

Ideals and Oughts and the Reliance on Affect versus Substance in Persuasion

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Motivation research distinguishes two types of goals: (a) ideals, which relate to people's hopes, wishes, and aspirations, and (b) oughts, which relate to people's duties, obligations, and responsibilities. We propose that, in persuasion, the accessibility of ideals increases consumers' reliance on their subjective affective responses to the ad relative to the substance of the message, whereas the accessibility of oughts increases consumers' reliance on the substance of the message relative to their subjective affective responses. This phenomenon is accompanied by a relative change in the perceived diagnosticity of the two types of information under accessible ideals versus oughts—a change that can be related to the distinct modes of self-regulation that ideals and oughts trigger. The phenomenon appears to be unrelated to the kind of change in depth-of-processing posited by the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the Heuristic-Systematic Model.

Evaluative judgments can be based on two distinct types of information or inputs: (a) information that pertains to the essence of the target to be evaluated (e.g., the strength of advertising claims, the compellingness of product attributes, or the professional experience of a job candidate) and (b) information that relates to the person's subjective affective response to the target (e.g., feelings experienced during ad exposure, the aesthetic of the product's design or the charisma of the job candidate). The distinction transpires, for instance, in studies on attitude structures, which often uncover a utilitarian component and a hedonic component, and in studies on the effects of advertising, which show that some of these effects are mediated by changes in product beliefs, while others are mediated by affective response to the ad. (Although the two types of inputs can sometimes overlap, this research focuses on situations where the two types of input are independent.)

The tendency to rely on substantive versus affective information in judgments seems to depend on a number of

factors. Judgments are more likely to be based on affective (as opposed to substantive) considerations when the consumer has experiential motives (e.g., reading a novel to relax) than when the consumer has instrumental motives (e.g., reading a tax manual to prepare a tax return; Pham 1998). Because consumption motives tend to vary across product categories, certain types of products (e.g., vacation packages) are more likely to be evaluated based on affect (as opposed to substance) than other types of products (e.g., long-distance plans; Adaval 2001). Furthermore, holding the product category constant, certain types of judgments (e.g., predicted enjoyment) are more likely to be based on affect (as opposed to substance) than other types of judgments (e.g., predicted usage cost; Wyer, Clore, and Isbell 1999). Finally, reliance on affective as opposed to substantive inputs seems to increase when motivation, ability, or opportunity to process information is limited (e.g., Albarracín and Wyer 2001; Miniard et al. 1991)—a phenomenon consistent with general predictions of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM; e.g., Petty and Cacioppo 1986) and the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM; e.g., Chaiken, Liberman, and Eagly 1989).

The purpose of this article is to investigate, in a persuasion context, another factor that may moderate the reliance on affective versus substantive information: the types of goals that consumers have and the self-regulation tendencies that these goals trigger. Higgins (1987) distinguishes between two types of goals, ideals (i.e., aspirations, hopes, and wishes) and oughts (i.e., obligations, duties, and responsibilities). We hypothesize that, in advertising-based persuasion, accessible ideals increase consumers' reliance on their subjective affective responses to the ad (e.g., the perceived

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attractiveness of the ad's execution) and decreases their reliance on the substance of the message (i.e., the perceived strength of the claims). Accessible oughts have the opposite effects: they increase consumers' reliance on the substance of the message and decrease their reliance on their subjective affective responses to the ad. We speculate that this phenomenon is accompanied by a change in the perceived diagnosticity of the two types of information—a change that can be related to the distinct modes of self-regulation that ideals and oughts trigger.

We review research on how ideals and oughts operate and discuss how these goals may influence the use of judgment inputs in persuasion. We then report on four studies. The results suggest that: (a) ideals versus oughts do modify the reliance on subjective affective responses versus substantive assessments of the message; (b) these effects seem to occur independent of changes in involvement and hold even when exposure time is fixed; (c) the effects hold both with temporarily and chronically accessible ideals and oughts; and (d) the effects are paralleled by a relative change in the perceived diagnosticity of subjective affective responses to the ad versus substantive assessments of the message.

PERSUASION UNDER IDEALS VERSUS OUGHTS

Ideals, Oughts, and Self-Regulation

Although there are many ways of classifying goals (e.g., Huffman, Ratneshwar, and Mick 2000), according to Higgins (1987) there is a fundamental distinction between ideals and oughts. Ideals refer to people's hopes, wishes, and aspirations (e.g., wanting a beautiful house, dreaming of an exotic vacation). Oughts refer to people's obligations, duties, and responsibilities (e.g., having to provide for a child's education, behaving professionally at work). Recent work on regulatory-focus theory (Higgins 1998) suggests that ideals and oughts tap into distinct self-regulatory systems. Ideals tap into the promotion system, which is responsible for the regulation of nurturance needs; oughts tap into the prevention system, which is responsible for the regulation of security needs. These two systems are distinct not only in the types of goals and needs that they regulate, but also in the types of strategies that these systems invoke to fulfill these goals and needs. To achieve a given desirable end state (e.g., to become an excellent tennis player), the promotion system relies primarily on approach strategies (e.g., practicing for several hours a day). The prevention system, however, relies primarily on avoidance strategies (e.g., refraining from smoking). Although one system may be chronically more accessible than the other in a given person, both systems are assumed to coexist in every individual. Hence, promotion and prevention are best conceptualized as motivational states as opposed to strict motivational traits.

The distinction between promotion- and prevention-focused self-regulation, which ideals and oughts tap into, appears to be a strong predictor of judgment, thought, and behavior (e.g., Aaker and Lee 2001; Kardes and Cronley

2000). For example, Aaker and Lee (2001) recently found that consumers with an independent self view, who tend to be promotion-focused, are more persuaded by messages focusing on positive outcomes, whereas people with an interdependent self view, who tend to be prevention-focused, are more persuaded by messages emphasizing negative outcomes.

Self-Regulation and Eagerness versus Vigilance

The promotion and prevention modes of self-regulation appear to foster different patterns of exploration and different attitudes toward risk (Crowe and Higgins 1997; Liberman et al. 1999). Because promotion centers on approaching matches to desired end states, it seems to trigger a drive to capture as many existing opportunities as possible. This drive fosters a more eager form of exploration, in which the person is more willing to accept risks and seeks to maximize hits and minimize misses (errors of omission). In contrast, because prevention centers on avoiding mismatches to desired end states, it seems to trigger a drive to protect against potential threats. This drive fosters a more vigilant form of exploration, in which the person is less willing to accept risks and seeks to maximize correct rejections and minimize false alarms (errors of commission). Crowe and Higgins (1997) found, for example, that in a recognition task promotion-focused participants exhibited a risky bias, identifying more items as having appeared in the original list and committing more errors of commission. In contrast, prevention-focused participants exhibited a conservative bias, identifying fewer items as having appeared in the original list and committing more errors of omission. Similarly, Liberman et al. (1999) observed that in situations involving a choice between a status quo (a conservative option) and a new course of action (a more risky option), promotion-focused individuals tended to choose the new course of action, whereas prevention-focused individuals tended to choose the status quo. We now turn to how these two forms of exploration may influence the reliance on affect versus substance in advertising.

Eagerness, Vigilance, and Reliance on Affect versus Substance

We shall focus on situations where the substance of the advertising message is independent from the consumer's affective response to the ad. That is, we shall treat the substance of the message and the affective response as alternative inputs for making a brand evaluation. Situations where the two types of inputs are strongly correlated (e.g., a transformational ad for a hedonic product) are not examined.

Several lines of argument would suggest that a vigilant (and risk-averse) form of exploration should encourage the reliance on substantive information in persuasion. First, it has been proposed that heightened vigilance increases the reliance on external data as opposed to internal knowledge structures (Bless, Mackie, and Schwarz 1992; Bless et al

1996). This is consistent with the idea that problematic situations should encourage learning from the external environment (Gray 1971). This argument helps explain why negative moods often increase message scrutiny in persuasion settings. Negative moods, just like prevention, can trigger states of vigilance because negative affect generally signals that the environment is unsafe. This vigilance in turn encourages the reliance on external information, which message claims provide (Bless et al. 1996). A related argument comes from studies suggesting that emotional states with a strong element of uncertainty (e.g., sadness or anxiety) trigger greater message scrutiny compared to emotional states with a strong element of certainty (e.g., anger or disgust; Tiedens and Linton 2001). Second, vigilant and risk-averse individuals should theoretically prefer information whose use can be readily justified (Shafir, Simonson, and Tversky 1993). This tendency should favor the reliance on substantive information because this information, being more factual, can provide a more compelling basis for justification (Rieke and Sillars 1975). Third, vigilant and risk-averse individuals should theoretically prefer information that is seen as safe. The substance of the message is likely to be regarded as safer because, on average, the substance of the message should be a better predictor of the true merit of the target than other nonsubstantive elements of the ad (see Hilton and Fein 1989). Finally, research shows that prevention and risk-aversion tends to increase the reliance on analytical processes (Friedman and Förster 2000). Theoretically, analytical and ruled-based processes should be more compatible with substantive information.

Similarly, several lines of argument would suggest that an eager (and risk-seeking) form of exploration should encourage the reliance on affective information in persuasion. First, eagerness and risk-seeking should encourage the use of heuristics in general (Friedman and Förster 2000, 2001). To the extent that feelings are compelling evaluation heuristics (e.g., Pham 1998; Pham et al. 2001; Schwarz and Clore 1996, Slovic et al. 2002), eagerness and risk-seeking should also increase the reliance on subjective affective responses in persuasion. Second, promotion-induced eagerness has been shown to increase creativity (Friedman and Förster 2001). To the extent that subjective affective responses to the ad provide information that may go beyond stated attributes of the target, this increased creativity may promote the use of affect in persuasion. This reasoning is consistent with Forgas's (1995) thesis that feelings are especially likely to infuse into judgments when people engage in inferential processing, and with Epstein's (1990) argument that affect-based judgments are more likely under more associative (as opposed to rule-based) modes of reasoning. Finally, it has been proposed that states of eagerness encourage the reliance on internal inputs as opposed to external information (Bless et al. 1992, 1996). To the extent that subjective affective responses capture internal reactions to the environment as opposed to external information, reliance on such affective responses should increase under states of eagerness.

H1: When forming evaluations, consumers whose oughts are accessible will rely more on the substance of the message than consumers whose ideals are accessible.

H2: When forming evaluations, consumers whose ideals are accessible will rely more on their subjective affective responses to the ad than consumers whose oughts are accessible.

Note that hypotheses 1 and 2 compare the relative reliance on affect versus substance across ideals versus oughts, not the absolute reliance on affect versus substance within ideals and oughts. The question of whether consumers with accessible oughts rely more, in absolute terms, on the substance of the message than on their subjective affective responses is left open. So is the question of whether consumers with accessible ideals rely more, in absolute terms, on their subjective affective responses than on the substance of the message.

If the phenomenon hypothesized in hypotheses 1 and 2 reflects a relative preference for different types of information under accessible ideals and accessible oughts, we would additionally expect a relative change in the perceived diagnosticity of subjective affective responses and the perceived diagnosticity of the substance of the message. That is, the greater use of either type of information should correspond to an increased confidence that this information is useful for making an evaluation (see, e.g., Feldman and Lynch 1988; Petty, Briñol, and Tormala 2002). In particular, consumers whose oughts are accessible should perceive the substance of the message to be more relevant and useful for forming a brand evaluation than consumers whose ideals are accessible. Similarly, consumers whose ideals are accessible should perceive their affective responses to the ad to be more relevant and useful for forming a brand evaluation than consumers whose oughts are accessible. (Again, the following hypotheses compare the relative perceived diagnosticity of the two types of inputs across ideals and oughts, not the absolute diagnosticities of these inputs within ideals and oughts.)

H3: Consumers whose oughts are accessible will perceive the substance of the message to be more diagnostic for evaluating the brand than consumers whose ideals are accessible.

H4: Consumers whose ideals are accessible will perceive their affective responses to the ad to be more diagnostic for evaluating the brand than consumers whose oughts are accessible.

Previous research suggests two additional hypotheses. Though not central to this research, these secondary hypotheses help refine the predictions of hypotheses 1 and 2. Under a prevention focus, the consumer should be more sensitive to mismatches to desired end states than to matches

(Higgins 1998). As a result, assuming that the consumer is pursuing desirable ends, the tendency to rely on the substance of the message when oughts are accessible may be more pronounced when the substance of the message is weak than when it is strong. In contrast, under a promotion focus, the consumer should be more sensitive to matches to desired end states than to mismatches. As a result—assuming again that the consumer is pursuing desirable ends—the tendency to rely on subjective affective responses when ideals are accessible may be more pronounced when these affective responses are positive than when they are negative.

H5: Among consumers whose oughts are accessible, evaluations will be especially sensitive to the substance of the message when the message is weak. That is, evaluations will be more unfavorable if the message is weak than they will be favorable if the message is strong.

H6: Among consumers whose ideals are accessible, evaluations will be especially sensitive to subjective affective responses when these affective responses are positive. That is, evaluations will be more favorable if the subjective affective responses are positive than they will be unfavorable if the subjective affective responses are negative.

Relation to Previous Persuasion Research

It should be apparent that the predicted effects of ideals and oughts—especially those captured by hypotheses 1 and 2—resemble other effects reported in the persuasion literature. In particular, the greater reliance on the substance of the message under accessible oughts resembles the central/systematic modes of processing that high involvement, negative mood and high need-for-cognition (NFC) have been shown to trigger. Likewise, the greater reliance on subjective affective responses under accessible ideals resembles the peripheral/heuristic mode of processing that low involvement, positive mood, and low NFC have been found to produce (e.g., Bless et al. 1990; Cacioppo et al. 1986; Chaiken 1980; Miniard et al. 1991; Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983).

Although our predictions are broadly consistent with a dual-process view of judgment and persuasion, this research differs from earlier persuasion work in two main respects. First, we speculate that the effects of ideals and oughts are empirically independent of those of involvement, mood, and NFC, the most established antecedents of central/systematic-peripheral/heuristic processing. We shall report evidence suggesting that the effects of ideals and oughts on persuasion are not driven by changes in involvement, mood, and NFC. Second, we postulate a conceptual distinction between the effects of ideals and oughts and the traditional notion of central/systematic-peripheral/heuristic processing. According to the ELM and HSM models, the primary determinant

of whether people process information centrally/systematically or peripherally/heuristically is their desired level of accuracy or confidence in their judgments (Chaiken et al. 1989; Petty and Cacioppo 1986). We speculate that what differentiates ideals- and oughts-oriented consumers is not so much their desired levels of accuracy and confidence—which, in fact, may be equal—as the type of information that they find relevant to attaining their desired accuracy and confidence. As hypothesized in hypotheses 3 and 4, ideals- and oughts-oriented consumers may perceive different types of information to be diagnostic even if their motivation for accuracy is identical. This is consistent with recent studies showing that in persuasion the direction of processing—that is, the type of information people choose to focus on when forming attitudes—may be independent of the depth of processing—that is, the care with which the information is processed (e.g., Bless et al. 1996; Pham 1996; Sorrentino et al. 1988). In other words, factors other than motivation for accuracy can determine whether people focus on the substance of the message or on some other type of information (e.g., source credibility).

PRETEST

This pretest tests a priming manipulation of ideals versus oughts to be used in studies 1–3. The manipulation was based on a procedure developed by Higgins and his colleagues. Although these authors report evidence that this procedure influences judgment and behavior in a manner consistent with the activation of promotion versus prevention orientations (e.g., Higgins et al. 1986, 1994; Liberman et al. 1999), to the best of our knowledge, it was never verified that the procedure does manipulate the relative accessibility of ideals versus oughts. This pretest provides the first explicit test of this priming manipulation.

Forty students, participating in small sessions of five on average, were randomly assigned to either a primed-ideals or a primed-oughts condition. In the primed-ideals condition, participants were asked to think about their past hopes, aspirations, and dreams, and to list two of them. They were then asked to think about their current hopes, aspirations, and dreams, and again to list two of them. In the primed-oughts condition, participants were asked to think about their past duties, obligations, and responsibilities, and to list two of them. They were then asked to think about their current duties, obligations, and responsibilities, and to list two of them. (The full instructions are available from the authors.) Once participants had completed this priming task, two goal-accessibility measures were administered as part of a supposedly unrelated study.

First, participants were presented with three different “personal choices” meant to capture conflicts between ideals and oughts. The choices were presented as pairs of statements anchoring opposite ends of seven-point scales. The pairs, which all started with “I would prefer to,” were (1) “do what is right” (ought) versus “do whatever I want” (ideal); (2) “take a trip around the world” (ideal) versus “pay back my loans” (ought); and (3) “go wherever my heart

takes me" (ideal) versus "do whatever it takes to keep my promises" (ought). For each pair of statements, participants were asked to indicate which direction they would lean toward. Responses were averaged into a single index ranging from 1 (emphasis on ideals) to 7 (emphasis on oughts). As expected, when given these choices, participants in the primed-oughts condition put relatively greater emphasis on oughts versus ideals ($M = 4.52$) than did participants in the primed-ideals condition ($M = 3.63$; $F(1, 38) = 4.29$, $p < .05$).

Participants were then asked to list, in an open-ended format, up to eight priorities they set for themselves in their day-to-day lives. These priorities were coded by two judges as either reflecting an ideal (36% of the responses), reflecting an ought (61%), or ambiguous (3%). Interjudge agreement was 82%; disagreements were resolved with a third judge. A mixed ANOVA of the number of ideal-related priorities and number of ought-related priorities revealed a pronounced priming-by-type of priorities interaction ($F(1, 37) = 8.93$, $p < .01$). As expected, participants in the primed-ideals condition listed more ideal-related priorities ($M = 3.23$) than did participants in the primed-oughts condition ($M = 2.00$; $F(1, 37) = 4.51$, $p < .05$). Similarly, participants in the primed-oughts condition listed more ought-related priorities ($M = 5.30$) than did participants in the primed-ideals condition ($M = 3.37$; $F(1, 37) = 10.97$, $p < .01$). (It should be observed that the manipulation influences the relative accessibility of ideals and oughts, not their absolute accessibility.)

STUDY 1

This study tests the prediction that the relative accessibility of ideals versus oughts changes the relative reliance on subjective affective responses to the ad versus the substance of the message. Participants whose ideals or oughts were primed as described in the pretest were asked to evaluate a product based on a print advertisement. To manipulate the substantive quality of the message, the ad featured either strong or weak claims. To manipulate participants' subjective affective responses to the ad independently of the substance of the message, the ad's execution was either attractive or unattractive. As mentioned earlier, attractiveness of the ad's execution is only one of several potential manipulations of subjective affective responses to the ad. We chose this particular manipulation here because it could be made orthogonal to a manipulation of the substantive content of the message.

We predicted that participants' subjective affective responses to the ad's attractiveness would be a stronger determinant of their evaluations in the primed-ideals condition than in the primed-oughts condition (hypothesis 2). In contrast, participants' substantive assessments of the claims would be a stronger determinant of their evaluations in the primed-oughts condition than in the primed-ideals condition (hypothesis 1). In addition, based on our speculation that the effects of ideals versus oughts would be independent of those of involvement, we also predicted that the priming of

ideals versus oughts would have no influence on the level of involvement reported by the participants.

Method

Participants and Design. A total of 80 students were randomly assigned to the conditions of a 2 (weak or strong claims) \times 2 (attractive or unattractive ad) \times 2 (ideals or oughts) between-subjects design.

Procedure and Goal Priming. The experiment was administered in two supposedly unrelated studies. In the first study participants completed the same priming task as described in the pretest. In the second study participants were shown a print ad for a dictionary and asked to read it as though they were considering buying a dictionary. Exposure time was under participants' control. (Most read it in less than 60 sec.) After reading the ad, participants reported their product evaluations and completed manipulation and confounding checks.

Claim Strength and Ad Attractiveness. The ad featured a fictitious dictionary described in five product claims that previous research (Pham 1996) had shown to be either weak or strong. Another pretest ($n = 40$) confirmed that the claims were perceived to be more convincing in the strong-claim condition ($M = 4.43$ on a seven-point scale) than in the weak-claim condition ($M = 3.03$, $F(1, 38) = 8.75$, $p < .01$). The attractiveness of the ad was manipulated by varying the ad's layout, color scheme, and illustration. Another pretest ($n = 40$) showed that the more attractive version of the ad elicited more positive affective responses ($M = 4.90$ on a seven-point scale) than did the less attractive version ($M = 2.94$; $F(1, 36) = 14.29$, $p < .001$).

Measures. Brand evaluation was measured by three seven-point items anchored at "good/bad," "favorable/unfavorable," and "like/dislike" ($\alpha = .94$). As a manipulation check, subjective affective responses to the ad were assessed by four seven-point items anchored at "exciting/boring," "enjoyed/didn't enjoy reading," "appealing/not appealing," and "pleasant/not pleasant to look at" ($\alpha = .93$). Substantive assessments of the claims were assessed by three seven-point items anchored at "compelling/not compelling," "convincing/not convincing," and "strong/weak" ($\alpha = .95$). Finally, involvement was assessed by three seven-point agree-disagree items: "I did not take the task of evaluating the dictionary seriously" (reversed scored); "I really read the ad as if I actually needed to buy a dictionary"; and "I took extra care in making a sound evaluation of the dictionary" ($\alpha = .84$).

Results

The means across conditions are reported in table 1. All ANOVA tests were based on a full, 2 \times 2 \times 2 model, with (1, 72) degrees of freedom.

Manipulation Checks. As expected, the more attrac-

TABLE 1
STUDY 1—CELL MEANS AS A FUNCTION OF PRIMED GOALS, CLAIM STRENGTH, AND AD ATTRACTIVENESS

	Primed ideals				Primed oughts			
	Weak claims		Strong claims		Weak claims		Strong claims	
	Unattractive (<i>n</i> = 10)	Attractive (<i>n</i> = 10)	Unattractive (<i>n</i> = 9)	Attractive (<i>n</i> = 10)	Unattractive (<i>n</i> = 10)	Attractive (<i>n</i> = 10)	Unattractive (<i>n</i> = 11)	Attractive (<i>n</i> = 10)
Subjective affective response	2.23	5.63	2.25	5.20	2.55	5.23	1.95	4.98
Assessment of claim strength	3.17	2.60	5.11	5.17	2.80	2.47	5.30	5.53
Brand evaluation	3.30	5.17	4.04	5.57	3.13	3.47	4.97	5.06
Involvement	5.17	4.43	4.63	4.33	4.87	5.57	4.51	5.17

tive ad elicited more positive affective responses ($M = 5.26$) than did the less attractive ad ($M = 2.24$; $F = 265.81$, $p < .0001$). Similarly, the strong claims were rated as more convincing ($M = 5.28$) than the weak claims ($M = 2.76$; $F = 162.04$, $p < .0001$). No other effect was significant for either measure. The four versions of the ad manipulated assessments of substance and subjective affective responses orthogonally, as intended.

Brand Evaluations. If oughts increase consumers' reliance on the substance of the message, the strength of the claims should have greater influence on brand evaluations when oughts are primed than when ideals are primed (hypothesis 1). We thus predicted a claim strength \times primed goals interaction showing that the simple effect of claim strength is stronger in the primed-oughts condition than in the primed-ideals condition. Similarly, if ideals increase consumers' reliance on their subjective affective responses, the attractiveness of the ad should have greater influence on brand evaluations when ideals are primed than when oughts are primed (hypothesis 2). Therefore, we also predicted an ad attractiveness \times primed goals interaction showing that the simple effect of attractiveness is stronger in the primed-ideals condition than in the primed-oughts condition.

Consistent with the idea that accessible oughts should trigger prevention, we further predicted that, in the claim \times goal interaction, the simple effect of ideals versus oughts would be more pronounced for weak claims than for strong claims (see hypothesis 5). Consistent with the idea that accessible ideals should trigger promotion, we also predicted that, in the attractiveness \times goal interaction, the simple effect of ideals versus oughts would be more pronounced for the attractive ad than for the unattractive ad (see hypothesis 6).

Main effects of claim strength ($F = 22.42$, $p < .0001$) and attractiveness ($F = 15.7$, $p < .0002$) indicated that brand evaluations were more favorable in the strong-claim condition ($M = 4.93$) than in the weak-claim condition ($M = 3.77$) and in the attractive-ad condition ($M = 4.82$) than in the unattractive-ad condition ($M = 3.88$). More important, a claim \times goal interaction ($F = 5.67$, $p < .02$; see panel A in fig. 1) showed that the strength of the claims

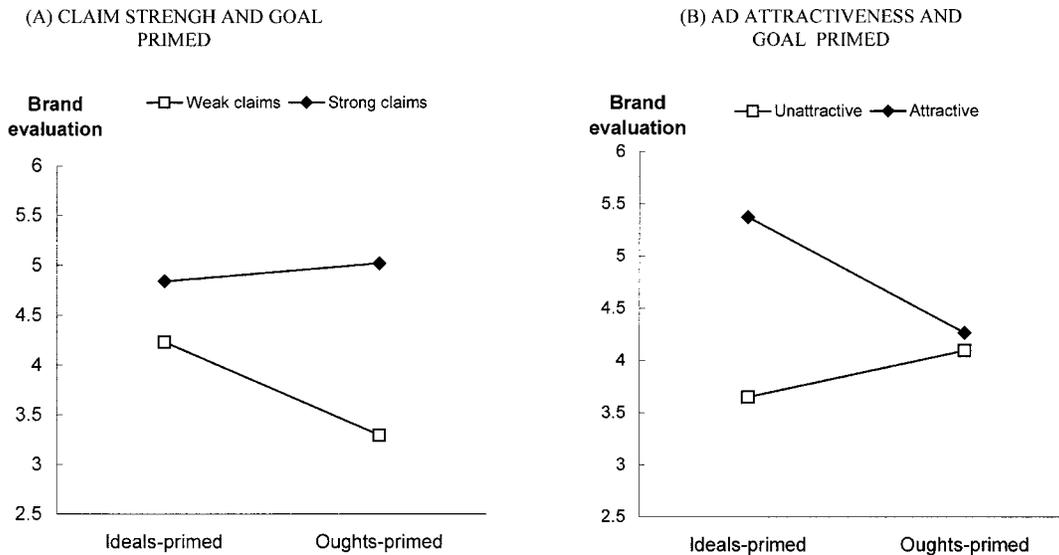
was a stronger determinant of brand evaluations in the primed-oughts condition ($M_{\text{Strong}} = 5.02$ vs. $M_{\text{Weak}} = 3.30$; $F = 25.97$, $p < .0001$) than in the primed-ideals condition ($M_{\text{Strong}} = 4.84$ vs. $M_{\text{Weak}} = 4.23$; $F = 2.70$, $p = .10$). This result supports hypothesis 1 that the relative accessibility of oughts (compared to ideals) increases the reliance on the substance of the message. Interestingly, the effect of oughts (vs. ideals) was more pronounced when the claims were weak ($F = 7.487$, $p < .01$) than when the claims were strong ($F < 1$). This finding is consistent with hypothesis 5 and a prevention interpretation of the claim \times goal interaction.

Similarly, an attractiveness \times goal interaction ($F = 9.43$, $p < .01$; see panel B in fig. 1) showed that the attractiveness of the ad had greater influence on brand evaluations in the primed-ideals condition ($M_{\text{Attr.}} = 5.37$ vs. $M_{\text{Unattr.}} = 3.65$; $F = 24.12$, $p < .0001$) than in the primed-oughts condition ($M_{\text{Attr.}} = 4.27$ vs. $M_{\text{Unattr.}} = 4.10$; $F < 1$). This result supports hypothesis 2 that the relative accessibility of ideals (compared to oughts) increases the reliance on subjective affective responses to the ad. Interestingly, the effect of ideals versus oughts was more pronounced when the ad was attractive ($F = 10.40$, $p < .01$) than when the ad was unattractive ($F = 1.25$, $p = .27$). This finding is consistent with hypothesis 6 and a promotion interpretation of the claim \times goal interaction. (Note that the evidence for hypotheses 5 and 6 in only tentative. More conclusive evidence would require baseline conditions where the level of subjective affective responses and the level of substantive assessments would be neutral.)

Regression Analyses. To provide further evidence that the main experimental effects were driven by a change in the weighting of substantive assessments versus subjective affective responses under primed ideals versus oughts, brand evaluations were submitted to a multiple regression with the following predictors: (a) participants' own substantive assessments of the claims, (b) participants' own subjective affective responses to the ad, (c) a dummy code for ideals (1) versus oughts (0), (d) the interaction between substantive assessments (a) and primed goals (c), and (e) the interaction between subjective affective responses (b) and primed goals

FIGURE 1

STUDY 1—BRAND EVALUATIONS AS A FUNCTION OF CLAIM STRENGTH, AD ATTRACTIVENESS, AND GOAL PRIMED



(c). As expected, there was a negative interaction between primed ideals and substantive assessments ($\beta = -0.516, t(74) = -3.77, p < .0003$), suggesting that primed ideals (compared to oughts) did reduce the relative weight attached to substantive assessments (hypothesis 1). There was also a positive interaction between primed ideals and subjective affective responses ($\beta = 0.373, t(74) = 3.15, p < .01$), suggesting that, in addition, primed ideals (compared to primed oughts) increased the relative weight attached to subjective affective responses (hypothesis 2).

Task Involvement. There were no influences of the manipulations on participants' self-reports of involvement. In particular, self-reported levels of involvement were similar in the primed-oughts condition ($M = 5.02$) and in the primed-ideals condition ($M = 4.65; F = 1.46, NS$). Ideals and oughts seem to alter the persuasion process without changing the level of involvement.

Discussion

The results indicate that ideals and oughts influence the reliance on subjective affective responses to the ad versus the substance of the message. Participants were found to be more influenced by the attractiveness of the ad when ideals were primed than when oughts were primed, suggesting that accessible ideals increase the reliance on subjective affective responses (hypothesis 2). Consistent with this interpretation, regression analyses show that subjective affective responses to the ad were better predictors of brand evaluations when ideals were primed than when oughts were primed. This suggests that, compared to ought-primed respondents, ideals-primed respondents did weight their subjective affective

responses to the ad more heavily, not just some unobserved correlates of the attractiveness manipulation (e.g., vividness). Interestingly, the increased influence of ad attractiveness under accessible ideals was observed primarily for the attractive ad. This seems consistent with the notion that ideals trigger promotion, which theoretically should favor positive affective signals when the end state is desirable (see hypothesis 6).

It was also found that participants were more influenced by the strength of the claims when oughts were primed than when ideals were primed, suggesting that accessible oughts increase the reliance on an assessment of the substance of the message (hypothesis 1). Consistent with this interpretation, regression analyses show that substantive assessments of the message were better predictors of brand evaluations when oughts were primed than when ideals were primed. Interestingly, the increased influence of claim strength under accessible oughts was observed primarily when the claims were weak. This seems consistent with the idea that oughts trigger prevention, which theoretically should result in greater monitoring of negative substantive signals when the end state is desirable (see hypothesis 5).

An alternative explanation could be that ideals and oughts trigger different levels of involvement. Specifically, ideals-primed respondents may have been more influenced by the ad's attractiveness because they were less motivated to be accurate than oughts-primed respondents were. Similarly, oughts-primed respondents may have been more influenced by the claims' strength because they were more motivated to be accurate than ideals-primed respondents were. Self-reports of involvement, however, were equivalent in the primed ideals and primed oughts conditions, suggesting that ideals and oughts do not trigger different levels of involve-

TABLE 2
STUDY 2—CELL MEANS AS A FUNCTION OF PRIMED GOALS, AD TYPE, AND INVOLVEMENT

	Primed ideals				Primed oughts			
	Attractive ad with weak claims		Unattractive ad with strong claims		Attractive ad with weak claims		Unattractive ad with strong claims	
	Low involvement (<i>n</i> = 10)	High involvement (<i>n</i> = 10)	Low involvement (<i>n</i> = 10)	High involvement (<i>n</i> = 10)	Low involvement (<i>n</i> = 10)	High involvement (<i>n</i> = 10)	Low involvement (<i>n</i> = 10)	High involvement (<i>n</i> = 10)
Subjective affective response	4.77	4.55	2.20	2.25	2.55	1.97	4.10	5.05
Assessment of claim strength	2.73	3.70	4.13	5.26	3.10	2.50	4.76	4.93
Involvement	4.66	5.06	4.36	4.96	4.90	5.36	4.03	5.60
Brand evaluation	5.10	5.60	3.67	3.70	2.46	2.83	4.90	4.80

ment. This issue is revisited in study 2. Another explanation could also be that accessible ideals versus oughts change the person's mood. Specifically, ideals-primed participants may have been in a more positive mood than oughts-primed participants. It has been suggested that positive mood increases peripheral/heuristic processing, whereas negative mood increases systematic processing (e.g., Bless et al. 1990). To test this explanation, another sample of 40 respondents were administered the same goal-priming task as in this study. Immediately after completing the priming task, these respondents were asked to assess how they were feeling on three items anchored by "cheerful/depressed," "happy/unhappy," and "in a good mood/in a bad mood" ($\alpha = .94$). The reported moods were almost identical across priming conditions ($M_{\text{Ideals}} = 5.11$ vs. $M_{\text{Oughts}} = 5.25$ on a seven-point scale of pleasantness; $F < 1$). This result converges with other results suggesting that the activation of promotion versus prevention does not influence people's mood (e.g., Crowe and Higgins 1997).

STUDY 2

In study 1 ad exposure was entirely under the participants' control, raising the possibility that respondents whose oughts had been primed exposed themselves to the ad longer than respondents whose ideals had been primed did. This study tests whether the effects uncovered in study 1 hold when exposure duration is held constant. More important, this study further examines how the effects of ideals and oughts relate to those of involvement. Whereas in study 1 involvement was measured, in this study involvement was manipulated in addition to primed ideals versus oughts. The study thus allows a joint examination of the effects of motivation type (ideals vs. oughts) and motivation intensity (involvement) on persuasion. If the effects of ideals and oughts are independent of those of involvement, ideals and oughts should influence brand evaluations regardless of the level of involvement. If the effects of ideals and oughts are related to differences in involvement, varying the level of involvement should moderate the effects of ideals versus oughts.

High involvement should attenuate the effects of ideals, and low involvement should attenuate the effects of oughts.

Method

Participants and Design. Eighty students were assigned to the conditions of a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ between-subjects design. The first factor manipulated the priming of ideals versus oughts. The second factor varied whether the ad featured strong claims with an attractive execution or weak claims with an unattractive execution. The third factor manipulated involvement.

Procedure and Measures. The procedure followed that of study 1, with three modifications. First, all participants were exposed to the target ad for the same amount of time (50 sec) via individual computer monitors. Second, participants' involvement was manipulated as in previous research (e.g., Petty et al. 1983; Pham and Muthukrishnan 2002). Participants in the high-involvement condition were told that the advertised dictionary would soon be sold at the university's bookstore. They were further told that they would have a chance to win this dictionary in a lottery. Participants in the low involvement condition were told that the dictionary would be sold at another university and would not be available in the local area for another year. They were told that they would have a chance to win a pen in a lottery. Finally, only two combinations of ad attractiveness and claim strength were used: the target ad had either strong claims presented with an unattractive execution or weak claims presented with an attractive execution. After exposure to the ad, participants reported their brand evaluations, their levels of involvement, their subjective affective responses to the ad, and their substantive assessments of the claims on the same scales as in study 1.

Results

The means across conditions are reported in table 2. All ANOVA tests were based on a full $2 \times 2 \times 2$ model with (1, 72) degrees of freedom.

Manipulation Checks. As expected, self-reports of involvement were higher in the high-involvement condition ($M = 5.25$) than in the low-involvement condition ($M = 4.49$; $F = 8.18$, $p < .01$). Manipulation checks of subjective affective responses and of substantive assessments were also as expected (see table 2).

Brand Evaluations. If the phenomenon observed in study 1 holds when exposure duration is fixed, there should be a two-way interaction between primed goals and type of ad. Specifically, evaluations based on the attractive ad with weak claims should be more favorable in the primed-ideals condition than in the primed-oughts condition (hypothesis 2), whereas evaluations based on the unattractive ad with strong claims should be more favorable in the primed-oughts condition than in the primed-ideals condition (hypothesis 1). Furthermore, if the priming of ideals induces promotion (which is especially sensitive to positive affective signals), and if the priming of oughts induces prevention (which is especially sensitive to negative substantive signals), the effects of the primed goals should be more pronounced for the attractive ad with weak claims (where positive affective signals are combined with negative substantive signals) than for the unattractive ad with strong claims (where this combination is not present; see hypotheses 5 and 6). As illustrated in figure 2, this interaction did emerge ($F = 56.72$, $p < .0001$).

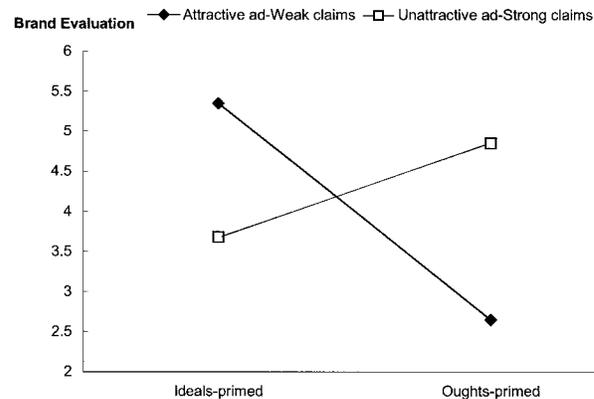
When based on the attractive ad with weak claims, evaluations were more favorable in the primed-ideals condition ($M = 5.35$) than in the primed-oughts condition ($M = 2.65$; $F = 55.31$, $p < .0001$). When based on the unattractive ad with strong claims, evaluations were more favorable in the primed-oughts condition ($M = 4.85$) than in the primed-ideals condition ($M = 3.68$; $F = 10.32$, $p < .001$). These results replicate those of study 1, supporting hypotheses 1 and 2. In addition, the simple effect of primed goals was stronger for the attractive ad with weak claims ($\omega^2 = .38$) than for the unattractive ad with strong claims ($\omega^2 = .07$). This is consistent with study 1's finding that the effects of ideals versus oughts appear stronger when the target contains positive affective signals and when the ad contains negative substantive signals (hypotheses 5 and 6). A main effect of primed goals indicated that, across ads, evaluations were more favorable in the primed-ideals condition ($M = 4.52$) than in the primed-oughts condition ($M = 3.75$; $F = 8.92$, $p < .01$). There were no effects of involvement.

Discussion

Consistent with study 1, it was found that an attractive ad with weak claims produced stronger brand evaluations when ideals were primed than when oughts were primed. In contrast, an unattractive ad with strong claims produced stronger brand evaluations when oughts were primed than when ideals were primed. This pattern of results lends further support to the hypothesis that accessible oughts (compared to accessible ideals) increase the reliance on the sub-

FIGURE 2

STUDY 2—BRAND EVALUATIONS AS A FUNCTION OF TYPE OF AD AND GOAL



stance of the message (hypothesis 1), whereas accessible ideals (compared to accessible oughts) increase the reliance on subjective affective responses (hypothesis 2). It was also found that the effect of ideals versus oughts was stronger for the attractive ad with weak claims, which combined a positive affective signal and a negative substantive signal, than for the unattractive ad with strong claims. This pattern of result is consistent with hypotheses 5 and 6. That the results closely replicate those of study 1 when exposure duration was held constant suggests that differential duration of self-exposure does not account for the phenomenon.

These effects were not moderated by the level of involvement. This is consistent with study 1's finding that ideals and oughts accessibility does not influence self-reports of involvement. Together, these null results seem to indicate that the effects of ideals and oughts are independent of those of involvement.¹ These results also seem to indicate that in a situation where the effects of motivation type (ideals vs. oughts) are pit against those of motivation intensity (involvement), the former may dominate the latter.

STUDY 3

We propose that the phenomenon observed in the first two studies reflects a preference for different types of information under accessible ideals versus oughts. Specifically, consumers with accessible oughts rely more on the substance of the message (than consumers with accessible ideals) because this information is relatively more compatible with their vigilance. Similarly, consumers with accessible ideals rely more on their subjective affective responses

¹Several considerations mitigate the possibility that the involvement manipulation was not strong enough. First, the manipulation closely mimicked that used successfully in previous research. Second, the manipulation check indicated a significant influence of the manipulation. Third, the strength of our manipulation (manipulation check $\omega^2 = .08$) was larger than that of other studies where involvement was found to influence the dependent measures.

TABLE 3
STUDY 3—CELL MEANS AS A FUNCTION OF PRIMED GOALS, CLAIM STRENGTH, AND AD ATTRACTIVENESS

	Primed ideals				Primed oughts			
	Weak claims		Strong claims		Weak claims		Strong claims	
	Unattractive (<i>n</i> = 12)	Attractive (<i>n</i> = 13)	Unattractive (<i>n</i> = 13)	Attractive (<i>n</i> = 13)	Unattractive (<i>n</i> = 13)	Attractive (<i>n</i> = 11)	Unattractive (<i>n</i> = 10)	Attractive (<i>n</i> = 11)
Subjective affective response	2.62	3.61	2.57	3.69	2.23	3.54	2.70	2.90
Assessment of claim strength	4.00	3.42	4.46	5.11	3.92	3.00	5.25	4.90
Brand evaluation	3.58	4.95	3.33	4.51	3.10	2.42	4.83	5.06
Perceived diagnosticity of subjective affective response	5.08	6.11	5.34	5.03	3.34	3.82	2.35	3.13
Perceived diagnosticity of assessment of claim strength	4.20	4.53	4.69	4.73	5.88	6.13	6.05	5.77

to the ad (than consumers with accessible oughts) because this information is more relatively compatible with their eagerness. If this reasoning is correct, oughts-primed respondents should perceive the substance of the message to be more diagnostic (i.e., relevant and useful) than ideals-primed respondents (hypothesis 3); and ideals-primed respondents should perceive their subjective affective responses to the ad to be more diagnostic than oughts-primed respondents (hypothesis 4).

Method

A total of 96 students were assigned to the conditions of the same design as in study 1: 2 (weak or strong claims) × 2 (attractiveness or unattractive ad execution) × 2 (ideals or oughts primed). The procedure was identical to that of study 1 and exposure duration was under participants' control. The main difference with study 1 was that, after they had evaluated the brand, participants were asked to assess both the diagnosticity of their subjective affective responses to the ad and the diagnosticity of their substantive assessments of the claims. To assess the former, participants were shown a copy of the ad's execution from which the claims had been removed. To focus participants' attention on their subjective affective responses, participants were first asked to assess how they felt toward the ad's execution: "What are your reactions to this layout? In other words, how do you feel about this layout?" These affective responses were collected on two seven-point scales anchored at "my feelings are positive/negative" and "the ad is pleasant/unpleasant to look at." The perceived diagnosticity of these affective responses was then measured by two questions: "To what extent do you think your reactions to this layout are relevant for you to form an opinion of this dictionary?" (1 = "Not relevant at all"; 7 = "Very relevant"); and "How useful do you find your feelings toward this layout? In other words, how much do your feelings toward this layout help you in judging this dictionary?" (1 = "Not useful at all"; 7 = "Very useful"). Responses to these two questions ($r = .73$) were averaged into a single measure of perceived diagnosticity of feelings toward the ad's execution.

The perceived diagnosticity of participants' substantive assessments of the claims was then assessed in a similar manner. Participants were shown a copy of the claims without any execution elements. Again to focus attention to the claims only, participants were first asked to assess the claims: "What is your assessment of these claims? In other words how would you evaluate the product information provided about this dictionary?" These substantive assessments were collected on two seven-point scales anchored at "the claims are very convincing/not convincing at all" and "these are strong/weak reasons to buy the dictionary." The perceived diagnosticity of these substantive assessments was then measured by two questions: "To what extent do you think your assessment of these claims is relevant for you to form an opinion of this dictionary?" (1 = "Not relevant at all"; 7 = "Very relevant"); and "How useful do you find your assessment of these claims? In other words, how much does your opinion toward these claims help you in judging this dictionary?" (1 = "Not useful at all"; 7 = "Very useful"). Responses to these two questions ($r = .69$) were averaged into a single measure of perceived diagnosticity of substantive assessments of the claims.

Results

The means across conditions are reported in table 3. All ANOVA tests were based on a full 2 × 2 × 2 model with (1, 88) degrees of freedom.

Manipulation Checks. The manipulation checks results were almost identical to those of study 1 and are not discussed to save space.

Brand Evaluation. The brand evaluation results were also almost identical to those of study 1. Again, in addition to main effects of claim strength ($F = 14.32, p < .001$) and of ad attractiveness ($F = 4.63, p < .04$), two two-way interactions emerged. A claim × goal interaction ($F = 26.97, p < .0001$) showed that the strength of the claims had a stronger influence on brand evaluations in the primed-oughts condition ($M_{\text{Strong}} = 4.95$ vs. $M_{\text{Weak}} = 2.79$; $F = 37.79, p < .0001$) than in the primed-ideals condition

($M_{\text{Strong}} = 3.92$ vs. $M_{\text{Weak}} = 4.29$; $F = 1.07$, NS), consistent with hypothesis 1. Again, this interaction was driven largely by the unfavorable evaluations of primed-oughts respondents in the weak-claim condition (see hypothesis 5). Similarly, an attractiveness \times goal interaction ($F = 9.48$, $p < .003$) showed that the attractiveness of the ad had greater influence on brand evaluations in the primed-ideals condition ($M_{\text{Attr.}} = 4.73$ vs. $M_{\text{Unattr.}} = 3.45$; $F = 14.65$, $p < .0002$) than in the primed-oughts condition ($M_{\text{Attr.}} = 3.74$ vs. $M_{\text{Unattr.}} = 3.85$; $F < 1$), consistent with hypothesis 2. Again, this interaction was driven largely by the favorable evaluations of primed-ideals respondents in the attractive ad condition (see hypothesis 6).

Perceived Diagnosticity. The perceived diagnosticity of substantive assessments of the claims and the perceived diagnosticity of subjective affective responses to the ad were treated as a repeated factor in a full-model mixed ANOVA. On average, participants perceived their substantive assessments of the claims to be more diagnostic of the product ($M = 5.21$) than their subjective affective responses to the ad ($M = 4.36$; $F = 26.79$, $p < .0001$). However, this effect was qualified by a strong interaction with primed goals ($F = 94.44$, $p < .0001$). As illustrated in figure 3, participants perceived their assessments of the claims to be more diagnostic if their oughts had been primed ($M = 5.96$) than if their ideals had been primed ($M = 4.55$; $F = 45.73$, $p < .0001$). In contrast, they perceived their subjective affective responses to the ad to be more diagnostic if their ideals had been primed ($M = 5.40$) than if their oughts had been primed ($M = 3.19$; $F = 45.73$, $p < .0001$). These findings support hypotheses 3 and 4.

Discussion

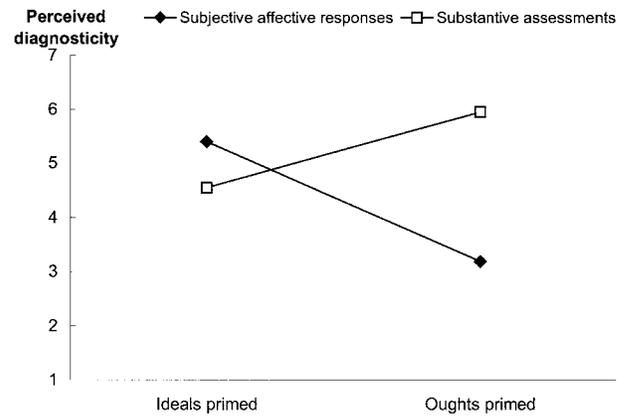
The results replicate once more the basic effects observed in study 1. More important, the results suggest that the greater reliance on the substance of the message under accessible oughts (compared to ideals) is associated with an increased perceived diagnosticity of this type of information (hypothesis 3). Similarly, the greater reliance on subjective affective responses under accessible ideals (compared to oughts) is associated with an increased perceived diagnosticity of this information (hypothesis 4). That ideals and oughts change not just the reliance on affect versus substance, but also these inputs' perceived diagnosticity seems to be consistent with the thesis that the phenomenon is driven by a change in relative preference for affective versus substantive information.

STUDY 4

The first three studies focused on the effects of temporarily accessible ideals and oughts. This study examines whether the phenomenon generalizes to chronically accessible ideals and oughts. In the first three studies, reliance on affective information was examined by manipulating the attractiveness of the ad, leaving it unclear whether it was

FIGURE 3

STUDY 3—PERCEIVED DIAGNOSTICITY AS A FUNCTION OF TYPE OF INFORMATION AND GOAL PRIMED



their subjective affective responses that ideals-accessible respondents weighted more heavily or some other correlate of the attractiveness manipulation. In this study, reliance on affective information was assessed by measuring subjective affective responses to the ad directly. The measure used was relatively broad, so that it could capture affective responses toward any aspects of the ad, not just the attractiveness of its execution. Even feelings toward the substance of the message would be counted as affective responses.

Method

Overview. In order to observe a wide range of chronic ideal and ought orientations 457 students were recruited in the United States, Germany, Turkey, and Israel. The design was correlational. Participants were asked to read and evaluate three print public announcement ads, one ad at a time. All participants evaluated the same three ads. For each ad, participants were asked to (a) report their subjective affective responses, (b) report their substantive assessments, and (c) rate the ad's persuasive impact. After evaluating the ads, participants completed the Selves Questionnaire (Higgins et al. 1986), which provided a measure of chronic ideal and ought orientation. Regression analyses were used to examine how chronic ideal and ought orientations moderated the relative influence of affective responses and substantive assessments on the persuasive impact of each ad.

Measures. Each measure consisted of three seven-point items. The subjective affective responses items were anchored at "catchy/not catchy," "appeals/doesn't appeal to me," and "excites/doesn't excite me" ($\alpha = .80$). The substantive assessment items were anchored at "gives me/doesn't give me additional information about [issue]," "explains/doesn't explain the link between [issue and its consequences]," and "stimulates/does not stimulate my thoughts about [issue]" ($\alpha = .86$). The overall persuasive

TABLE 4
STUDY 4—REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (*t*-values)

	Predictors										Ad dummy 1	Ad dummy 2
	Intercept	Affective response	Substance assessment	Affect × Substance	Ideal match	Affect × Ideal match	Substance × Ideal match	Ought match	Affect × Ought match	Substance × Ought match		
Equation 1	4.456** (76.73)	.293** (11.55)	.430** (16.95)	-.008 (-.61)	.005 (.40)	.019* (2.14)	-.014* (-1.71)				-.544** (-8.07)	-.518** (-7.83)
Equation 2	4.460** (76.85)	.296** (11.66)	.427** (16.82)	-.009 (-.75)				.006 (.37)	-.024* (-2.34)	.022* (2.26)	-.541** (-8.05)	-.513** (-7.79)

NOTE.—Intercepts have 456 degrees of freedom; all others predictors have 855 degrees of freedom

* $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .0001$.

impact items were anchored at “influences/doesn’t influence my opinion about [issue]”; “changed/didn’t change my attitude toward [issue],” and “the ad will influence my/other people’s [issue] habits” ($\alpha = .80$).

Chronic Ideal and Ought Orientations. The Selves Questionnaire provides a measure of the degree of congruency (or discrepancy) between people’s actual selves (the attributes they believe they possess), their ideal selves (the attributes they aspire to possess), and ought selves (the attributes they perceive as their duties and obligations to possess). Following standard procedures, participants were asked to list up to 10 attributes of each of these types of selves (actual, ideal, and ought). For each attribute listed, participants were asked to indicate, on a 1 (slightly) to 4 (extremely) scale, the degree to which they actually possessed that attribute, would ideally possess that attribute, or ought to possess that attribute. Two judges coded the degree to which attributes listed for the actual self matched those listed for the ideal self and those listed for the ought self (interjudge agreement = 97%). Consistent with the latest research on regulatory focus theory (Brockner et al. 2002; Higgins et al. 2001), two scores were tabulated for each participant: an actual-ideal match score (hereafter, ideal-match), which was taken as a measure of chronic ideal orientation, and an actual-ought match score (hereafter, ought-match), which was taken as a measure of chronic ought orientation.²

Predictions. We predicted that participants’ chronic ideal orientation, as measured by the congruency between their ideal and actual attributes, would amplify the weight placed on their subjective affective responses and attenuate the weight placed on their substantive assessments of the ads. In contrast, participants’ chronic ought orientation, as measured by the congruency between their ought and actual

attributes, would attenuate the weight placed on their subjective affective responses and amplify the weight placed on their substantive assessments.

Results

Judgments of persuasive impact across participants and advertisements were submitted to two random-coefficient regressions. The first regression had the following predictors: (1) subjective affective response, (2) substantive assessment, (3) ideal-match, (4) interaction between (1) and (2), (5) interaction between (1) and (3), and (6) interaction between (2) and (3). (Dummy variables were included to account for the main effects of advertisements, and a random intercept was used to account for the repeated assessment of participants.) The second regression was identical, except that the ought-match score was entered as a predictor instead of the ideal-match score. Separate regressions were used because the correlation between the ideal and ought-match scores ($r = -.60$) produced multicollinearity (variance inflation factors > 20). The results are summarized in table 4.

As in the first three studies, there were large main effects of affective response ($t = 11.55$ in eq. 1 and $t = 11.66$ in eq. 2) and substantive assessment ($t = 16.95$ in eq. 1 and $t = 16.82$ in eq. 2), showing that both increased the persuasive impact of the ads. More important, there was a positive interaction between affective response and ideal-match ($t = 2.14$ in eq. 1) and a marginally significant negative interaction between substantive assessment and ideal-match ($t = -1.71$ in eq. 1). These interactions indicate that chronic ideal orientation magnified the influence of subjective affective responses and attenuated the influence of substantive assessments. Similarly, there was a negative interaction between affective response and ought-match ($t = -2.34$ in eq. 2) and a positive interaction between substantive assessment and ought-match ($t = 2.26$ in eq. 2). These interactions show that chronic ought orientation attenuated the influence of subjective affective responses and amplified the influence of substantive assessments.

²It was originally thought that the discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal self would tap into a chronic promotion orientation, whereas the discrepancy between the actual self and the ought self would tap into a chronic prevention orientation (e.g., Higgins et al. 1994). However, more recent work has shown that it is the congruencies between actual and ideal selves and between actual and ought selves that are better predictors of chronic promotion and prevention, respectively (Higgins et al. 2001), which is consistent with the scoring used in this study.

Discussion

The results suggest that chronic ideal and ought orientations influence persuasion in a manner similar to the temporary accessibility of ideals and oughts. Specifically, chronic ideal orientation seems to increase the reliance on subjective affective responses and decrease the reliance on substantive assessments. Chronic ought orientation has the opposite effect: it seems to increase the reliance on substantive assessments and decrease the reliance on subjective affective responses. (Given the substantial negative correlation between the measures of chronic ideal and ought orientations, these effects cannot be empirically dissociated.)

Unlike in the previous studies, in this study subjective affective responses to the ad were measured directly and were not limited to the perceived attractiveness of the ad. The fact that the results closely mirror those of the previous studies seems to support that it is their subjective affective responses to the ad that consumers weight more heavily under accessible ideals.

To test the possibility that chronic ideal and ought orientation is correlated with the need-for-cognition (NFC)—the most established trait antecedent of heuristic versus systematic processing—another 160 students were administered the same measure of chronic ideal and ought orientation as in the main study and the shortened form of the NFC scale (Cacioppo, Petty, and Kao 1984). Chronic ideal orientation was uncorrelated with NFC ($r = .00$, $p = .98$), as was chronic ought orientation ($r = -.12$, $p = .15$).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Two Motivational Paths to Persuasion

Results from four studies suggest that the accessibility of ideals versus oughts alters how much consumers rely on affect versus substance in persuasion. The accessibility of ideals (compared to oughts) tends to increase the reliance on subjective affective responses to the ad, whereas the accessibility of oughts (compared to ideals) tends to increase the reliance on the substance of the message. This phenomenon was observed in situations where subjective affective responses were manipulated orthogonally to the substance of the message by varying the attractiveness of the ad (studies 1–3). It was also observed in a situation where subjective affective responses and substantive assessments of the ad were measured directly and allowed to be correlated (study 4). The phenomenon was observed when exposure duration was under the respondent's control (studies 1, 3, and 4) and when exposure duration was fixed (study 2). Finally, the phenomenon was observed both with primed ideals and oughts (studies 1–3) and with chronically accessible ideals and oughts (study 4).

It was also found that the differential reliance on affect versus substance was accompanied by a change in the perceived diagnosticity of the two types of information under accessible ideals versus oughts (study 3). Under accessible ideals, subjective affective responses to the ad were per-

ceived to be more diagnostic than under accessible oughts. Under accessible oughts, assessments of the substance of the message were perceived to be more diagnostic than under accessible ideals.

Finally, it was found that the greater reliance on affective information under accessible ideals was more pronounced when the ad was attractive, that is, when the affective signal was positive. In contrast, the greater reliance on substantive information under accessible oughts was more pronounced when the claims were weak, that is, when the substantive signal was negative. These last results are consistent with the proposition that, when the end state is desirable, promotion should increase the reliance on positive signals and prevention should increase the reliance on negative signals (Higgins 1998).

Walking the Paths of Accessible Ideals and Accessible Oughts

In studies 1–3 substantive affective responses were manipulated by varying the attractiveness of the ad's execution. An alternative interpretation of the findings could be that the priming of ideals did not increase the reliance on subjective affective responses per se, but the influence of some other correlate of the manipulation of ad attractiveness. Three sets of results seem inconsistent with this interpretation. First, in study 1, regression analyses indicated that self-reports of affective responses to the ad (assessed by a manipulation check) were indeed weighted more heavily under primed ideals than under primed oughts. Second, in study 3, subjective affective responses to the ad were perceived to be more diagnostic when ideals were primed than when oughts were primed, suggesting that the effects of ideals are related to how consumers feel toward the ad. Finally, the same effect was observed in study 4, where ad attractiveness was not manipulated and subjective affective responses were measured directly. Nonetheless, it would be worthwhile to examine the phenomenon in other empirical settings to further support the hypothesis that ideals do increase the reliance on affective inputs.

Because the observed phenomenon resembles so closely the kind of heuristic versus systematic processing identified in past persuasion research, another possible explanation is that the effects of ideals versus oughts are caused by changes in involvement, mood, or NFC, which are well-known antecedents of heuristic versus systematic processing. The results do not seem to support any of these three interpretations. The priming of ideals versus oughts seems to have no effect on self-reports of involvement (study 1), and their effects seem to hold independently of the level of involvement (study 2). The priming of ideals versus oughts does not seem to change the person's mood (see discussion of study 1). Finally, there seems to be no correlation between chronic ideal and ought orientations and NFC (see discussion of study 4).

That the effects of ideals versus oughts seem to be independent of well-known antecedents of heuristic versus

systematic processing raises the possibility that these effects reflect different processes than those captured in typical ELM/HSM studies. According to the ELM and HSM, the primary determinant of the type of processing strategy used (central/systematic vs. peripheral/heuristic) is the desired level of accuracy or confidence in the judgment (Chaiken et al. 1989; Petty and Cacioppo 1986). From a regulatory focus perspective, however, it is not clear that ideals- and oughts-oriented consumers should have different levels of desired accuracy and confidence. Theoretically, their desired levels of accuracy and confidence may be equal (Higgins 1998). What differentiates ideals- from oughts-oriented consumers may not be so much their desired levels of accuracy and confidence as the type of information that they find relevant to attain this desired accuracy and confidence. Study 3's finding that ideals- and oughts-primed respondents have different perceptions of the diagnosticity of the information seems consistent with this speculation. Evidence consistent with this conjecture was also obtained in another study, which shows that evaluations formed under accessible ideals and accessible oughts have comparable attitudinal strength in terms of confidence, persistence, and resistance to counterattitudinal information (Avnet and Pham 2004).

It is interesting to relate our findings to the notion of uncertainty orientation (Sorrentino and Short 1986). Uncertainty-oriented individuals are those who—because they have been rewarded for past exploratory behavior—are motivated by situations that allow them to resolve uncertainty about the self and the environment. They tend to be curious, open to new information, and have a high tolerance for ambiguity. Certainty-oriented individuals are those who are motivated by situations that do not allow the resolution of uncertainty, because they have not been rewarded for past exploratory behavior and may even have been punished. They tend to prefer the familiar and the predictable, and have a low tolerance for ambiguity. Although uncertainty orientation refers to a personality trait and regulatory focus refers to a motivational state, there seems to be some surface resemblance between the eagerness of ideals-primed individuals and the openness to new and ambiguous information of uncertainty-oriented individuals. Similarly, there seems to be some resemblance between the vigilance of oughts-primed individuals and the preference for familiar and unambiguous information of certainty-oriented individuals. Interestingly, however, in persuasion settings uncertainty-oriented individuals seem to behave in a manner opposite to that of the ideals-primed respondents in our studies. When personal relevance is high, uncertainty-oriented individuals seem to rely more on the substance of the message (Sorrentino et al. 1988), whereas in our studies ideals-primed individuals seem to rely more on their subjective affective responses even under high involvement. Similarly, when personal relevance is high, certainty-oriented individuals seem to rely more on heuristic cues such as source expertise (Sorrentino et al. 1988), whereas in our studies oughts-primed individuals seem to rely more on the substance of the message regardless of their level involvement. Despite the surface resemblance between the no-

tions of regulatory focus and uncertainty orientation, the latter does not appear to fit the pattern of results observed in this research.

Although ELM/HSM and uncertainty-orientation-based interpretations can probably be ruled out, there remains a possibility that processes other than eagerness versus vigilance or promotion versus prevention drive the effects of ideals and oughts on the relative weight of affect versus substance in persuasion. It has been shown that compatibility with the person's goals increases the weights of inputs in judgments and decisions (e.g., Tversky, Sattath, and Slovic 1988). It could be that ideals, as goals, are more compatible with affective inputs than with substantive inputs. Many ideals (e.g., owning a beautiful house, taking an exotic vacation) seem inherently more commensurable with affective considerations than with substantive reasons. Similarly, oughts may be more compatible with substantive inputs than with affective inputs. Oughts (e.g., being a responsible father, behaving professionally) are often driven by norms, which may be more commensurable with rules-like or reason-based inputs. It is also possible that even though the priming of ideals versus oughts does not produce measurable changes in people's mood, it still produces some low-level affective responses (e.g., primitive approach-avoidance tendencies) that self-reports do not capture. Though difficult to observe, these low-level affective responses might be responsible for some of the findings (see Friedman and Förster 2000). These explanations could operate instead of, or in conjunction with, the proposed explanation. They deserve further attention. Clarifying to the link between regulatory focus and affect is especially critical given the resemblance between the effects observed in this research and those observed with positive versus negative mood (e.g., Bless et al. 1996; Isen 2001).

Although ideals and oughts change the relative weight attached to subjective affective responses to the ad versus the substance of the message, it is not clear whether the phenomenon is driven by (a) an increased reliance on subjective affective responses under accessible ideals, (b) an increased reliance on the substance of the message under accessible oughts, or (c) both at the same time. The answer depends on the integration rule that respondents are assumed to follow. If respondents followed a purely additive rule, the finding that both affect and substance were weighted differently under accessible ideals versus oughts (see fig. 1) would suggest that ideals and oughts generate two separate tendencies: one to weight affective information more heavily under ideals and one to weight substance more heavily under oughts. If respondents followed an averaging rule, only one of the tendencies may in fact exist. This is because, under an averaging rule, an increase in the absolute weight of one input necessarily produces a decrease in the relative weight of the other inputs.

The Paths' Psychological Boundaries

However reliable the findings may seem, it is most likely that the phenomenon we describe occurs only under certain conditions. Identifying these conditions would be an im-

portant extension of this research. Several hypotheses may be suggested. First, it is possible that the greater reliance on feelings under accessible ideals holds only for feelings such as joy or sadness that are related to promotion-focused regulation. The findings might reverse with feelings such as anxiety or relief that are related to prevention-focused regulation. Second, in our studies the end state (e.g., identifying a suitable dictionary for personal use) was presumably desirable. It is not clear how the processes would operate in situations where the reference state is undesirable (e.g., ads on cancer prevention). Third, the reliance on affect under accessible ideal could depend on the perceived relevance of this affect (e.g., Pham 1998). After all, objectively, affective responses to an ad for a dictionary are not completely irrelevant when evaluating this dictionary. We speculate that, among consumers whose ideals are accessible, reliance on subjective affective responses will be in direct proportion of the perceived relevance of these affective responses.

The Paths at the Crossroads

While previous research has emphasized constructs such as involvement, arousal, and accountability, which tap into the intensity of consumers' motives, our research stresses that the content of consumers' motives matters as well. Even if drive intensity is held constant, consumers may follow very different paths to evaluation depending on the content of their accessible goals. Our research also underlines that consumers may follow different routes to persuasion not so much because they have different desired levels of accuracy, but because they perceive different types of information to be diagnostic. This proposition echoes a growing body of evidence suggesting that reliance on different types of information in judgment and in persuasion does not necessarily imply different depths of processing (e.g., Bless et al. 1996; Pham 1996; Sorrentino et al. 1988).

In conclusion, while regulatory focus theory and research on the role of feelings in judgment have evolved as separate bodies of work, this article suggests that the two may be related. Offered a substantive and a feeling path to evaluation, promotion- and prevention-oriented individuals may not find the two paths equally worth traveling—and this regardless of their destination.

[David Glen Mick served as editor and Frank R. Kardes served as associate editor for this article.]

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