was the same except that the use of pronouns and picture(s) differed. In the “we” pronoun condition there was one picture of a cohesive group of people, and in the “RAH” pronoun condition there were separate pictures of individual profiles. The number of individuals in this condition matches the number of people that are in the group picture in the “we” pronoun condition. A manipulation check is necessary because the pictures differ in each pronoun condition. Therefore, to further test participant’s sensitivity to pronoun use in the advertisement, a one-way ANOVA was performed for the item “This advertisement had a picture of a close knit group of people in it.”. A significant effect for pronoun was found,  $F(1, 143) = 60.17, p < .01$ , such that those in the “we” pronoun condition agreed more with the previous statement than those in the “RAH” pronoun condition,  $M_s = 2.11 (SD = 1.40)$  vs.  $4.18 (SD = 1.82)$ , respectively (see Table 4 and Table 5).

The other factor that was manipulated in this study was threat level. To check whether this manipulation was successful or not, various affective and psychological states relative to threat were tested (e.g. “upset”, “scared”, “alert”, “nervous”, “jittery”, “afraid”, “anxious”, and “uneasy”). It was expected that those in the high threat condition would rate themselves higher on the states associated with threat than those in the low threat condition. An independent-samples *t* test analysis indicates that variances for those in the high threat condition and those in the low threat condition did not differ significantly from each other, except for one item (see Table 6). Results show that for the item “uneasy” the means do differ significantly ( $p = .05$ ), such that those in the high

threat condition felt more uneasy than those in the low threat condition ( $M_s = 4.82$  ( $SD = 1.94$ ) vs.  $4.94$  ( $SD = 1.68$ ). None of these items were significant performing a one-way, ANOVA's (see Table 7). However, using a one-tailed standard, which is justifiable using a priori predictions, only the item "alert" was significant  $F(1, 143) = 2.87, p = .05$ . The main effect for threat (low,  $N = 72$  vs. high,  $N = 73$ ) shows that those in the high threat condition felt more alert than those in the low threat condition  $M_s = 2.30$  ( $SD = 1.33$ ) vs.  $2.67$  ( $SDs = 1.27$ ) which is an expected pattern (see Table 8 and Table 9). Thus, there is some support that the threat level manipulation check was effective.

### *Primary Hypotheses*

To review, one of the primary hypotheses predicted a main effect for ad framing where participants in the inclusive pronoun condition would evaluate the product more positively. The other primary hypothesis predicted an interaction between ad framing and threat such that the predicted effect of inclusive pronouns on product attractiveness was expected to be significantly stronger in the high threat condition. To test positive evaluations of the product, comprehensive analyses were conducted using each product evaluation item as a dependent variable. There were eight items used to determine if there was a positive product evaluation, which are as follows: "I like this iPod.", "I think this iPod would be fun to own.", "I would want to use this iPod.", "I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands.", "I think this iPod seems durable.", "I think this iPod offers a good value for its price.", "I think this iPod has an attractive design.", and "I think this iPod has a good variety of features."

When conducting one-way ANOVA's with these dependent variables, there was only one significant main effect for pronoun that is reported in the next paragraph (see

Table 10 for all non significant results). However, there were two items that were close to significance which were “I would want to use this iPod” ( $p = .14$ ) and “I think this iPod would be fun to own” ( $p = .13$ ). When examining the nature of these items, both seemed to reflect the desire to own the iPod and therefore could be related. A correlation was performed and these two items were positively correlated  $r = .47, p < .01$  (see Table 11). Thus, because these items were related a composite was created representing participant’s desire to own the iPod. To test the hypothesis that those in the “we” pronoun condition felt more positive about the product, this composite was used as the dependent variable in a one-way ANOVA with a one-tailed standard. A significant effect for pronoun was found  $F(1, 143) = 3.12, p < .05$  and those in the “we” pronoun condition were more likely to agree that they felt more positively about the product expressed by a stronger desire to own it than those in the “RAH” pronoun condition ( $M_s = 3.19 (SD = 1.42)$  vs.  $3.65 (SD = 1.66)$ , respectively, see Table 12 and Table 13). Therefore, there is some support for the first hypothesis.

Furthermore, a one-way ANOVA was performed on the only significant item “I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands.” And found a significant effect for pronoun  $F(1, 143) = 4.43, p < .05$  (see Table 14 and Table 15). Those in the “RAH” pronoun condition were more likely to agree with the statement that the iPod was priced reasonably compared to other brands than those in the “we” pronoun condition ( $M_s = 2.44 (SD = 1.44)$  vs.  $2.96 (SD = 1.53)$ , respectively). This effect was unexpected and will be discussed later in the discussion section.

To test the second hypothesis, a 2 (low threat vs. high threat) X 2 (“RAH” pronoun vs. “we” pronoun) ANOVA using the composite for positive product evaluations



expressed by the desire to own the iPod was performed. There was not a significant interaction ( $p = .70$ ) between ad framing and threat in which effect of inclusive pronouns on product attractiveness was significantly stronger in the high threat condition. To be thorough, all other positive evaluation items were used as the dependent variables in two-way ANOVA's and there were not any significant interactions (see Table 16 for all nonsignificant results).

### *Exploratory Analyses*

In addition to the primary hypotheses, a lot of additional analyses could be performed. Some of these analyses will be discussed in this section. One analysis conducted was a 2 (low threat vs. high threat) X 2 (“RAH” pronoun vs. “we” pronoun) ANOVA using the item “I would buy this iPod” as the dependent variable. This item can be considered the participant's intent to purchase the product rather than an evaluation of the product. Results show a main effect for threat  $F(1, 141) = 3.88, p = .05$  (see Table 17 and Table 18). Those in the high threat condition agreed more with the previous statement more than those in the low threat condition ( $M_s = 2.55 (SE = .19)$  vs.  $3.07 (SE = .18)$ , respectively).

Another exploratory analysis examined the participant's perceptions of the advertisement. A two-way ANOVA with the dependent variable “This advertisement was difficult to read” was performed and was nonsignificant ( $p = .07$ ). However, because of the expected pattern of results, when using a one-tailed test standard results showed a significant main effect for threat  $F(1, 141) = 3.34, p < .05$  (see Table 19 and Table 20). As predicted, those in the low threat condition agreed more with the previous statement than those in the high threat condition ( $M_s = 5.22 (SE = .19)$  vs.  $5.72 (SE = .20)$ ,

respectively). Other ad recognition items were analyzed as the dependent variable (e.g. “This advertisement sounded professional”, “This advertisement reported the gigabyte memory and screen size”, “The iPod model was a touch screen”, “The make of the iPod was RAH”, “The iPod came in a variety of colors”, and “This iPod offered a variety of features”) and there was only one significant finding (see Table 21). There was a significant main effect for pronoun when a two-way ANOVA with the dependent variable “The make of the iPod was RAH” was performed  $F(1, 141) = 3.89, p = .05$  (see Table 22 and Table 23). Those in the “RAH” pronoun condition were more likely to agree with this statement than those in the “we” pronoun condition ( $M_s = 1.18 (SE = .11)$  vs.  $1.47 (SE = .10)$ , respectively). When performing an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with the product evaluation items as the dependent variables with the ad recognition composite as the covariate, one significant finding emerged (see Table 24). A significant main effect for pronoun was found for the item “I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands”  $F(1, 140) = 5.78, p < .05$ . Thus, showing that factors are still significantly related to the dependent variable after the variation due to the covariates has been removed.

Individual difference measures were used as questionnaires in this study and were utilized as covariates in ANOVA’s with the product evaluation items as the dependent variables (e.g. tolerance for ambiguity, attachment style and affiliative tendency). Tolerance for ambiguity was the first individual difference measure in this study. A 2 (threat: high vs. low) X 2 (pronoun: we vs. RAH) ANCOVA was performed on the item “I would buy this iPod.” Along with a tolerance for ambiguity composite as a covariate. A significant main effect for threat was found  $F(1, 140) = 4.26, p < .05$  (see Table 25 and

Table 26). When performing 2 (threat: high vs. low) X 2 (pronoun: we vs. RAH) ANCOVA's with the tolerance for ambiguity composite as the covariate and the product evaluation items as the dependent variables, one significant finding emerged (see Table 27). The item "I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands" revealed a main effect for pronoun  $F(1, 140) = 4.96, p < .05$ .

When considering attachment style, a one-way ANOVA was performed with the composite as the dependent variable and threat as the independent variable (see Table 28 and Table 29). A significant main effect for threat was not found ( $p = .19$ ). Therefore, there was not a difference in attachment styles across the condition.

Lastly, 2 (threat: high vs. low) X 2 (pronoun: we vs. RAH) ANCOVA's with the affiliative tendency composite as the covariate and the product evaluation items as the dependent variables were performed (see Table 30). "I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands" was the only significant result, with a main effect for pronoun  $F(1, 140) = 4.85, p < .05$ .

The feelings and psychological states of the participants also provided an opportunity for exploratory analysis. A correlation matrix revealed significant findings at the .05 level (2-tailed) for some product evaluation items and some affective states (see Table 31). These results, among the others, offer interesting discussion in the next section. A series of 2 (threat: high vs. low) X 2 (pronoun: we vs. RAH) ANCOVA's with the affective states composite as the covariate and the product evaluation items as the dependent variables were performed and there was one significant finding (see Table 32). The item "I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands" was the only significant result, with a main effect for pronoun  $F(1, 140) = 4.95, p < .05$ .

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

There were two similar advertisements used in this study. Depending on the random condition each participant was placed in, determined which ad that they viewed. The advertisements only differed on two factors: the use of pronouns and picture(s). The way in which the ad was framed was either in inclusive pronoun language using pronouns such as “we” and “our” or was framed in third person pronouns using the iPod manufacturer name “RAH”. In the “we” pronoun condition there was one picture of a cohesive group of people, and in the “RAH” pronoun condition there were separate pictures of individual profiles. The number of individuals in this condition matches the number of people that are in the group picture in the “we” pronoun condition. Why would these differences matter? Perhaps a sense of affiliation leads to positive evaluations of the iPod. We are social animals by nature, which is a broad lesson that is being applied to the domain of consumer behavior in this study.

In this study there was some support for the primary hypotheses. To test the hypothesis that those in the “we” pronoun condition felt more positive about the product, a desire to own the iPod composite was used when performing one-way ANOVA.

Results showed that those in the “we” pronoun condition were more likely to agree that they felt more positively about the product expressed by a stronger desire to own it than those in the “RAH” pronoun condition. Thus, there was a main effect for ad framing where participants in the inclusive pronoun condition evaluated the product more positively.

Results also showed that participants in the “we” pronoun condition were sensitive to the inclusive pronoun language and correctly reported that these inclusive pronouns were used in the advertisement. Hence, these findings have implications for marketers in that subtle differences in pronoun usage in an advertisement have an effect on consumers. Several studies mentioned earlier support this notion. Past research upholds this theory that framing messages impacts consumers. Brewer and Gardner (1996) demonstrated this by using reference groups to prime participants in order to activate either “we-us” concepts or “they-them” concepts and collective self-identifications were successfully activated in the we-prime condition. Thus, different levels of inclusiveness conceptually define distinct construals of the self. This example illustrates that certain pronouns are perceived differently and carry distinctive meaning. Furthermore, participants in the “we” pronoun condition were more likely to see a picture of a close knit group of people in the advertisement. This finding also suggests that participants in this condition are not only sensitive to inclusive pronoun language, but may also be more likely to see a cohesive group of people rather than individuals because they were primed with inclusive pronouns in the text of the advertisement.

An additional interesting finding emerged when examining a product evaluation item. For example, why were those in the “RAH” pronoun condition more likely to think

that the iPod was priced reasonably compared to other brands than those in the “we” pronoun condition? This particular pattern of results was counter to what was expected. It could be assumed that when viewing the advertisement, participants could be placing more or less weight on the picture(s) depending on whether or not they view the people as a cohesive group or as individuals. Furthermore, if participants in the “we” pronoun condition are viewing the picture with a group of people this could explain why there was a main effect for pronoun. Participants might be suspicious in their thinking. If this is the case, it could be a result of thinking that the iPod is more expensive because it is popular product due to the picture of a group of people that endorse it rather than individuals. Also, participants could be considering race and SES in relation to the physical appearance of the people in the picture(s). For example, in the “RAH” condition people might be stereotyping by thinking that since there are people of different race, the iPod may be more affordable since people with a average or low SES are represented in the pictures.

Exploratory analyses produced interesting findings and patterns. When considering whether or not a participant reported that they would purchase the product, results showed that those in the high threat condition were more likely to agree that they would buy the iPod than those in the low threat condition. One potential explanation for this finding could be related to threat and materialism. As stated earlier, threat may increase consumption of goods or products by providing something to decrease the thought of uncertainty. So, it is possible that when feeling threatened, purchasing a product may act as an anxiety buffer for thoughts of uncertainty.

When examining participant's perceptions of the advertisement, it was reported that those in the low threat condition agreed more with the statement "This advertisement was difficult to read" than those in the high threat condition. This finding is unexpected and counter-intuitive. One possible explanation for the finding may be related to more feelings of threat experienced by those in the high threat condition. These participants might be more consciously aware of what they are looking at or may be feeling more alert and therefore are more likely to pay attention to what is in the ad, thus finding it easier to read because they are looking at it more closely. Those in the "RAH" pronoun condition were more likely to agree with the statement "The make of the iPod was RAH" than those in the "we" pronoun condition. This could be a result of the pronoun condition that the participant was in. Hence, participants in the "RAH" pronoun condition could be agreeing more with the previous statement because they are simply seeing this third person pronoun word repeated in the advertisement more than those in the "we" pronoun condition.

It is important to consider individual difference measures that may impact the consumer's purchasing process. Both tolerance for ambiguity and affiliative tendency showed that the pronoun condition is still significantly related to the item "I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands" after the variation due to the covariates has been removed. Furthermore, this finding shows that the degree to which a consumer is experiencing a particular feeling, in this case threat, in conjunction with their tolerance level for ambiguity which may influence his/her buying behavior.

Determining whether or not affective states influence a participant's evaluation of the product and intent to purchase it were examined. Why is it that participants that were

exposed to the low threat and “we” pronoun condition felt anxious? Also, why did participants in the high threat and “RAH” pronoun condition feel anxious? A correlation matrix showed that the more upset the participant was the more they liked the iPod, and as the participant’s level of nervousness increased they were less likely to think that the iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands and were less likely to report that they would buy the iPod. Thus, patterns suggest that specific types of feelings matter and are different. This was an anticipatory correlation because these items were lower level intensity items compared to the other items that did not reveal significant effects.

When considering the distinction between the two types of feelings in this study, feeling upset might relate to evaluations of the product while feelings of nervousness might relate to intention. These findings support theories behind previous work such as TMT, which examines the implicit emotional reactions of people when confronted with the psychological terror of knowing they will eventually die. Therefore, feeling upset may relate to concepts like threat and uncertainty. If nervousness relates to the purchase decision and buying intentions, inducing nervousness may be beneficial from a marketer’s perspective. One implication of threat could be that it makes people want to buy more. Results in this study showed that those in the high threat condition felt more alert than those in the low threat condition. For example, stores could potentially benefit from using scarcity strategies. By communicating a “while supplies last” theme in sales, this could activate feelings of threat among consumers. Hence, this could possibly increase sales by getting consumers in the store to alleviate feelings of threat that the product will no longer be available at the sale price if they do not get their quickly.



To provide additional support for these findings and implications, it was suggested that those in the high threat condition felt more alert than those in the low threat condition. This finding aligns the assumption that participants in the high threat condition should feel more threatened and experience stronger feelings associated with uncertainty.

## CHAPTER V

### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Some limitations to this research may be a result of the visual imagery of the pronoun condition. For example, one component of each advertisement was the picture. In this study, there were only two advertisements; the “we” pronoun condition with a cohesive group picture and the “RAH” advertisement with individual profiles of consumers. This could be considered a major hypothesis in future studies that consider print advertisements as the medium. Having a variety of different pictures of product endorsers in the ads will allow the researcher to compare differences due to visual representations of the end users of the product. Would a cohesive group of people portrayed in the ad have the same impact on participants? Some people may react differently to the picture. For example, they may react negatively because they could be non-conformists that are independents which could lead to less positive evaluations of the product. Therefore, participant’s motives could also be beneficial to assess, because how they react to the picture that is shown could depend on their motives. In addition to this concept, another limitation to this study was that the people depicted in the ads were strangers. This could have implications for the affiliative tendencies. Past research has

shown that people under threat are more likely to affiliate with similar others. So, future research could use pictures of similar social groups in the ads. For example, if the majority of the sample will be college students from a particular university, then the pictures of people represented in the ad can be students from that campus. Thus, enabling participants to be able to identify with a similar social group could increase affiliative tendencies especially in the ‘we’ pronoun condition.

Other limitations that may effect generalizability involves the threat manipulation of the study. One limitation is that the threat manipulation might not have been as effective or strong because the task that the participants were told they would be participating in was anticipated and not actual. Therefore, the threat that was induced was only projected. Future research should make participants experience an actual threat in the present. Thus, the task that would produce feelings of threat would be more certain and likely to occur at that time. In addition to this weakness, there was only one type of threat manipulated, which was aversion. Therefore, this study only considered negative consequences of receiving sound blasts that a participant might experience. One suggestion for future research is to have another type of threat manipulated, such as threat to a person’s ego. Having more than one type of threat manipulation will allow the researcher to compare conditions across threat types and allow the opportunity to determine if individual differences influence different types of threat.

Given the number of analyses run, there is a valid concern that the effects that were found were due to chance (Type I errors). However, since the significant effects were often in the predicted direction and consistent with theory and past research of others, one could argue that the likelihood that these effects were due to chance rather

than the experimental manipulation is reduced. Regardless, it would be advisable to conduct future research and to provide converging evidence prior to wholeheartedly endorsing the explanations and implications of the current work.

This preliminary line of research should be extended and be used to frame a wide range of persuasive communications (e.g., health-related messages; political speeches; advertisements) so the audience is more receptive. Future studies should continue to explore the relationship between threat and affiliation within the consumer realm.

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## APPENDIX



## Appendix A

### *Tolerance for ambiguity*

Please respond to the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with them. Use the following rating scale that best represents your evaluation of the item.

- 1 Strongly agree
  - 2 Moderately agree
  - 3 Slightly agree
  - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
  - 5 Slightly disagree
  - 6 Moderately disagree
  - 7 Strongly disagree
- 
1. An expert who doesn't come up with a definite answer probably doesn't know too much.
  2. I would like to live in a foreign country for a while.
  3. There is really no such thing as a problem that can't be solved.
  4. People who fit their lives to a schedule probably miss most of the joy of living.
  5. A good job is one where what is to be done and how it is to be done are always clear.
  6. It is more fun to tackle a complicated problem than to solve a simple one.
  7. In the long run it is possible to get more done by tackling small, simple problems rather than large and complicated ones.
  8. Often the most interesting and stimulating people are those who don't mind being different and original.
  9. What we are used to is always preferable to what is unfamiliar.
  10. People who insist upon a yes or no answer just don't know how complicated things really are.

11. A person who leads an even, regular life in which few surprises or unexpected happenings arise really has a lot to be grateful for.
12. Many of our most important decisions are based upon insufficient information.
13. I like parties where I know most of the people more than ones where all or most of the people are complete strangers.
14. Teachers or supervisors who hand out vague assignments give one a chance to show initiative and originality.
15. The sooner we all acquire similar values and ideals the better.
16. A good teacher is one who makes you wonder about your way of looking at things.

## Appendix B

### *Attachment style*

Please select which of the following best describes your feelings.

1. I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.
2. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.
3. I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to merge completely with another person, and this desire sometimes scares people away.

## Appendix C

### *Affiliative Tendency*

Please use the following scale to indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements:

- 1 Very strong agreement
- 2 Strong agreement
- 3 Moderate agreement
- 4 Slight agreement
- 5 Neither agreement nor disagreement
- 6 Slight disagreement
- 7 Moderate disagreement
- 8 Strong disagreement
- 9 Very strong disagreement

1. When I'm introduced to someone new, I don't make much effort to be liked.
2. I prefer a leader who is friendly and easy to talk to over one who is more aloof and respected by his followers.
3. When I'm not feeling well, I would rather be with others than alone.
4. If I had to choose between the two, I would rather be considered intelligent than sociable.
5. Having friends is very important to me.
6. I would rather express open appreciation to others most of the time than reserve such feelings for special occasions.
7. I enjoy a good movie more than a big party.
8. I like to make as many friends as I can.
9. I would rather travel abroad starting my trip alone than with one or two friends.
10. After I meet someone I did not get along with, I spend time thinking about arranging another, more pleasant meeting.
11. I think that fame is more rewarding than friendship.
12. I prefer independent work to cooperative effort.
13. I think that any experience is more significant when shared with a friend.
14. When I see someone I know walking down the street, I am usually the first one to say hello.
15. I prefer the independence which comes from lack of attachments to the good and warm feelings associated with close ties.
16. I join clubs because it is such a good way of making friends.
17. I would rather serve in a position to which my friends had nominated me than be appointed to an office by a distant national headquarters.
18. I don't believe in showing overt affection toward friends.

19. I would rather go right to sleep at night than talk to someone else about the day's activities.
20. I have very few close friends.
21. When I'm with people I don't know, it doesn't matter much to me if they like me or not.
22. If I had to choose, I would rather have strong attachments to my friends than have them regard me as witty and clever.
23. I prefer individual activities such as crossword puzzles to group ones such as bridge or canasta.
24. I am much more attracted to warm, open people than I am to standoffish ones.
25. I would rather read an interesting book or go to the movies than spend time with friends.
26. When traveling, I prefer meeting people to simply enjoying the scenery or going places alone.

## Appendix D

### *Alleged Partner Profile (High Threat Condition)*

The profile of your partner is from responses they have provided that describe themselves and is as follows:

“One of my dislikes are slow drivers. I hate being stuck behind idiots. It REALLY pisses me off when I honk my horn and they slow down. It’s like their looking for fights and want to annoy me.”.

Overall, your partner scores high on aggression and is easily frustrated.

## Appendix E

### *Alleged Partner Profile (Low Threat Condition)*

The profile of your partner is from responses they have provided that describe themselves and is as follows:

“I dislike traffic, but I try not to let it get to me because I know there’s nothing I can do about it. I don’t understand aggressive drivers and think people who tailgate just make traffic situations worse. I guess everyone has their own way of dealing with things. I prefer just listening to the radio.”.

Overall, your partner scores low on aggression, is patient and empathetic.

## Appendix F

### *Affective States*

Please use the following scale to indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, at the present moment.

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Moderately agree
- 3 Slightly agree
- 4 Neither agree nor disagree
- 5 Slightly disagree
- 6 Moderately disagree
- 7 Strongly disagree

1. upset
2. strong
3. scared
4. alert
5. nervous
6. jittery
7. afraid
8. anxious
9. uneasy



## Appendix G

*iPod Advertisement: "we/our" source*

Introducing the all-new 2009

### RAH iPod touch



**Available in these colors:**

**Customer Rating** ★★★★★

Value for price 5.0 Durability 5.0

Features 5.0 Ease of Use 5.0

**Starting at**

**\$189.99**

Contoured, polished stainless steel design

Built-in speaker

Multitouch interface

Gorgeous 3.5" widescreen display

Wi-Fi web browsing

Long battery life

Measures just over 0.3" thin and weighs only 4.05 oz

32 GB internal flash memory stores up to 7,000 songs, up to 40,000 digital photos, or up to 40 hours of video

Our customers love it!



Our customers believe it is easy to use!

Our customers think it is fun entertainment!

We have engineered an iPod that unveils an altogether unprecedented level of achievement because of its new technology, design, and performance.

We offer all kinds of features, plus the best warranty you can find.

We know you're going to love it! Our customers certainly do!

Play music, watch video and surf the Internet with the touch of a finger. The revolutionary multitouch interface is easy to use and the built-in wi-fi comes with a Safari Web browser. Music, movies, games and the Internet — with a built-in speaker and groundbreaking technologies such as accelerometer, and 3D graphics, RAH iPod touch puts an amazing entertainment experience in the palm of your hand.

## Appendix H

### *iPod Advertisement: "RAH manufacturer" source*

Introducing the all-new 2009

## RAH iPod touch



**Starting at**  
**\$189.99**

Contoured, polished stainless steel design

Built-in speaker

Multitouch interface

Gorgeous 3.5" widescreen display

Wi-Fi web browsing

Long battery life

Measures just over 0.3" thin and weighs only 4.05 oz

32 GB internal flash memory stores up to 7,000 songs, up to 40,000 digital photos, or up to 40 hours of video


**Available in these colors:**

**Customer Rating** ★★★★★

Value for price 5.0 Durability 5.0

Features 5.0 Ease of Use 5.0

Customers love it!



Customers believe it is easy to use!



Customers think it is fun entertainment!



RAH has engineered an iPod that unveils an altogether unprecedented level of achievement because of its new technology, design, and performance.

RAH offers all kinds of features, plus the best warranty you can find.

RAH knows you're going to love it! Customers certainly do!

Play music, watch video and surf the Internet with the touch of a finger. The revolutionary multitouch interface is easy to use and the built-in wi-fi comes with a Safari Web browser. Music, movies, games and the Internet — with a built-in speaker and groundbreaking technologies such as accelerometer, and 3D graphics, RAH iPod touch puts an amazing entertainment experience in the palm of your hand.

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## Appendix I

### *Product Evaluation*

Please respond to the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with them. Use the following rating scale that best represents your evaluation of the item.

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Moderately agree
- 3 Slightly agree
- 4 Neither agree nor disagree
- 5 Slightly disagree
- 6 Moderately disagree
- 7 Strongly disagree

1. I like this iPod.
2. I think this iPod would be fun to own.
3. I would want to use this iPod.
4. I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands.
5. I think this iPod seems durable.
6. I think this iPod offers a good value for its price.
7. I think this iPod has an attractive design.
8. I think this iPod has a good variety of features.
9. I would buy this iPod.

## Appendix J

### *Ad Recognition Items*

Please respond to the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with them. Use the following rating scale that best represents your evaluation of the item.

- 1 Strongly agree
  - 2 Moderately agree
  - 3 Slightly agree
  - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
  - 5 Slightly disagree
  - 6 Moderately disagree
  - 7 Strongly disagree
- 
1. This advertisement was difficult to read.
  2. This advertisement sounded professional.
  3. This advertisement had a picture of a close knit group of people in it.
  4. This advertisement reported the gigabyte memory and screen size for the iPod.
  5. The iPod model was a touch screen.
  6. The make of the iPod was RAH.
  7. The iPod came in a variety of colors.
  8. This iPod offered a variety of features.
  9. When describing the iPod, the advertisement used:
    - a. A lot of “we” statements (such as, “We know you’re going to love it! Our customers certainly do!”).
    - b. A lot of “RAH” statements (such as, “RAH knows you’re going to love it! Customers certainly do!”).

## Appendix K

### *Demographic Questions*

Please choose the best option or provide a response to the following questions.

1. What is your sex?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
2. What is your age?

\*P's entered in their age
  
3. What is your race?
  - a. White or Caucasian
  - b. Black or African American
  - c. American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - d. Hispanic or Latino
  - e. Asian or Pacific Islander
  - f. Other
  
  - g. Choose not to respond
  
4. What academic year are you?
  - a. Freshman
  - b. Sophomore
  - c. Junior
  - d. Senior
  - e. 5<sup>th</sup> year Senior
  - f. non-degree student
  - g. post-baccalaureate student
  - h. Other
  
5. What is your major?

\* P's entered in their age

Table I. Descriptives and Frequencies: Study Design

Condition (Threat by Pronoun)	Frequency	Percent
Low-RAH	37	25.5%
Low-we	35	24.1%
High-Rah	25	17.2%
High-we	48	33.1%

N=145

Table II. Chi Square Test with item: “When describing the iPod, a lot of (1) we statements were used or (2) a lot of RAH statements were used”

Response Option	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
(1)	105	72.5	32.5
(2)	40	72.5	-32.5

Table III. Chi-Square Test Statistics with item: “When describing the iPod, a lot of (a) we statements were used or (b) a lot of RAH statements were used”

“When describing the iPod, a lot of (a) we statements were used or (b) a lot of RAH statements were used”	
Chi-Square	29.14
df	1
Asymp. Sig	.001

Table IV. Descriptive Statistics for One-way ANOVA with DV: “This advertisement had a picture of a close knit group of people in it.”

Pronoun Condition	N	Mean	SD
RAH	62	4.18	1.82
we	83	2.11	1.40

Table V. One-way ANOVA with DV: “This advertisement had a picture of a close knit group of people in it.”: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for pronoun condition

Source	df	F	P value
Between Groups	1	60.17	.001
Within Groups	143		

Table VI. Independent Samples T-test with affective states: Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

Affective State	F	P value
Upset	.55	.46
Scared	.98	.32
Alert	.12	.73
Nervous	.41	.52
Jittery	1.76	.19
Afraid	.01	.91
Anxious	.52	.47
Uneasy	4.10	.05*

Note. \*Significant at the .05 level

Table VII. Nonsignificant One-way ANOVA's with affective states as the DV and threat as the IV:

Affective State	P value
Upset	.95
Scared	.72
Alert	.09
Nervous	.95
Jittery	.64
Afraid	.85
Anxious	.64
Uneasy	.69

Table VIII. Descriptive Statistics for One-way ANOVA with DV: "alert"

Threat Condition	N	Mean	SD
Low	72	2.67	1.27
High	73	2.30	1.33

Table IX. One-way ANOVA (one-tailed) with DV: "alert": Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for threat condition

Source	df	F	P value
Between Groups	1	2.87	.05
Within Groups	143		

Table X. Nonsignificant One-way ANOVA's with product evaluation items as the DV and threat as the IV:

Product Evaluation Item	P value
I like this iPod	.50
I think this iPod would be fun to own	.13
I would want to use this iPod	.14
I think this iPod seems durable	.42
I think this iPod offers a good value for its price	.81
I think this iPod has an attractive design	.71
I think this iPod has a good variety of features	.29

Table XI. Correlation Matrix: Product Evaluation Items

Product Evaluation Items			
		“I would want to use this iPod”	‘I think this iPod would be fun to own’
“I would want to use this iPod”	Pearson Correlation		.471**
	P value		.001
‘I think this iPod would be fun to own’	Pearson Correlation	.471**	
	P value	.001	

Note. \*\*Correlation significant at the .01 level

Table XII. Descriptive Statistics for One-way ANOVA with DV: “Desire to own Composite”

Pronoun Condition	N	Mean	SD
RAH	62	3.65	1.66
we	83	3.19	1.42

Table XIII. One-way ANOVA (one-tailed) with DV: “Desire to own Composite” Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for pronoun condition

Source	df	F	P value
Between Groups	1	3.12	.04
Within Groups	143		



Table XIV. Descriptive Statistics for One-way ANOVA with DV: “I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands.”

Pronoun Condition	N	Mean	SD
RAH	62	2.44	1.44
we	83	2.96	1.53

Table XV. One-way ANOVA with DV: “I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands.”: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for pronoun

Source	df	F	P value
Between Groups	1	4.43	.04
Within Groups	143		

Table XVI. Nonsignificant Interactions for Two-way ANOVA’s with product evaluation items as the DV:

Product Evaluation Item	P value (Interaction)
Desire to own composite	.70
I like this iPod	.54
I think this iPod would be fun to own	.55
I would want to use this iPod	.99
I think this iPod seems durable	.44
I think this iPod offers a good value for its price	.51
I think this iPod has an attractive design	.18
I think this iPod has a good variety of features	.69
I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands	.46

Table XVII. Descriptive Statistics for Two-way ANOVA with DV: “I would buy this iPod.”

Condition (Threat by Pronoun)	N	Mean	SD
Low-RAH	37	3.11	1.67
Low-we	35	3.03	1.77
High-RAH	25	2.48	1.33
Low-we	48	2.63	1.23

Table XVIII. Two-way ANOVA with DV: “I would buy this iPod.”: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	df	F	P value
Threat	1	3.88	.05
Pronoun	1	.02	.90
Threat*Pronoun	1	.18	.67
Error	141		

Table XIX. Descriptive Statistics for One-way ANOVA with DV: “This advertisement was difficult to read.”

Threat Condition	N	Mean	SE
Low	72	5.22	.19
High	73	5.72	.20

Table XX. One-way (one-tailed) ANOVA with DV: “This advertisement was difficult to read.”: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for threat

Source	df	F	P value
Between Groups	1	3.34	.04
Within Groups	141		

Table XXI. Two-way ANOVA’s with ad recognition items as the DV’s

Ad Recognition Item	P value (threat)	P value (pronoun)	P value (interaction)
This advertisement was difficult to read	.07	.36	.58
This advertisement sounded professional	.15	.48	.56
This advertisement reported the gigabyte memory and screen size for the iPod	.83	.88	.56
The iPod model was a touch screen	.91	.86	.87
The make of the iPod was RAH	.71	.05*	.57
The iPod came in a variety of colors	.14	.16	.26
This iPod offered a variety of features	.94	.75	.46

Note. \*Significant effect for pronoun

Table XXII. Descriptive Statistics for Two-way ANOVA with DV: “The make of this iPod was RAH.”

Condition (Threat by Pronoun)	N	Mean	SD
Low-RAH	37	1.19	.57
Low-we	35	1.40	1.01
High-RAH	25	1.16	.47
Low-we	48	1.54	1.11

Table XXIII. Two-way ANOVA with DV: “The make of this iPod was RAH.”: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	df	F	P value
Threat	1	.14	.71
Pronoun	1	3.89	.05
Threat*Pronoun	1	.32	.57
Error	141		

Table XXIV. Two-way ANCOVA’s with product evaluation items as the DV and ad recognition composite as the covariate:

Product Evaluation Item	P value (threat)	P value (pronoun)	P value (interaction)
I like this iPod	.32	.74	.55
I think this iPod would be fun to own	.16	.58	.55
I would want to use this iPod	.34	.53	.10
I think this iPod seems durable	.37	.96	.44
I think this iPod offers a good value for its price	.51	.48	.51
I think this iPod has an attractive design	.47	.23	.16
I think this iPod has a good variety of features	.81	.66	.67
I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands	.40	.02*	.46

Note. \*Significant effect for adrecogcomp

Table XXV. Descriptive Statistics for Two-way ANCOVA with DV: “I would buy this iPod.” along with tolerance for ambiguity composite covariate

Condition (Threat by Pronoun)	N	Mean	SD
Low-RAH	37	3.11	1.70
Low-we	35	3.03	1.77
High-RAH	25	2.48	1.33
Low-we	48	2.63	1.30

Table XXVI. Two-way ANCOVA with DV: “I would buy this iPod.” along with tolerance for ambiguity composite covariate: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	df	F	P value
Tolambcomp	1	3.71	.06
Threat	1	4.26	.04
Pronoun	1	.10	.75
Threat*Pronoun	1	.11	.74
Error	140		

Table XXVII. Two-way ANCOVA’s with product evaluation items as the DV and tolerance for ambiguity composite as the covariate:

Product Evaluation Item	P value (threat)	P value (pronoun)	P value (interaction)
I like this iPod	.38	.77	.61
I think this iPod would be fun to own	.21	.26	.60
I would want to use this iPod	.41	.23	.97
I think this iPod seems durable	.42	.61	.47
I think this iPod offers a good value for its price	.62	.98	.54
I think this iPod has an attractive design	.55	.56	.16
I think this iPod has a good variety of features	.87	.36	.65
I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands	.42	.03*	.47

Note. \*Significant effect for tolambcomp

Table XXVIII. Descriptive Statistics for One-way ANOVA with DV: attachment style

Threat Condition	N	Mean	SE
Low	72	1.67	.67
High	73	1.52	.70

Table XXIX. One-way (one-tailed) ANOVA with DV: attachment style: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for threat

Source	df	F	P value
Between Groups	1	1.72	.19
Within Groups	143		

Table XXX. Two-way ANCOVA's with product evaluation items as the DV and affiliative tendency composite as the covariate:

Product Evaluation Item	P value (threat)	P value (pronoun)	P value (interaction)
I like this iPod	.43	.70	.55
I think this iPod would be fun to own	.22	.26	.56
I would want to use this iPod	.43	.18	.98
I think this iPod seems durable	.43	.68	.45
I think this iPod offers a good value for its price	.63	.95	.52
I think this iPod has an attractive design	.59	.64	.18
I think this iPod has a good variety of features	.91	.33	.69
I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands	.43	.03*	.46

Note. \*Significant effect for afftendcomp

Table XXXI. Correlation Matrix: Affective States and Product Evaluation Items

Affective State		Product Evaluation Items			
		"I like this iPod"	"I would want to use this iPod"	"I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands"	"I would buy this iPod"
Upset	Pearson Correlation	.16*			
	P value	.05			
Nervous	Pearson Correlation			-.16*	-.19*
	P value			.05	.03

Note. \*Correlation significant at the .05 level

Table XXXII. Nonsignificant Two-way ANCOVA's with product evaluation items as the DV and affective state composite as the covariate:

Product Evaluation Item	P value (threat)	P value (pronoun)	P value (interaction)
I like this iPod	.47	.61	.47
I think this iPod would be fun to own	.25	.20	.48
I would want to use this iPod	.46	.19	.89
I think this iPod seems durable	.46	.52	.43
I think this iPod offers a good value for its price	.63	.89	.54
I think this iPod has an attractive design	.60	.66	.19
I think this iPod has a good variety of features	.91	.30	.70
I think this iPod is priced reasonably compared to other brands	.39	.03*	.54

*Note.* \*Significant effect for affstcomp