

Discovering New Extensions of Regulatory Focus and Fit: A Three Essay Investigation

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines three research questions under the framework of Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998). These research questions are organized into three essays. The first essay examines the malleability of regulatory construction of goals. I demonstrate that regulatory construction of a goal is subject to goal distance—the perceived discrepancy between current and desired end state. When goal distance is large, the goal is more likely to be construed as a promotion-focused goal; when goal distance is small, the goal is more likely to be construed as a prevention-focused goal. This effect is mediated by the intensity of anticipated affect (pleasure of goal attainment versus pain of goal failure). The second essay examines a fit between sustainability and a prevention focus. I demonstrate that sustainability claims activate prevention concerns in consumers. Consumers make prevention-focused inferences about products of sustainable companies. Finally, regulatory fit between a sustainable product and prevention-focused product claims leads to enhanced product evaluations. The third essay examines the influence of regulatory focus in sequentially presented choice sets. I demonstrate that regulatory focus influences evaluations of equivalent sequentially presented choice alternatives, the amount of search and choice of option form a sequential set. Prevention-focused individuals defer favorable evaluations until choice options presented later in the sequential set. They perform more search compared to promotion-focused individuals and select an option encountered later in the sequence. Theoretical contributions and practical implications of these essays are discussed.

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## **Research Overview**

The purpose of this research is to investigate three previously unexamined questions within the framework of Regulatory Focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998). The three research questions are examined in distinct essays. Each essay reviews and integrates the relevant literature, develops the conceptual framework, and advances hypotheses for empirical testing. The methodology and the results of the studies that were conducted to test these hypotheses are also presented in this dissertation. While each essay is distinct from the other, the common theoretical framework employed is that of regulatory focus theory. In this section, I begin with an overview of this theory. I then introduce the three research questions that form the basis for the essays in this dissertation.

Regulatory Focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998) distinguishes between two self-regulatory systems, which may guide individuals in goal pursuit: a promotion focus on aspiration to ideals advancement and accomplishment, and a prevention focus on protection, security and responsibility. A promotion focus is a system that emphasizes sensitivity to gains (their presence or absence) and the eagerness of attainment of desirable outcomes (Higgins, 1997; Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998). A prevention focus is a system that emphasizes sensitivity to losses (their presence or absence) and the vigilance against the presence of undesirable outcomes (Higgins, 1997; Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998). Promotion and prevention foci independently co-exist within each individual and, depending on which one is currently more accessible, individuals tend to act according to that system (Higgins, 2002). In the absence of situational primers,



individuals usually rely on their chronic regulatory focus, which is acquired through childhood socialization (Higgins et al., 2001). A given situation, however, may temporarily activate a promotion or prevention focus despite an individual's chronic regulatory orientation. For example, situations that communicate gain–non-gain information are likely to activate a promotion focus, whereas situations that communicate loss–non-loss information are likely to activate a prevention focus (Higgins, 1997, 2002).

It is important to note that regulatory focus theory gives us an understanding of individuals' goal pursuit beyond the basic hedonic principle (Freud, 1920; Higgins, 1997). "The hedonic principle asserts that people approach pleasure and avoid pain" (Higgins, 1997, p. 1283). It does not, however, distinguish between different forms of pleasure and pain individuals may wish to seek or avoid. It also does not explain how and by the virtue of what means and strategies individuals do so (Higgins, 1997). Regulatory focus theory posits that promotion- and prevention-focused individuals both seek pleasure and avoid pain, but they view pleasure and pain differently; they also exhibit different motivations and employ distinct means in doing so. Promotion-focused individuals seek pleasure of gains avoid pain of non-gains; they view their desired end states as ideals. Prevention-focused individuals avoid pain of losses and seek pleasure of non-losses; they view their desired end states as responsibilities. In seeking to attain the desired end-states, promotion-focused individuals employ "eager" strategies which approach matches to their desired end states, while prevention-focused individuals employ "vigilant" strategies which avoid mismatches to their desired end states (Higgins, 1997; Crowe & Higgins, 1997). Therefore, regulatory focus theory gives us insights which the basic hedonic principle does not. It gives us a tool to understand the

preferences, motivations and strategies employed by individuals who are concerned with the pleasure and pain of responsibility, versus those concerned with the pleasure and pain of ideals.

Promotion and prevention foci lead to differences in regulatory construal of goals. Promotion-focused individuals construe their goals as hopes and aspirations that “function like maximal goals” (Crowe & Higgins, 1997, p. 118; Brendl & Higgins, 1996), while prevention-focused individuals construe their goals as duties and obligations which “function like minimal goals” (Crowe & Higgins, 1997, p. 118; Brendl & Higgins, 1996). In other words, two people who differ in their regulatory motivation may both strive for a goal of losing weight. However, a person who is stronger in promotion focus will view this goal as an exciting opportunity to look and feel better, a chance to advance from the state in which they currently are; a person who is stronger in prevention focus will view this goal as a requirement which, if not met, can lead to disapproval and other potentially negative social and health-related consequences. In addition, regulatory focus of a goal can be primed by the way a goal is framed. For example, in the consumption context, product claims can activate regulatory goals: promotion-focused claims, such as “get a great deal”, or “delight your senses” prime promotional consumption goals and prevention-focused claims, such as “avoid overpaying”, or “do not be disappointed” prime preventional consumption goals (Mogilner, Aaker, & Pennington, 2008). Finally, some goals which generally exhibit greater concern for security and provision of necessities are likely to be construed as minimal preventional goals, whereas goals that are generally concerned with delight and fulfillment are likely to be construed as promotional (Chitturi, Raganathan, & Mahajan, 2008).

Central to regulatory focus theory and to this research is the concept of regulatory fit (Higgins, 2000). The regulatory fit effect (Higgins, 2000) occurs when the manner in which an individual is pursuing a goal sustains or matches their current regulatory orientation. This results in a person's "feeling right" about what they are doing and increases their motivation and engagement with the activity (Higgins, 2000). The "feeling right" of regulatory fit affects a person's target of evaluation in two ways: it can inform a decision maker about the correctness of their evaluation (positive or negative) (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004; Avnet, Laufer, & Higgins, 2013) or transfer directly onto the target of evaluation and make the evaluation more favorable (Anvet et al., 2013). In the marketing context, this phenomenon has several manifestations. For example, consumers who experience a regulatory fit form stronger product preferences (Wang & Lee, 2006), develop stronger attitudes toward the brand (Florack & Scarabis, 2006), assign greater monetary value to their choices (Avent & Higgins, 2006), experience greater satisfaction with their choice (Mourali & Pons, 2009), and find advertising messages more persuasive (Keller, 2006; Kim, 2006).

In this dissertation I examine three research questions under the framework of regulatory focus theory. The first research question, which forms the basis for Essay 1, examines how the type of motivation individuals experience in goal pursuit differs based on goal distance, the perceived discrepancy between the current and the desired state (Townsend & Liu, 2012). Specifically, I examine whether large goal distance primes individuals to experience a promotion motivation, while small goal distance primes individuals to experience a prevention motivation in goal pursuit. I demonstrate that a regulatory fit effect occurs when distal (vs. proximal) goals are approached with

promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) means. Contributions of this research question are several. First, I show that individuals' construal of goals as promotion- or prevention-focused is malleable. A goal is construed as relatively more promotion-focused when goal distance is large. As goal distance becomes smaller, a goal is construed as relatively more prevention-focused. This research makes a contribution to regulatory focus theory by demonstrating that our regulatory construction of goals is malleable; and goal distance is a factor that influences whether a goal is construed as promotion-focused or prevention-focused. Second, this research contributes to goal pursuit literature. Previous research examined how the *amount* of motivation differs at different points throughout goal pursuit. To my knowledge, this is the first endeavor to examine how the *type* of motivation differs based on goal distance.

Essay 2 examines a fit between sustainability and prevention focus. I first investigate whether sustainability claims about a company's products prime prevention focus in consumers. I then examine whether consumers make prevention-focused inferences about products of sustainable companies. Lastly, I argue that a regulatory fit effect occurs between a sustainable product and a prevention-focused appeal due to a perception of fit between sustainability of a product and the focus of the appeal. This essay contributes to regulatory focus theory in several ways. First, it identifies sustainability as a primer of a prevention focus. Second, it demonstrates a previously unrecognized phenomenon, whereby the activated focus serves as information about the object of evaluation (a company's products). Third, it identifies that individuals may be aware of the *fit* in the "regulatory fit effect"; this suggests that the nature of regulatory fit may be less affective than previously believed. The findings of this essay also contribute

to the sustainability literature by identifying a specific type of motivation (prevention) associated with sustainability claims and practices.

The research question examined in Essay 3 identifies a previously overlooked difference in preferences for choice alternatives displayed by promotion- and prevention-focused individuals. Specifically, I examine the role of regulatory focus in judgment and decision making in *sequential* choice sets. I show that prevention-focused individuals favor choice alternatives presented later in a sequence comparatively to promotion-focused individuals. While promotion-focused consumers evaluate equivalent sequentially presented options equally, prevention-focused consumers evaluate earlier presented options less favorably and defer more favorable evaluations till later presented alternatives. When selecting an option from a sequential set, promotion-focused consumers examine fewer options and select an option encountered earlier in a set, comparatively to prevention-focused consumers. This research makes an important contribution to regulatory focus theory. I show a previously unrecognized preference pattern, whereby prevention-focused consumers favor later options in a sequence compared to promotion-focused consumers. Importantly, I show that regulatory focus can influence the amount of search—the number of choice alternatives examined before selection is made. This research also contributes to sequential presentation literature by identifying regulatory focus as a factor which predicts preference construction for choice options, amount of search and choice of option form a sequential set.

The remainder of this dissertation is organized in the following manner. The next section reviews regulatory focus literature and gives the reader a broad overview of the major findings of the theory. Following the literature review, Essay 1 is presented,

including the question investigated in the essay, the conceptual framework which introduces hypotheses for empirical testing, and the studies that were run to test the hypotheses. Essay 1 concludes with a discussion of the findings and the contribution that these findings make to the field of consumer behavior as well as some limitations of the current research. Essays 2 and 3 are organized in a similar fashion.

### **Literature Review**

Regulatory Focus theory, introduced by E. Tory Higgins (1997, 1998), distinguishes between two self-regulatory systems which govern individuals toward their desired end states. A *promotion focus* is a system that guides individuals to seek matches to their desired end states, which are viewed as ideals and aspirations. Individuals under promotion focus are concerned with attainment, aspiration to ideals, advancement and accomplishment. They employ approach strategies and rely on “eager means” in goal pursuit, seek to maximize gains and are sensitive to the presence or absence of *positive* outcomes (Higgins, 1997; Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998). Promotion-focused individuals aim to “maximize hits” and avoid errors of omission (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). Emotions associated with promotion focus are those of cheerfulness and dejection-related, such as excitement (Higgins, 1987; Shah & Higgins, 2001).

On the other hand, a *prevention focus* is a system that guides individuals to avoid mismatches to their desired end states, which are viewed as responsibilities and oughts. Individuals under prevention focus are concerned with security, responsibility and protection. They employ avoidance strategies and rely on “vigilant means” in goal pursuit, seek to minimize losses, prevent making mistakes and are sensitive to the presence or absence of *negative* outcomes (Higgins, 1997; Shah, Higgins & Friedman,

1998). Prevention-focused individuals aim to ensure correct rejections and avoid errors of commissions (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). Emotions associated with prevention focus are those of quiescence and agitation-related, such as anxiety (Higgins, 1987; Shah & Higgins, 2001).

Promotion and prevention systems co-exist independently in each person. In the absence of situational primers, individuals tend to rely on their chronic (or dominant) regulatory focus, which is acquired through childhood socializations and (Higgins, 1997; Higgins et al., 2001). For example, a person who has been disciplined via reward principle as a child (i.e., behave well – get an ice cream, behave bad – no ice cream) is likely to become more sensitive to gains and to have a dominant promotion focus; a person who has been disciplined via punishment principle as a child (i.e., behave bad – get a spanking; behave well – no spanking) is likely to become more sensitive to losses and to have a dominant prevention focus (Higgins, 1997). However, notwithstanding chronic regulatory focus, momentary situations can allow individuals to temporarily access their promotion or prevention system, and they will act in accordance to the system that is currently accessed (Higgins, 1997, 2002; Higgins et al., 2001). For example, when individuals are asked to think about their hopes and aspirations, they temporarily become more promotion focused; when they are asked to think about responsibilities and duties, they temporarily become more prevention-focused (Higgins et al., 1994). In marketing contexts, environmental cues can temporarily prime promotion or prevention focus in consumers. For example, product claims that emphasize a possibility of a gain, such as “get a great deal”, can put a consumer into a promotion-focused mind-set; claims that highlight assurance against a loss, such as “do not get

ripped off”, can put a consumer into a prevention-focused mindset (Mogilner et al., 2008). Recent salary receipt primes individuals to become more promotion-focused, while prevention-focus becomes stronger when significant time has lapsed since last salary receipt (Mishra, Mishra, & Nayakankuppam, 2010). More recently, Bullard and Manchanda (2013) found that when consumers are exposed to sustainability claims (i.e., green, environmentally friendly, sustainable) their prevention-focus concerns become activated.

When individuals approach a goal their regulatory orientation guides them to select appropriate means to reach the goal. When the manner of goal pursuit matches their current regulatory orientation, individuals experience a “feels right” sensation which makes them more motivated and engaged with the activity. This experience can arise from a match between a person’s current regulatory focus and a strategy which they employ to reach a goal (process-based fit) or from a match between regulatory focus and consequences of an outcome (outcome-based fit) (Higgins, 2002). For example, if a person currently under promotion (prevention) focus is choosing a product and is instructed to follow an eager (vigilant) strategy of ensuring that desirable features are present (undesirable features are absent) they will experience process-based regulatory fit. If a person currently under promotion (prevention) focus is choosing a product framed in terms of gains it will help realize (losses it will help prevent), they will experience outcome-based regulatory fit. Regulatory fit influences motivation, prospective and retrospective evaluations of a decision, and value assigned to a chosen object (Higgins, 2000). “Feeling right” of regulatory fit can affect a person’s target of evaluation in two ways: it can inform a decision maker about the correctness of their evaluation (positive or



negative) (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004; Avnet et al., 2013) or transfer directly onto the target of evaluation and make the evaluation more favorable (Camacho, Higgins, & Luger, 2003; Higgins, Idson, Freitas, Spiegel, & Molden, 2003; Avnet et al., 2013). Recent work by Avnet and colleagues (2013) shows that under high involvement, “feeling right” of regulatory fit confirms the correctness of evaluation: positive reactions become more positive and negative reactions become more negative; under low involvement, however, “feeling right” of regulatory fit functions like feelings-as-information and both positive and negative reactions become more favorable.

Extant research examined manifestations of regulatory fit in marketing. For example, regulatory fit between an individual’s regulatory orientation and the framing of a message enhances persuasion and opinion ratings on the advocated topic (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004). A match between the focus of a health message (promotion (e.g. achieve ultimate health) or prevention (e.g. prevent disease)) and the framing of the message enhances its evaluations and effectiveness (Lee & Aaker, 2004). Regulatory fit between a consumer’s focus and the focus of the product claims results in the formations stronger preferences toward that product (Wang & Lee, 2006). Products chosen using a strategy which matches one’s regulatory focus are assigned greater monetary value (Avent & Higgins, 2006). Advertisements are found more effective and persuasive, if they make claims which fit regulatory focus of a consumer (Kim, 2006; Florack & Scarabis, 2006).

Building on the knowledge about motivational differences and psychological states prevalent among promotion- and prevention-focused individuals, Zhu and Meyers-Levy (2007) examined cognitive mechanisms that underlie differences in processes

produced by the two regulatory systems. Authors found that promotion-focused individuals engage in relational elaboration, which allows them to draw connections and abstract links between multiple pieces of data; whereas prevention-focused individuals engage in item-specific elaboration which allows them to contextually generate precise associations to each independent item (Zhu & Meyers-Levy, 2007). Several other findings shed more light on differences that exist between promotion and prevention systems. Pham and Avnet (2004, 2009) demonstrated that individuals under promotion focus rely more on affect (vs. cognition) when making decisions and the reverse is true for individuals under prevention focus. In addition, promotion focus is associated with distant temporal perspective and prevention focus is associated with proximal temporal perspective (Pennington & Roese, 2003). Individuals under promotion-focus process information more globally (Forster & Higgins, 2005), alternative-based (Mourali & Pons, 2009), and construe information at a more abstract level (Lee, Keller, & Sternthal, 2010); whereas individuals under prevention-focus process information more locally (Forster & Higgins, 2005), attribute-based (Mourali & Pons, 2009), and construe information at a more concrete level (Lee et al., 2010). In the context of decision making, promotion-focused people value speed (Forster, Higgins, & Bianco, 2003) and progress toward the goal (Wan, Hong, & Sternthal, 2009), whereas prevention-focused people value accuracy (Wan et al., 2009). Individuals under promotion focus exhibit tendencies for creativity (Freitas, Liberman, & Higgins, 2002; Friedman & Förster, 2001), change (Liberman, Idson, Camacho, & Higgins, 1999), fun and enjoyment (Aaker & Lee, 2001); while individuals under prevention focus exhibit tendencies for self-control (Freitas, Liberman, & Higgins, 2002; Friedman & Förster, 2001), stability (Liberman et al., 1999), safety and

security (Higgins, 1997; Aaker & Lee, 2001). These factors create regulatory fit for promotion- and prevention-focused individuals when they are integrated into decision-making strategy or outcome of goal pursuit.

A number of differences are evident with respect to how individuals are influenced by their regulatory system in performing comparative judgments. For example, when a brand is compared to its competitor, promotion-focused individuals favor maximal (Jain, Agrawal, & Maheswaran, 2006), positively-framed comparisons and evaluate the target object first (Jain, Lindsey, Agrawal, & Maheswaran, 2007). On the other hand, prevention-focused individuals favor minimal (Jain, Agrawal, & Maheswaran, 2006), negatively-framed comparisons and evaluate the comparison object first (Jain, Lindsey, Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2007). In a similar vein, promotion-focused individuals rely more on an attraction effect and prefer products presented as an asymmetrically dominant option, while prevention-focused individuals rely more on a compromise effect and prefer products presented as a compromise (Mourali, Bockenholt & Laroche, 2007).

Recent research recognized that some decision-making contexts bring out the relevance of promotion- or prevention-relevant outcomes without *necessarily* directly changing an individual's regulatory focus as measured through direct self-report of motivational strivings (e.g., Mogilner et al., 2008; Pennington & Roese, 2003). For example, individuals facing temporally distant purchases (purchase will happen in the future) are more attracted to promotion-framed products; prevention-framed products are preferred for purchases that are temporally proximal (purchase is about to take place) (Mogilner et al., 2008). Purchases of hedonic products bring out preferences for

promotion-framed products; prevention-framed products are preferred when purchasing utilitarian products (Chtturi et al., 2008; Micu & Chawdhury, 2010). When products have distant (vs. proximal) expiration dates promotion-framed (vs. prevention-framed) cues create regulatory fit; similarly, for less (vs. more) familiar brands promotion (vs. prevention) framing is more fitting (Ramanathan & Dhar, 2010). Furthermore, when cues that fit promotion or prevention focus are respectively paired with one another, regulatory fit effect occurs (Ramanathan & Dhar, 2010). Finally, recent salary receipt makes individuals exhibit promotion-focused preferences, whereas prevention-focused preferences begin to dominate once significant time has lapsed since last salary receipt (Mishra, Mishra, & Nayakankuppam, 2010). The main findings of regulatory focus theory are summarized in Table 1 below.

The research questions examined in this dissertation build upon and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in regulatory focus theory. In the following sections I outline conceptual framework for each of the research questions in more detail.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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## Essay 1

### Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this essay is to investigate how regulatory motivation in goal pursuit differs based on goal distance (i.e., the perceived discrepancy between current and desired end states) (Townsend & Liu, 2012)). Specifically, I demonstrate that large goal distance highlights the anticipated pleasure from goal attainment, which leads to construal of the goal as a promotion-focused goal. On the other hand, small goal distance highlights the anticipated pain from goal failure, which leads to construal of the goal as a prevention-focused goal. As a result, the regulatory fit effect occurs between large goal distance and promotion-focused goal attainment means and small goal distance and prevention-focused goal attainment means. I hope to contribute to two streams of literature with this research. To regulatory focus theory, I contribute by demonstrating that our regulatory construction of goals is malleable. More specifically, the majority of research on regulatory focus appears to agree that it is individuals' characteristics (e.g., Higgins, 1997; Aaker & Lee, 2001; Cesario et al., 2004) or goal specific characteristics (e.g., Lee & Aaker, 2004; Zhou & Pham, 2004; Chitturi et al., 2010) that determine construction of goals as promotion- or prevention-focused. In this research, I show that goal distance is a factor that influences how the goal is construed. The same goal can be construed as promotion- or prevention-focused depending on whether goal distance is large or small respectively. I also demonstrate the role of anticipated affect in regulatory construction of distant and proximal goals. To literature on goal pursuit, this research contributes by identifying distinct types of motivation associated with stages of goal pursuit. Recent research examined a variety of factors that differ throughout the stages of

goal pursuit (e.g., Louro, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2007; Toure-Tillery & Fishbach 2011; Bonezzi, Brendl, & De Angelis, 2011; Etkin & Ratner, 2012; Townsend & Liu, 2012). This research is the first to identify specific types of motivation which prevail based on proximity to the goal.

Goal pursuit research has long been interested in the role of goal distance—the discrepancy between current and desired end states (Townsend & Liu, 2012)—in motivational strength. The goal gradient effect (Hull, 1932; Kivetz, Urminsky, & Zheng, 2006) posits that as the goal nears, motivational strength increases. This supposedly happens because as goal distance becomes smaller, larger portions of goal distance are covered by a fixed increment of progress (Forster, Higgins, & Idson, 1998). Recent research, however, has demonstrated that the relationship between goal distance and motivational strength may not be as straight forward as the goal-gradient effect suggests. For example, Bonezzi and colleagues (2011) found that throughout the course of goal pursuit, motivational strength is at its lowest in the middle. This happens because people use the initial starting state as a reference point early on in goal pursuit, and they use the final desired state when the goal nears. Fishbach and Dhar (2005) examined the effect of construal of movement toward the goal on goal striving. They found that if the movement toward the goal is construed as commitment it increases motivational strength; however, if construed as progress, movement toward the goal can decrease motivation and even lead to goal switching.

A growing body of research provides ample evidence that goal distance is an influential factor in determining preferences and psychological states in goal pursuit. For example, Etkin and Ratner (2012) found that the type of uncertainty experienced by

individuals in goal pursuit differs based on whether they are close or far from their goal. Individuals who are far from their goal tend to be uncertain about the best way to go about reaching their goal, whereas those who are close to their goal are uncertain about their ability to stay focused on achieving the goal. As a result, more variety among goal attainment means is motivating for individuals who are far from the goal as it reduces their uncertainty about their ability to find the best means to reach the goal. In contrast, less variety is motivating for individuals close to their goal as it offers a more direct way to stay focused on reaching the goal (Etkin & Ratner, 2012). Additionally, goal distance affects individuals' reactions to concrete implementation plans in goal pursuit.

Individuals in poor goal standing (large goal distance) are demotivated by concrete implementation plans as the act of concrete planning produces feelings of distress in these individuals; this adverse effect is not found among individuals in good goal standing (Townsend & Liu, 2012). Finally, as goal distance changes, so do our reactions to positive and negative feedback. Louro, Pieters, and Zeelenberg (2007) found that dieters who were far from their goal were motivated by positive feedback, while negative feedback motivated dieters close to their weight-loss goal.

Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) offers a framework in which goals are seen as either hopes, aspirations and ideals (promotion-focused goals) or oughts, duties and responsibilities (prevention-focused goals). Promotion goals are maximal—they are associated with exceeding and excelling; prevention goals are minimal—they are associated with “meeting the bar” or attaining a set cut-off (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). The way that people construe goals can be influenced by their chronic regulatory focus. People with a stronger chronic promotion focus are likely to construe their goals as

maximal (promotion-focused); people with a stronger chronic prevention focus are likely to construe their goals as minimal (prevention-focused) (Higgins, 1997; Crowe, & Higgins, 1997). For example, consider a graduate school applicant taking a GMAT. A promotion-focused applicant is likely to be focused on doing his or her best and getting the highest score he or she can get (maximal goal); while a prevention-focused applicant is likely to focus on the cut-off score set by his/her school of choice making sure he/she does not fall short of that score (minimal goal). Characteristics of any particular goal can also influence the way that the goal is construed. For example, hedonic goals are likely to be construed as promotion-focused as they represent “wants”, while utilitarian goals are likely to be construed as prevention-focused as they represent “needs” (Chernev, 2004; Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2007; Higgins, 1997, 2001). In other words, regardless of a person’s chronic focus, a goal of having a pleasurable experience (e.g., enjoying a day at a luxurious spa) is likely to be construed as promotion-focused, on the other hand, a goal of satisfying a functional necessity (e.g., having reliable transportation in winter months) is likely to be construed as prevention-focused. Mogilner and colleagues (2008) also found that consumption goals that are temporally proximal are likely to be construed as prevention-focused, whereas temporally distant consumption goals are likely to be construed as promotion-focused. A man walking around the mall in December, thinking of a Valentine’s gift for his wife will focus on delighting her and exceeding her expectations (promotion goal); a man walking around the mall a few days before Valentine’s day thinking of a gift for his wife will focus on meeting her expectations and making sure she is not disappointed (prevention goal).



Although two streams of research, regulatory focus and goal distance, each provide valuable insight into goal pursuit behavior, the two have not been examined in consort. While existing regulatory focus research treats goals as *either* promotion- or prevention-focused depending on personal or goal-specific characteristics, in this essay I examine how goal distance may play a role in determining which regulatory motivation will dominate. My proposition in this essay is that goal distance influences regulatory focus of the goal. When goal distance is large, individuals will construe the goal as more promotion-focused and will be more motivated by promotion-focused means to goal attainment; when goal distance is small, individuals will construe the goal as more prevention-focused and be motivated more by prevention-focused goal attainment means. I explain my reasoning below.

Consider a first year medical school student with a goal of becoming a doctor. His goal distance is large and his probability of failure is high. At that point, the goal is quite ambitious and if the goal is realized, it will allow him to distinguish himself, be fulfilled, earn the respect of others and demonstrate attainment. Now consider a medical school student in his final year. Goal distance toward becoming a doctor is small and probability of failure is low. At this point the goal is quite realistic and the end is in sight. For this student becoming a doctor is an expectation that must be met, a standard that must be realized. If he does not graduate the pain from knowing he was so close and failed will be severe.

More formally, when goal distance is large, perceived likelihood of failure is high (Bandura, 1997), this uncertainty about the ability to realize the goal will provide an opportunity for the goal seeker to distinguish himself, demonstrate attainment and

achievement if he/she succeeds. Therefore, large goal distance will lead a person to view the goal as an opportunity for attainment and advancement—the goal will be construed as promotion-focused. When goal distance is small, perceived likelihood of failure is low (Bandura, 1997). Since failure is perceived to be unlikely, realization of this goal becomes an expectation that must be met; it is much less likely to represent attainment or a possibility to distinguish oneself. Instead, the goal is likely to function as a “must attain” criterion when goal distance is small. Therefore, small goal distance will lead a person to construe his goal as prevention-focused. My proposition of changes in regulatory motivation based on goal distance is consistent with previous findings in goal distance literature, such as findings by Louro and colleagues (2007) that positive feedback (which is beneficial for individuals pursuing a promotion-focused goal (Van Dijk & Kluger, 2004; Van Dijk & Kluger, 2011)) is motivating for individuals who are far from their goal, while negative feedback (which is beneficial for individuals pursuing a prevention-focused goal (Van Dijk & Kluger, 2004; Van Dijk & Kluger, 2011)) is motivating for individuals who are close to reaching their goal. Promotional construction of a distant goal could also help explain Townsend and Liu’s (2012) finding that individuals far from their goal prefer abstract (rather than concrete) implementation plans; this is because promotion focus produces a fit with abstraction and non-fit with concreteness (Lee et al., 2010) resulting in demotivation if a distant goal is broken up into a series of concrete steps. Finally, finding by Etkin and Ratner (2012) that large goal distance is associated with uncertainty about the *best way* to attain the goal is congruent with construction of a maximal goal; on the other hand, the fact that small goal distance is associated with uncertainty about staying focused on the goal, or in other words “just

making sure you can get there”, is congruent with a construction of a minimal goal. Additionally, preference for more (vs. less) variety by individuals far from (vs. close to) the goal (Etkin & Ratner, 2012) is consistent with the notion that promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) individuals interpret variety as possibility to make a good choice (vs. make a mistake); indeed, Crowe and Higgins (1997) found that promotion-focused people generated more *distinct* alternatives in an alternative-generating task, while prevention-focused individuals were more *repetitive*. In summary, I propose the following hypotheses:

H1a: Large (vs. small) goal distance will lead to construal of a goal as promotional-focused (vs. prevention focused)

Previous regulatory focus research found that pleasure from being able to attain the goal is stronger for promotion-focused than for prevention-focused goals, while pain from failing to attain the goal is stronger for prevention-focused than promotion-focused goals (Idson, Liberman, & Higgins, 2000; Liberman, Idson, & Higgins, 2005; Mogilner et al., 2008). Mogilner and colleagues (2008) found that anticipated pleasure (vs. pain) associated with temporally distant (vs. proximal) consumption goals mediated the appeal of promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) products. Evidence exists that individuals find unusual information more informative than usual information (Finkelstein & Fishbach, 2012; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Tesser, 1988). Since large goal distance is associated with high probability of failure (Bandura, 1997), individuals who are far from their goal are quite used to the thought that they might fail and hence, anticipated pain of failure is likely to be uninformative in their construction of the goal. A possibility of goal attainment, however, for large goal distance individuals is less likely and, hence,

anticipated pleasure from goal attainment represents more unusual information and is likely to be informative in their construction of the goal. In contrast, small goal distance is associated with low probability of failure (Bandura, 1997), and hence individuals who are close to their goal are quite used to the idea of goal attainment. As a result, anticipated pleasure from goal attainment represents more usual information which is less informative. Since failure is unlikely, anticipated pain from failure to attain the goal represents more unusual information which is more informative. Altogether, I suggest that large goal distance will lead to a construal of a goal that is a pleasure to attain, and small goal distance will lead to a construal of a goal that is a pain not to attain. This difference in anticipated affect will mediate the effect of goal distance on regulatory focus of the goal.

H1b: Large (vs. small) goal distance will lead to a construal of a goal which is a pleasure to attain (a pain not to attain). This anticipated affect will mediate the effect of goal distance on regulatory focus of the goal.

In line with previous research, I predict a regulatory fit effect which results from the regulatory construal of the goal and regulatory-framed goal attainment means (e.g., Lee & Aaker, 2004; Mogilner et al., 2008).

H2a: Individuals who are far from their goal, will experience regulatory fit with promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) goal attainment means

H2b: Individuals who are close to their goal, will experience regulatory fit with prevention-focused (vs. promotion-focused) goal attainment means

Three studies have been conducted to test the above hypotheses. Study 1 seeks initial support for hypotheses 1a and 1b by demonstrating that large (vs. small) goal distance leads people to describe a goal with promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) statements, which would be a pleasure to attain (vs. a pain not to attain). Hypotheses 2a and 2b are tested in the next two studies. Study 2 demonstrates that large (vs. small) goal distance produces regulatory fit with promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) goal pursuit strategies, which increases goal involvement. Finally, Study 3 shows that individuals who are far from (vs. close to) their goal express more favorable attitude and report greater purchase intentions for a promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) product as means to goal attainment. Next, I describe these studies in more detail.

### **Study 1: The Running World**

The purpose of the first study was to test hypotheses 1a and 1b. Participants were asked to read a description of a running club and its clientele, which manipulated goal distance, and select descriptive statements which could help describe the running goal of the Running World's clients. If goal distance influences regulatory construal of a goal, individuals in large (small) goal distance condition should select more promotion-focused (prevention-focused) statements. I also tested the role of anticipated affect (pleasure and pain) in regulatory construal of distal and proximal goals in this study.

**Method.** Sixty student participants (50% male; mean age 19.8 years), who were recruited for participation through an undergraduate subject pool program at the Asper School of Business, took part in the study in exchange for course credit. Participants were instructed to read a description of a Running World gym, a fictitious running club, which provides specialized running programs for their clients. Goal distance was manipulated

by varying description of the clients' current level of running skill. In the "large goal distance" condition, the description read: "*Most of the Running World's runners are there to learn or significantly improve their current low level of running skills*"; in the "small goal distance" condition, the description read: "*Most of the Running World's runners are there to "polish off" or enhance their already high current level of running skills*". Following this manipulation, participants were shown 10 descriptive statements (5 promotion-focused and 5 prevention-focused), which appeared one by one on their screen in random order, and instructed to click on the statement if they felt it was relevant. If a participant did not perceive a statement as relevant he/she could wait few seconds and let the page expire on its own. Table 2 contains the statements that were used. The study concluded with demographic measures, manipulation check and a suspicion probe.

**Measures.** To assess whether goal distance influenced regulatory construction of the goal, I constructed a Regulatory Focus score by subtracting the number of prevention-focused statements selected from the number of promotion-focused statements selected. Higher numbers would indicate more dominant promotion focus and lower numbers would indicate more dominant prevention focus.

To assess the role of anticipated affect I asked the participants to rate on a 7-point bi-polar scale rating scale to what extent they would describe the goal of the Running World's clients as "A goal that would be a pleasure to attain" 1/ "A goal that would be a pain not to attain"<sup>7</sup>, "Attaining the goal would make them feel good"<sup>1</sup>/ "Failing to attain the goal would make them feel bad"<sup>7</sup>. Responses to these statements (Pearson's  $r = .53$ ) were averaged into Anticipated Affect measure.

**Results.** Goal distance manipulation worked as intended. In response to “How far is an average client of the Running World from his/her running goal?” anchored with “Very close”<sup>1</sup>/ “Very far”<sup>7</sup>, participants in the “large goal distance” condition rated being further away from the goal ( $M = 4.33$ ) compared to the participants in the “small goal distance” condition ( $M = 3.18$ ;  $F(1, 58) = 11.55, p < .01$ ).

To analyze the role of goal distance in regulatory construal of the goal, the regulatory focus score was subjected for analysis to a one-way ANOVA with goal distance as the independent variable. This difference was significantly greater among individuals in the “large goal distance” condition ( $M = 2.31$ ), indicating stronger promotion focus, than among those in the “small goal distance” condition ( $M = 1.5$ ;  $F(1, 54) = 4.19, p < .05$ ), indicating stronger prevention focus.

I then analyzed the influence of goal distance on anticipated affect. Anticipated affect was subjected to an ANOVA with goal distance as the independent variable for analysis. As expected, participants in the “small goal distance” condition reported anticipating more pain from failure to attain the goal ( $M = 3.24$ ), whereas participants in the “large goal distance” condition reported more pleasure from being able to attain the goal ( $M = 2.15$ ;  $F(1, 58) = 8.71, p < .01$ ). This means that small (vs. large) goal distance lead participants to think of the goal as something that would be a pain not to attain (vs. a pleasure to attain), which is consistent with the anticipated affect associated with prevention-focused (vs. promotion-focused) goals.

Lastly, I hypothesized that anticipated affect would mediate the effect of goal distance on regulatory construal of the goal. To test this, I analyzed the indirect effect of

goal distance on regulatory focus score through anticipated affect using model 4 of the process macro (Hayes, 2012). The ninety five percent bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect of goal distance was below zero (from -1.09 to -.12) indicating that anticipated affect mediated the effect of goal distance on regulatory construction of the goal.

This study provides evidence in support of hypotheses 1a and 1b. Small goal distance highlights the pain associated with the possible failure to attain the goal and leads to construction of the goal as more prevention-focused. Large goal distance highlights the pleasure associated with the prospect of being able to attain the goal and leads to construction of the goal as promotion-focused.

## **Study 2: Healthy Weight Goal**

The purpose of this study was to test hypotheses 2a and 2b. Participants were asked to read a statement about changes in the BMI guidelines, which manipulated distance toward their healthy weight goal. They were then asked to generate strategies to pursue their goal, which manipulated regulatory focus. Following the manipulations, participants were asked to evaluate their healthy weight goal in terms of its importance and relevance. I expected that individuals in the large (vs. small) goal distance condition would report greater involvement with the goal if they were asked to generate promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) goal attainment strategies.

**Method.** Eighty student participants (50% male; mean age 20.07 years), who were recruited for participation through an undergraduate subject pool program at the Asper School of Business, took part in this 2 (goal distance: large vs. small) x 2 (regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) between subjects lab experiment for course



credit. In order to activate a goal of attaining a healthy body weight, participants first read the following statement: *“In this study we would like to learn about your views and attitudes concerning healthy weight. Consciously or unconsciously, reaching a healthy weight is a goal that most people pursue. Here are some recent findings that might surprise you”*. Following this, two factors were manipulated. Goal distance was manipulated by varying the description of change in BMI guidelines by the American Medical Association. In the “large goal distance” condition the description read:

*“...Researchers found that there might be a benefit in being thinner than previously believed. Whereas previous guidelines suggested that a healthy BMI for an adult is between 18.5 and 24.9, it is now suggested that a healthy adult BMI should fall between 18.0 and 24.4. In real terms this is a difference of about 8-10 pounds. What this means for you? This could mean that you are 8 to 10 pounds further away from your health goal than you thought!”*

In the small goal distance condition the description read:

*“...Researchers found that there might be a benefit in being slightly thinner than previously believed. Whereas previous guidelines suggested that a healthy BMI for an adult is between 18.5 and 24.9, it is now suggested that a healthy adult BMI should fall between 18.2 and 24.6. In real terms this is a difference of about 3-5 pounds. What this means for you? This could mean that you are 3 to 5 pounds further away from your health goal than you thought!”*

Following goal distance manipulation, participants received regulatory focus manipulation. Promotion focus of goal attainment strategies was manipulated as follows:

*“Please think about benefits of attaining a healthy weight goal (for example, many people say that reaching healthy weight will allow them to feel more confident in a swimming suit). In the space provided below please list the things you can do to help you reach your healthy weight goal. Focus on how these things will help you attain the goal”.*

The manipulation for prevention-focused goal attainment strategies read:

*“Please think about problems you can prevent by securing a healthy weight goal (for example, many people say that reaching healthy weight will allow them to stop worrying about hypertension). In the space provided below please list the things you can avoid doing to help you reach your healthy weight goal. Focus on how these things will help you secure the goal”.*

In both conditions participants typed their strategies in the space that was provided to them. After completing these tasks, participants were asked dependent-measure, manipulation-check and demographic questions. The study concluded with a suspicion probe and disclosure that the BMI guideline changes described in the beginning of the study were fictitious.

**Measures.** Four items were borrowed from the personal involvement inventory (Zaichkowsky, 1994) and slightly modified for the context of the study: “I am interested in my goal of reaching a healthy weight”, “I am excited about my goal of reaching a healthy weight”, “My goal of reaching a healthy weight is fascinating to me”, and “My goal of reaching a healthy weight is needed”. Responses to these variables (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .73$ ) were averaged into a composite measure *Involvement* which was further analyzed.

**Results.** Manipulation of goal-distance was successful. A 2 (goal distance) x 2 (regulatory focus) ANOVA on the perception of goal distance (How far do you perceive yourself to be from your healthy weight goal: Very close<sup>1</sup>/Very far<sup>7</sup>) revealed only a significant main effect of goal distance ( $F(1,76) = 4.12, p < .05$ ) with participants in the “large goal distance” condition ( $M = 5.16$ ) reporting feeling further away from their weight goal compared to participants in the “small goal distance” condition ( $M = 4.43$ ).

To test for regulatory fit between goal distance and approach of goal pursuit, *involvement* was subjected for analysis to an ANOVA with goal distance and regulatory focus as the independent variables. There was no main effect of goal distance or regulatory focus, the interaction effect between the two variables, however, was significant ( $F(1, 76)=12.47, p < .01$ ) (please see Figure 1).

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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To better understand the nature of this interaction, analysis of simple effects was conducted. In the “large goal distance” condition, participants who generated promotion-focused strategies ( $M = 5.71$ ) reported greater goal involvement than those who generated prevention-focused strategies ( $M = 5.07; F(1, 76) = 4.65, p < .05$ ). In the “small goal distance” condition, on the other hand, participants who generated prevention-focused strategies ( $M = 5.92$ ) reported greater goal involvement than those who generated promotion-focused strategies ( $M = 4.96; F(1, 76) = 7.87, p < .01$ ). The results of this study provide support for hypotheses 2a and 2b. Large goal distance produces regulatory fit with promotion-focused strategies, while small goal distance produces regulatory fit

with prevention-focused strategies in goal pursuit. This regulatory fit is manifested through greater involvement with the goal.

### **Study 3: LearnALanguage.com**

The purpose of this study was to provide additional support for hypotheses 2a and 2b by replicating results from Study 2 in a different context, using a product as means to goal attainment and using different dependent variables. In this study, participants were asked to imagine that they desire to improve their foreign language skills. Goal distance was manipulated by varying the description of their current language skill. Participants were then asked to imagine that they receive an e-mail advertisement of a language learning product. The product description manipulated regulatory focus. Following this, participants were asked to report their attitude and purchase intentions for the product. I expected that individuals in “large goal distance” (vs. “small goal distance”) condition would express more favorable attitudes and report greater purchase intentions when they read about a promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) language learning product.

**Method.** Eighty two student participants (64% male, mean age 21 years), who were recruited through an undergraduate subject pool program at the Asper School of Business, took part in this 2 (goal distance: large vs. small) x 2 (regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) between subjects experiment in exchange for course credit. Participants were asked to imagine that they desire to improve their foreign language skills. The description of their level of current language skill manipulated goal distance. In the “large goal distance” condition participants read:

*Please imagine that you have been thinking about learning a completely new language. You know nothing about grammar, phonetics or any other aspect of this language. In other words, you are a complete novice and you have a long way to go to attain the level of language skill you desire.*

In the “small goal distance” condition participants read:

*Please imagine that you have been thinking about polishing off your skills with a language you are quite familiar with. Though you would like to improve, you have some knowledge of grammar, phonetics and other aspects of this language. In other words, you are not a novice and you have just a short stretch to attain the level of language skill you desire.*

Following this manipulation, participants were asked to imagine that they receive an e-mail advertisement from an online-based language learning service called LearnALanguage.com. Manipulation of regulatory focus was imbedded into the product description and was modified from a manipulation used by Molignier and colleagues (2008). In the “promotion-focus” condition the manipulation read:

*We are happy to introduce our service! At LearnALanguage.com we are pleased to offer language learning solutions to delight our customers. Every person is unique and it is our mission to help you find exactly what you want in a program. We know you desire the very best! We have years of experience in meeting customers’ dreams. We pride ourselves in utilizing language learning technologies that are always cutting edge. We offer fun and exciting approaches to learning a language and our customers love it – we are always in demand. Visit us today at*

*LearnALanguage.com and select a solution that is right for you. We guarantee you will be happy you did!*

In “prevention-focus” condition the manipulation read:

*We are happy to introduce our service! At LearnALanguage.com we are pleased to offer language learning solutions to satisfy our customers. Every person is unique and it is our mission to help you find exactly what you need in a program. We know you do not want to settle for less! We have years of experience in meeting customers' expectations. We pride ourselves in utilizing language learning technologies that are never behind times. We offer safe and secure approaches to learning a language and our customers love it – we are never undersold. Visit us today at LearnALanguage.com and select a solution that is right for you. We guarantee you will not be disappointed!*

This manipulation was pre-tested on an independent sample ( $N = 27$ ). Pre-test participants provided responses (on a 7-point bipolar scale) to the following question: “A product by LearnALanguage.com that you read about is focused on: Being safe/Being exciting”. Participants in the “promotion focus” condition rated the product as more exciting ( $M = 5.09$ ), whereas participants in the “prevention focus” condition rated the product as more safe ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $F(1, 25) = 4.31$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Following the manipulations, participants were asked to report their attitude and purchase intentions for the product. The study concluded with manipulation checks, demographic measures and a suspicion probe.

**Measures.** Two measures were of interest in this study. Attitude was measured by asking participants to rate how they felt about the product: “Bad”/“Good”7, “Negative”/“Positive”7, “Unfavorable”/“Favorable” 7(Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .95$ ). Purchase intentions were measured (on a 7-point bi-polar scale) by asking participant how likely they would be to purchase a product from LearnALanguage.com: “Not likely at all”/“Very likely”, “Definitely will not purchase”/“Will purchase for sure” (Pearson’s  $r = .87$ ).

**Results.** Goal distance manipulation worked as intended. A 2 (goal distance) x 2 (regulatory focus) ANOVA on perception of goal distance (How far do you perceive yourself to be from your desired level of language skill: Very close/Very far7) revealed only a significant main effect on goal distance ( $F(1, 78) = 21.17, p < .01$ ) with participants in the “large goal distance” condition ( $M = 4.86$ ) reporting feeling further away from their desired skill level than participants in the “small goal distance” condition ( $M = 3.38$ ) and a (unhypothesized) marginally significant effect of regulatory focus ( $F(1, 78) = 3.18, p = .08$ ). Participants in the promotion focus ( $M = 4.72$ ) condition reported feeling slightly further away from the goal than those in prevention focus condition ( $M = 4.20$ ). To analyze whether large (vs. small) goal distance produced regulatory fit with a promotion (vs. prevention) focus, attitude and purchase intentions were subjected to ANOVAs with goal distance and regulatory focus as the independent variables.

There was no main effect of goal distance or regulatory focus on attitude ( $p_s > .1$ ). Regulatory focus by goal distance interaction, however, was significant ( $F(1, 78) = 8.923, p < .01$ ) (please see Figure 2).

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Insert Figure 2 about here

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Planned contrasts revealed that in the “large goal distance” condition, participants who read about a promotion-focused product ( $M = 5.58$ ) reported more favorable attitude than those who read about a prevention-focused product ( $M = 4.79$ ;  $F(1, 78) = 6.10, p < .05$ ). In the “small goal distance” condition, however, participants who read about a prevention-focused product ( $M = 5.49$ ) reported higher attitude than those who read about a promotion-focused product ( $M = 4.48$ ;  $F(1, 78) = 3.92, p = .05$ ).

Likewise, there was no main effect of regulatory focus or goal distance on purchase intentions, but regulatory focus by goal distance interaction was significant ( $F(1, 78) = 14.20, p < .01$ ) (please see Figure 3).

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Insert Figure 3 about here

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Analysis of simple effects revealed that in the “large goal distance” condition, participants reported greater purchase intentions for promotion-focused ( $M = 4.41$ ) than prevention-focused ( $M = 3.5$ ;  $F(1,78) = 5.83, p < .05$ ) product. In the “small goal distance” condition, however, participants reported greater purchase intentions for prevention-focused ( $M = 4.27$ ) than promotion-focused ( $M = 2.50, F(1, 78) = 8.61, p < .01$ ) product. The results of this experiment provide additional support for hypotheses 2a and 2b. Participants who perceived themselves to be far from (close to) their goal reported higher attitude and greater purchase intentions for a promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) product which was offered as means to goal attainment.



## **Discussion**

The results of three experiments provide converging support for the propositions of this essay. When goal distance is small, individuals use more prevention-focused (vs. promotion-focused) statements to describe a goal (Study 1), report greater goal involvement after generating prevention-focused (vs. promotion-focused) goal attainment strategies (Study 2) and express more favorable attitude and greater purchase intentions for a prevention-focused (vs. promotion-focused) product as means to goal attainment (Study 3). The effect of goal distance on the regulatory construal of the goal is mediated by the anticipated affect from goal attainment or failure (Study 1). These findings suggest that large goal distance leads individuals to view goal attainment as an opportunity for advancement and accomplishment, a goal which is a pleasure to attain. As a result, promotion-focused approaches make people who are far from their goal view the goals as more valuable. Also, as demonstrated in study 3, promotion-focused goal attainment means are more appealing to individuals who are far from their goal. When goal distance is small, the goal is no longer perceived as an opportunity for attainment; instead the perception of the goal changes in favor of an expectation that has to be met, a goal that would be a pain not to attain. As a result, greater goal involvement results from prevention-focused goal attainment approaches. Also, prevention-focused goal attainment means become more appealing when goal distance is small.

**Theoretical contribution.** This research makes contributions in several areas. To regulatory focus theory this research contributes by demonstrating the malleability of regulatory construction of goals. Whereas previous research focused on individual (e.g., Higgins, 1997; Aaker & Lee, 2001; Cesario et al., 2004) and goal specific characteristics

(e.g., Lee & Aaker, 2004; Zhou & Pham, 2004; Chitturi et al., 2010) which determine construction of a goal as promotion- or prevention-focused, this research identifies that regulatory construction of a goal depends on one's perceived proximity to the goal. When a goal is perceived to be far, it is more likely to represent an opportunity for attainment and be construed as a promotion-focused goal; when a goal is perceived to be close, it is more likely to represent an expectation or a standard that has to be met and be construed as a prevention-focused goal. Therefore, it is possible that a person will construe his/her goal differently throughout the course of goal pursuit. In the beginning of goal pursuit the goal will likely be perceived as more promotion-focused; as progress toward the goal is made the goal will likely become more prevention-focused. In addition, I also shed light on the underlying role of anticipated affect in the difference of regulatory construal of "large (vs. small) goal distance" goals. I show that a difference in focus on pleasure of goal attainment versus pain of goal failure mediates that effect of goal distance on regulatory construction of the goal.

This research also contributes to a growing body of goal distance literature (e.g., Louro, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2007; Etkin & Ratner, 2012; Townsend & Liu, 2012) by identifying distinct types of motivation associated with stages of goal pursuit. Previous studies examined differences in preferences and psychological states based on proximity to the goal; this research examines differences in a motivational factor—regulatory focus—based on proximity to the goal. I also show that goal distance is associated with differences in anticipated goal relevant affect. When goal distance is large, anticipated pleasure of success is more relevant, when goal distance is small anticipated pain of failure is more relevant.

Finally, the current research contributes to a deeper understanding of complexities of the goal gradient effect. A well-established phenomenon, goal gradient effect considers the relationship between goal distance and motivational strength; it is, however, silent about the role of motivational type in this phenomenon. Goal gradient posits that as goal distance becomes smaller, motivational strength increases. My findings offer additional insight into goal gradient effect by identifying the interplay between goal distance and regulatory focus of the goal. Mogilner and colleagues (2008) found that temporal perspective plays a role in regulatory construction of goals. When a (purchasing) goal is far off in the future, it is construed as more promotion-focused, when a (purchasing) goal is imminent, however, the goal is more prevention in nature. This means that although our *intentions* (temporarily distant) may be to promote a positive outcome, our *actions* (immediate) often seek to prevent a negative outcome (Mogilner et al., 2008). Since we are likely to represent our immediate actions as prevention actions, regulatory fit is more likely to be generated in later stages of goal pursuit when the goal distance is small and the goal is construed as prevention. This fit explains increase in motivational strength as goal distance decreases. To the contrary, in the beginning of goal pursuit when goal distance is large and the goal is construed as promotional, immediate actions (perceived as prevention actions) are likely to result in regulatory non-fit and decrease motivation.

**Practical implications.** This research has important practical implications. For example, in the context of promoting healthy behaviors, such as losing weight, quitting smoking or hoping to improve one's daily diet, it is important to understand the interactive effect of goal distance and regulatory focus. Individuals who are far from their goal (e.g., very overweight, heavy smoker, very unhealthy eater) can benefit from

promotion-focused goal attainment strategies. Such strategies can entail reward-based incentive system, focus on can do (rather than avoid doing) goal-related behaviors as well as reinforcement of the benefits associated with goal attainment. To the contrary, individuals who are close to their goal are more likely to benefit from prevention-focused goal attainment strategies. Such strategies can emphasize the negative outcomes which can stem from failing to attain the goal, focusing on avoiding behaviors which can harm goal attainment and introducing a negative-reinforcement based incentive system.

In the context of product marketing, many products are marketed as means to goal attainment. For example, oral care products are often marketed as means to attaining a goal of oral health, household cleaning products as means to a goal of a better household, not to mention, weight-loss supplements or learning solutions that have a primary purpose of serving as goal attainment means. Combining representation of goal distance with appropriate regulatory framing of the appeal can enhance marketing effectiveness.

**Limitations and directions for future research.** This research has some limitations which also provide opportunities for future research. The current research employed between-subjects design in all three experiments. Although it offers internal validity, such design does not directly test whether regulatory motivation *shifts* as a person makes progress toward the goal and his/her goal distance reduces. A within-subjects design would be beneficial to more directly provide support for the regulatory motivation shift. Future studies are necessary to address this shortcoming.

This research employed self-reported dependent measures in all three experiments. Although they provide converging support for the hypotheses of this essay, more studies with direct behavioral measures are necessary to strengthen current findings. For

example, such measures as compliance with goal attainment plan, consecutive goal-consistent behaviors, and product choice (healthy over unhealthy option) would strengthen the ecological validity of my findings. Therefore, future studies which test these hypotheses in different contexts and use more long-term oriented behavioral dependent measures are necessary.

The samples for all three studies were drawn from a population of Canadian undergraduate students. Although this population has some ethnic diversity, it is predominantly North American. Comparatively to North American consumers, who value attainment, consumers from East Asian or Latin American countries emphasize responsibility over individual accomplishment (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000; Briley & Aaker, 2007). In other words, whereas for North Americans the ultimate goal is to distinguish oneself and demonstrate accomplishment, for Asians and Latin American it is to be a responsible member of the society who maintains societal harmony. It is than possible that large goal distance, which means “if you accomplish this you can set yourself apart from others” to North Americans and leads to a construction of a promotional goal, may mean “if you accomplish this you will satisfy our expectation for you” to Asians and lead to a construction of a preventional goal. Hence the relationship between goal distance and regulatory construal of goals may be subject to cultural context and self-construal. Future studies are needed to determine whether culture or self-construal moderate the goal-distance—regulatory focus relationship found in this research.

In conclusion, this research opens the door for future research opportunities examining the interplay of motivational and individual factors throughout the course of

goal pursuit. Our society is faced with a variety of challenges which stem from our inability to exercise control over our consumption (e.g., obesity, overspending). Hence, it is important for us not only to set New Year's Resolutions but also to stick with our goals until they have been accomplished. A better understanding of the motivational differences associated with stages of goal pursuit may be key in keeping us motivated as we self-regulate toward becoming a healthier society.

## Essay 2

### Conceptual Framework

In this essay I examine fit between sustainability and a prevention focus. Specifically, I demonstrate that exposure to sustainability claims activates prevention concerns in consumers. I then show that consumers make prevention-focused inferences about sustainable products. Finally, I demonstrate that marketing of sustainable products with prevention-framed (vs. promotion-framed) marketing appeals generates regulatory fit and leads to more favorable evaluations. This essay makes a substantive contribution to the sustainability literature by identifying a specific type of motivation (prevention motivation) associated with sustainability-oriented practices and offerings. This essay contributes to regulatory focus literature by identifying a marketing context (sustainability) as a primer of a prevention focus. Also, by demonstrating that perception of fit mediates the sustainability by regulatory focus interaction, I show that consumers may be aware of the fit in the regulatory fit effect. While previous research documented that heuristic factors as processing fluency (e.g., Lee & Aaker, 2004; Lee et al., 2010) engagement (Lee et al., 2010) or confidence (Wan et al., 2009) drive regulatory fit effects, in this research I demonstrate that the perception of a fit can mediate the effect on product evaluation.

In view of rising concerns about the depletion of natural resources and increasing consumer interest in “green” products and services, numerous organizations have responded with a variety of sustainability initiatives (Gunther, 2006). Environmentally friendly brands such as GreenWorks and NatureClean have emerged, retailers such as Walmart and Whole Foods have introduced various sustainability practices (e.g.,

reducing packaging of goods, using recycled materials in store bags), and many major brands, such as Tide, Clorox, and Purex now provide “green” options. Despite the overall awareness and seemingly positive attitudes of consumers towards “green” initiatives, the link to purchase behaviour of sustainable alternatives is not always apparent. One source suggests, for example, that while 40% of consumers report positive attitudes and willingness to buy “green products,” only 4% of consumers actually end up purchasing them (United Nations Environment Programme, 2005, p. 15). This attitude-behaviour gap (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000) can make it challenging for companies pursuing socially conscious initiatives to market their products.

Several studies demonstrated that although consumers are, in general, positively disposed toward sustainable products, they feel that ethical consumption involves a compromise. Jagel, Keeling, Reppel and Gruber (2012) found that some of the goals consumers aim to achieve through ethical consumption can conflict with one another. For example, a goal of paying a reasonable price can compete with the goal of looking fashionable. This means that with ethical consumption at least some of the desirable product attributes have to be compromised (Jagel et al., 2012). Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) found that ethical company behaviour can negatively influence inferences about some desirable product attributes. Specifically, the authors found that although companies’ socially responsible behaviour favourably influences consumers’ evaluations, it also can generate negative beliefs about the company’s ability to make *high quality* products, which can lead to lower purchase intentions. Luchs, Walker-Naylor, Irwin and Rangunathan (2010) demonstrated that ethical products carry a “sustainability liability”—consumers infer that sustainable products lack in strength. In product categories in which



strength is an important attribute (e.g., tires, car shampoo), sustainability liability can lower consumers' propensity to buy ethical products.

Another stream of research examined factors which make consumers more likely to buy sustainable products. Davies, Lee and Ahonkhai (2012) found that product category matters. Consumers are significantly less likely to consider ethics when purchasing luxuries compared to commoditized products. In product categories, such as personal care or baby products, where gentleness is valued over strength, sustainable products tend to be preferred over their conventional counterparts (Luchs et al., 2010). The manner in which a consumer forms his/her consideration set plays a role in how much value is placed on ethicality. When a consideration set is formed by excluding (vs. including) choice alternatives into consideration set, ethicality is more likely to be valued as a product attribute (Irwin & Walker-Naylor, 2009). In other words, it is easier to *not include* a sustainable product than to *exclude* one from a consideration set. Lastly, some consumers wilfully ignore information about ethical product attributes to avoid feeling negative emotions (specifically anger) which can result from lack of ethicality (Ehrich & Irwin, 2005).

Sustainability can be seen as a characteristic of a company or a product which signals commitment to responsibility (e.g., employing environmentally friendly manufacturing practices to be a responsible member of society). Indeed, The United States Environmental *Protection Agency*, Corporate Social *Responsibility*, Environmental Health and *Safety Standards* are just some of the prominent terms which condition consumers to think of Sustainability in the context of protection, safety and responsibility—values emphasized by a prevention focus system. This conditioned

association links sustainability to prevention-focused concerns. Moreover, prevention-focused goals function as minimal goals (Idson, Liberman, & Higgins, 2000), whereby a standard is set and the goal is not to fall short of that standard. Moral standards are often presented or framed as minimal goals. For example, out of the Ten Commandments, only two are maximal commandments (i.e., “honour thy father and thy mother”, and “remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy”), the remaining eight commandments are minimal (“though shall not kill”, “though shall not commit adultery”, etc.). Examples of moral standards framed as minimal goals are not limited to a Christian value system. Consider standards such as: “First, do no harm” (paraphrased from the Hippocratic Oath), “Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk” (U.S. Department of Transportation campaign), or “Just Say No” (from the anti-drug campaign) (Irwin & Walker-Naylor, 2009), which also frame responsible behaviors as minimal prevention-focused goals. Altogether, this points to socially constructed compatibility between sustainability—responsibility—prevention-focused goals paradigm. My main proposition in this essay is that sustainability claims, which communicate commitment to responsibility, temporarily shift consumers’ focus toward their prevention concerns, which leads to the first hypothesis:

H1: Sustainability claims activate prevention concerns (rather than promotion concerns) in consumers

This proposition is consistent with several previous research findings. For example, activation of prevention focus upon exposure to sustainability claims is consistent with a finding by Irwin and Walker-Naylor (2009) that exclusion of alternatives strategy in the formation of a consideration set induces consumers to value

ethical attributes; this is because exclusion of alternatives strategy resembles a prevention-focused strategy of ensuring correct rejections (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). It is also consistent with the finding by Davies and colleagues (2012) that ethicality matters less when purchasing luxuries (vs. commoditized products). Luxuries, which tend to be hedonic in nature, are more compatible with a promotion focus (Chitturi et al., 2008; Micu & Chawdhury, 2010) and hence sustainability (which is compatible with prevention) just does not fit.

Product attributes which satisfy prevention-focused consumption goals are commonly referred to as prevention-focused attributes. They are the attributes that deliver safety, security and protection relevant benefits and help reduce the possibility of negative outcomes. For example, antilock car breaks is a prevention-focused attribute of a car as it reduces a possibility of a collision (Wang & Lee, 2006). Since sustainable companies are perceived to be motivated by their commitment to responsibility, it is likely that sustainable products will be perceived to satisfy concerns for responsibility and possess prevention-focused attributes. This leads to the second hypothesis:

H2: Consumers make prevention-focused (rather than promotion-focused) inferences about sustainable companies' products.

Again, this proposition is consistent with previous sustainability literature findings. Several studies demonstrated that consumers associate ethicality and sustainability with caring and compassion (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Sisodia, Sheth, & Wolfe, 2007), gentleness and safety (Luchs et al., 2010), and protectiveness (Gildea, 2001) and these traits are prevention-focused in nature.

In line with previous research (e.g., Lee & Aaker, 2004; Wang & Lee, 2006; Kim, 2006; Micu & Chawdhury, 2010; Mogilner, Aaker, & Pennington, 2008), which demonstrated the effect of regulatory fit in product marketing, I propose that marketing of sustainable products with prevention-framed appeals will generate regulatory fit and lead to more favorable evaluations.

H3: Marketing of sustainable products with prevention-framed (vs. promotion-framed) appeals will generate regulatory fit and lead to more favorable evaluations.

Much of regulatory focus research sought to understand the underlying mechanisms of the “feeling right” effect of regulatory fit. Processing fluency (e.g., Lee & Aaker, 2004; Murali & Pons, 2009; Lee et al., 2010) engagement (Lee et al., 2010) and confidence (Wan et al., 2009) have been demonstrated to mediate the regulatory fit effect. These previously documented mediators are heuristic in nature. However, is it possible that regulatory fit can function in a more systematic manner? Indeed, consumers make prevention-relevant inferences about sustainable products and infer responsibility commitment from sustainability practices, so it is plausible that consumers will also be able to “make the connection” and be aware that sustainability of a product matches or fits with its prevention-framed appeal. I propose that the regulatory fit between sustainability and a prevention focus on evaluations will be mediated by the perception of fit.

H4: Regulatory fit between sustainability and a prevention focus on evaluations will be mediated by the perception of fit

To test the four hypotheses outlined in this essay three studies were conducted. The first study tests whether exposure to sustainability claims activates a prevention focus in consumers (hypothesis 1). The second study tests whether consumers make prevention-focused inferences about sustainable company's products (hypothesis 2). Lastly, the third study tests whether the regulatory fit between a sustainable product and a prevention-focused appeal leads to enhanced evaluations and whether indeed the perception of fit can explain enhanced evaluations (hypotheses 3 and 4). Below are detailed descriptions of these studies.

### **Study 1: Activation of Focus**

Study 1 was designed to test hypothesis 1. Participants were given a description of a company that engaged in either sustainable or conventional production practices and asked to generate five thoughts that reading about the company brought to mind. I predicted that participants who read about a company that used sustainable practices would generate more prevention-relevant thoughts than participants who read about a company that did not use sustainable practices.

**Method.** Eighty five student participants (50% male; mean age 20 years), who were recruited through an undergraduate subject pool program at the Asper School of Business took part in the study. They were randomly assigned to either a “sustainable” or “conventional” company description condition. The description of a sustainable company read:

*WinterExpress is a young Canadian company that specializes in making a broad range of winter products such as toboggans, sleds, skies and skates, shovels, ice*

*picks and other products that can help make snowy Canadian winter fun and enjoyable. WinterExpress employs sustainable technologies and uses at least 75% recycled materials in all product parts. All of the WinterExpress products follow the ingredient make up of today's environmentally friendly manufacturers and include only ecologically safe materials in the production. WinterExpress adheres to strict environmental guidelines to ensure that a portion of each dollar of its customers' money is spent on making the manufacturing process cleaner so that the consumers get the best products which are also great for our planet!*

The description of a conventional company read:

*WinterExpress is a young Canadian company that specializes in making a broad range of winter products such as toboggans, sleds, skies and skates, shovels, ice picks and other products that can help make snowy Canadian winter fun and enjoyable. WinterExpress employs proven technologies and uses new materials in all product parts. All of the WinterExpress products follow the ingredient make up of today's leading producers and only include proven performance materials in the production. WinterExpress adheres to strict corporate guidelines to ensure that a portion of each dollar of its customers' money is spent on making the manufacturing process better so that the consumers get the most "bang for their buck"!*

After reading the description of the company, participants were asked to list thoughts or priorities that the company's description brought to their mind. They were then asked to code the thoughts they had listed as either a) wants and opportunities; or b)

responsibilities and duties; or c) things I want to do; or d) things I have to do; or e) none of the above. This procedure is similar to that used by Pham and Chang (2010) to test for activation of regulatory focus. The study concluded with demographic questions and a suspicion probe.

**Measure.** For each respondent, the number of thoughts coded as “a” and “c” were summed to capture the number of promotion-relevant thoughts that were generated; the “b” and “d” codings were summed to capture the number of prevention-relevant thoughts that were generated. An *index of activation* of promotion or prevention focus was then created, whereby the number of prevention-relevant thoughts was subtracted from the number of promotion-relevant thoughts (index of activation =  $(a+c)-(b+d)$ ). Higher numbers indicated a greater degree of activation of a promotion focus and lower numbers indicated greater degree of activation of a prevention focus.

**Results.** A one-tailed t-test, which is suitable for testing of one-directional hypotheses (e.g. Kimmel, 1957; Leventhal & Huynh, 1996) was employed to compare the index of activation between the “sustainable” and “conventional” conditions. As expected, the index of activation was lower for a company described as sustainable ( $M = -.53$ ) than for a company described as conventional ( $M = .21$ ;  $t(81) = 1.85$ ,  $p < .05$  (one-tailed)). Thus, when participants read about a sustainable company, they generated more prevention-relevant thoughts than when they read about a conventional company. This finding supported hypothesis 1 that sustainability of a company activates prevention concerns in consumers.

## Study 2: Product Inferences

The purpose of this study was to test hypothesis 2. Sustainability manipulation was borrowed from Study 1. After reading the description of the company, the participants were asked to match adjectives to the company's products. This was done to capture their inferences about the characteristics of the products made by sustainable vs. conventional companies. I hypothesized that participants would select more prevention-relevant adjectives for the company with sustainable practices than they would for the company with conventional practices.

**Method.** One hundred and sixteen student participants (62% male; mean age 21 years), who were recruited for participation through an undergraduate subject pool program at the Asper School of Business took part in the study. They were randomly assigned to either a “sustainable” or “conventional” company description condition. To capture the participants' inferences about the company's products, they were asked to match adjectives to the products of the company. Participants were shown ten pairs of adjectives, one pair at a time, and instructed to select an adjective from each pair that best described the company's products. Participants had an option not to select either of the two adjectives if they did not feel that either was applicable. Each pair consisted of one promotion-relevant and one prevention-relevant adjective (see Table 3 for the pairs of adjectives used). These adjectives had been pre-tested to be descriptive of promotion- and prevention-focused product features (please see appendix for pretest details).

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Insert Table 3 about here

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**Measure.** An *index of association* was created by subtracting the number of prevention-relevant adjectives that were selected from the number of promotion-relevant adjectives that were selected. Higher numbers indicated a greater association with a promotion focus and lower numbers indicated a greater association with a prevention focus.

**Results.** To test whether sustainability of a company influenced product inferences the index of association was subjected to a t-test for analysis. As expected, the index of association was significantly lower for a company described as sustainable ( $M = -2.20$ ) than for a company described as conventional ( $M = 2.88$ ;  $t(114) = 5.55$ ,  $p < .01$  (one-tailed)). Participants who read about a sustainable company matched more prevention-relevant adjectives to the company's products than those that read about a conventional company. These results supported hypothesis 2 that consumers make prevention-focused inferences about sustainable companies' products.

### **Study 3: Sustainability—Prevention Fit**

The purpose of Study 3 was to test hypotheses 3 and 4. In this 2 (sustainability: conventional vs. sustainable) x 2 (regulatory framing: promotion vs. prevention) between subjects experiment, participants read a description of a laundry detergent (sustainable or conventional) and its claims (promotion-framed or prevention-framed). They were then asked to provide their ratings of the detergent on a number of measures. I hypothesized that the sustainable detergent would be evaluated higher when prevention-framed (vs. promotion-framed) claims were used due to regulatory fit between sustainability and a prevention focus. A “conventional” condition was included in the design to serve as a

“control” condition—no effect of regulatory focus was hypothesized for a conventional detergent.

**Manipulation pre-tests.** Forty-five undergraduate students rated the product (detergent) on a seven point scale. In the “conventional” condition, the description of the detergent read:

*This detergent is made from chemically derived ingredients, similar to those used in most of today's laundry detergents. It is not any more harmful for the environment than any other conventional brand of laundry detergent. It has been evaluated by an independent panel of judges on sustainability and environmental friendliness and received a 5 out of 10 (average) rating. The makers of this detergent focused on using the latest technologies in engineering and the best possible selection of ingredients to include in their product.*

In the “sustainable” condition the description read:

*This detergent is made from 98% all natural plant derived ingredients, similar to those used in today's environmentally conscious laundry detergents. It is a lot less harmful for the environment than most conventional brands of laundry detergents. It has been evaluated by an independent panel of judges on sustainability and environmental friendliness and received a 9 out of 10 (superior) rating. The makers of this detergent focused on using only the most pure and wholesome ingredients to include in their product.*

Participants in the “sustainability” condition rated the detergent as more “sustainable and environmentally friendly” ( $M = 5.72$ ) than participants in the “conventional” condition ( $M = 3.71$ ;  $F(1,40) = 14.32$ ,  $p < .01$ ), validating the sustainability manipulation.

The pre-test of the “regulatory focus of claims” framing manipulation followed the procedure used by Wang and Lee (2006). I asked eighty undergraduate students to read definitions and examples of promotion-focused and prevention-focused features in order to ensure that participants had a clear understanding of these terms and their meaning. Promotion-focused features were described as those designed to bring about *positive* outcomes (e.g., to help people attain accomplishments and advancement when they use the product, and to make people feel cheerful when these features are present and disappointed when they are absent). Participants were also given an example of a promotion-focused feature: a powerful engine of a car that would allow people to enjoy the excitement and adventure of driving a fast car. Prevention-focused features were described as those designed to avoid *negative* outcomes (e.g., to help people avoid potential costs and losses when they use the product, and to make people feel comfortable when these features are present and tense when they are absent). The participants were also given an example of a prevention-focused feature: antilock car brakes that would reduce the probability of a collision and make people feel safe and secure.

Three benefits typically offered by a laundry detergent (fabric care, cleaning power, and odour control) into three promotion-framed and three prevention-framed product claims (see Table 4).

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Insert Table 3 about here

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Participants were asked to rate all the features on a seven point scale anchored by “Prevention-focused” at one extreme and “Promotion-focused” at the other extreme. Lower numbers indicate that a feature is perceived as more prevention-focused, while higher numbers indicate that a feature is perceived as more promotion-focused. For each of the three benefits, promotion-framed features were rated significantly higher than their corresponding prevention-framed features. For the “fabric care” benefit, the promotion-framed feature ( $M = 4.61$ ) was rated significantly higher than its prevention-framed feature ( $M = 2.83$ ;  $t(70) = 5.11, p < .01$ ). Similarly, for the “cleaning power” benefit, the promotion-framed feature ( $M = 4.03$ ) was rated significantly higher than its prevention-framed feature ( $M = 3.15$ ;  $t(70) = 2.76, p < .01$ ). Lastly, for the “odour control” benefit, the promotion-framed feature ( $M = 4.82$ ) was rated significantly higher than its prevention-framed feature ( $M = 3.28$ ;  $t(70) = 5.10, p < .01$ ). Therefore, when the three detergent benefits were formulated into prevention-framed features, they were perceived as more prevention-focused; whereas when those *same* benefits were formulated into promotion-framed features, they were perceived as more promotion-focused.

**Method.** In the main study, one hundred and four consumers from a general population (45% male, mean age 28 years) were recruited through a Qualtrics research panel. Participants were told that they were helping design an advertisement for a new brand of laundry detergent. Following that, participants received the sustainability manipulation described above. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to the “sustainable” condition and half to the “conventional” condition. Immediately after, participants were told that a marketer was planning to emphasize three benefits to position this detergent in the market. Half of the participants in each condition received

the benefits framed with a promotion focus and the other half received the benefits framed with a prevention focus. Participants then answered dependent measure questions intended to capture their evaluations of the product. The study concluded with demographic measures and a suspicion probe.

**Measures.** After reading the manipulations, participants were asked a number of questions relating to the dependent measures. I first asked the participants to rate (on a seven point scale) their own preferences: *attitude toward the product* (negative1/positive7; bad1/good7; and unfavourable1/favourable7, Chronbach's  $\alpha = .97$ ) and *purchase intentions for the product* ("Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree that you would be willing to purchase it (detergent) over the detergent you normally buy if it was available at a price the same as that of the detergent you usually buy."), which was anchored with "Strongly disagree"1/"Strongly agree"7.

Researchers (e.g., Luchs et al., 2010) have found that when participants are asked to indicate their own preferences in situations where sustainable choices are involved, they may give socially biased responses favoring the sustainable option as they try to present themselves in a positive light. To overcome this potential problem, I collected a set of projective measures. Consistent with reasoning by Luchs and colleagues (2010), I expected that these measures would be more indicative of the participants' true opinions because it would allow them to project their true thoughts in a non-threatening manner, i.e., attributing preferences to "others" and not themselves (Fisher, 1993; Luchs et al., 2010). Therefore, I measured *evaluations* by asking participants to rate the following three statements on a seven point scale anchored by "Strongly disagree"/"Strongly agree": (1) "This product would be likely to sell well in large North American

supermarkets,” (2) “This product would be likely to become a best seller,” and (3) “This product would be likely to beat major leading brands of laundry detergent.” These items were combined into a measure *evaluations* (Chronbach’s  $\alpha = .88$ ) by taking an average of the responses to the three statements.

I also measured *perceived fit* between the degree of sustainability and the regulatory focus of product benefits. Participants indicated on a seven point scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: “The performance features of the detergent “fit well” with the overall description of the detergent.” I hypothesized that this *perceived fit* would mediate the interaction between sustainability and regulatory focus on *evaluations*.

**Results.** I first analyzed the measures of attitude and purchase intentions. Both measures were submitted to 2 x 2 ANOVAs with sustainability and regulatory focus of product claims as the independent variables. A main effect of sustainability revealed that participants reported a more positive attitude ( $M = 6.31$ ) and greater purchase intentions ( $M = 5.55$ ) toward the product in the “sustainable” condition than the product in the “conventional” condition ( $M = 5.67$ ;  $F(1,89) = 7.36, p < .01$ ) and ( $M = 4.95$ ;  $F(1,89) = 4.42, p < .05$ ), respectively. These results are not altogether surprising as they likely reflect socially desirable responding driven by the desire to appear favourably disposed toward sustainability issues. I then analyzed *perceived fit* and *evaluations*, which I hypothesized would more accurately reflect the participant’s true reactions.

The measures of perceived fit and positioning were submitted to 2 x 2 ANOVAs with sustainability and regulatory focus of product claims as the independent variables.

As expected, I found a significant interaction effect between sustainability of the detergent and the regulatory focus of its claims for both perceived fit ( $F(1,89) = 4.34, p < .05$ ) and evaluations ( $F(1,89) = 5.21, p < .05$ ). Further analyses of simple effects revealed that the interaction effects were driven by the effect of regulatory focus in the “sustainable” condition. Participants perceived a better fit ( $M = 5.60$ ) and gave higher evaluations ( $M = 5.49$ ) when the detergent was sustainable and the benefits were framed with a prevention focus, compared to the fit ( $M = 4.92; F(1, 89) = 3.22, p = .08$ ) and evaluations ( $M = 4.69; F(1,89) = 6.14, p < .05$ ) when the benefits were framed with a promotion focus. Though the simple effect of regulatory focus for the *perceived fit* was marginally significant, the reader should keep in mind that the reported p-value reflects a two-tailed comparison. Given the directionality of the hypothesis, a one-tailed comparison would be more appropriate. A one-tailed comparison of the means of *perceived fit* would yield a significant p-value of .04. As anticipated, there was no simple effect of regulatory focus for the conventional detergent. Participants reported similar perceived fit ( $M = 5.14$ ) and evaluations ( $M = 5.10$ ) when the detergent was conventional and the benefits were framed with a promotion focus, compared to the fit ( $M = 4.65; F(1,89) = 1.44, p > .1$ ) and evaluations ( $M = 4.78; F(1,89) = 1.19 p > .1$ ) when the benefits were framed with a prevention focus (see Figures 4 and 5 for the results pattern and the cell means). Hypothesis 3 was supported.

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Insert Figure 4 about here

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Insert Figure 5 about here

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Lastly, I analyzed whether *perceived fit* mediated the interaction effect between sustainability and regulatory focus on *evaluations*. Hayes' (2012) mediated moderation test indicated a mediating effect of *perceived fit* on *evaluations*. A 95% bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect of the interaction between sustainability and regulatory focus was above zero (from 0.03 to 1.57). This means that the perceived fit between sustainability and prevention focus explains more favorable product evaluations given to a sustainable detergent with prevention-framed claims. H4 was supported.

## **Discussion**

In this essay I demonstrate regulatory fit between sustainability and prevention focus. In Study 1 participants read about a company (sustainable or conventional) and generated thoughts that reading about the company brought to mind. The results indicate that sustainability claims activate prevention concerns in consumers. In Study 2, participants read about a company (sustainable or conventional) and selected adjectives to describe company's products. The results of this study showed that participants made prevention-focused inferences about products of a sustainable company. Lastly, in Study 3 participants evaluated a laundry detergent (sustainable or conventional) marketed using either promotion-framed or prevention-framed product claims. I found that sustainable detergent was evaluated more favorably when prevention-framed (vs. promotion-framed) product claims were used. This effect was mediated by the perception of fit between sustainability and prevention-focus of the claims.

**Contribution.** This research makes contributions to sustainability literature and to regulatory focus literature. First, I contribute to sustainability literature by identifying a specific type of motivation (prevention motivation) associated with sustainable practices



and offerings. This is important because it recognizes sustainability as an antecedent of prevention focus. Findings of regulatory focus literature can be leveraged to better understand challenges in marketing of sustainability initiatives. One specific example comes to mind. For years environmental activists have tried to get the public to recognize Global Warming as an issue and to take action against it. Findings of this essay suggest that the way in which the problem is framed may be problematic because it represents regulatory non-fit. “Global” Warming suggests an abstract global phenomenon, and abstraction and global processing fit a promotion (vs. prevention) focus (Forster & Higgins, 2005; Lee et al., 2010). In other words, since sustainability is prevention-focused in nature, framing a problem in global abstract terms (which fit promotion focus) “feel wrong” due to regulatory non-fit and does not sufficiently motivate people to address the issue.

This research also contributes to regulatory focus literature. First, I identify sustainability as a primer of a prevention focus. Recent research has emphasized the importance of understanding how contextual factors can engender regulatory motivation and influence consumers’ preferences (e.g., Mogilner et al., 2008; Mishra et al., 2010; Micu & Chawdhury, 2010). In line with this reasoning, I contribute by identifying a marketing initiative (sustainable practices) as a factor that activates prevention focus in consumers. The second contribution to regulatory focus literature is that I demonstrate that consumers may be aware of the fit in the regulatory fit effect. While previous research demonstrated that mediators which are predominantly heuristic in nature, such as processing fluency (e.g., Lee & Aaker, 2004; Murali & Pons, 2009), engagement (Lee et al., 2010) and confidence (Wan et al., 2009) can explain regulatory fit effects, in

this research I demonstrate that perception of fit, a more systematic phenomenon, mediates sustainability by regulatory focus interaction.

**Practical implications.** This research has important practical implications. For marketers of sustainable products, this research offers a theoretically justified yet practical technique for marketing of their offerings. If practitioners choose prevention-framed appeals (product claims, brand slogans, mission statements) for their sustainable products they may be able to increase effectiveness of their marketing efforts. Social marketers can use prevention-focused appeals in advertisements and PSAs to market sustainability initiatives more successfully. Marketers of sustainability initiatives can also leverage other aspects of prevention focus, such a concreteness (Lee et al., 2010), local processing (Forster & Higgins, 2005), reliance on cognitive (vs. affective) cues (Pham & Avnet, 2004) to construct more effective marketing appeals through regulatory fit.

**Limitations and directions for future research.** This research has several limitations which also present opportunities for future research. In the studies reported in this essay two product categories were used for hypotheses testing: winter recreation products and laundry detergent. While both product categories are fairly neutral in their compatibility with promotion/prevention focus, future research should examine robustness of sustainability—prevention focus fit using other product categories. For example, would this fit be strong enough to make consumers care about ethical luxury? Questions such as this are worth investigating in future studies.

Another limitation of this research is the lack of “actual choice” measures. Specifically, in Study 3, which intended to demonstrate the sustainability—prevention focus fit, a projective measure was used to capture consumers’ reactions to the product.

While projective measures have been found to be highly predictive of actual behavior, especially in situation where socially desirable responding is likely (e.g., Fisher, 1993; Luchs et al., 2010), future studies should directly examine whether sustainability—prevention focus fit would result in purchase of sustainable product over conventional one.

Lastly, in this essay I examined the effect of sustainability—prevention focus fit in the context of product marketing. Future research should examine this fit in other marketing context. For example, since much of sustainability marketing takes form of marketing of ideas (e.g., Earth Hour, Recycling, consumption reduction) it is particularly important to examine this fit in the context of message and advertising persuasiveness. In conclusion, sustainability—prevention focus fit demonstrated here is a simple yet potentially powerful effect which can help promote sustainability. Examining extensions, moderators and boundary conditions of this effect is important in pursuit of becoming a more sustainable society.

## Essay 3

### Conceptual Framework

In this essay, I investigate the role of regulatory focus in consumers' evaluations of choice alternatives, the amount of search, and choice of option from sequentially presented choice sets. Specifically, I investigate whether regulatory focus influences evaluations given to sequentially presented choice alternatives based on whether they appear earlier or later in the sequence. I also examine whether regulatory focus influences the amount of search (aka, the number of options examined before a selection is made) and whether an option presented earlier or later in the sequence is more likely to be chosen based on consumer's regulatory focus. I demonstrate that promotion-focused individuals evaluate equivalent sequentially presented options equally, perform less search (examine fewer options) and select an option presented earlier in the sequence. On the other hand, prevention-focused individuals evaluate earlier presented options less favorably and defer more favorable evaluations until later choice alternatives; they perform more search (examine more options) and select an option presented later in the sequence. This research makes contributions in two areas. To my knowledge, this is the first research to examine the influence of regulatory focus in sequentially presented choice sets, and, hence it contributes to regulatory focus stream of literature by identifying a new preference pattern that emerges in sequential sets. Also, this is the first research I am aware of to identify that regulatory focus can influence the amount of search. Previous findings (Pham & Higgins, 2005; Pham & Chang, 2010) suggest that regulatory focus does not influence the amount of search. Therefore, I contribute to regulatory focus literature by identifying presentation style as a moderator to the regulatory focus – amount of search relationship. This research also contributes to the

literature on sequential presentation by identifying the unique influence of a motivational factor (regulatory focus) on consumer behavior in sequential sets.

In many consumer purchase situations, sequential presentation of choice alternatives is inevitable. An independent evaluation of each choice option is thus required by the decision maker. For example, shopping for a house requires a consumer to travel to different “open house” locations and evaluate each choice alternative one at a time. In some cases, sequential presentation of options is a choice of a retailer. Some high end retail stores, for example, only allow a consumer to view one option at a time for expensive products such as jewelry or designer hand bags (Mogilner et al., 2013). In some non-consumer-purchase settings sequential presentation of choice alternatives is also evident. For instance, evaluating a job candidate or selecting a hopeful from a pool of American Idol contestants at a try-out cycle involves a sequential presentation process. A growing body of research has acknowledged the importance of understanding how sequential presentation influences consumer decision making. For example, Qiu and Yeung (2008) found that valence of the mood transfers onto evaluation of the first sequentially presented option. Consumers in positive (negative) mood evaluate first sequentially presented option more (less) favorably than the remaining options in the sequence. Mantonakis and colleagues (2009) found that product knowledge moderates consumers’ preferences for first (vs. last) sequentially presented option. Novices tend to prefer an option that appears first, while experts exhibit a preference for the last presented option. Finally, Mogilner and colleagues (2013) found that choosing from a sequential set leads to feelings of hope (for a better option in the future) and regret (for options that

have been passed up) and results in lower levels of satisfaction and choice commitment compared to choosing from simultaneous sets.

Recent research has sought to understand the effect of regulatory focus on processes involved in evaluation of choice alternatives (e.g., Wang & Lee, 2006; Pham & Chang, 2010; Murali, Bockenholt, & Laroche, 2007; Mogilner, Aaker, & Pennington, 2008; Murali & Pons, 2009). Much of this research assumes that consumers are presented with choice alternatives *simultaneously*. The influence of regulatory focus on option evaluation in *sequentially* presented choice sets has been largely unexamined to date. The ability to compare across all available choice alternatives is the primary difference between simultaneously and sequentially presented choice sets. In sequential sets individuals are forced to evaluate one option at a time and are unaware of whether a better or worse option is coming up (Mogilner et al., 2013). Some research suggests that options evaluated one at a time are compared to an *imaginary* reference or comparison point (Farquhar & Pratkanis, 1993; Hsee & Leclerc, 1998; Griffin & Broniarczyk, 2010; Mogilner et al., 2013). At the beginning of a sequential set the only comparison point available to a decision-maker is an imaginary one. An imaginary comparison point has to be internally generated and, therefore, requires relying on *internal* information. Toward the end of a sequential set, when a consumer has seen other available choice options, a comparison point can be generated from *external* information: the characteristics of options already examined. In this essay, I argue that promotion- and prevention-focused consumers will respond differently to the absence of an *externally* generated comparison point in the beginning of a sequential set, which will lead to a difference in (1) how earlier (vs. later) sequentially presented options will be evaluated, (2) the number of

options examined before a selection is made, and finally (3) choice preference for options presented earlier versus later in the sequence.

Evidence exists that promotion- and prevention-focused individuals differ in their reliance on internal vs. external information. According to Kramer and Yoon (2007), approach-motivated individuals tend to have an internal focus of attention and rely more on internal information, whereas avoidance-motivated individuals tend to have external focus of attention and rely more on external information. Indeed, prevention-focused individuals are concerned with avoiding negative outcomes, which signals to them that their environment is hostile (Friedman & Forster, 2002; Zhu & Meyers-Levy, 2007). Hence, attending to external information is beneficial in order to resolve the problematic environment. This is also consistent with Zhu and Meyers-Levy (2007) finding that prevention-focused individuals employ item-specific elaboration which emphasizes the role of context in information processing. In contrast, promotion-focused individuals strive for positive outcomes, which signal to them that their environment is benign (Friedman & Forster, 2002; Zhu & Meyers-Levy, 2007) and, therefore, the benefits of attending to external information become less obvious. In addition, constantly attending to external information may limit cognitive resources; in fact, a typical cognitive load manipulation (e.g., Ward & Mann, 2000; Shiv & Huber, 2000) requires attending to external information (i.e., memorizing a list of words from an external source). Cognitive load distracts from self-goals (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1998; Ward & Mann, 2000; Drolet & Luce, 2004) and limits creativity (Bose, Folse, & Burton, 2013) which both are central to promotion-focused individuals (Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000; Freitas, Liberman, & Higgins, 2002; Friedman & Förster, 2001). Without obvious benefits and some likely

costs of attending to external information to promotion-focused individuals, they are likely to find it counterproductive to their goals, and rely more heavily on internal information.

In the beginning of a sequential set, an external comparison point is unavailable. To prevention-focused individuals, who rely heavily on external information, absence of an external comparison point is likely to signal that they will not be able to perform the evaluation properly, aka, their evaluation may be incorrect. Wan and colleagues (2009) found that presentation format of brand information which undermined the perceived accuracy of brand evaluation resulted in less favorable evaluations of the chosen brand. In a similar vein, I propose that feeling that an evaluation may be incorrect will lead prevention-focused individuals to provide less favorable evaluations to earlier options in the sequence. Toward the end of the sequence, external comparison point can be generated from the characteristics of the options presented earlier in the sequence; and these later presented options are likely to receive more favorable evaluations from prevention-focused individuals. This reasoning leads to the following hypotheses.

H1a: In sequential choice sets, prevention-focused individuals will evaluate earlier presented choice options less favorably compared to later presented choice alternatives.

Promotion-focused individuals rely heavily on internal information in decision making. In the beginning of a sequential set, they will easily generate an internal comparison point and will be unaffected by the unavailability of an external comparison point. Therefore, their evaluations of earlier and later options in the sequence will likely not differ.



H1b: In sequential choice sets, there will be no difference in the evaluation of sequentially presented equivalent choice alternatives by promotion-focused individuals

In sequential choice sets, consideration of each choice alternative typically presents an opportunity to quit the search and make a selection. In many situations which involve sequential presentation of options, passed up options become unavailable and the decision maker cannot return to an option from which he/she has moved on. Such situations may include buying a used car, hiring an employee or declining a marriage proposal (Mogilner et al., 2013). In much of sequential decision studies, unselected options have been presumed to become immediately unavailable to the decision maker (Ferguson, 1989; Gilbert & Mosteller, 1966; Samuels, 1991; Seale & Rapoport, 1997; Shu, 2008). In other cases, however, unselected options may remain available and the consumer can return to a previously unselected option (Mantonakis et al., 2009; Payne, Schkade, Desvousges, & Aultman, 2000; Mogilner et al., 2013). Such situations may include buying a house in an economic downturn or hiring in an extremely competitive job market (Mogilner et al., 2013). I argue that regulatory focus will influence the amount of search in both types of situations. Here is why.

Regardless of whether passed up options remain available or not, consideration of each choice alternative in a sequential set presents an opportunity to exercise a “select” decision or to move on to the next alternative. Promotion-focused individuals are eager to “ensure hits”, avoid errors of omission and make progress toward the goal (Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Wan et al., 2009). Exercising a “select” decision with regard to a favorable option represents ensuring a hit and making progress toward the goal, which

*feel right* to promotion-focused individuals; in addition, in situations in which passed up option become unavailable, a “select” decision also avoids an error of omission (giving up a desirable option). Therefore, a “select” decision feels right for a promotion-focused consumer and he/she is likely to exercise this decision earlier on in a set. On the other hand, prevention-focused individuals evaluate earlier options in a sequence less favorably (hypothesis 1a), thus selecting an earlier option is quite unlikely. Additionally, a decision to move on to the next alternative is likely to *feel right* for prevention-focused individuals as it will allow them to generate an external comparison point for decision making, and, in case of unavailable passed up options, ensure a correct rejection (correctly rejecting a disliked earlier option). Hence, prevention-focused consumers are likely to prolong their search and select an option later in a set.

One might argue that it would make sense for promotion-focused individuals to examine all available options in situations in which passed up options remain available. Examining all options would give promotion-focused individuals more options to choose from and represent a better possibility of making the best choice. However, promotion-focused individuals rely more on affective (vs. substantive) cues in decision making and in general employ affective heuristic more heavily (Pham & Avnet, 2004, 2009). Although it might “makes sense” for promotion-focused individuals to examine all options it does not “feel right” in sequential sets. This reasoning leads to the next set of hypotheses.

H2a: When selecting an option from a set of sequentially presented equivalent choice alternatives, prevention-focused individuals will examine more choice options than promotion-focused individuals before making a selection. This

will be true regardless of whether passed-up options become unavailable or remain available.

H2b: When selecting an option from a set of sequentially presented equivalent choice alternatives, prevention-focused individuals will select an option encountered later in the set relative to promotion-focused individuals. This will be true regardless of whether passed-up options become unavailable or remain available.

### **Study 1: Evaluating Desserts**

The purpose of this experiment was to test hypotheses 1a and 1b. Participants were primed with regulatory focus and asked to evaluate four equivalent options of chocolate desserts, presented either sequentially or simultaneously as pictures on a computer screen. I expected that in the “sequential presentation” condition, promotion-focused participants would evaluate all of the desserts without a difference, while prevention-focused individuals would evaluate options encountered earlier in the set less favorably and assign more favorable evaluations to options encountered later in the sequence. For participants in the “simultaneous presentation” condition, which was included into the design as a control condition, no effect of regulatory focus was predicted.

**Stimuli.** Prior to the main study the desserts were pretested for equivalency. Forty-five undergraduate students who did not participate in the main study were asked to evaluate the pictures of the desserts (see Figure 6) by providing responses to the same measures subsequently used in the main study. Participants randomly received one of the four dessert pictures and rated it on the following statements (on seven-point rating scales

scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”): “This dessert appears attractive,” “This dessert appears nice,” “This dessert looks tasty,” and “This dessert looks delicious” (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .95$ ). These items were averaged into a composite measure called *Score*, which was subjected to a one-way ANOVA for analysis. There was no significant difference in how the desserts were evaluated ( $M_1 = 5.40$ ,  $M_2 = 5.78$ ,  $M_3 = 5.28$ ,  $M_4 = 5.43$ ;  $F(3, 41) = 0.223$ ,  $p > .1$ ). I concluded that the chosen desserts were equivalent.

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Insert Figure 6 about here

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**Regulatory focus priming.** Participants in the main study were asked to read a short memo in order to prime them with regulatory focus. The memo was approximately 270 words long and structurally similar in both conditions. In the “promotion focus” condition, the memo was worded in “gains terms”; the memo emphasized achieving aspirations in life, striving to reach goals, and pursuing opportunities—characteristics of a promotion motivation. In the “prevention focus” condition, the memo was worded in “loss terms”; the memo emphasized responsibility, making safe and secure decisions, and preventing mistakes—characteristics of a prevention focus.

This manipulation was pretested using a procedure similar to that of Pham and Chang (2010). Sixty eight undergraduate students who did not participate in the main study were randomly assigned to read a memo designed to prime either a promotion or a prevention focus. They were then asked to generate five thoughts that the memo brought to mind. Following the procedure by Pham and Chang (2010), participants were asked to

code each of the five thoughts that they generated as either a) aspirations and hopes, or b) responsibilities and duties, or c) pursuing opportunities, or d) avoiding mistakes, or g) none of the above. An *index of activation* of a relative promotion or prevention focus was created by subtracting the number of thoughts coded as “b” or “d” from the number of thoughts coded as “a” or “c” ( $Index\ of\ activation = [a+c] - [b+d]$ ). Higher numbers indicated a stronger promotion focus while lower numbers indicated a stronger prevention focus. Results showed that the *index of activation* was significantly greater for participants assigned to the “promotion focus” condition ( $M = .91$ ) than for those assigned to the “prevention focus” condition ( $M = -.78$ ;  $F(1, 66) = 16.44, p < .01$ ). This indicated that the procedure successfully primed the intended regulatory focus.

**Method.** One hundred and forty six students (59% male; 20 years mean age) were recruited for participation in the main study through an undergraduate subject pool program at the Asper School of Business, University of Manitoba in exchange for course credit. They were asked to complete two purportedly unrelated tasks. In the first task—which was designed to prime either a promotion or a prevention regulatory focus—participants were asked to read a short memo. In the second task, participants were asked to evaluate four options of chocolate desserts presented either sequentially or simultaneously as pictures on a computer screen. Assignment to conditions for both tasks was random. All of the participants evaluated all four options of chocolate desserts. This resulted in a 2 (regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) x 2 (presentation: sequential vs. simultaneous) x 4 (place in sequence of presentation) mixed design, with regulatory focus and presentation style as the between factors and place in sequence of presentation

as the within factor. The study concluded with demographic measures and a suspicion probe.

**Measure.** The desserts were appraised by participants on the basis of aesthetics (“This dessert appears attractive” and “This dessert appears nice”) and perceived palatability (“This dessert looks tasty” and “This dessert looks delicious”). Participants provided their responses to these statements on seven-point rating scales ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree.” The responses to the four statements, which correlated highly (Cronbach’s  $\alpha > .90$ ), were averaged into a composite measure called *Score*, which was further analyzed.

**Results.** To check whether there was a difference in evaluations given to the equivalent options of chocolate desserts, the *Score* measure was submitted to a repeated measures ANOVA with regulatory focus and presentation style as the between factors and place in the sequence of presentation as the within factor. As expected, there was a significant presentation style by regulatory focus by place in the sequence of presentation interaction ( $F(3, 426) = 4.81, p < .01$ ).

To better understand the nature of this interaction, separate ANOVAs were run for the sequential and simultaneous presentation conditions. I first analyzed the effects of regulatory focus and place in the sequence of presentation for the participants in the “sequential presentation” condition. The measure *Score* was submitted to a repeated measures ANOVA with regulatory focus as the between factor and place in the sequence of presentation as the within factor. As expected, there was a significant regulatory focus

by place in the sequence of presentation interaction ( $F(3, 213) = 11.18, p < .01$ ). Figure 7 displays the means and the pattern of results.

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Insert Figure 7 about here

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Further analysis revealed a simple effect of place in the sequence of presentation in the “prevention focus” condition ( $F(3, 213) = 20.28, p < .01$ ), but not in the “promotion focus” condition ( $M_1 = 5.81, M_2 = 5.82, M_3 = 5.93, M_4 = 5.77; F(3, 213) = .22, p > .1$ ). Specifically, in the “prevention focus” condition, options presented first ( $M = 4.96$ ) and second ( $M = 4.54$ ) did not differ from each other ( $t(34) = 1.77, p > .05$ ); neither did options presented third ( $M = 5.92$ ) and fourth ( $M = 5.99; t(34) = .38, p > .1$ ). However, the two options that were presented first were evaluated lower than the two options presented last ( $t(34) = 4.97, p < .01$ ). These results support hypothesis 1a and 1b, i.e., in a sequential set, promotion-focused individuals appraised all of the options equally favorably, while prevention-focused individuals “held out” and evaluated earlier encountered options less favorably than later encountered options.

In the “simultaneous presentation” condition there was no significant difference in the appraisal of desserts. Promotion-focused individuals ( $M_1 = 5.13; M_2 = 5.14; M_3 = 5.26; M_4 = 5.57$ ) evaluated all choice options equally ( $F(3, 213) = 0.84, p > .1$ ). Prevention-focused individuals ( $M_1 = 5.19; M_2 = 5.03; M_3 = 5.37; M_4 = 5.11$ ) also evaluated all choice options without a difference ( $F(3, 213) = 0.49, p > .1$ ). Importantly, promotion-focused individuals evaluated desserts no differently than prevention-focused individuals did ( $F(1, 213) = .22, p > .1$ ). The results of this study are consistent with the

proposition that regulatory focus influences evaluations of equivalent choice alternatives in sequential sets based on whether they are encountered earlier or later in the sequence.

### **Study 2: Choosing a Water Bottle**

The purpose of Study 2 was to examine whether regulatory focus influences the amount of search that takes place in sequential sets in which passed-up options become unavailable. Regulatory focus was manipulated using the procedure described in Study 1. After receiving regulatory focus manipulation, participants were asked to select a water bottle from four possible alternatives. Water bottles were presented to all participants sequentially. Participants could select a bottle after examining it or move on to the next one; if they moved on, they were not allowed to choose a previously examined water bottle. I hypothesized that prevention-focused participants would examine more water bottles than promotion-focused participants before making a selection. This study also intended to boost the ecological validity of the “holding-out” effect by demonstrating it in an actual choice study.

**Stimuli and Pre-test.** The water bottles used in the study displayed the university logo and had different colors with some minor variations in shape/style (see figure 8). They were all similar in price, but labels were removed so that the participants would not be influenced by the price.

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Insert Figure 8 about here

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The water bottles were pre-tested for equivalency prior to the main study. Forty undergraduate students who did not participate in the main study were randomly assigned to rate one of the four bottles. On a seven-point scale, participants rated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: “This would be a nice water bottle to own”. A one-way ANOVA revealed no difference in how the water bottles were rated ( $M_1 = 6.56$ ,  $M_2 = 6.31$ ,  $M_3 = 6.33$ ,  $M_4 = 6.64$ ;  $F(3, 36) = .27$ ,  $p > .1$ ). We concluded that the water bottles were equivalent.

**Method.** Sixty student participants (59% male; mean age 21 years) were recruited through an undergraduate subject pool program at the Asper School of Business, University of Manitoba in exchange for course credit. They were asked to complete two purportedly unrelated tasks. The purpose of the first task was to prime them with regulatory focus (see Study 1 for details). The assignment to “promotion” and “prevention” focus conditions was random. In the second task, the participants were asked to select a water bottle. Four water bottles were placed on each participant’s desk in brown paper bags. The paper bags were closed so that the participants could not look inside to see the bottles. Participants were instructed to take out one water bottle at a time and examine it. The participant could either choose that bottle or place it back into the brown bag and move on to examining the next one. Once they moved on, participants could not select a bottle that had previously been examined. Participants were told that, if after examining all of the water bottles they did not want to select any one of them, they could take home a pen instead. The order in which the water bottles were examined was randomized. The study concluded with demographic measures and a suspicion probe.

**Measure.** The number of water bottles examined before making a selection was the dependent measure in this experiment. The measure *Choice* was assigned a value of 1 if a participant chose the first bottle they examined; it was assigned values 2, 3 and 4 if a participant chose the second, third and fourth bottle, respectively.

**Results.** One participant who came close to identifying the purpose of the study was removed from the analysis. As well, 13 participants who decided to take a pen (they did not like any of the water bottles) were also removed from the sample (six were prevention-focused and seven were promotion-focused). This left 46 usable responses. To analyze whether regulatory focus influenced the amount of search, *Choice* was submitted to a one-way ANOVA with regulatory focus as the independent variable. Before deciding on a water bottle to take home, prevention-focused participants ( $M = 3.28$ ) examined, on average, significantly more water bottles than did promotion-focused participants ( $M = 2.68$ ;  $F(1, 44) = 5.28, p < .05$ ). See Table 5 for order effects.

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Insert Table 5 about here

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The results supported the notion that prevention-focused individuals perform more search in sequential sets compared to their promotion-focused counterparts. Promotion-focused individuals, who are concerned with “ensuring hits” and avoiding errors of omission (Crowe and Higgins, 1997), quit the search after examining fewer alternatives as it presents an opportunity to “ensure a hit” and avoid the mistake for forgoing an attractive option (error of omission). Prevention-focused individuals, who are concerned with “correct rejections” and avoiding errors of commission (Crowe and Higgins, 1997),

forego earlier encountered options to ensure a correct rejection of a disliked option and avoiding the mistake of accepting an unattractive option (error of commission).

### **Study 3: Choosing a Dessert**

The purpose of this study was to examine whether regulatory focus influences the amount of search in sequential sets in which passed up options remain available. Participants were primed with regulatory focus (see Study 1 for details) as a purportedly unrelated task and were asked to select a chocolate dessert (stimuli were also borrowed from Study 1) from four available options. Desserts appeared sequentially as pictures on a computer screen and participants had an option to make a selection after examining each option. Importantly, they were not restricted from selecting an option viewed previously. In other words, after examining a choice option participants could decide to select that option or any one of the previously viewed options. I hypothesized that the prevention-focused individuals would examine more options before making a selection than promotion-focused individuals. I also predicted that prevention-focused individuals would select an option that appeared later in the set relative to their promotion-focused counterparts.

**Method.** Fifty eight consumers (36% male; mean age 46 years) from the general population were recruited for participation through Qualtrics research panel. They were asked to complete two purportedly unrelated exercises. The first exercise was a regulatory focus priming task. The second exercise was a dessert selection task. The participants were asked to imagine selecting a chocolate dessert from a menu which presented one option at a time and asked the participant to either place an order (on either of the desserts seen to that point) or move on to viewing the next available alternative.

Assignment to regulatory focus conditions was random. The order in which the desserts appeared to participants was also randomized. The study concluded with a suspicion probe and demographic measures.

**Measures.** Two measures were examined in this experiment. The measure *View* was intended to gauge the amount of search that took place (i.e., how many choice options were viewed before a selection was made). *View* was assigned a value of 1 if a participant only viewed one option before making a selection; it was assigned values 2, 3 and 4 if a participant viewed two, three and four dessert options, respectively, before deciding which one to order.

The measure *Choice* was intended to gauge which option becomes selected. *Choice* was assigned a value of 1 if a participant chose the option which was presented first in the set; it was assigned values 2, 3 and 4 if a participant chose the option presented second, third and fourth in the set, respectively. Recall, that this measure captures which option became selected regardless of how many options were viewed.

**Results.** To analyze whether regulatory focus influenced the amount of search in sequential sets with passed up options remaining available, the measure *View* was subjected to a one-way ANOVA with regulatory focus as the independent variable. As expected, prevention-focused individuals ( $M = 3.87$ ) viewed, on average, more dessert options before making a selection than promotion-focused individuals did ( $M = 3.07$ ;  $F(1, 56) = 9.99, p < .01$ ). To examine whether prevention-focused individuals selected an option presented later in a sequential set relative to their promotion-focused counterparts, the measure *Choice* was subjected to a one-way ANOVA with regulatory focus as the independent variable. As expected, I found that prevention-focused participants ( $M =$

2.40) selected an option which appeared later in the sequential set relative to their promotion-focused counterparts ( $M = 1.82$ ;  $F(1, 56) = 4.09$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Table 6 contains detailed order effects for *View* and *Choice* measures.

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Insert Table 6 about here

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The results of this study supports the notion that even when passed up options remain available in sequential sets, promotion-focused individuals interrupt the search sooner and choose an option encountered earlier in a set compared to prevention-focused individuals.

## **Discussion**

This research explores the influence of regulatory focus in sequential sets. I report three studies in support of the “holding-out effect”, whereby prevention-focused individuals favor options presented later in the sequence compared to promotion-focused individuals. First, I examined evaluations given to equivalent sequentially presented choice alternatives. Promotion-focused individuals, who have an internal focus of attention and rely on internal information heavily, are unaffected by the inability to have an external comparison point in the beginning of the set; they evaluate equivalent options without a difference. Prevention-focused individuals held-out: they evaluated earlier presented options less favorably and deferred more favorable evaluations until later encountered alternatives (Study 1). When consumers have to make a selection from a sequential set, promotion-focused individuals examine fewer choice alternatives and select an option presented earlier in a set, compared to prevention-focused individuals.

This effect holds regardless of whether passed up options become unavailable (Study 2) or remain available (Study 3).

**Contribution.** This research makes contributions to regulatory focus theory and to the literature on sequential presentation. To regulatory focus theory this research contributes by exploring the influence of regulatory focus in sequential sets—something that has not been done before in regulatory focus literature. A preference pattern emerges whereby prevention-focused individuals favor options presented later in the sequence compared to their promotion-focused counterparts. Importantly this research identifies presentation style as a moderating factor to the regulatory focus – amount of search relationship. Previous findings (Pham & Higgins, 2005; Pham & Chang, 2010) indicate that in simultaneous sets regulatory focus does not influence the amount of search. This makes sense since promotion- and prevention-focused individual are both motivated to examine options to make the best possible choice (promotion focus) or to avoid making a poor choice (prevention focus). In sequential sets, however, examination of each option presents an opportunity to exercise a “select” decision or a decision to move on to the next available alternative. For promotion-focused individuals “select” decision *feels right*, as it allows to ensure a hit; and for prevention-focused individuals deciding to perform more search represents a “correct rejection”. Even though in sets in which passed up options remain available it would make sense for promotion-focused consumers to examine all options, their reliance on affective heuristic (Pham & Avnet, 2004, 2009) leads them to act on what *feels right* (not on what makes sense) and interrupt their search in earlier on in the set.

This research also contributes to sequential presentation literature by identifying a motivational factor (regulatory focus) which leads to a preference formation pattern in sequential sets. Previous research examined the influence of mood (Qui & Yeung, 2010) and expertise (Mantonakis et al., 2009) on preference formation in sequential sets. This research documents the unique role of regulatory focus in preference formation for earlier or later options in a sequence.

**Practical implications.** The holding-out effect reported in this research has important practical implications. In consumer purchase situations regulatory focus can be determined by an individual's trait characteristic (Higgins 1997), by a consumption goal (e.g., Mogilner et al., 2008; Chitturri et al., 2008) or an environmental cue that makes gains or losses more salient (e.g., Ramanathan & Dhar, 2010; Mishra, Mishra, & Nayakankuppam, 2010). A marketer who presents his/her customers with one choice option at a time can predict whether earlier or later presented choice alternatives will be preferred based on regulatory focus of the consumer. For example, if a real estate agent is showing homes to a family whose main concern is safety and security of their young children, he/she can expect to show more homes and close a deal on a home showed later in the sequence. On the other hand, a real estate agent showing a home to a young professional concerned with attainment and accomplishment can expect to close a deal after showing fewer homes. In non-consumer-purchase settings, such as recruitment process, for example, job candidates who have similar qualifications will be interviewed on different occasions and evaluated independently. This research suggests that prevention-focused members of the search committee may be negatively biased against

candidates who are interviewed earlier in the search process and favor candidates who are interviewed toward the end instead.

**Limitations and suggestions for future research.** This research has some limitations which also provide opportunities for future research. First, in all of the studies reported here participants were asked to select from four possible alternatives. Future research should investigate whether a similar pattern of results would emerge in larger sets. Two possibilities come to mind: one, prevention-focused individuals might satisfice after examining a certain number of choice options, when they begin to feel that they have acquired sufficient amount of search information, and no longer exhibit a preference toward choice options at the end of the set; two, prevention-focused individuals might continue to divide the set in half and dislike options in the first half of the set compared to options in the latter half of the set. More research is needed to answer this question. The second limitation is that in all of the studies participants knew how many options were available in the set. Future research is necessary to understand how regulatory focus influences preference formation when consumers are unaware of the number of available choice alternatives. It is likely that prevention-focused consumers will progress in a more linear fashion comparatively to the pattern found here and give higher ratings to each subsequent choice alternative. Finally, in this research all choice alternatives were equivalent. Future studies should examine how sequential presentation interacts with regulatory focus in sets that consist of choice alternatives which are not all equivalent.

In conclusion, this research opens a door for understanding the influence of regulatory focus in sequentially presented choice sets. It also emphasizes the differences in how consumers behave when options are presented sequentially versus simultaneously.



Therefore, we should not assume that regulatory focus effects found in simultaneous sets will necessarily be robust in sequential presentation situations. Examination of the additional questions of regulatory focus effects in sequential sets are fertile grounds for future research.

## Conclusion

In this dissertation, three research questions have been examined under the framework of regulatory focus theory. These research questions have been organized into and examined in three essays. In Essay 1 I examined how goal distance influences regulatory focus of a goal and subsequently leads to preference for regulatory-framed goal attainment means. This essay makes several important contributions. This is the first research to demonstrate that our regulatory construction of goals is malleable—subject to goal distance. When goal distance is large, we are more likely to construe a goal as a promotion-focused goal and be motivated by promotion-focused goal attainment means; when goal distance is small, we are more likely to construe a goal as a prevention-focused goal and be motivated by prevention-focused goal attainment means. This research also makes a contribution to goal distance literature by identifying regulatory motivation that is likely to prevail based on whether goal distance is large or small.

In Essay 2, I examined regulatory fit between sustainability and prevention focus. I demonstrated that sustainability claims activate a prevention focus in consumers; consumers make prevention-focused inferences about products of sustainable companies; and, finally, sustainable products are evaluated more favorably if prevention-focused claims are used to market these products. This essay makes a substantive contribution to sustainability literature by identifying a regulatory motivation for purchase of sustainable products. To regulatory focus theory this essay contributes by identifying a marketing initiative (sustainability) which serves as an antecedent to or a primer of regulatory focus.

In Essay 3, I examined how regulatory focus influences judgment and decision making in sequentially presented choice sets. I demonstrate evidence in support of the

“holding-out” effect among prevention-focused consumers. Prevention-focused individuals evaluate earlier presented options in a sequence less favorably, compared to options presented later in the sequence, while promotion-focused individuals evaluate sequentially presented choice alternatives without a difference. When choosing an option from a sequential set, prevention-focused individuals examine more choice alternatives and select an option presented later in a set compared to promotion-focused individuals. This essay contributes to regulatory focus theory by demonstrating how regulatory focus creates a preference for earlier or later presented choice alternatives in a sequential set. I also find in this essay that regulatory focus influences the amount of search in sequential sets. More specifically, I find that prevention-focused consumers examine more choice alternatives before making a selection compared to promotion focused individuals. This essay also contributes to the literature on sequential presentation by indentifying the influence of a motivational factor, namely regulatory focus, on preference construction in sequential sets.

Although the three essays reported in this dissertation examined questions which are independent from one another, they offer novel perspectives on examining the role of regulatory focus in judgment and decision making. The findings of the first essay identify the dynamic interplay between goal distance and regulatory focus. This finding is important because it identifies that regulatory focus of a goal may not stay the same throughout the course of goal pursuit. This essay also opens a door to future research opportunities examining the dynamic nature of regulatory focus. For example, is it possible, that as people gain expertise on a task they may begin to exhibit more prevention-focused tendencies and preferences. The findings of the second essay identify

a marketing initiative which serves as an antecedent to regulatory focus. Marketers of sustainable products can leverage this finding and choose prevention-framed appeals to market their products and services. As opposed to much of previous regulatory focus research which examined the effects of individuals' regulatory focus (chronic or situational) on persuasion, this essay offers a very practical technique for marketers of sustainable products which utilizes the concept of regulatory fit without relying on an individual difference variable. Other marketing initiatives and contexts should be examined for their compatibility with promotion or prevention focus to identify primers of regulatory focus. In the third essay, I examined the role of regulatory focus on preference formation in sequential sets. Again, this approach is novel as much of previous regulatory focus research assumed simultaneous presentation situations. This essay identified a preference pattern whereby prevention-focused individuals tend to favor choice alternatives presented later in a sequential set. This finding is a starting point for understanding how regulatory focus influences choice outcomes in sequential sets. Other relevant questions should be examined, for example, satisfaction with choice, willingness to spread positive word of mouth and choice commitment are among the variables that could be influenced by regulatory focus in sequential sets.

In a seemingly exhausted field of regulatory focus theory, many previous studies focused on understanding the expressions of regulatory fit. In this dissertation, three essays identified three novel directions for regulatory focus research which can offer significant contributions to the regulatory focus theory and other fields of consumer behaviour. Each of the essays can be expanded on to build a unique research program and future research should examine logical extensions of these essays.

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## Tables and Figures

Table 1

*Summary of the promotion and prevention focus characteristics*

Promotion Orientation	Prevention Orientation
General characteristics	
Focus on attainment, advancement, accomplishment	Focus on protection, security, responsibility
Aspiration to ideals	Adhering to oughts
Sensitivity to gains	Sensitivity to losses
Seek desirable outcomes	Avoid undesirable outcomes
Fulfill aspirations	Fulfill duties
Pursue opportunities	Avoid mistakes
Ensure “hits”	Ensure correct rejections
Avoid errors of omission	Avoid errors of commission
Elaboration and Information processing	
Relational elaboration	Item-specific elaboration
Global information processing	Local information processing
Alternative-based evaluation	Attribute-based evaluation
Abstract-level information construal	Concrete-level information construal
Decision making	
Reliance on affect	Reliance on cognition
Value speed and progress toward the goal	Value accuracy
Comparative judgments	
Favor maximal comparisons (A is better than B)	Favor minimal comparisons (A is no worse than B)
Prefer positively framed comparisons	Prefer negatively framed comparisons
Evaluate target object first	Evaluate comparison object first
Stronger attraction effect	Stronger compromise effect
Relevant outcomes	
Change	Stability
Creativity	Self-control
Fun and enjoyment	Security and safety
Situational primers and/or compatible contexts	
Hedonic products	Utilitarian products
Recent salary receipts	Distant salary receipt
Distant expiration date on a product	Proximal expiration date on a product
Distal time of purchase	Proximal time of purchase
Less familiar brands	More familiar brands

Table 2

*Study 1. Promotion- and prevention-focused descriptive statements*

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<u>Promotion-focused statements</u>	<u>Prevention-focused statements</u>
Attain the goal	Secure the result
Advancement and accomplishment	Security and responsibility
Making progress toward the goal	Avoiding errors in the course of action
Do your best to reach the goal	Don't fall short of your goal
Achieve excitement	Avoid disappointment

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Table 3

*Study 2. Pairs of Adjectives to be Matched with Winter Express's Products*

	Promotion-relevant adjective	Prevention-relevant adjective
Pair 1	Adventurous	Safe
Pair 2	Exciting	Responsible
Pair 3	Hopeful	Reassuring
Pair 4	Aspiring	Secure
Pair 5	Courageous	Caring
Pair 6	Fast	Accurate
Pair 7	Eager	Vigilant
Pair 8	Bold	Compassionate
Pair 9	Progressive	Stable
Pair 10	Inspiring	Thoughtful

Table 4

*Study 3. Laundry Detergent Benefits: Corresponding Promotion-framed and Prevention-framed Features*

	<b>Promotion-framed feature</b>	<b>Prevention-framed feature</b>
Benefit 1: Fabric care	It will keep the fabric of your clothes as strong as new	It will not cause damage to the fabric of your clothes
Benefit 2: Cleaning power	It will clean the stains off your clothes to make them look like new again	It will ensure no stains remain on your clothes to make them look like you have never worn them
Benefit 3: Odour control	It will give your clothes a great fresh scent that stays on the fabric to actively fight new odours while you are wearing your clothes	It will remove all odours from your clothes and prevent new odours from absorbing into the fabric while you are wearing your clothes

Table 5.

*Study 2. Order effects of regulatory focus on the amount of search*

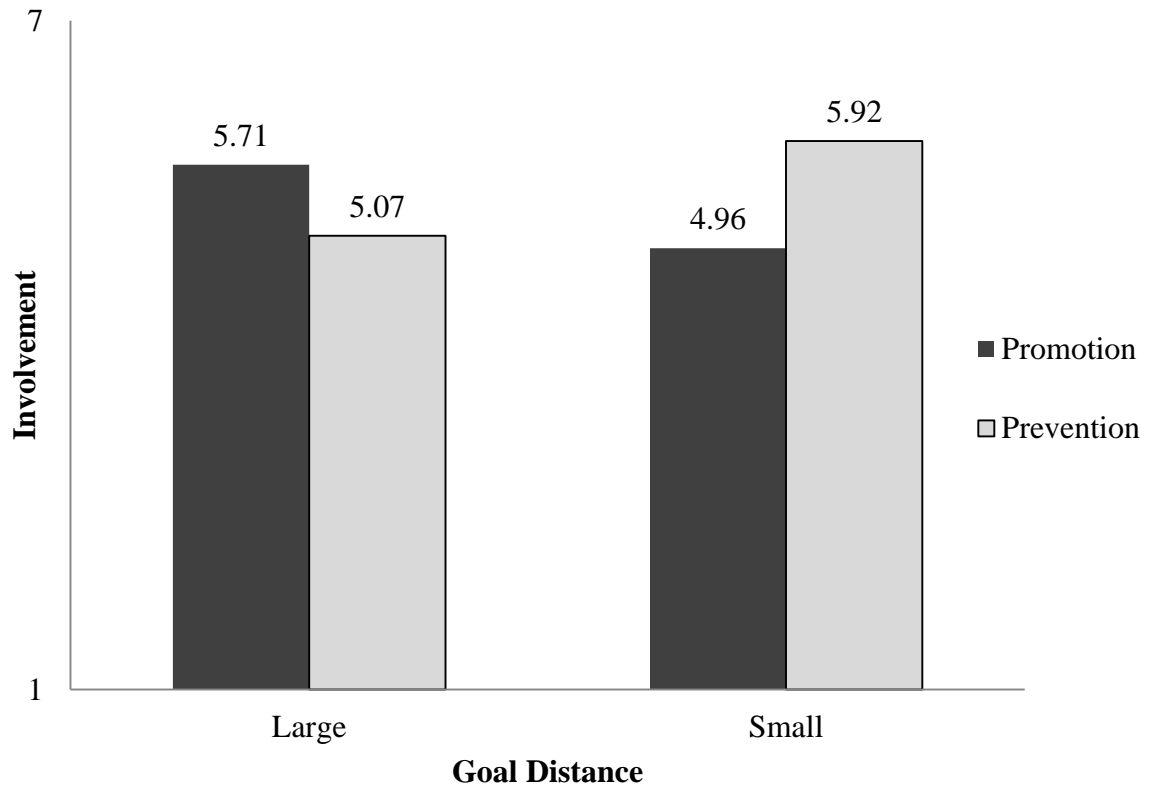
	Number of participants selecting each option				
	<u>Option</u>	<u>Option</u>	<u>Option</u>	<u>Option</u>	<u>Pen</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>
Promotion focus	5	7	8	7	6
Prevention focus	1	2	8	9	7

Table 6.

*Study 3. Order effects of regulatory focus on the amount of search and choice of option*

		Measure View			
		<u>Option</u>	<u>Option</u>	<u>Option</u>	<u>Option</u>
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Promotion focus		7	2	1	18
Prevention focus		0	0	4	26
		Measure Choice			
		<u>Option</u>	<u>Option</u>	<u>Option</u>	<u>Option</u>
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Promotion focus		15	6	4	3
Prevention focus		5	12	9	4





*Figure 1.* Study 2. Interaction between goal distance and regulatory focus on goal involvement

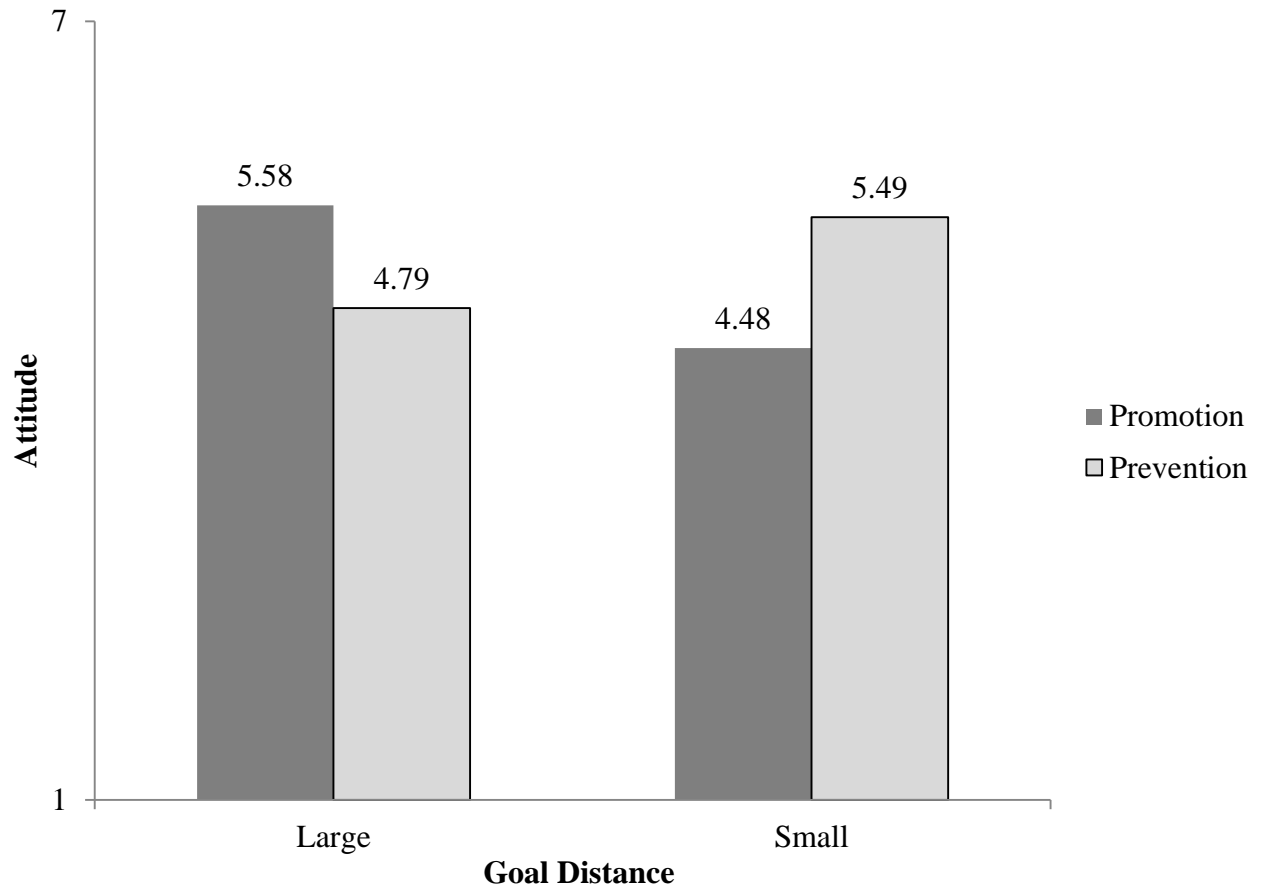
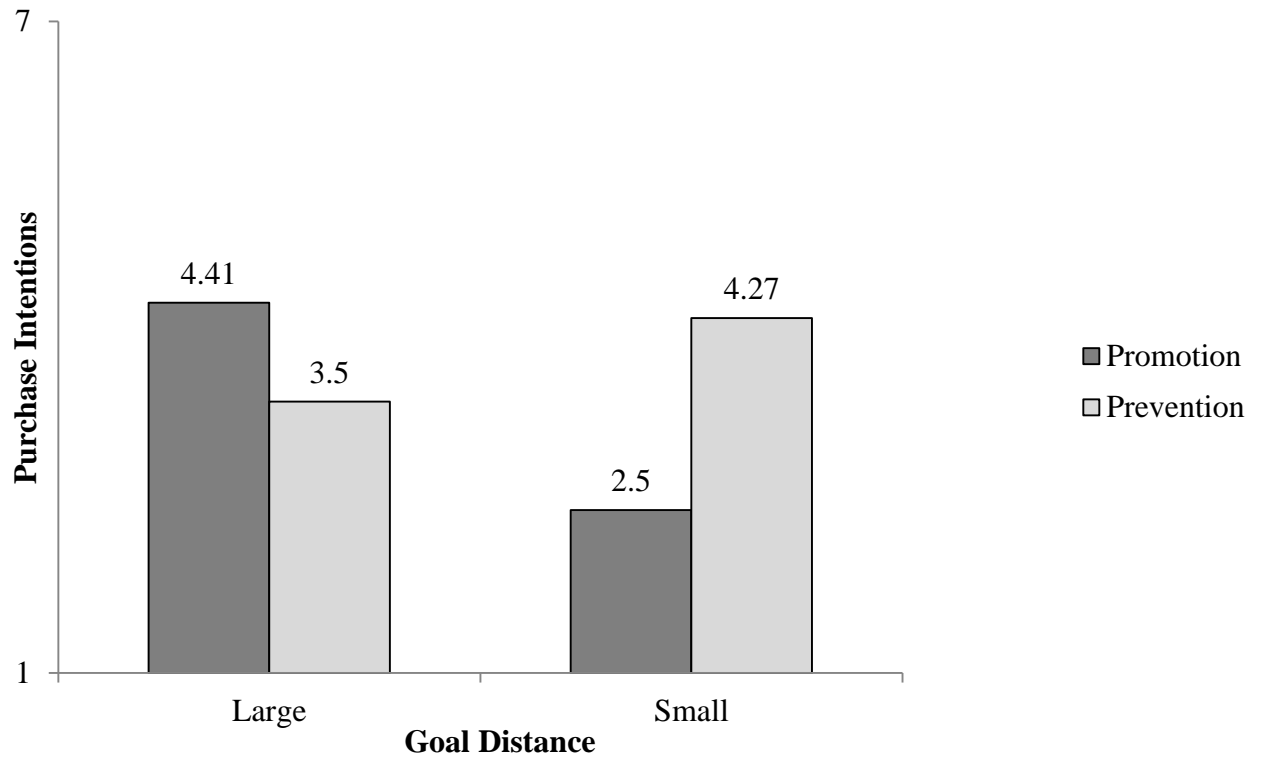


Figure 2. Study 3. Interaction between goal distance and regulatory focus on attitude



*Figure 3.* Study 3. Interaction between goal distance and regulatory focus on purchase intentions

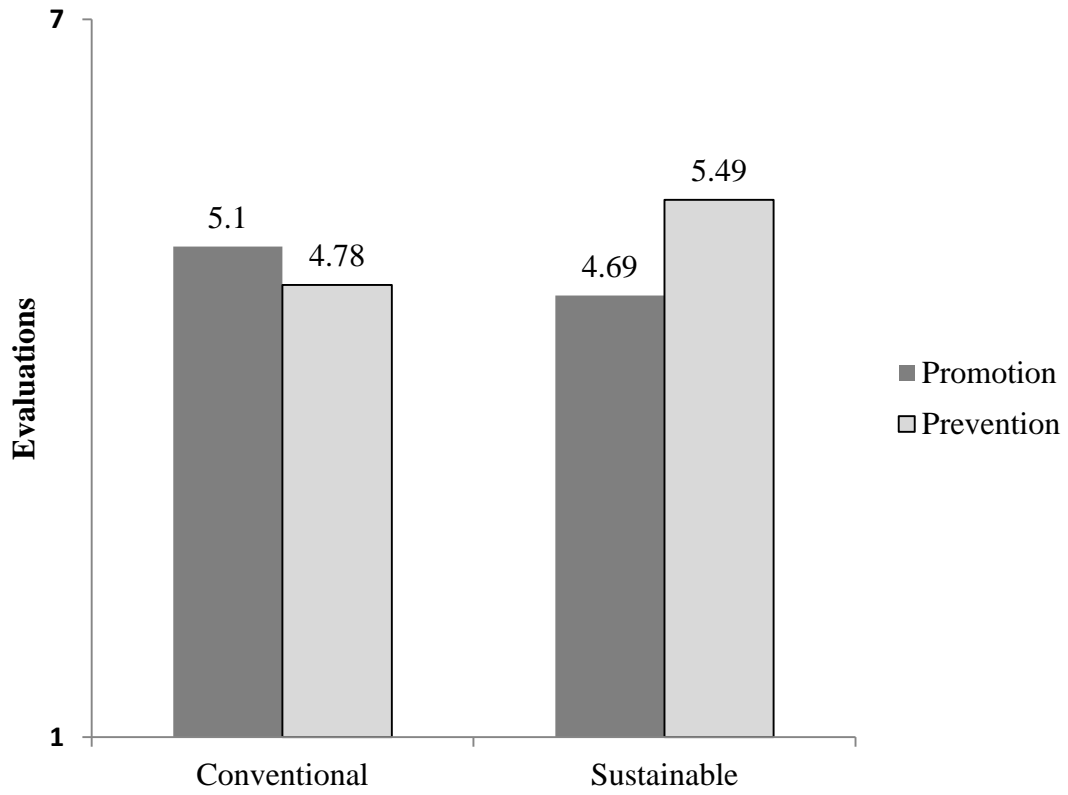


Figure 4. Study 3. Evaluations by type of detergent and regulatory focus of benefits

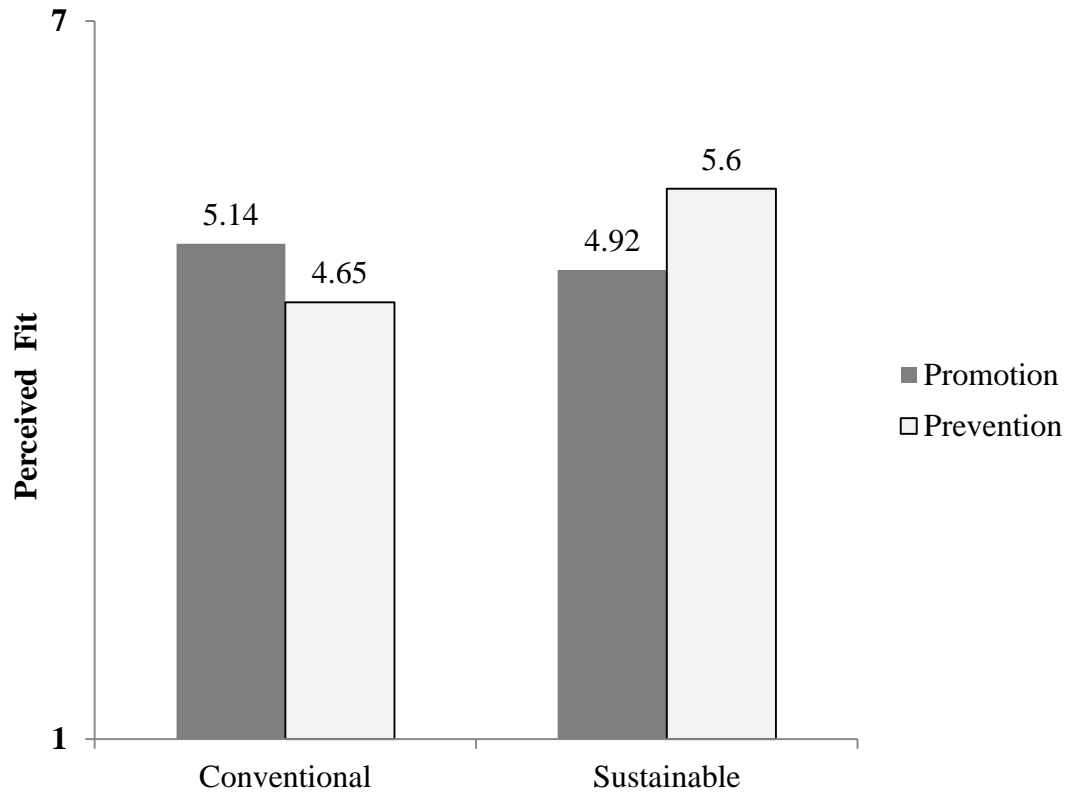


Figure 5. Study 3. Evaluations by type of detergent and regulatory focus of benefits



*Figure 6.* Study 1. Pictures of chocolate desserts.

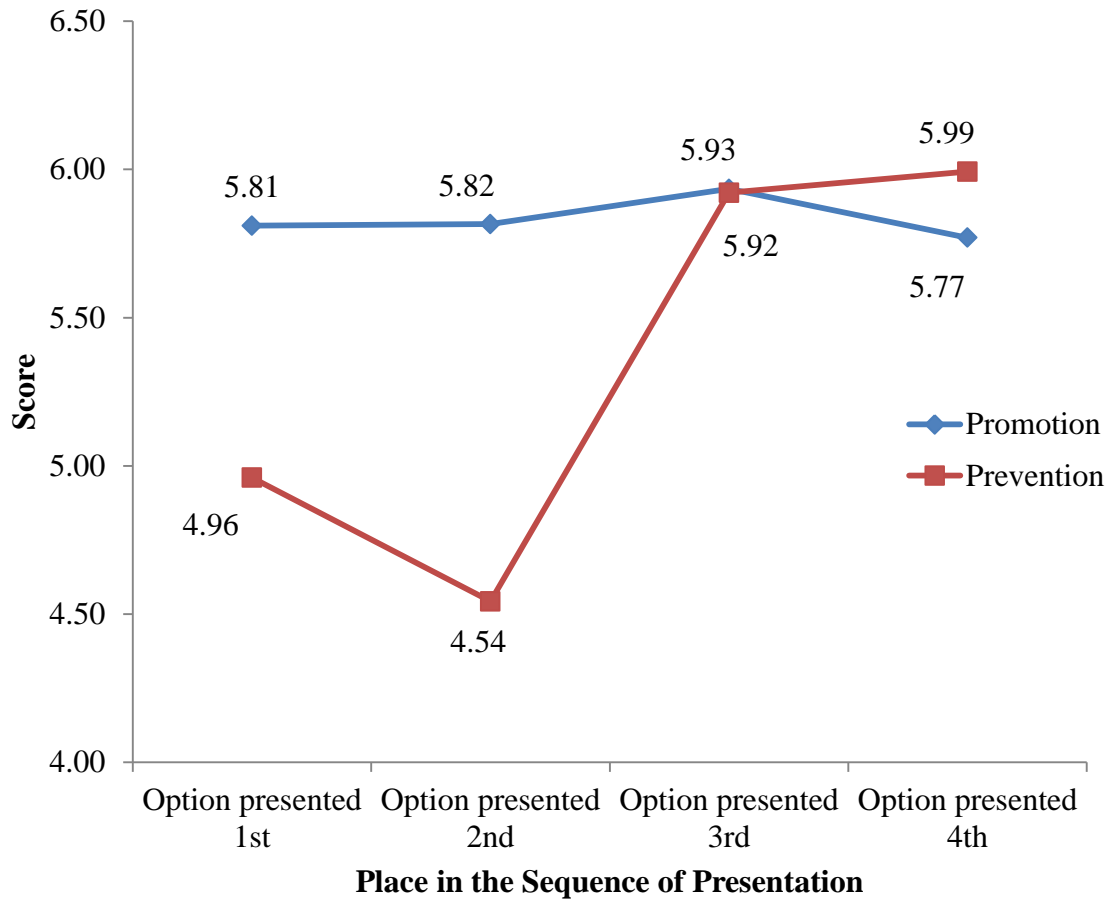


Figure 7. Study 1. Regulatory focus by place in the sequence of presentation interaction



Figure 8. Study 2. Regulatory focus by place in the sequence of presentation interaction



## Appendix A

### Essay 1: Study 1 Informed Consent Form

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This 1-hour session consists of some small separate studies. Each is described below. After reading the descriptions, please select either “Yes” or “No” corresponding to whether or not you wish to participate in the studies

Research Project Title: The Running World  
Researcher: Olya Bullard, PhD Student in Marketing

In this study you will be asked to read about a running club which delivers personalized training programs to its clientele. You will then be asked to match some phrases to the running goal of the Running World’s clients. Finally, you will be asked to answer some follow up questions. There is no risk to participating in this study other than those in everyday life. If you feel uncomfortable when answering the questionnaire, you are free to withdrawal at any time without any penalty.

These research projects have been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about any of these projects, you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca).

Your response on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research projects and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from any of the studies at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. You will still get course credit if you choose to withdraw. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The data from the study will be used only for academic research. No part of the data will be sold or used for any commercial purpose.

If you wish to receive a copy of this INFORMED CONSENT FORM to keep for your own records, please inform the researcher conducting your experimental session. Please answer the following question:

Yes, I wish to participate    No, I do not wish to participate

## **Essay 1: Study 1 Instrument**

In this short study you will be asked assist in designing of a promotional campaign for a local gym. Please read all of the materials and instructions carefully. We value your honest and sincere responses.

**Large goal distance condition.** Please read the description of the Running World gym:

The Running World is a local company which is committed to providing high quality experience and training to recreational runners who seek to improve their running skills. It focuses on individuals, who are new to running and tailors its approaches to the clients' individual skill levels and needs. Most of the Running World's runners are there to learn or significantly improve their current low level of running skills.

**Small goal distance condition.** Please read the description of the Running World gym:

The Running World is a local company which is committed to providing high quality experience and training to recreational runners who seek to improve their running skills. It focuses on individuals, who have been running for a long time and tailors its approaches to the clients' individual skill levels and needs. Most of the Running World's runners are there to "polish off" or enhance their already high current level of running skills.

In order for us to more effectively design a marketing strategy, we want to understand how our runners view their goals. You will see 10 descriptive statements on your screen. They will appear one at a time and stay on the screen for a few seconds. If

you feel that a statement can help describe a Running World client's goal (based on what you read) or if you feel it is relevant to the description of the Running World gym, click on it. If not, let the page expire on its own.

**Dependent measure and additional questions.** Promotion focus statements: attain the goal, advancement and accomplishment, making progress toward the goal, do your best to reach the goal, achieve excitement; prevention focus statements: secure the result, security and responsibility, avoiding errors in the course of actions, don't fall short of your goal, avoid disappointment.

Thinking about the running goal of the Running World's clients (the way that it was described to you in the study). To what extent would you describe the goal as:

A goal that would be a pleasure to attain 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A goal that would be a pain not to attain

Something they aspire to accomplish 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Something they feel they must accomplish

The better they do with respect to their 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Their goal is more like a "bar goal, the better goal, the better it is that just has to be met"

Attaining their goal will make them feel 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Failing to attain their goal will good make them feel bad

They would like the best possible way to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 They just want something that attain their goal works to have their goal met

Their goal is a want 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Their goal is an ought

Their goal is an aspiration 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Their goal is a necessity

How far is an average client of the Running World from his/her running goal?

Very close 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very far

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

How do you identify yourself? North American Asian Black Latin American East  
European

I speak English fluently: Yes No

My first language is: English French Other

In your opinion, what was the purpose of this research?

## Appendix B

### Essay 1: Study 2 Informed Consent Form

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This 1-hour session consists of some small separate studies. Each is described below. After reading the descriptions, please select either “Yes” or “No” corresponding to whether or not you wish to participate in the studies

Research Project Title: Healthy Weight Goal  
Researcher: Olya Bullard, PhD Student in Marketing

In this study you will be asked to discuss your views and opinions about your goal of reaching a healthy weight. You will then be asked to answer some follow up questions. There is no risk to participating in this study other than those in everyday life. If you feel uncomfortable when answering the questionnaire, you are free to withdrawal at any time without any penalty.

These research projects have been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about any of these projects, you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca).

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If you wish to receive a copy of this INFORMED CONSENT FORM to keep for your own records, please inform the researcher conducting your experimental session.

Please answer the following question:

Yes, I wish to participate    No, I do not wish to participate

## Essay 1: Study 2 Instrument

Welcome to the Healthy Weight Goal study. Please proceed to the next page to start the study.

**Large goal distance condition.** In this study we would like to learn about your views and attitudes concerning healthy weight. Consciously or unconsciously, reaching a healthy weight is a goal that most people pursue. Here are some recent findings that might surprise you: Recent research by the American Medical Association found that previous BMI guidelines we used to go by to assess the healthiness of our body weight may be quite a bit off. Researchers found that there might be a benefit in being thinner than previously believed. Whereas previous guidelines suggested that a healthy BMI for an adult is between 18.5 and 24.9, it is now suggested that a healthy adult BMI should fall between 18.0 and 24.4. In real terms this is a difference of about 8-10 pounds. What this means for you? This could mean that you are 8 to 10 pounds further away from your health goal than you thought!

**Small goal distance condition.** In this study we would like to learn about your views and attitudes concerning healthy weight. Consciously or unconsciously, reaching a healthy weight is a goal that most people pursue. Here are some recent findings that might surprise you: Recent research by the American Medical Association found that previous BMI guidelines we used to go by to assess the healthiness of our body weight may be slightly off. Researchers found that there might be a benefit in being slightly thinner than previously believed. Whereas previous guidelines suggested that a healthy BMI for an adult is between 18.5 and 24.9, it is now suggested that a healthy adult BMI

should fall between 18.2 and 24.6. In real terms this is a difference of about 3-5 pounds. What this means for you? This could mean that you are 3 to 5 pounds further away from your health goal than you thought!

**Promotion focus condition.** Please think about benefits of attaining a healthy weight goal (for example, many people say that reaching healthy weight will allow them to feel more confident in a swimming suit). In the space provided below please list the things you can do to help you reach your healthy weight goal. Focus on how these things will help you attain the goal.

**Prevention focus condition.** Please think about problems you can prevent by securing a healthy weight goal (for example, many people say that reaching healthy weight will allow stop worrying about hypertension). In the space provided below please list the things you can avoid doing to help you reach your healthy weight goal. Focus on how these things will help you secure the goal.

**Dependent measure and additional questions.** Please answer the following questions:

How motivated do you feel to pursue a healthy-weight goal?

Not motivated at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very motivated

How much effort are you willing to devote to reaching your healthy-weight goal?

No effort at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A lot of effort

How committed are you to reaching your health goal?

Not committed at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very committed

My goal of reaching a healthy weight is important to me

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

My goal of reaching a healthy weight is relevant  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

My goal of reaching a healthy weight means a lot to me  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

My goal of reaching a healthy weight is valuable  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I am interested in my goal of reaching a healthy weight  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I am excited about my goal of reaching a healthy weight  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I am involved with my goal of reaching a healthy weight  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

My goal of reaching a healthy weight is appealing to me  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

My goal of reaching a healthy weight is fascinating to me  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

My goal of reaching a healthy weight is needed  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

My goal of reaching a healthy weight is feasible  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I am confident in my ability to reach my healthy weight goal  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

My goal of reaching a healthy weight fits into my life perspective  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree



My goal of reaching a healthy weight is a priority for me  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I feel uncertain about my ability to reach my healthy weight goal  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

How far do you perceive yourself to be from your healthy weight goal?

Very close 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very far

I speak English fluently: Yes No

My first language is: English French Other

In your opinion, what was the purpose of this research?

## Appendix C

### Essay 1: Study 3 Informed Consent Form

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This 1-hour session consists of some small separate studies. Each is described below. After reading the descriptions, please select either “Yes” or “No” corresponding to whether or not you wish to participate in the studies

Research Project Title: LearnALanguage  
Researcher: Olya Bullard, PhD Student in Marketing

In this study you will be asked to imagine that you desire to improve foreign language skills. You will then be asked to evaluate an advertisement for a language learning product. There is no risk to participating in this study other than those in everyday life. If you feel uncomfortable when answering the questionnaire, you are free to withdrawal at any time without any penalty.

These research projects have been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about any of these projects, you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca).

Your response on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research projects and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from any of the studies at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. You will still get course credit if you choose to withdraw. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The data from the study will be used only for academic research. No part of the data will be sold or used for any commercial purpose.

If you wish to receive a copy of this INFORMED CONSENT FORM to keep for your own records, please inform the researcher conducting your experimental session.

Please answer the following question:

Yes, I wish to participate    No, I do not wish to participate

### **Essay 1: Study 3 Instrument**

LearnALanguage.com is an online company which sells solutions for people who desire to improve their foreign language skills. In this study we will ask for your help designing a promotional message for this company.

**Large goal distance condition.** Please imagine that have been thinking about learning a completely new language. You know nothing about grammar, phonetics or any other aspect of this language. In other words, you are a complete novice and you have a long way to go to at attain the level of language skill you desire.

**Small goal distance condition.** Please imagine that have been thinking about polishing off your skills with a language you are quite familiar with. Though you would like to improve, you have some knowledge of grammar, phonetics and other aspects of this language. In other words, you are not a novice and you have just a short stretch to attain the level of language skill you desire.

Imagine that you receive the following promotional email from LearALanguage.com.

**Promotion focus condition.** We are happy to introduce our service! At LearnALanguage.com we are pleased to offer language learning solutions to delight our customers. Every person is unique and it is our mission to help you find exactly what you want in a program. We know you desire the very best! We have years of experience in meeting customers' dreams. We pride ourselves in utilizing language learning technologies that are always cutting edge. We offer fun and exciting approaches to learning a language and our customers love it – we are always in demand. Visit us today

at LearnALanguage.com and select a solution that is right for you. We guarantee you will be happy you did!

**Prevention focus condition.** We are happy to introduce our service! At LearnALanguage.com we are pleased to offer language learning solutions to satisfy our customers. Every person is unique and it is our mission to help you find exactly what you need in a program. We know you do not want to settle for less! We have years of experience in meeting customers' expectations. We pride ourselves in utilizing language learning technologies that are never behind times. We offer safe and secure approaches to learning a language and our customers love it – we are never undersold. Visit us today at LearnALanguage.com and select a solution that is right for you. We guarantee you will not be disappointed!

**Dependent measures and additional questions.** Overall, how do you feel about LearnALanguage.com?

Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Positive

Bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Good

Unfavourable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Favourable

How likely would you be to purchase a service from LearnALanguage.com?

Not likely at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Vary Likely

Definitely will not purchase 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Will purchase for sure

How much would you be willing to pay for a product from LearnALanguage.com?

\_\_\_\_\_

Buying a service from LearnALanguage.com would be a good decision

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I would expect a product from LearnALanguage.com to deliver the results

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I believe LearnALanguage.com offers great products

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

If you were to purchase a service from LearnALanguage.com how do you think it would rate on the following attributes?

Effectiveness ☆☆☆☆☆

User-friendliness ☆☆☆☆☆

Value ☆☆☆☆☆

Ease of learning ☆☆☆☆☆

Helpfulness ☆☆☆☆☆

Please answer some additional questions

How far do you perceive yourself to be from your desired level of language skill?

Very close 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very far

Now, thinking about your language goal in the way that it was described to you in the beginning of the study, to what extent is it:

A goal that would be a pleasure to attain 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A goal that would be a pain not to attain

Something I aspire to accomplish 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Something I feel I have to accomplish

The better I do with respect to my goal 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 My goal is more like a "bar that the better it is just has to be met"

Attaining my goal will make me feel good 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Failing to attain my goal will make me feel bad

I would like the best possible way to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I just want something that works to attain my goal have my goal met

My goal is a want 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 My goal is an ought

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age \_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently: Yes No

My first language is: English French Other

In your opinion, what was the purpose of this research?

## Appendix D

### Essay 2: Study 1 Informed Consent Form

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This 1-hour session consists of some small separate studies. Each is described below. After reading the descriptions, please select either “Yes” or “No” corresponding to whether or not you wish to participate in the studies

Research Project Title: Winter Express  
Researcher: Olya Bullard, PhD Student in Marketing

In this study you will be asked to read about a company which manufactures winter recreation products and generate some thoughts that reading about the company brought to mind. There is no risk to participating in this study other than those in everyday life. If you feel uncomfortable when answering the questionnaire, you are free to withdrawal at any time without any penalty.

These research projects have been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about any of these projects, you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca).

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If you wish to receive a copy of this INFORMED CONSENT FORM to keep for your own records, please inform the researcher conducting your experimental session.

Please answer the following question:

Yes, I wish to participate    No, I do not wish to participate

## Essay 2: Study 1 Instrument

In this study you will be asked to read a description of a company and answer some questions. Please read all materials carefully. We value your responses.

**Conventional condition.** WinterExpress is a young Canadian company that specializes in making a broad range of winter products such as toboggans, sleds, skies and skates, shovels, ice picks and other products that can help make snowy Canadian winter fun and enjoyable. WinterExpress employs proven technologies and uses new materials in all product parts. All of the WinterExpress products follow the ingredient make up of today's leading producers and only include proven performance materials in the production. WinterExpress adheres to strict corporate guidelines to ensure that a portion of each dollar of its customers' money is spent on making the manufacturing process better so that the consumers get the most "bang for their buck"!

**Sustainable condition.** WinterExpress is a young Canadian company that specializes in making a broad range of winter products such as toboggans, sleds, skies and skates, shovels, ice picks and other products that can help make snowy Canadian winter fun and enjoyable. WinterExpress employs sustainable technologies and uses at least 75% recycled materials in all product parts. All of the WinterExpress products follow the ingredient make up of today's environmentally friendly manufacturers and include only ecologically safe materials in the production. WinterExpress adheres to strict environmental guidelines to ensure that a portion of each dollar of its customers' money is spent on making the manufacturing process cleaner so that the consumers get the best products which are also great for our planet!



Sometimes finding out different facts about a company may remind people of certain priorities or reinforce certain thoughts. Please list 5 thoughts or priorities that the company's description made you think about

Please list thought 1

Please list thought 2

Please list thought 3

Please list thought 4

Please list thought 5

We now ask that for every thought that you listed you code it as either: a) Wants and opportunities; orb) Responsibilities and duties; or c) Things I want to do; or d) Things I have to do; or e) None of the above.

Please code thought 1

- a) Wants and opportunities
- b) Responsibilities and duties
- c) Things I want to do
- d) Things I have to do
- e) None of the above

Please code thought 2

- a) Wants and opportunities
- b) Responsibilities and duties
- c) Things I want to do
- d) Things I have to do
- e) None of the above

Please code thought 3

- a) Wants and opportunities
- b) Responsibilities and duties
- c) Things I want to do
- d) Things I have to do
- e) None of the above

Please code thought 4

- a) Wants and opportunities
- b) Responsibilities and duties
- c) Things I want to do
- d) Things I have to do
- e) None of the above

Please code thought 5

- a) Wants and opportunities
- b) Responsibilities and duties
- c) Things I want to do
- d) Things I have to do
- e) None of the above

WinterExpress is a sustainable environmentally friendly company

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age\_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently Yes No

My first language is: English French Other

In your opinion, what was the purpose of this research?

## Appendix E

### Essay 2: Study 2 Informed Consent Form

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This 1-hour session consists of some small separate studies. Each is described below. After reading the descriptions, please select either “Yes” or “No” corresponding to whether or not you wish to participate in the studies

Research Project Title: Winter Express

Researcher: Olya Bullard, PhD Student in Marketing

In this study you will be asked to read about a company which manufactures winter recreation products and match adjectives to the company’s products. There is no risk to participating in this study other than those in everyday life. If you feel uncomfortable when answering the questionnaire, you are free to withdrawal at any time without any penalty.

These research projects have been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about any of these projects, you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca).

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If you wish to receive a copy of this INFORMED CONSENT FORM to keep for your own records, please inform the researcher conducting your experimental session.

Please answer the following question:

Yes, I wish to participate    No, I do not wish to participate

## **Essay 2: Study 2 Adjectives pre-test**

The pre-test of the adjectives was conducted in the following manner. Thirty five undergraduate students who did not participate in either of the studies reported in the essay were randomly assigned to read the descriptions and examples of either promotion-focused or prevention-focused product features. The descriptions were taken from the Wang and Lee (2006) article and are described in the essay. The participants then saw the ten pairs of adjectives one by one and were instructed to select an adjective from each pair if they thought it could be used to describe the type of product features they read about. They had an option not to select any of the adjectives if they thought neither was applicable. For each participant I subtracted the number of adjectives meant to be prevention-relevant from the number of the adjectives meant to be promotion-relevant. This difference was greater for the participants who read the description of promotion-focused features ( $M = 5.22$ ) than for the participants who read about prevention-focused features ( $M = -5.0$ ,  $F(1,33) = 45.33$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This indicates that the participants who read about promotion-focused product features selected more adjectives that were meant to be promotion-relevant (vs. prevention-relevant) to describe those features; on the other hand, those who read about prevention-focused product features selected more adjectives that were meant to be prevention-relevant (vs. promotion relevant) to describe those features. In other words, the adjectives that I intended to be promotion-relevant were selected to be descriptive of promotion-focused product features; the adjectives that were intended to be prevention-relevant were selected to be descriptive of prevention-focused product features.

## **Essay 2: Study 2 Instrument**

In this study you will be asked to read a description of a company and its products and answer some questions. Please read all materials carefully. We value your responses.

**Conventional condition.** WinterExpress is a young Canadian company that specializes in making a broad range of winter products such as toboggans, sleds, skies and skates, shovels, ice picks and other products that can help make snowy Canadian winter fun and enjoyable. WinterExpress employs proven technologies and uses new materials in all product parts. All of the WinterExpress products follow the ingredient make up of today's leading producers and only include proven performance materials in the production. WinterExpress adheres to strict corporate guidelines to ensure that a portion of each dollar of its customers' money is spent on making the manufacturing process better so that the consumers get the most "bang for their buck"!

**Sustainable condition.** WinterExpress is a young Canadian company that specializes in making a broad range of winter products such as toboggans, sleds, skies and skates, shovels, ice picks and other products that can help make snowy Canadian winter fun and enjoyable. WinterExpress employs sustainable technologies and uses at least 75% recycled materials in all product parts. All of the WinterExpress products follow the ingredient make up of today's environmentally friendly manufacturers and include only ecologically safe materials in the production. WinterExpress adheres to strict environmental guidelines to ensure that a portion of each dollar of its customers' money is spent on making the manufacturing process cleaner so that the consumers get the best products which are also great for our planet!

Sometimes consumers make inferences about a company's products and their performance simply based on what they know about the company. We are interested to find out what consumers might think about the WinterExpress' products based on the description you just read. We are interested to find out what kind of adjectives you would associate with WinterExpress' products. You will be shown one pair of adjectives at a time and asked to select the one that you feel would describe WinterExpress' products. Because we are interested in your most immediate associations each page will expire within 5 seconds. If in your opinion none of the two adjectives that appear on a page describe the products simply don't select any of them and wait for the page to expire. Please proceed to the next page when you are ready

**Dependent measure and additional questions.** The following adjective pairs appeared on the screen one by one

- Adventerous
- Safe
  
- Responsible
- Exciting
  
- Hopeful
- Reassuring
  
- Secure
- Aspiring

- Courageous
- Caring

- Accurate
- Fast

- Eager
- Vigilant

- Compassionate
- Bold

- Progressive
- Stable

- Thoughtful
- Inspiring

Please answer some additional questions

I am: Male Female

Age \_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently: Yes No

My first language is: English French Other

In your opinion, what was the purpose of this research?



## Appendix F

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This research is being conducted by a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to contact me. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Please read the description of the study that you will be participating in. After you read the description of the study, please select either “Yes” or “No” corresponding to whether or not you wish to participate.

Research Project Title: Detergent

Researcher: Olya Bullard, PhD Student in Marketing, Olya.Bullard@gmail.com

In this study you will be asked to read about a laundry detergent and the product claims that a marketer is planning to use to market this product. You will then be asked to evaluate the product and answer some additional questions. There is no risk to participating in this study other than those in everyday life. If you feel uncomfortable when answering the questionnaire, you are free to withdrawal at any time without any penalty.

These research projects have been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about any of these projects, you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca).

Your response on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research projects and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from any of the studies at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. You will still get course credit if you choose to withdraw. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The data from the study will be used only for academic research. No part of the data will be sold or used for any commercial purpose.

If you wish to receive a copy of this INFORMED CONSENT FORM to keep for your own records, please inform the researcher conducting your experimental session.

Please answer the following question:

Yes, I wish to participate    No, I do not wish to participate

## **Essay 2: Study 3 Pretest of Regulatory Focus of Product Benefits**

The purpose of this study is to help a marketer design an advertising campaign for a new brand of laundry detergent. You will be asked to: 1) Review definitions of two types of performance features commonly used in marketing: Promotion-focused features and Prevention-focused features. 2) Review the performance features of the new brand of laundry detergent that the marketer is planning to use to position it in the market. 3) Answer several questions to help us classify each of the features as promotion- or prevention-focused. Thank you in advance for your help!

Please read carefully the definitions of Promotion-focused and Prevention-focused features

Promotion-focused features: Are designed to bring about benefits that concern positive outcomes. They help people attain accomplishments and advancement when they use the product. People would feel cheerful when these features are present and disappointed when they are absent. For example, a promotion-focused feature of a car could be a powerful engine because it might enable people to enjoy the excitement and adventure of driving a fast car. Prevention-focused features: Are designed to bring about benefits that concern negative outcomes. These help people avoid potential costs and losses when they use the product. People would feel relieved when these features are present and tense when they are absent. For example, an antilock brake could be an example of a prevention-focused feature when considering a car because it might reduce the probability of a collision and make people feel safe and secure.

Below are the six performance features that the marketer is considering to use to position the new band of laundry detergent in today's competitive market. Please review them carefully.

Due to the specially designed ingredient make up of this detergent: 1) It will keep the fabric of your clothes as strong as new; 2) It will clean the stains off your clothes to make them look like new again; 3) It will give your clothes a great fresh scent that stays on the fabric to actively fight new odours while you are wearing your clothes; 4) It will not cause damage to the fabric of your clothes; 5) It will ensure no stains remain on your clothes to make them look like you have never worn them; 6) It will remove all odors from your clothes and prevent new odors from absorbing into the fabric while you are wearing your clothes.

Now, for every one of these performance features please indicate to what extent you feel that the feature is prevention or promotion-focused.

It will keep the fabric of your clothes as strong as new

Promotion-focused 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Prevention-focused

It will clean the stains off your clothes to make them look like new again

Promotion-focused 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Prevention-focused

It will give your clothes a great fresh scent that stays on the fabric to actively fight new odours while you are wearing your clothes

Promotion-focused 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Prevention-focused

It will not cause damage to the fabric of your clothes

Promotion-focused 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Prevention-focused

It will ensure no stains remain on your clothes to make them look like you have never worn them

Promotion-focused 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Prevention-focused

It will remove all odors from your clothes and prevent new odors from absorbing into the fabric while you are wearing your clothes

Promotion-focused 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Prevention-focused

## **Essay 2: Study 3 Sustainability Pre-test**

In this pre-test you will be asked to assist in the designing of a marketing campaign for a new brand of laundry detergent. Please read all information carefully. We appreciate your help with this important task.

**Conventional condition.** A marketer is introducing a new brand of laundry detergent and needs your help designing a marketing campaign for the product. Firstly, let us tell you about the product. This detergent is made from chemically derived ingredients, similar to those used in most of today's laundry detergents. It is not any more harmful for the environment than any other conventional brand of laundry detergent. It has been evaluated by an independent panel of judges on sustainability and environmental friendliness and received a 5 out of 10 (average) rating. The makers of this detergent focused on using the latest technologies in engineering and the best possible selection of ingredients to include in their product.

**Sustainable condition.** A marketer is introducing a new brand of laundry detergent and needs your help designing a marketing campaign for the product. Firstly, let us tell you about the product. This detergent is made from 98% all natural plant derived ingredients, similar to those used in today's environmentally conscious laundry detergents. It is a lot less harmful for the environment than most conventional brands of laundry detergents. It has been evaluated by an independent panel of judges on sustainability and environmental friendliness and received a 9 out of 10 (superior) rating. The makers of this detergent focused on using only the most pure and wholesome ingredients to include in their product.

**Dependent measures.** Please answer some questions about the laundry detergent

we just told you about.

This detergent is a sustainable environmentally friendly product

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This detergent is a main stream product

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This detergent was rated as high on sustainability and environmental friendliness by an independent panel of judges

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age \_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently? Yes No

My first language is: English French Other

I buy environmentally friendly products

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I would consider buying environmentally friendly products

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please enter your Student Number \_\_\_\_\_

## **Essay 2: Study 3 Instrument**

In this study you will be asked to assist in the designing of a marketing campaign for a new brand of laundry detergent. Please read all information carefully. We appreciate your help with this important task.

**Conventional condition.** A marketer is introducing a new brand of laundry detergent and needs your help designing a marketing campaign for the product. Firstly, let us tell you about the product. This detergent is made from chemically derived ingredients, similar to those used in most of today's laundry detergents. It is not any more harmful for the environment than any other conventional brand of laundry detergent. It has been evaluated by an independent panel of judges on sustainability and environmental friendliness and received a 5 out of 10 (average) rating. The makers of this detergent focused on using the latest technologies in engineering and the best possible selection of ingredients to include in their product.

**Sustainable condition.** A marketer is introducing a new brand of laundry detergent and needs your help designing a marketing campaign for the product. Firstly, let us tell you about the product. This detergent is made from 98% all natural plant derived ingredients, similar to those used in today's environmentally conscious laundry detergents. It is a lot less harmful for the environment than most conventional brands of laundry detergents. It has been evaluated by an independent panel of judges on sustainability and environmental friendliness and received a 9 out of 10 (superior) rating. The makers of this detergent focused on using only the most pure and wholesome ingredients to include in their product.

**Promotion focus condition.** To position this laundry detergent in today's competitive market, the marketer is planning to emphasize three key performance features that they feel will make his product successful. Their planned statement appears below: Due to the specially designed ingredient make up of this detergent: 1) It will keep the fabric of your clothes as strong as new; 2) It will clean the stains off your clothes to make them look like new again; and, 3) It will give your clothes a great fresh scent that stays on the fabric to actively fight new odours while you are wearing your clothes.

**Prevention focus condition.** To position this laundry detergent in today's competitive market, the marketer is planning to emphasize three key performance features that they feel will make his product successful. Their planned statement appears below: Due to the specially designed ingredient make up of this detergent: 1) It will not cause damage to the fabric of your clothes; 2) It will ensure no stains remain on your clothes to make them look like you have never worn them; and, 3) It will remove all odors from your clothes and prevent new odors from absorbing into the fabric while you are wearing your clothes

**Dependent variables and additional questions.** Based on what we told you about the laundry detergent and how the marketer is planning to position it, please rate your impression of this product

Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Positive

Bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Good

Unfavourable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Favourable

Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

The performance features you read about in the statement "fit well" with the description of the detergent that was given earlier



Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

People should have a positive response to this product once it enters the market  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I would have a positive response to this product if I saw it in a store  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This product would be likely to sell well in large North American supermarkets  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This product would be likely to become a best seller  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This product would be likely to beat major leading brands of laundry detergents  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please imagine that you go to a store to buy a laundry detergent and you see that the  
detergent we told you about in this study is available

Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree that you would be willing to purchase  
it over the detergent you usually buy if it was available at

A price slightly lower than the price of the detergent you usually buy  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

A price the same as that of the detergent you usually buy  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

A price slightly higher than the price of the detergent you usually buy  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please answer to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about  
the laundry detergent we told you about in this study

This detergent is a sustainable environmentally friendly product

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This detergent is a main stream product  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This detergent was rated as high on sustainability and environmental friendliness by an independent panel of judges  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Think of the key performance features that the marketer the marketer was planning to use to position the detergent.  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

The three key performance features appeared in  
Non-loss framed terms 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Gains-framed terms

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age\_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently? Yes No

My first language is: English French Other

I buy environmentally friendly products  
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 All the time

I would consider buying environmentally friendly products  
Would never consider 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Would definitely consider

In your opinion, what was the purpose of this study?

## Appendix G

### Essay 3: Study 1 Informed Consent Form

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This 1-hour session consists of some small separate studies. Each is described below. After reading the descriptions, please select either “Yes” or “No” corresponding to whether or not you wish to participate in the studies

Research Project Title: Desserts

Researcher: Olya Bullard, PhD Student in Marketing

In this study you will be asked to first read a short paragraph about making good decisions, you will then be asked to evaluate four options of chocolate desserts and answer some follow-up questions. There is no risk to participating in this study other than those in everyday life. If you feel uncomfortable when answering the questionnaire, you are free to withdrawal at any time without any penalty.

These research projects have been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about any of these projects, you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca).

Your response on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research projects and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from any of the studies at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. You will still get course credit if you choose to withdraw. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The data from the study will be used only for academic research. No part of the data will be sold or used for any commercial purpose.

If you wish to receive a copy of this INFORMED CONSENT FORM to keep for your own records, please inform the researcher conducting your experimental session.

Please answer the following question:

Yes, I wish to participate    No, I do not wish to participate

### **Essay 3: Study 1 Regulatory Focus Manipulation Pretest**

In this exercise you will be asked to read a short memo. You will then be asked to list some of the thoughts and feelings that reading this memo brought to your mind. Please read the memo carefully and when you are done reading, click “Next” to proceed. You will be asked a few questions after you finish with your thought listing. Thank You! Please click "Next" to read the memo.

**Promotion focus condition.** We all know that making good decisions in life is essential. However, many people find it very difficult to pinpoint what makes a good decision. Today, I would like to discuss one very important aspect of a good decision – progress toward the goal. When making a decision one should ask himself or herself: “How will this help me attain my goals?” Making decisions that bring you closer toward your ultimate goals is a crucial component of a successful strategy that often does not receive the emphasis that it deserves. Making steps which will help you reach your goal is what will get you to the aspirations that you have for your life, and taking every opportunity you can to reach your target is what will effectively allow you to make good decisions. Missed opportunities cost individuals the coveted career progress that they dream of and missed opportunities in the business and government sectors cost our economy that competitive advantage we aspire to gain as a nation. Foregoing decisions that make progress toward the goal will not only keep you stagnant but will also cost you the time it will take you to get the next opportunity to make that progress. It is time to challenge our thinking! Next time you have to make a decision, focus on how it will get you closer to your ultimate goal. Don’t miss that precious chance to stand out and take a leap of faith. Make bold, courageous choices that will ensure your progress toward your

goals and aspirations. A bold decision is a good decision and an opportunity taken means you are one step closer to your dreams!

**Prevention focus condition.** We all know that making good decisions in life is essential. However, many people find it very difficult to pinpoint what makes a good decision. Today, I would like to discuss one very important aspect of a good decision – accuracy. Accuracy is something that is frequently overlooked in our culture. It is often seen as a waste of time and is not given the attention that it truly deserves. Accuracy at every step of a decision making process is crucial as it helps you to avoid making mistakes. Mistakes are costly and are much harder to correct than they are to prevent. Mistakes made by ordinary individuals cost them hundreds of dollars of their personal budget, and mistakes made in the business and government sectors cost our economy billions of dollars per year. Not only does foregoing accuracy create a cost in terms of poorly made decisions, but it also generates an additional cost of time and resources that it takes to correct the mistake. It is time to challenge our thinking! Next time you have to do something: an assignment at school, a task at work or an exercise for a course, focus on being precise and accurate at every step. It will make you feel secure and safe about your decisions, answers and choices. It will ensure that you don't make mistakes which can cost you lost points on an assignment, being reprimanded by your boss at work or simply being embarrassed in front of your peers. An accurate decision is a good decision and a mistake avoided is time and resources saved for the next challenge in life!

**Thought generating exercise.** Please list 5 thoughts or feelings that reading this memo brought to your mind

Thought 1

Thought 2

Thought 3

Thought 4

Thought 5

We now ask that for every thought that you listed you code it as either: a) Aspirations and hopes; or b) Responsibilities and duties; or c) Pursuing opportunities; or d) Avoiding mistakes; or e) None of the above.

Please code your Thought 1

- a) Aspirations and hopes
- b) Responsibilities and duties
- c) Pursuing opportunities
- d) Avoiding mistakes
- e) None of the above

Please code your Thought 2

- a) Aspirations and hopes
- b) Responsibilities and duties
- c) Pursuing opportunities
- d) Avoiding mistakes
- e) None of the above

Please code your Thought 3

- a) Aspirations and hopes
- b) Responsibilities and duties
- c) Pursuing opportunities
- d) Avoiding mistakes
- e) None of the above

Please code your Thought 4

- a) Aspirations and hopes
- b) Responsibilities and duties
- c) Pursuing opportunities
- d) Avoiding mistakes
- e) None of the above

Please code your Thought 5

- a) Aspirations and hopes
- b) Responsibilities and duties
- c) Pursuing opportunities
- d) Avoiding mistakes
- e) None of the above

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age \_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently? Yes No

Which language do you speak at home most frequently? English French Other

In your opinion, what were we trying to test in this study?



### Essay 3: Study 1 Instrument

This study consists of two separate exercises. Please click "next" to start your first exercise:

Here we ask you to read a short memo and summarize it in your own words in three to five sentences. The researchers are interested to find out how well they were able to capture and communicate the idea. Please read the memo carefully and when you are done reading, click "next" to give your short summary. You will be asked a few questions after you finish summarizing. Thank You! Please click "next" to read the memo.

**Promotion focus condition.** We all know that making good decisions in life is essential. However, many people find it very difficult to pinpoint what makes a good decision. Today, I would like to discuss one very important aspect of a good decision – progress toward the goal. When making a decision one should ask himself or herself: “How will this help me attain my goals?” Making decisions that bring you closer toward your ultimate goals is a crucial component of a successful strategy that often does not receive the emphasis that it deserves. Making steps which will help you reach your goal is what will get you to the aspirations that you have for your life, and taking every opportunity you can to reach your target is what will effectively allow you to make good decisions. Missed opportunities cost individuals the coveted career progress that they dream of and missed opportunities in the business and government sectors cost our economy that competitive advantage we aspire to gain as a nation. Foregoing decisions that make progress toward the goal will not only keep you stagnant but will also cost you the time it will take you to get the next opportunity to make that progress. It is time to

challenge our thinking! Next time you have to make a decision, focus on how it will get you closer to your ultimate goal. Don't miss that precious chance to stand out and take a leap of faith. Make bold, courageous choices that will ensure your progress toward your goals and aspirations. A bold decision is a good decision and an opportunity taken means you are one step closer to your dreams!

**Prevention focus condition.** We all know that making good decisions in life is essential. However, many people find it very difficult to pinpoint what makes a good decision. Today, I would like to discuss one very important aspect of a good decision – accuracy. Accuracy is something that is frequently overlooked in our culture. It is often seen as a waste of time and is not given the attention that it truly deserves. Accuracy at every step of a decision making process is crucial as it helps you to avoid making mistakes. Mistakes are costly and are much harder to correct than they are to prevent. Mistakes made by ordinary individuals cost them hundreds of dollars of their personal budget, and mistakes made in the business and government sectors cost our economy billions of dollars per year. Not only does foregoing accuracy create a cost in terms of poorly made decisions, but it also generates an additional cost of time and resources that it takes to correct the mistake. It is time to challenge our thinking! Next time you have to do something: an assignment at school, a task at work or an exercise for a course, focus on being precise and accurate at every step. It will make you feel secure and safe about your decisions, answers and choices. It will ensure that you don't make mistakes which can cost you lost points on an assignment, being reprimanded by your boss at work or simply being embarrassed in front of your peers. An accurate decision is a good decision and a mistake avoided is time and resources saved for the next challenge in life!

Please summarize the memo that you have just read in your own words.

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age\_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently? Yes No

My first language is: English French Other

This completes your first exercise. Please click “next” to start your second exercise.

This is your second exercise. Please read all the materials carefully. We appreciate your honest and sincere responses. Click "next" to begin.

**Sequential presentation condition.** In this study we are asking you to help us evaluate four options of chocolate desserts that Asper school of business is considering for its annual gala dinner for BComm graduates. You will be shown pictures of the chocolate desserts that we are considering and asked to evaluate them on three attributes: 1) aesthetics: how nice or attractive the dessert appears; 2) palatability: how tasty or delicious it looks and 3) richness: how rich in chocolate content it appears. The dessert that gets the highest combined score will be chosen for the gala dinner. You will be shown pictures of each of the four desserts one by one and asked to evaluate each dessert

before you see the next one. We thank you in advance for your genuine and sincere responses! Please click "next" to view the desserts.

**Simultaneous presentation condition.** In this study we are asking you to help us evaluate four options of chocolate desserts that Asper school of business is considering for its annual gala dinner for BComm graduates. You will be shown pictures of the chocolate desserts that we are considering and asked to evaluate them on three attributes: 1) aesthetics: how nice or attractive the dessert appears; 2) palatability: how tasty or delicious it looks and 3) richness: how rich in chocolate content it appears. The dessert that gets the highest combined score will be chosen for the gala dinner. You will first get to see pictures of all four desserts and then asked to provide your evaluations after you finish viewing them. We thank you in advance for your genuine and sincere responses! Please click "next" to view the desserts.

**Dependent measures simultaneous presentation condition.**





When you finish viewing the desserts please click "next" to provide your ratings

Please provide your ratings for dessert option 1

This dessert appears attractive  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please provide your ratings for dessert option 2

This dessert appears attractive  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please provide your ratings for dessert option 3

This dessert appears attractive  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please provide your ratings for dessert option 4

This dessert appears attractive

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

**Dependent measures sequential presentation condition.**



Please provide your ratings for dessert option 1

This dessert appears attractive

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree



Please provide your ratings for dessert option 2

This dessert appears attractive

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree





Please provide your ratings for dessert option 3

This dessert appears attractive

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree



Please provide your ratings for dessert option 4

This dessert appears attractive  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age \_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently: Yes No

My first language is English French Other

In your opinion, what was the purpose of this research?

## Appendix H

### Essay 3: Study 2 Informed Consent Form

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This 1-hour session consists of some small separate studies. Each is described below. After reading the descriptions, please select either “Yes” or “No” corresponding to whether or not you wish to participate in the studies

Research Project Title: Water Bottles  
Researcher: Olya Bullard, PhD Student in Marketing

In this study you will be asked to first read a short paragraph about making good decisions, you will then be asked to choose a water bottle from four possible options. Finally, you will be asked to answer some follow up questions. There is no risk to participating in this study other than those in everyday life. If you feel uncomfortable when answering the questionnaire, you are free to withdrawal at any time without any penalty.

These research projects have been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about any of these projects, you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca).

Your response on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research projects and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from any of the studies at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. You will still get course credit if you choose to withdraw. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The data from the study will be used only for academic research. No part of the data will be sold or used for any commercial purpose.

If you wish to receive a copy of this INFORMED CONSENT FORM to keep for your own records, please inform the researcher conducting your experimental session. Please answer the following question:

Yes, I wish to participate    No, I do not wish to participate

### **Essay 3: Study 2 Instrument**

You will now proceed to the next study. Please click “Next”; when you are ready

This study consists of two separate exercises. Please click "next" to start your first exercise:

Here we ask you to read a short memo and summarize it in your own words in three to five sentences. The researchers are interested to find out how well they were able to capture and communicate the idea. Please read the memo carefully and when you are done reading, click “next” to give your short summary. You will be asked a few questions after you finish summarizing. Thank You! Please click "next" to read the memo.

**Promotion focus condition.** We all know that making good decisions in life is essential. However, many people find it very difficult to pinpoint what makes a good decision. Today, I would like to discuss one very important aspect of a good decision – progress toward the goal. When making a decision one should ask himself or herself: “How will this help me attain my goals?” Making decisions that bring you closer toward your ultimate goals is a crucial component of a successful strategy that often does not receive the emphasis that it deserves. Making steps which will help you reach your goal is what will get you to the aspirations that you have for your life, and taking every opportunity you can to reach your target is what will effectively allow you to make good decisions. Missed opportunities cost individuals the coveted career progress that they dream of and missed opportunities in the business and government sectors cost our economy that competitive advantage we aspire to gain as a nation. Foregoing decisions that make progress toward the goal will not only keep you stagnant but will also cost you

the time it will take you to get the next opportunity to make that progress. It is time to challenge our thinking! Next time you have to make a decision, focus on how it will get you closer to your ultimate goal. Don't miss that precious chance to stand out and take a leap of faith. Make bold, courageous choices that will ensure your progress toward your goals and aspirations. A bold decision is a good decision and an opportunity taken means you are one step closer to your dreams!

**Prevention focus condition.** We all know that making good decisions in life is essential. However, many people find it very difficult to pinpoint what makes a good decision. Today, I would like to discuss one very important aspect of a good decision – accuracy. Accuracy is something that is frequently overlooked in our culture. It is often seen as a waste of time and is not given the attention that it truly deserves. Accuracy at every step of a decision making process is crucial as it helps you to avoid making mistakes. Mistakes are costly and are much harder to correct than they are to prevent. Mistakes made by ordinary individuals cost them hundreds of dollars of their personal budget, and mistakes made in the business and government sectors cost our economy billions of dollars per year. Not only does foregoing accuracy create a cost in terms of poorly made decisions, but it also generates an additional cost of time and resources that it takes to correct the mistake. It is time to challenge our thinking! Next time you have to do something: an assignment at school, a task at work or an exercise for a course, focus on being precise and accurate at every step. It will make you feel secure and safe about your decisions, answers and choices. It will ensure that you don't make mistakes which can cost you lost points on an assignment, being reprimanded by your boss at work or

simply being embarrassed in front of your peers. An accurate decision is a good decision and a mistake avoided is time and resources saved for the next challenge in life!

Please summarize the memo that you have just read in your own words.

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age \_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently: Yes No

My first language is English French Other

In your opinion, what was the purpose of this research?

This completes your first exercise. Please click “next”; to start your second exercise.

This is your second exercise. Please read all the materials carefully. We appreciate your honest and sincere responses. Click "next" to begin.

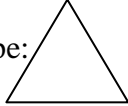
Every year the Asper School of Business awards its distinguished graduating BComm students at the convocation ceremony. Along with the award students also receive a small gift from the Asper school as a token of appreciation for their hard work and studies during their program. The gift usually includes a pen and a shirt with the Asper logo, a University of Manitoba writing pad and a travel water bottle with the UofM logo. We need your help in selecting the water bottle that will be included in the gift this year. We've narrowed down our search to 4 water bottles from the UofM book store and the

one that is the most preferred by the students who participate in this study will become a part of the gift. Also, as a token of appreciation for your help, you will get to take one of the water bottles with you. On the next page you will be asked to read the instructions which explain what we ask you to do. Please read the instructions carefully, it is essential that you follow them. Click “Next” to proceed to the next page when you are ready.

**Instructions.** Dear participant, thank you for helping us with this important task. On your desk you will see four brown paper bags. Each paper bag contains one water bottle. Each bag has a yellow sticky note with a unique shape drawn on it. When you begin the task, you will be asked to open a bag with the sticky note that has the shape which matches the shape you will see on the screen. When you open the bag, you can take out the water bottle and look at it for about 10 seconds. After that, you will provide your evaluations of the water bottle by answering the questions on the screen. When you are done answering the questions, you can either vote for that bottle or choose to view another one. If you vote for the bottle, the task is over and you get to take that bottle with you. If you choose to view another bottle you will be asked to put the bottle you just viewed back in the bag and click “next”. You will then be asked to open another bag with the shape on the sticky note that matches the shape on the screen. You will open the bag, look at the bottle for 10 seconds and provide your evaluations by answering questions on the screen. After that, you can vote for that bottle and take it with you or choose to view the next bottle. You get the idea! Please note, that once you put the bottle back into its bag, you cannot vote for that bottle or take it with you. If you have viewed all four bottles and did not vote for any of them, its ok, you will get to take a UofM pen with you instead

of a water bottle. If you finish the task early you may be asked to sit and wait for a few minutes. You can proceed to the next page when you are ready.



Please open the bag with the following shape:  Please look at the water bottle for 10 seconds and then rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements below



This water bottle looks nice

I would not mind carrying this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I would not mind owning this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I like this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This water bottle would make a good present for a graduating student  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This water bottle would be a good choice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

What would you like to do next? Would you like to vote for this bottle and take it home? or would you like to see the next bottle?

Vote and take it with me      See the next one

Please open the bag with the following shape



Please look at the water bottle

for 10 seconds and then rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements

below



This water bottle looks nice

I would not mind carrying this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I would not mind owning this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I like this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This water bottle would make a good present for a graduating student  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This water bottle would be a good choice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

What would you like to do next? Would you like to vote for this bottle and take it home? or would you like to see the next bottle?

Vote and take it with me      See the next one

Please open the bag with the following shape:

Please look at the water bottle

for 10 seconds and then rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements

below



This water bottle looks nice

I would not mind carrying this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I would not mind owning this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

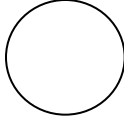
I like this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This water bottle would make a good present for a graduating student  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This water bottle would be a good choice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

What would you like to do next? Would you like to vote for this bottle and take it home? or would you like to see the next bottle?

Vote and take it with me      See the next one

Please open the bag with the following shape:  Please look at the water bottle for 10 seconds and then rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements below



This water bottle looks nice

I would not mind carrying this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I would not mind owning this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

I like this water bottle  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This water bottle would make a good present for a graduating student  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This water bottle would be a good choice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

What would you like to do next? Would you like to vote for this bottle and take it home? or would you like to take home a pen?

Vote and take it with me      Take home a pen

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male Female

Age \_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently: Yes No

My first language is English French Other

In your opinion, what was the purpose of this research?

## Appendix I

### Essay 3: Study 3 Informed Consent Form

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This research is being conducted by a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to contact me. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Please read the description of the study that you will be participating in. After you read the description of the study, please select either “Yes” or “No” corresponding to whether or not you wish to participate.

Research Project Title: Desserts  
Researcher: Olya Bullard, PhD Student in Marketing

In this study you will be asked to first read a short paragraph about making good decisions, you will then be asked to imagine choosing a dessert from a dessert menu which consists of four possible choice alternatives. Finally, you will be asked to answer some follow up questions. There is no risk to participating in this study other than those in everyday life. If you feel uncomfortable when answering the questionnaire, you are free to withdrawal at any time without any penalty.

These research projects have been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about any of these projects, you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca).

Your response on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research projects and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from any of the studies at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. You will still get course credit if you choose to withdraw. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The data from the study will be used only for academic research. No part of the data will be sold or used for any commercial purpose.

If you wish to receive a copy of this INFORMED CONSENT FORM to keep for your own records, please inform the researcher conducting your experimental session. Please answer the following question:

Yes, I wish to participate    No, I do not wish to participate

### **Essay 3: Study 3 Instrument**

This study consists of two unrelated exercises. In the first exercise you will be asked to read and summarize a short memo about decision making, followed by some general questions. In the second exercise you will be asked to imagine choosing a dessert from a restaurant menu. Please proceed to your first exercise when you are ready.

**Promotion focus condition.** We all know that making good decisions in life is essential. However, many people find it very difficult to pinpoint what makes a good decision. Today, I would like to discuss one very important aspect of a good decision – progress toward the goal. When making a decision one should ask himself or herself: “How will this help me attain my goals?” Making decisions that bring you closer toward your ultimate goals is a crucial component of a successful strategy that often does not receive the emphasis that it deserves. Making steps which will help you reach your goal is what will get you to the aspirations that you have for your life, and taking every opportunity you can to reach your target is what will effectively allow you to make good decisions. Missed opportunities cost individuals the coveted career progress that they dream of and missed opportunities in the business and government sectors cost our economy that competitive advantage we aspire to gain as a nation. Foregoing decisions that make progress toward the goal will not only keep you stagnant but will also cost you the time it will take you to get the next opportunity to make that progress. It is time to challenge our thinking! Next time you have to make a decision, focus on how it will get you closer to your ultimate goal. Don’t miss that precious chance to stand out and take a leap of faith. Make bold, courageous choices that will ensure your progress toward your

goals and aspirations. A bold decision is a good decision and an opportunity taken means you are one step closer to your dreams!

**Prevention focus condition.** We all know that making good decisions in life is essential. However, many people find it very difficult to pinpoint what makes a good decision. Today, I would like to discuss one very important aspect of a good decision – accuracy. Accuracy is something that is frequently overlooked in our culture. It is often seen as a waste of time and is not given the attention that it truly deserves. Accuracy at every step of a decision making process is crucial as it helps you to avoid making mistakes. Mistakes are costly and are much harder to correct than they are to prevent. Mistakes made by ordinary individuals cost them hundreds of dollars of their personal budget, and mistakes made in the business and government sectors cost our economy billions of dollars per year. Not only does foregoing accuracy create a cost in terms of poorly made decisions, but it also generates an additional cost of time and resources that it takes to correct the mistake. It is time to challenge our thinking! Next time you have to do something: an assignment at school, a task at work or an exercise for a course, focus on being precise and accurate at every step. It will make you feel secure and safe about your decisions, answers and choices. It will ensure that you don't make mistakes which can cost you lost points on an assignment, being reprimanded by your boss at work or simply being embarrassed in front of your peers. An accurate decision is a good decision and a mistake avoided is time and resources saved for the next challenge in life!

Welcome to your second exercise. In this exercise we ask you to assist a local restaurant with testing their dessert menu. The menu consists of four chocolate desserts. The restaurant manager is planning to have the dessert menu electronically on an I-Pad. The



device will present a picture of one chocolate dessert at a time and offer the customer an option to order it or move on to viewing the next dessert. If the customer chooses to view the next dessert he/she will be able to order a previously viewed dessert at any time.

What we ask you to do, is to imagine that you are in the restaurant and you are about to order a dessert for yourself. Just like the menu on the I-Pad, you will see one picture of chocolate dessert at a time. You will be able to order it or move on to the next of the four available desserts. If you choose to move on, you will always be able to order a previously viewed dessert. We thank you on behalf of the restaurant manager for your help with this important task.



Before you decide whether or not to order this dessert, please rate it on the three attributes commonly considered when selecting a chocolate dessert

This dessert appears attractive  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

What would you like to do next? Order this dessert or view the next one?

Order this dessert    View the next one



Before you decide whether or not to order this dessert, please rate it on the three attributes commonly considered when selecting a chocolate dessert

This dessert appears attractive

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

What would you like to do next? Order this dessert or view the next one?

Order this dessert    Order the first dessert I have seen    View the next one



Before you decide whether or not to order this dessert, please rate it on the three attributes commonly considered when selecting a chocolate dessert

This dessert appears attractive  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

What would you like to do next? Order this dessert or view the next one?

Order this dessert   Order the first dessert I have seen   Order the second dessert I have seen   View the next one



Before you decide whether or not to order this dessert, please rate it on the three attributes commonly considered when selecting a chocolate dessert

This dessert appears attractive  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert appears nice  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks tasty  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

This dessert looks delicious  
Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Please order one of the desserts

Order this dessert   Order the first dessert I have seen   Order the second dessert I have seen   Order the third dessert I have seen

Please answer some questions about yourself

I am: Male   Female

Age \_\_\_\_\_

I speak English fluently:   Yes   No

My first language is   English   French   Other

In your opinion, what was the purpose of this research?