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**The Influence of Adult Attachment Style and Advertising Appeals on Consumer Brand Attachment and Measures of Advertising Effectiveness**

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**The Influence of Adult Attachment Style and Advertising Appeals on  
Consumer Brand Attachment and Measures of Advertising  
Effectiveness**

**by**

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**Dissertation**

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to Jesus Christ, through whom all things are possible. To my Mother, who served as a constant source of support, strength and encouragement. And, to the loving memory of my grandparents Milton and Essie Carter, who believed that an education was one of the most important things a person could possess.

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# **The Influence of Adult Attachment Style and Advertising Appeals on Consumer Brand Attachment and Measures of Advertising Effectiveness**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2015

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The relationship consumers form with products and brands is well researched. Products provide consumers with a way to create a sense of stability, comfort and expression and can serve as an actual or psychological extension of the consumer. The theoretical idea that consumers form relationships with brands that often mimic interpersonal relationships is the foundational assumption this dissertation operates under.

The common thread that ties various transitions of branding scholarship together is the notion of attachment. In the domain of consumer behavior, current research that examines attachment fails to address the impact advertising plays in the effective communication of brand messages. The purpose of this research is to further examine the role advertising plays in the formation of consumer emotional brand attachment. But specifically, this research examines how various types of advertising appeals and adult attachment interact to influence advertising effectiveness.

Two studies were conducted. Study 1 examined the impact of adult attachment and one advertising appeal on participants' emotional attachment to a brand that was

perceived to have a sincere personality. Also, participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of the ad by reporting their attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention. Study 2 further examined the anxiety dimension of attachment by looking at the affects of secure and preoccupied attachment styles and two advertising appeals. The study sought to understand how participants with varying levels of anxiety coupled with seeing two advertising appeals would report their emotional brand attachment and their perception of the advertisement shown.

Overall, this research seeks to bring attention to the importance of the role attachment and advertising play in fulfilling consumers' needs. Consumers with different attachment styles often have different consumption goals that need to be taken into account when trying to craft effective strategic communications that help build strong consumer brand relationships.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The relationship consumers form with products and brands is well researched. Products provide consumers with a way to create a sense of stability, comfort and expression (Sirgy, 1982). Products can serve as an actual or psychological extension of the consumer that is used to signal who they are to others (Belk, 1988). Consumers evaluate brand fit by past experiences and perceived brand personality (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1997). But, the proposition that consumers form relationships with brands that often mimic interpersonal relationships (Fournier, 1998) is the foundational assumption under which this research operates.

The common thread that ties these transitions in branding scholarship together is the notion of attachment. At the core of attachment is the formation of bonds with others. The need to form bonds for psychological stability and security is one of the earliest needs humans experience (Polek, 2007). In the domain of consumer behavior, current research that examines attachment in the context of brands appears to minimize the impact advertising plays in the effective communication of brand messages. While researchers have not ignored it wholesale, the role of advertising in attachment has been woefully undertheorized and marketing scholars ought to pay more attention to the effects various advertising elements (i.e. appeals) have on brand and advertising outcomes.

## **GAP IN THE LITERATURE**

Bowlby (1969) describes attachment as a strong and long-lasting emotional bond connecting one person to another that begins to form in childhood. Swaminathan, Stilley, and Ahluwalia (2009) conducted a study examining the effects of attachment style and brand personality on consumers' emotional brand attachment. When examining the effects of attachment style and brand personality, Swaminathan et al. (2009) reported that participants who were primed to display high anxiety and high avoidance (what is termed a fearful attachment) reported a statistically significant increase in attachment for brands perceived as exciting. Participants who were primed to display high anxiety and low avoidance (what is termed a preoccupied attachment) reported a statistically significant increase in brand attachment when seeing a brand perceived to be sincere.

For low anxiety participants, Swaminathan et al. (2009) reported inconclusive results. Specifically, participants primed to display low anxiety were seemingly not influenced by the brand's personality, and participants' levels of brand attachment did not differ in the sincere or exciting brand personality conditions.

These findings demonstrate that attachment clearly influences advertising effectiveness, but in varying ways. Based on the attachment literature, individuals who display high levels of anxiety tend to have a negative view of self and seek external means to increase their sense of security (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). High anxiety individuals mainly use brands to signal who they are to others (Swaminathan et al., 2009). So far, however, extant literature is largely silent on how low anxiety individuals

develop relationships with brands and the role advertising plays in the formation of consumer-brand relationships.

These inconclusive results indicate there is still much to be learned about the role of anxiety, especially low anxiety, on consumer-brand relationships and outcomes of persuasion attempts. Narrowing the focus of the research to one type of brand personality and a specific dimension of attachment could help further our knowledge of how various types of ads influence brand attachment.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Although inconclusive, these past findings are in line with attachment theory that states individuals with lower degrees of anxiety feel more secure and have a more positive sense of self (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). These low anxiety consumers, then, would be less likely to use products and brands as a means of bolstering feelings of security and managing their self-concept. However, low anxiety consumers still purchase brands and products and are driven to do so by a range of different motives. Unlike high anxiety consumers, though, these low anxiety consumers are motivated less by an extrinsic desire to compensate for perceived shortcomings and more by an intrinsic desire to maintain internal consistency with the self-concept and to maximize positive internal evaluations of the self (Swaminathan et al., 2009). In short, high anxiety consumers are concerned with externally broadcasting their value and worth, whereas low anxiety consumers are concerned with internally enhancing their self-identity. So far, this avenue of research has not been examined. I argue that this represents a gap in understanding under what conditions low anxiety consumers (those with what are called secure and

dismissing attachment styles) are less responsive to brand messages that use a signaling approach, which encourages consumers to display who they are to others through the products and brands that they purchase (Park & John, 2012). It raises the question of what types of alternate appeals are more effective when communicating to low anxiety consumers. Low anxiety consumers should be given a closer look as targeted audiences of persuasive messages, and the following studies sought to provide additional understanding of how different advertising appeals interacted with various attachment styles to influence brand and advertising related outcomes.

Study 1 examines how emotional and logical appeals interact with attachment style and how those interactions influence advertising effectiveness. Study 1 lays the groundwork for understanding how attachment style interacts with advertising's two most common types of appeals (Tellis, 2003). Study 1 examines the emotional and logical appeal, which is broadly applied across various real-world advertising situations. Study 2 builds on Study 1 and examines two very specific types of consumer goals – signaling and self-help – to refine how specific ad messages interact with attachment style. Signaling and self-help appeals served to help consumers with differing attachment styles assess if the brand was able to fulfill their need for signaling (i.e. self-expression) or self-help.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

Based on attachment literature, the argument has been made that attachment style influences the way we connect with others and, in a consumption context, the way consumers connect to brand personalities. The way consumers form relationships with

brands plays a role in what consumers need and expect from brands in their consumer-brand relationships. The argument this research seeks to advance is that the way we form attachments to others and objects impacts consumer-brand interactions. In the context of advertising message effectiveness, it is important to understand *why* consumers form attachments to brands. The following studies pose the following research questions: First, what are the effects of high anxiety (preoccupied and fearful attachment style) and low anxiety (dismissing and secure attachment style) on the persuasiveness of logical and emotional appeals for products with sincere brand personalities? And second, what are the effects of high anxiety (preoccupied attachment) and low anxiety (secure attachment style) on the persuasiveness of these logical and emotional appeals when consumer goals of signaling and self-help are taken into account?

#### **SAMPLE AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

These questions are explored through two studies, each relying on an experimental design. Study 1 examines how individuals with varying levels of anxiety and avoidance respond to emotional and logical advertising appeals. The study used an existing brand that participants perceived as having a sincere personality. The product used was based on the results of pre-testing. Participants were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions in a 2 (Attachment Anxiety: High v Low) X 2 (Attachment Avoidance: High v Low) X 2 (Advertising Appeal: Emotional v Logical) between subjects design. Attachment style was manipulated using a variation of the validated and widely used *memories of supportive people* priming technique (McGowan, 2002; Bartz & Lydon, 2004; Mikulincer, Shaver, and Rom, 2011). The dependent variables of the study

were consumers’ emotional brand attachment, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention.

Study 2 further examines the relationship between attachment style and logical/emotional advertising appeals by honing in on the anxiety dimension of attachment styles. The avoidance dimension of attachment is not a central focus of Study 2, so attachment styles that primed low avoidance were used and high avoidance attachment styles were set aside. The study examines how individuals, when primed to be either high or low on anxiety, responded to logical and emotional appeals that interact with signaling and self-help consumer goals. (See Table 1.1 for study designs.)

**Table 1.1: Study Design**

Study 1

	Logical Appeal		Emotional Appeal	
	Avoidance High	Avoidance Low	Avoidance High	Avoidance Low
Anxiety High				
Anxiety Low				

Study 2: Only Low Avoidance

	Logical Appeal		Emotional Appeal	
	Signaling Goal	Self-Help Goal	Signaling Goal	Self-Help Goal
Anxiety High				
Anxiety Low				

Study 2 also used an existing brand that consumers perceived as having a sincere personality. The product used was based on the results of pre-testing. Participants were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions in a 2 (Attachment Anxiety: High v Low) X 2 (Advertising Appeals: Emotional v Logical) X 2 (Ad Goal: Signaling v Self-Help) between subjects design. Attachment style was manipulated in the same manner as Study 1. Again, Study 2 was only concerned with the anxiety dimension of attachment. So, the avoidance dimension was controlled while including those who were primed to have either high anxiety or low attachment styles as outlined in the *memories of supportive people*. The dependent variables proposed in Study 2 remain the same as Study 1: consumers' emotional brand attachment, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention.

Both studies used samples drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The sample consisted of U.S. adults, both male and female, aged 18 and older. Both Study 1 and Study 2 had a minimum sample size of 320 participants (8 conditions with a minimum of 40 participants per condition).

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Within the advertising and branding literature, the concept of brand personality and the idea that consumers use brands as a means of displaying their personality are well researched. It is common for consumers to use brands and possessions as a way to display various aspects of their self to others (Aaker, 1997; Belk, 1988).

Associating human characteristics with a brand causes consumers to form “self-brand connections,” which cause brand associations to be more worthwhile and enduring (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Self-brand connections form to the degree a consumer incorporates the brand into their self-concept. The connection that is formed between the “self” and the brand acts as a bridge that allows consumers to construct and manage their identities in a concrete way through the use of brands. Brands allow consumers to achieve their identity goals, to a degree, by using objects to influence how others perceive them (Huffman, Ratneshwar, & Mick, 2000; Escalas & Bettman, 2003). It is worth pointing out that the self-brand connection construct is based on the entire set of a brand’s associations (perceived brand personality) and not a single brand attribute.

Self-brand connections impact advertising often through the construction of narratives. People create stories to establish order, explain unusual events, organize their experiences, gain perspective, and make evaluations (Escalas, 2004). Individuals use personal stories and the experiences (narratives) of others to make sense of the world and to gain a greater understanding of their lives within society (Escalas, 2004).

Within the context of consumption, consumers use brands to evaluate product quality. Advertising, through the use of appeals, sets the proverbial stage for the brand's narrative to be told and for products to be evaluated by consumers. The narrative experiences created by advertising lead to the formation of memories that consumers use to evaluate whether the psychological benefits that the brand offers will be incorporated into the "self" (Escalas, 2004).

The personification of brands by consumers allows consumers to gain a sense of psychological stability. Brands can provide an internal sense of warmth, competence and overall feelings of brand loyalty when consumers perceive a brand to be congruent with how they view themselves (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012).

When consumers personify brands it can lead to a number of outcomes. First, consumers can form an emotional attachment to brands. Consumers are exposed to a number of brands on a daily basis. But, consumers seem to form attachments with only a select group of brands and products. Just like people, the more attached a consumer is to a brand the more likely they are to commit to, invest in, and sacrifice to purchase the brand (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005).

Second, depending on the level of brand loyalty a consumer has for a brand, the type of relational attachment a consumer forms can vary. These brand-related bonds can range from a committed marriage to the brand being viewed as a buddy (Fournier & Yao, 1997).

Third, a brand can be viewed as a childhood friend. Childhood-brand relationships are relationships that form in childhood, but follow the consumer

throughout his life (Connell & Schau, 2012). Consumers preserve these childhood-brand relationships because they are emotionally rewarding and provide feelings of comfort and security about the “self” (Fournier, 1998; Connell & Schau, 2012).

Fourth, consumers can form attachments to brands based on a brand’s history and beginnings. When companies inform consumers about the origins of the brand and the subsequent struggles that were endured to bring the brand to market, it can lead to increased purchase intention and brand loyalty (Paharia, Keinan, Avery, & Schor, 2011).

Lastly, consumers can form unhealthy relationships with brands. Brand-relationship theorists often refer to the idea of “brand transgression.” Brand transgression refers to when a consumer feels that a brand has broken a “relationship” rule in regard to brand performance (Aaker, Fournier & Brasel, 2004). Aaker et al. (2004) argue that the status of a relationship is most evident when the consumer-brand relationship is put at risk causing our attachment system to activate.

From the above mentioned research it can be argued that relationships are at the heart of branding. Aggarwal (2004) found that when consumers form relationships with brands, the consumer-brand relationship often reflects the same types of relationships that the consumer forms in social contexts. As well, consumers tend to follow the same social norms that are used in interpersonal relationships when deciding how to treat a brand (Aggarwal, 2004).

Within the realm of consumer-brand relationships, what differentiates these relationships is not just the relationship type, but also the nature of the bond or attachment that is formed between the brand and the consumer over time. It is *how* we

form attachments to others and to objects that shapes consumer-brand interaction (Fournier & Alvarez, 2011; Paulssen & Fournier, 2007; Swaminathan et al., 2009). To understand the nature of these consumer-brand bonds, I turn to *Attachment Theory* as a theoretical framework.

#### **ATTACHMENT THEORY OVERVIEW**

The foundational ideas surrounding attachment were first articulated by John Bowlby (1969). Attachment theory is considered to be a general theory of personality (Mikulincer, 1997). Attachment theory argues there is a universal need within all humans to form emotional bonds with others (Polek, 2007) and that this attachment with others is one of the earliest behavioral systems to emerge, operating primarily during the formative years. The attachment system is designed to protect individuals from danger by ensuring that they remain close to people (attachment figures) who create a sense of stability and security in their lives (Bowlby, 1982; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). The process of building an emotional bond that links one person to another often leads to the formation of an *attachment*.

Initial attachment research focused on the child-parent relationship, however these attachment systems cover the entire human lifespan (Bowlby, 1988). Humans are continually looking for people who support them, give affection, and provide protection (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). The key difference between child and adult attachment is the kind of attachment figures that are sought out at these different periods of life. During infancy, the focus of attachment is on parents, grandparents, and siblings, and the proximity infants have to these attachment figures (Ainsworth, 1973; Heinicke &

Westheimer, 1966 and Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). During adolescence and adulthood, other types of relationships that vary in proximity are sought out. Adolescents and adults often look outside the close family unit to friends, romantic partners, teachers, supervisors and therapists for emotional support (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012).

Additionally, Bowlby (1982) says that groups, institutions and symbolic personages can be used mentally as attachment figures. These attachment figures – whether they be real or imaginary – can vary in importance or centrality, which creates what attachment theorists refer to as a *hierarchy of attachment figures* (Bowlby, 1982; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). The notion adults form attachments to people and objects whether real or imaginary suggests important implications for advertisers who use various methods to build emotional bonds with consumers.

Shaver and Mikulincer (2012) state that the key aspects signaling that a relationship or figure facilitates individual attachment are as follows: first, the person or object is someone or something the attached person seeks out in times of stress or need. This object or person can be real, fictitious or symbolic. Second, the person or object provides a sense of comfort, support, protection or security. Lastly, the attached person views the object or person with whom they share an emotional bond as stable and secure. The attached person feels free to explore and form other relationships without fear of risking their current relationships (Ainsworth, 1991; Hazan and Shaver, 1994; Hazan and Zeifman, 1994; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). The attachments we form are relied upon most during times of stress, sadness, or sickness and it is during these times of distress that our attachments provide a sense of stability and security.

When a sense of security is not possible with current primary attachment figures, then individuals must develop *secondary attachment strategies* (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988). Secondary attachment strategies take one of two forms: *hyperactivation* or *deactivation*. Hyperactivation is an attempt by the attached individual to gain the attention of an inattentive attachment figure through increased effort. Deactivation is a strategy that tries to avoid or minimize the pain and frustration caused by the attachment figure's absence or lack of attention (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012).

These attachment strategies shape how we see the world and the people around us, which serve as a foundation for what Bowlby (1982) called *internal working models*. Internal working models are important memories gained through social interaction and experiences had with attachment figures. The experiences and memories gained serve to guide future behavior and predict future relationship outcomes with attachment figures (Bowlby, 1982; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). Bowlby (1973) identified two forms of internal working models: (1) working models of the *self* and (2) working models of *others*. Working models of the self represent how a person views themselves based on the attachment figure's emotional and physical responsiveness. Children who have attachment figures who show emotional availability and responsiveness form healthy perceptions of the self and believe they are acceptable and worthwhile. Children who have unresponsive attachment figures view their self as unworthy and unacceptable (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000).

Working models of *others* focus on whom someone may go to during times of need and how the attachment figure will respond emotionally during times of insecurity.

When children have attachment figures who fulfill their need for security, they will be more willing to depend on others. When children have attachment figures who are not available, they will be less willing to depend on others. (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000).

The working models of self and others are the foundational concepts that parallel a person's anxiety (working model of the self) and avoidance (working model of others) levels within the attachment style construct. As working models of self and others are further refined based on past interpersonal relationship experiences, expectations of potential outcomes in future relationships begin to develop. Based on those expectations, behavioral and psychological patterns begin to emerge with the goal being to maintain a sense of security. These psychological and behavioral patterns create *attachment styles*.

#### **ATTACHMENT STYLES**

Attachment style is defined as "the habitual pattern of expectations, needs, emotions, and behavior in interpersonal interactions and close relationships" (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012, p.170). Attachment style characterizes a person's typical attachment-related mental processes and behaviors in a particular relationship (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). Based on the work of Hazan and Shaver (1987), three attachment styles were conceptualized: (1) secure, (2) avoidant and (3) anxious/ambivalent. Secure individuals easily become emotionally close to others. Secure individuals are comfortable with depending on others and having others depend on them. Secure individuals are not concerned with being alone or not being accepted by others. Avoidant individuals, on the other hand, do not trust others and fear intimate relationships. Anxious/ambivalent

individuals desire close relationships, but think people do not really care about them (Polek, 2007).

Over time, as the concept of attachment was refined, methodological improvements were made to the original self-report measure and researchers found that attachment style was orthogonal (Swaminathan et al., 2009) and best conceptualized as regions in a two-dimensional space (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012).

The first dimension of attachment (see Figure 2.1) is *avoidance*, which focuses on discomfort with closeness and dependence on others. People who score high on avoidance prefer to rely on themselves and to be emotionally distant from others. The second dimension *anxiety* focuses on an individual's feelings about themselves and whether they perceive themselves as loveable. Both avoidance and anxiety can vary from low to high. When avoidance is high, individuals are uncomfortable building close relationships. But, when avoidance is low, individuals are more open to building close intimate relationships. When anxiety is low, a positive view of self is established internally and individuals are not looking to others to validate their self-worth. If an individual has high levels of anxiety they maintain self-esteem and self-worth by the affirming words of others. These two dimensions of attachment yield four different attachment styles.

**Figure 2.1: The Four Attachment Styles**

		Model of Self (Anxiety)	
		Low	High
Model of Other (Avoidance)	Low	Secure	Preoccupied
	High	Dismissing	Fearful

### **Secure Attachment**

Securely attached individuals have a healthy sense of self-worth and believe others will find them lovable. These individuals expect others to be generally accepting and responsive in social interactions. Also, secure individuals are comfortable with autonomy. From an attachment perspective, autonomy deals with the degree someone is comfortable with significant others engaging in other relationships without having feelings of insecurity (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

### **Preoccupied Attachment**

Individuals, who report having a preoccupied attachment style often feel unlovable, but have a positive view of others. These individuals strive for self-acceptance by gaining the recognition and approval of significant others. These individuals are considered *preoccupied* because they are most concerned with the opinions of others and

strive for acceptance in their relationships.

### **Fearful Attachment**

Individuals who report having a fearful attachment style display a sense of unworthiness or unlovability and expect others will not be responsive to and accepting of them in social interactions. Individuals who display a fearful attachment style seek to protect themselves from the rejection of others by avoiding close relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

### **Dismissing Attachment**

Lastly, individuals who have a dismissive attachment style believe they are worthy of love, but have a negative disposition towards other people. These individuals guard against disappointment by avoiding close relationships and developing a sense of independence and invulnerability.

The dismissing and fearful attachment styles both avoid intimacy and closeness in interpersonal relationships. Dismissing and fearful attachment styles differ in their need to be accepted by others. Individuals who display preoccupied and fearful attachments both depend on others to maintain a positive self-perception. But, preoccupied and fearful people differ in their desire to build close relationships with others. Preoccupied individuals hope to build close relationships with others, but fearful individuals avoid close relationships to keep from being disappointed (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

## **TRADITIONAL OPERATIONALIZATIONS OF THE ATTACHMENT CONSTRUCT**

Attachment theorists argue attachment is a general predisposition based on early childhood interactions with significant others (i.e. parents and caretakers) that guides our behavior in future interpersonal relationships. Attachment style is often viewed as a trait because of its stability (Bartholomew, 1991; Hazan and Shaver, 1994b). However, additional research has shown that this traditional view of the attachment construct as a stable trait is not always consistent across various situations.

According to Sibley and Overall (2008), the attachment construct has been traditionally defined and operationalized in four ways: (1) internal working models, (2) relational schema, (3) appraisal and response components of a control systems model, and (4) trait-like differences in the tendency to employ hyperactivating or deactivating behavioral strategies to regulate felt insecurity.

First, internal working models, as mentioned earlier, are internal representations that people develop about themselves and others based on an attachment figure's responsiveness and ability to fulfill one's need to feel emotionally secure. These experiences create belief systems that are used to predict the behavior of others within relationships (Collins, 1996).

Second, the notion of relational schema is also based on the idea that people develop cognitive patterns in interpersonal relationships. But, the key difference is relational schema focus on the general cognitive patterns present in the relationship itself and not individual components (i.e. attachment figures) of the relationship (Baldwin, 1992). For example, if a student has a great experience in one advertising class, the

student will expect to have a great experience in future advertising courses irrespective of who the instructor is or the students in the class.

Third, attachment has been operationalized based on the appraisal and response components of the attachment system. Meaning, scholars who take this third approach to attachment are interested in the variables that trigger insecurity within a person causing the attachment system to activate. These scholars are interested in how attachment operates and varies in intensity across situations. For example, this type of research will look at how the physical or psychological proximity of the attachment figure influences the degree of anxiety or avoidance felt when measured or manipulated experimentally. Also, researchers will be interested in the coping mechanisms insecure individuals develop to recreate a sense of security. Simply, these researchers are interested in how the system of attachment operates (Fraley & Shaver, 2000).

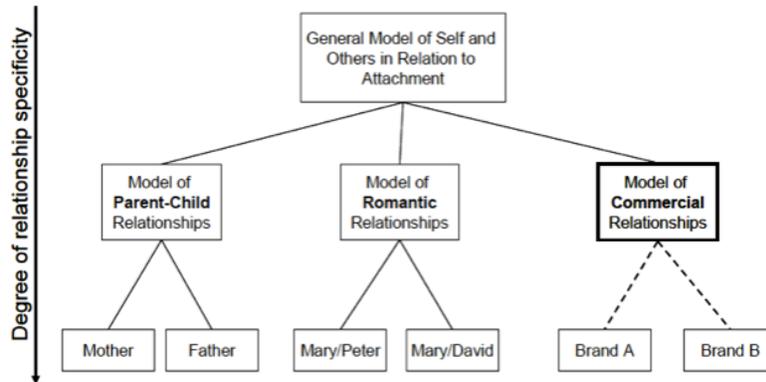
Lastly, attachment has been operationalized to examine the traits that cause insecure individuals to trigger either hyperactivation or deactivation behavioral strategies. Hyperactivation is an attempt by the attached individual to gain the attention of an inattentive attachment figure through increased effort. Deactivation is a strategy that tries to avoid or minimize the pain and frustration caused by the attachment figure's lack of attention or absence (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). The central ideas behind whether an individual chooses hyperactivation or deactivation as a strategy to deal with insecurity is based on the proximity and availability of the attachment figure (Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003). Attachment theorists interested in the traits of proximity and availability of attachment figures often operationalize attachment in this manner.

Although the theoretical differences between the above approaches to attachment are subtle, they all agree on two things: (1) people hold multiple attachments toward a multitude of specific relationship partners, and (2) representations of these attachments are cognitively organized within a hierarchical structure (Collins & Read, 1994).

#### **ATTACHMENT HIERARCHIES IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

The general trait of attachment, which is said to develop in early childhood, forms in relation to the general experiences we have with attachment figures. But, in specific situations, people develop relation-specific approaches that attachment scholars sometimes refer to as *relationship templates* and are formed based on specific situational contexts (Collins & Read, 1994; Paulssen & Fournier, 2007). These relationship templates begin to be applied to our everyday life and become *working models*. These working models are then sorted into *attachment hierarchies* that guide our relationship behavior (Collins & Read, 1994; Sibley & Overall, 2008). Figure 2.2 is a visual representation of how attachment hierarchies can be structured during an individual's lifetime and includes a hypothetical placement of where Paulssen and Fournier (2007) believe commercial relationships fall within the hierarchy. Figure 2.2 is further explained below.

**Figure 2.2: Hierarchical Network of Attachment Representations**



Source: Paulssen & Fournier, 2007

Attachment theorists state that traditionally, individuals form two *primary attachments*: (1) parent-child attachment and (2) romantic attachment. But, after repeated exposure to important others (ie. friends, co-workers, instructors etc.) new *secondary attachments* are established (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997).

During adolescence and young adulthood, individuals expand their attachment hierarchies to include peers as well as additional family members. It is also during adolescence and young adulthood that romantic partners begin to gain prominence within the attachment hierarchies as sources of security and emotional support. Both parental and romantic relationships are considered predictive of psychological well-being. It is also important to note that these hierarchies can shift. For example, after two people have been in a romantic relationship for an extended time, the couple begins to consider each other as their primary attachment figure. The romantic relationship eventually becomes

more important than the parental relationship, causing the attachment hierarchy to change (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997).

Collins and Read (1994) observed that the higher an attachment relationship is within the attachment hierarchy, the more the relationship is used as a relationship template to predict relationship outcomes across subsequent situations and relational contexts. Relationships higher within the attachment hierarchy are more global/general mental models. But, as one progresses further down the attachment hierarchy, the relationships become more specific and situational.

Paulssen and Fournier (2007) apply and extend attachment theory as a framework for understanding relationships in the consumption context. Paulssen and Fournier's (2007) findings demonstrated that (1) an individual's personal attachment style is related to differences experienced in the quality of marketplace relationships; (2) personal attachment affects commercial relationship attitudes and behaviors similarly to interpersonal relationships; and (3) individuals who display a secure attachment style often experience greater satisfaction, trust, and loyalty in consumer-commercial relationships. Attachment literature articulates that securely attached people find it easier to build relationships with others and have a more positive view of themselves. Also, securely attached people experience greater satisfaction with their relationships in general in comparison to individuals who display other attachment styles (Sable, 2008). The findings of Paulssen and Fournier's (2007) research are in line with attachment research conducted in other contexts and disciplines.

Paulssen and Fournier's (2007) research successfully expands the application of attachment and attachment style outside of the interpersonal context and into the area of consumption. They note, however, that to successfully extend the attachment construct into commercial relationships, researchers have to be careful how the construct is operationalized and clearly articulate that *consumer attachment* is what is of interest to the research project.

Paulssen and Fournier's findings (2007) offer a framework for advertising and consumer behavior researchers to take the initial steps needed to better understand the boundaries of the attachment construct within a consumption context. Specifically, for advertising scholars, it is worth understanding how personal attachment styles influence consumer response to brand messages and how advertising can be tailored to communicate more effectively with consumers.

#### **ATTACHMENT THEORY AND BRANDS**

Since Bowlby's (1969) initial work leading to the development of attachment theory, attachment has been studied in various contexts. Attachment has been applied to individual interactions with relationship partners (e.g., Aron & Aron, 1986; Hazan & Shaver, 1987), individual attachment to places (e.g., Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Williams & Vaske, 2003), attachment to products (e.g., Belk, 1988; Mugge et al., 2008), and attachment to brands (e.g., Thomson et al., 2005; Thomson, 2006).

Strong attachment accompanies positive feelings of love, joy, security, or passion and is related to a cognitive connection of the self (Proksch, Orth & Bethge, 2013). In the case of consumer attachment, the connection is between the self and the brand (Park et

al., 2006, 2010; Proksch et al., 2013). A consumer's identification with a brand happens to the degree to which the consumer perceives congruency between their self and the brand. Consumer identification with a brand is also influenced by the motivation of the consumer to fulfill their need for self-distinctiveness and self-enhancement (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). When a consumer finds a brand that allows them to fulfill their need for self-distinctiveness or enhancement, the consumer identifies with the brand and incorporates that brand into the *self* (Proksch et al., 2013). Attachment primarily centers on significant others, but when these individuals are not accessible to satisfy attachment needs the attached individual begins looking for substitute attachment figures or objects (Hazan & Shaver, 1994b; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). For human attachment targets, attachment scholars argue that family members are permanent members of the attachment hierarchy but the structure of the attachment hierarchy can evolve to include non-humans (Bowlby, 1969; Hazan & Shaver, 1994b; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997).

Research also shows that people search for non-human attachment targets to offset the lack of emotional security felt in their current relationships with human attachment figures (Kirkpatrick, 1997; Birgegard & Granqvist, 2004). Given that people search for and relate to non-human attachment figures (i.e. brands) in very similar ways to people (Fournier, 1998), it is reasonable to extend the attachment construct into the branding and advertising domain. It seems logical that consumers may search out brands they perceive to have similar personalities to their own when seeking a greater level of emotional security.

## MEASURING THE ATTACHMENT STYLE CONSTRUCT

Attachment theorists state people have two primary attachments in a lifetime, the parent-child relationship and romantic relationships. All other relationship types are considered to be secondary attachment relationships (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). Paulssen and Fournier's (2007) research on attachment in a commercial setting makes a compelling case that attachment is applicable to commercial relationships and that commercial attachment should be viewed as a third type of attachment.

As advertising and marketing researchers delve further into this third type of attachment the various ways commercial attachment is measured and manipulated will become increasingly important.

There are two ways attachment style is commonly measured: using narratives and self-report instruments (Moss, 2011). The most common approach when using narratives is the *Adult Attachment Interview*. The adult attachment interview asks participants to describe past experiences with primary attachment figures. These interviews are interested in understanding the unconscious processes used by the individual to regulate their emotions when discussing primary attachment relationships. Self-report measures assess how participants explicitly feel about being rejected and the degree they seek out close relationships.

While there are only a couple of narrative interviews that are used to assess attachment styles there are numerous self-report instruments to assess attachment. I briefly mention the most common instruments.

*Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ)* – this questionnaire is used to measure anxiety and avoidance. The scale seeks to predict levels of anger, distress and behavior during times of conflict in a relationship (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996).

*Experience in Close Relationships Revised* – this questionnaire is generally used to measure anxiety and avoidance in romantic relationships (Fraley, Waller & Brennan, 2000).

*The Relationship Questionnaire* – used to distinguish the four attachment styles through the use of four paragraphs that describe each style. Participants pick the paragraph that most relates to their relationship tendencies and patterns. Next, participants specify to what degree each paragraph accurately describes them (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

## **MANIPULATING AND PRIMING ATTACHMENT STYLE**

In contrast to viewing attachment style as a fixed state, another body of work demonstrates attachment style can be manipulated and primed in numerous ways. Below are the most common ways attachment has been primed with a brief description.

*Subliminal Presentation of Names* - Individuals are presented with names of friends or acquaintances, either subliminally or incidentally (e.g., Mikulincer,

Hirschberger, Nachmias, & Gillath, 2001). To prime secure attachment, individuals are subliminally exposed to the name of someone who they feel is particularly supportive. In the control condition, individuals are subliminally exposed to the name of an acquaintance or someone who is not especially supportive.

*Pictures of Supportive Contexts* - To prime a secure attachment, some researchers expose participants to pictures that depict supportive contexts (Mikulincer, Hirschberger, Nachmias, & Gillath, 2001).

*Incidental Words* - Researchers expose individuals to incidental words that relate to secure attachment, such as "love." Incidental words should prime secure attachment and increase candor and openness. Exposure to the word love, evoking a secure style, increased the likelihood that individuals would concede their negative traits or shameful acts of the past (Gillath, Sesko, Shaver, & Chan, 2010).

*Memories of Supportive People* - The most common procedure used to prime a secure or insecure attachment is to ask participants to recall previous episodes in their lives (Moss, 2011). Participants may be asked to consider an interaction with a supportive or unsupportive person to prime avoidance and anxiety. Memories of supportive people evoke secure attachment and improve emotional regulation (e.g., McGowan, 2002).

In a consumption context, researchers have used a variation of *Memories of Supportive People* to prime attachment. The study conducted by Swaminathan

et al. (2009) used this method to prime attachment for brands with distinct brand personalities. Given its centrality to studies of attachment in a consumption context, the *Memories of Supportive People* was the method used in the studies presented in this dissertation.

## **ATTACHMENT AND BRAND PERSONALITY**

Often when researchers analyze the various facets of branding (i.e. brand personality, brand equity etc.) researchers primarily focus on how brand personalities are built and the various dependent variables that signal the success of marketing tactics. Firms endeavor to build brand personalities to differentiate themselves from competitors, connect with consumers emotionally and appeal to consumers who wish to express or enhance their self-image through brands (Park & John, 2012).

Brand personality is defined as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997). The set of human characteristics that consumers perceive brands to have can be used to create a unique identity for brands that strengthens or establishes positioning in the marketplace. Brand personality can be divided into five dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Sincerity represents warmth and acceptance; competence represents security and dependability; excitement represents sociability, energy, and activity; ruggedness represents masculinity and strength; sophistication represents class and charm (Aaker, 1997). The personality traits a consumer associates with a brand can be formed by corporations through the use of symbols (i.e. logos), strategic brand communication, product promotions and advertising. Brand personality is a driving factor in creating brand equity, establishing differentiation

from other brands, engaging consumer emotions, establishing brand loyalty and influencing consumer preference (Ang & Lim, 2006).

The consumer emotions a brand generates can help consumers differentiate and evaluate competing brands in their mind. And, consumers are only emotionally attached to a limited number of brands (Thomason, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Consumers use products to display who they are to others by purchasing brands with established brand personalities to express their self-concept (Aaker, 1999; Belk, 1988). Brand personality can also be used to help consumers find a greater sense of comfort and psychological stability when they find a brand that fits their self-concept (Sirgy, 1982). The self-concept comprises the cognitive and affective understanding of who we are and is divided into two parts: the *actual self* and the *ideal self* (Sirgy, 1982). The actual self is based on the actual assessment of ourselves. The actual self is concerned with our actual ability, talent and self-perception. The ideal self is based on the goals a person sets based on who they would like to be or aspire to become (Malar, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011).

The consumer can achieve self-congruence by consuming a brand with a personality that they perceive to be similar to either the actual or ideal self. Actual self-congruence examines the fit between a consumer's actual self and the brand's personality. The ideal self-congruence examines the fit between a consumer's ideal self and the brand's personality (Malar et al., 2011).

Attachment scholars describe attachment as an emotional bond between people or between a person and a specific object (Bowlby, 1979). According to the branding literature, people can have emotional relationships with brands (Belk, 1988; Fournier,

1998). *Emotional brand attachment* can be defined as the emotional bond that connects a consumer with a specific brand (Malar et al., 2011). It is common for consumers to feel affection, passion and connection with their brands (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005).

Swaminathan et al. (2009) state interpersonal attachment styles have the potential to predict what types of consumers are most likely to be influenced by a brand's personality. But, consumer sensitivity to brand personality tends to diminish if consumers are not explicitly directed to focus on this aspect of the brand. In addition, Swaminathan et al. (2009) also extend attachment theory in a branding context by showing that the use of certain brand personalities (i.e., sincere and exciting personalities) can enhance the brand attachment level of individuals who display attachment styles (i.e., preoccupied and fearful) that are known to hinder one's ability to form attachments in an interpersonal context. Consumers who displayed higher levels of anxiety gravitated toward exciting brand personalities while consumers who reported lower levels of anxiety reported inconclusive results. Participants who display low levels of avoidance gravitated toward brands that were perceived to have a sincere personality (Swaminathan et al., 2009).

When a brand's personality is established through successful advertising campaigns, brand personalities help consumers evaluate brands in the marketplace. The emotional attachment consumers have with established brands allows for the brand to serve as a secondary attachment. Established brand personalities can help consumers more accurately express who they are to others and give consumers a greater sense of stability and psychological security. Psychological security is gained because consumers

are able to choose brands that fit best with the self (actual or ideal) they wish to display (Malar et al., 2011).

### **THE TRANSFER OF MEANING AND BRANDS**

Successfully developing a brand's personality requires that firms transfer both cultural meanings and symbols to the brand (McCracken, 1989). McCracken (2013) argues that brands serve as containers of meaning that add value to goods. McCracken asks three key questions concerning brands and meaning transfer: (1) What cultural meanings can exist in any particular brand? (2) How does meaning get into a brand? (3) Why do consumers care about what a brand means?

According to McCracken (2013) a brand can represent numerous meanings and convey multiple meanings concurrently. For example brands can represent gender, status and culture. Brands can also embody tradition, patriotism and family. Brands can be used to represent almost anything. Meaning is transferred to brands through the use of advertising. Good ads often capture and ultimately reflect the current dominant cultural symbols and values of the times (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; McCracken, 2013).

Advertising creative teams select emotionally charged symbols from the current culture that reflect time, place, activity, and people and place them in an ad. Once the elements that will be a part of the ad are decided upon, the product is then placed in the ad. The purpose of doing this is to transfer the meanings of time, place and people to the product and have those meanings eventually transfer to the brand (McCracken, 1986).

Consumers care about brand meaning because they are constantly constructing their social self (the self that consumers present to the world). Psychological outlooks

require consumers to change and life in general requires consumers to continually adapt and modify their self-presentation. Consumers look to brands and products for meaning because it helps them construct what they desire others to see (McCracken, 1986). A common question consumers ask themselves before making a purchase is, “Does this brand correspond to who I am or aspire to be?” The meanings consumers take from a brand are transferred through the act of purchasing and use (McCracken, 2013). Figure 2.3 offers a visual representation of the meaning transfer process.

**Figure 2.3: The Meaning Transfer Model**



Source: McCracken, 2013

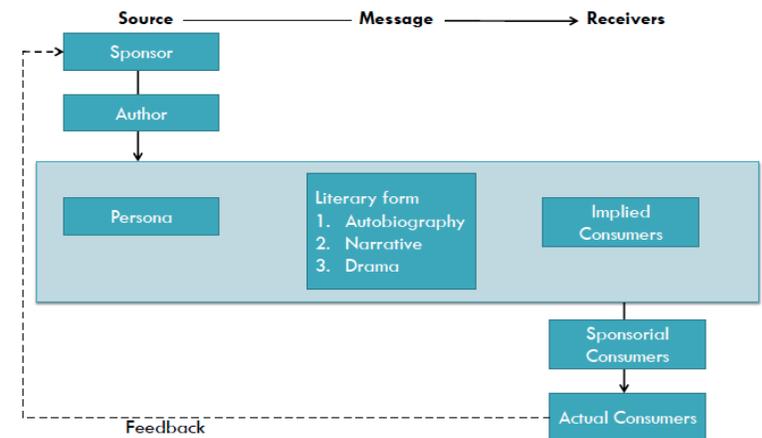
Approaching products and brands from an anthropological perspective allows for a brand to be assessed based on the meanings it contains. The meaning transfer model focuses our attention on those parts of a brand that may at times get overlooked. Often times, strong brands have loyal consumers because strong brands contain appealing,

powerful meanings consumers want to be associated with internally (either their actual and ideal self). Weak brands, or brands that lack clear meaning, fail to contain meanings that consumers want to be associated with internally. Brand attractiveness is based on the congruency between brand meaning and consumer need (McCracken, 2013). Consumers show preferences for brands that fulfill their symbolic needs (Sirgy, 1982). To understand how advertising can convey different meanings and associations to consumers, we can turn to models that outline the communicative function of advertising and the different ways these messages are framed and presented.

#### **STERN MODEL OF ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION**

Advertising is a form of interactive communication that has many parts. Advertising, unlike traditional oral communication, exists in both the real world and the imaginary worlds designed by advertising creatives. Advertising presents crafted messages of ideal uses for actual products (imaginary) interpreted by consumers (real world) to be consumed in real-time (Stern, 1994). The *Stern Advertising Communication Model* (Figure 2.4) is a simple framework of the common parts that make up an advertisement. The parts of an advertisement are interchangeable, but work together to create a unified message.

**Figure 2.4: Stern Advertising Communication Model**



Source: Stern, 1994

This model works well with the research outlined here, which examines how consumers with varying attachment styles respond to brands with established personalities (persona) when brand messages are framed in specific ways. The advertising appeals that run parallel with the literary forms proposed in the Stern Model (i.e. autobiographical, narrative etc.) are just a few ways advertising can be framed to increase message effectiveness to actual consumers.

## **FRAMING AND ADVERTISING APPEALS**

### **Framing Theory**

The concept of framing was initially developed by Goffman (1974) who stated that frames help people organize their everyday life. Frames help individuals take isolated events and collectively make them meaningful. Entman (1993) states framing involves selection and salience. Selection is to take some aspect of reality and make that issue more salient based on how the issue is communicated. Framing can be used to

promote a particular aspect of a problem, interpretation of an issue, moral judgment, or the way various situations should be handled (Entman, 1993).

### **Equivalency Frames**

Chong and Druckman (2007) state that equivalency effects occur when different, but logically equivalent, phrases cause individuals to alter their opinion. This typically involves informing people of the same information, but shaping it in a positive or negative light. Equivalency frames are worded using a gain versus loss perspective. An example of equivalency framing would be to say, “this product is 97% fat free” (gain) versus “this product contains 3% fat” (loss). Again, the unique thing about this frame is that both gain and loss statements are logically and mathematically equal. Kahneman and Tversky (1979, 1984) demonstrated how different presentations of similar information influenced the choices people made. They discovered when individuals received messages that highlighted the possibility of suffering loss, individuals were more willing to take risk to avoid loss. When individuals were exposed to a similar message that highlighted gains or benefits, individuals were less likely to take risks in order to keep what was promised or could be gained.

### **Emphasis Frames**

Emphasis framing states that by highlighting certain aspects of a message, it focuses an individual’s attention on a particular viewpoint of the issue (Borah, 2011). Scholars who approach framing from an emphasis perspective argue it is not always possible to manipulate a frame without changing some of the facts (Borah, 2011). Druckman (2004) points out it is not always possible to present issues in an equivalent

manner. Emphasis framing instead focuses on highlighting different issues that are of equal importance, but based on where emphasis is placed it could impact an individual's decision on an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007). An example of emphasis framing would be a debate being had about abortion where the positions being emphasized focus on the sanctity of human life versus a woman's right to choose. The two positions (sanctity of human life v. women's rights) are not equivalent in a mathematical or economic sense, but they are equally important discussions that could impact a person's decision-making process about abortion.

#### **FRAMING THEORY AND ADVERTISING**

In a competitive marketplace where gaining and keeping the attention of consumers is becoming increasingly more difficult, decisions about how advertising messages are framed and presented to consumers is a critical element of advertising strategy (Tellis, 2003). There are three framing tactics commonly used in advertising: frames of reference, frame valence, and frame perspective (Berger & Smith, 1998).

#### **Frames of Reference**

Frames of reference influence what product or brand attributes will be considered for evaluation by consumers and serve as a point of comparison between competing products. Frames of reference can be further divided into three types: attribute frames, price frames and outcome frames. *Attribute frames* work to guide potential consumers to examine product and brand attributes besides price. For example, Apple may want consumers to focus on the fact that the products are environmentally friendly and have great battery life to direct consumers away from the expensive price tag. *Price frames* are

designed to influence the consumer to specifically look at price to make product comparisons. *Outcome frames* aim to focus the attention of the consumer on the outcome benefits of using the product (Berger & Smith, 1998). An example of outcome framing would be a consumer who buys makeup to appear more physically attractive.

### **Frame Valence**

Frame valence influences consumers by framing ad messages positively and negatively. Frame valence is comparable to gain and loss framing mentioned earlier. In the example given by Berger and Smith (1998) hamburger meat is positioned as either being 75% lean or 25% fat (Berger & Smith, 1998).

### **Frame Perspective**

Frame perspective has to do with *when* an outcome will be realized by the consumer, meaning frame perspective is temporal and time sensitive. If a product is positioned to provide a future outcome the frame is said to be *prospective*. An example of ad copy for this frame might be, “You’ll be glad you bought this product.” The framing of the message speaks to a future benefit. If the market is overly saturated in a product category, advertisers may use a *retrospective* frame to encourage consumers not to miss out on buying the product. Possible ad copy could be, “You’ll wish you bought this product.” The retrospective frame speaks in past tense as if the consumer is about to make the wrong purchase decision (Berger & Smith, 1998).

## **THE USE OF ARGUMENTS IN ADVERTISING**

A key function of arguments put forth in advertising is to communicate meaning (Deighton, 1985; Webster, 1971). One way to convey meaning is through the use of brand and product knowledge. Product knowledge can be used by advertisers to not only convey meaning but also to construct meaning that shapes consumer experiences (Puto & Wells, 1983). Deighton (1985) further states that advertising does more than make consumers aware of various product offerings in the marketplace, but advertising affects how the product is experienced, which is a key component of the consumption experience. Arguments in advertisements influence what consumers attend to, recall and experience when consuming products (Deighton, 1984). With this in mind, consumers must exert effort to process and assess advertising appeals and draw conclusions about message claims. Consumer assessment of the advertised message often comes from the goals they have in mind as mentioned in the previous section. Consumers who have contrary views about the product or brand in question form counterarguments that potentially reduce the effectiveness of the message.

### **Emotional Appeals in Advertising**

Emotional and rational appeals have been studied thoroughly in the advertising literature. Traditionally, it is believed that consumers buy products for emotional or rational reasons (Albers-Miller & Royne Stafford, 1999).

Tellis (2003) defines emotion as “a state of arousal” (pg. 147). Advertisers use various stimuli to engage consumer emotion. Pictures, music, humor, and fear are some of the cues that are commonly used in advertising. Advertising appeals stimulate

consumer emotions, aid ad recall and are easier to process when compared to logical appeals. Emotional appeals motivate consumers to emotionally connect to ads implicitly, explicitly or through the use of association (Tellis, 2003). But, in general emotional appeals are concerned with consumer experiences that generate positive or negative feelings that advertisers use to prompt a response. But generally, appeals generating an emotional response result in more positive reactions (Albers-Miller & Royne Stafford, 1999).

### **Logical Appeals In Advertising**

The use of logical appeals has its roots in traditional information processing. Logical appeals are created to influence consumers' ideas and beliefs about the advertised product or brand (Albers-Miller & Royne Stafford, 1999). Logical appeals try to relate to consumers by relaying messages of product quality and value (Kotler & Armstrong, 1994).

Advertising and marketing researchers have found that logical appeals provide more product information (Golden & Johnson, 1983), increased purchase intention (Coulson, 1989) and lead to higher ad credibility (Holbrook, 1978).

Advertisers should do their best to make sure the appeals used are a match to the product or service they are promoting. Emotional appeals should be used for a value-expressive product and logical appeal should be used for a utilitarian product (Johar and Sirgy, 1991). The strategic use of logic and emotion in advertising appeals can help advertisers construct consumption experiences consumers' value.

## **GOAL FRAMING AND ADVERTISING APPEALS**

### **Goal Framing**

Advertisements can be framed in many different ways, but advertising messages often involve the use of a specific type of frame: goal framing (Chandy et al., 2001; Levin, Schneider, & Gaeth, 1998). Goal frames are a type of valance frame, which positions products in a positive or negative light. Goal framing helps consumers assess advertising to determine if products and brands will help them attain their physical, psychological and consumption goals.

Goal-directed consumer behavior begins with goal setting. Goal setting requires consumers to answer two broad questions: What are the goals I can pursue? And, why do I want or not want to pursue them? (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999). The goals people set usually arise organically because of biological, emotional, moral, or ethical forces. These goals are often subconscious and are not necessarily produced by habitually learned responses to environmental stimuli. Rather, goals are activated unconsciously by internal criteria but pursued consciously (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999).

Second, goals can be forced on people, through coercion or reward power (meaning the attainment of the goal leads to greater social standing) or, more subtly, by virtue of their position in an organization, family, or other social unit, whereby they are obligated to work toward predefined ends (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999).

Third, goals can be created within people based on reason or external stimuli (i.e., the presentation of a new product, a provocative advertisement, or a persuasive appeal by a salesperson). It is important to note exposure to the goals of others leads to the

evaluation of personal goals. Goals can be achieved through the acquisition of objects (products, brands) that consumers own or display; or, through targeted actions that lead to desired outcomes (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999).

### **Symbolic and Utilitarian Advertising Appeals**

The two most common appeals used in advertising to influence consumer behavior are symbolic (value-expressive) appeals and utilitarian (functional) appeals (Johar & Sirgy, 1991; Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986; Snyder & DeBono, 1985). The use of symbolic advertising appeals helps consumers form a perception of who is the intended audience for the product or brand. Consumers can use advertising appeals to help them understand how a brand or product can be used to meet their goals (Johar & Sirgy, 1991).

The use of symbolic appeals as an advertising strategy is linked to product symbolism, consumer self-concept, and symbolic consumption. Value-expressive advertising appeals seek to create an image for prospective users of the advertised product or brand (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). Within the context of consumption, brands, consumer self-concept and the way advertisers strategically communicate brand messages (advertising appeals) help shape consumption experiences.

### **Signaling and Self-Help Advertising Appeals**

Two common goals consumers seek to achieve are goals of self-help and signaling. Advertisements that use self-help appeals position products in a way that encourages consumers to buy them because it will help them become better people. Signaling appeals position the product or brand to attract consumers who want products

that signal to others who they are (Park & John, 2012). These two appeals implicitly make connections to beliefs consumers have about their notion of self, both real and idealized. To uncover this connection, we can look to theories that help explain how individuals understand their selves and how these notions of the self are both malleable and fixed.

### *Implicit Self-Theories*

Park and John (2012) state individuals develop lay theories regarding the social world in order to interpret, control, and predict social outcomes. Implicit self-theories focus on the degree of malleability of personal traits. There are two implicit self-theories that apply to a wide range of personality traits: incremental and entity theory.

*Incremental Theory* states personal traits can change and new traits can develop with effort. Individuals with an incremental view of personality agree with statements like, “Anyone can change their most basic qualities” (Levy, Stroessner, & Dweck, 1998). *Entity Theory*, on the other hand, states personal traits are fixed and are difficult to change (Dweck, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Individuals who believe personal traits are fixed agree with statements like, “People are who they are and there is not much that can be done to change them” (Levy et al., 1998). Incremental and entity theory differ significantly in approaches to personality and change. These theories help inform why people’s consumption habits possibly differ. A consumer’s beliefs about the changeability of personal traits may influence the consumption goals consumers’ set for themselves with regard to goals of self-enhancement and social perception (Park & John, 2012).

People who hold an incremental theory perspective seek ways to become better people and seek learning opportunities for self-development. This behavioral approach is in line with a belief system that personal change can be experienced through direct effort. People who agree with the entity theorists' viewpoint state that personal qualities cannot improve by direct efforts to learn, develop, or grow. Individuals who hold this viewpoint endeavor to enhance the self through opportunities that allow them to signal their positive qualities to others (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988).

A study conducted by Park and John (2012) examined the impact implicit self-theories had on the effectiveness of advertising appeals using established brand personalities. Their findings showed that when consumers held an incremental viewpoint about personality, ads that positioned a product using a self-help/self-improvement frame were more effective than those with a signaling frame. And in contrast, consumers who held the view that personality traits were set and unchangeable responded best to ads that positioned the products using a signaling frame.

Implicit self-theories theoretically run parallel with findings from attachment studies conducted in a consumption context. Research conducted by Swaminathan et al. (2009) reveals individuals who have an anxious attachment style use brands with the goal to signal positive traits to others in order to appear more desirable. And in contrast, individuals with a less anxious attachment style, meaning they have a more positive view of themselves, rely very little on external things (objects, brands etc.) to self-enhance and are not as concerned about what others think of them.

Implicit self theory helps inform attachment theory in a consumption context, because implicit self theories help to bring some understanding to how individuals who display lower levels of anxiety make consumption decisions. Attachment theory can help researchers interested in consumer behavior understand how implicit self theories develop in light of attachment theory, which according to the literature is one of the first psychological systems to develop early in life.

### **General Summary**

Attachment theory is a general theory about personality formation and the goal is to maintain a sense of security through interactions with primary attachment figures. At the core of attachment theory are the concepts of anxiety and avoidance. Anxiety is concerned with how an individual sees him or herself. Avoidance is concerned with how an individual sees or relates to others. Both of these concepts (anxiety and avoidance) are based on interpersonal interactions with primary attachment figures. Based on someone's level of anxiety or avoidance attachment styles form, which are patterns of interaction based on experiences with primary attachment figures.

Attachment theory argues that hierarchies of attachment form over time with those we interact with. According to the literature, individuals traditionally form only two primary attachments over their lifetime: parent-child relationships and romantic relationships. All other forms of attachment serve as secondary attachments. Secondary attachments can be formed with people and objects. In the context of consumption, secondary attachments can be formed with brands and products. And often, the attachment to a brand or product helps the consumer signal their desirable qualities to the

individuals around them. It is important to note that brand personalities play a key role in attachment because brand personalities help the consumer assess if the brand is something they want to be associated with and help guide their consumption decisions.

Advertising is a type of strategic communication and the way a message is framed can aid message effectiveness. Emotional and logical arguments help shape the tone of the message to increase its palatability to consumers and aids how product and brand knowledge will be attended to (Tellis, 2003). Additional arguments (appeals) put forth in the advertisement will be most successful when consumer goals and the product's ability to meet those goals are aligned. Two common goals consumers use products and brand to accomplish are goals of signaling and self-improvement.

This research argues that attachment style, which influences how consumers see themselves and others, plays a role in how consumers use brands to manage their identity and the perception of others. And more specifically, the following research examines how advertising appeals influence advertising effectiveness for consumers who report having varying levels of anxiety and avoidance. By examining how advertising appeals impact consumers with varying levels of anxiety and avoidance, this research hopes to shed light on how differing consumption situations and consumer needs influence advertising effectiveness and message impact.

### **Research Question and Hypotheses**

Consumer research conducted analyzing attachment style argues that when consumers display high anxiety, consumers leverage brands to signal their personality to others. But, there is little emphasis placed on the role advertising plays in the successful

communication of signaling messages and how different advertising approaches (frames and appeals) could be used to better reach these consumers. Similarly, there is very little research on how consumers who display low levels of anxiety respond to signaling appeals. And of greater importance, are those appeals effective?

The study conducted by Swaminathan et al. (2009) found that participants who were primed to display a low anxiety attachment style were not influenced by the brand's personality in the formation of their brand attachments. The researchers used brands with established personalities (sincere and exciting) in the ads. But, when you look at their ad stimuli, the frame was emotional and the appeal was a signaling appeal. Based on attachment literature, people who are secure do not look for external means to display who they are as readily as insecure individuals.

In contrast, the participants primed with a high anxiety attachment style became very sensitive to brand personality and formed a stronger emotional attachment to the brand. The participants demonstrated significant differences in response to the sincere versus exciting ads. Again, the responses of the high anxiety group make sense based on the attachment and self-implicit theory literature.

The findings from Swaminathan et al. (2009) highlight why research on attachment style and ad appeals is important. How the advertising message was constructed was not a key factor of the research and received minimal consideration, Lack of consideration for the message frame could have been a reason the response of the low anxiety participants in the study lead to inconclusive results.

So, it is worthwhile to see what possible approach is most effective for secure consumers. The research will use both signaling and self-help appeals to gain a greater understanding of the types of messages and appeals secure and insecure consumers respond to best. Based on the previous literature review, these studies are motivated by the following research questions: What are the effects of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance on the persuasiveness of emotional and logical advertising appeals for products with sincere brand personalities? What are the effects of low and high attachment anxiety on the persuasiveness of signaling and self-help advertising appeals for products with sincere personalities?

## **Chapter 3 – Study One**

### **THE EFFECTS OF ADULT ATTACHMENT STYLE ON THE PERSUASIVENESS OF LOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL APPEALS FOR PRODUCTS WITH SINCERE BRAND PERSONALITIES**

The purpose of the following chapter is to present the research method and findings of Study 1. Overall, this study was concerned with understanding how emotional and logical advertising appeals influence consumers' emotional brand attachment as well as participants' attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention when primed to adopt different attachment styles.

#### **STUDY 1 RATIONALE**

As outlined in the theoretical framework put forth in the previous chapter, I expect high anxiety consumers to respond positively to brands using an emotional appeal because they strongly desire intimate bonds yet fear intimacy (Bartholomew, 1990). Emotional appeals would not trigger the natural defenses of consumers to the same degree as logical appeals (Tellis, 2003), which is important since these individuals are not as trusting of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Study 1 was motivated by the following hypotheses:

**H1** High anxiety consumers (preoccupied and fearful attachment styles) will report more emotional attachment to the brand when the advertisement uses an emotional appeal than when it uses a logical appeal.

Additionally, based on the work of Bartholomew & Horowitz (1991), I expect low anxiety consumers to respond positively to brands using a logical appeal. These individuals are emotionally secure and not as preoccupied with what others think of them, which should theoretically make these consumers more objective and willing to evaluate the claims made in advertisements (Tellis, 2003).

**H2** Low anxiety consumers (secure and dismissing attachment styles) will report more emotional attachment to the brand when the advertisement uses a logical appeal than when it uses an emotional appeal.

In terms of avoidance, extant literature is unclear on its influence. Some studies that have looked at attachment in a consumption context have simply removed this dimension as an independent variable. In others, when avoidance is included as an independent variable results have been inconclusive (Swaminathan et al., 2009; Paulssen & Fournier, 2007).

Due to the lack of research examining the effects of adult attachment in a consumption context and the sparse results obtained in the aforementioned studies, Study 1 includes the avoidance dimension in order to learn more about it in general and to explore the possible impact of avoidance on consumer-brand relationships. It is framed as a research question:

**RQ1** How do varying levels of participant anxiety, avoidance and ad appeal all interact to influence participants' attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention?

In order to test the hypotheses for Study 1, attachment style and advertising appeals were manipulated experimentally using a 2 (Attachment Anxiety: High v Low) X 2 (Attachment Avoidance: High v Low) X 2 (Advertising Appeals: Emotional v Logical) between subjects design.

## **METHOD**

### **Sample Rationale**

Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) was used to field the study as well as all pre-tests. MTurk is a suitable source of participants for a number of reasons. First, it is designed for online experimentation (Reips, 2000). Second, it provides access to a larger subject pool that might not be available at all universities or colleges, and offers a population that is more diverse than traditional college samples (Buhrmester, Kwang & Gosling, 2011). Third, MTurk lends itself to greater demographic sample diversity. Lastly, the cost is low.

### **Study 1: Product Pre-test and Ad Stimulus Development**

Before conducting the main study, a pre-test was carried out to identify which product, brand and ad stimulus should be used in the main experiment. The goal of the product pre-test was to find a product and brand that were viewed by respondents to have a sincere personality. Also, the advertising copy used to manipulate the emotional and logical appeals was tested to ensure that each ad resonated with respondents as either logical or emotional.

**Product Pre-test**

A product pre-test was conducted with a sample of 197 respondents (39.1%: male, age  $M = 36.96$ ) using MTurk. Six product categories and five brands within each product category were tested. See Table 3.1 for a list of the products and brands that were tested. These product categories were chosen based on market data provided by *statista.com*, a website that gathers market research data from various research institutions and business organizations. For the product pre-test, the above product categories were chosen based on sales data taken from 2013.

**Table 3.1: List of Product Categories and Brands Tested**

Product Category						
	Athletic Shoes	Bottled Water	Deodorant	Laptops	Soap	Cell Phones
Brands	Adidas	Dasani	Degree	Apple	Dial	Apple
	Reebok	Nestle	Old Spice	Dell	Safeguard	Blackberry
	Puma	Aquafina	Secret	HP	Dove	Nokia
	New Balance	Poland Spring	Suave	Lenovo	Lever 2000	HTC
	Converse	Smartwater	Axe	Sony	Tone	Samsung

Of the six product categories being evaluated, each respondent was randomly assigned to answer questions about one product category and the five brands within that category. The questionnaire contained abbreviated versions of the following scales: personal involvement inventory (product involvement), consumers' emotional brand attachment (CEBA), and brand personality (sincerity dimension). See Appendix A for all scales used in this pretest. Descriptive statistics for the product pre-test are shown in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Product Pretest Descriptive Statistics**

(n=197)	Dependent Variables <i>M (SD)</i>			
	PI	CEBA	Br. Per.	N
Athletic Shoes	4.25 (1.82) $\alpha = 0.82$	3.36 (1.27) $\alpha = 0.98$	3.37 (0.89) $\alpha = 0.97$	35
Bottled Water	4.09 (1.87) $\alpha = 0.87$	3.16 (1.37) $\alpha = 0.98$	3.06 (0.78) $\alpha = 0.95$	29
Deodorant	5.20 (0.96) $\alpha = 0.62$	3.34 (1.70) $\alpha = 0.99$	3.10 (1.02) $\alpha = 0.97$	33
Laptops	5.94 (1.32) $\alpha = 0.90$	4.13 (1.27) $\alpha = 0.98$	3.32 (0.78) $\alpha = 0.96$	33
Soap	4.77 (1.32) $\alpha = 0.57$	3.50 (1.59) $\alpha = 0.98$	3.32 (0.67) $\alpha = 0.95$	33
Cell Phones	5.30 (1.42) $\alpha = 0.84$	3.63 (1.09) $\alpha = 0.96$	3.40 (0.65) $\alpha = 0.94$	34

**Notes:** PI = Product Involvement, CEBA = Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment, and Br. Per = Brand Personality (Sincere Dimension)

When comparing the six product categories, laptops and cellphones scored the highest on product involvement, brand attachment (CEBA), and brand personality. These three measures were of particular interest to ensure that participants cared about the product, that they had some form of connection with the brands in the product category, and that the brand was evaluated as being sincere.

### ***Using an Established Brand***

To make sure participants' attachment to the brand was strong enough, it was important to use an established brand that participants would have possibly been exposed to over time, thereby giving them time to form some level of attachment to the brands being pretested. According to Swaminathan et al. (2009), when emotional brand attachment is a dependent variable in a study, the use of an established brand is necessary. They argue brand attachment ceases to be a viable dependent variable if established brands are not used because attachment is a construct that develops over time

and the strength or weakness of the attachment depends on repeated interactions and experiences with a known brand.

For each of the two top product categories identified above, one brand was chosen. In the laptop product category, respondents reported the highest levels of consumers' emotional brand attachment and perception of brand sincerity to the Apple brand (CEBA  $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 1.63$ ; Apple BP  $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ).

In the cellphone product category, respondents reported the highest levels of consumers' emotional brand attachment and perception of brand sincerity to the Apple brand (CEBA  $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ; Apple BP  $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ). These two aspects (consumers' emotional brand attachment and perception of brand sincerity) are most important to the following studies because it is imperative that a previous consumer-brand connection is present and that respondents view the brands used as sincere.

### ***Ad Stimulus Development***

The results of the product pre-test formed the basis for the creation of the ads that were used in Study 1. The advertising stimuli were pre-tested with a sample of 41 respondents (43.9% Male, age  $M = 34.98$ ) using MTurk.

Study 1 required that two types of ad appeals be created: logical and emotional. Four ads using one brand within each product category (laptops and cellphones) were tested in order to finalize the product and brand that would ultimately be used in the main experiment.

The ad pre-test was used to assess the believability of each ad and to see if the ad copy manipulations were successful in appealing to respondents' emotions or logic. The

ad believability scale is a 10 item 7-point scale that measures a consumer's attitude about a specific ad. The measure places emphasis on credibility of the ad and the probability of the ad being true (Beltramini, 1982). See Appendix A for scale wording. The results of the ad pre-test revealed that respondents reported high levels of ad believability for all ads shown ( $M = 5.11$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ;  $\alpha = 0.98$ ).

The advertising copy manipulations were tested by creating a one item 6-point bipolar adjective scale anchored by "Emotional" at one end and "Logical" at the other. The question wording was: "Looking at the ad, how would you describe the appeal that is used? Would you say it relies more on an emotional appeal, one that tries to connect with the audience's feelings? Or, would you say it relies on more of a logical appeal, one that tries to emphasize product benefits?" Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare ads for group differences between ad appeals designed to be perceived as either emotional or logical.

The Apple Macbook Pro (CEBA  $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 1.63$ ; Apple BP  $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) and the Apple iPhone (CEBA  $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ; Apple BP  $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ) earned similar scores for consumers' emotional brand attachment and brand sincerity. The ad appeal manipulations were successful for both products. The iPhone emotional appeal ( $M = 2.86$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ) and logical appeal ( $M = 4.85$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ) were significantly different [ $t(39) = -8.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ]. Likewise, the MacBook emotional appeal ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ) and logical appeal ( $M = 4.75$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ) were also significantly different [ $t(39) = -8.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ]. Ultimately, the iPhone was chosen as the target product because

while ad appeal manipulations for both products were successful, the manipulation for the iPhone was stronger.

### **Study 1 – Procedure**

For the main study, participants were directed to a survey link posted on Qualtrics and after consenting to participate were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions in a 2 (Attachment Anxiety: High v Low) X 2 (Attachment Avoidance: High v Low) X 2 (Advertising Appeals: Emotional v Logical) between subjects design. After answering some general questions about brands, participants were randomly presented with one of the four-attachment style scenarios (secure, fearful, preoccupied and dismissive) used in the *memories of supportive people* priming technique (Bartz & Lydon, 2004; Swaminathan et al., 2009).

The *memories of supportive people* priming technique is the common procedure used to prime adult attachment. This priming technique asks participants to recall previous moments in their life and reflect on how they felt during the encounter and who was involved at the time of the memory (Bartz & Lydon 2004, Swaminathan et al., 2009, and Moss, 2011). Based on the scenario they are assigned, participants are asked to think of a positive or negative memory and to consider an interaction with a supportive or unsupportive person. It is while the memory is being considered that attachment anxiety and avoidance are primed.

These scenarios require that you think of someone who is significant to you so that it will be easier to visualize the person, recall past events, past conversations and how it felt to be with that significant other. To ensure that participants were able to think

of someone significant that fit the description given to them, they were asked to write a sentence or two about their thoughts and feelings regarding themselves in relation to this person. If the participant could not think of someone that fit the scenario given, they were removed from the study.

Once participants' attachment styles were primed, they saw one of two ads that had either an emotional or logical appeal promoting an existing brand and product that was perceived to have a sincere personality. Lastly, after seeing the ads, participants rated the advertisement's effectiveness by reporting their attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention and emotional brand attachment.

## MEASURES

### Independent Variables

The independent variables of this study are the three experimental factors: Attachment Anxiety (High v Low), Attachment Avoidance (High v Low), and Advertising Appeal (Emotional v Logical). As stated earlier, attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were primed using the *memories of supportive people* prime technique.

*Attachment Style.* The theoretical foundation for how this priming technique works and why it works is based on the scholarship of Andersen and Chen (2002), who state that simply thinking of a specific relationship leads to a shift in the sense of self temporarily. This temporary shift of the self reflects the participant's relationship with the significant other being visualized in that moment. This technique does not capture or reflect the participant's attachment style across all their current relationships. The

development of relationship visualization as a way to activate various selves based on relationship context with a significant other allows for the priming of attachment styles.

There are four attachment style relationship descriptions (see Appendix B) that manipulate both dimensions of attachment (anxiety and avoidance).

In order to ensure the priming technique was effective, participants were asked to sit and think of this important person for a minimum of 90 seconds and write a sentence or two describing the person they were asked to think about based on the attachment style scenario they received. The 90-second time limit was enforced by placing a timer on this portion of the questionnaire within Qualtrics. Only after the time expired and a sentence or two describing the person in mind was written could they proceed to the next section of the experiment. Participants were removed from the sample if they could not think of someone to write about or if their responses were off topic.

When testing attachment experimentally, it is customary to initially separate the two dimensions of attachment (anxiety and avoidance) into separate variables (Swaminathan et al., 2009; Fraley, Waller, and Brennan, 2000), which enables the researcher to test the four kinds of attachment separately. For purposes of analysis, these four categories are then turned into the two dimensions of attachment style (anxiety and avoidance) and given a high or low score according to the scenarios. Specifically, in keeping with established methods, individuals were assigned a value for both anxiety and avoidance, depending on the scenario with which they were presented. Individuals in the preoccupied and fearful conditions (high anxiety) were assigned a 2 for anxiety whereas individuals in the secure and dismissive conditions (low anxiety) were assigned a 1 for

anxiety. Similar steps were taken for avoidance. Those in the fearful and dismissive conditions (high avoidance) were assigned a 2 for avoidance whereas those in the preoccupied and secure conditions (low avoidance) were assigned a 1 for avoidance.

*Advertising Appeals.* The advertising stimuli were designed using a variation of the ad manipulations proposed by Aaker et al. (2004), which altered the ad's taglines and images to reflect the desired brand personality. Ad copy manipulation ideas from John and Park (2012), who focused on using a key word to manipulate ad taglines, were also incorporated into the stimulus design. All products, brands and ad copy were pretested previously before the main study was conducted.

The advertising appeals were designed to create an emotional response or logical response from participants. To control the manipulation of both the logical and emotional ads each was developed around one key word or phrase. For the emotional ad the text read, "bigger phone, bigger happiness." The word "happiness" was used to create an emotional response for the emotional ad. For the logical ad the focus was on the phone's design. The text read, "bigger phone, smarter design."

### **Dependent Variables**

A number of scales were used to assess the effectiveness of each advertisement: attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention. In addition to the advertising effectiveness measures, the consumers' emotional brand attachment (CEBA) scale was used to establish that a consumer-brand relationship was present for each participant and to measure the strength of that relationship. For each scale, all scale items

were averaged together to create a single item score representing the dependent variable of interest.

The dependent variables tested in this study are: (1) Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment (2) Attitude Toward the Ad, (3) Attitude Toward the Brand, (4) Purchase Intention. See Appendix B for specific question wording.

*Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment (CEBA).* Consumers' emotional brand attachment is based on general attachment theory and assesses the emotional bond between a consumer and a brand. The CEBA scale was developed by Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005) and is designed to predict attitudes toward the brand, brand involvement and brand commitment.

The CEBA scale is a 10-item scale divided into three dimensions: affection, passion, and connection and measured on a seven-point scale anchored by 1=describes poorly to 7= describes very well ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ;  $\alpha = 0.97$ ). These items are of particular interest because the dimensions of affection and connection parallel anxiety (affection) and avoidance (connection).

In addition to consumer brand attachment, conventional measures of advertising effectiveness were also assessed.

*Attitude Toward the Ad.* Attitude toward the ad is defined as a mental predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to an advertising stimulus during a particular exposure (Mackenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986; Lutz, 1985). This construct taps both affective and cognitive consumer responses to an ad and is measured on a four-point scale analyzing respondent's thoughts about the ad and were anchored by

"no, definitely not" and "yes, definitely" (Henthorne, LaTour & Natarajan, 1993) ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ;  $\alpha = 0.86$ ).

*Attitude Toward the Brand.* Attitude toward the brand is defined as an "individual's internal evaluation of the brand" (Mitchell & Olson, 1981 p.318; Spears & Singh, 2004). This definition captures two important aspects of this construct: (1) attitude is focused on the object (brand) (2) the construct is evaluative in nature (ex. pleasant/unpleasant) (Spears & Singh, 2004). "The "attitude toward the brand" scale has five items and is measured on a 7-point scale ( $M = 5.07$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ;  $\alpha = 0.98$ ).

*Purchase Intention.* Purchase intention is a "behavioral measure that examines an individual's conscious effort to purchase a brand" (Spears & Singh, 2004). Purchase intention uses five items, measured on a 7-point scale ( $M = 4.24$ ,  $SD = 2.23$ ;  $\alpha = 0.98$ ).

### **Sample Characteristics**

The sample for Study 1 ( $n=335$ ) was drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk and consisted of 57% males and 43% females. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 82 years with an average age of 35 years ( $SD = 12.71$ ). The majority of the participants self-identified racially as follows: White (75.8%), Asian-American (7.5%), African-American (6%), Bi-Racial (5.4%), Hispanic (4.5%), Native American/Alaska Native (0.6%), and Other (0.3%).

## **RESULTS**

Hypothesis H1 examined how high anxiety attachment styles (preoccupied and fearful) and logical and emotional appeals affect consumers' emotional brand attachment.

Hypothesis H2 examined how low anxiety attachment styles (secure and dismissing) and logical and emotional ad appeals affect consumers' emotional brand attachment.

Each experimental condition had roughly 40 participants per condition. All conditions were tested for random assignment and there were no significant differences between the conditions. A manipulation check was also conducted on the advertising appeal factor to confirm the manipulations worked. The question was formatted in the same way as the pre-test, with a higher score indicating a more logical appeal and a lower score indicating a more emotional appeal. There was a significant difference [ $t(328.27) = 7.89, p < 0.01$ ] in the scores for participants who saw a logical ad appeal ( $M = 4.43, SD = 1.61$ ) and an emotional ad appeal ( $M = 2.95, SD = 1.79$ ). See Appendix B for ad manipulations.

To test the hypotheses, a 2 (Attachment Anxiety: High v Low) X 2 (Attachment Avoidance: High v Low) X 2 (Advertising Appeals: Emotional v Logical) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out on participants' ratings of consumers' emotional brand attachment and on the three measures of persuasion.

### **Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment**

There was a significant main effect for Anxiety, [ $F(1, 327) = 6.79, p < 0.05$ ]. But, no significant main effect for Avoidance, [ $F(1, 327) = 0.81, p > 0.05$ ] or Ad Appeal [ $F(1, 327) = 2.22, p > 0.05$ ]. See Table 3.3 for complete Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment ANOVA Table.

**Table 3.3 – Consumers’ Emotional Brand Attachment Predicted from Attachment Styles (Anxiety and Avoidance) and Ad Appeal**

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Consumers’ Emotional Brand Attachment

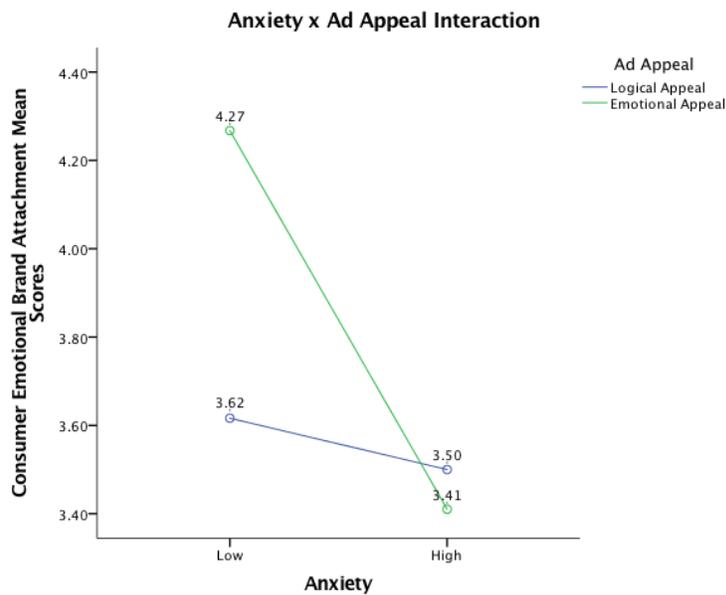
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	45.151 <sup>a</sup>	7	6.450	2.200	.034
Intercept	4576.233	1	4576.233	1560.564	.000
Anxiety	19.895	1	19.895	6.785	.010
Avoidance	2.374	1	2.374	.810	.369
Ad Appeal	6.518	1	6.518	2.223	.137
Anxiety * Avoidance	4.666	1	4.666	1.591	.208
Anxiety * Ad Appeal	11.411	1	11.411	3.891	.049
Avoidance * Ad Appeal	.767	1	.767	.262	.609
Anxiety * Avoidance * Ad Appeal	.669	1	.669	.228	.633
Error	958.902	327	2.932		
Total	5564.340	335			
Corrected Total	1004.053	334			

a. R Squared = .045 (Adjusted R Squared = .025)

There was no significant two-way interaction between Anxiety x Avoidance [ $F(1, 327) = 1.59, p > 0.05$ ]. But, there was a significant two-way interaction between Anxiety x Ad Appeal, [ $F(1, 327) = 3.89, p < 0.05$ ] (See Figure 3.1). As Figure 3.1 indicates, low anxiety participants reported higher levels of CEBA when seeing an emotional appeal ( $M = 4.27, SD = 1.59$ ) in comparison to a logical appeal ( $M = 3.62, SD = 1.61$ ). High anxiety

participants reported no significant mean differences in CEBA based on ad appeal. Based on these findings, hypothesis H1 and H2 were not supported. While the interaction was significant, it was not in the predicted direction.

**Figure 3.1: Anxiety x Ad Appeal Interaction**



Although not formally hypothesized, the analysis indicated there was no significant two-way interaction between Avoidance x Ad Appeal, [ $F(1, 327) = 0.262, p > 0.05$ ]. Nor was there a significant three-way interaction between Anxiety x Avoidance x Ad Appeal, [ $F(1, 327) = 0.23, p > 0.05$ ].

### **Attachment Style and Persuasion Outcomes**

A research question asked how different levels of anxiety and avoidance influence measures of persuasion, including attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intent. To answer RQ1 a series of three ANOVAs were carried out.

### ***Attitude Toward the Ad***

When examining the effects of anxiety, avoidance and ad appeal on attitude toward the ad, the results showed no significant main effect for Anxiety [ $F(1, 327) = 0.525, p > 0.05$ ], no significant main effect for Avoidance [ $F(1, 327) = 0.007, p > 0.05$ ] and no significant main effect for Ad Appeal [ $F(1, 327) = 0.046, p > 0.05$ ]. See Table 3.4 for Attitude Toward the Ad ANOVA Table.

**Table 3.4 - Attitude Toward the Ad Predicted from Attachment Styles (Anxiety and Avoidance) and Ad Appeal**

#### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Attitude Toward the Ad

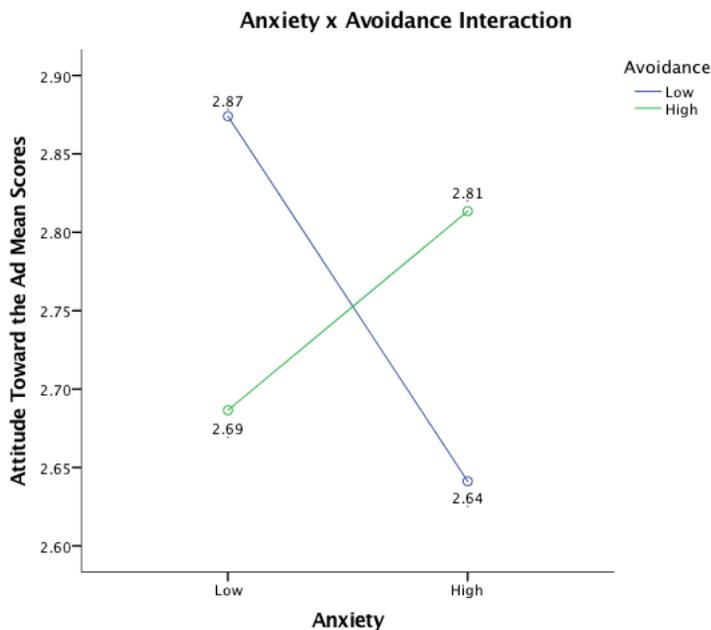
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	9.160 <sup>a</sup>	7	1.309	1.287	.256
Intercept	5715.210	1	5715.210	5621.616	.000
Anxiety	.534	1	.534	.525	.469
Avoidance	.007	1	.007	.007	.933
Ad Appeal	.047	1	.047	.046	.830
Anxiety * Avoidance	6.043	1	6.043	5.944	.015
Anxiety * Ad Appeal	2.475	1	2.475	2.434	.120
Avoidance * Ad Appeal	.007	1	.007	.007	.935
Anxiety * Avoidance * Ad Appeal	.014	1	.014	.014	.907
Error	332.444	327	1.017		
Total	6053.188	335			
Corrected Total	341.604	334			

a. R Squared = .027 (Adjusted R Squared = .006)

Although the research question was not directly concerned with two-way interactions, the analysis revealed there was a significant two-way interaction between Anxiety x Avoidance [ $F(1, 327) = 5.944, p < 0.05$ ]. As Figure 3.2 indicates, low avoidance participants reported a more favorable attitude toward the ad ( $M = 2.87, SD = 0.56$ ) in comparison to high avoidance ( $M = 2.67, SD = 0.60$ ). The anxiety dimension reported no significant mean differences in their attitude toward the ad. The two-way interaction between Anxiety and Ad Appeal was not significant [ $F(1, 327) = 2.434, p > 0.05$ ] nor was the two-way interaction between Avoidance and Ad Appeal [ $F(1, 327) = 0.007, p > 0.05$ ].

The three-way interaction between Anxiety, Avoidance, and Ad Appeal was also not significant [ $F(1, 327) = 0.014, p > 0.05$ ].

**Figure 3.2: Anxiety x Avoidance Interaction**



***Attitude Toward the Brand***

When examining the affects of anxiety, avoidance and ad appeal on attitude toward the brand, the results showed no significant main effects for Anxiety [ $F(1, 327) = 2.475, p > 0.05$ ], Avoidance [ $F(1, 327) = 0.714, p > 0.05$ ] or Ad Appeal [ $F(1, 327) = 0.499, p > 0.05$ ]. (See Table 3.5 for Attitude Toward the Brand ANOVA Table).

**Table 3.5 - Attitude Toward the Brand Predicted from Attachment Styles (Anxiety and Avoidance) and Ad Appeal**

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Attitude Toward the Brand

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	19.517 <sup>a</sup>	7	2.788	.893	.513
Intercept	8631.125	1	8631.125	2762.900	.000
Anxiety	7.731	1	7.731	2.475	.117
Avoidance	2.232	1	2.232	.714	.399
Ad Appeal	1.559	1	1.559	.499	.480
Anxiety * Avoidance	2.862	1	2.862	.916	.339
Anxiety * Ad Appeal	4.761	1	4.761	1.524	.218
Avoidance * Ad Appeal	.346	1	.346	.111	.739
Anxiety * Avoidance * Ad Appeal	.089	1	.089	.029	.866
Error	1021.527	327	3.124		
Total	9665.880	335			
Corrected Total	1041.044	334			

a. R Squared = .019 (Adjusted R Squared = -.002)

There was no significant two-way interaction between Anxiety x Avoidance [ $F(1, 327) = 0.916, p > 0.05$ ]. The two-way interaction between Anxiety x Ad Appeal was not

significant [ $F(1, 327) = 1.524, p > 0.05$ ]. And, the two-way interaction between Avoidance and Ad Appeal was not significant [ $F(1, 327) = 0.111, p > 0.05$ ]. The three-way interaction between Anxiety, Avoidance, and Ad Appeal was not significant [ $F(1, 327) = 0.029, p > 0.05$ ].

### ***Purchase Intention***

When examining the affects of anxiety, avoidance and ad appeal on purchase intention, the results showed no statistically significant main effects for Anxiety [ $F(1, 327) = 0.470, p > 0.05$ ], Avoidance [ $F(1, 327) = 1.157, p > 0.05$ ] or Ad Appeal [ $F(1, 327) = 1.955, p > 0.05$ ]. See Table 3.6 for Purchase Intention ANOVA Table.

**Table 3.6 – Purchase Intention Predicted from Attachment Styles (Anxiety and Avoidance) and Ad Appeal**

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	32.649 <sup>a</sup>	7	4.664	.938	.477
Intercept	6021.733	1	6021.733	1210.765	.000
Anxiety	2.337	1	2.337	.470	.493
Avoidance	5.756	1	5.756	1.157	.283
Ad Appeal	9.723	1	9.723	1.955	.163
Anxiety * Avoidance	.543	1	.543	.109	.741
Anxiety * Ad Appeal	11.435	1	11.435	2.299	.130
Avoidance * Ad Appeal	.441	1	.441	.089	.766
Anxiety * Avoidance * Ad Appeal	2.835	1	2.835	.570	.451
Error	1626.332	327	4.973		
Total	7673.000	335			
Corrected Total	1658.981	334			

a. R Squared = .020 (Adjusted R Squared = -.001)

There were no significant two-way interactions between Anxiety x Avoidance [ $F(1, 327) = 0.109, p > 0.05$ ], Anxiety x Ad Appeal [ $F(1, 327) = 2.299, p > 0.05$ ] or Avoidance x Ad Appeal was not significant [ $F(1, 327) = 0.089, p > 0.05$ ]. The three-way interaction between Anxiety, Avoidance, and Ad Appeal was also not significant [ $F(1, 327) = 0.570, p > 0.05$ ].

### **Discussion**

Although the findings of Study 1 failed to support the proposed hypotheses, it did shed light on how attachment style might influence a consumer's emotional brand attachment and their perception of various advertising appeals.

First, the lack of findings among high anxiety consumers might be related to the context of the persuasion attempt. In an interpersonal context, individuals who display high anxiety desire to form meaningful relationships even though it may be a struggle for them to do so (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). So, because high anxiety individuals desire emotional connection, it was hypothesized that an emotional ad appeal would be the best approach to reach these individuals.

Second, high anxiety consumers, especially those who have a fearful attachment style, may actually resist (avoid) the initial attempts by advertisers to build quality relationships. High anxiety individuals may need more time to assess persuasive communication before deciding to connect emotionally with the brand.

These findings indicate there is a difference in approach or perception in how individuals view interpersonal relationships in comparison to consumer-brand relationships. This finding shows that more research needs to be done to further

understand the limitations of consumer attachment, what goals do high anxiety consumers have in consumer-brand relationships and what types of messages are most effective based on these goals.

In terms of the low anxiety dimension, these results show that in low anxiety conditions, individuals do respond differently to advertising appeals. This clarifies previous work that reported non-significant or inconclusive findings among low anxiety individuals. In contrast to these past studies, the results of this experiment show that it is among low anxiety individuals (and not among high anxiety individuals) that we see variation in consumer brand attachment, when different advertising appeals are taken into account.

Specifically, for low anxiety individuals, the emotional ad appeal yielded higher levels of consumer brand attachment than did the logical ad appeal. For high anxiety consumers, there was no difference. Although these patterns were in the opposite direction of the stated hypothesis, the significant pattern suggests there is still much to be learned about low anxiety consumers and the boundary conditions under which they are likely to respond to persuasion attempts. I offer some possible explanations below.

First, work by Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy (1984) might explain why low anxiety respondents responded best to an emotional appeal. They argue that when emotional appeals are designed to establish positive feelings, these appeals trigger the intrinsic motivation within individuals to seek self-fulfillment and a sense of competence. This raises the possibility that how individuals evaluate the advertised message coupled

with individual motivation can lead to goal-oriented action (Holbrook & O'Shaughnessy, 1984).

Applying these patterns to the findings of Study 1, it suggests that a consumer's consumption goals are an important factor in advertising effectiveness. Depending on what an individual hopes to accomplish by consuming certain products, they will respond differently to various advertising appeals. Study 2 explores this possibility and draws on two types of goals that consumers seek to meet through consumption: self-help and signaling. Study 2 builds on the results of study 1 and combines logical and emotional appeals with signaling and self-help appeals to further understand how the addition of an appeal focused on goal achievement influences consumer emotional brand attachment and ad persuasiveness.

Study 2 also includes dependent measures related to conventional measures of advertising persuasion attempts (attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention). Although RQ1 sought to understand these outcomes in study 1, the results were not significant. We incorporate them in study 2 to see if consumer goals (specifically self-help and signaling) play an important role in how attachment style interacts with advertising appeal.

## **Chapter 4 - Study Two**

### **THE EFFECTS OF ADULT ATTACHMENT STYLE AND SELF-HELP AND SIGNALING**

#### **APPEALS FOR PRODUCTS WITH SINCERE BRAND PERSONALITIES**

The following chapter presents the findings of Study 2. Study 2 takes the ad appeals (emotional and logical) that were used in Study 1 and combines them with signaling and self-help appeals to understand how varying levels of anxiety and the combination of two ad appeal types influence consumers' emotional brand attachment and outcomes of persuasion.

In order to better isolate the effects of the anxiety construct, participants were primed to display either secure or preoccupied attachment. Only these two attachment styles were chosen because they keep avoidance levels low and manipulate only the anxiety dimension. Keeping avoidance levels low was important because one of the motivations for this study was to understand how anxiety levels, high or low, influence participant attitudes toward the ad and brand in addition to consumer emotional brand attachment.

#### **STUDY 2 RATIONALE**

Study 2 builds off the established theoretical idea that our possessions (i.e. brands) can serve as an extension of the self (Belk, 1988) and as a way to express our values (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). The findings of Study 1 highlighted the need for more research surrounding the limitations of attachment in a consumption context and how consumer goals influence consumer-brand relationships. Specifically, in terms of the

anxiety dimension, Study 1 showed that low anxiety and high anxiety individuals' levels of brand attachment are different based on the ad appeal seen. Compared to previous studies, these results shed new light on the role of anxiety. Study 1 revealed that for low anxiety participants, emotional appeals were most influential and for high anxiety participants logical appeals worked best.

Study 2 builds off the findings of Study 1 to further examine the anxiety dimension of attachment. In particular, Study 2 examines how a consumer's consumption goals will cause them to respond differently to various advertising appeals. Study 2 explores this possibility and draws on two types of goals that consumers seek to meet through consumption: self-help and signaling.

### **Goal Frames and Attachment Style**

Consumers seek to build and maintain an identity that will remain stable and secure in a world of constant change (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). The ever-increasing number of product offerings on the market allows consumers to achieve a version of themselves that they approve of personally and that others approve of socially (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998).

Product symbolism operates in two directions: outwardly to construct our social world, via *social-symbolism*; and inwardly to construct our self-identity, via *self-symbolism* (Elliott, 1997). What we consume supplies meaning and value to the consumer's personal and social world and advertising is a tool often used to convey symbolic meaning (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998).

The symbolic meaning that brands transfer to consumers offers a framework for understanding why high anxiety consumers would respond positively to brands using a signaling appeal. These individuals look to form secondary attachments that reinforce the social self through social symbolism, which creates a greater sense of psychological security (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988). Given the outward-looking focus of these types of individuals, it is logical to assume that outward facing goals, like signaling, would resonate more successfully with this group than would inward-facing goals, like self-help. This serves as the basis for the following hypothesis. Note that for this hypothesis and all others in Study 2, the avoidance dimension is controlled for by isolating it as low.

**H1.** High anxiety consumers will report more emotional attachment to the brand when the advertisement uses a signaling appeal than when it uses a self-help appeal.

On the other hand, low anxiety consumers seek to consume products that match their self-symbolism, which ultimately reinforces their self-identity (Elliott, 1997). I expect low anxiety consumers to respond positively to brands using a self-help appeal because low anxiety individuals have a greater sense of psychological security and rely less on secondary attachments (brands) to display who they are to others (Cassiday & Kobak, 1988; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). They are motivated more by internal needs and goals, which motivated the following hypothesis:

**H2.** Low anxiety consumers will report more emotional attachment to the brand when the advertisement uses a self-help appeal than when it uses a signaling appeal.

## **Goal Frames, Ad Appeals and Attachment Style**

Advertisers use various advertising appeals to engage consumer logic and emotion. Advertising appeals often stimulate consumer emotions, aid ad recall and help with message processing (Tellis, 2003). But, in addition to aiding consumer recall and message processing, advertisers try to create value-expressive ad appeals that give potential consumers an idea of the target consumer of the advertised brand or product (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). These types of appeals serve as a form of symbolic consumption (Johar & Sirgy, 1991; Belk, 1985).

In addition to value-expressive ad appeals, advertisers might also seek to create utilitarian advertising appeals that highlight product attributes and features. Utilitarian types of appeals serve as a type of “informational advertising” (Johar & Sirgy, 1991; Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Based on the theoretical work of Johar and Sirgy, (1991) the following argues that logical ad appeals combined with signaling goals represent a type of utilitarian ad appeal that emphasizes product and brand information; emotional ad appeals combined with self-help goals represent a type of value-expressive ad appeal that relies on brand and product image (Johar & Sirgy 1991).

While consumers are in the act of processing a message, advertising plays a role in shaping consumer attitude about that product or brand (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). According to Katz (1960), attitude towards an object forms and changes when the message communicated match the motives of the individual.

Consumers have different life experiences and begin to develop certain “lay theories” about the world around them (Lickel, Hamilton & Sherman, 2001). As these lay

theories are either reinforced or dismantled in the process of acquiring more life experience, ideas of who we are based on these experiences begin to emerge and influence our personality along with perceptions of how malleable it is (Park & John, 2012).

Within personality research, there are two lay theories that describe how people view the malleability of an individual's personality: incremental and entity theory (Dweck, 2000). Someone who views personality from an incremental viewpoint believes that personality traits can be shaped or developed, while individuals who view personality from an entity view believe that personality is fixed and is difficult to change (Dweck, 2000). These two perspectives influence our individual goals of self-enhancement. Specifically, people who hold an incremental view seek out learning and self-development opportunities. In contrast, people who hold an entity view seek to signal their desirable personality traits to others because they believe their traits are fixed and self-development yields few rewards (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988).

Consumers' beliefs about their ability to change their personality or the perception others have of it may impact the effectiveness of certain types of ad appeals over others. In particular, attachment style may influence the perception of personality, which would influence advertising effectiveness. According to Shiota, Keltner and John (2007), who conduct research on attachment style and its impact on positive affect, state individuals who display insecure attachment (attachment styles that display high anxiety) have an increased vulnerability to emotional personality disorders like depression. Also, their research has shown that attachment anxiety and avoidance trigger different negative

emotions (e.g. fearfulness and shame) in childhood that continue to manifest in adulthood shaping the individual's personality.

The key finding of Shiota, Keltner and John's (2007) research most applicable to this study is their finding that individuals without a sense of security in intimate relationships, are less able to assess and reap the rewards presented in their environment. The researchers argue this to be the case because insecure individuals lack the drive to seek out reward-focused experiences. Meaning insecure individuals do not pursue experiences that seek out goal fulfillment as often as secure people. Insecure individuals often miss the environmental cues that signal that something in the environment will meet a need or fulfill a goal. The finding that insecure people may be paying less attention to external stimuli because of past negative experiences may have significant implications for advertising effectiveness.

Lastly, Johar and Sirgy (1991) state that in order to positively persuade consumers, a consumer's self image and the product image must be congruent. Johar and Sirgy (1991) state that consumers seek to fulfill four different types of needs based on their self-image: the need for self-consistency (congruency between the actual self and product image), self-esteem (congruency between the ideal self and product image), social consistency (congruency between the social self and product image), and social approval (congruency between the ideal social self and product image). Consumers may seek to fulfill one or all four of these needs through consumption.

Based on the previously presented theoretical frameworks of attachment style, self-theories and image-product congruency, the following rationale is presented for the

study's remaining hypotheses. High anxiety individuals look to form emotional bonds with others, but are not as successful as others at establishing those bonds. Because high anxiety individuals have experienced repeated instances where people resist or reject them, overtime an entity perspective of their personality and their ability to change may have developed.

High anxiety consumers might be expected to respond best to ads that display either an emotional and signaling appeal or a logical and self-help appeal. In the case of the former (emotional/signaling combination), advertisements that present the opportunity to form an emotional attachment, while also informing these consumers about the attractiveness of the brand and how it can be used as a way to signal to others that they possess the same desirable traits is ideal (Park & John, 2012) and should satisfy the high anxiety consumer's need for social approval (Johar & Sirgy, 1991).

Similarly, in the case of the latter (logical/self-help combination), high anxiety consumers should also find the ad effective. Although high anxiety individuals may think self-development is tedious, these consumers are still interested in learning about products and learning how these products may potentially help them, even though they may think it is unlikely. Ads that show high anxiety consumers that through using the product positive change can occur speaks to this high anxiety consumer's need to build self-esteem (Johar & Sirgy, 1991).

The opposite patterns are expected for low anxiety consumers. Specifically, low anxiety consumers ought to respond best to advertisements displaying either an emotional and self-help appeal or a logical and signaling appeal. Low anxiety people enjoy

emotional connections, and forming relationships with others tends to be a more pleasant experience for these individuals compared to high anxiety individuals. As a result, these low anxiety individuals would likely have an incremental viewpoint about their personality and be open to ads that claim to help them become better people. Ads that present a combined emotional/self-help appeal should bolster the consumer's need for self-consistency (Johar & Sirgy, 1991).

Low anxiety consumers should also respond positively to a combined logical/signaling appeal. Although, low anxiety consumers are not as concerned with using brands to display who they are to others, all consumers seek some level of congruency between themselves and the products that they purchase (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). Ads that speak to this consumer's desire to learn about product benefits and use that knowledge to convey a personal attribute (i.e. intelligence, athleticism etc.) would speak to these consumers need to remain socially constant. As a result, these consumers approach consumption from a rational perspective and buy products that reflect outwardly the person they feel they are internally (Johar & Sirgy, 1991).

Based on the theoretical work underlying attachment style and self-theories, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H3.** High anxiety consumers who see an advertisement displaying either an emotional and signaling appeal or a logical and self-help appeal will report higher levels of persuasion via a) attitude toward the ad, b) attitude toward the brand, and c) purchase intention than when they see either an emotional and self-help appeal or a logical and signaling appeal.

**H4.** Low anxiety consumers who see an advertisement displaying either an emotional and self-help appeal or a logical and signaling appeal will report higher levels of persuasion via a) attitude toward the ad, b) attitude toward the brand, and c) purchase intention than when they see either an emotional and signaling or a logical and self-help appeal.

The last set of hypotheses are concerned with consumers' emotional brand attachment. In Study 1, high anxiety consumers did not report significant levels of brand attachment as a result of the logical or emotional ad appeal. The lack of findings in Study 1 could have been an artifact of the single frame combination that was used. In real-world advertising, it is a common practice to blend various types of appeals. To explore this possibility, consumers' emotional brand attachment is included in Study 2 to explore the possibility that combining two different kinds of ad appeal (i.e., emotional and logical and signaling and self-help) might yield more nuanced insights. In particular, whereas the first frame manipulation did not provide an expectation of how the product will be perceived socially or how the product will help the consumer individually, this second study incorporates this dimension. With this additional message cue added to the ad the following hypotheses were suggested:

**H5.** High anxiety consumers who see an advertisement displaying either an emotional and signaling appeal or a logical and self-help appeal will report higher levels of brand attachment than when they see either an emotional and self-help appeal or a logical and signaling appeal.

**H6.** Low anxiety consumers who see an advertisement displaying either an emotional and self-help appeal or a logical and signaling appeal will report higher levels of brand attachment than when they see either an emotional and signaling appeal or a logical and self-help appeal.

## **METHOD**

### **Sample Rationale**

MTurk was used to field both the pre-tests and the main study. The reasoning for using MTurk remains the same as stated for Study 1. Due to MTurk's flexibility of use for online experimentation, larger subject pool, diverse demographic population, and low cost this method of data collection was used.

### ***Using an Established Brand***

An established brand (Apple) was used in Study 2 for the same reasons as previously mentioned in Study 1. Consumer emotional brand attachment is a dependent variable of this study and since attachment develops over time an established brand had to be used to accurately test consumer attachment (Swaminathan et al., 2009).

### **Study 2: Ad Stimulus Development**

Before conducting this study, a pre-test was conducted to identify what copy was most effective for the self-help and signaling ads. The advertising pre-test was conducted with a sample of 43 respondents (41%: male, age  $M = 34.5$ ) using MTurk. The product, brand and ad copy used in Study 1 remained the same in Study 2. Slight changes were

made to the logical and emotional ad copy when needed for grammatical accuracy and flow, but the keywords used to trigger an emotional or logical response stayed the same.

Study 2 required that two additional ad appeal elements be created: self-help and signaling appeals. These two additional ad appeal elements were coupled with either an emotional or logical appeal to be manipulated in the main study. Four ads using the Apple brand were tested to ensure that the self-help and signaling ad copy manipulations were effective.

The ad pre-test was used to assess the believability of each ad and to see if the ad copy manipulations were successful in appealing to a respondent's emotions or logic, and their need to improve themselves (self-help) or signal who they are to others. The ad believability scale is a 10 item 7-point scale that measures a consumer's attitude about a specific ad. The measure places emphasis on credibility of the ad and the probability of the ad being true (Beltramini, 1982). See Appendix A for scale wording. The results of the ad pre-test showed that respondents reported high levels of ad believability for all ads shown ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ,  $\alpha = 0.96$ ).

The advertising copy manipulations were tested the same way as in Study 1. A one item 6-point bi-polar adjective scale anchored by "Emotional" (lower score) and "Logical" (higher score) was created to test the appeal manipulations. The question wording was: "Looking at the ad, how would you describe the appeal that is used? Would you say it relies more on an emotional appeal, one that tries to connect with the audience's feelings? Or, would you say it relies on more of a logical appeal, one that tries to emphasize product benefits?" Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare

ads for group differences between ad appeals designed to be perceived as either emotional or logical. There was a significant difference [ $t(36.33)=-8.28, p < 0.01$ ] between the emotional ( $M=2.29, SD= 0.63$ ) and logical ( $M=3.64, SD=0.42$ ) Apple iPhone ads.

The self-help and signaling copy manipulations were tested in the same manner as the emotional and logical ad copy. The signaling and self-help copy was tested by creating a one item 6-point bi-polar adjective scale anchored by “Self-Help” and “Signaling.” The question wording was: “Looking at the ad, how would you describe the appeal that is used? Would you say the advertisement relies more on a self-help appeal, one that encourages consumers to use products as a means to improve their life or general knowledge? Or, would you say the advertisement relies more on a signaling appeal, one that encourages consumers to display their products and brands to others as a way to display their personality?” Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare ads for group differences between ad appeals designed to be perceived as either self-help or signaling. There was a significant difference [ $t(41)=-7.09, p < 0.01$ ] between the self-help ( $M=2.39, SD= 0.73$ ) and signaling ( $M=4.00, SD=0.68$ ) appeals in Apple iPhone ads.

### **Study 2 – Procedure**

Participants were directed to a survey link posted on Qualtrics, and after consenting to participate in the study were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions in a 2 (Attachment Anxiety: High v Low) X 2 (Ad Appeal: Emotional v Logical) X 2 (Ad Goal: Signaling v Self-Help) between subjects design. After answering some general questions about brands, participants were randomly presented with one of two attachment

styles designed to manipulate high or low anxiety. Avoidance was kept low, which was accomplished when priming secure and preoccupied attachment styles. The attachment style scenarios presented to the participants were the same as those presented in Study 1 and are taken from the *memories of supportive people* priming technique.

The *memories of supportive people* priming technique ask participants to think of a person that is important to them. Then participants are asked to think about how they felt being with the person visualized and to recall a time when they were with the person. Participants were asked to remember past conversations and interactions with this significant person. Participants were then asked to write a sentence or two about their thoughts and feelings regarding themselves in relation to this person.

Once participants' attachment styles were primed, they saw one of four ads promoting an existing brand and product that were previously pre-tested. The ads were designed to reflect: (1) an emotional/self-help appeal, (2) an emotional/signaling appeal, (3) a logical/self-help appeal or (4) a logical/signaling appeal.

Lastly, after seeing the ads, participants rated the advertisement's effectiveness by reporting their attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention and emotional brand attachment.

## **MEASURES**

### **Independent Variables**

The independent variables for Study 2 are the three experiment factors: Attachment Anxiety (High v Low), Ad Appeal (Emotional v Logical) and Ad Goal (Self-Help v Signaling).

*Attachment Style Prime.* Attachment style was manipulated the same way as described in Study 1. For the purposes of this study, only two of the four relationship descriptions were used; secure and pre-occupied attachment styles. These two attachment styles manipulate the anxiety dimension of adult attachment while keeping the avoidance dimension low. For a complete description of the method, please refer back to Study 1. For a full description of attachment style manipulations, please refer to Appendix B.

*Advertising Appeals.* The advertising stimuli were designed using a variation of the ad manipulations proposed by Aaker et al. (2004), which altered the ad's taglines and images to reflect the desired brand personality. Ad copy manipulation ideas from John and Park (2012) who focused on using a key word to manipulate ad taglines were also incorporated into the stimulus design.

The advertising appeals were designed to create a combination of responses from participants. Participants were shown ads that were created to generate either an emotional or logical response coupled with either a signaling or self-help appeal. To control the manipulation for the various advertising appeals, the ad copy was developed around one key word or phrase. Staying consistent with Study 1, the keyword to trigger an emotional response was "happiness" for both emotional ads. For the logical ad the focus was on the phone's design. Staying consistent with Study 1, the logical ad copy manipulation focused on the word "design" and the phone's features to trigger a logical response to the ad being shown.

In order to create the signaling and self-help ad copy, the same technique as described in Study 1 was used. The ad copy manipulations again focused on a keyword or

phrase to ensure consistency across manipulations. The ad copy manipulations follow the suggestion of Park and John (2012) who used the word “show” to manipulate signaling ad copy and the word “learn” to manipulate self-help ad copy. (See Appendix C for ad manipulations.)

### **Dependent Variables**

A number of scales were used to assess the effectiveness of each advertisement: attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention. In addition to the advertising effectiveness measures, the consumers’ emotional brand attachment (CEBA) scale was used to establish that a consumer-brand relationship was present for each respondent and to measure the strength of that relationship. For each scale, all scale items were averaged together to create a single item score representing the dependent variables of interest. See Appendix B for specific question wording.

*Consumers’ Emotional Brand Attachment (CEBA).* Consumers’ emotional brand attachment (CEBA) is based on general attachment theory and assesses the emotional bond between a consumer and a brand. The CEBA scale was developed by Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005) and is designed to predict attitudes toward the brand, brand involvement and brand commitment.

The CEBA scale is a 10-item scale divided into three dimensions: affection, passion, and connection and measured on a seven-point scale anchored by 1=describes poorly to 7= describes very well ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 1.80$ ;  $\alpha = 0.97$ ). These items are of particular interests because the dimensions of affection and connection seem to parallel anxiety (affection) and avoidance (connection).

*Attitude Toward the Ad.* Attitude toward the ad is defined as a mental predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to an advertising stimulus during a particular exposure (Mackenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986; Lutz, 1985). This construct measures both affective and cognitive consumer responses to an ad. This construct is measured on a four-point scale analyzing respondent's thoughts about the ad and were anchored by "no, definitely not" and "yes, definitely" (Henthorne, LaTour & Natarajan, 1993) ( $M = 2.54$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ;  $\alpha = 0.88$ ).

*Attitude Toward the Brand.* Attitude toward the brand is defined as an "individual's internal evaluation of the brand" (Mitchell & Olson, 1981 p.318; Spears & Singh, 2004). This definition captures two important aspects of this construct: (1) attitude is focused on the object (brand) (2) the construct is evaluative in nature (ex. pleasant/unpleasant) (Spears & Singh, 2004). The "attitude toward the brand" scale has five items and is measured on a 7-point scale ( $M = 5.00$ ,  $SD = 1.76$ ;  $\alpha = 0.98$ ).

*Purchase Intention.* Purchase intention is a behavioral measure that examines an individual's conscious effort to purchase a brand (Spears & Singh, 2004). Purchase intention contains five items and is measured on a 7-point scale ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 2.19$ ;  $\alpha = 0.99$ ).

### **Sample Characteristics**

The sample for Study 2 ( $n=336$ ) consisted of 53% males and 47% females. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 83 years with an average age of 34 years ( $SD = 11.67$ ). The majority of the participants self-identified racially as follows: White (80.4%),

Asian-American (6.5%), African-American (8.6%), Hispanic (5.4%), Native American/Alaska Native (1.2%), and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.3%).

## **RESULTS**

Before hypothesis testing, tests of random assignment were carried out to make sure there were no differences across conditions. Tests indicate random assignment was successful. Manipulation checks were carried out on the ad appeal and ad goal factors to confirm the stimuli were successful. Manipulation check questions were the same as those used in the pre-test. There was a significant difference [ $t(334)=-10.49, p < 0.01$ ] between the emotional appeal ( $M=2.30, SD= 1.56$ ) and logical appeals ( $M=4.12, SD=1.62$ ) as well as a significant difference [ $t(331.5)=-7.65, p < 0.01$ ] between the self-help ( $M=2.79, SD= 1.77$ ) and signaling ( $M=4.20, SD=1.60$ ). See Appendix C for ad manipulations.

### **Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment**

Hypothesis 1 examines how the effects of high anxiety influence the effectiveness of signaling and self-help appeals on consumers' emotional brand attachment. It is expected that participants who display a preoccupied attachment will respond more favorably to ads using a signaling appeal. Hypothesis 2 examines how the effects of low anxiety influence the effectiveness of signaling and self-help appeals on consumers' emotional brand attachment. It is expected that participants who display a secure attachment will respond more favorably to ads using a self-help appeal.

To test hypotheses H1 and H2 a 2 (Anxiety: High v Low) x 2 (Ad Goal: Self-Help v Signaling) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out on participants' ratings of consumers' emotional brand attachment (CEBA).

There was no significant main effect (see Table 4.1) for participant anxiety, [ $F(1, 332) = 1.36, p > 0.05$ ]. The results also showed there was no significant main effect for participants who saw a signaling or self-help appeal [ $F(1, 332) = 0.78, p > 0.05$ ].

**Table 4.1 – Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment Predicted from Anxiety Attachment Style and Ad Goal**

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment (CEBA)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	7.232 <sup>a</sup>	3	2.411	.739	.529
Intercept	4510.348	1	4510.348	1382.961	.000
Anxiety	4.420	1	4.420	1.355	.245
Ad Goal	2.539	1	2.539	.779	.378
Anxiety * Ad Goal	.266	1	.266	.081	.776
Error	1082.775	332	3.261		
Total	5597.080	336			
Corrected Total	1090.007	335			

a. R Squared = .007 (Adjusted R Squared = -.002)

The two-way interaction between participant anxiety and ad goal was also not significant [ $F(1, 332) = 0.08, p > 0.05$ ]. The results of the two-way ANOVA failed to support hypotheses 1 and 2.

## Persuasion Outcomes

*Attitude toward the Ad.* To test hypotheses H3a and H4a a 2 (Anxiety: High v Low) x 2 (Ad Appeal: Logical v Emotional Appeal) x 2 (Ad Goal: Self-Help v Signaling Appeal) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated on participants' ratings of attitude toward the ad. See table 4.2 for ANOVA results.

**Table 4.2 - Attitude Toward the Ad Predicted from Anxiety Attachment Style, Ad Appeal and Ad Goal**

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Attitude Toward the Ad

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	9.777 <sup>a</sup>	7	1.397	2.611	.012
Intercept	2159.232	1	2159.232	4036.928	.000
Anxiety	1.203	1	1.203	2.248	.135
Ad Appeal	.238	1	.238	.444	.505
Ad Goal	.958	1	.958	1.791	.182
Anxiety * Ad Appeal	.271	1	.271	.507	.477
Anxiety * Ad Goal	.080	1	.080	.149	.699
Ad Appeal * Ad Goal	7.063	1	7.063	13.204	.000
Anxiety * Ad Appeal * Ad Goal	.090	1	.090	.169	.681
Error	175.437	328	.535		
Total	2347.333	336			
Corrected Total	185.214	335			

a. R Squared = .053 (Adjusted R Squared = .033)

Although not formally hypothesized, the results for the main effects and two-way interactions are reported here. There was no significant main effect for anxiety, [ $F(1, 328) = 2.25, p > 0.05$ ], ad appeal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.44, p > 0.05$ ] or ad goal [ $F(1, 328) =$

1.79,  $p > 0.05$ ]. Likewise, there was no significant two-way interaction between anxiety and ad appeal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.51, p > 0.05$ ] or between participant anxiety and ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.15, p > 0.05$ ]. The interaction between ad appeal and ad goal was significant [ $F(1, 328) = 13.20, p < 0.05$ ].

The results of the three-way ANOVA showed no statistically significant three-way interaction between anxiety, ad appeal and ad goal, [ $F(1, 328) = 0.169, p > 0.05$ ]. Based on these findings H3a and H4a were not supported.

***Attitude toward the Brand.*** To test hypotheses H3b and H4b a 2 (Anxiety: High v Low) x 2 (Ad Appeal: Logical v Emotional Appeal) x 2 (Ad Goal: Self-Help v Signaling Appeal) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated on participants' ratings of attitude toward the brand. See Table 4.3 for results.

Although not formally hypothesized, the results for the main effects and two-way interactions are reported here. The results of the ANOVA showed a significant main effect for anxiety, [ $F(1, 328) = 4.31, p < 0.05$ ], but no significant main effects for ad appeal [ $F(1, 328) = 2.77, p > 0.05$ ] or ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.098, p > 0.05$ ]. Similarly, there were no significant two-way interactions between participant anxiety and ad appeal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.056, p > 0.05$ ], anxiety and ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 1.30, p > 0.05$ ], or ad appeal and ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.124, p > 0.05$ ].

There was a significant three-way interaction between participant anxiety, ad appeal and ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 9.183, p < 0.05$ ]. H3b and H4b were supported. As shown in Figure 4.1 high anxiety participants reported more positive attitudes toward the brand when exposed to an emotional/signaling appeal ( $M=5.15, SD = 1.74$ ) and a logical

/self-help appeal (M=5.04, SD= 1.92) when compared to seeing either an ad displaying an emotional/self-help appeal (M=4.67, SD= 1.79) or an ad displaying a logical/signaling appeal (M=4.24, SD = 1.88).

Low anxiety participants (see Figure 4.2) reported a more favorable attitude to the brand when seeing ads composed of an emotional/self-help appeal (M=5.46, SD = 1.41) and a logical/signaling appeal (M=5.38, SD= 1.63) when compared to seeing an ad displaying an emotional/signaling appeal (M=5.23, SD= 1.67) or an ad displaying a logical/self-help appeal (M=4.60, SD = 1.77).

**Table 4.3 –Attitude Toward the Brand Predicted from Anxiety Attachment Style, Ad Appeal and Ad Goal**

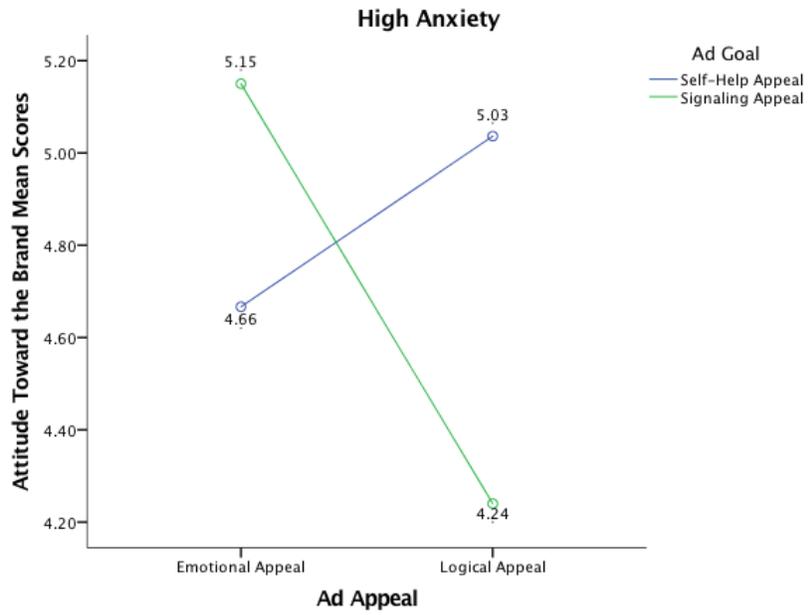
**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Attitude Toward the Brand

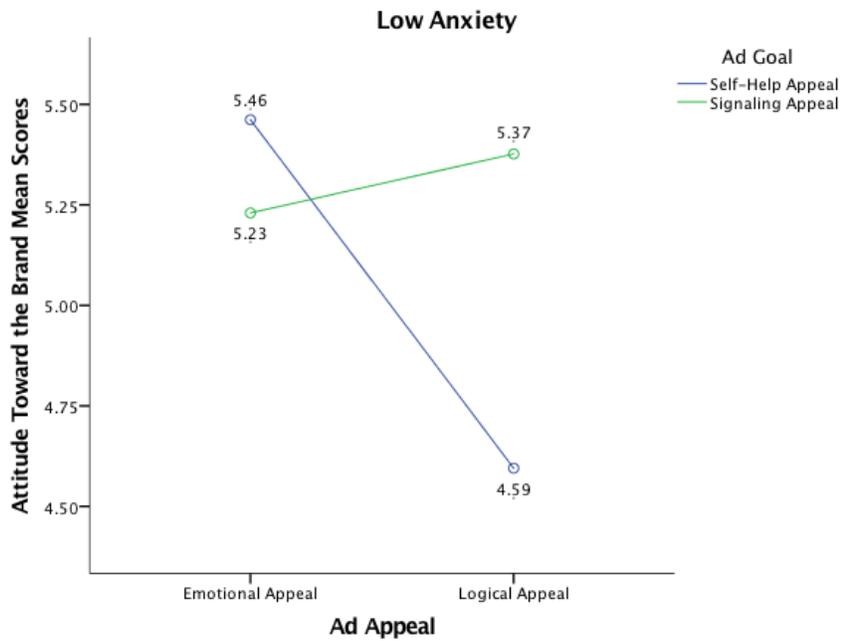
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	52.530 <sup>a</sup>	7	7.504	2.499	.016
Intercept	8287.574	1	8287.574	2760.056	.000
Anxiety	12.936	1	12.936	4.308	.039
Ad Appeal	8.329	1	8.329	2.774	.097
Ad Goal	.294	1	.294	.098	.755
Anxiety * Ad Appeal	.169	1	.169	.056	.812
Anxiety * Ad Goal	3.903	1	3.903	1.300	.255
Ad Appeal * Ad Goal	.371	1	.371	.124	.725
Anxiety * Ad Appeal * Ad Goal	27.574	1	27.574	9.183	.003
Error	984.880	328	3.003		
Total	9357.600	336			
Corrected Total	1037.410	335			

a. R Squared = .051 (Adjusted R Squared = .030)

**Figure 4.1: High Anxiety x Ad Appeal x Ad Goal Interaction**



**Figure 4.2: Low Anxiety x Ad Appeal x Ad Goal Interaction**



**Purchase Intent.** To test hypotheses H3c and H4c a 2 (Anxiety: High v Low) x 2 (Ad Appeal: Logical v Emotional Appeal) x 2 (Ad Goal: Self-Help v Signaling Appeal) analysis of variance was calculated on participants' purchase intention. See Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4 – Purchase Intention Predicted from Anxiety Attachment Style, Ad Appeal and Ad Goal**

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	52.104 <sup>a</sup>	7	7.443	1.564	.145
Intercept	5793.712	1	5793.712	1217.687	.000
Anxiety	3.551	1	3.551	.746	.388
Ad Appeal	.150	1	.150	.032	.859
Ad Goal	.966	1	.966	.203	.653
Anxiety * Ad Appeal	1.208	1	1.208	.254	.615
Anxiety * Ad Goal	6.139	1	6.139	1.290	.257
Ad Appeal * Ad Goal	.517	1	.517	.109	.742
Anxiety * Ad Appeal * Ad Goal	39.665	1	39.665	8.337	.004
Error	1560.613	328	4.758		
Total	7437.720	336			
Corrected Total	1612.717	335			

a. R Squared = .032 (Adjusted R Squared = .012)

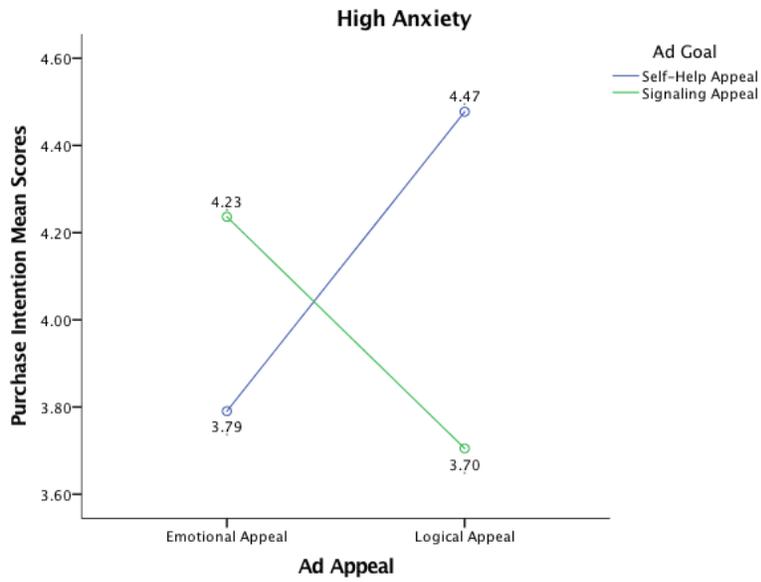
Although not formally hypothesized, the results for the main effects and two-way interactions are reported here. The results of the ANOVA showed no significant main effect for participant anxiety, [ $F(1, 328) = 0.746, p > 0.05$ ], ad appeal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.032, p > 0.05$ ] or ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.203, p > 0.65$ ]. Similarly, there were no significant

two-way interactions between participant anxiety and ad appeal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.254, p > 0.05$ ] anxiety and ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 1.29, p > 0.05$ ], or ad appeal and ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.109, p > 0.742$ ].

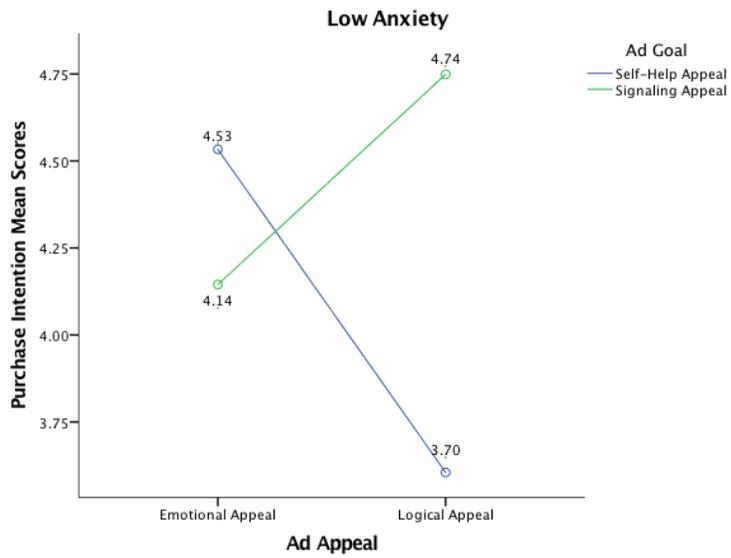
There was a significant three-way interaction between participant anxiety, ad appeal and ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 8.34, p < 0.05$ ]. H3c and H4c were supported. As Figure 4.3 indicates, high anxiety consumers reported greater purchase intent when an emotional/signaling appeal ( $M=4.23; SD=2.24$ ) and a logical/self-help appeal ( $M=4.47; SD=2.17$ ) when compared to seeing an emotional/self-help appeal ( $M=3.79; SD=2.21$ ) and a logical/signaling appeal ( $M=3.70; SD=2.19$ ).

Low anxiety participants (see Figure 4.4) reported a greater intent to purchase when seeing ads composed of an emotional/self-help appeal ( $M=4.53, SD = 2.20$ ) and a logical/signaling appeal ( $M=4.74, SD= 2.18$ ) when compared to seeing an ad displaying an emotional/signaling appeal ( $M=4.14, SD= 2.21$ ) or an ad displaying a logical/self-help appeal ( $M=3.60, SD = 2.04$ ).

**Figure 4.3: High Anxiety x Ad Appeal x Ad Goal Interaction**



**Figure 4.4: Low Anxiety x Ad Appeal x Ad Goal Interaction**



## Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment

Advertising practitioners often use more than one type of appeal to influence consumer attitude and behavior. But, there is very little research describing the role advertising appeals play in influencing consumer brand attachment. In order to gain additional understanding of the potential impact that various blends of appeals have on consumers' emotional brand attachment, a 2 (Anxiety: High v Low) x 2 (Ad Appeal: Logical v Emotional Appeal) x 2 (Ad Goal: Self-Help v Signaling Appeal) analysis of variance was calculated on participants' ratings of consumers' emotional brand attachment. See Table 4.5.

Although not formally hypothesized, the results for the main effects and two-way interactions are reported here. The results of the ANOVA showed no significant main effect for participant anxiety, [ $F(1, 328) = 1.507, p > 0.05$ ], ad appeal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.555, p > 0.05$ ] or ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.803, p > 0.05$ ]. As well, there were no significant two-way interactions between participant anxiety and ad appeal [ $F(1, 328) = 1.916, p > 0.05$ ], anxiety and ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 0.099, p > 0.05$ ], or ad appeal and ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 1.053, p > 0.05$ ].

**Table 4.5 – Consumer Emotional Brand Attachment Predicted from Anxiety Attachment Style, Ad Appeal and Ad Goal**

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

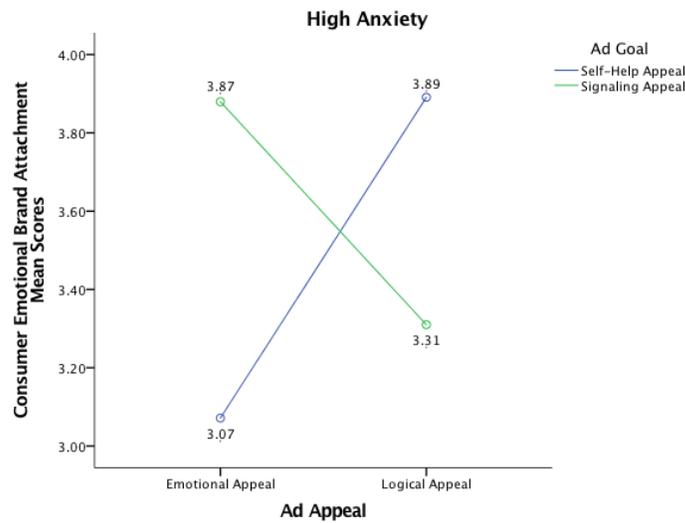
Dependent Variable: Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	39.212 <sup>a</sup>	7	5.602	1.749	.097
Intercept	4490.090	1	4490.090	1401.557	.000
Anxiety	4.829	1	4.829	1.507	.220
Ad Appeal	1.777	1	1.777	.555	.457
Ad Goal	2.572	1	2.572	.803	.371
Anxiety * Ad Appeal	6.138	1	6.138	1.916	.167
Anxiety * Ad Goal	.317	1	.317	.099	.753
Ad Appeal * Ad Goal	3.374	1	3.374	1.053	.305
Anxiety * Ad Appeal * Ad Goal	20.469	1	20.469	6.389	.012
Error	1050.796	328	3.204		
Total	5597.080	336			
Corrected Total	1090.007	335			

a. R Squared = .036 (Adjusted R Squared = .015)

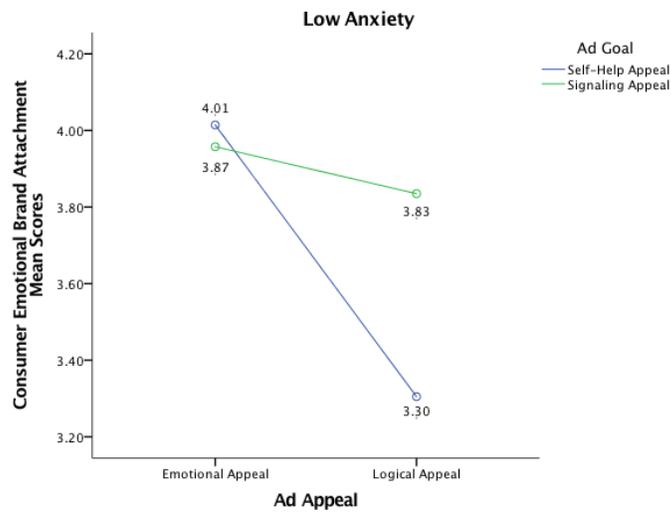
There was a significant three-way interaction between participant anxiety, ad appeal and ad goal [ $F(1, 328) = 6.389, p < 0.05$ ]. H5 was supported and H6 was partially supported. As Figure 4.5 shows, high anxiety consumers reported higher levels of brand attachment when seeing ads composed of an emotional/signaling appeal ( $M=3.87, SD = 1.85$ ) and a logical/self-help appeal ( $M=3.89, SD= 1.85$ ) when compared to seeing an ad displaying an emotional/self-help appeal ( $M=3.07, SD= 1.75$ ) or an ad displaying a logical/signaling appeal ( $M=3.31, SD = 1.71$ ).

**Figure 4.5: High Anxiety x Ad Appeal x Ad Goal Interaction**



For low anxiety consumers (see Figure 4.6), the combination of emotional/self-help appeals yielded higher levels of consumer brand attachment ( $M=4.01$ ;  $SD=1.81$ ) compared with a logical/self-help appeal ( $M=3.30$ ;  $SD=1.62$ ).

**Figure 4.6: Low Anxiety x Ad Appeal x Ad Goal Interaction**



## **Discussion**

The results shed important light on the role of attachment style, specifically high and low anxiety individuals, in processing and reacting to different kinds of advertising appeals. When two advertising appeals are combined, we see differential impacts of ad arguments combined with ad goals.

### ***Measures of Advertising Effectiveness***

When examining the dependent variables used to measure advertising effectiveness (attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention) two hypotheses were developed for each dependent variable.

#### *Attitude Toward the Ad*

When examining the effects of anxiety on ads containing either an emotional and signaling appeal or logical and self-help appeal the level of participant anxiety did not have a significant impact on participant attitude toward the ad, which failed to support H3a and H4a. It is possible that when taking into account attachment styles and an individual's likelihood of building connections, advertising messages do not constitute substantial or meaningful relationship targets. Whereas brands represent more enduring and established relationship targets, the advertising messages themselves might not. For example, a consumer might have a very strong relationship with a brand like Nike, but not the individual ads used to promote Nike products. That is, consumer-brand relationships are social connections that develop over an extended period of time and are based on numerous cues and factors. Advertisements, however, are more transient and

temporary. Attachment style, then, could have less impact on the evaluation and assessment of these more temporary marketing elements.

As well, ads and campaigns are constantly changing. Attachment is based on building enduring bonds that take time to develop. Attachment may have a greater influence on consumer attitude toward the ad when dealing with nostalgic ads (i.e. polar bear Coke commercials and print ads) that are seen annually.

#### *Attitude Toward the Brand and Purchase Intention*

For more enduring and more consequential outcomes – attitude toward the brand and purchase intent – we see that attachment style does have an important influence depending on which combination of advertising frames are used. Specifically, for high anxiety consumers, the combination of emotional/signaling appeals and logical/self-help appeals are more successful. Wheatley and Oshikawa's work (1970) offers an explanation. Individuals displaying high anxiety levels respond best to positive advertising that relays a recommended course of action or goal that the consumer stands to accomplish by consuming the product. The articulation of a goal in the actual advertising copy creates a sense of reassurance in the individual that helps high anxiety individuals manage and at times reduce their anxiety levels (Wheatley & Oshikawa, 1970). And, it is in this state of managed or reduced anxiety that consumer learning, attitudinal change and behavioral change take place (Wheatley & Oshikawa, 1970).

So based on the findings of this study, the ads affected consumer attitude and purchase intention because the ads framed the product in a positive light and the claims in the ad created a sense of reduced anxiety making the participants feel like they would be

able to fulfill their needs for social approval (emotional/signaling appeal) or their need to build their self-esteem (logical/self-help) (Johar & Sirgy, 1991).

On the other hand, for low anxiety consumers, consumption situations present less anxiety or concern and as a result, respond better to ads that harness self-confidence. According to Locander and Hermann (1979), there is a negative relationship between anxiety and general self-confidence in a consumption context. Locander and Hermann (1979) specifically state that high anxiety individuals adopt self-depreciating attitudes based on past failures that undermine their confidence in making consumption decisions. But, the reverse is true for low anxiety consumers. Consumers who have higher self-confidence, defined by the researchers as “perceived ability,” will see consumption situations as situations that produce little to no anxiety, which leads to lower risk perception when making purchasing decisions.

The findings of Locander and Hermann (1979) are applicable to this study because they highlight how perceived risk when making consumption decisions is handled when in a low anxiety state. As previously mentioned, low anxiety consumers are less concerned about how they are perceived by others. This psychological outlook is why the ad appeals that focused on the consumers need for self-consistency (emotional/self-help appeal) or the need to be socially consistent (logical/signaling) was most effective.

### ***Consumers’ Emotional Brand Attachment***

When examining the effects of anxiety on ads containing either a signaling or self-help appeal the level of participant anxiety did not have a significant impact on

participants' consumer brand attachment, which fails to support H1 and H2. According to Yi (1990) who examined the role of the cognitive and affective context of ads and their influence on attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention found that ad context does matter because it influences how consumers evaluate the advertised brand. Specifically, cognitive context were shown to impact attitude toward the brand and affective contexts impacted the attitude toward the ad.

Yi's (1990) research provides a possible reason for why the proposed hypothesis (H1 and H2) was not supported. These two hypotheses only examined the effects of the ad goal on consumer brand attachment. And because, the context of the ad (emotional and logical) was excluded from the analysis the results of H1 and H2 further supports the claims of Yi (1990) that ad context does influence consumer evaluations.

The influence of the ad context can be further confirmed when viewing the results of H5 and H6, which examine how the ad appeal (context) and ad goal affects consumers' emotional brand attachment. When the type of appeal participants' saw was taken into consideration, significant findings for consumer attachment were revealed.

Specifically, H5 was supported while H6 was partially supported. The reasons for why high anxiety participants reported higher levels of consumers' emotional brand attachment (CEBA) are the same as for the advertising effectiveness variables. High anxiety consumers' CEBA was positively influenced because the ad positively framed the product and the claims in the ad reduced consumer anxiety making the participants feel like the product was something to which they wanted to be attached. Again, the

product was seen as something that could provide them social approval or build their self-esteem (Johar & Sirgy, 1991).

The hypothesis concerning low anxiety consumers (H6) was only partially supported, but it theoretically makes sense why this is the case. When examining the emotional/self-help appeal, low anxiety consumers are comfortable in close emotional relationships and seek out products and experiences that allow them to improve themselves. But, low anxiety consumers may occasionally want to signal to others who they are if it allows them to form meaningful relationships. But, additionally, I would put forth the argument that this finding could be considered a possible secondary message strategy. Meaning, although the emotional/signaling approach may not be the primary way to approach these types of consumers, this finding begins to shed light on additional ways to reach this type of consumer that could be effective when primary message strategies may not work.

## Chapter 5: General Discussion

Attachment scholars in psychology often focus on individual interpersonal dynamics in the various types of relationships we experience during our lives (e.g. parent-child relationships and romantic relationships).

The relationship between individuals and their objects gained the attention of marketing scholars and their research demonstrated that attachment does extend beyond interpersonal relationships (Belk, 1988; Park et al., 2006). Marketing research showed that consumers could develop attachments to various types of objects including brands (Park et al., 2006).

Consumers encounter numerous brands over the course of their lives. As consumers gain various brand experiences, which can be either good or bad, consumers develop emotional attachments to these symbolic objects (Thomson, 2005). The idea that consumers can develop strong emotional attachments to brands requires further exploration. The theory of attachment developed by Bowlby (1979) suggests that the degree of emotional attachment to an object a person experiences factors into how that individual interacts with the attachment object (e.g. people, places or things). Further, according to Thomson (2005), individuals who display strong attachment begin to commit to, invest in, and make sacrifices for the attachment object. So, it is worth exploring how attachment influences brand relationship outcomes (e.g. brand loyalty, brand commitment, consumer brand attachment) perceived consumer value and purchase decisions.

However, the role advertising plays in these brand relationship outcomes has been under researched. The previous studies were conducted to begin to address this lack of research done on the role adult attachment and advertising play in strengthening or weakening consumer brand attachment. In addition to understanding the influence of advertising on the impact of consumer brand attachment, additional understanding needs to be had on how adult attachment influences the effectiveness of advertising.

To address these important issues, two studies were conducted. Study 1 examined how adult attachment styles and emotional and logical ad appeals interact to influence consumers' emotional brand attachment, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention when participants are exposed to brands with sincere personalities. Study 2 builds off Study 1 and is concerned with how attachment anxiety impacts the same dependent variables tested in Study 1. This was done primarily for two reasons: First, the avoidance dimension of attachment is mostly concerned with an individual's desire to be physically and emotionally close with others and how the desire for closeness impacts a person's decisions. The ads that were designed for the previous studies had no spokespeople in them. The absence of spokespeople may have made it difficult to understand how avoidance would impact advertising effectiveness and brand attachment.

Second, based on the work of Swaminathan et al. (2009), who found that attachment avoidance influenced brand attachment, but reported inconclusive results when manipulating attachment anxiety, Study 2 was designed to purposefully focus on the affects of attachment anxiety to gain further understanding of anxiety on brand attachment.

The two studies in this dissertation provided evidence that a consumer's levels of anxiety and avoidance does influence brand attachment, consumer attitudes toward the ad and brand along with purchase intent. What was most interesting is the impact that the advertising appeals had on the dependent variables in the study. When comparing both studies, it appears that the use of one type of appeal was not as effective when compared to using two ad appeals. Two ad appeals allow the advertiser the opportunity to send consumers two types of messages, messages that complement each other and offer greater impact through resonance. The first message, which frames the ad as either logical or emotional, gives the consumer some context with which to cognitively frame the advertisement, (Yi, 1990). The second appeal allows the advertiser to provide the consumer with a sense of what purchasing the product will provide the user (i.e. building self-esteem etc.). The use of one ad appeal may not provide consumers with enough information for them to make a decision.

#### **ATTACHMENT STYLE AND ADVERTISING APPEALS**

Although study 1 showed no significant three-way interactions between anxiety, avoidance and advertising appeals (emotional or logical), it did reveal an important two-way interaction between anxiety and ad appeal on consumers' emotional brand attachment. Participants who were primed to display low anxiety and saw the advertisement using an emotional appeal were most likely to report higher levels of consumer brand attachment.

These results showed that low anxiety participants responded better to

advertisements using an emotional appeal and provides support to the idea that attachment style and ad appeal type play a role in influencing consumers' emotional brand attachment.

When looking at the interaction affects of anxiety, avoidance, and ad appeal type on attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention there were no significant 3-way interactions for any of the variables examined. But, there was a two-way interaction between anxiety and avoidance when assessing a participant's attitude toward the ad shown in the study. The data showed that participants who were primed to display low levels of avoidance reported a significant difference in their attitudes toward the ad in comparison to participants who were primed to display higher levels of avoidance. But, a participant's level of anxiety did not play a factor in their attitude toward the ad. As stated earlier, the avoidance dimension has to do with how physically close or far we want to be to someone. Since there was not a person in the ads shown, it makes sense that there would not be a significant finding when looking at the high avoidance group. The avoidance dimension may influence a consumer's attitude toward an advertisement in some situations and conditions. A reason why low avoidance may have had an impact could be due to participant curiosity about the product creating a desire to learn more about it. But, additional studies will need to be conducted to further strengthen this argument.

#### **ATTACHMENT STYLE AND FRAME RESONANCE**

Study 2 further examined how ad appeals, ad goals and attachment style interact to influence consumer brand attachment and advertising effectiveness. This study focused

only on participants who were primed to display high or low anxiety. The decision to only manipulate the anxiety dimension while keeping avoidance low was done to better isolate the effect of anxiety and to understand how anxiety impacts the various combinations of advertising appeals on the dependent variables of interests.

There are many variables of interests to advertising researchers when measuring advertising effectiveness, the primary ones being attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention. Consumer emotional brand attachment is also a vital outcome of interest.

Study 2 demonstrated that when two frames resonate, the interaction yields important outcomes in terms of persuasion. For example, when examining the effects of anxiety, ad appeal, and ad goal on participant brand attitude and purchase intent, the data showed that for participants primed to display high anxiety, the combination of emotional/signaling appeals and logical/self-help appeals were more successful. Participants primed to display low anxiety reported a more favorable attitude to the brand when seeing ads composed of an emotional/self-help appeal and a logical/signaling appeal.

Similar patterns were obtained for consumer emotional brand attachment. When examining the effects of anxiety on ads containing just a signaling or self-help appeal, the level of anxiety did not have a significant impact on consumers' emotional brand attachment. The data showed that once the contextual appeals (emotional and logical appeals) were added, then emotional attachment was impacted significantly. Specifically, participants primed to display high anxiety reported higher levels of brand attachment

when seeing an ad composed of an emotional/signaling appeal or a logical/self-help appeal. Participants primed to display low anxiety that saw a combination of emotional/self-help appeals reported higher levels of consumer brand attachment.

### **THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Due to the lack of research on adult attachment style in a consumption context, this research was conducted to begin to fill that gap and to further our understanding of how attachment styles can be applied to advertising research and strategy. This research has begun to show that attachment theory and attachment styles are viable constructs worth researching in advertising. Additional research should be geared towards understanding the boundaries of attachment style and examining under what circumstances attachment has its greatest influence on consumer behavior and consumption. But, more work needs to be done to understand what types of products and what types of brands (luxury or generic) are most influenced by attachment.

This research expands our knowledge of attachment style in a consumption context by informing how participant anxiety influences consumers' emotional brand attachment (CEBA) and advertising effectiveness. The theoretical implications of studies 1 and 2 showed that using two types of ad appeals are generally more effective than one. In study 1 providing the ad with context and tone (emotional and logical appeals), although important, revealed few findings for the variables under investigation. Study 2 examined how CEBA was influenced when presenting an appeal that helped consumers achieve a particular goal (self-help and signaling). But, the analysis also did not yield

significant results. But when both appeals were added, which provided the ads with context, tone, and a goal; the ads' effectiveness increased significantly.

The data collected for study 2 revealed, that in general, participants primed to display high anxiety responded best to ads that combined emotional/signaling appeals or logical/self-help appeals. Participants primed to display low anxiety responded best to ads that showed an emotional/self-help appeal or a logical/signaling appeal. These findings further inform our knowledge of attachment theory by showing that attachment may influence how we perceive our ability to shape and change the negative things about our personality, which impacts how closely we pay attention to messages present in our external environment. This is a key finding for advertising because it highlights the need for advertising practitioners to consider consumer personality when determining how to build a healthy consumer-brand relationship.

This research also helps to inform how attachment anxiety in particular impacts consumption experiences. As mentioned earlier, high anxiety consumers see consumption experiences as being more risky (the possibility of choosing the wrong product) than low anxiety consumers. And, the incorporation of specific goal framing in advertising serves to reduce the perceived risk and anxiety high anxiety consumers may feel. So, further examination of ad appeal types is needed. Based on this research an argument can be made that it might be helpful for advertising practitioners to further categorize appeals into contextual appeals (i.e emotional, humor, fear etc.) and goal-oriented appeals (i.e. self-help, signaling, value-based). Although, there may not be complete agreement on where different types of appeals fit and it is possible that one type of appeal may fit in

more than one category, the takeaway here is that additional consideration of what type of appeal will be used may be all that is needed to increase ad effectiveness.

### **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Together, the findings of both studies begin to show how adult attachment style, could become a factor worth consideration when trying to build brand equity and establish strong consumer-brand relationships. Also, the findings show that adult attachment should be a factor worth considering when advertising practitioners are designing advertising messages for advertising campaigns. Although there is currently not enough research done to know to what degree and under what circumstances attachment style is most impactful, the findings show promise. Gaining additional understanding of how ad appeals can be best leveraged to enhance consumer-brand relationships is worthy of additional research.

Given that these results are so exploratory, more work needs to be done in terms of replication and verification to further solidify how this research can be used by managers when developing advertising strategy. Keeping this in mind, the following managerial recommendations are presented.

Advertising and brand managers can use the findings of these studies to improve the quality and type of relationships consumers' have with their brands. As more information is known about what combinations of ad appeals work best based on the product, brand, brand personality and attachment type of the target consumer, it can lead to the creation of more effective ad campaigns that create positive brand equity and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the marketing strategy.

In general additional knowledge about the affects of adult attachment can provide an additional layer of criteria for managers as they continue to search for ways to better frame communication aimed at the consumer. More effective message framing has the potential to increase consumer brand knowledge and brand awareness that lead to stronger brand associations in the mind of the consumer (Keller, 1993).

Also, marketing mangers can use adult attachment style as an additional way to segment target markets along with traditional forms of market segmentation like demographics, geographics and psychographics. Adult attachment style could be seen as a type of psychographic segmentation, which could provide insight to marketers and advertisers about how a potential segment of consumers may view getting into a new brand relationship in general. For example, if practitioners are aware of the fact that the target audience they are trying to attract to the brand resists forming relationships in general (dismissing and fearful attachment styles), no matter the context (consumption or interpersonal), this information will help brand strategists with how they execute their communication strategies and possibly craft more effective messages.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

Like all empirical work, this research has a few limitations that should be noted. One limitation is the product category. Cellphones are usually considered to be a high involvement product, meaning the product requires considerable consideration in the mind of the consumer. Due to constant changes in cellphone technology, the high price tag, and the degree that cellphones have been incorporated into everyday life, consumers

will usually spend more time on these purchases. The increased risk associated with cellphone purchases theoretically might create higher levels of anxiety within consumers, which could impact a consumer's anxiety level in this particular consumption situation. So, for future research, low involvement products should be tested to know if high involvement products influence anxiety levels within consumers. If this is the case, product involvement will have to be incorporated into the design of future experiments.

A second limitation is that the iPhone could be considered a luxury item. The fact that a luxury good was used in the study may have impacted the results. Luxury goods are expensive and increase the barrier of entry for some consumers. Also, consumers who cannot afford luxury items may see luxury items as trivial or overpriced, which can lead to negative feelings about the brand. These negative feelings could increase a consumer's anxiety towards the brand and possibly their level of avoidance because they feel the product is overpriced. So, future research needs to examine the influence of luxury goods on consumer brand attachment and anxiety. If individuals harbor negative feelings about luxury items (i.e. overpriced) these negative feelings could increase consumer anxiety and confound the results of future studies.

Future research should examine the influence of spokespeople in the advertisements to better understand the avoidance dimension of attachment and how it relates to consumption. Additional research on avoidance may provide greater understanding of various other dependent variables that were not examined in the previous studies (e.g. brand loyalty, brand love). Research with spokespeople will possibly provide an additional measure to analyze spokesperson effectiveness. The

avoidance dimension of attachment could help practitioners understand to what degree consumers embrace or resist different types of people in advertisements.

For future research, additional brand personalities need to be examined to gain a clearer picture of how attachment style and consumer attachment operate as a whole. When considering the brand relationship metaphor (Fournier, 1998) an argument can be made that the results may differ if a different brand personality were chosen. Just like in interpersonal relationships, people are attracted to different types of people. I expect this to be the case also with brand personalities. So, future research will need to test how other types of brand personalities and attachment styles interact to influence the quality of the consumer-brand relationships.

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, the findings of this research show the potential of attachment theory and attachment style to impact consumers' perceptions of advertising and the quality of consumer-brand relationships. These studies are an important first step in demonstrating the impact that attachment style can have in shaping advertising strategy. The studies also show that a combination of advertising appeals that provide both context and a sense of goal fulfillment are more influential than appeals that provide just context.

This research helps to expand the application of attachment theory beyond just the interpersonal realm and extends the theory into advertising by looking at how advertising appeals impact attachment within a consumption context. Also, attachment style should serve as a variable of consideration when crafting advertising messages. Further, this

research reinforces the consumer-brand relationship metaphor that is so well researched in the branding literature. Hopefully, as more attachment research is conducted it will solidify adult attachment as a construct of value to both advertising academics and practitioners.

## **APPENDIX A – Product and Ad Pretest Scales**

### **PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT INVENTORY (PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT) ABBREVIATED (Zaichowsky, 1985)**

1. Important/Unimportant
2. Irrelevant/Relevant
3. Unexciting/Exciting

\*Scale items were anchored from 1 to 7.

**CONSUMERS' EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS TO BRANDS SCALE  
(Thomson, MacInnis , and Park 2005)**

***Affection Items***

Affectionate

Friendly

Loved

Peaceful

***Passion Items***

Passionate

Delighted

Captivated

***Connection Items***

Connected

Bonded

Attached

*Notes: 1= describes poorly, 7= describes very well; three dimensions may all be combined for a single-score indicator of emotional attachment.*

**BRAND PERSONALITY SCALE (SINCERE DIMENSION) ABBREVIATED**  
**(Aaker, 1997)**

1. Honest
2. Sincere
3. Real
4. Original
5. Friendly
6. Genuine

\*Items scored on 5-point Likert-type scales from 1 – “not at all descriptive” to 5 –  
Extremely descriptive.

**ATTITUDE TOWARD THE AD (BELIEVABILITY)**  
**(Beltramini, 1982)**

1. Unbelievable / Believable
2. Untrustworthy / Trustworthy
3. Not convincing / Convincing
4. Not credible / Credible
5. Unreasonable / Reasonable
6. Dishonest / Honest
7. Questionable / Unquestionable
8. Inconclusive / Conclusive
9. Not authentic / Authentic
10. Unlikely / Likely

\*This scale is composed of 10, 7-point, bi-polar adjectives measuring a person's attitude about a specific advertisement with an emphasis on the credibility and likelihood of it being true.

## **APPENDIX B – Study 1 Attachment Manipulations, Scales and Advertising Stimuli**

### **ATTACHMENT STYLE MANIPULATIONS**

**Script:** Please think about a relationship that you have had that fits the description given below and *picture in your mind the person with whom you have had that relationship*. Please make sure that the person and the relationship you have chosen to focus on is *meaningful* and *important* to your life. After reading the relationship description, turn to the next page. [Subjects in each of the four conditions read one of the following four descriptions.]

#### **Secure Attachment Style (Low Anxiety/Low Avoidance)**

Please think about a relationship you have had in which you have found that it was relatively easy to get close to the other person and you felt *comfortable* depending on the other person. In this relationship *you didn't often worry about being alone or abandoned by the other person* and *you didn't worry about the other person getting too close to you* or not *accepting* you.

#### **Dismissing Attachment Style (Low Anxiety/High Avoidance)**

Please think about a relationship you have had in which *you did not want to be emotionally close* to the other person and *didn't worry about being alone or abandoned by the other person*. In this relationship *you felt that it was very important to be independent and self-sufficient* and *you preferred not to depend on the other person or have the other person depend on you*.

#### **Preoccupied Attachment Style (High Anxiety/Low Avoidance)**

Please think about a relationship you have had in which you have felt like you

*wanted to be completely emotionally intimate with the other person but felt that the other person was reluctant to get as emotionally close as you would have liked. In this relationship, you felt uncomfortable being alone but worried that the other person didn't value you as much as you valued them.*

**Fearful Attachment Style (High Anxiety/High Avoidance)**

Please think about a relationship that you have had in which [you] *did not want to be emotionally close to the other person. In this relationship you felt that it was difficult to trust the other person completely, or to depend upon them. In this relationship, you worried that the other person was not willing to accept you and you would be hurt if you allowed yourself to become too emotionally close to the other person.*

After reading one of the above descriptions, participants were asked the following questions:

Now, take a moment and try to get a visual image in your mind of this person. What does this person look like? What is it like being with this person? You may want to remember a time you were actually with this person. What would he or she say to you? What would you say in return? How do you feel when you are with this person? How would you feel if they were here with you now? After the visualization, write a sentence or two about your thoughts and feelings regarding yourself in relation to this person.

**LIST OF SCALES**

**Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment Scale**

**(Thomson, MacInnis , and Park 2005)**

***Affection Items***

Affectionate

Friendly

Loved

Peaceful

***Passion Items***

Passionate

Delighted

Captivated

***Connection Items***

Connected

Bonded

Attached

*Notes: 1= describes poorly, 7= describes very well; three dimensions may all be combined for a single-score indicator of emotional attachment*

## **Attitude Toward the Ad Scale**

**(Henthorne, LaTour & Natarajan, 1993)**

1. Good
2. Interesting
3. Informative
4. Appropriate
5. Easy to Understand
6. Objective

\*All attitude toward the ad scale items were measured on four-point scales addressing respondent's thought about the ad and were anchored by "no, definitely not" and "yes, definitely."

## **Attitude Toward the Brand**

**(Mitchell & Olson, 1981)**

Please describe your overall feelings about the brand described in the ad you just read.

1. Unappealing / Appealing
2. Bad / Good
3. Unpleasant / Pleasant
4. Unfavorable / Favorable
5. Unlikable / Likable

Attitude toward the brand is measured on a 7-point scale.

## **Purchase Intention**

**(Spear & Singh, 2004)**

**Script:** If you were in the market today for this product/brand, how likely is it that you would purchase this product/brand?

1. Never / Definitely
2. Definitely do not intend to buy it / Definitely intend to buy it
3. Very low purchase interest / Very High Purchase Interest
4. Definitely not buy it / Definitely buy it
5. Probably not buy it / Probably buy it

\*Purchase intention is measured on a 7-point scale.

## STUDY 1 – ADVERTISING STIMULI

### Logical Advertisement



iPhone 6  
Bigger Phone.  
Smarter Design.

### Emotional Advertisement



iPhone 6  
Bigger Phone.  
Bigger Happiness.

## **APPENDIX C – Study 2 Attachment Manipulations, Scales and Advertising Stimuli**

### **ATTACHMENT STYLE MANIPULATIONS**

**Script:** Please think about a relationship that you have had that fits the description given below and *picture in your mind the person with whom you have had that relationship*. Please make sure that the person and the relationship you have chosen to focus on is *meaningful* and *important* to your life. After reading the relationship description, turn to the next page. [Subjects in each of the two conditions read one of the following two descriptions.]

#### **Secure Attachment Style (Low Anxiety/Low Avoidance)**

Please think about a relationship you have had in which you have found that it was relatively easy to get close to the other person and you felt *comfortable* depending on the other person. In this relationship *you didn't often worry about being alone or abandoned by the other person* and *you didn't worry about the other person getting too close to you* or not *accepting* you.

#### **Preoccupied Attachment Style (High Anxiety/Low Avoidance)**

Please think about a relationship you have had in which you have felt like you *wanted to be completely emotionally intimate with the other person* but felt *that the other person was reluctant to get as emotionally close* as you would have liked. In this relationship, you felt *uncomfortable being alone* but *worried that the other person didn't value you* as much as you valued them.

After reading one of the above descriptions, participants were asked the following questions:

Now, take a moment and try to get a visual image in your mind of this person. What does this person look like? What is it like being with this person? You may want to remember a time you were actually with this person. What would he or she say to you? What would you say in return? How do you feel when you are with this person? How would you feel if they were here with you now? After the visualization, write a sentence or two about your thoughts and feelings regarding yourself in relation to this person.

**LIST OF SCALES**

**Consumers' Emotional Brand Attachment Scale**

**(Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005)**

***Affection Items***

Affectionate

Friendly

Loved

Peaceful

***Passion Items***

Passionate

Delighted

Captivated

***Connection Items***

Connected

Bonded

Attached

*Notes: 1= describes poorly, 7= describes very well; three dimensions may all be combined for a single-score indicator of emotional attachment*

## **Attitude Toward the Ad Scale**

**(Henthorne, LaTour & Natarajan, 1993)**

1. Good
2. Interesting
3. Informative
4. Appropriate
5. Easy to Understand
6. Objective

\*All attitude toward the ad scale items were measured on four-point scales addressing respondent's thought about the ad and were anchored by "no, definitely not" and "yes, definitely."

## **Attitude Toward the Brand**

**(Mitchell & Olson, 1981)**

Please describe your overall feelings about the brand described in the ad you just read.

1. Unappealing / Appealing
2. Bad / Good
3. Unpleasant / Pleasant
4. Unfavorable / Favorable
5. Unlikable / Likable

Attitude toward the brand is measured on a 7-point scale.

## **Purchase Intention**

**(Spear & Singh, 2004)**

**Script:** If you were in the market today for this product/brand, how likely is it that you would purchase this product/brand?

1. Never / Definitely
2. Definitely do not intend to buy it / Definitely intend to buy it
3. Very low purchase interest / Very High Purchase Interest
4. Definitely not buy it / Definitely buy it
5. Probably not buy it / Probably buy it

\*Purchase intention is measured on a 7-point scale.

## STUDY 2 – ADVERTISING STIMULI

### Emotional Appeal and Self-Help Appeal Advertisement



### Bliss Boost

Learn how to improve your feelings of happiness and self-confidence with this sleek, easy to use phone.

iPhone 6

## Emotional Appeal and Signaling Appeal Advertisement



### Broadcast Your Bliss

Show the world what happiness and self-confidence feels like with this sleek, eye catching phone.

# iPhone 6

## Logical Appeal and Self-Help Appeal Advertisement



## Be Your Own Tech Support

Learn how to be more tech-savvy with this bigger, smartly designed phone that's easy to use and functional.

# iPhone 6

## Logical Appeal and Signaling Appeal Advertisement



### Be Mistaken For Tech Support

Show people you're tech-savvy with this noticeably bigger, smartly designed phone that's easy to use and functional.

iPhone 6

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## Vita

Jason Jerome Flowers was born in Montgomery, Alabama. After graduating from Opelika High School in Opelika, Alabama, in 1999, he entered The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Communication & Information Sciences from The University of Alabama in August 2003. During the following years, he was employed as a freelance copywriter and project manager in the Atlanta, GA area. In August 2007, he entered the Graduate School at The University of Texas at Austin. He received the degree of Master of Arts in May 2009. In August of 2010, he continued his graduate education at The University of Texas at Austin and entered the advertising doctoral program.

Jason's primary research focuses in the areas of consumer psychology, message framing and brand management. Specifically, he is interested in how consumer attachment and advertising message strategies influence the perception of advertising in general and the quality of consumer-brand relationships in particular. Additional research interests include, celebrity endorsement and how online brand communities can be best utilized to build positive brand equity.

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