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경영학 석사학위논문

Seeking Pleasure for Self and Avoiding Danger for Home

— *Impact of Product Type Exposure on Regulatory
Focus and Moderation Effect of Only-Child
Background*

제품의 유형이 조절초점에 미치는 영향:
자기 구성의 매개효과와 외동이의 조절효과를
중심으로

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Abstract

Seeking Pleasure for Self and Avoiding Danger for Home ***— Impact of Product Type Exposure on Regulatory Focus and*** ***Moderation effect of Only-Child Background***

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The exposure to the product type is playing an increasingly substantial impact to consumers due to the advent of novel shopping manner such as online shopping. Such effect is therefore of growing necessity for research. Prior study suggests the sheer exposure to the certain health product type can induce regulatory focus. The paper aims to extend the generalizability of the finding by studying household product in comparison to individual use product. Self-construal is proposed and studied as the mediator. In addition, the moderation effect of family background, whether the person is the only-child or not specifically, is also researched.

Two studies are designed to examine the hypotheses. The first study confirmed the effect of exposure to product type. The second study replicated the result with different products, and tested the mediation effect of self-construal and the moderation of only-child background. Both of the hypotheses were supported.

The research contributed in three ways. The findings extended the generalizability of the effect of product type; and provided a mechanism to explain the relationship by the mediation effect. Moreover, the moderation effect of only-child background was proposed.

Key Words: product type, priming effect, regulatory focus, only-child, self-construal

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The majority of consumption situation includes an exposure to the product before the making of the purchase decision, and the tendency is further enhanced by the recent popularity of online shopping. The nature of the product set the fundamental tone to the purchase situation, and affect consumers' subsequent decisions. The impact of product type per se to consumer's choice was extensively studied in current literature. Adilson Borges & Pierrick Gomez (2015) suggest that mere exposure to different product types can induce regulatory focus. But only the effect of health product was investigated. The generalizability of such effect is in need of further research.

There is no controversy that China has grown into one of the biggest markets in the world, and become the major target for many international companies. Recently, China's younger generation (the post-80s generation) are entering their 30s, and are rapidly becoming China's mainstream consumer group. This generation is significantly different from their parents due to the one-child policy that had been instituted in China ever since 1979. Considerable research has concerned about the aftermath of this new family structure on children's personalities (Tobin et al., 1989; Lee, 1992). However, the characteristics about their consumption behavior remains under-researched. Research on the features of consumer behavior patterns of China's only-child generation is thus indispensably important. How only child as a special consumer group behave under the context will not only be intriguing but also provide useful managerial implications.

1.2 Research Objectives

The research is conducted for two objectives. The first objective is to look into the relationship between the effect of product type and regulatory focus more closely, and investigate the underlying mechanism. The second objective is to investigate if the distinct growth environments between only-child vs. non-only-child bring difference to their consumption preferences after exposed to certain product type, especially with regard to their regulatory focus.

1.3 Research Questions

According to the discussions above, three research questions are proposed. Question 1: Does product type indeed induce regulatory focus? Question 2: What is the mechanism beneath the relationship between exposure to product type and regulatory focus? Question 3: How does family background as only child affect the relationship between exposure to product type and regulatory focus?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Regulatory Orientation Product Type

2.1.1 Promotion-focused vs. Prevention-focused Orientation

The concept of regulatory orientation is based on the general notion that people are motivated to approach pleasure and avoid pain (Higgins, 1997). Two opposing regulatory focuses are thus derived. Promotion goals aim for positive outcomes, either by maximizing the presence of positive outcomes or minimizing their absence. In contrast, prevention goals regulate behavior in reference to negative outcomes, either by minimizing the presence of negative outcomes or by maximizing the absence of negative outcomes (Brockner, Paruchuri, Idson, & Higgins, 2002).

2.1.2 Goal-pursuit strategy and Regulatory Fit

Extant studies suggest that there exists an association between regulatory orientations and attribute evaluation. Alexander Chernev (2014) state that products attributes that are compatible with individuals' regulatory orientation tend to be over-weighted in purchase choice. Specifically, prevention-focused individuals are more likely to overweight utilitarian, reliability-related attribute than promotion-focused consumers, who are more likely to place relatively more weight on hedonic, performance-related attributes. Considered together, positively-framed product information stressing the positive outcomes will be preferred by promotion-focused person, and negatively-framed product information stressing the avoidance of negative outcomes will be more attractive to prevention-focused person.

2.1.3 Product Type as a Source of Regulatory Focus

It is noticed that the regulatory focus is not fixed, rather people's regulatory focuses can vary according to different conditions. Regulatory focus can be either chronically accessible or temporarily primed by situations. To be more specific, a chronically accessible regulatory focus is shaped by the prolonged influence from early childhood (Higgins, 1997), and cultural surroundings (Lee et al., 2000). Moreover, regulatory focus can be induced temporarily by situational cues. Thus, framing goals (Freitas et al., 2002) or tasks (Gino and Margolis, 2011) in terms of prevention or promotion can induce a promotion or a prevention focus.

Priming effect of different stimuli such as context, dispositional factors are well researched in prior literature (Yi, Youjae.1990, 1993;

Oyserman, D., & Lee, S. W. 2008, etc.). In addition to dispositional and situational cause, Adilson Borges & Pierrick Gomez (2015) suggest that exposure to product type itself can trigger consumers' different regulatory orientations. The underlying reason is that product is always associated with consumer's goals. The concept of goal contains both end-states, and all the means enabling these desired end-state to be achieved, such as objects and behaviors (Fishbach and Ferguson, 2007). Products, or brands, are objects by which consumers utilize to achieve their goals (Van Osselaer and Janiszewski, 2012). For instance, when purchasing a household product, the goal of family wellbeing is likely to be associated. To note that making one of these cognitive elements accessible can activate the entire construct (Kruglanski et al., 2002). Since the product are associated to the goals, simply exposed to the consumption objects, such as products or services, can remind the consumers of the goals (Bargh, 1990). Likely, Fitzsimons and his colleagues found in their study that mere exposure to Apple logo can better activate individuals to perform creative tasks compared to IBM logo. Additionally, free gifts and coupons were used to prime hedonic and utilitarian goals in prior studies (Youjiae Yi and Jung-Chae Suh 2012). Apart from brands and services, Adilson Borges & Pierrick Gomez (2015) suggest that product type can induce regulatory orientation when it is linked to specific goal. However, the author admitted that his study was limited to only to health products, and studies involving other product types should be conducted to test the generalizability.

Accordingly, the author hypothesizes that household product type that is often shared by family instead of being used alone should elicit collective goal. Similarly, individual product category that is often used for self-use should activate the accessibility of individualist goal. The

regulatory focus should be induced accordingly under the aforementioned mechanism.

H1: Exposure to product type used for household vs. individual use can induce different regulatory focus

H1a: Exposure to household product induces prevention regulatory focus

H1b: Exposure to individual product induces promotion regulatory focus

2.2 The View of the Self and Self-Regulatory Goals

2.2.1 Independent Self-Construal vs. Interdependent Self-Construal

Abundant research in cultural psychology and marketing have discussed the concept of self-construal. The development of a self-construal, which refers to the self-definition vis-à-vis the other people and groups, is said to be substantially influenced by its cultural surroundings. Specifically, the independent self-construal, which refers to the view of oneself as defined by unique attributes and characteristics that distinguish him or her from others, tends to be nurtured in cultures where the values of independence are endorsed (e.g. United States). In contrast, the interdependent self-construal, which refers to the view of oneself as intimately defined by others rather than distinguished from others, tends to be nurtured in cultures that encourage the values of fulfilling one's obligations and responsibilities over one's own personal wishes or desires (e.g. China; Singelis 1994).

2.2.2 Association between Self-Construal and Types of Goals

Linkage between self-construal and types of goal are also well discussed in prior research. For an independent self, the goal is

thought to be autonomy and achievement, a desire to succeed relative to others. In contrast, the goal of an interdependent self-construal tends to be characterized by belonging, mandating the fulfillment of obligations and responsibilities to others (Heine et al. 1999). Therefore, Jennifer L. Aaker (2001) suggested that the more accessible independent self-construal tend to be promotion focused, and an accessible interdependent self-construal leads people to be more prevention-focused. For example, as Aaker stated in his research, two women might have different references and goals when buying an automobile. For a single woman without any children, the most salient idea is to live without regrets and one should pursue the most fun, and chooses a convertible sports car, while a mother with children considers the safety against possible accident because she should survive for the responsibility of raising her children, then she might prefer a SUV. In addition, information that is compatible to the currently accessible self-construal is believed to be more important and persuasive to customers.

Therefore, combined with the previous discussion, household product can elicit collective goal for family and activate interdependent self-construal, which in turn translates into prevention focus. Likewise, individual product can elicit individualist goal and elicit independent self-construal. Therefore, promotion focus can be more accessible as the result. Accordingly, I propose the hypotheses as follows:

H2: Accessibility self-construal mediates the relationship between product type and regulatory focus

2.2.3 Dual Selves

Prior research also suggests that, apart from the chronically accessible self-construal that is culturally nurtured, one's self-view can be made temporarily accessible through various external stimuli such

as referencing tasks (e.g. Aaker and Williams 1998), situational contexts (e.g. Briley, Morris, and Simonson 2000) and primes (e.g., Hong et al. 2000). Moreover, Theodore M. Singelis (1994) indicated that people can have both well-developed independent self-construal as well as interdependent self-construal. For example, Cross and Markus (1991) found in their research that, East Asian students had better developed interdependent self-construal than their American counterparts but were similar to the Americans in the development of their independent self-construal. Triandis (1989) suggest that probability that a particular aspect of self will be referenced is a function of its complexity or development and the situation. Similarly, Trafimow et al. (1991) state that both culture and the temporal prime significantly determine that type of self-construal produced. Therefore, a self-construal is determined by both chronically nurtured self-construal and the temporary context.

2.3 The Twofold Characteristics of China's Only Child

2.3.1 China's Only-Child Phenomenon after One-Child Policy

The one-child policy that had been instituted in China ever since 1979 has brought significant difference to the new generation compared to their parents, challenging the traditional values of Chinese families. The one-birth rate rose from 20.7% in 1970 to 72.4% in 2003 on the national level (White 2006). Moreover, the only-child is heavily distributed in urban area. 95% of preschool children in urban areas, such as Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, were only children (Rosenberg and Jing 1996). The non-only children born in the period, however, are not necessarily illegal population. Despite of how the policy is referred to, there are several exemptions allowing people to have more than one child. For example, divorced and re-married families, some rural families, families who gave birth to multiple

children at one time of labor and so forth all enables families to legally have additional children. Moreover, paying an amount of fine, although expensive to most of families, can also legalize extra birth. Due to the pressure of decreasing birth rate and diminishing youth labor, Chinese government has gradually repealed the one-child policy, until recently, all families are allowed to have a second child¹. Although the post-80s generation might have become the only generation in the history that is artificially made only-child generation, the fact that they are becoming the core of the society necessitates study on the generation.

Considerable research within China has concerned about the effects of this new family structure on children's personalities (Tobin et al., 1989; Lee, 1992). For example, Falbo (1987) reported some positive aspects of being an only child in China (e.g. higher IQ and achievement motivation in only children). However, extant researches seem to have conflicting view on the self-construal orientation about the only-child.

2.3.2 The “Little Emperor” and the Family Hope

On the one hand, the one-child policy has created a brand new family structure and a series of problems named the ‘4-2-1’ syndrome (Tobin et al., 1989; Lee, 1992). The syndrome refers to the phenomena that the child's four grandparents and two parents all focus their attention on the only-one child. Due to the special status of the only child as the only offspring in the family, all of the adults tend to be excessively indulgent to their only child, and the only-child is referred to as the ‘little sun’ or ‘little emperor’ in the family. Accordingly Chinese

¹ The one-child policy was firstly modified to allowing couple among whom at least one is a only-child to have two children in the third session of 18th communist party conference in 2013. The policy was further adjusted to allowing all the families to have two children in the fifth session of 18th communist party conference in October, 2015

scholars have portrayed the only children as more self-involved, selfish and less willing to cooperate (e.g. Wang et al., 1983; Jiao et al., 1986; Lee, 1992; Fan, 1994). To note that the reason for the only children to be labelled as self-centered could be partially attributed to the influence of independent orientation from a Western perspective. For instance, Jiao and colleagues (1986) raised some behavioral examples to demonstrate only-children's egocentrism, and the examples they raised were 'does as he or she likes' and 'acts according to his or her own interest'. Therefore, it can be hardly concluded that the only-child status necessarily result in poor social behavior. However, since the only child are raised in the unique family environment, and because they have undivided attentions from their parents and grand-parent solely on their needs, desires and growth condition, the child's private, inner aspects of self may become better developed compared to children with siblings.

2.3.3 Effect of 4-2-1 Syndrome on Only-Child's Regulatory Focus

As another side-effect of "4-2-1 syndrome", all family members are protective to their only child. The status of only-child also highlights the only-children's identity as the family's only hope, and they tend to orient their thoughts and behaviors with consideration of their parents. The only-children, on the other hand, are also more aware of their responsibility to the family as a whole compared to their counterparts with siblings. Liu (2008) found in profound interviews with the only-child adults in China that the young people demonstrate a strong family-oriented tendency. The young adults who were raised as the only-child in their family unanimously indicated an imperativeness to be dutiful to their parents in old age. The construction of the filial self, and their overall meaning-making in relation to their parents, is done not without negotiation between the individual self and the collective-

familial entity, which is embedded in the specific socio-cultural context of today's China.

After a closer investigation on the conflicting view on the only-child, however, it is believed that the two self-construals are not necessarily contradictory to one another. As aforementioned, it is possible that a person has both well-developed independent view and interdependent view. Accordingly, the only-children might have twofold self-construal, and which self-construal is more temporarily salient depends on the context, which is congruent to the finding of Trafimow et al. (1991). Only-child are educated to bear greater responsibility for the family and are more cautious about security factor since they are the only hope with regards to family. Accordingly, their interdependent self-construal is chronically nurtured in a family context. Therefore, the context of purchasing products that are innately for household-use (ex. toothpaste, rice, household-use cars etc.) would activate their interdependent self-construal.

Prior research also provided association from a self-construal orientation and a regulatory focus. Jennifer L. Aaker et al. (2001) suggest that individuals with an accessible independent self-construal are more persuaded by promotion-focused information, and prevention-focused information is more valued when interdependent self-construal is more accessible. Having seen the dually strong self-construals of the only-children under different contexts, their regulatory focuses should be varied accordingly.

H3: Family status as an only child moderates the effect between product type, self-construal and regulatory focus

H3a: Only child (vs. Non-only child) demonstrate a more prominent

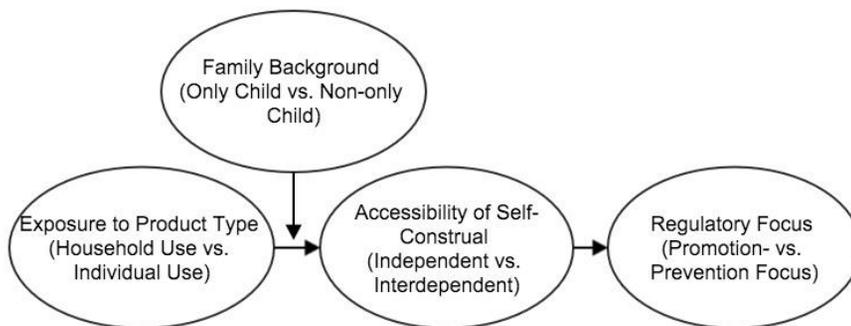
interdependent self-construal towards household product

Only-child receive undivided attention in the family and they become especially self-involved and egocentric compared to their peers with siblings, the psychological pursuit of being noticed and being unique extends to their daily behavior. Therefore, their independent self-construal is salient under the context of purchasing products that are innately for individual-use.

H3b: Only child (vs. Non-only child) demonstrate a more prominent independent self-construal towards individual product

2.4 Summary of Hypotheses

In summary, my proposed conceptual framework and hypotheses are shown as follows:



H1: Exposure to product type (household vs. individual) can induce regulatory focus

H1a: Household product induces prevention regulatory focus

H1b: Individual product induces promotion regulatory focus

H2: Accessibility self-construal mediates the relationship between product type and regulatory focus

H3: Family status as an only child moderates the effect between product type exposure, self-construal and regulatory focus

H3a: Only child (vs. Non-only child) demonstrate a more prominent interdependent self-construal towards household product

H3b: Only child (vs. Non-only child) demonstrate a more prominent independent self-construal towards individual product

3 Experiments

One pretest and two main studies were conducted to test the hypotheses. The prior study was conducted to choose the product items for further studies. Since the prior studies only researched the effect of health product, the effect of exposure to a household vs. individual use product remained to be tested. Therefore, in the first study, the main effect of exposure to different product types on the induced regulatory focus was tested. In the second study, the mediation effect of self-construal and the moderation effect of family status as the only child was investigated. All of the studies were facilitated by online survey, and the sampling is subject to the problems of snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is recognized as a commonly used technique for both qualitative and quantitative research (Frankwick et al. 1994; He and Li 2011). Considering the resource constraint, the snowball sampling is thought to be optimal.

3.1 Pretest

A pretest was conducted to determine the products for further studies. The study was facilitated by an online questionnaire. Six products were chosen for the pretest, the products are respectively smartphone, TV, T-shirt, toothpaste, sports car and SUV.

3.1.1 Procedure

The participants are asked to imagine that they are shopping for the product, and a picture of the product was provided at the same time. Subsequently, they are asked to state the reason for their purchase, and how they are planning to use the product. Questions measuring perceived involvement and product usage collectiveness were then asked. The participants then responded to the question regarding the perceived product type.

3.1.2 Measure

During the pretest, the involvement level and the perceived usage collectiveness were tested. The involvement was measured by the involvement inventory suggested by Zaichkowsky (1985), I measured involvement with eight 7-point scales which are each anchored as important/unimportant, irrelevant/relevant, means a lot / means nothing, valuable/worthless, beneficial/ not beneficial, uninterested/ interested, boring/exciting, unnecessary/ needed. The product type, or usage collectiveness, was measured in the question “Concerning the usage of the product, do you think it is more personal used or collectively used?” by 7-point Likert scale, a higher score implies more collective in product usage.

3.1.2 Result

All of the involvement measures indicate satisfactory reliability as illustrated in the following table. More importantly, all of the 3 pairs of product are similar in perceived involvement compared to one another, so the comparison in the main studies is free from the concern of the impact of involvement. An independent t-test was conducted to compare the perceived usage collectiveness.

	Sample Size	Usage Collectiveness	Cronbach's α for Involvement	Involvement
Sports Car	25	4.04	0.947	4.26
SUV	24	5.17	0.911	3.98
Smartphone	31	2.12	0.92	3.90
TV	26	4.46	0.934	3.83

As the result implies, sports car and SUV are statistically different in usage nature (4.04 vs. 5.17, $t=3.754$, $P < 0.001$), and the perceived involvement are not statistically different (3.98 vs, 4.26 $t=1.09$, $p=0.277$). Similarly, the smartphone and TV are also distinct from one another in usage nature (4.42 vs. 2.16, $t=4.917$, $p < 0.001$), the involvement level is not significantly different from each other (3.90 vs. 3.83, $t=.302$, $p=0.764$). However, the T-shirt and Toothpaste are not different in product type as the result suggests (3.59 vs. 4.21, $t=1.547$, $p=0.133$), therefore the pair of products are dropped for the main study.

3.2 The First Study

The study was conducted through an online survey, and 111 college students from a major university in Hunan Province in China were recruited in the study. The participants were randomly assigned to either the individual-use product group (smartphone) or the collective-use product group (TV). 16 answers were dropped during the questionnaire checking due to excessively little variance (checked only 4's or 7's).

3.2.1 Procedure

The participants are first asked to imagine that they are planning to purchase a product (smartphone vs. TV), the cash value for both the products are told to be 2000 Yuan, which are reasonable prices in real market in China. The participants are then assigned to the priming

work. They are asked to write down the reasons they buy the product, to imagine the process of the purchase, and the situation of the usage. Then they were presented with two products in the group, one of the product was positively framed and the other negatively framed. The description for the products are presented in the table below, and the content was translated into Chinese for the participants. They were asked to respond to the 3 questions measuring purchase intention for each product, and then reported their personal information.

Positively Framed Products

 <p>Crystal Clear Air Feel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High pixel camera, enabling you make wonderful picture and video-chat experience - Retina display, best visual feel - Light and thin, enabling you to travel anywhere you want
---	---

 <p>Sheer Visual Pleasure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High pixel display, providing the best visual enjoyment - Top-class audio system, delivering the best audio experience
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Negatively Framed Products

 <p>Sturdy Reliability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Great battery volume, making you free from the concern of low battery during your travel - Sturdy frame and screen, no longer need to worry about screen shatter - Water-proof, free from soak problem
---	---

 <p>No More Eye Fatigue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anti-fatigue screen, protecting the eyes of of yours and your family's - Low radiation design, no more headache and insomnia caused by TV radiation
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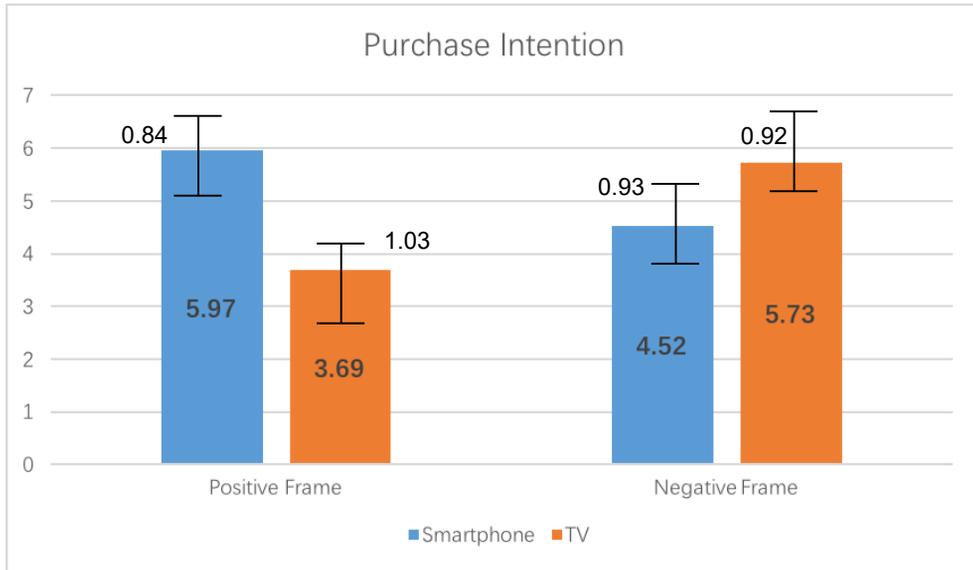
3.2.2 Measure

The regulatory focus is attained by regulatory fit, which is measured by the purchase intention. Measures for regulatory focus follows the design of previous study (Adilson Borges and Pierrick Gomez 2015). Purchase intention of the product, which consists of three questions, was adopted from previous research. 7-point Likert scale was used to indicate the degree of agreement (1-totally disagree; 7-totally agree). The purchase intention score is then obtained by the mean of the three items, the specific measure items are attached in the appendix.

3.2.3 Result

The questions concerning purchase intention reveal satisfactory internal consistency reliability. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test the effect of product type on the regulatory focus. The result supported the expectation, the effect of product type is significant to negatively framed product [$F(1, 95) = 26.373, p < 0.01$] (H_{1a}) and the positively framed products [$F(1, 95) = 40.208, p < 0.01$] (H_{1b}). The pattern of purchase intention is shown in the following table. Therefore, the effect of product type is indeed significant on inducing consumer's regulatory focus.

	Smartphone Group		TV group	
	Positive Frame (A)	Negative Frame (B)	Positive Frame (A)	Negative Frame (B)
Cronbach's α for PI	0.886	0.733	0.861	0.883



* The numbers in the columns are the means, and the smaller number above are the standard deviation.

3.2.4 Summary

As expected, the effect of exposure to household use product does induce regulatory focus of the consumers. Accordingly, the Hypothesis 1 was supported. More specifically, exposure to the household-use products induces prevention focus, while the individual products give rise to higher promotion focus. The second study will further look into the mechanism of such effect, and replicate the effect with products of higher level of involvement to test the generalizability of the finding.

3.3 The Second Study

The study was facilitated by an online questionnaire, and 163 participants (age from 15 to 36, 84 only children, 79 non-only children, 112 males, 51 females) were chosen through an alumni organization of a major high school in Hunan Province. The participants chosen were all born after 1979 since it was the point of time for implementation of one-child policy. After dividing the population of only-children and non only-children, the participants were randomly

assigned to either the individual-use product group (sports car) or the collective-use product group (SUV).

3.3.1 Procedure

The participants were told that their responses were to be used for marketing research, but they were unaware of the specific research topic. The participants are first asked to imagine that they are planning to purchase the assigned product in their group (Sports Car vs. SUV), the cash value for both the products are 400,000 Yuan, which are reasonable prices in real market in China. The participants are then assigned to the priming work. They are asked to write down the reasons they buy the product, to imagine the process of the purchase, and the situation of the usage. Subsequently, the participants are presented two products with different features, one of the product is presented in positive frame, and the other in negative frame. The features are presented in the chart below, and the explanations are translated into Chinese for the participants. Then the participants respond to the questions that measure their self-construal. In the end, the participants reported their personal information including if they are only-child.

Positively Framed Products

 <p>Sheer Driving Pleasure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The convertible has the world-class design, making you the focus on the street- The automobile has outstanding control and power system, bringing best joy of drive
---	--

 <p>Travel the impossible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The automobile can handle various field road situation - The automobile is equipped with the top-class engine, helping you enjoy the drive
--	---

Negatively Framed Products

 <p>No Worry on the Road</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The convertible has outstanding ESP and other stabling systems, which keeps your car stable and safe during the drive - The automobile has great fuel-efficiency, and safes a lot of your expenses
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 <p>Reliable as a rock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The SUV has famous brake system and ESP system, keeping you safe from accidental emergency - The SUV is equipped top-class safety facilities, protecting you in any situation
--	--

3.3.2 Measure

The self-construal was attained by using two measures. The first measure is one that is already developed by Theodore M. Singelis (1994), which is also referred to as Self-Construal Score (SCS). The measurement is specifically designed to access independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal, and therefore focuses on the private-self and collective-self information. 24 questions in total are included in the measure set. Additionally, with the consideration that the study is focused on the concern of family rather than broad social dependent self-view, another measure is proposed at the same time. The measure set contains 6 questions; the specific measure items are

attached in the appendix. 7-point Likert Scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) was utilized in both the measures according to the suggestion of prior study. The self-construal score was attained by the difference between dependent-self score and independent-self score, with higher score meaning more dependent in self-construal. The regulatory focus is attained by regulatory fit, which is measured by the purchase intention. The measure of purchase intention is the same as that in the first study.

3.3.3 Result

Both the measures of self-construal and purchase intention demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency reliability as shown in the table below. But the responses in Self-Construal Score was not uni-dimensional during the principle factor analysis, therefore the second measure that is focused on the family self-view was used in the subsequent study for its satisfactory unidimensionality. The purchase intension demonstrated solid internal consistency reliability and unidimensionality.

Self-Construal Scores				
Sports Car			SUV	
	Ind. Self SCS	Dep. Self Family	Ind. Self SCS	Dep. Self Family
Cronbach's α for PI	0.857	0.806	0.876	0.814

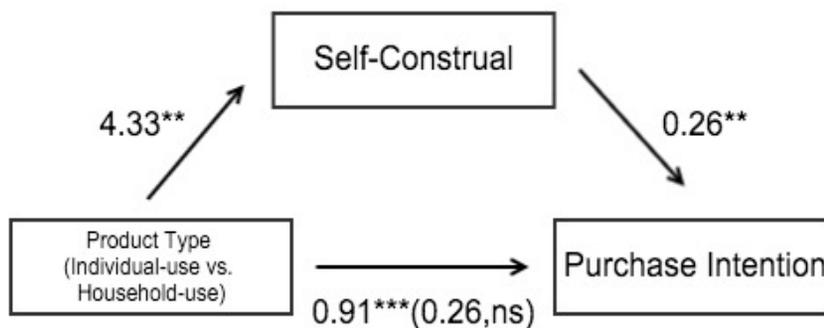
Purchase intention				
Sports Car			SUV	
	Positive Frame	Negative Frame	Positive Frame	Negative Frame
Cronbach's α for PI	0.799	0.937	0.857	0.949

Mediation effect of Self-construal

The main effect of product type on the regulatory focus was firstly tested by ANOVA. As expected, the product type exerts a significantly

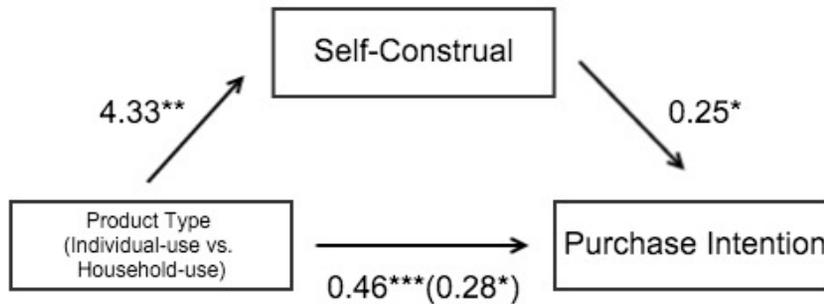
effect on the regulatory focus both for the positively framed products [F (1, 163) = 26.373, $p < 0.01$] and the negatively framed products [F (1,163) = 10.312, $p < 0.05$]. More importantly, when investigating the mediation effect of self-construal, the result turned out as expected. The effect of product type on self-construal is significant [F (1,163) = 937.0063, $\beta = 4.3310$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.85$]. The self-construal also significantly affects the purchase intention [t (1,163) = 2.81, $\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$]. Notably, when regressing both the self-construal and product type on the purchase intention, the effect of product type is no longer significantly effective [$\beta = 0.26$, $p = 0.56$].

Purchase Intention towards Positively Framed Products



The same analysis is conducted on the impact of product type on the negatively-framed item. The similar pattern appeared as shown in the table below. The effect of product type on self-construal is significant [F (1,163) = 30.61, $\beta = 4.3310$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.85$]. The self-construal also significantly affects the purchase intention [t (1,163) = 2.71, $\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.05$]. However, the effect the product type remained significant when considered together with self-construal [$\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$]. Therefore, the self-construal partially mediates the effect between product type and the regulatory focus in the negative framed situation. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported.

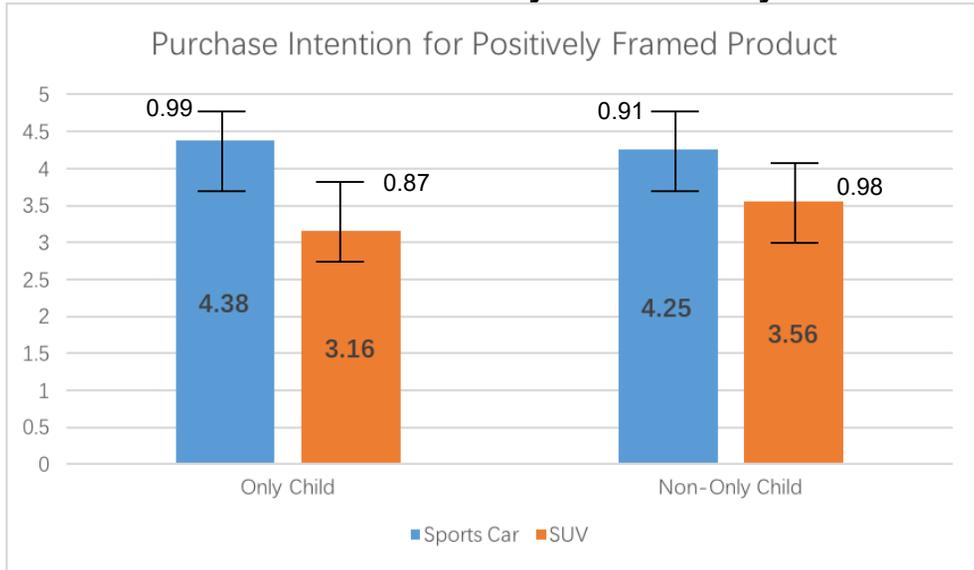
Purchase Intention towards Negatively Framed Products



Moderation effect of Family-status as Only-Child

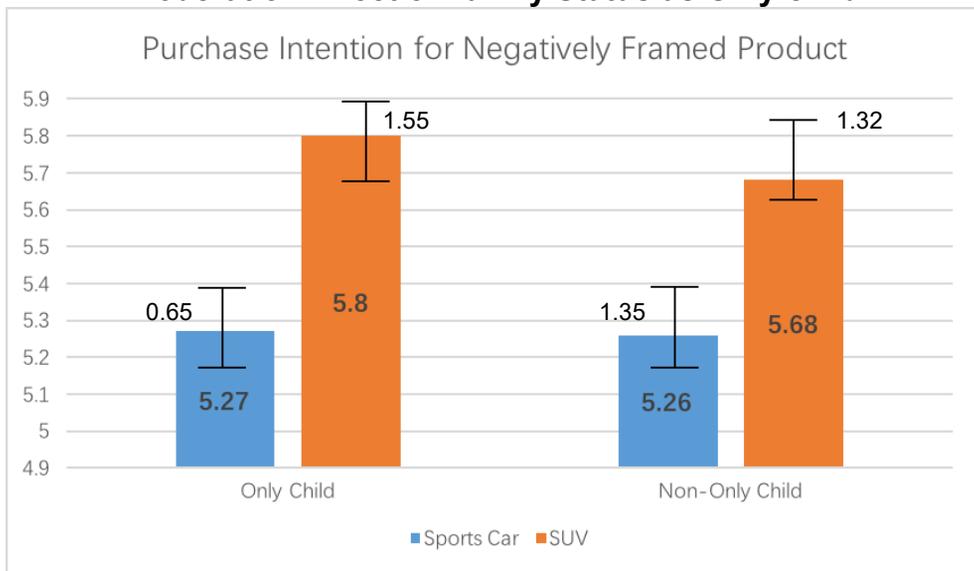
A 2 (Individual-use vs. Household-use) X 2(Only-child vs. Non-only Child) ANOVA is conducted to test the moderation effect. The main effect of Only-child status on regulatory focus is not significant on both situations [$F_{\text{Negative}}(1, 163) = 1.44, P > 0.1$; $F_{\text{positive}}(1, 163) = 1.6386, P > 0.1$], however, the interaction between only-child status and the effect of product type is significant in both cases [$F_{\text{Negative}}(1, 163) = 5.51, P < 0.05$; $F_{\text{positive}}(1, 163) = 2.32, P < 0.05$]. Specifically, the only children indeed demonstrated higher promotion focus when exposed to individual-use product and higher prevention focus for household-use product. Therefore, the moderation effect of family-status as the only-child is supported.

Moderation Effect of Family Status as Only-child



* The numbers in the columns are the means, and the smaller number above are the standard deviation.

Moderation Effect of Family Status as Only-child



* The numbers in the columns are the means, and the smaller number above are the standard deviation.

3.3.4 Summary

The effect of product type on regulatory focus is replicated with a different pair of products in the second study. More importantly, the self-construal mediates the effect both to positively-framed and negatively-framed products, supporting the H₂. In addition, the family status that whether the person is raised as the only child moderates the relationship between the product type and regulatory focus. Therefore, the H₃ is also supported.

4. General Discussion

4.1 Summary

Consumers are constantly exposed to different products nowadays, either online purchase or the traditional shopping situation always involve the exposure to the product. The previous studies have found that the exposure to the product per se could prime customers into different regulatory focuses. Nevertheless, the previous study only tested such effect of health products, and the current study extended the generalizability of such effect by testing the effect of household product versus individual product.

People defined themselves by either differentiating themselves from or assimilate themselves to the social surroundings. Accordingly, people have independent and dependent self-construal that is chronically nurtured in culture, and temporally primed by the context. The self-construal is hypothesized to be the mediator between the exposure to household product type to the regulatory focus. The product type reminds consumers of the usage situation, and the impact to the people around at the same time. Therefore, exposing to a

household product induces higher dependent self-construal and an individual-use product should prime an independent self-construal.

Moreover, the only-children in China is considered to be a special consumer group. Because they are the only hope of their family, they tend to consider the safety when concerning the family, in contrast, since they are used to be noticed as the only child in the family, they also pursue individuality and coolness more than their peers with siblings. Therefore, the only children are more subject to the priming effect of both household product and individual use product. When they are exposed to the household product, their family concern becomes more salient that they are more prevention-focused, while they are more promotion-focused for the individual use products.

Two studies were conducted in the research, the first study confirmed that the exposure to a household product vs. individual product will induce different regulatory focus of the consumers. In the second study, the self-construal was proved to be the mediator in the effect, and the family status of only-children moderate the relationship that it amplifies the mediated effect.

The research contributes to the previous studies for the following aspects. First, the research extended the finding of the product type onto the regulatory focus to a more generalizable manner. With the findings in the research, the household use and individual use dimension is believed to be worthwhile of consideration. In addition, the proposed mediation effect of self-construal offers a further explanation to the effect, at least to the product category of household good vs. individual product. More importantly, the to-be-tested moderation effect of only-child vs. non-only-child discusses the effect

of cultural background. The finding is will be helpful to the managers who intend to understand China's consumer market.

4.2 Implication

Although the one-child policy is already adjusted, study of the only-child generation in China remains important since the generation has become the backbone of Chinese economy. The research offers three managerial implications. First, since people's regulatory focus are induced by the product itself, the product managers should consider their product type and consider the the proper way of framing and promoting their products. Secondly, since the self-construal mediates the priming effect, the managers could refer to ways to magnify people's self-construal accessibility in order to make the most of the product type effect in the promotion process. In addition, the managers should consider the customer's background before making the promotion decision, since the product type effect is more significant to only-children.

4.3 Limitation & Future Research

The research has several limitations. To begin with, the sampling method selected in the research is non-probability sampling, which means the probability of subjects belonging to different categories cannot be determined nor be controlled. Therefore, this sampling method cannot guarantee that the sample select could exactly represent the general condition of China's young generation. The potential inaccuracy is the main limitation of this research.

Also the generalizability of the finding needs to be tested in further research. Since the mechanism of self-construal is only tested in household goods vs. individual goods, the mechanism for other product types might be different. It is possible that only-children's

interdependent view is triggered only to cues that is relevant to family. Therefore, it is possible that the moderation effect can be only refined to household goods. Further test is needed with other product types.

Although the current research tested product pairs in different involvement levels, the comparison study between different involvement levels can be interesting in the future research. Additionally, other than the household-individual continuum, the other dimension that aligns the product type can be studied to extend the finding on the induced regulatory focus.

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Appendix

Appendix1 Measures

Self-Construal Scores by Theodore M. Singelis (1994)

Interdependent items:

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me
4. I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments
8. I should take into consideration my parents' advice when making education/ career plans
9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group
10. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I'm not happy with the group
11. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible
12. Even when strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument

Independent items

1. I'd rather say "No" directly, than risk being misunderstood
2. Speaking up during a class is not a problem for me
3. Having a lively imagination is important to me
4. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards
5. I am the same person at home that I am at school
6. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me
7. I act the same way no matter who I am with

8. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even when they are much older than I am
9. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met
10. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects
11. My personal identity independent of others, is very important to me
12. I value being in good health above everything

Self-Construal Score Made for Specifically Household Use

Interdependent Items

1. My family's happiness is determined by the effort of mine
2. I am responsible to my family's wellbeing
3. I am obliged to devote my life and effort to the wellbeing of my family
4. When I am making critical life/career decisions, I should take my family into consideration

Independent Items

1. My happiness is determined by my own effort
2. I am responsible to my own wellbeing
3. I should take care of myself before thinking of others
4. When I am making critical life/career decisions, I should put myself over consideration of others

Measure of Purchase intention (Fortin et al., 2011, Barber et al., 2012).

1. I have a positive/negative opinion of this product
2. I have a good/ bad opinion of this product
3. I have a favorable/ unfavorable opinion of this product

국문 초록

제품의 유형이 조절초점에 미치는 영향: 자기 구성의 매개효과와 외동이의 조절효과를 중심으로

서울대학교 경영대학원

마케팅전공

왕호

온라인 쇼핑과 같은 참신한 소비행태가 등장하면서 제품 유형에 노출되는 것은 소비자에게 점점 중요한 영향을 미치고 있다. 이에 따라 이러한 효과에 대한 연구가 더욱 활발히 이뤄져야 할 필요성이 제기된다. 한 선행연구는 건강과 관련된 특정 제품에 노출되었을 때 조절 초점 (regulatory focus)이 유발될 수 있음을 밝혔다. 본 논문은 공유하는 가정 용품과 개인이 혼자 사용하는 제품을 비교함으로써 선행연구의 결과를 일반화하여 그 의미를 확장시키고자 했다. 이를 위해 자기 해석(Self-construal)이라는 개념을 매개변수로 활용했다. 아울러, 외동 자녀에 해당하는가와 같은 가족 환경이 조절변수의 역할을 하는지에 대해서도 연구했다. 이상과 같은 가설을 검증하기 위해 두 가지 실험을 설계했다. 첫 번째 실험은 소비자가 제품 유형에 노출되었을 때 영향을 받는 효과를 입증했다. 두 번째 실험은 다른 제품의 경우에도 첫 번째 실험과 동일한 결과를 보인다는 사실을 입증했고, 자기 해석 개념의 매개효과와 외동 자녀 해당 여부의 조절효과를 확인했다. 이로써 두 가설 모두를 증명할 수 있었다. 본 논문은 세 가지의 함의를 지닌다. 우선 제품 유형이 지닌 효과를 일반화하는 데 기여했고, 제품 유형에 노출되는 것이 소비자에게 영향을 미치는 메커니즘을 매개효과를 활용하여 설명했다. 또한 외동 자녀 해당 여부의 조절 효과를 밝혀냈다.

하지만 눈덩이 표집(snow-ball sampling) 방식으로 표본을 추출했다는 점과, 자기 해석 개념의 매개효과가 가정 용품-개인 용품 관계에서만 나타날 수 있다는 점에서는 일부 한계가 있다고 할 수 있다. 마지막으로 본 논문에서

밝힌 조절효과가 외동 자녀 해당 여부 외의 다른 변수들에 의해 나타났을 수도 있기에 이후 더욱 정교한 연구가 이뤄져야 할 것이다.

주요어: 제품유형, 프라이밍 효과, 조절초점, 외동이, 자기 구성

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