
Chart toppers: most cited JCP articles since 2011

What are consumer psychologists writing about?

We looked up the most cited articles from JCP since 2011 to find out what topics have been on consumer psychologists' minds for the past three years. Among other things, we've been thinking about...

- Applications of neuroscience in consumer decision making domain
- The impact of sensory attributes on consumers' evaluation of brands and products
- Our relationship with money, food and happiness
- Consumers' relationships with brands
- The impact of ownership on brand and product evaluations
- Subliminal and nonconscious aspects of consumer decision making

Have a look through the articles below to see what you might have missed out!

Updates from SCP

- The publications committee of the Society for Consumer Psychology is pleased to announce that [Amna Kirmani will be the new editor](#) of the Journal of Consumer Psychology. Amna will start processing new manuscripts on January 1, 2015. Connie Pechmann, who has served as editor since January 1, 2012, will continue processing revisions through June 30, 2015. After that date Amna will process all manuscripts.
 - SCP announces a **Call for Nominations for an Early Career Award** which recognizes distinguished scientific contribution to consumer psychology by a researcher within 8 years of receiving their PhD. Please send a letter of nomination for either award, including the Candidate's curriculum vitae if possible and two additional letters of reference, to Bob Wyer, Chair, Scientific Affairs Committee by August 22, 2014. For more information, please visit myscp.org
 - The annual American Psychological Association (APA) Convention is being held from August 6-10, 2014 in Washington, DC. SCP-APA Conference co-chairs, Katherine Burson (University of Michigan) and Andrew Gershoff (University of Texas), have arranged an exciting track of conference presentations for SCP, Division 23 of APA. A featured speaker is **Maya Shankar from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy**, Executive Office of the President. More information on conference registration and the program is available [here](#).
 - The [call for papers](#) for the **Annual 2015 Winter Conference** is now open. The conference will be held at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Phoenix, Arizona on February 26-28, 2015. The deadline for submissions is Friday, August 29, 2014 (midnight PST). [The conference website is now open](#) - and don't forget to sign up as a reviewer!
 - With the next academic year drawing nearer, don't forget to check out the [SCP/JCP Consumer Psychology PhD syllabus](#) as a resource for planning your courses.
-

Top 20 cited articles published since 2011 in Scopus

1. If money doesn't make you happy, then you probably aren't spending it right

Dunn, E.W., Gilbert, D.T., Wilson, T.D.

The relationship between money and happiness is surprisingly weak, which may stem in part from the way people spend it. Drawing on empirical research, we propose eight principles designed to help consumers get more happiness for their money. Specifically, we suggest that consumers should (1) buy more experiences and fewer material goods; (2) use their money to benefit others rather than themselves; (3) buy many small pleasures rather than fewer large ones; (4) eschew extended warranties and other forms of overpriced insurance; (5) delay consumption; (6) consider how peripheral features of their purchases may affect their day-to-day lives; (7) beware of comparison shopping; and (8) pay close attention to the happiness of others.

[2011 Journal of Consumer Psychology 21 \(2\), pp. 115-125](#)

2. The Dieter's Paradox

Chernev, A.

Despite the vast public policy efforts to promote the consumption of healthy foods and the public's growing concern with weight management, the proportion of overweight individuals continues to increase. An important factor contributing to this obesity trend is the misguided belief about the relationship between a meal's healthiness and its impact on weight gain, whereby people erroneously believe that eating healthy foods in addition to unhealthy ones can decrease a meal's calorie count. This research documents this misperception, showing that it is stronger among individuals most concerned with managing their weight—a striking result given that these individuals are more motivated to monitor their calorie intake. This finding has important public policy implications, suggesting that in addition to encouraging the adoption of a healthier lifestyle among overweight individuals, promoting the consumption of healthy foods might end up facilitating calorie overconsumption, leading to weight gain rather than weight loss.

[2011 Journal of Consumer Psychology 21 \(2\), pp. 178-183](#)

3. Managing sensory expectations concerning products and brands: Capitalizing on the potential of sound and shape symbolism

Spence, C.

In this article, the evidence demonstrating the existence of a variety of robust crossmodal correspondences between both sounds (phonetic speech sounds, tones, and other parameters of musical expression) and shapes, and the sensory attributes (specifically the taste, flavor, aroma, and oral-somatosensory attributes) of various foods and beverages is reviewed. The available research now clearly suggests that marketers can enhance their consumers' product experiences by ensuring that the sound symbolism of the brand name, as well as any shape symbolism of/on the labeling, and even the very shape of the packaging itself, sets up the right (i.e., congruent) product-related sensory expectations in the mind of the consumer. In this review, the rapidly-growing literature on the topic of sound and shape symbolism is critically evaluated. Potential caveats, limitations, and problems of interpretation with previous studies are highlighted. The question of whether this approach to sensory marketing should be considered as implicit (or functionally subconscious) is also addressed. Finally, some of the relative strengths and weaknesses of this approach to modulating a consumer's product-related expectations (relative to various other approaches) are considered.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(1\), pp. 37-54](#)

4. An integrative review of sensory marketing: Engaging the senses to affect perception, judgment and behavior

Krishna, A.

I define "sensory marketing" as "marketing that engages the consumers' senses and affects their perception, judgment and behavior." From a managerial perspective,

sensory marketing can be used to create subconscious triggers that characterize consumer perceptions of abstract notions of the product (e.g., its sophistication or quality). Given the gamut of explicit marketing appeals made to consumers every day, subconscious triggers which appeal to the basic senses may be a more efficient way to engage consumers. Also, these sensory triggers may result in consumers' self-generation of (desirable) brand attributes, rather than those verbally provided by the advertiser. The understanding of these sensory triggers implies an understanding of sensation and perception as it applies to consumer behavior—this is the research perspective of sensory marketing. This review article presents an overview of research on sensory perception. The review also points out areas where little research has been done, so that each additional paper has a greater chance of making a bigger difference and sparking further research. It is quite apparent from the review that there still remains tremendous need for research within the domain of sensory marketing—research that can be very impactful.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(3\), pp. 332-351](#)

5. Red Bull "Gives You Wings" for better or worse: A double-edged impact of brand exposure on consumer performance

Brasel, S.A., Gips, J.

We show that brand exposure can have double-sided effects on behavior, with brand identity associations creating both positive and negative effects on objective consumer performance. Experimental results from a racing game involving functionally identical cars with differently branded paint jobs show that Red Bull branding creates a U-shaped effect on race performance, as Red Bull's brand identity of speed, power, and recklessness work both for and against the players. Even though brands were exposed supraliminally, effects traveled through nonconscious channels. Double-edged effects of branding on consumer performance could be increasingly important as ambient advertising and product cobranding become more commonplace.

[2011 Journal of Consumer Psychology 21 \(1\), pp. 57-64](#)

6. Brands as intentional agents framework: How perceived intentions and ability can map brand perception

Kervyn, N., Fiske, S.T., Malone, C.

Building on the Stereotype Content Model, this paper introduces and tests the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework. A growing body of research suggests that consumers have relationships with brands that resemble relations between people. We propose that consumers perceive brands in the same way they perceive people. This approach allows us to explore how social perception theories and processes can predict brand purchase interest and loyalty. Brands as Intentional Agents Framework is based on a well-established social perception approach: the Stereotype Content Model. Two studies support the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework prediction that consumers assess a brand's perceived intentions and ability and that these perceptions elicit distinct emotions and drive differential brand behaviors. The research shows that human social interaction relationships translate to consumer-brand interactions in ways that are useful to inform brand positioning and brand communications.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(2\), pp. 166-176](#)

7. The benefits of "sleeping on things": Unconscious thought leads to automatic weighting

Bos, M.W., Dijksterhuis, A., van Baaren, R.B.

We tested and confirmed the hypothesis that unconscious thought leads to an automatic weighting process whereby important decision attributes receive more weight, and unimportant decision attributes receive less weight. In three experiments, participants chose between cars with few important positive attributes and many unimportant negative attributes ("Quality cars"), and cars with many unimportant positive attributes and few important negative attributes ("Frequency cars"). In all experiments, unconscious thinkers showed a stronger preference for Quality cars than immediate decision makers, showing that unconscious thought indeed evokes an automatic weighting process. An alternative explanation is refuted and implications are discussed.

[2011 Journal of Consumer Psychology 21 \(1\), pp. 4-8](#)

8. The IKEA effect: When labor leads to love

Norton, M.I., Mochon, D., Ariely, D.

In four studies in which consumers assembled IKEA boxes, folded origami, and built sets of Legos, we demonstrate and investigate boundary conditions for the IKEA

effect—the increase in valuation of self-made products. Participants saw their amateurish creations as similar in value to experts' creations, and expected others to share their opinions. We show that labor leads to love only when labor results in successful completion of tasks; when participants built and then destroyed their creations, or failed to complete them, the IKEA effect dissipated. Finally, we show that labor increases valuation for both “do-it-yourselfers” and novices.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(3\), pp. 453-460](#)

9. A neural predictor of cultural popularity

Berns, G.S., Moore, S.E.

We use neuroimaging to predict cultural popularity — something that is popular in the broadest sense and appeals to a large number of individuals. Neuroeconomic research suggests that activity in reward-related regions of the brain, notably the orbitofrontal cortex and ventral striatum, is predictive of future purchasing decisions, but it is unknown whether the neural signals of a small group of individuals are predictive of the purchasing decisions of the population at large. For neuroimaging to be useful as a measure of widespread popularity, these neural responses would have to generalize to a much larger population that is not the direct subject of the brain imaging itself. Here, we test the possibility of using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to predict the relative popularity of a common good: music. We used fMRI to measure the brain responses of a relatively small group of adolescents while listening to songs of largely unknown artists. As a measure of popularity, the sales of these songs were totaled for the three years following scanning, and brain responses were then correlated with these “future” earnings. Although subjective likability of the songs was not predictive of sales, activity within the ventral striatum was significantly correlated with the number of units sold. These results suggest that the neural responses to goods are not only predictive of purchase decisions for those individuals actually scanned, but such responses generalize to the population at large and may be used to predict cultural popularity.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(1\), pp. 154-160](#)

10. Brands on the brain: Do consumers use declarative information or experienced emotions to evaluate brands?

Esch, F.-R., Möll, T., Schmitt, B., Elger, C.E., Neuhaus, C., Weber, B.

An fMRI study was conducted with unfamiliar and familiar (strong and weak) brands to assess linguistic encoding and retrieval processes, and the use of declarative and experiential information, in brand evaluations. As expected, activations in brain areas associated with linguistic encoding were higher for unfamiliar brands, but activations in brain areas associated with information retrieval were higher for strong brands. Interestingly, weak brands were engaged simultaneously in both processes. Most importantly, activations of the pallidum, associated with positive emotions, for strong brands and activations of the insula, associated with negative emotions, for weak and unfamiliar brands suggested that consumers use experienced emotions rather than declarative information to evaluate brands. As a result, brand experiences should be considered a key driver of brand equity in addition to brand awareness and cognitive associations.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(1\), pp. 75-85](#)

11. Motivating consumer behavior by subliminal conditioning in the absence of basic needs: Striking even while the iron is cold

Veltkamp, M., Custers, R., Aarts, H.

Previous research suggests that priming of behavioral concepts (e.g., drinking water) motivates consumers outside conscious awareness, but only if primes match a current need (e.g., fluid deprivation). The present article reports two studies testing whether subliminal conditioning (subliminally priming a behavioral concept and linking it to positive affect) can motivate such need-related behaviors even in the absence of deprivation. Both studies showed an interaction effect: Motivation to drink water increased with fluid deprivation, and subliminally conditioning drinking water more positive only motivated drinking in the absence of deprivation. Furthermore, Study 2 suggests that motivation resulting from conditioning is more specific than following deprivation, as only the latter can be reduced by pursuing alternative behaviors (i.e., eating high-liquid foods). Thus, although traditionally the motivation for need-related behaviors is thought to depend on deprivation, this research shows subliminal conditioning can motivate consumers as if they were deprived.

[2011 Journal of Consumer Psychology 21 \(1\), pp. 49-56](#)

12. Branding the brain: A critical review and outlook

Plassmann, H., Ramsøy, T.Z., Milosavljevic, M.

The application of neuroscience to marketing, and in particular to the consumer psychology of brands, has gained popularity over the past decade in the academic and the corporate world. In this paper, we provide an overview of the current and previous research in this area and explain why researchers and practitioners alike are excited about applying neuroscience to the consumer psychology of brands. We identify critical issues of past research and discuss how to address these issues in future research. We conclude with our vision of the future potential of research at the intersection of neuroscience and consumer psychology.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(1\), pp. 18-36](#)

13. Losses, gains, and brains: Neuroeconomics can help to answer open questions about loss aversion

Rick, S.

Much is understood about loss aversion (the tendency for losses to have greater hedonic impact than comparable gains), but open questions remain. First, there is debate about whether loss aversion is best understood as the byproduct of a single system within the brain that treats losses and gains asymmetrically or the interaction of separate deliberative and emotional systems. Second, some have questioned whether loss aversion alone is the best account for the endowment effect. Alternative accounts, based on the differential focus induced by buying versus selling, the order in which buyers and sellers consider positive and negative aspects of the good, the extent to which ownership induces liking, and the desire to avoid making a bad deal, have been proposed. Third, it is unclear whether losses are actually experienced more intensely than comparable gains, or whether people simply behave as if they were. Some have argued that loss aversion is nothing more than an affective forecasting error, while others have argued that there are many situations in which losses are actually more impactful than comparable gains. This review synthesizes the insights that behavioral researchers and neuroeconomists have contributed to each debate, and highlights potential avenues for future research.

[2011 Journal of Consumer Psychology 21 \(4\), pp. 453-463](#)

14. Inherently loyal or easily bored?: Nonconscious activation of consistency versus variety-seeking behavior

Fishbach, A., Ratner, R.K., Zhang, Y.

This article explores nonconscious effects on consumers' tendency to seek consistency versus variety in sequential choices. We propose that activation of concepts related to a positive frame of repetition (e.g., "loyalty") triggers a preference-based construal of consumption that encourages consistency seeking. In contrast, activation of concepts related to a negative frame of repetition (e.g., "boredom") triggers a satiation-based construal of consumption that encourages variety seeking. Four studies demonstrate that which construal of consumption consumers adopt can be activated outside of awareness, impacts consumers' experienced satiation, and determines in turn the amount of variety they incorporate into their choices.

[2011 Journal of Consumer Psychology 21 \(1\), pp. 38-48](#)

15. Calories, beauty, and ovulation: The effects of the menstrual cycle on food and appearance-related consumption

Saad, G., Stenstrom, E.

The menstrual cycle has been largely ignored within the consumer research literature. Using a survey panel, women's food and appearance-related consumption was tracked for 35 consecutive days. As predicted, food-related desires, dollars spent, and eating behaviors were greater during the luteal (non-fertile) phase, whereas appearance-related desires, dollars spent, and beautification behaviors increased during the fertile phase. Dollars spent on products unrelated to food or beautification were not significantly influenced by the menstrual cycle. Hence, women's consumption desires, preferences, and dollars spent in evolutionarily relevant product categories (food and mating) fluctuate across their ovulatory cycle. Branding-related implications are briefly discussed.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(1\), pp. 102-113](#)

16. Psychological ownership and affective reaction: Emotional attachment process variables and the endowment effect

Shu, S.B., Peck, J.

This research proposes that the concept of emotional attachment, and specifically

the independent constructs of psychological ownership and affective reaction, can help explain many of the endowment effect findings documented in the literature. We define these constructs and then test them across a set of nine studies in which we both replicate previous and generate new endowment effect findings, and then show that psychological ownership and affective reaction can mediate the effects. In doing so, we offer direct empirical support for the idea of emotional attachment as a driver of loss aversion while also providing practitioners and future endowment effect researchers with new insights about the psychological processes that underlie the endowment effect.

[2011 Journal of Consumer Psychology 21 \(4\), pp. 439-452](#)

17. Mediation analysis and categorical variables: The final frontier

Iacobucci, D.

Many scholars are interested in understanding the process by which an independent variable affects a dependent variable, perhaps in part directly and perhaps in part indirectly, occurring through the activation of a mediator. Researchers are facile at testing for mediation when all the variables are continuous, but a definitive answer had been lacking heretofore as to how to analyze the data when the mediator or dependent variable is categorical. This paper describes the problems that arise as well as the potential solutions. In the end, a solution is recommended that is both optimal in its statistical qualities as well as practical and easily implemented.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(4\), pp. 582-594](#)

18. Power and consumer behavior: How power shapes who and what consumers value

Rucker, D.D., Galinsky, A.D., Dubois, D.

The current paper reviews the concept of power and offers a new architecture for understanding how power guides and shapes consumer behavior. Specifically, we propose that having and lacking power respectively foster agentic and communal orientations that have a transformative impact on perception, cognition, and behavior. These orientations shape both who and what consumers value. New empirical evidence is presented that synthesizes these findings into a parsimonious account of how power alters consumer behavior as a function of both product attributes and recipients. Finally, we discuss future directions to motivate and guide the study of power by consumer psychologists.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(3\), pp. 352-368](#)

19. Brands as relationship partners: Warmth, competence, and in-between

Fournier, S., Alvarez, C.

The dialogue between social perception and consumer-brand relationship theories opens new opportunities for studying brands. To advance branding research in the spirit of interdisciplinary inquiry, we propose to (1) investigate the process of anthropomorphism through which brands are imbued with intentional agency; (2) integrate the role of consumers not only as perceivers but also as relationship agents; (3) consider important defining dimensions of consumer-brand relationships beyond warmth and competence, including power and excitement; and (4) articulate the dynamics governing warmth (intentions) and competency (ability) judgments to yield prescriptive guidance for developing popular and admired brands.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(2\), pp. 177-185](#)

20. The consumer psychology of brands

Schmitt, B.

This article presents a consumer-psychology model of brands that integrates empirical studies and individual constructs (such as brand categorization, brand affect, brand personality, brand symbolism and brand attachment, among others) into a comprehensive framework. The model distinguishes three levels of consumer engagement (object-centered, self-centered and social) and five processes (identifying, experiencing, integrating, signifying and connecting). Pertinent psychological constructs and empirical findings are presented for the constructs within each process. The article concludes with research ideas to test the model using both standard and consumer-neuroscience methods.

[2012 Journal of Consumer Psychology 22 \(1\), pp. 7-17](#)



SCP on [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Blog](#)