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**AUTHENTICITY AND PERSUASION:  
HOW MUCH IS THE 'SELF' WORTH?  
AN EXPLORATION OF PRODUCER AUTHENTICITY AND ITS IMPACT  
ON PRODUCT EVALUATIONS.**

**Thesis submitted by  
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in July 2007**

**For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
In the School of Psychology  
James Cook University**

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I declare that this thesis is my own work, and has been supported by the following organisations and people. Financial support for university fees and living expenses were funded through an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA), and by departmental scholarships from the School of Psychology at James Cook University, Townsville. Editorial contributions to this thesis were provided by my supervisor Ben Slugoski. Additional editorial contributors include, Peter Raggatt, Renee Brimstone, Lynne Doonan, Ryan Nuttall, and Paul Bowers.

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines the persuasiveness of producer authenticity and its influence on product evaluations. Though there has been a substantial amount of research within the social and consumer psychology literature examining the persuasiveness of other source characteristics (e.g. attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, honesty, similarity, etc.), producer authenticity has not been empirically examined as a persuasive cue. ‘Authenticity’ is defined as the quality of being true to one’s self. For the purpose of operationalising this construct, producer enjoyment and producer culture/ethnicity were used as authenticity cues. Three broad objectives were established for this research: 1) to establish the persuasiveness of producer authenticity; 2) to explore some of the potential boundary conditions of this phenomenon; 3) to identify the psychological processes underlying the persuasiveness of producer authenticity. Ten studies were conducted to address the three research objectives. The first three studies aimed to establish the persuasive impact of producer authenticity on product evaluations. It was hypothesised that producer authenticity would have a favourable impact on evaluations of product quality, but also on the amount individuals were willing to pay for a product. Across the three studies, results provided support for both hypotheses. Studies four and five were designed to test the hypothesis that producer authenticity would influence participant preferences when forced to choose between several service providers. In support of this hypothesis, results of these studies show this producer characteristic to be a clear service differentiator with the majority of individuals exhibiting a preference for the authentic provider. Aligned with the second research objective,

Studies six to nine aimed to address the boundary conditions of authenticity as a persuasive cue. More specifically, these studies aimed to explore the potential conditions under which effects of producer authenticity would be moderated or attenuated. Study six examined the impact of producer authenticity when a producer's formal expertise was manipulated. Results indicate that producer authenticity remained persuasive both when the producer was tertiary-trained in the appropriate field, but more interestingly, also when the producer *failed* to possess the appropriate degree. Furthermore, the results of this study illustrate that participants relied more on producer authenticity than formal learning when assessing the expertise of that producer/service provider. Studies seven and eight explored the interaction between multiple authenticity cues (e.g. high enjoyment, culturally appropriate). Results of these studies are conflicting, with authenticity cues having an interactional effect for evaluations of product value, but not product quality. Study nine re-examined the interaction between multiple producer authenticity cues whilst also incorporating a product authenticity manipulation. The results failed to provide any evidence that the authenticity of the product itself detracts or adds to the persuasiveness of producer authenticity cues. Interestingly, in this study producer authenticity cues were found to be independently persuasive. Finally, Study ten examined the psychological processes rendering some individuals to be more susceptible to this persuasive cue than others. Results show that individuals exhibiting authentic preferences are more likely to engage in magical thinking (specifically the law of similarity), have more essentialist conceptions of self, have a lower need for cognition, and possess a more idiocentric ideology than individuals

not susceptible to this cue. Other results revealed that producer authenticity failed to be discounted when the producer was paid for completing the task. Participants' racist beliefs (about the authentic producer's ethnic group) also failed to influence the persuasiveness of producer authenticity when it came to evaluating a cultural product. Though the results of this dissertation contribute to the psychological literature by establishing another persuasive source characteristic, the findings also have implications for both marketers and consumers, which are also discussed.

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## CHAPTER 1

*We have been told endlessly that the future is global and virtual - and of course it is. But we haven't grasped enough that there is an opposite trend emerging which may be just as powerful and which values what is real (David Boyle, 2004).*

*'Can't beat the real thing'*

Coca Cola slogan (1983).

Globalisation and mass production have meant that companies can specialise in selling virtually anything these days. It is almost impossible to find a product on the market without a corresponding rival product. The proliferation of products within categories, and categories within life has had two major effects. The first is that marketers and advertising agencies struggle to find a way to meaningfully position their products. The second is that consumers are already finding ways to simplify their day to day buying behaviours.

As a strategy for differentiating themselves in the market, companies often take the stance of promoting something *unique* about their products, which other products are less likely to compete with. The unique selling proposition (USP) promoted by a company has the added benefit of enabling its products to compete within sub-niches as opposed to competing with the entire spectrum of products in the broader category (Reeves, 1961). Depending on the psychology of the individual consumer, the USP promoted by a company may or may not have appeal. Some

consumers will be persuaded by *multiple* USPs, but must then differentiate which is most relevant to them.

This being said, many niches are already heavily occupied by products which have a long history within that market space. New products entering the market therefore have two options; a) create a new USP (which may or may not be an inherent quality of the product), or b) take the risk of coming into the heavily saturated market as a 'me too' product.

As consumer trends vacillate, marketers must also evolve, catering their advertising attempts and designing USPs which will cater to the needs and desires of their target audience. One niche which is less occupied is authenticity. Responding to the demands for something 'real,' many advertisements are promoting authenticity in an attempt to engage consumers. When using authenticity to sell a product, companies can either focus on the authenticity of the product itself, or the authenticity of its producer. Research suggests that more often than not, product authenticity depends on producer authenticity (Evans-Pritchard, 1987).

Though much of the consumer and social psychology literature has examined the persuasiveness of source characteristics such as credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness, there has been very little empirical research exploring the influence of source authenticity on consumer evaluations and preferences. This is interesting given that there seems to be some evidence within the realm of advertising that this cue is persuasive. Hence, the current research seeks to explore the persuasive impact of producer and service provider authenticity.



### *Research Questions*

The current dissertation aims to answer three broad research questions.

1. Is the authenticity of a producer or service provider persuasive? More specifically, does the authenticity of a producer/service provider influence individuals to provide more favourable evaluations of product quality and value than when the source is not authentic? Furthermore, does authenticity influence individuals' preferences for a producer or service provider?
2. If producer/service provider authenticity *is* persuasive, what are the boundary conditions of the phenomenon? At what point does authenticity lose its ability to influence product and service evaluations, and what factors override the effect it has on people's judgements and decisions.
3. What are the underlying psychological mechanisms causing authenticity to be persuasive? That is, what dispositional differences render some individuals more susceptible to this persuasive cue than others?

### *Research Contribution and Significance*

The current research is significant for several reasons. Firstly, there has been a great deal of evidence supporting the persuasiveness of other source characteristics (e.g. expertise, similarity, attractiveness, trustworthiness, credibility etc.); however, there has been virtually no empirical examination of source authenticity as a cue to

persuasion. This research therefore aims to establish producer authenticity as another cue to persuasion so that it too can be recognised within both the social psychology and consumer psychology literatures. Furthermore, this work will also contribute to the authenticity literature, which typically is more focused on consumers' desire for authentic products and experiences as opposed to the authenticity of those *making* those products or providing those experiences.

These research findings also have a practical application in the sense of *informing* both the marketing sector and consumers. Though there is plenty of anecdotal evidence in the form of advertisements that this cue is widely exploited, from a marketing perspective, this research will provide a basic understanding of the limitations of this cue, when it will work and when it will not, and most importantly, which consumers are most likely to be persuaded by the inference of authenticity and are therefore best targeted. From a consumer perspective, this dissertation provides the awareness and education to become savvier in their purchasing decisions. By becoming aware of the tendency to rely on authenticity cues when making decisions, consumers may be more mindful the next time they walk down the supermarket aisle.

### *Thesis Structure*

This thesis is divided into sixteen chapters, which proceed in accordance with the research questions. Chapters two through six provide a review of the literature pertinent to authenticity and persuasion. Chapters seven through fifteen present the

ten studies conducted. Chapter sixteen provides a conclusion of the research. A more detailed explanation of each chapter is provided below.

*Chapter two* provides the reader with a basic overview of the persuasion literature, specifically the Elaboration Likelihood Model, and the use of source characteristics as cues to persuasion.

*Chapter three* explores the possibility of authenticity acting as a cue to persuasion. Literature relating to the persuasiveness of both product and producer authenticity is reviewed.

*Chapter four* provides a review of theoretical conceptions of ‘self’ and their meaning for the nature of authenticity.

*Chapter five* discusses potential cues to authenticity, and their persuasive impact on consumer behaviour.

*Chapter six* outlines potential reasons for the persuasiveness of producer authenticity and discusses some of the key psychological processes potentially underlying this phenomenon.

*Chapter seven* presents the first experimental study aiming to establish the persuasiveness of producer authenticity using an ‘essay’ as the product of evaluation. The product is not provided and participants are required to predict the value and quality of the product based on the information provided.

*Chapter eight* explores the persuasiveness of producer enjoyment when the product (an essay) is actually present for evaluation (Study two). The objective of this study is thus to examine whether authenticity information relating to the producer is as persuasive when the product is directly available. The impact of

producer enjoyment on participants' evaluations of producer knowledge and competence are also explored.

*Chapter nine* presents the results of Study three, which again aims to explore the persuasiveness of service provider enjoyment. However, this study explored this phenomenon in relation to a new product being an actress' performance in a film, and the associated quality of the broader film itself.

*Chapter ten* presents the results of Studies four and five, which share the objective of examining whether authenticity influences participants' service provider preferences. Study four examines this objective using enjoyment as the authenticity cue, whilst Study five applies producer ethnicity/culture as a cue to authenticity.

*Chapter eleven* presents the first study within this research to examine potential boundary conditions of the phenomenon. By manipulating both producer authenticity *and* formal expertise (by means of being tertiary trained in the appropriate field) this chapter examines whether authenticity loses its persuasive influence when expertise is low. The impact of authenticity manipulations on perceptions of producer authenticity and expertise are also examined, firstly as a manipulation check, but then to establish whether authenticity is viewed as an indicator of expertise.

*Chapter twelve* presents the second study in this thesis aimed at exploring boundary conditions of producer authenticity. This study explores the interaction between multiple authenticity cues (e.g., producer's enjoyment and cultural appropriateness) to establish whether the absence of one authenticity cue detracts from the persuasiveness of the other authenticity cue. More specifically, if the

producer lacks enjoyment, does this information function as a boundary condition for the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity, and vice versa? The product used in this study is coffee.

*Chapter thirteen* offers a direct replication of chapter twelve; however, in this study more explicit low authenticity manipulations are introduced. The interaction between authenticity cues will again be examined. Differences between explicit (Study eight) and non-explicit (Study seven) manipulations are also examined by combining the data sets from the two studies.

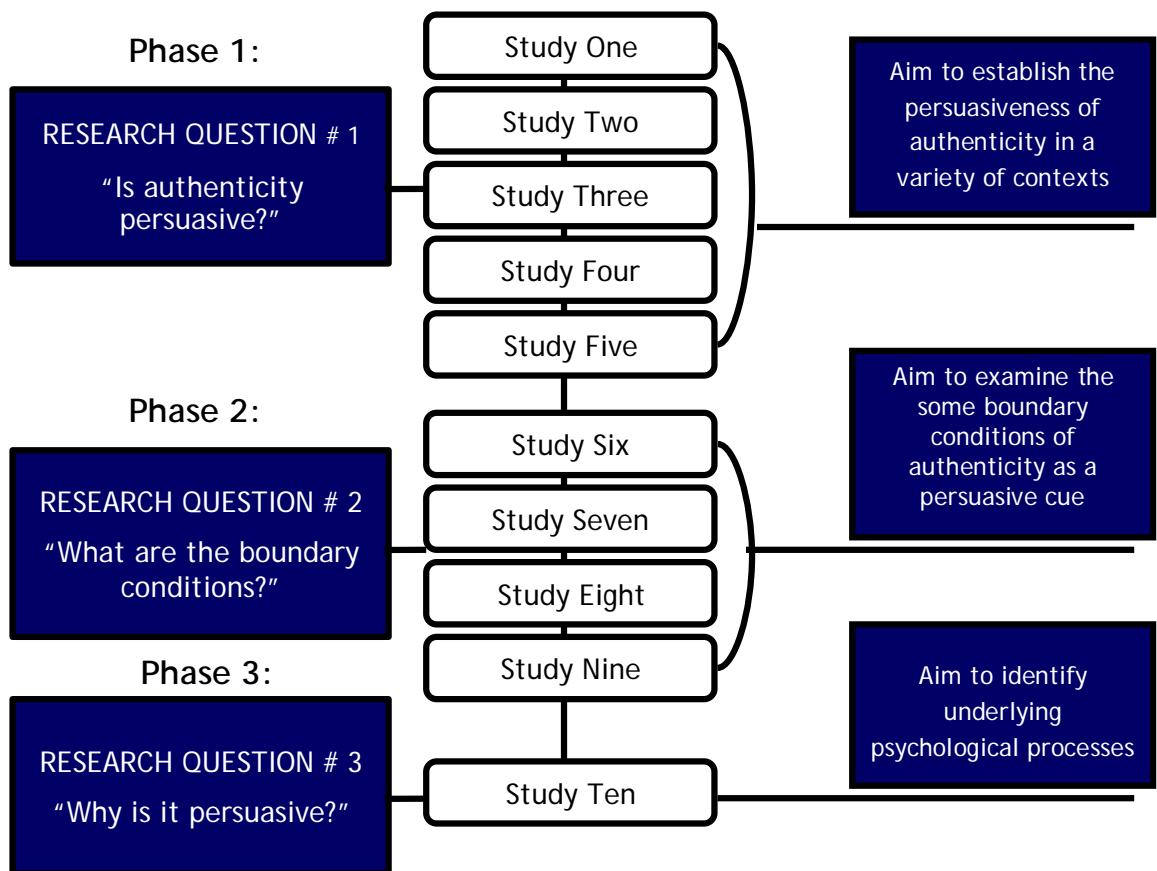
*Chapter fourteen* presents the results of Study nine, which again examines the impact of multiple authenticity cues on coffee evaluations whilst also introducing a product authenticity manipulation. The results of this study will explore the persuasiveness of producer authenticity when product authenticity is low, addressing the question ‘does *product* authenticity function as a boundary condition for the persuasiveness of producer authenticity?’

*Chapter fifteen* examines whether certain psychological processes might render some individuals susceptible to the persuasiveness of producer authenticity and others relatively immune. Based on participants’ exhibited service provider preferences (authentic vs. non-authentic), a range of hypothesised individual differences between groups are explored. Psychological processes examined include essentialist and individualist conceptions of self, need for cognition, reliance on the representativeness heuristic and magical thinking.

*Chapter sixteen* provides an overview of the thesis and summarise the key conclusions and implications of the research. This chapter also discusses the

limitations of the research and makes recommendations for subsequent research. An overview of the ten studies conducted and their relationship with the respective research objectives is outlined below in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram of Studies



## CHAPTER 2

### Background

#### *The Age of Persuasion*

*'Persuasion is often more effectual than force'*

- Aesop

“From a social psychological perspective, the 20<sup>th</sup> century may be dubbed the Age of Persuasion.” (Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999a, p.83). Persuasion is defined as the process through which a communicator intentionally attempts to induce a change in the beliefs, attitudes or behaviours of another individual, or group of people (Perloff, 1993). This process has become such a conventional feature of daily life that we often fail to detect its occurrence. There are a multitude of subtle and extremely clever persuasion tactics that have been devised in order to successfully influence the mental or emotional state of a receiver, and the presence of persuasion extends far beyond the advertisements, political speeches, and sales pitches where one may typically expect to encounter it (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). Persuaders can manipulate facts, associate messages with attractive stimuli, or even create a situation where agreement with the endorsed argument appears to be the only rational response.

Each year, enormous amounts of both time and money are spent on advertising which relies heavily on persuasion. In essence, “... the psychology of advertising may be viewed as the psychology of influence or persuasion.” (Petty &

Cacioppo, 1984a, p.419). In the Veronis Suhler Stevenson Media Merchant Bank's 2004 communications industry forecast it was estimated that 248 billion dollars would be spent that year on advertising within the United States alone (Media Education Foundation, 2003). Furthermore, it has been estimated that a typical American individual has the potential to be exposed to well over 1400 persuasive appeals on any single day (Cacioppo, Berntson & Petty, 1997; Will, 1982). These statistics illustrate the extent to which people's attitudes are challenged through the use of persuasion.

Given its complex, pervasive and lucrative nature, it is of little surprise that persuasion has remained a dominant topic of research across a variety of disciplines. The first documented discussion of persuasion dates back approximately 2500 years ago to Aristotle (trans. 1954). However, it was not until the mid 20th century that several theoretical paradigms were developed. These paradigms aimed to gain an understanding not only of the strategies used to alter others' beliefs, attitudes, and actions, but additionally what factors cause individuals to be receptive to such persuasive strategies (See Chaiken, 1980; Chaiken & Eagly, 1993; Chaiken, Wood & Eagly, 1996; Greenwald, 1968; Hovland, Janis & Kelly, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

Psychology as a discipline has always maintained at least a cursory interest in persuasion. For example, John B. Watson, the father of modern Behaviourism left academia in 1920 and pursued a career in advertising, applying many of his behavioural principles when persuading consumers (Cited in Kreshel, 1990). It was the innovative work of psychologist Carl Hovland and his colleagues at Yale



University, however, that formally developed a program exclusively focused on examining the phenomenon of persuasion within an experimental context (Bagozzi, Gurhan-Canli & Priester, 2002; Hovland et al., 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999a). This program was driven by the belief that variables relating to the source, message or individual receiving the message could potentially enhance or decrease persuasion (Hovland et al., 1953). Curiously, the research resulting from the Yale program produced many conflicting results, showing the same variables (e.g. source credibility) to increase persuasion in some contexts, and have no effect in others. These discrepancies ultimately led Petty and Cacioppo (1981) to develop a model of persuasion that could account for the variety of conflicting results within the previous research literature. A discussion of this model follows.

#### *The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion*

Evolving from over a decade of research, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) aimed to examine people's cognitive responses to persuasion by establishing a finite number of ways in which source, message and other variables can influence attitude change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; 1983; Petty, Kasmer, Haugtvedt & Cacioppo, 1987).

Fundamental to the ELM is the notion of 'elaboration', which Petty and Cacioppo define as the extent to which an individual will contemplate issue-relevant arguments contained within a provided message. Elaboration is conceptualised along a continuum, ranging from no elaboration of the issue-relevant information presented

(low end) to thorough elaboration of every argument presented (high end). Most importantly, the likelihood of elaboration is moderated by a person's ability and/or motivation to evaluate any information presented (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty et al., 1987). Hence, for elaboration likelihood to be high the individual must possess some knowledge about the information presented (Woodside & Davenport, 1974), they must have the capacity to process the message (i.e. no distraction, intellectual ability), and the message should also be of personal relevance to them. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), the most important determinant of high elaboration is the relevance of the message. If the individual is not personally involved with the message, motivation to process the information will decrease, resulting in low elaboration likelihood. Additionally, when the ability and/or knowledge required to process the message is lacking, elaboration likelihood will also decrease (Petty et al., 1987).

Accordingly, it is possible for any persuasive message to induce changes in the attitudes of the receiver in one of two distinct ways. As discussed, when elaboration is high, the receiver should be influenced to think deeply about the content of all information presented. In this situation the individual would be processing the message via what Petty and Cacioppo (1981) characterise as the *central* route to persuasion. This route requires a significant amount of cognitive effort, with individuals forming an evaluative judgement based only on information perceived to be of relevance (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; 1983; 1986; Petty et al., 1987; Petty, Rucker, Bizer & Cacioppo, 2004; Petty, Wegner & Fabrigar, 1997). For example, a persuader may be interested in influencing people to quit smoking. The

persuader gathers nine disturbing facts about health risks associated with smoking and presents them to the audience. Central processing would necessitate a great deal of cognitive effort when considering all of these issue-relevant facts. If the person is a smoker wanting to quit, such information would be highly relevant and elaboration likelihood would be high, requiring a thorough evaluation of each fact before establishing their attitude (Petty et al., 1987).

Alternatively, if elaboration is low (i.e. the issue is not relevant, cognitive ability is lacking), it is *still* possible to induce an attitude change by getting the receiver to process via the *peripheral* route to persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Perloff, 1993). This type of processing allows the message receiver to rely upon simple extraneous cues (either positive or negative) to arrive at a decision without the use of any issue-relevant information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). The peripheral route is often characterised by the use of simple decision rules, known as heuristics. These heuristics essentially operate as cognitive shortcuts which help individuals arrive at a quick conclusion with little mental effort (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

Returning to the former example regarding the anti-smoking campaign, if the target individual smokes only rarely (less relevance), the use of the peripheral route may be efficient. In this case, the individual may be more persuaded by the fact that there are nine arguments presented, which may provide sufficient justification for a change in attitude. Consequently, he/she may choose to stop smoking without even considering the merits of the facts presented. In this instance, peripheral processing may initially seem somewhat irrational, considering that the arguments, although plentiful, may still be largely tenuous. Research indicates that attitude change via the

central route is typically more permanent than attitude change via the peripheral route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Hence, the occasional smoker may begin smoking again two weeks after the appeal, given that he/she failed to thoughtfully process the arguments presented.

It is important to note that the ELM does not discriminate between which variables operate as central cues and which act as peripheral cues. According to the model, variables may function as either, dependent on the specific context (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1984). An effective example of this is the variable source attractiveness. In the context of a moisturiser advertisement, a female endorser's attractiveness may seem relevant to the evaluation of that product, hence resulting in the central processing of her appearance (i.e. "she uses this product and her skin is fabulous. It must be good."). If, however, the advertisement was for a toothbrush, her attractiveness would become extraneous to the true merits of the product. By the use of the peripheral route an individual's attitude may nonetheless still be influenced by this cue (i.e. "this woman is really good looking. I will buy that toothbrush."). Furthermore, under conditions of moderate elaboration, a variable may influence the amount of elaboration exerted on the issue at hand (i.e. "I will listen to what this woman says about this toothbrush, *only* because she is attractive and captured my attention") (Petty et al., 1987).

Although the central route may logically seem to be the more 'rational' mode of information processing, it should be noted that neither route to persuasion is necessarily more logical than the other. Central is not rational, but rather 'thoughtful.' In fact the model does not deal with what is rational or irrational (R.E.

Petty, personal communication, September 18, 2005). As stated by Petty et al. (2004), "...the distinction between high and low elaboration should not be viewed as a distinction between "good" versus "bad" persuasion. For example, the use of the peripheral route can be an adaptive, necessary tool in people's everyday lives" (p. 71). Furthermore, the central route to persuasion is somewhat inefficient when the individual lacks the ability and/or motivation to process issue-relevant information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty et al., 1997). Given that people are continuously inundated with a diverse range of information, and have only a limited amount of time, cognitive capacity, and/or interest to cognitively process incoming stimuli, the peripheral route may prove more efficient for the majority of information. The Elaboration Likelihood Model can be examined in greater detail in Appendix A1.

From a theoretical perspective the ELM is impressive, offering a comprehensive theory of the persuasion process which is acknowledged as the dominant model of persuasion even today (Petty et al., 1997) (For an alternative dual processing model, see Chaiken & Eagly's 1983 heuristic-systematic model; for more recent alternatives to dual processing theories see Kruglanski & Thompson's unimodel, 1999a; 1999b, or van Overwalle & Siebler's connectionist network model, 2005).

This being said, people can't always distinguish peripheral cues from relevant arguments (Homer & Kahle, 1990). Peripheral cues are often considered relevant to the communicated message, which leads to them being erroneously processed as persuasive arguments. Recall the previously provided example of the attractive

source endorsing moisturiser. The endorser may have never even used the product, however, the quality of her skin may have still been considered by the viewer when evaluating the moisturiser's quality. Furthermore, other research has indicated that the two types of processing may not be as mutually exclusive as Petty and Cacioppo assert, and research conducted by Olson and Zanna (1993) and Chaiken and Eagly (1993) have indicated that it is quite possible for people to be influenced by peripheral cues even when they are processing thoughtfully.

#### *The Use of Peripheral Cues in Persuasion*

Much of the literature on persuasion suggests that individuals often fail to think logically when forming judgements (Pratkanis & Aronson, 1992; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Sutherland, 1993). From a rational choice perspective, individuals *should* evaluate only the pertinent attributes of an object/appeal/event etc. All available information ought to be carefully evaluated for relevance before incorporating it into one's judgement, whether that be by means of applying some economic utility theorem (von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1947) or other rational choice model (Hsee, Zhang, Yu & Xi, 2003; Simon, 1955; Tversky & Kahneman, 1986). In reality, most people fail to do this, and this is especially probable when elaboration likelihood is low (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). As previously discussed, extensive research has indicated that extraneous variables relating to either the source of persuasion, the message itself, or recipient of the message can strongly influence people's judgements (Hovland et al., 1953; Perloff & Brock, 1980; Petty &

Cacioppo, 1981; Reardon, 1981). These peripheral cues will now be examined in more detail.

A substantial amount of research indicates that message recipients differ in their susceptibility to be persuaded (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Given that persuasion requires people to evaluate a variety of information, this is not surprising, especially considering there are a diverse range of factors that affect how individuals process information. For example, some individuals tend to enjoy and participate in complex thought where others do not (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; Cacioppo, Petty & Kao, 1984; Cacioppo, Petty, Kao & Rodriguez, 1986). Differences in need for cognition have been found to determine levels of elaboration. There are a variety of individual differences which may influence the ways in which people process information, need for cognition being only one of these. A range of individual differences related to persuasion will be discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this thesis.

The structure of the message itself can also play an important role in the persuasion process. Repetition, the sidedness of an argument, the number of facts presented, and the order of information have all been shown to affect how individuals process persuasive messages (Haugtvedt & Wegner, 1994; Perloff, 1993). For the purpose of the current research, message effects are not pertinent and will therefore not be considered further.

Within the ELM framework, the most popular peripheral cues researched and the most relevant to this thesis are those associated with the source of persuasion. It is of little surprise that source characteristics are able to strongly influence message receivers, given that with any source, additional information above and beyond that

which is simply presented in their message is communicated (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). Communicators will often exploit a variety of irrelevant personal qualities in an attempt to substantiate their argument and persuade others. This is especially pertinent within the sector of advertising (Chestnut, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1983).

The credibility of the communicator is perhaps the most established source characteristic within the persuasion literature (Chaiken & Eagly, 1993; Petty et al., 1997). Over two millenniums ago, Aristotle (trans. 1954) wrote that “A man’s character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses” (p.1356). Even though source credibility is effective in influencing people’s judgements, research indicates that the attitude change resulting from such persuasion attempts usually decays with time, as is the case with other peripheral cues (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984a; 1984b; Reardon, 1981).

There are a number of attributes that may constitute credibility although it is predominantly depicted by one of four fundamental source characteristics (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). These consist of the perceived expertise, trustworthiness, similarity and attractiveness of the message source. Expert sources typically tend to be most influential when the receiver’s psychological defenses are down, when they feel little involvement with the issue at hand, when they have little knowledge on the issue, or when they doubt their ability to challenge the message (Perloff, 1993; Woodside & Davenport, 1974). Under these circumstances, individuals are likely to accept the communicator’s message with little questioning, perceiving that an expert is better informed on the issue than they themselves are (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Petty et al., 1997).



Sources that appear untrustworthy are usually thought to have manipulative intentions and are consequently less successful in their persuasion attempts than sources who exhibit genuine intentions (Hass & Grady, 1975). Research also indicates that sources who argue against their own vested interests are perceived as especially trustworthy (Petty, et al., 1997). Communicator similarity suggests that communicators will be more successful in persuading others if they are perceived to be similar to those whom they are attempting to influence (Perloff, 1993; Larson, 1998; Woodside & Davenport, 1974). The persuasive power underlying communicator similarity may be best understood in terms of balance theory (For a review see Heider, 1946). Because people usually exhibit a tendency to like those who are perceived to be similar to them, they consequently want to share the same opinions. Source-receiver similarity seems, however, to have little impact unless the similarity relates directly to the communicated message (Berscheid, 1966).

Finally, attractive sources are usually more persuasive than unattractive sources (Chaiken, 1979; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; 1984; Petty et al., 2004). Research indicates that the processing of this characteristic does not necessarily rely on a peripherally processed “beautiful is good” heuristic. Rather, an attractive source may simply capture the attention of recipients more successfully, which then increases the chance of the message being attended to (Perloff, 1993; Petty et al., 1987). In any case, a persuasive communication must gain the recipient’s attention in order to be effective, and source characteristics can facilitate this occurring (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

The reliance on the discussed source characteristics requires individuals to form judgements based on information not found within the communication itself. The irrelevant source information may be congruent with the source's argument, therefore strengthening it, or conversely, it may oppose the communicated argument and detract from its impact (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). The use of sex in advertising is an effective example. With regard to a male audience, it could be proposed that a provocatively dressed woman stretched out on the front of a sporty car may persuade males that the car is desirable, and may strengthen the argument presented. Conversely, female consumers may be deterred from processing the same argument due to the apparent objectification of women.

Marketing strategies are typically structured in such a way that the presence of peripheral characteristics related to the source reinforce the argument and consequently strengthen it. Moreover, advertisements often attempt to make a source seem relevant to the evaluation of a product. Take for example the (expert) dentist selling toothbrushes. The dentist's relevance to the product increases the likelihood that the audience will take into consideration the characteristics of that source (expert opinion) when formulating their attitude. As previously discussed, any source characteristic perceived as relevant to the conveyed message may be processed centrally as a persuasive argument (Petty et al., 1987).

Persuasion and consumer research is in continuous pursuit of discovering new qualities that enable a communicator to be inconspicuously persuasive. Given the influential nature of source characteristics one may ask whether other subtle,

unexplored source characteristics exist. Furthermore, from a marketing perspective, this issue may be especially important.

*'Trust No One': The Consequences of Post-Modernism on Modern Day Advertising*

Over the last few decades society has become progressively more dubious of marketing ploys. "Consumers know they are being taken for a ride by advertisers" (Boyle, 2004, p. 277). In accordance with reactance theory, people will often resist being manipulated (Brehm, 1966; Pennebaker & Sanders, 1976). Even research with children has found that once children realise commercials have the intent to persuade them, they believe the commercials less, like them less, and are less favourable towards the products advertised (Robertson & Rossiter, 1974). Moreover, it is quite feasible for all four source characteristics associated with credibility to be simulated in a bid to alter consumer attitudes. As a result, many individuals have become increasingly suspicious of the ulterior motives that may drive persuasion attempts, and characteristics such as trustworthiness and expertise etc. are perhaps not as universally persuasive as they were in the past (Forehand & Grier, 2003; Pratkanis & Aronson, 1992).

A survey conducted by the American Association of Advertising Agencies in 2004 revealed that 60 percent of respondents held a much more negative opinion of advertising than they had just a few years earlier (Elliot, 2004). The critical comment made by David Lubars of the advertising and media group Omnicom illustrates the effect that mass media has had on modern day consumers "Consumers are like roaches; you can spray them and spray them, and they get immune after awhile"

(Cited in Boyle, 2004, p. 70). Within post-modern life, cynicism seems to have become a dominating theme summed up in what Duignan and Bhindi (1997) refer to as a series of 'do not's.' Post-modern society is taught to not trust the government, the banks, sales people and advertising.

In short, today's reality now suggests that truth, honesty and genuineness have become exceptions to the norm. This is by no means to suggest that credibility is no longer persuasive; however, people are becoming increasingly conscious that the trustworthy source may be appearing that way to make a sale, the expert source in the television advertisement might really be a model *acting* as a dentist, the similar source may in fact be costumed and speaking in that fashion to convince others of their likeness. A good example of what may have contributed to this distrust in credibility has been in print media. Magazines, for example, are abundant with advertisements conveyed by attractive sources, and aim to persuade the consumer in a variety of ways. However, there is an increasing awareness that many images in fashion or beauty magazines are touched-up using the latest computer technology to remove bulges, pimples and stretch marks (Cobb, 2003). The attractive woman with flawless skin selling skincare products loses all credibility, and therefore persuasiveness, when consumers realise that no one can look that good without the assistance of a computer.

As a result of magazines, behind the scenes documentaries, and various other formats, consumers are privy to the fact that most celebrity images are to some extent artificial products (Gamson, 1994). As paparazzi aim to capture the reality behind those images, the consumer learns that the portrayed image and behind scenes

footage are often incongruous. Popular magazines have somewhat exposed the notion that celebrity is really derived from nothing but images (Jagodozinki, 2003). Consumers have also become wary of celebrity endorsements given that the celebrity life is often detached from consumers' sense of everyday reality (Lauro, 2004). Consumers watch Britney Spears on million dollar Pepsi-Cola ads professing her devotion to the product and convincing people to 'take the Pepsi challenge' but then see her opting for Coca-Cola in the real world. As consumers become more media savvy, the once revolutionary persuasion tactics from the eighties, such as source expertise and source attractiveness, may become increasingly obsolete.

Recent evidence within the persuasion literature has indicated that source *honesty* is actually more persuasive than any of the characteristics associated with source credibility. Priester and Petty (1995) found that, especially when elaboration likelihood was low, people rated honesty as the source characteristic most strongly associated with providing accurate information. Source trustworthiness was rated second in terms of importance, and was rated considerably higher than other facets of credibility such as source expertise and similarity. Results further indicate that sources perceived as dishonest induce individuals to process information via the central route rather than the peripheral route. Hence, when the source is of questionable integrity, people decide to focus more on the quality of the message itself. So what makes people feel so strongly about source honesty? Priester and Petty (1995) state that honest and trustworthy sources were perceived to be the most accurate because they are presumed to always convey the truth, given they have access to it. Knowledgeable or expert sources on the other hand, were perceived to

know the truth but participants concluded that they may not be willing to convey it. One explanation for why honesty works is because it provides assurance to the consumer that ulterior motives are at a minimum. When a person seems honest, people are less likely to be sceptical of persuasion attempts.

However, even the impression of honesty can be feigned. It seems that the more sceptical the consumer becomes, the higher the demand will be for absolute genuineness. If source characteristics are not necessarily what they purport to be, one may question whether there exists a personal characteristic that encompasses qualities similar to credibility, yet may be perceived by consumers to lack the potential for being feigned. If this form of complete genuineness exists, it is possible that it may operate as a more lucrative cue to persuasion. Thomas Hayo, creative director at Bartle Bogle Hegarty advertising agency in New York concurs. “The audience is so aware of advertising as being something that is fabricated by an agency and people with an agenda that you have to be a little more genuine. People are not willing to buy manufactured truth anymore.” (Cited in Lauro, 2004, ¶ 5). According to Hall (2004), honesty and authenticity are the keys to marketing in modern day society, and stipulate that with so much artificiality around, consumers crave authenticity. And what better expression of honesty and genuineness is there than that of authenticity? The question is, how persuasive is it?

## CHAPTER 3

### Background

#### *The Quest for the Authentic*

The term “authenticity” can be defined as the quality or condition of being authentic, trustworthy, genuine or true to one’s ‘self’ (Lewis & Bridger, 2000). The word authentic is derived from the Latin word ‘authenticus’ and was subsumed into English during the period between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. Western psychological thought has produced numerous definitions of authenticity and descriptions of authentic experience. As a concept often used within academic discourse, authenticity encapsulates characteristics such as being real, honest, truthful, having integrity, being actual, genuine, essential, and sincere (Moore, 2002). Rahilly (1993) defines authenticity as that which is ‘worthy of acceptance’ or a ‘belief as conforming to fact or reality’ and notes that authentic means being *actually* and *exactly* what is claimed and being entirely trustworthy. The dictionary of psychology asserts authenticity to be “the quality of being internally genuine and outwardly real” (Corsini, 2002, p.81). Furthermore, authenticity is regarded as being good, artistically, politically and morally, whilst being non-authentic is considered fake, commercialised and is perceived negatively (Leach, 2001). In effect, it seems that authenticity encompasses many of the characteristics central to credibility, however, with authenticity, credibility would seem genuinely *assured* in most instances. “It’s (authenticity) what credibility used to be before we became more discerning” (Cirucci, 2000, p.68).

Authenticity has been sought after among factions as diverse as consumers to art dealers, music critics and tour operators. The desire to find and somehow capture or protect the "authentic" product, art object, or even ceremonial dance is hardly new. Searches for authenticity have been a constant companion to the feelings of loss inherent in modernisation (Boyle, 2004; Gergen, 1991; Lewis & Bridger, 2000). As a result of post-modernism, it seems that people crave that which is genuine, rather than a contrived imitation. As stated by Tomkins (2005), "...it is in our everyday lives that the desire for authenticity is most apparent" (p.12).

Consumer research indicates that authentic products are preferred to non-authentic products (Boyle, 2004; Lewis & Bridger, 2000). Individuals seek authenticity in many of their acquisitions whether they be products, services, experiences or even friends. Take for example, the tourism industry. Within the literature on tourism there are often discussions relating to tourists' desire for authentic products and experiences over commercialised encounters (Cohen, 1988; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Lowenthal, 1992; MacCannell, 1973; Martin, 1993; Munoz, Wood & Solomon, 2006). McIntosh's (2004) research on tourists' appreciation of Maori culture in New Zealand found that tourists show a high demand for indigenous tourism, seeking out authenticity for an experience that is not 'artificial.' When asked to discuss the importance of experiencing authenticity in their travels, one participant stated;

We live in such a plastic society these days, you really don't know what to believe when you see it; whether it's real or not, so you are always hesitant; if you are seeing something that is



genuine, or think that it is genuine, then it means a little more (McIntosh, 2004, p. 10).

Authentic products and services may be perceived to offer the best value for money since they represent that which is *natural* or *genuine*. They are consequently perceived to be superior in quality, more reliable, and are likely to maintain their value or even increase it (Boyle, 2004; Rozin, Spranca, Krieger, Neuhas, Surillo, Swerdin et al., 2004). Many products are frequently rejected by consumers purely because they lack the air of authenticity. This often occurs even when these inauthentic products offer equivalent or better quality, reliability and value for money (Lewis & Bridger, 2000). This is somewhat perplexing considering non-authentic products may have just as much to offer, and are more often than not, less expensive.

### *Constructing the Authentic?*

Given the strong consumer focus on authenticity, it seems that all one has to do in order to enhance the selling potential of a product is create the impression that it is authentic. According to Lewis and Bridger (2000), there are several ways to create an impression of product authenticity, all of which are commonly employed within the advertising world. The first is to locate the product in place. By simply associating a product with a certain location, authenticity is acquired, giving the product an advantage over identical products. For example, bottled water from an undistinguished lake attracts no attention, however, if one proclaims the water was bottled in Switzerland where it was filtered through mineral rich glacial formations,

the result is an authentic product, which is considered more valuable (Lewis and Bridger, 2000). The second means of creating an authentic product is by locating the product in time. Products that are embedded within a specific era present the image of authenticity, even if originally they were little more than a basic commodity. An example of such a product would be the continuous cycle of fashion trends that replicate styles from previous eras. Even the re-release of coca cola in glass bottles denotes the authentic and 'classic' experience of drinking coke in the fifties. Concurring with this, Grayson and Martinec (2004) propose that assessments of authenticity are far more likely when a product is associated with a specific time or place. Grayson and Martinec extend on Lewis and Bridger's (2000) theory and suggest that authenticity can be ascribed when a product is associated with a *person*.

According to Lewis and Bridger (2000), another way of ascribing authenticity to a product is by making the product original. A good example of this is the recent influx of stainless steel appliances. From a functional perspective, they offer no advantage over the more stereotypical white goods, and if anything, are more difficult to maintain given that they require more cleaning. However, consumers are happily paying more money to purchase something genuinely different from the norm, or something authentic. Therefore, being perceived as distinct from the existing mass of products can be enough to make a very commonplace product seem original and thus, authentic, which then increases both the product's value and demand.

Finally, the impression of authenticity can also be created by making a product credible (Lewis & Bridger, 2000). In congruence with the persuasion

literature, it is acknowledged that credibility can be highly persuasive, but does it lead to perceptions of authenticity? It is doubted that *all* products that are professed to be credible will also appear authentic. As formerly discussed, many consumers are aware that ulterior motives frequently motivate many marketing ploys, and may consequently be more suspicious of claims made about supposedly ‘credible’ commodities (Pratkanis & Aronson, 1992). Some consumers may therefore expect evidence that a product *is* credible. Simply saying it is might not be enough to convince the contemporary consumer. It is important to keep in mind that credibility *is* persuasive. Genuine credibility should *always* be persuasive. And Lewis and Bridger (2000) allude to the important point that the more *legitimately* credible a product or source seems, the greater its chance is of being perceived as authentic. A product that *is* authentic will possess a considerable deal of credibility given that it is the ‘genuine article,’ so it seems reasonable to assume that in certain contexts credibility may bestow an impression of authenticity.

#### *Is Product Authenticity Persuasive?*

Within the literature, there is evidence that consumers find authentic products appealing (Boyle, 2004; Grayson & Martinec, 2004). An excellent documented example of using authenticity to sell a product was the 1999 released film, the Blair Witch Project (Myrick & Sanchez, 1999). The plot of the film is simple. Three student filmmakers venture into the woods near Burkitsville, Maryland to make a documentary about a local legend known as the Blair Witch. They are never seen again and what the viewer is watching is their film footage, which has just been

recovered one year later from a place where no human could reasonably have hidden it (Schreier, 2004). What attracted audiences to this film was its undeniable realism. A great deal of time and effort had gone into developing a context that would heighten the authenticity of The Blair Witch Project.

There was no elaborate cinema advertising campaign. Rather, the official website presented the events of the film as real occurrences, and included biographies of the missing filmmakers, a history regarding the mythology of the Blair Witch, news clips about the disappearances, interviews with relatives, police missing persons reports, excerpts from the missing filmmakers' journals, and information about the police investigation. A detailed mock documentary on the Blair Witch was also screened on documentary channels across America. The film itself was shot in an amateurish documentary style. In effect, it was expected that anyone going to this film, without awareness that it is was a complete fabrication, would emerge from the theatre convinced that what they witnessed was real (McDowell, 2001). "The realism is what makes the film so effective. It makes you forget that you're watching a movie and feel like you are right there with the characters" (Tweek, 2004).

Needless to say, the film attracted much hype. A study by Schreier (2004) found that among emails written within the six months following the release of this film, 38% of the emails submitted to news boards by consumers concerned questions regarding the reality of the movie. Such a statistic reveals that consumers take a remarkable interest in product authenticity. Of greater interest though, is that the

presence or absence of authenticity significantly alters consumers' perceptions of the film's quality.

It was a good movie... when I thought that it was real. I suspect that I would have thought that it was a bad, unconvincing movie had I known that it was fiction. I wouldn't have gone to see it, had I known (Loy, 1999, ¶ 3).

This consumer's comment reaffirms that the very same product can be perceived quite differently depending on its impression of authenticity. When the movie was perceived as a real documentary, the reactions of the film's characters were perceived as *genuine*, and the movie was appreciated as an authentically frightening experience. However, when the deceptive nature of the film was exposed, the evaluation of the film became quite negative and was criticised for its lack of plausibility. "I can't remember the last time a movie, once so popular, later became the source of such derision" (Carney, 2005, Review 6). This is an interesting comment considering that in both circumstances the product remains the same. The only thing that was altered was the viewer's perception of authenticity, which seems to be influential enough to persuade consumers in either direction. Authenticity in this context rests on the critical fact that the characters did not actually die, and there was no such thing as the Blair Witch.

Thus, the Blair Witch Project exemplifies that authenticity itself can essentially act as a commodity; something that is both easily marketed and purchased. Take for example, the following comment by a consumer regarding the

Blair Witch Project; “I just found out tonight that the Blair Witch Project was fictional. I am very upset that I spent my hard earned money on it now” (Angelbunny, 2004). This individual’s comment further suggests that perceptions of authenticity *do* affect product evaluations and consumer purchasing decisions. Interestingly, box office figures also confirm this. The Blair Witch Project cost a meagre 25,000 dollars to make, but took earnings in excess of 150 million dollars at the box office alone (Boyle, 2004). However, pseudo-authenticity can only be sustained through the use of deception, and is more likely to be effective when the illusion of authenticity is maintained (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997).

The results of a study by Lewis and Bridger (2000) provide further evidence that authenticity adds value to a product. Consumers rated their liking for a small green glass bottle. Some participants were informed that the bottle had been discovered in the ruins of Pompeii, Italy, whilst others were told nothing regarding the origin of the bottle. Those who believed they were holding an authentic artefact from Pompeii were found to like the bottle significantly more than those participants told nothing. Whilst participants who were uninformed about the bottle’s history showed little interest in owning the product, many of the informed participants offered to pay hundreds of dollars to own the relic, indicating that the impression of authenticity enhanced the product’s value. While this finding is encouraging, other explanations such as participants appreciating the potential resale value can not be discounted. Given that participants were not questioned about their reasons for their responses, it is difficult to ascertain whether it was authenticity that made the product so valuable, and if so, why? It would be interesting to gain an understanding into the

psychological processes which make consumers believe authenticity is worth purchasing. Likewise, an investigation of the circumstances by which authenticity may lose its persuasive appeal would also be beneficial. In any case, this thesis makes the critical connection that increasing product authenticity results in higher evaluations of product quality and value.

As observed with both the Blair Witch Project and Lewis and Bridger's (2000) green bottle study, it is not necessarily the latest technology or newest product, but rather the story *behind* these products that consumers seem drawn to (Boyle, 2004; Green, Howlett & Tetley, 2004; Jantsch, 2004). Products connect to the consumer more through the narrative woven around their creation rather than the functions of the products themselves. Interviews conducted by Fine (2003) with art gallery owners, for example, indicate that consumers do not necessarily even need to admire the product in order to be persuaded into purchasing when authenticity is present. One gallery owner states;

I do buy pieces that I don't like. I mean I've bought art before that I haven't really liked when I first look at it, but as I learned more about the people and more about the process and where it comes from, I gotta have the piece (p.172).

In the case of the former example regarding the bottle from Pompeii, the consumer is not buying the bottle for the bottle so to speak; they are buying it for its history. Its added value comes from its unique past. In the art example, the artist and

their life has an effect on how that product is perceived by others. It therefore seems possible that consumers are interested in the origins of products. Who were they made by? Does the identity of the producer contribute to the appeal of a product? Can a product with an authentic producer be evaluated more favourably than a product manufactured by someone less authentic? Given the examples discussed, it would appear that the answer to these questions is indeed 'yes.'

### *The Art of 'Being' Authentic*

Given the accumulated evidence, it could be proposed that the desire for authenticity extends beyond products themselves. Thus far, this review has discussed the importance of product authenticity, but what about personal authenticity? From a marketing perspective, is *personal* or source authenticity worth exploring? As previously discussed, source honesty is more persuasive than source trustworthiness, source expertise, source similarity and finally, source attractiveness (Priester & Petty, 1995). However, little research has been conducted regarding how the authenticity of a source might influence decision makers.

Applied to personhood or the art of living, authenticity means being true to oneself and one's world (Rahilly, 1993). "Authenticity is an exquisitely personal state of being - the result of being true to a norm discoverable from within the individual person" (Tageson, 1982, p.146). As a construct, authenticity maintains a form of genuineness, and denotes a more strenuous moral experience than mere credibility or sincerity (Trilling, 1974). As a result of post-modernism and globalisation, personal authenticity has come to be considered somewhat rare and



hence *highly* valued (McIntosh, 2004). As we become increasingly exposed to the selves of others, their principles, actions and attitudes, we come to live our existence entwined in numerous plots, whether they be our own, our interactions with immediate family, friends, or even characters in television sitcoms. These multiple existences cause the self to become *socially saturated* (Gergen, 1991). This social saturation brings with it a general loss in our assumption of genuine, obvious selves, and “concepts of truth, honesty and authenticity now turn strange” (Gergen, 1991, p. 111). Wanting to cling to something ‘real,’ authenticity becomes increasingly valuable to members of Western culture (Boyle, 2004).

There is research to suggest that the authenticity of those individuals connected with products is important to consumers (Cohen, 1988; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen & Sideman, 2005; Munoz et al., 2006). These people often include product producers and service providers. An interesting study by Price, Arnould and Deibler (1995) examined a variety of service provider qualities to establish which were effective in predicting consumers’ emotional responses to services provided. Not surprisingly, authenticity was found to be very important. To be considered authentic by consumers, the service provider must be viewed as genuine, his/her own person, and out of the ordinary, in the sense of being more than just a role (Price et al., 1995). Irrespective of the service provider’s competencies and knowledge, respondents in this research reported more positive evaluations of the service experience when interacting with an authentic salesperson, and more negative evaluations of the experience when source authenticity was perceived to be lacking. Hence, as with product authenticity, when

producer/service provider authenticity is believed to be lacking, evaluations of the product/service are also affected.

Hochschild (1983) further emphasises the importance of provider emotions being perceived by the consumer as authentic, especially in service encounters that require 'emotion work.' To be genuine is essential in such circumstances, given that artificial empathy can appear more offensive than no empathy at all. According to Hochschild (1983), consumers will "mentally subtract feeling with commercial purpose to it from the total pattern of display that they sense to be *sincerely* felt" (p.34).

Hochschild's (1983) work with airline hostesses additionally indicated that consumers will often judge a product or service based on the individuals providing it. For example, with regard to an airline company, the flight attendant has the most contact with the passengers, and does the most to influence perceptions of the company. As stated by one service marketing manager in the *Advertising Age*, "Your people are as much of your product in the consumer's mind as any other attribute of that service" (Knisely, 1979, p.47). This suggests that in the mind of the consumer, service provider authenticity may be functioning as a central merit of the service rather than a peripheral cue. This would explain why so many companies hire people who genuinely enjoy attending to people, revealing their authentic self in the process. According to Hochschild (1983), acting is simply not good enough.

From Hochschild's (1983) research it could be concluded that faking personal authenticity may not be convincing. According to Elster (1983), the attempt to appear natural (in terms of trying *not* to give an impression that one is actually trying

to give an impression), is conceptually problematic. He suggests it is impossible to will authenticity through a single mental act. Instead, it is better to go through the motions of acting as if one *is* authentic, counting on imitation, self perception theory or even cognitive dissonance to eventually bring about the real thing.

So in the case of airline hostesses, 'going through the motions' of appearing to enjoy one's job may eventually result in this indeed being a reality. So although being an airline hostess becomes authentic to that person, this type of authenticity would still be considered a by-product, because it transpires as a result of something one has actively chosen to do. Provided that the source seems genuine, however, this expression of authenticity may still be persuasive enough to convince consumers. As put by Dolliver (2001), despite "all the attempts to fake it as a marketing ploy, the appeal of authenticity seems oddly undiminished" (p.19).

Research by Grandey et al., (2005) provides compelling evidence that consumers can be persuaded by simulated source authenticity, provided it *seems* genuine. This research examined whether service providers within the hospitality industry were perceived by consumers as providing more satisfying service encounters when they were authentically smiling than when they were smiling less sincerely. Interestingly, in all conditions, the service provider was an actress, and was hence only *acting* authentic at best. As anticipated, however, the results indicated that consumers *did* distinguish between what were perceived to be authentic and non-authentic smiles, and these expressions consequently influenced how consumers evaluated the service. Impressions of the service were more favourable when the source was perceived as genuine. Irrespective of whether the

source is genuinely authentic or acting authentic, this characteristic appears to have a substantial influence on people's evaluations. Again, the connection can be made that as perceptions of source authenticity increase, service/product evaluations also become more favourable.

Skaggs and Anthony (2002) suggest that one area where source authenticity is considered crucial is within the realm of politics. According to the authors, political candidates will have greater appeal to voters if they remain true to their selves and show integrity. As stated by Elster, "For any actor, there is some potential spectator clever enough to see through him" (1983, p.74) highlighting that authenticity is the best approach.

Another example is the infectious nature of reality television (Rose & Wood, 2005). Over the past few years reality shows featuring 'real' people have slowly but surely secured a higher percentage of the commercial ratings than the more traditional popular sitcoms or dramas (Jagodozinki, 2003). In these shows, the product is the show itself, and what sells the product is the characters. Although these characters can only be their true selves in a limited sense, the presence of 'real' people on television almost guarantees authenticity to the lay viewer. Real people have always been popular purely because they *are* real (Lauro, 2004; Minna & Mervi, 2006). Research by Gardyn (2001) indicated that 37% of Americans have a preference for watching people that are real over characters that are scripted. Once more, viewers want a piece of authenticity. As stated by two consumers interviewed in Gardyn's (2001) research, "...If we wanted fake, we'd watch sitcoms" (p.36) and

“You can see their true emotions, their frustrations, their joy. That’s real enough for me” (p. 36).

Reality television’s strategy of constant surveillance assures the audience that cast members are no more nor less than whom they appear to be. The authenticity of the characters is expected, given that it would be difficult to maintain a role that isn’t true to one’s self day and night over a duration of several months (Stahl, 2002). The cast members’ contributions are their ability to be real, to reveal their authentic reactions, and to simply be themselves. This is not, however, to suggest that *all* reality television guarantees authenticity. Results of Gardyn’s (2001) survey indicated that 81% of viewers who ceased watching reality shows did so purely because the people seemed too scripted or not real enough. This again suggests that a product’s acceptance or rejection by the public may be strongly influenced by the authenticity of the people associated with providing the product.

The evidence reviewed suggests that source authenticity is important within the sectors of sales, hospitality, politics and television. In addition to these areas, it also seems relevant when evaluating music. Peterson (1997) examined the phenomenon of source authenticity within the context of the country music scene. According to his research, an entertainer’s success within this music genre is determined largely by the possession of certain attributes. Not only must the musician dress, speak, and behave like a country person; more importantly, they must embody the values and lifestyle of a country person. Manipulating only their public persona is not enough. Peterson (1997) even goes so far as to suggest that a

country musician can only be perceived as genuinely authentic when he or she comes from a strong lineage of country performers.

Additionally, in the genre of rock music, authenticity typically necessitates the presence of either a talented individual or small group of individuals who formed because they 'naturally' knew one another and were driven to write and play songs themselves purely as an expressive outlet for either their personal beliefs or emotions (Leach, 2001). Although it cannot be denied that commercially fabricated bands (e.g. bands created through reality television shows such as Pop Stars, Idol and X Factor) show initial appeal, it is usually the case that these acts are relatively short lived, possibly because continuing a musical career requires the ability to produce new music which is simply not sustainable for non-authentic artists.

For many consumers of music, it is crucial that song lyrics are personal and speak autobiographically for that singer/performer (Leach, 2001). Without authenticity, such songs will be unlikely to be as well received. Tuning in to any show of Australian Idol or American Idol, it is all too common to hear a judge inform contestants that they didn't enjoy a song because its performance didn't feel sincere. This observation suggests that the authenticity (or lack thereof) of a producer/service provider/source, again seems to somehow affect the way in which their product is evaluated.

Hence, it seems that producer/service provider authenticity is more persuasive than previously recognised. So how can a source be considered authentic? One possibility is that by utilising one of Lewis and Bridger's (2000) routes to *product* authenticity, and applying it to a source, that source might *also* be bestowed

with qualities of authenticity. This may then enable them to be more influential than an inauthentic source. However, throughout this literature review, it has been repeatedly indicated that ascriptions of personal authenticity rely on being true to one's self. In order for an action to be considered authentic, it must signify that it is the product of that person's *genuine self* (Rahilly, 1993).

Given that the self is such a recurrent theme within this review, it is now necessary to examine the various conceptions of 'self', both from a theoretical perspective and a lay perspective. Given that lay beliefs about the nature of 'self' parallel theoretical conceptions of 'self', the greater part of the next chapter will focus predominantly on conceptions of self within the theoretical and philosophical literature. It is believed that these theories provide an effective foundation for exploring possible lay conceptions of the 'self' as a construct. The literature on lay beliefs about the self will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 15.

## CHAPTER 4

### Background

#### *Authenticity and the 'Self'*

##### *What is the Self?*

Providing a consensually agreed upon definition of the self appears to be difficult. The conceptual elusiveness of the self has caused much debate and has contributed to the self becoming a popular topic of research (Baumeister, 1987; 1999). Within the last two decades over 31000 pieces of literature on the self were published in the discipline of psychology alone (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997). Most people possess a rudimentary understanding of what the self is, given that people routinely use the word 'self', as well as its adjuncts and cognates, such as "I", in their daily discourse. But what do these words actually *mean* to individuals? Is self universal and stable or is it malleable and adaptable? Is self unitary, or composed of a multiplicity of selves? Are there different selves for different situations? Is the notion of self nothing more than a social construct? Several theoretical conceptions of self will now be explored. Given that personal authenticity necessitates the existence of a self, the different conceptions of self discussed will signify different things about the nature of authenticity. Furthermore, it is recognised that conceptions of self will differ across cultures and eras. For the purpose of this thesis, the discussed notions of self will reflect a predominantly modernist, Westernised and therefore individualist account of the literature on this topic.



*'The Essential Self': Authentic Self as a Core Construct*

In 1907, Dr. Duncan McDougall conducted an experiment in order to objectively establish the physical existence of a human soul (cited in Gergen, 1991). After obtaining the weight of human bodies immediately before and after death, he observed that body mass showed a systematic reduction of one ounce after death. This led Dr. McDougall to conclude that the soul weighed one ounce and departed once the self became deceased. The effort at establishing the reality of the 'soul' as a measurable 'substance' has been one of numerous attempts to argue for the presence of an *essential* or *core* human self. The notion of 'self' goes back at least as far as Descartes' (1641) "*cogito ergo sum*" or "I think therefore I am" (trans. Cottingham, 1996). This phrase suggests that cognitive thought alone provides evidence for the existence of self. After all, if there were no cognising 'self,' one could not have such a thought.

Within the wider social context, the language we use to communicate with others suggests that most people believe in the notion of a 'core', authentic self, which has fairly stable characteristics regardless of how we may act at any given time. Take for example the phrases, 'He was beside himself with sadness', and 'I'm not myself today'. Although these phrases imply the possibility of different selves, they also suggest the existence of a principal, essential self which can then be used as a point of reference to evaluate the authenticity of that person's actions and feelings.

One of the first psychologists to contemplate a 'core' concept of self was William James (1890). According to James, a person's self concept consists of the 'I' and the 'me.' The 'me' element of the self relates to one's experience, often in terms

of role descriptions, and is an aggregate of all things objectively known (James, 1999). For example, the 'me' as a 'mother,' or an 'Asian,' or even a 'shy person.' It is the 'me' that is known to others. For the purpose of the current thesis, it is the 'me' component of self that would be of concern to the consumer, television watcher, movie goer etc. However, it is the more innate 'I' component that provides continuity to our personality and contemplates the direct experience of the 'me.' For example, what does it mean to be a mother, or Brazilian? As put by Raggatt (2006, p.19) "... the 'I' of consciousness – has singularity, continuity, volition and embodiment". Hence, 'I' is the self as *knower* whilst 'me' is the self as *known*. 'Self as knower' seems continuous and stable, whilst 'self as known' might be in some aspects more multifaceted and mutable.

James (1890) further defined the 'me' element of self as consisting of a hierarchy of three components: the 'spiritual self,' the 'social self' and the 'material self'. The spiritual self is concerned with emotions, desires, sensations and intellectual processes (James, 1999). "The spiritual self is the most enduring and intimate part of the self. It is that which we seem to *be*. The spiritual self *is* our core self" (Levin, 1992, p. 77). This seems somewhat of a contradiction in that James also asserts the 'I' to be the core self. In any case, elements of the spiritual self cause individuals to be unique from one another and may act as a reference point for authenticity. Alternatively, the social self is related to how we perceive ourselves in terms of other people. Significant others are important given that they possess the ability to reinforce, or reject the self we express. James (1890) states that we have as

many different *social* selves as there are individuals and groups about whose opinions we care.

Finally, the material self aspect of James' theory implies that material objects can also function as important representations of 'self.' One's physical body, possessions, clothes and the products of one's labour *all* function as a means in conveying one's self (James, 1890; 1999; Levin, 1992; Smith & Bond, 1999). James argues that the loss of any external or physical representation of the material self can have just as strong an impact on an individual as the loss of the more intrapsychic elements of self. This idea is also supported by other theorists (Belk, 1988; Goffman, 1961). Even the Marxist perspective asserts that when the products manufactured by an individual come to be owned by some other party, the original producer becomes alienated from that which he or she has created, and is thus robbed of a part of self (Marx, 1848; 1964). Clearly, some parts of self are valued more than others. However, those elements that are valued most will remain central components of the self, irrespective of whether they are material, social or spiritual in composition (Levin, 1992). The material nature of self continues to be supported in more recent literature. Belk's (1988; 1995) theory of the 'extended self' postulates that external objects, personal possessions, places, the work of our hands and even other people can *all* be viewed as extensions of one's self, provided they have some symbolic meaning to that individual (Kiesler & Kiesler, 2004).

Hence, according to James (1890, p.273), "...a man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his," whether it be of a spiritual, social or physical nature.

Although James' theory of self does not deny the existence of different selves in

different social situations, generally speaking, the theory advocates for the presence of a consistent, stable self; a self from which authenticity can be inferred.

Consequently, there is a great deal of research and literature supporting the essential nature of the self (Maracek & Meettee, 1972; McFarlin & Blascovich, 1981; Sullivan, 1953).

### *The Development of Self Within a Social Context*

The majority of Western theoretical constructions of self allow for a 'core' or 'essential' self though for many theorists, this essentialism is viewed as being heavily shaped by a person's social environment. Even so, the existence of a core self acknowledges the potential for authentic expression in behaviour, preferences etc. Personality psychologists such as Rogers (1951) and Erikson (1968) promote the conception of self as an entity which is cohesive and enduring. However, like James' notion of the 'social self' (1890), both Rogers and Erikson believe the self to be strongly influenced by its social environment. Rogers (1951) conceives of an authentic, essential self which continues to develop amidst a network of interpersonal relationships. Dependant on the unconditional positive regard and support received both from oneself and from others, self can develop either positively or negatively (See Rogers, 1951). Alternatively, Erikson (1968) asserts that through the process of trying out several roles, individuals eventually come to establish a stable, authentic identity. This identity is, however, ultimately constructed to fit the roles and expectations prescribed by the wider social context (See Erikson, 1959; McAdams, 2001).

Several sociological perspectives suggest that self is influenced by its social environments. The observations of sociologists such as Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) led to the development of the school of thought referred to as 'Symbolic Interactionism' (Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979). Like James, Rogers, and Erikson, the symbolic interactionist perspective is interested in the relationship between self and society. Although these theories do not deny the presence of an inner or core self, they are specifically concerned with how self is shaped and developed by social environments.

Cooley's (1902) 'looking glass theory of self' suggests that the self concept is developed through our perceiving and imagining the ways in which others perceive and react to us. Cooley proposes that individuals see their selves 'reflected' in the behaviour of others and posits that there are three components within this process. The first concerns beliefs about how we appear to others, the second concerns beliefs about how others will judge our appearance and behaviour, and finally, our own self-evaluation relates to how these beliefs make us feel (e.g. shame or pride etc). "Human life becomes, importantly, the process by which we mutually mirror and are mirrored by other selves, and in this interactive reflective process build selves" (Levin, 1992, p. 128).

Subsequent to Cooley, Mead (1934) conceives self as not existing at birth, but rather as developing within a social matrix. Mead discusses the notion of a 'generalised other', which emerges when individuals are concerned about how others will react to them. By being able to put one's self in the other person's place and observe and judge their own social performance through the (generalised) other

person's eyes, individuals can become aware of themselves and fashion their own self accordingly.

Mead (1934) also distinguishes between the concepts of 'I' and 'me'. The 'I' contemplates the responses of others and is the more internalised aspect of self. The 'me' is the external beliefs of others that the 'I' has then internalised to facilitate the development of self (Levin, 1992). Again, without social interaction, 'self' cannot be developed, nor maintained (Mead, 1934). Thus, the notion of a stable unitary self continues to be important within symbolic interactionist theory. As stated by Holland (1977, p. 101), "Although Mead recognises the possibility of pathological dissociation of the personality into component selves, he insists on the original unity of the person." Hence, if one subscribes to a symbolic interactionist perspective of the self, it is likely that they will also believe in the existence of authenticity.

From a slightly different stance, Goffman's (1959) 'dramaturgical' approach to self suggests that we, as actors, habitually engage in 'performances' when in the presence of other individuals. The other 'actors' around us at any particular moment determine what type of performance we will execute. Performers attempt to present an idealised version of a character that reflects the specific values of that audience and/or society. This is what Goffman terms 'impression management'. Although, Goffman's theory has been taken to suggest that there is no 'core' or 'authentic' self, this is never explicitly stated. Rather, role-playing may actually help shape an individual's 'self' given that people tend to define their self concept through the roles they play (e.g. a teacher, mother, friend). Goffman (1959) argues that useful roles

eventually become internalised with individuals perceiving themselves in terms of these very roles.

The above theories all emphasise the importance of society on the formation and upholding of an authentic self. As discussed by Levin (1992), 'self' is the result of an interaction between culture and personality. The important thing to understand here is that these constructions of self still allow for the notion of authenticity even if it is socially constructed. Hence, the ways in which individuals express their authentic self within the modern world is still largely contingent upon what society deems appropriate, fashionable, popular and so on (Elliot & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Markus & Nurius, 1986).

As illustrated in the last chapter, consumers have little difficulty deciding what is authentic and what is *not* (Cohen, 1988; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Grandey et al., 2005; Hochschild, 1983; Price, et al., 1995). For example, an individual may be passionate about Latino dancing and perceive themselves in terms of this role (E.g. I am a Latin-dancing goddess); however, others may judge that person to be non-authentic unless they *are* Latino. Consequently, it seems that as much as one may individually incorporate a product, practice, music style, clothing range etc. into one's self concept, others still have the ability to say 'No. This is not your self. This is not authentic to you'.

### *The Multiplicity of 'Self'*

As mentioned earlier, there are numerous definitions of what constitutes the self. Focusing on the complexity of selfhood in post-modern times, many theorists

have come to depict self as fluid and many-sided rather than singular and stable (Katzko, 2003; Laing, 1960; McAdams, 2001; Raggatt, 2002; Sokefeld, 1999). The phrase 'multiplicity of self' is used to describe these theoretical perspectives which describe 'self' as partitioned or divided (Ashmore & Jussim, 1997). Factions within the self have been proposed since James (1890) who stated that an individual "has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognise him" (p. 294). Many theorists across disciplines have continued on in this tradition, postulating self to be dynamic and multifaceted (Nietzsche, 1901/1968; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Mair, 1977; Martindale, 1980; Rosenberg, 1997).

Defining 'self' and therefore authenticity has become even more problematic in contemporary Western culture. Globalisation has resulted in individuals increasingly having to interact with a multitude of people across a diversity of contexts. Maintaining a cohesive identity across such environments is more complex than it was a century ago (Arnould & Price, 2000). For example, during the day Jill is an industrious medicine student, at night she is a mother messing around cheerfully with her family, on Fridays she catches up with girlfriends to have a gossip, and some nights she logs on to the Internet and assumes the identity of a blonde underwear model.

People often speak of being in 'two minds' about something, or make statements such as 'part of me would really like to do this, but the other part isn't so sure.' Most individuals can identify with these experiences, but what is the core entity underlying this diversity? Does such multiplicity really deny the possibility of authenticity?



To think of the self as unitary in today's world, some would say, is to long for simpler times where people played fewer roles, cultural change was slow, and one grew up to be one particular thing, fitting a culturally sanctioned niche grounded in tradition (McAdams, 1997, p.48).

Though people may yearn for the 'good old days' of singular authentic selves and their products, it is indeed possible anymore? Technological advancements such as plane flights, fax machines, mobile phones, email, chat rooms, voice mail etc. have radically enhanced our social connectedness (Harter, 1997). The media (especially radio, television, and movies) is largely responsible for drastically expanding the scope and type of relationships that are available to individuals. Consequently, individuals become enmeshed in a myriad of relationships, which leads them to become familiarised with the identities of many others, whether they be with friends, family, work colleagues, neighbours, soap stars or celebrities (Gergen, 1991; Harter, 1997). In accordance with the symbolic interactionist perspective, in order to function within a diverse range of relationships, individuals must constantly adapt their self to match the given social context (Mead, 1934; Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979).

“What began as an apparently singular, static, lump-like entity has become a multidimensional, multifaceted dynamic structure that is systematically implicated in all aspects of social information processing” (Markus & Wurf, 1987, p. 301). So what does this imply for the notion of authentic self? Interestingly, many multiplicity

theorists continue to promote self as having some core, essential foundation. For instance, Mair (1977) theorises that each individual is essentially a *community of selves*, however “each ‘part’ of the person needs the whole person to account for it” (p.142). Rosenberg (1997) further proposes multiple selves as a reality, but suggests also that these selves are organised into a unifying personal identity structure. The philosopher Nietzsche (1901/1968) also suggests that the experience of consciousness itself is derived from the interaction and struggle between the *multiple* facets of self. So it seems that where symbolic interactionists perceive self as unified though constantly developing through the process of social interaction, multiplicity theorists distinguish the individual as having many coexisting selves, all of which can be authentic in their appropriate contexts.

For example, as a starting point, every person has some ethnic origin, which *usually* communicates some sort of cultural or ethnic self (e.g. Australian, Chinese, Italian, etc). Furthermore, each person within any single cultural/ethnic group also has a multitude of defining roles that denotes distinctly different selves (e.g. work self, parent self, husband self, neighbour self, etc). These selves, when combined, make each individual unique. Thus, it is still possible to be authentic; though rather than having one single authentic self, a person may have multiple authentic selves. Even so, the presence of multiple authentic selves within a single person also permits inconsistencies. For example, if Michel is a French chef, of French ethnicity and culture, then cooking, per se, would be perceived as authentic to his ‘work self’. However, if the dish cooked is sushi, this may not be considered authentic to his cultural/ethnic self (French).

*The Myth of Self*

Other theorists, particularly post-modernists, are not so optimistic about the existence of self, viewing it as a social construction only. According to these theorists, the constant need to swap and change identities to adapt to social circumstances severely jeopardises the notion of a 'true' or 'core' self (See Anton, 2001; Gergen, 1991; Hall, 1996; Sandstrom & Fine, 2003; Weigert & Gecas, 2005). At the extreme is Cushman's (1990) theory of the 'empty self.' He argues that modern-day society has "shaped a self that experiences a significant lack of community, tradition and shared meaning" (p.600). In view of this, the absence of self essentially nullifies the possibility of being authentic. Cushman further postulates that as a result of these absences the self becomes 'empty,' which initiates desperate attempts by individuals to fill the void, compensating for what has been lost.

Chronic consumerism is one means of filling the emptiness. Advertising companies promote certain lifestyles and commodified images of self as purchasable (Cushman, 1990; Ewen, 1989). Consumer research frequently suggests that the desire to possess and consume is often related to insecurities within the self or dissatisfaction with one's self-concept (Richins & Dawson, 1992, Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982). It should be noted, however, that Cushman's discussion of self does not negate that a unified stable self can exist. It simply suggests that as a result of modernisation it is now empty. Indeed, this may explain why people continuously seek authentic products and experiences (Cohen, 1988). They are searching for something genuine and real to replenish the self.

### *Self Conceptualised from a Lay Perspective*

In conclusion, the theoretical definitions of the self discussed represent some of the fundamental conceptions of self which have been established during the last two centuries. Whatever the nature of the self, it seems that selfhood is rooted in some universal human experience. However, attempting to formulate what this is, and what it entails for the concept of authenticity, is a complex process (Baumeister, 1999).

Though the psychological and philosophical conceptions of self just discussed are purely theoretical in nature, there is certainly evidence to suggest that these theories are also reflected in lay notions of 'self' (Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Dweck, Chiu & Hong, 1995; Haslam, Bastian & Bissett, 2004; Haslam, Bain, Douge, Lee & Bastian, 2005; Hong, Chiu, Dweck & Sacks, 1997; Levy, Plaks, Hong, Chiu & Dweck, 2000; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). An example would be that some people viewed human character as being fixed and stable from birth onwards, where others see human character as more mutable (Haslam et al., 2004).

If an individual believes their personality shifts and adapts as the context changes, this individual may be less inclined to believe authenticity is achievable, given that it is incredibly difficult to act in accordance with a continually shifting identity. Furthermore, it may be hypothesised that such an individual would not be as persuaded by source authenticity as much as those who hold the belief that an enduring self exists (whether that be a belief in the existence of multiple authentic selves or a single cohesive authentic self). There is research to suggest that lay theories of self and personality can influence the attributions made when evaluating

others (Levy & Dweck, 1998; 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994). It consequently seems important that the current research examines how individuals' lay beliefs about the 'self' influence their susceptibility to source authenticity as a persuasion characteristic.

These lay theories of self will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 15, and their relationship with susceptibility to source authenticity will be empirically examined. In the meantime, given that both the 'self' and 'authenticity' are constructs and cannot be directly observed (Evans-Pritchard, 1987), it seems important to consider how others perceive an individual to be authentic. In other words, what observable cues are relied upon when judging that a source is being authentic to their true self? In the course of examining the persuasiveness of source authenticity it will be necessary to manipulate these indicators to ascertain the most effective means of inducing perceptions of authenticity. Some of these cues to the authentic self will now be discussed.

## CHAPTER 5

### Background

#### *Cues to the Authentic Self*

An individual's authenticity may be revealed to others in many different ways. This chapter will predominantly focus on enjoyment-based and culturally-based authenticity. However, provided there is some indication that the individual is being true to their self, it is possible for many characteristics to function as effective authenticity cues.

#### *The Self and Emotion*

There is a substantial amount of literature suggesting that the authentic self is perceptible via an individual's emotional states. As put by Rudinow (1994) "...authentic expression is expression derived from felt emotion" (p.132). Accordingly, Rahilly (1993) asserts that our most authentic displays usually involve an experience of affective intensity that is accompanied by a significantly heightened sense of one's somatic experience. This frequently involves an affective reaction; one may laugh, cry, or shriek in terror. In most cases there is a genuine, physiological display of expressive emotion. Our emotions and somatic reactions are considered the true indicators of what people authentically feel. Turner (1999) further asserts that a person's 'real' self is best revealed when they do something purely because they impulsively *wish* to, and because they *enjoy* it, not because it is the right or wrong thing to do, or because doing so is considered to be noble,

courageous or altruistic. If an individual does not enjoy something, it may be unlikely for that person to define themselves in terms of that thing. As stated by Levin (1992, p. 74), “if I don’t love it, it isn’t mine; it isn’t *part of me*.”

Furthermore, research by Dodson (1996) suggests that activities and/or material possessions associated with enjoyment are often incorporated into the self concept. In other words, those tasks or activities that an individual elects to do for *no other reason* than their genuine desire can be considered authentic to one’s character. These activities should usually bring enjoyment to that individual and suggest to others that “this is the ‘real’ me! Doing this comes authentically to me and I enjoy it.” Hence, genuine enjoyment conveys that the individual is internally driven and is free of manipulative intentions (‘I do this because I enjoy it, not because I want to make money off consumers’). This may result in enjoyment being a very effective persuasion strategy. If one’s enjoyment, or passion, is considered an indication that a person is being authentic to their true ‘self,’ it may be theorised that when it comes to producing a product, a product might be evaluated more favourably when the producer ‘enjoys’ producing such a product.

As previously discussed, there is research showing how simple signs of enjoyment, such as a genuine smile, have been used to operationalise authenticity (Grandey et al., 2005). Recall that in this research Grandey et al., (2005) examined whether consumers could detect the difference between authentic and non-authentic smiles, and if so, would the authenticity of the service provider affect evaluations of the service. If smiling was not an indicator of authenticity, it is doubtful that their sample would detect differences between authentic and non-authentic expressions.

Results, however, indicated that consumers *could* discriminate between authentic and fake smiles. Genuine smiles were perceived as authentic to that person, where fake smiles were considered to be lacking in authenticity and hence, manipulative. Given that smiling is generally a signal of one's enjoyment (Godoy, Reyes-Garcia, Huanca, Tanner, Leonard, McDade, et al., 2005; O'Quin & Aronoff, 1981), this study provides support for Turner's (1999) reasoning that enjoyment functions as an effective cue to authenticity.

Grandey et al.'s (2005) study also supports a positive relationship between producer authenticity and service evaluations. Service providers whose enjoyment (smiling) was perceived to be genuine were evaluated as providing better service than providers who were perceived to lack authenticity. Interestingly, they were also perceived as more competent. Hence, if enjoyment suggests that a role or task comes 'naturally' or authentically to a person's self, it may also signify natural ability, which may be what enhances perceptions of competence. Possible explanations underlying authenticity's persuasiveness will be discussed in the next chapter. Hence, it seems that in order to persuade consumers, it is essential to create the impression that they are witnessing an authentic performance by the source of persuasion, executed for *enjoyment* rather than a commercialised advertising performance just *pretending* to be authentic (Stern, 1994).

It is important to emphasise, however, that enjoyment is by no means the only affective expression of authenticity to influence product evaluations. As a commodity, music provides an excellent example of how a variety of emotions can operate as cues to the authenticity of a person, and ultimately affect product



evaluations. In the genre of the blues, or country and western, for example, many songs have melancholic themes. When artists within this genre of music write and appear genuinely downhearted, they seem authentic. It is unlikely that a sad ballad would be as popular, and therefore purchased, if the singer stated that he or she was happy when writing it.

Other poignant examples include Kurt Cobain, the lead singer of the band 'Nirvana', and Ian Curtis, the lead singer of 'Joy Division.' Both singers penned predominantly melancholic songs and acted despondently when interviewed. Hence, their depressive songs seemed authentic. As stated by Mazullo (2000), "The communion between Cobain's identity and his music allowed him to express himself authentically in his art" (p. 738). Berkenstadt and Cross' further comment in their 1998 book about Nirvana, stating "There was no line between who he (Cobain) was and what his music was, no artifice, no posing, no false front" (p. 80).

When both singers independently committed suicide, sales of both band's music skyrocketed. In essence, their self-inflicted deaths were the perfect testimony to fans that their music was indeed the product of an authentically tormented self. Consequently, their music gained further appeal. This possibly occurred because perceptions of authenticity increased; however, the increased sales may also have resulted from the albums being the only remaining means of staying connected with these singers. Take for example the following fan's quote about Kurt Cobain; "The music is the link to the man. With the music, he will never be dead" (Justin, 2004). The amplified popularity of these artists' albums may have been because songs could be perceived, in a sense, to retain an element of the artists' selves; "In some ways he

is not gone... He is alive in his music” (Zeke, 2004). Such comments support James’ (1890), Marx’s (1848/1964), and Belk’s (1988) notion of self extending to the products of one’s self, such as music. The music may hence function as representation of that artist’s self, and this is perhaps intensified when the physical person is no longer alive.

It would therefore seem that the appeal of the songs can, in large part, be credited to the fact that they were written (or function) as an expression of the producer’s authentic self. In order to be persuasive, however, there needs to be a congruency between the authentic emotional state of the producer and the product itself. A gleefully happy teen would not be considered authentic at singing a depressive ballad, and in the same way, a funeral director would not be evaluated favourably for being overly jovial when dealing with clients. Such emotions would simply not be considered authentic to their respective roles. Hence, it seems that emotions provide an effective medium for the expression of authenticity. For the purpose of the current research, producer enjoyment will be used to examine authenticity, given that it is easier to manipulate and has congruence with a greater range of products.

If enjoyment is an effective cue to authenticity, it is anticipated that a product should be evaluated more favourably when the producer enjoys producing the product than when they do not. Within the literature, there has been little research experimentally examining the persuasiveness of enjoyment as a cue to authenticity. As previously discussed, Price et al. (1995) emphasise that emotions are key indicators that an individual is being authentic. Consumer interviews conducted by

Price, et al. revealed that participants often associate positive sales experiences with service provider authenticity, and many participants in their study perceived the service provider's enjoyment to be a reflection of their authenticity. "...I felt he loved what he was doing. He wasn't really trying to sell me anything." (p. 16). Alternatively, when the service provider was perceived not to enjoy his or her job they were considered to lack authenticity and the sales interaction was deemed a negative experience by the consumer, "The guy seemed bored, annoyed to be there etc. He was efficient but showed little emotion... I wanted to be done and leave as soon as possible" (p. 16).

The response of the first consumer supports Turner's (1999) concept that when enjoyment seems authentic it appears internally motivated - an expression of a genuine self. In sum, there seems to be both theoretical and empirical grounds for the proposal that enjoyment is a valid cue to personal authenticity and could be influential when it comes to evaluating the products made and services provided by these sources.

#### *A Lineage of Self: The Persuasiveness of Cultural Authenticity*

If an individual's self comprises the totality of all their conscious, unconscious, mental and physical characteristics and attributes (Corsini, 2002), it could reasonably be assumed that an individual's racial ethnicity and its associated culture could also constitute key dimensions of their self-concept (Connell & Gibson, 2003; McGuire, McGuire, Child and Fujioka, 1978). If this is the case, a large part of the authenticity ascribed to any individual may arise from them being true to their

ethnicity and culture (Leach, 2001; Nobles, 1991). Given that culture is typically passed down from members of one generation to the next (Bates & Plog, 1990), being culturally authentic is perhaps more complex than being true to a single self. It essentially involves acting in congruence with the collective beliefs, values, customs, practices, and behaviours of the *lineage* of selves who have defined themselves in terms of that culture.

The term 'culture' extends beyond ethnicity (e.g. gender, class, religion, sexuality, occupation, age group, etc.), however, and it is certainly possible for individuals to be members of different cultural groups simultaneously.

Unfortunately, because culture (like self and authenticity) is not directly observable (Beals & Hoijer, 1953; White, 1959), an individual's racial ethnicity (e.g. Brazilian, Italian, Indian etc.) may provide the most salient cue to observers that a target person possesses the cultural values corresponding to their ethnic appearance. Consequently, cultures pertaining to one's ethnic group are perhaps the most salient to individuals, and for the purpose of this thesis, seem most effective for examining how cultural authenticity influences product evaluations. Any subsequent discussion will relate specifically to the culture of ethnic groups.

There is a great deal of literature discussing the value of, and interest in culturally authentic products (Cohen, 1988; 2004; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Lowenthal, 1992; MacCannell, 1973; Martin, 1993; McIntosh, 2004; Swanson, 2004). Evidently, virtually all products and services have originated from some ethnic culture; however, their cultural origins remain more salient for some products than others. It seems that people will only recognise a product as specifically cultural

when it is thought to symbolise the culture from which it comes (Arnoldi, Geary & Hardin, 1996; Lowenthal, 1992; Moore, 2002). Furthermore, producing that product must be viewed as a genuine cultural practice rather than a ploy to commodify culture (Cohen, 2004; Cornet, 1975; Duffek, 1983; White, 1959). For example, sashimi originates from Japanese culture, and the art of preparing this dish remains a strong custom within this culture which would continue irrespective of Westerners' interest in the product. When Westerners eat sashimi, the experience indeed feels distinctly non-western, and individuals may feel as if they are directly participating in, or even consuming, Japanese culture.

Coffee is another good example of how a product can come to symbolically represent a culture. Within South America, coffee epitomises Brazilian ethos. In fact, even the word for "breakfast" in Portuguese (*café da manhã*) means 'morning coffee' (Wikipedia, 2005). Interestingly, coffee actually originates from Ethiopia and has only been grown and produced in Brazil since the early 1700s (Ukers, 1953). However, the production of coffee seems justifiably authentic to Brazilian culture, in that Brazil has fashioned its culture around the production of this product and coffee has in many ways come to define Brazil as a nation. Hence, products will be perceived as authentic *provided* that their production seems genuine to that culture and its members.

It may also be reasoned that in order to be perceived as culturally symbolic, a product must continue to be produced by someone from within that culture. Without a producer, many products would not exist. To ensure authenticity, it seems crucial that their producer be a member of the appropriate culture for cultural products made

by humans. Consider the example of a piece of art painted by a Caucasian artist in the Aboriginal style. It is unlikely that people would think of this piece as an authentic Indigenous painting. Hence, evaluations of product authenticity seem contingent on the cultural authenticity of their producer (See Brown, 2001; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Martin, 1993).

For example, a federal court order was recently implemented in Australia to prevent manufacturers from selling Australasian indigenous art as ‘authentic’ unless the products are actually painted or carved by a person of Aboriginal descent (Rose, 2003). Evans-Pritchard (1987) notes that in Santa Fe, Mexico, only jewellery made by native Indians may be evaluated as authentic, and that non-native producers “posed a threat to traditional Indian culture by copying Indian jewellery and selling it” (p. 290). Research within the context of tourism further suggests that tourists measure product authenticity in relation to the culture and ethnicity of a producer or service provider (Brown, 2001; Cohen, 1988; Cornet, 1975; McIntosh, 2004). Therefore, when a product’s cultural origins are viewed as important, *only* members of this culture will be accepted as culturally ‘authentic’ at producing such products. One possible explanation is that only those descending from the appropriate cultural group will be perceived to possess the *knowledge* necessary for producing a *genuine* cultural artefact in the ‘traditional’ or ‘original’ way. Persons outside that culture would be considered to lack authenticity and hence their product may seem little more than a cultural imitation at best. For example, with regard to the performance of blues music, many white musicians’ attempts at performing within this genre come across as lacking authenticity (Rudinow, 1994).

McIntosh's (2004) interviews with tourists in New Zealand further emphasise the importance of having an authentic service provider to present the sightseeing information. According to participants interviewed, having a Maori tour guide during their journey through New Zealand provided added value to the experience in comparison to having a non-authentic guide from outside of the Maori culture. In her 1987 discussion paper, Evans-Pritchard also provides an excellent illustration of how producer authenticity affects product evaluations. She describes observing the experience of a Canadian tourist who purchased a necklace thought to be made by an Indian producer. However, on being informed that it was actually made by a non-Indian producer, the tourist immediately attempted to return the piece and get her money refunded. Accordingly, tourists perceived the jewellery made by Indians to be of considerable value, and they paid far more for these items than those made by non-Indian producers.

What is striking about this observation is that it strongly suggests that the invisible attribute of producer authenticity can dramatically motivate an individual's acceptance or rejection of a product as a valid cultural artefact and can thus influence perceptions of product quality and product value. Needless to say, the advertising industry has already taken advantage of this persuasive phenomenon. Recently witnessed examples are McCain's advertisement for microwave lasagne, which has Italian women dancing around with the lasagne in their hands, attempting to insinuate that the product is made by authentic Italian women (Channel Ten, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2005, 7:10pm), and Dilmah's advertisement which depicts Sri Lankan

workers picking tea leaves which will be used to make authentic Ceylon tea (Channel Ten, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2005 8:17 pm).

It is, of course, entirely possible for individuals *not* to identify with the culture typically associated with their ethnicity (e.g. a Chinese person who has never lived in China may adopt Australian culture rather than Chinese culture). In spite of this, when it comes to persuading consumers, this incongruence may not be important. Any perceived homogeneity between an individual producer and the appropriately authentic culture (such as ethnicity) may therefore suggest the individual possesses the traits necessary to produce a culturally authentic product (Rubin & Badea, 2007). Individuals who ‘look the part’ will seem ‘outwardly real’ (Corsini, 2002; Hamm, 1995).

Cultural stereotypes (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994) and judgements of representativeness (Tversky, & Kahneman, 1974) are likely involved here. The ‘representativeness heuristic’ holds that individuals make judgements about a target’s group membership based purely on how representative they seem of a particular group (Plous, 1993; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Directly related to this heuristic are stereotypes, which are typically defined as a generalised representation of the attributes associated with a particular group membership, which are generally learned through social learning or direct experience with group members (Smith & DeCoster, 1998). “People can reflect on their own past experiences and summarise them, perhaps in the form of a symbolically represented rule” (Smith & DeCoster, 2000, p. 116). Hence, if a producer is of the appropriate ethnicity, and that ethnicity has a documented history of producing that product, individuals may rely on the



representativeness heuristic and stereotypes to then classify that producer as culturally authentic, given the producer seems representative of that stereotype.

*Alternatively*, the fact that culture is passed from generation to generation may imply to some that culture has a heritable element. If consumers believe that the skills, traits and proclivities essential for producing a cultural artefact are contained with the ethnic 'bloodline' of that culture, it wouldn't matter if a producer was separated from that culture physically. Theoretically, this may seem implausible, given that the consensus of theorists maintain culture to be transmitted through learning (Bates & Plog, 1990), and "is passed on from generation to generation *independently* of the biological genes" (Parsons, 1949, p. 8). However, from a lay person's point of view, the general rules of cultural transmission may seem quite elusive. People often speak of culture as if it has some physiological foundation. Take the following comment by Lowenthal (1992) regarding what distinguishes an authentic musician from one that lacks cultural authenticity, "However expert and empathetically attuned modern performers are, they can never wholly internalise music of the past, feel it in their blood and bones like a native (p.189).

In an informal test of this notion, a colleague was asked 'do you believe a Japanese person could make better sushi, than a person from another ethnicity, *even* if that Japanese individual had grown up in Australia and lacked previous experience making this product?' Her response was;

The Japanese person might not know how to make sushi *at that point in time*, but I would definitely think that they would learn

more *quickly* than someone not from that culture, given that they are Japanese, and once they knew how to do it, it would probably be better” (D.L. Bonde, personal communication, October 13, 2005).

Whilst purely suggestive, this comment implies that at least some element of culture is perceived to be contained within the genes of that producer simply by being born Japanese. Interesting to ponder is the question of what would happen if the non-authentic sushi maker actually had previous experience with making sushi. Would the Japanese individual still be perceived as better? To consider culture as a genetically transmittable entity implies an element of magical thinking, in the sense that it promotes cultural skills and abilities to be passed through the ancestral line of that culture. According to Grayson and Martinec (2004), perceptions of authenticity often depend on the simultaneous application of imagination and belief. The relationship between magical thinking and producer authenticity will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Within daily life, there are cases where individuals who are *not* authentic actually happen to excel at some culturally incongruent custom, practice or behaviour. Moreover, their credibility or expertise cannot be undermined by their lack of cultural authenticity. Take, for instance, the white rap artist Eminem. Though he is not black, he remains the highest selling rap artist of all time. In fact, since 1999, Eminem has sold more than \$1 billion worth of records to consumers (McCollum, 2005). From these sales figures it seems that cultural authenticity may

not be everything (although it could be contested that having grown up in a low socio-economic district of Detroit, Eminem may be considered authentic in other respects). There does seem to be some initial confusion, however, when a culturally non-authentic individual is successful. Eminem is just the latest in a long line of white musicians performing culturally incongruent music (e.g. The Rolling Stones, Elvis Presley, The Beatles etc.) Perhaps this perplexity is best summed up by comedian Chris Rock (personal communication, 1993) who stated in one of his stand up comedy shows,

You know the world is going crazy when the best rapper is a white guy (Eminem), the best golfer is a black guy (Tiger Woods), the tallest basketball player is Chinese (7'6"), and Germany doesn't want to go to war (in Iraq).

This comment suggests that society has definite ideas about who should be considered culturally authentic and who should not. It would certainly be of theoretical interest to investigate, however, to examine how products made by expert/credible (yet non-authentic) producers compare with those made by authentic producers. This will also be examined within the current thesis.

In conclusion, it can be argued that being true to one's self also involves being true to one's ethnicity and culture. When an individual acts in congruence with the collective beliefs, values, customs, practices and behaviours of their culture, they can be said to be authentic, both to their self and to the lineage of selves who are

defined by that culture. As discussed, there is also some evidence to suggest that an individual's cultural authenticity is important when it comes to evaluating products recognised as having strong cultural origins. As long as these products are produced by individuals who are members of the appropriate culture, the product will also be perceived as authentic, which typically results in more favourable evaluations of that product's quality and value.

#### *The Pros and Cons of Emotion Based Authenticity and Cultural Authenticity*

A producer will be perceived as authentic at producing a product if their product is thought to clearly reflect who that person genuinely is (Martinec & Grayson, 2004). For the purpose of this thesis, both producer enjoyment and ethnic culture will be the primary cues examined as persuasive indicators of producer/service provider authenticity. These are just two possible cues for assessing the authenticity of a producer; other valid emotions (e.g. sadness, fear, etc) and cultural classifications (e.g. gender, class, religion etc) may also signify authenticity and be effective source characteristics when it comes to the production of specific products.

Although it is anticipated that both cultural and enjoyment-based authenticity will be persuasive, it is proposed that cultural and enjoyment authenticities will differ in several respects. In the case of enjoyment-based authenticity, consumers are judging the production process as authentic to the *single* self of the producer *only*. Conversely, cultural authenticity is concerned with how authentic the production process is to a *culture* (or lineage) of selves (given that the ability to produce the

product has been passed down through generations). Whether this makes cultural authenticity more persuasive remains to be seen, nevertheless, this thesis undertakes to investigate this possibility.

Obviously, there are fewer products/services with which cultural authenticity can be utilised as a persuasion strategy in comparison to enjoyment authenticity. Generally speaking, it is assumed that producer enjoyment could be persuasive in respect to almost any product. The only circumstances where enjoyment would not be perceived as authentic would be in contexts where enjoyment is inappropriate and another emotion, such as anger, misery or fear, have greater congruence with the relevant product. Alternatively, cultural authenticity is only relevant when the production of the particular product is culturally specific. Although the initial studies within this thesis will examine the persuasiveness of both enjoyment and cultural authenticity independently, it seems both interesting *and* necessary to empirically examine how these two types of authenticity interact. It is proposed that when circumstances permit, a product will be most appealing when both cues are present. However, it is theorised that these cues reflect different psychological processes, which will now be discussed in greater detail.

## CHAPTER 6

### Background

#### *Why and How is Producer Authenticity Persuasive?*

In the course of this review, several strands of evidence alluding to the persuasiveness of producer/service provider authenticity have emerged. Plausible explanations for why producer authenticity may be persuasive in influencing product evaluations will now be discussed.

#### *Producer Authenticity Signifies 'Natural Expertise'*

Within recent decades, the Western world has developed a strong desire for that which is natural (Rozin et al., 2004). When we judge an activity or task as being authentic to an individual, we often expect that it will come to that person with relative ease, and that the person will consequently be somewhat proficient at it. Consider common expressions such as “it comes naturally to him/her.” More often than not, this phrase is used to rationalise why someone seems good at something without having to try. Hence, it may be argued that producer authenticity signifies a natural ability which may consequently entitle a producer to be considered credible at making that product - a *natural expert* so to speak. Furthermore, there seems to be a subtle implication that authentic producers don't need to exert a great deal of effort to acquire the skills necessary for producing that product, simply because doing this is already part of *who they authentically are*. A good example of this is the British aristocracy at Oxford/Cambridge Universities. Here, well-respected intellectuals go by 'Mr.' rather than 'Dr.' This implies that they didn't need to complete a

dissertation in order to be accepted as an intellectual. Rather, it came naturally to them. Particularly for individuals who appear culturally authentic, it may actually seem rather *peculiar* if these producers/service providers had to be formally taught how to make a product specific to their culture. It should be noted, however, that while reflecting lay perceptions, anthropologists, for example, would certainly argue that all cultural practices are learned (Bates & Plog, 1990).

Rudinow (1994) concurs with the proposal of natural expertise; “Authenticity is a value – a species of the genus credibility” (p. 129). Rudinow further suggests that as a result of being authentic that person exhibits that he/she possesses and demonstrates a genuine understanding and fluency for the process. Accordingly, when we encounter a producer who seems authentic (emotionally *or* culturally) we may instinctively trust that their product will be of a high quality. There is certainly some support for authenticity promoting perceptions of expertise and product quality. As stated by Kivy (1995); “Authentic’ has become, or is close to becoming, a synonym for ‘good’” (p.1). Cebrzynski, (2005) further postulates that “Authentic is often a codeword for quality” (p. 8).

As alluded to in the last chapter, it would certainly be interesting to establish whether natural expertise associated with authenticity would be more persuasive than expertise acquired through formal training. Rozin et al., (2004) discuss the Western world’s strong desire for ‘naturalness’ in recent decades. According to Jones (1989), “priority is typically assigned to uncontrollable native ability factors while motivation and learned skills take a back seat.” (p.480). In order to add to the literature on source characteristics, it seems necessary for producer authenticity to be

processed differently from more typical manipulations of credibility. Although learned expertise is persuasive in its own right, it may be proposed that someone who had learned expertise may be perceived as having to work harder, given that producing that product is not natural to them. As stated by Jones (1989), any “performance may be the reflection of high effort compensating for low ability (learned expertise), or of high ability requiring minimal effort (natural expertise)” (p.478). Furthermore, their product may not be considered as high quality a product compared to one made by someone who has this expertise naturally ‘running through their veins’ so to speak. For example, it seems likely that an Indigenous Aboriginal artist would be perceived as painting a better Aboriginal-styled painting than a Caucasian artist who has been trained in Indigenous art. Furthermore, because the process seems natural for an authentic producer, they may also be considered more persuasive than a non-authentic expert, in the sense that their products may appear less commercial, made for intrinsic reasons rather than extrinsic.

Thus, accompanying producer authenticity seems to be the perception that that producer doesn’t have to exert a great deal of time or effort to produce a superior product. It is important to acknowledge, however, that there will be times where being authentic may involve exerting *greater* time and care into the production of a product. This effort does not signify that it comes any less naturally, is any more difficult or requires more exertion. Rather, when a product’s production can be considered authentic to that producer’s self, it is also possible that that producer will take a great deal of pride in both the item and its production. Especially when the process brings the producer genuine enjoyment, it may be expected that producers



would exert more time and energy into an object's production than a person who is less authentic and finds it less enjoyable. There is certainly research indicating that perceptions of increased effort investment in a product results in higher product evaluations, provided the effort doesn't seem laborious (Kruger, Wirtz, van Boven & Altermatt, 2004). Kruger et al. assert that a product "will seem inferior to one that comes more easily, if for example the latter is thought to be a product of inspiration, and the former a struggle" (p.97).

#### *Products as a Connection between the Consumer and That Which Is Authentic*

Throughout this review, it has been commented that as a result of postmodernism people have come to crave that which is genuine. More than ever before, there seems to be an obsession with that which is 'real' as opposed to the fake or non-authentic (Boyle; 2004; Goulding, 2000). It may be proposed that by purchasing authentically produced products, consumers are able to experience for themselves a sense of genuineness in a world where authenticity has become increasingly rare (Gergen, 1991; Lewis & Bridger, 2000; Tomkins, 2005). For example, when we observe a producer showing genuine enjoyment whilst making a product, we may feel that the producer does this for the love of it, rather than any external motive (Turner, 1999).

As previously discussed, products, by definition, need to be made by authentic producers in order to be classified as authentic themselves (Cornet, 1975; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Fine, 2003). This further justifies why producer authenticity may be so important to the consumer. Unless the producer is

perceived as authentic, a product itself may do little to provide consumers with the experience of authenticity. If anything, the product may serve as a negative reminder of missing out on the 'real deal'. For example, going to Chinatown for a night of Asian cuisine is unlikely to provide consumers with a sense that their dishes are genuinely authentic if the chefs were African Americans rather than Asian. The consumers' desire to experience authenticity is unlikely to have been fulfilled, especially to the degree it would have been had the producers been authentic. Souvenirs provide another effective example, serving as personal reminders of authentic places travelled (Grennberg, 2000; Kim & Littrell, 1999). However, it is proposed that these would not be as valuable a reminder if they were not made by authentic producers (Evans-Pritchard, 1987).

Particularly for products that are cultural icons, value is somewhat reliant on the sense of connectedness between consumers and authentic producers (Connell & Gibson, 2003). When consumers feel they are in the presence of something authentic, they can feel transported to the context to which the object is related, feeling a sense of connection to the authentic culture. Hence, authentically made products and services may provide consumers with a connection to that which is authentic (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). Cohen suggests that people will often abandon the artificiality of modernity and embrace other cultures "to participate vicariously in the authentic lives of others" (p.107).

Cohen (2004) does suggest, however, that sophisticated forms of "covertly staged authenticity" (p.107) may be enough to satisfy consumers, given that more often than not individuals lack the knowledge to distinguish real cultural authentic

practices from the pastiche practices staged for consumers. Furthermore, the collecting of authentically produced products may allow consumers to portray to other individuals that they too participate in authentic experiences through the owning of such products. Given this discussion about producer authenticity being connected to the consumer through a product or service, it now seems necessary to discuss how this may occur.

#### *Products as an Extension of the Authentic Producer's Self*

As discussed in chapter four, several theorists have argued that external objects can be viewed as extensions of one's self (Belk, 1988; 1995; James, 1890; 1999; Kiesler & Kiesler, 2004; Locke & Axtell, 1968; Smith & Bond, 1999). Many of these theorists have also suggested that the greater the control an individual has over an object, the more representative of one's self that object will seem (Belk, 1988; Locke & Axtell, 1968; McClelland, 1951). This seems particularly relevant in the context of the current research, given that this thesis is interested in examining the authenticity of *producers*, and what better control could one have over a product than when they are the producer of it? Accordingly, as emphasised by English philosopher, John Locke, the process of labour is perhaps the most effective means of maintaining control over and "extending" one's personality and 'self' into objects produced (Locke & Axtell, 1968). James (1999) also asserts that "...the parts of our wealth most intimately ours, are those which are saturated with our labour" (p. 70).

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) maintain that the energy invested and the products resulting from one's labour can be regarded as a part of

one's extended self, because they have emerged from the self. In regard to one's labour, research by Kiesler and Kiesler (2004) experimentally examined how the extended self affected people's evaluations of a product they made. In this experiment, participants were asked to create a pet rock. When participants were told to design the rock to keep for themselves, they evaluated their rocks to be symbolic of their own self significantly more than designers in a control condition (who were told to decorate the rock to give away). Additionally, these participants also reported personality traits for the rock that were consistent with those they reported for themselves, and showed less desire to sell the product. This research thus provides strong evidence that the products of one's labour are often considered as extensions of the self. However, it is anticipated that this will only occur for products that are considered representative of who one is.

### *The Extended Self and Consumerism*

The key to comprehending consumer behaviour often requires an understanding as to how consumers actually perceive products (Belk, 1995; O'Shaughnessy, 1987). As previously discussed, the self extends beyond both one's psychological realm and physiological being, to material products (Belk, 1988; 1995; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; James, 1890; 1999; Kiesler & Kiesler, 2004; Locke & Axtell, 1968; Smith & Bond, 1999). However, do people believe in the notion of an extended self? Common expressions such as "putting one's heart and soul into it" and "I gave it my all" suggest that some people do. It is not expected

that such beliefs will be held by everyone equally, but would be motivated by the extent to which an individual believes in the existence of self at all.

However, if consumers *do* believe in the notion of an extended self, they might also believe that somehow, each product is infused with the psychic energy, or ‘self’ of its authentic producer. As observed by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981), “When someone invests psychic energy in an object - a thing, another person, or an idea – that object becomes charged with the energy of the agent” (p.8). Regardless of whether the item produced is of a material or abstract nature, it seems that the producer will be considered to forever retain *some* identity with that item, so long as they were invested in the product and considered the process of creating that product central to their self concept (Levin, 1992).

According to Belk (1988), it is possible that consumers seek to purchase possessions that “retain a part of the extended self of *valued* others” (p. 149). This idea is in accordance with symbolic self-completion theory (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982) and Cushman’s empty self theory (1990), which suggest that consumers who feel that certain aspects of their self-concept are lacking will often consume to compensate and use relevant products to symbolically represent to others that they are effectively complete.

Hence, when consumers purchase an authentically produced product, they may believe that they are gaining *not only* a product, but also the ability to be connected through this product to the self of its authentic producer. Therefore, the authentic self or authentic culture represented by that product essentially becomes a commodity in its own right, which has the ability to be bought and sold on the open

market. It may be that this 'extended self' is what makes producer authenticity persuasive. Locke and Axtell (1968) also suggest that the value of a product will often depend on how much self goes into them, and it may be the investment of self that causes authentically produced items to perhaps seem more 'human' than their mass produced equivalents.

It is therefore theorised that both consumers' desire for the authentic and their perceptions of authentic producers being naturally expert, function as valid explanations for the persuasiveness of both enjoyment authenticity and cultural authenticity. These factors may not be mutually exclusive and may in fact influence product evaluations concurrently. It is acknowledged that other factors may contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the psychological processes underlying the persuasiveness of producer authenticity. It is anticipated that the current research will provide insight into some of these processes, such as a tendency for magical thinking.

#### *Producer Authenticity and Magical Thinking*

Grayson and Martinec (2004) observe that perceptions of authenticity will often depend on the simultaneous application of imagination and belief. Some of the psychological processes discussed in relation to producer authenticity imply an element of magical thinking, for example, believing that a service or product is infused with the authentic self of its producer (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

Magical thinking is characterised by the lack of a realistic relationship between cause and effect (Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994; Rozin & Nemeroff, 1990; Zusne & Jones, 1989). Common examples of magical thinking include superstitions and even some religious beliefs (Frazer, 1911; Wiseman & Watt, 2004). Initially an anthropological concept, magical thinking has been documented within many cultures and across recorded history, suggesting that such thought processes are intrinsic to humanity (Frazer, 1911; Rozin, Haidt & McCauley, 2000). Perhaps the most common form of magical thinking has been labelled the ‘law of contagion,’ which holds that when two objects come into contact, even briefly, properties are permanently transmitted between them (Frazer, 1911; Mauss, 1902/1972). As postulated by Nemeroff and Rozin (1994) “...through contact, some ‘essence’ or ‘soul stuff,’ some yet undefined contagious entity, may be transmitted” (p.159).

Contagion typically flows from a source, often through a vehicle (e.g., clothing or food), to another person. Examples of contagious beliefs in everyday life include celebrity token hunting, valuing of family heirlooms, and the reluctance of many individuals to share or buy used clothing. Sources capable of producing positive contagion are usually valued by the person (e.g. loved ones, celebrities etc). Sources capable of producing negative contagion are generally disliked by the person (e.g. enemies, diseased people, those considered evil etc) (Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994). The basic psychology motivating such thought (either explicitly or implicitly), is that things which have once been in contact with each other *continue* to act on each other at a distance even after physical contact has been severed. According to Nemeroff and Rozin (1994) contagion can occur in several ways. The first does not entail

contact per se, but rather involves pure association (e.g. the object serves as a pleasant or unpleasant reminder of the source). The second regards the passage of a material-like essence (e.g. hair attached to voodoo doll, germs, etc), and the third is the passage of a spiritual, nonmaterial essence.

It was proposed that to believe in the notion of an extended self implies a degree of magical thinking. Nemeroff and Rozin (1994) concur, stating “Underlying the law of contagion is the ‘primitive notion’ of the extended self and the interaction of this self with other selves” (p.161). To believe that a material object can be infused with elements of a person’s self clearly shows signs of contagious thinking. After all, material objects are inanimate. However, according to Kivy (1995), authenticity confers upon a product, service, or performance, some magical property it did not possess before. In the context of the current research, to believe that a product can become a reified extension of a producer’s authentic self implies that both ‘self’ and ‘authenticity’ operate as a spiritual, non-material essence which travels from the authentic producer to their product during the process of labour. Furthermore, it may even be proposed that this essence can then transfer to the consumer after they come to own the product, providing them with a sense of authenticity. In consequence, the selves of both producer and consumer become *connected* through the consumer’s ownership of the product.

The second type of magical thinking is referred to as the ‘law of similarity,’ which suggests that things which are felt to be similar in some properties are then considered to be fundamentally similar in general (Nemeroff & Rozin, 2000). In other words, “the image equals the object” (Subbotsky, 2004, p.337). This magical



belief subsequently seems to rely on judgements of representativeness, in some part (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), and may partly explain why individuals (when evaluating a culturally authentic product) may perceive anyone who ethnically ‘looks the part’ to be culturally authentic (Corsini, 2002). This logic may occur even when the producer fails to identify with that culture. Given that magical beliefs seem possible predictors of whether individuals will be persuaded by producer authenticity, it seems necessary to examine some of these beliefs when it comes time to examine the psychological processes underlying this phenomenon.

*Authenticity: Central vs. Peripheral Cue?*

In light of the literature reviewed, it seems necessary to return to where this thesis started: *persuasion*. Given the evidence that product evaluations are higher when a producer is authentic (Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Grandey, et al., 2005; McIntosh, 2004; Price et al., 1995), it is proposed that both the cultural authenticity *and* enjoyment authenticity of a producer will be effective persuasion cues. A further question to be asked, however, is ‘are these cues processed via the central route or the peripheral route?’

Firstly, it is imperative to emphasise that producer authenticity is different from the more typical source characteristics examined within the persuasion literature (e.g. sales people, endorsers, information providers etc) which are often examined as peripheral cues. Most noteworthy, is the fact that producers and service providers ultimately have the potential to influence how a product or service turns out. It is therefore acknowledged that within many contexts producer authenticity

should seem relevant to product evaluations and subsequently should be processed as a central merit of the product. “It makes sense that authenticity would generally be perceived as relevant to the true merits of the product when scrutinised carefully” (R.E. Petty, personal communication, September 18, 2005).

Recall that attitude change via the central route typically involves relatively extensive and thoughtful information-processing of the central merits of a product (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; 1983; 1986; Petty & Wegner, 1999). Provided that individuals possess both the ability and the motivation to process all product information (high elaboration), it seems likely that producer authenticity (in conjunction with any other relevant product characteristics) will influence evaluative judgements of a product. Hence, for relevant products, individuals may thoughtfully evaluate whether the producer is authentic, and if so, incorporate this characteristic into their criteria for evaluating the product.

It also seems feasible that producer authenticity may even *bias* the interpretation of other relevant information. For example, two producers may be perceived to be equally expert and knowledgeable until one is said to be authentic, which then causes evaluations of the authentic producer’s expertise and knowledge to increase. Thus, the meaning of other presented information may be changed as a result of producer authenticity. Research does support this proposal, suggesting that in situations where elaboration likelihood is high, an argument processed centrally may also bias perceptions of other arguments (Petty et al., 1987).

Interestingly, producer authenticity also has the potential to function effectively in conditions where people rely on the peripheral processing of

information. Petty and Wegner (1999) assert that when utilising the peripheral route “...attitude changes are based on a variety of processes that typically require less cognitive effort” (p. 42). As discussed, the peripheral route is often characterised by the use of simple decision rules, stereotypes or heuristics (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Petty & Cacioppo, 1983). Furthermore, there is much research suggesting that source characteristics are most persuasive when elaboration likelihood is low (Cacioppo et al., 1986; Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Petty et al., 1987; Petty et al., 1997; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; 1984). Especially considering that authenticity is viewed as a genus for credibility (Rudinow, 1994), it seems logical that this cue, like source credibility, would be persuasive in contexts where elaboration likelihood is low.

Van Overwalle and Siebler (2005) observe that “heuristic processing implies that people form or change their attitudes by using situational cues that automatically give rise to stored decision rules such as ‘experts can be trusted,’ ‘majority opinion is correct’ and ‘long messages are valid messages’(p.244). Similarly, individuals persuaded by source authenticity may simply rely upon an “authentic is good” heuristic in circumstances where the ability or motivation to thoughtfully process information is limited (low elaboration). Recall Kivy’s (1995) statement “the word ‘authentic’ has become, or is close to becoming, a synonym for ‘good’” (p.1), and Cebrynski’s (2005) postulation that “authentic is often a codeword for quality” (p. 8).

Evaluations of producer authenticity and the use of the proposed authenticity heuristic may also rely on stereotypes and heuristics [e.g. Italians are authentic at

cooking pasta (stereotype), this producer seems stereotypical of an authentic Italian (representativeness heuristic), and therefore the Italian producer must also be good at cooking pasta (authenticity heuristic)].

Whilst this authenticity heuristic may seem persuasive, it may be relatively ineffective in situations where low elaboration is the result of possessing little knowledge of a product (Woodside & Davenport, 1974). If, for example, a person evaluating a product has no knowledge of its cultural origins, it may seem useless for them to apply the authenticity heuristic, primarily because it would be impossible for that person to assess how culturally authentic the producer is.

Finally, more recent contributions to persuasion research may have important implications for understanding the cognitive processing of producer authenticity. For example, both Kruglanski and Thompson (1999a) and van Overwalle and Siebler (2005) claim the central and peripheral routes to be functionally equivalent, differing only in the degree of cognitive effort required to process simple versus complex information. Kruglanski and Thompson (1999a) demonstrated that it is indeed possible for a central merit to have a persuasive impact under peripheral processing conditions, provided that the cue is relatively simple to process. Conversely, once a peripheral cue becomes cognitively complex to process (e.g. source expertise expressed by means of a lengthy resume) it will only impact judgements when elaboration likelihood is high (Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999a).

Based on this logic, if source authenticity is cognitively simple to process, it seems reasonable to presume it could be processed under low elaboration *and* high elaboration. This is interesting given that in many low elaboration contexts, the

person typically comes to rely on highly salient peripheral cues, which are generally *irrelevant* to the product itself (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; 1986).

The only distinction may be that under high elaboration, *all* product merits are likely to be considered, with producer authenticity being only one of these. When elaboration likelihood is low, individuals may concentrate on the most effortless cue to process, which may indeed be producer authenticity. If this is the case, it may be immensely profitable for advertisers. Provided that producer authenticity is perceived as genuine, it seems that it will be persuasive irrespective of the consumers' cognitive capacity or motivation to process the information presented. As a final point, it is important to appreciate that if an individual *does not* believe in the notion of authenticity, it is unlikely that this producer characteristic will be evaluated as a central merit *or* a peripheral cue.

### *Conclusions*

In conclusion, this literature review has brought to attention several key issues pertinent to the area of persuasive communication. Firstly, over the last few decades it seems people have become increasingly sceptical of the ulterior motives underlying traditional advertising strategies. Advertisers may now need to utilise persuasion strategies based on genuineness and authenticity. There seems to be a visible gap in the persuasion literature, however, concerning the persuasiveness of authenticity as a source characteristic, particularly with regard to a products' producer. Although there has been a great deal of research on product authenticity, most of the literature pertaining to the persuasiveness of *producer* authenticity has

been predominantly qualitative and relied extensively on consumer interviews (Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Grandey et al., 2005; McIntosh, 2004; Price et al., 1995). There has been little to no quantitative research experimentally examining the persuasiveness of producer/service provider authenticity. In fact, very little research has examined producer characteristics in any sense. This will be the key focus for the studies in this thesis.

Theoretical arguments presented suggest that the enjoyment and cultural ethnicity of a source should be effective cues to personal authenticity, in that they seem to function as obvious indicators that a person is being true to their genuine self (which may include their culture). Furthermore, observations within the literature and examples from everyday life provide encouraging evidence that these cues to producer authenticity do influence product evaluations in positive ways (Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Grandey et al., 2005; McIntosh, 2004; Price et al., 1995).

Accordingly, this thesis aims to experimentally examine whether products made by a culturally or emotionally authentic producer will be evaluated superior in quality and considered more valuable than those made by a non-authentic producer. If producer authenticity *is* found to influence product evaluations, the current research aims to examine possible boundary conditions by which authenticity may lose its persuasive appeal (e.g. comparison with other producer characteristics, elaboration ability, etc). A variety of psychological processes hypothesised to underlie this persuasive phenomenon will also be examined to identify whether certain psychological processes render some individuals more susceptible to the influence of producer authenticity than others. It is assumed that these measures may

relate to individual differences in need for cognition, superstitious beliefs, conceptions of self, magical thinking, perceptions of expertise, and susceptibility to the representativeness heuristic.

The current research does not seek to settle the question as to whether it is rational or not to evaluate a product more favourably when the producer is perceived as authentic. It aims rather to examine whether producer authenticity *is* persuasive to most individuals, and if so, is it persuasive across different contexts and products? Are there certain conditions in which producer authenticity is *not* persuasive? Finally, what causes some individuals to be more susceptible to producer authenticity than others? A series of studies addressing these questions follows.

## CHAPTER 7

### Study One: The Effect of Enjoyment Authenticity on Essay Evaluations

#### *Rationale and Hypotheses*

Study one aims to provide initial experimental validation for authenticity as a persuasive producer characteristic. Producer authenticity relates to the perception that producing that product seems *genuine* or *natural* to that person's true self. For the purpose of this initial study, producer enjoyment will be used as the manipulated cue to authenticity.

As discussed in chapter five, an individual's authentic self is said to be most observable via their emotional states (Rahilly, 1993; Salmela, 2005; Turner, 1999). As an emotional state, enjoyment should function as an effective indicator of authenticity, given that people typically derive enjoyment from activities/tasks that are congruent with whom they define themselves to be (Dodson, 1996; Levin, 1992). Conversely, a lack of enjoyment should signify that producing that product is *not* congruent with that producer's self. When something is perceived *not* to be authentic or to come naturally to an individual, it might even be assumed that the producer finds the task to be more challenging or difficult than someone to whom it comes naturally. Hence, an individual who doesn't enjoy producing a product should not be considered as authentic or naturally skilled at it as someone who does derive enjoyment from the process.

Alternatively, a producer's enjoyment may simply indicate to others that they will produce the product with greater care, precision, and enthusiasm, than a person



who is less authentic and finds it less enjoyable. Recall that when a person takes pleasure in something, their enjoyment acts as a true reflection of their self (Rahilly, 1993; Salmela, 2005; Turner, 1999). Hence, enjoyment may symbolise that that producer is giving ‘their all’ to the task at hand. If an individual is perceived not to enjoy a task, it might be suspected that the individual would be unmotivated to complete the task to the best of their ability. Consequently, they may be perceived to rush the task, or to not take it seriously as required.

At this stage, the aim is simply to establish the persuasiveness of enjoyment authenticity *before* attempting to explore valid reasons for why it is persuasive. More specifically, study one aims to examine whether participants will pay more for a product and evaluate it more favourably when it is produced by an individual who derives enjoyment from the process than when it is produced by someone who does not. Furthermore, this study will examine whether producer enjoyment may actually create a halo-type effect (Kelley, 1950; Thorndike, 1920), biasing the interpretation of other producer characteristics. Producer enjoyment, for example, might increase perceptions of how competent a producer is.

To examine the persuasiveness of producer enjoyment, it is necessary to utilise a product for which enjoyment is an appropriate emotion. The selected product for this study will be an essay. The essay topic will be Greek mythology, which was chosen given that it is assumed to be a subject matter that most people are familiar with but at the same time are not too well-versed in. This information will be of greater relevance in Study two.

Within daily life, consumers are often forced to make purchasing decisions prior to having any direct experience with the product itself (e.g. items sold in infomercials, food, movies, music etc.). Rather, consumers are frequently required to rely on the information about both the product and its producer to determine whether it is worth investing in. For the purpose of encouraging individuals to focus on producer enjoyment, participants within this study will not examine the essay itself, but will have to rely instead on the information provided about the producer to form their predictions regarding the product. Using a vignette task, participants will be told to imagine they need a short essay on Greek mythology to be written for them. Participants will then have to evaluate what they predict the quality and value of the essay to be based on the information they have received within the vignette.

Given that producers will usually receive some payment for their product, it furthermore seems necessary to examine how the salience of producer payment may impact perceptions of a producer's enjoyment, and additionally, product evaluations. When an individual expresses a great degree of enjoyment during an activity/task, it usually implies to the observer that the individual completes this task completely of his/her own volition, with no external incentive necessary. Thus, the motivation for the production of the product can be understood to be the producer's genuine enjoyment.

As previously discussed, producer enjoyment is only persuasive when it is perceived to be genuine (Grandey et al., 2005). When a producer seems to enjoy a task, but is also paid very well for it, others may infer that this 'enjoyment' is attributable to the financial gain involved *rather* than the producer's supposed

authentic motivation. Consequently, it would be interesting to examine whether producer payment would detract from the persuasiveness of producer enjoyment within the current study. Therefore, the producer's payment for writing the essay will also be manipulated.

According to the attribution literature, the presence of multiple causes for an event may often cause individuals to favour a single cause, disregarding the influence of alternative causes. Termed initially by Jones and Davis (1965) and later elaborated on by Kelley (1972), "the discounting principle suggests that the role of a given cause in producing a given effect is discounted if other plausible causes are also present" (p. 8). Basically, "...one cause casts doubt on another" (Morris & Larrick, 1995, p. 331).

A plethora of research within this literature provides support for the discounting principle. For example, research indicates that discounting commonly occurs when internal attributions to the individual are discounted for the external causes present (van Overwalle & van Rooy, 2001). According to Kruglanski (1980), and McClure (1998), discounting is more likely to occur when the relevant causes are mutually exclusive or incompatible. However, when causes are compatible, it may be the case that multiple causes are perceived to jointly contribute to the observed effect (McClure, 1992; McClure, Jaspars & Lalljee, 1993).

For the purpose of the current study, the production of the essay may be attributed to two causes. The first being producer authenticity, which is dispositional or internally motivated. The second potential cause is the producer's payment which operates as an external motivation for production of the essay. It is proposed that by

making the producer's payment for the task highly salient, participants will potentially discount the producer's authenticity. Previous research indicates that when paid to partake in an already interesting activity, individuals discount their own intrinsic motivation, instead inferring the payment to be the primary motive for their participatory behaviour (Deci, 1971). Hence, the external reward appears to undermine the individual's original interest in the task. It is envisaged that observers may discount producer authenticity in the same way. If so, the quality of the essay may be perceived to be induced by the financial payment involved, rather than the producer's genuine desire, and/or natural ability.

Hence, this first study will have participants predicting the quality and value of an essay on Greek mythology that is yet to be written. Producer enjoyment and the salience of their payment for writing the essay will be manipulated across conditions. To ensure the producer is regarded as proficient, this essay will be written by an individual who should be evaluated as sufficiently competent (high achievement in courses taken on the topic, works at an essay writing company). Consequently, as both a manipulation check and as a way of examining how enjoyment influences perceptions of proficiency, perceptions of producer *competence* will also be measured. This will allow the researcher to examine if perceptions of competence remain the same for both high and low enjoyment conditions.

Additionally, if producer enjoyment is found to affect perceptions of competence, this dependent measure will allow the researcher to examine whether competence mediates the relationship between producer enjoyment and product evaluations (i.e. do participants believe that higher levels of enjoyment enhance

producer competence, which subsequently increase product evaluations). Thus, the following hypotheses are advanced;

1. Participants will pay significantly more to have the essay written by the authentic producer who expresses genuine enjoyment about the topic, than the non-authentic producer who fails to enjoy the topic.
2. Participants will predict the essay to be written by the emotionally authentic producer to be superior in quality to the essay to be written by the non-authentic producer.
3. When the payment for writing the essay is made salient, the authenticity of the producer will be less persuasive than when producer payment is undisclosed. Furthermore;
  - 3a. it is anticipated that hypothesis 3 will function for predictions of product value.
  - 3b. it is anticipated that hypothesis 3 will function for predictions of product quality.

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Sixty undergraduate psychology students from James Cook University participated in this study. Participants' ages ranged between 18 and 50 years, with the sample comprising ten males ( $M = 23.30$  years,  $SD = 7.99$  years) and fifty

females ( $M = 24.22$  years,  $SD = 8.17$  years). As an incentive, participants received one course credit point for their participation.

### *Design*

The design for this study was a 2 [Authenticity manipulation: High producer enjoyment (authentic) versus low producer enjoyment (non-authentic)] x 2 (Producer payment: Present versus absent) between subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to the four possible conditions. For the purpose of the current study, product evaluations were made without participants being exposed to the product itself.

### *Materials*

Dependent measures for this study were obtained by means of a pen and paper task. The task consisted of a vignette and three questions. Participants were provided with a character profile of an individual named Tom. Tom was described as an employee of the company, "Essays.Com" which writes professional essays on a broad range of topics for its clients. The vignette was configured so that the participants were made to feel they required an essay written on Greek mythology. The vignette informed participants that the essay company had selected Tom to write this essay, given he had completed extensive university studies in Greek mythology. Participants were subsequently told that Tom received a high distinction for these courses. This information was included to ensure both the knowledge and ability of Tom remained controlled across conditions. Additional information within the

provided vignette was, however, manipulated in two different ways across participants.

*Manipulation one: Authenticity manipulation.* Within each vignette, participants received information about Tom's feelings toward Greek mythology. In the authentic producer manipulation, half of the sample was told that Tom thoroughly enjoyed learning and writing about Greek Mythology and is quite passionate about this topic. The remaining half of participants received the non-authentic producer manipulation and were informed that Tom has little interest in Greek Mythology, and finds the topic to be quite boring. For the purpose of this study, authenticity was thus operationalised in terms of the producer's enjoyment for Greek mythology.

*Manipulation two: Producer payment manipulation.* To examine whether monetary incentives affect perceptions of producer authenticity, half of the participants received information within the vignette regarding Tom's payment for working on this essay. This half of the sample was informed that Tom would be paid very well for writing this essay (payment salient condition). The remaining half of the sample were not told anything about Tom's earnings for his work (payment undisclosed condition).

Following this vignette, participants were asked to answer three questions. The first question required participants to state how much they would be willing to pay Essays.Com to have Tom write the required essay. Responses for this dependent measure were made by stating a monetary value in dollars. The second question required participants to rate along a five-point Likert scale the degree to which they

agree with the statement, “Tom is extremely competent at writing this essay.” Higher scores signified higher perceptions of competence. The third question required participants to rate how good they would perceive the quality of the essay to be, based upon the provided information (given there was no essay to read). This response was recorded along a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘exceptionally bad quality’ to ‘exceptionally good quality.’ It was expected that perceptions of product value and product quality would be related, given that the perceived quality of a product usually determines perceptions of its value. (All four versions of the vignette can be located in Appendix B1. The three questions can be located in Appendix B2.)

### *Procedure*

Participants were tested either individually or in small groups. On arrival at the laboratory, participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study. Confidentiality and consent were discussed and accepting participants then signed a consent form. Participants were asked to write their age and sex on a provided demographic sheet and were told that if they had any questions they should feel free to ask them at any stage during the testing. Participants were then provided with a piece of paper containing both the vignette and questions. The manipulated vignettes were distributed to participants randomly, keeping the researcher blind as to what version the participant was completing. The researcher then provided participants with the following instructions, “Please read the following scenario, and answer the three questions as honestly as possible.” The participants completed the questions at



their own pace and on completion were debriefed regarding the nature of the study and asked if they had any questions. Participants were then thanked for their time and were free to leave.

### *Results*

Before proceeding, data were examined to establish whether they met the assumptions required for a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Normality tests revealed three outliers with scores greater than three standard deviations from the mean on the dependent measure regarding payment for the essay. These three cases were eliminated from the analysis. Data remained slightly positively skewed; however, as stipulated by Pallant (2005) multivariate analysis is typically robust to modest violations of normality. No outliers remained, and data were relatively linear, homogeneous and the Mahalanobis distance showed no multivariate outliers to be present.

### *Main Effects*

Given that the nature of this study was primarily exploratory, all analyses were conducted using two-tailed tests. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests. A 2 x 2 between subjects MANOVA was conducted to establish whether the effects of producer enjoyment and producer payment were significant across the three responses in this study. As anticipated, the enjoyment of the producer was found to have a significant effect on participants' responses,  $F(3, 51) = 4.52, p = .007, \eta^2 = .21$ . Conversely, the salience of the producer's payment was not found to

significantly influence the responses of participants,  $F(3, 51) = 1.02, p = .39$ . The producer enjoyment x producer payment interaction was also found not to be significant,  $F(3, 51) = 1.50, p = .23$ .

#### *The Effect of Producer Enjoyment Authenticity on Task Responses*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the producer's enjoyment had on participants' responses for each of the three dependent measures. Failing to support hypothesis one, the producer's enjoyment failed to have a significant effect on how much participants were willing to pay for the required essay. Participants were found to pay no more for the essay when the producer enjoyed Greek mythology ( $M = \$71.25, SD = 67.37$ ) than when the producer did not enjoy the topic ( $M = \$54.89, SD = 47.49$ ),  $F(1, 53) = 1.20, p = .28$ , although this trend *was* in the predicted direction. The enjoyment of the producer also failed to affect perceptions of producer competence,  $F(1, 53) = .09, p = .77$ . Participants in the authentic condition ( $M = 2.78, SD = .80$ ) failed to differ in their perceptions from those in the non-authentic condition ( $M = 2.72, SD = .92$ ). In support of the second hypothesis, however, the enjoyment of the producer *was* found to significantly influence participants' perceptions of product quality. Participants predicted that the quality of the essay would be significantly better when the producer enjoyed the desired topic (authentic) ( $M = 3.99, SD = .80$ ) than when the producer did not enjoy the topic (non-authentic) ( $M = 3.21, SD = 1.19$ ),  $F(1, 53) = 9.00, p = .004, \eta^2 = .15$ .

### *The Interaction between Producer Enjoyment and Producer Payment*

Although the multivariate effect for the producer enjoyment x producer payment interaction was not significant, the univariate results indicated that this interaction *was* having a significant effect on participants' evaluations of product quality,  $F(1, 53) = 4.47, p = .04, \eta^2 = .08$ . This interaction may provide better insight into evaluations of product quality than the discussed authenticity effect alone. Simple effects analysis using a series of independent samples t-tests revealed that when the producer didn't enjoy the topic (non-authentic), the salience of the producer's payment *was* found to have a marginal effect on evaluations of essay quality,  $t(27) = 1.69, p = .10$ . Participants were found to evaluate the essay's quality more favourably when the non-authentic producer's payment was made salient ( $M = 3.56, SD = 1.14$ ) than when it was not ( $M = 2.84, SD = 1.16$ ). However, when the producer *was* emotionally authentic, producer payment failed to affect evaluations of essay quality,  $t(26) = -1.29, p = .21$ . Although this result was not significant, it is interesting to observe that enjoyment became slightly less persuasive when producer payment was made salient ( $M = 3.79, SD = .80$ ) than when it was not ( $M = 4.18, SD = .77$ ). Any interpretation of this trend should be made with extreme caution, given its lack of statistical significance.

Furthermore, when producer payment was not made salient, the enjoyment of the producer *was* found to significantly affect evaluations of the essay's quality,  $t(26) = -3.60, p = .001$ . Participants predicted that the essay would be better in quality when it was written by the authentic producer ( $M = 4.18, SD = .77$ ), than by the non-authentic producer ( $M = 2.84, SD = 1.16$ ). However, when the producer's payment

was made salient, producer enjoyment lost its ability to significantly affect participants' evaluations of product quality,  $t(27) = -.63, p = .53$ . Participants evaluated the producer who did not enjoy the topic, ( $M = 3.56, SD = 1.14$ ) to do just as good a job on the essay as the producer who did enjoy the topic ( $M = 3.79, SD = .80$ ) *provided* he was paid enough. The trend is again in the predicted direction. The mean evaluation of the product's quality for each condition can be located in Figure 2.

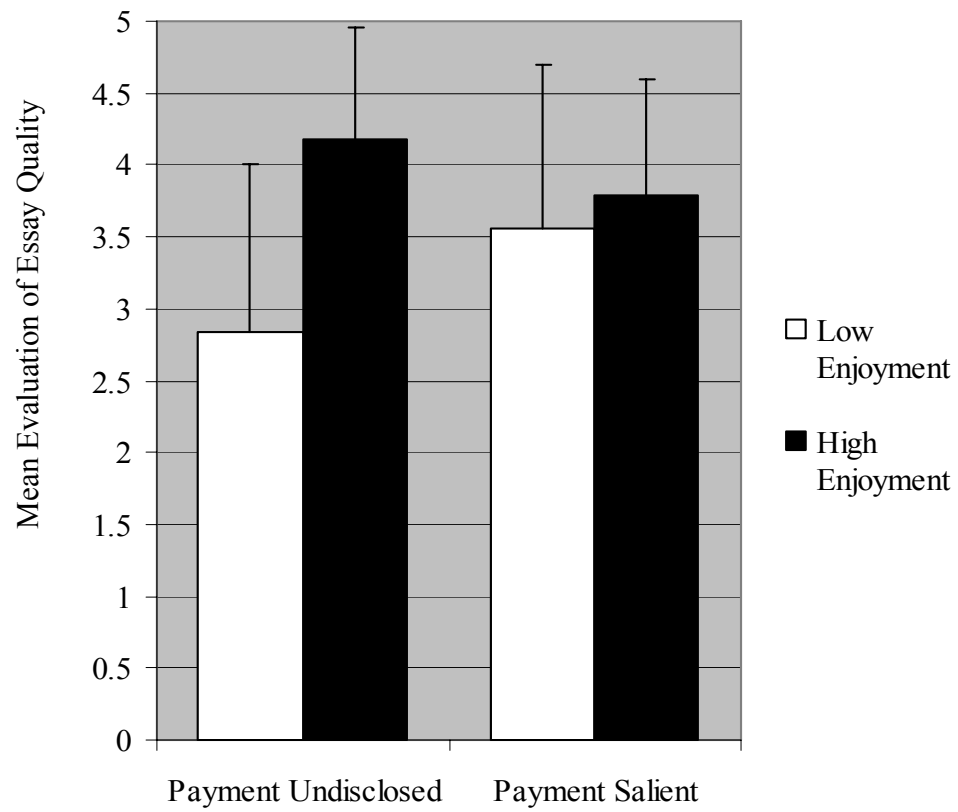


Figure 2. Study one. Mean evaluations of product (essay) quality.

*Ancillary Correlational Analyses*

It was expected that the dependent measures of product value and product quality would be strongly related. A Pearson's bivariate correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between these two dependent measures. Unexpectedly, perceptions of product value were not found to be related to perceptions of product quality,  $r(55) = .15, p = .25$ , 2-tailed.

A point bi-serial correlation was also conducted to further examine the relationship between competence and authenticity. In the multivariate analysis, producer enjoyment failed to affect perceptions of producer competence. Results from the correlational analysis support these results, indicating that perceptions of producer competence and producer enjoyment share very little common variance,  $r(55) = .04, p = .79$ , 2-tailed. A final Pearson's bivariate correlational analysis did, however, indicate that perceptions of producer competence were significantly related to evaluations of product quality,  $r(55) = .61, p < .001$ , 2-tailed. As perceptions of producer competence increase, so do the evaluations of the essay's quality.

Given that the previous correlation indicates that perceptions of producer competence are strongly related to evaluations of product quality, it seemed necessary to establish whether producer competence or enjoyment is the best predictor of this dependent measure. Although one variable was objective (authenticity manipulation) and the other subjective (perceptions of producer competence), a simultaneous multiple regression was nonetheless conducted using these two variables as predictors, and evaluations of product quality as the dependent variable. Results indicated that the model consisting of these two predictors was

found to be significant for predicting evaluations of product quality,  $F(2, 54) = 25.76, p < .001$ . The model, was found to explain 48.80% of the variance in participants' evaluations of product quality,  $R = .70$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .47$ . Examining the  $t$  values, it can be observed that producer authenticity was not as significant a predictor of product quality ( $t = 3.49, p = .001$ ) as perceptions of competence ( $t = 6.14, p < .001$ ). Perceptions of producer competence could account for 35.76 % of the variance in evaluations of product quality (semi-partial  $r = .60$ ). Producer enjoyment could explain 11.56 % of the variance in evaluations of product quality (semi-partial  $r = .34$ ). Had producer competence been manipulated alongside authenticity, this analysis would have been more appropriate, and later studies will examine this prospect.

### *Discussion*

The results of study one show a great deal of potential, suggesting that the enjoyment of a product's producer *does* influence participants' predictive evaluations about a product. In summary, three hypotheses were established for this initial study. The first hypothesis stated that participants would pay more for an essay written by a producer who enjoyed the desired topic than a producer who failed to enjoy the topic. This hypothesis unfortunately failed to obtain support. Nonetheless, the second hypothesis, that participants would evaluate the quality of the proposed essay more favourably when the producer enjoyed the topic of the essay, *was* supported. Finally, the third hypothesis, that producer authenticity would lose its effect on participants' responses once the producer's payment was made

salient, was to some extent supported for perceptions of product quality, but not product value. A discussion of these results follows.

#### *The Failure of Producer Enjoyment to Affect Evaluations of Product Value*

As previously mentioned, producer enjoyment unfortunately failed to affect how much participants were willing to pay for the essay. Though the results established that producer enjoyment *did* influence evaluations of product quality, perhaps people were just not as easily persuaded when it came to spending their own money on this product. Although plausible, two alternative explanations may also account for the null finding.

The first relates to the question for this dependent measure being, “How much would you be willing to pay Essays.Com to have Tom write the required essay?” Notice that the payment goes to the company and *not* the producer. As a result, participants may have decided that the added money should be paid to the producer of the essay *rather than* the company. Conceivably, the authentically produced essay may well have been evaluated as the more valuable essay, however, as a result of the question phrasing, participant responses simply do not reflect this. This problem might have been alleviated by asking participants how much Tom *should* be paid for his essay (regardless of what he *was* paid). Hence, future studies examining the interaction between producer payment and authenticity should ensure that producer payment is perceived to go directly to the producer and not an external source, such as a company like in the current study.



However, it is believed that the most likely reason that producer enjoyment failed to have an effect on how much participants would pay for the product relates to unanticipated methodological issues with the response format of this dependent measure. Recall that participants were simply asked to evaluate the value of the essay in dollars. Responses were not evaluated along a Likert scale, no parameters or standard values were provided; in short, responses were not constrained in any way.

It had been originally expected that perceptions of product value would be strongly related to perceptions of product quality. If there were no methodological issues with the dependent measure of product value, it would be expected that producer enjoyment would also fail to affect evaluations of essay quality. As the results have shown, however, this was not found to be the case. Producer enjoyment *did* affect perceptions of product quality. In actuality, the two dependent measures were not found to be related. The fact that there was a considerable variance between participants in the responses for product value may account for this result.

Given that there is no universal standard for what constitutes an acceptable price for an essay (and if there *is*, participants do not seem to be familiar with it), it makes it somewhat difficult to examine the true effect of producer enjoyment on price evaluations. In regard to future studies, it would be more effective to control for such variability in responses. This could be done in several ways. Firstly, it seems more sensible to use products that the majority of people are familiar with in terms of a standard price range. Secondly, participants' responses could be made along a Likert scale measure ranging from, for example, \$0 to \$100. Furthermore, an

average price may even be stated so that people can adjust their responses according to a common anchor.

### *The Effect of Producer Enjoyment on Evaluations of Product Quality*

In support of the second hypothesis, when the producer was authentic and genuinely enjoyed Greek mythology, participants predicted the essay to be superior in quality to an essay written by a producer who lacked authenticity and didn't enjoy the essay topic. As anticipated, this result indicates that source authenticity, just like source credibility or source attractiveness, operates as another influential characteristic capable of persuading people. It seems that even in the presence of information accentuating the producer's competence (extensive studies in Greek mythology, high distinction achievement in such courses), it is the producer's enjoyment that gives the essay the competitive edge.

The results also revealed that the producer was considered *equally* as competent across high and low enjoyment conditions. In fact, as established by the ancillary analysis, producer enjoyment and perceptions of competence were not found to be related, and perceptions of producer competence were consequently not found to mediate the relationship between producer enjoyment and product quality. The consistency in perceptions of producer competence across authenticity conditions strongly indicates that participants formulated their evaluations of competence based on the producer's previous academic studies and achievements, rather than his enjoyment (or lack there of).

So if producer enjoyment didn't cause the producer to seem more competent, why did enjoyment increase essay evaluations? It is unlikely that participants would care a great deal about having an 'authentic' or 'genuine' *experience* when it comes to purchasing an essay as a product. The desire to be connected to the authentic extended self of the essay writer (Belk, 1988) does not seem valid as an explanation for why participants evaluated essay quality better in the high enjoyment condition as other explanations. It is assumed that the extended self explanation may be more effective for products that are more explicit representations of the self or one's culture.

In the literature review, the notion of natural ability was also discussed as a possible rationale for the persuasiveness of producer authenticity. When it comes to writing an essay on Greek mythology, how could a producer be perceived as naturally expert; independent of formal training? It seems quite implausible to believe that people can be born with a sound knowledge of Greek mythology, with perhaps the exception of being 'Greek.' Certainly the persuasiveness of a culturally authentic producer would have been interesting to examine in the current context. It would have been quite interesting to examine whether people think Greeks *naturally* possess a better knowledge of Greek mythology, simply because of their ethnicity. The aim at this point, however, was to examine the persuasiveness of enjoyment *rather* than cultural authenticity. Forthcoming studies will examine the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity.

It is also possible that participants perceive producer enjoyment to indicate how easily the process comes to the individual. For the producer who enjoyed the

topic, it may have been assumed that the process is not arduous, but comes naturally and is *fun*, whilst for a producer who does not enjoy the topic, the process may seem difficult, strenuous, and a great deal of effort may be required to ensure a superior product results. Accordingly, the literature suggests that producer effort that is strenuous is likely to result in poor evaluations of the product (Kruger et al., 2004). Thus, even though both producers have had a history of receiving excellent marks when previously evaluated on the topic of Greek mythology (rendering them equally competent), the processes leading to such marks may be perceived as strikingly different.

Additionally, enjoyment for the topic may also signify that the producer will be more likely to seek out further knowledge on Greek mythology when writing the requested essay. It seems logical that individuals spend more time obtaining knowledge on a topic that is interesting to them in comparison to a topic that is mundane and uninspiring. Although no research has directly discussed how a person's enjoyment impacts their acquisition of knowledge, there *is* research discussing the relationship between an individual's level of interest and knowledge. Research by Schiefele and Krapp (1988) has confirmed that as one's interest in a topic increases, so does the amount of knowledge they acquire. In fact, according to Hidi and Baird (1986), interest is crucial for learning and acquiring knowledge.

Possibly the most logical explanation for why producer enjoyment is persuasive is because it implies that the individual will take a great deal of pride in both the item and its production. *Especially* when the process brings the producer genuine enjoyment, it may be expected that producers would exert a great deal of

time and energy into an object's production primarily because it is fun. Participants may envision a happy essay writer taking great care, researching comprehensively and showing more enthusiasm than an unhappy essay writer, who they might envisage as being careless, rushed and resentful.

Whilst previous university grades may allude to competence, they cannot guarantee that the individual will produce the required essay to the best of their ability in the current context. To produce an excellent essay, ability along with motivation may be perceived necessary. At university, the producer needed to get good marks in order to pass the subject. Now as an employee, performing to the pinnacle of one's ability may not seem as critical. Hence, genuine enjoyment may provide a much better impression that the producer will extend their self to the task at hand, more so than a lack of enjoyment. At this initial testing stage, it difficult to distinguish the underlying psychological mechanisms responsible for producer authenticity's persuasive ability, however, in regard to authenticity's effect on evaluations of product quality, the results are certainly encouraging.

#### *Discounting and Producer Authenticity*

It had been thirdly hypothesised that by making the producer's payment for the task highly salient, participants might then discount the producer's authenticity when formulating their product evaluations. This hypothesis was based on discounting theory, which asserts that the role of a given cause in producing a given effect is often discounted if other plausible causes are also present (Kelley, 1972; Morris & Larrick, 1995; van Overwalle & van Rooy, 2001). It had been theorised

that producer enjoyment, rather than payment, would be discounted given that the literature suggests that the internal motivations of an individual are commonly discounted for the sufficient external causes present (Deci, 1971; Jones & Davis, 1965; van Overwalle & Timmermans, 2005).

It was obviously difficult to examine the effect of discounting on the dependent measure of product value, given the previously discussed methodological issues. Interestingly, the results show some support for hypothesis three regarding participants' evaluations of product quality. When the producer's payment was not made salient, the producer's enjoyment (authenticity) was found to influence participants' predictions of essay quality, however, as soon as producer payment was made salient, the authenticity manipulation failed to have an impact. These results provide evidence that participants discounted the producer's enjoyment in the presence of producer payment. However, examining the mean evaluations of essay quality, it can be observed that in the high enjoyment – payment salient condition, essay evaluations declined only slightly from the high enjoyment - payment undisclosed condition. The failure of authenticity to have an effect in the payment salient conditions may be better accounted for by the fact that the producer's *lack* of enjoyment seemed to be discounted by the producer's payment, which was considered a sufficient enough cause to largely augment evaluations of essay quality.

Also interesting, however, was the finding that when the producer failed to enjoy the essay topic, producer payment was found to have a marginal influence on participants' predictions of essay quality. Making the producer's payment salient was found to result in more favourable predictions of essay quality than in the condition

where payment was not made salient. However, in the conditions where the producer enjoyed writing and learning about Greek mythology, the saliency of producer payment had no effect on predictions of essay quality. These results suggest that high enjoyment is a sufficient enough explanation to render producer payment superfluous. Research on the fundamental attribution error and correspondence bias provide further evidence that external causes for behaviour will often be disregarded in the presence of dispositional explanations (Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Jones & Harris, 1967; Ross, 1977).

Thus, the results provide some evidence that both producer authenticity and producer payment can be discounted in the presence of the other when predicting the quality of the essay. Although attribution literature has suggested that multiple causes may jointly determine an effect (McClure, 1992), it can be observed that in the current study the presence of multiple sufficient causes failed to result in the highest product evaluation. Interestingly, increasing the salience of the authentic producer's payment did not increase evaluations of their essay's quality any more than when the producer's payment was not salient. If anything, evaluations of product quality declined slightly when the producer's payment was made salient; however, this reduction was not statistically significant and should be interpreted with caution. Therefore, when the producer enjoyed Greek mythology, participants may have discounted the individual's *payment* when evaluating the essay. Alternatively, when payment was made salient, participants seem to discount the producer's level of enjoyment when evaluating the essay.

Finally, it could alternatively be proposed that because the producer writes essays as a paying job, participants may have already somewhat discounted their supposed enjoyment across conditions. Even if this was the case, it remains clear that producer enjoyment still maintains a persuasive influence on evaluations of product quality, and is not completely disregarded. Future studies examining the relationship between enjoyment and producer payment would do well to have one condition where the producer is explicitly paid and the other where the producer is clearly unpaid.

#### *Payment as an Assurance of Quality*

Interestingly, the results also indicated that when the producer *failed* to enjoy the topic, the salience of the producer's payment *was* found to affect participants' evaluations of product quality. Participants were found to evaluate the quality of the essay to be substantially lower when the producer lacked enjoyment for Greek mythology *unless* their payment was made salient. When it was explicitly stated that the producer would be paid very well for writing the essay, evaluations of the essay's quality increased and were comparable to evaluations in the high enjoyment conditions. It seems that participants will accept an essay to be of a high standard *provided* they have some indication that the person will produce it to the best of their ability, and either the producer's enjoyment *or* an explicit reminder that they are being paid well will do this.



*Comparing the Persuasiveness of Producer Enjoyment versus Competence*

The results of study one also indicated that perceptions of producer competence were more powerful in influencing evaluations of product quality than producer enjoyment. This is, however, to be somewhat expected in this particular context, especially given that enjoyment failed to influence perceptions of competence, and the two variables shared little common variance. If a person doesn't possess a sound knowledge of Greek mythology or fails to have the intellectual ability to write an exceptional essay, their enjoyment for the topic may seem largely irrelevant. Consequently, the quality of the essay, in a sense, seems dependent on the competence of the producer, however, the *motivation* to fully utilise this knowledge and ability is more likely to be contingent on the producer's enjoyment for the topic.

It would be interesting to examine whether producer authenticity would influence evaluations of products other than an essay (particularly cultural products) *even* when the producer lacks competence, in the sense of formal training or education. Study six examines this possibility. To conclude, as the pioneer study in this research, the results are certainly encouraging. They provide evidence that the emotional authenticity of a product's producer affects how people evaluate the quality of products. It now seems pertinent to establish whether producer enjoyment results in more favourable evaluations of a product when the product is actually present.

## CHAPTER 8

## Study Two: Revisiting the Effect of Enjoyment Authenticity on Essay Evaluations

*Rationale and Hypotheses*

Given the promising results of study one, it was decided to conduct a similar study, with the same essay as the focal product. Study two aims to further establish the persuasiveness of producer authenticity, by again manipulating the producer's enjoyment. However, extending on Study one, the current study aims to examine whether producer enjoyment will have a persuasive effect on essay evaluations when the essay itself is also present. Participants will therefore have the opportunity to read the essay *prior* to making any judgement about its quality. Therefore, unless perceptions of producer enjoyment influence attitudes towards the essay, the same essay should be evaluated identically across all conditions.

This study also examines how producer enjoyment affects product evaluations, *not* when the participant is actually purchasing that product, but rather when they are simply evaluating it. For this reason, participants will not be required to assess the value of the essay. Rather, the context of Study two can be considered somewhat analogous to the academic appraisal of an essay, in that participants will only be required to evaluate the quality of the product, without having to feel like they must invest in it. The decision to abandon the examination of product value in the current study is due in part to participants' difficulties understanding what constitutes an adequate price for an essay. However, it also seems important to

examine the impact of producer authenticity in a context where purchasing is not imperative.

There are countless situations in daily life, outside of a consumer context, by which individuals' work comes to be evaluated (e.g. assessment at university, work related proposals/reviews/case reports, art projects, movie scripts, music, prepared meals). In some contexts, individuals will play the role of the evaluator and in others it will be their work which becomes the object of evaluation. Although people typically aim to be objective when making judgements, there are a multitude of subtle biases and errors that may prevent this from occurring (Plous, 1993). Producer enjoyment may function as another evaluator bias, especially when the essay is actually present for appraisal and evaluations based on the product alone would seem most objective. If evaluations of essay quality *are* found to differ between high and low producer enjoyment conditions, it would essentially suggest that participants are interpreting the *same* essay in different ways, so that evaluations are congruent with knowledge of the producer's enjoyment (or lack there of).

Therefore, this study aims to examine whether this producer characteristic can reduce individuals' ability to remain objective when reading and then evaluating the provided essay. If evaluations of an essay *can* be influenced by something as simple as the writer's level of enjoyment, the results of this study may have important implications for the education system (in addition to any other agency that evaluates written work).

It was proposed that producer enjoyment was persuasive in Study one due to the belief that emotionally invested producers will dedicate themselves more to the

task at hand, and display greater enthusiasm for producing that product in comparison to a producer who fails to enjoy the same process. As mentioned earlier, there is also literature to suggest that an individual who is interested in an essay topic may also spend greater time acquiring relevant knowledge than an individual who lacks interest (Hidi & Baird, 1986; Schiefele & Krapp, 1988). In Study one, it was found that both producers had been evaluated as equally competent given their identical history of excellent grades in Greek mythology courses. Interestingly, it seemed that it was the producer's passion or enjoyment for the topic which provided participants with a greater assurance that the producer would be motivated to actually utilise their ability. There was no direct means of examining this suggestion in the former study, however. Consequently, this issue will be addressed in this study.

In this study, the producer will be a student who has written an essay on Greek mythology at the request of his lecturer. The producer will be stated as having taken a course in foundations of history, rather than a course specifically in Greek mythology. So although he may possess some knowledge on Greek mythology, it is possible the producer would have needed to do further research to write the requested essay. Participants will also be informed that the producer has a high grade-point average, indicating that his ability to write essays is of a high standard. As in study one, perceptions of producer competence will again be obtained from participants. Given that both groups will receive identical information about the educational experience and academic achievement of the producer it is expected that,

in congruence with the previous study, perceptions of competence should remain the same for both high and low enjoyment conditions.

Extending on the methodology for study one, perceptions of producer *knowledge* will also be obtained from participants in the current study. It will be interesting to establish whether participants also formulate their evaluations of producer knowledge based on the producer's academic history and achievements, or on the producer's enjoyment for the topic. The former would result in relatively similar evaluations of producer knowledge across high and low enjoyment conditions, whilst the latter may be interpreted to suggest that individuals who are passionate about a topic are more likely to acquire greater knowledge on it than those who lack interest and enjoyment for it (Hidi & Baird, 1986; Schiefele & Krapp, 1988).

If, for one reason or another, producer enjoyment *is* found to affect how competent or how knowledgeable the producer is perceived to be, these dependent measures will enable the researcher to examine whether these producer characteristics mediate the relationship between producer enjoyment and evaluations of essay quality. For example, higher levels of producer enjoyment may cause participants to believe that the producer would put more effort into acquiring greater knowledge on the topic, which may then result in enhanced product evaluations. If the relationship between producer enjoyment and evaluations of essay quality is unmediated, it could be argued that enjoyment is not persuasive because of increased effort or ability, but rather because the essay provides participants with an opportunity to connect to an authentic producer and thus, experience something

‘real.’ However, since participants will not be purchasing the essay this is considered unlikely to be the case in the current experimental context.

Finally, when faced with multiple sufficient causes for an event, people tend to favour a single cause and discount the influence of alternative causes (Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1972; Kruglanski, 1980; McClure, 1998; van Overwalle & van Rooy, 2001). Interestingly, the results of study one provided evidence that participants marginally discount the emotional authenticity of a producer once the producer’s payment been made salient. Additionally, participants were also found to discount the producer’s payment when the producer’s enjoyment was high (authentic). However, given that the producer in study one was said to be an employee of an essay writing company, there is the possibility that discounting may have occurred to some extent across all conditions. To clarify this, producer payment will again be examined within the current study.

In the current context, it seems unexpected for a student to be paid for writing an essay at the request of a teacher. It is anticipated that this design will enable the researcher to examine the attributional discounting effect of producer payment on producer authenticity more effectively than in study one. Recall that according to discounting theory, participants should discount the producer’s internal motivations (i.e. authenticity) once an external motivation (i.e. payment) is made salient (Deci, 1971; van Overwalle & Timmermans, 2005). Two hypotheses are established for the current study;

1. It is hypothesised that participants will perceive the essay to be better in quality when it is written by the authentic producer than the non-authentic producer. Producer enjoyment will lead to higher evaluations of essay quality.
2. It is also hypothesised that when the producer is paid for writing the essay, the authenticity of the producer will be less persuasive than when producer is unpaid. Hence, producer enjoyment will have less influence on evaluations of product quality when an external motivation for the essay production is present.

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Eighty-six participants were sampled from James Cook University. Participants' ages ranged between 17 and 56 years, with the sample comprising forty-two males ( $M = 20.71$  years,  $SD = 3.76$  years) and forty-four females ( $M = 22.66$  years,  $SD = 7.05$  years).

#### *Design*

The design was a 2 (Authenticity manipulation: Authentic producer versus non-authentic producer) x 2 (Producer payment: Present versus absent) between subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to the four possible conditions.

### *Materials*

Dependent measures were again obtained by means of a pen and paper task. The task consisted of a vignette, a short essay and three questions. The vignette provided participants with a character profile of a male student named Steve. Participants in all conditions received the information that Steve, who recently took 'Foundations of History' as a subject, has a high grade point average, and was asked by his lecturer to write a four hundred word essay on the topic of Greek mythology. By including such information, it was ensured that both Steve's knowledge and ability remained relatively controlled across conditions. However, additional information provided within the vignette was manipulated in the following ways:

*Manipulation One: Authenticity manipulation.* Within each vignette, participants received information regarding Steve's feelings towards both Greek mythology and the writing of the required essay. In the high enjoyment (authentic producer) manipulation, half of the sample were told that Steve really enjoys Greek mythology and thoroughly enjoyed writing the essay. The remaining half of participants received the low enjoyment (non-authentic producer) manipulation and were informed that Steve has little interest in Greek Mythology, and did not enjoy writing the essay for his lecturer. For the purpose of this study authenticity was thus defined in terms of the producer's enjoyment, given that enjoyment is usually derived from experiences where one's authentic self can be presented (Turner, 1999).

*Manipulation two: Producer payment manipulation.* To examine whether producer payment results in the discounting of authenticity, half of the participants were informed that Steve received fifty dollars for writing the essay, whilst the



remaining half of the sample were not told anything about Steve's earnings for his effort. All four versions of the vignette can be located in Appendix C1.

Following this vignette, participants were asked to read Steve's essay on Greek mythology. The one page essay was approximately 400 words in length and provided a brief synopsis of Greek mythology (See appendix C2). Following the essay were three questions. The first question was used to establish participants' product evaluations. Participants rated the quality of the essay along a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'exceptionally bad in quality' to 'exceptionally good in quality.' The second question provided a measure of perceived producer competence, requiring participants to rate along a five-point Likert scale their perceptions of how competent they believed Steve to be at writing the essay. Responses ranged from 'extremely incompetent', to 'extremely competent.' The third question measured perceptions of producer knowledge. This question required participants to rate how much knowledge Steve has on the essay topic. This response was also recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'not much at all' to 'a great deal of knowledge'. These three questions can be located in Appendix C3.

### *Procedure*

Participants were again tested either individually or in small groups. On arrival at the laboratory, participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study. Confidentiality and consent were discussed and accepting participants then signed a consent form. Participants were asked to write their age and gender on a provided demographic sheet and were told that if they had any questions they should

feel free to ask them at any stage during the testing. Participants were then provided with a piece of paper containing the vignette. The manipulated vignettes were distributed to participants randomly, keeping the researcher blind as to what version the participant was completing. The researcher then provided participants with the following instructions,

I want you to read the following character profile. After you have finished this, please read the one page essay on the following page. After you have completed this there are three questions that I would like you to answer as honestly as possible.

The participants completed the requirements at their own pace, and on completion were debriefed regarding the nature of the study and asked if they had any questions. Participants were then thanked for their time, and were free to leave.

### *Results*

Before proceeding, data were examined to establish whether they met the assumptions required for a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Normality tests revealed no outliers on any of the dependent measures. Distributions within each of the four conditions were found to be slightly negatively skewed across all three dependent measures, however, MANOVA as an analysis is robust and can handle minor violations of normality (Pallant, 2005). Data across all dependent

measures were found to be homogeneous and the Mahalanobis distance showed no multivariate outliers to be present.

### *Main Effects*

Given that the nature of this study was primarily exploratory, all analyses were conducted using two-tailed tests. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests. A 2 x 2 between subjects MANOVA was conducted to establish whether the effects of producer enjoyment and producer payment were significant across the three responses in this study. As anticipated, producer enjoyment was found to have a significant effect on participants' responses,  $F(3, 80) = 6.85, p < .001, \eta^2 = .20$ . Conversely, whether the producer was paid or unpaid for writing the essay was found to have only a marginal influence on participants' responses,  $F(3, 80) = 2.30, p = .08$ . Failing to provide support for the second hypothesis, the producer enjoyment x producer payment interaction was found not to be significant,  $F(3, 80) = .24, p = .87$ .

### *The Effect of Producer Enjoyment on Dependent Measures*

Univariate ANOVAs were completed to examine the effect that the enjoyment of the producer had on participants' responses for each of the dependent measures. Regarding responses for question one, the producer's enjoyment was found to have a significant effect on participants' perceptions of product quality. Supporting hypothesis one, participants rated the essay to be significantly higher in quality when the producer enjoyed the task and topic ( $M = 3.05, SD = 0.90$ ) than when the

producer did not ( $M = 2.40, SD = 0.96$ ),  $F(1, 82) = 10.42, p = .002, \eta^2 = .113$ .

Contrary to the results of study one, the enjoyment of the producer was also found to significantly affect perceptions of producer competence. Thus, participants within the high enjoyment condition ( $M = 2.60, SD = .62$ ) rated the producer as more competent than participants in the low enjoyment condition ( $M = 2.30, SD = .70$ ),  $F(1, 82) = 4.07, p = .047, \eta^2 = .05$ . The enjoyment of the producer was also found to affect participants' perceptions of producer knowledge. Participants believed the producer to be more knowledgeable when he enjoyed writing the essay and enjoyed Greek mythology ( $M = 2.56, SD = .78$ ) than when he did not ( $M = 1.83, SD = .91$ ),  $F(1, 82) = 17.06, p < .001, \eta^2 = .17$ .

#### *The Effect of Producer Payment on Dependent Measures*

Despite the fact that the main effect for producer payment was only marginal, it was decided to explore this result further, to establish if any of the dependent measures were being influenced by this manipulation. Producer payment was found to have no effect on participants evaluations of product quality,  $F(1, 82) = 1.22, p = .27$ , evaluations of producer competence,  $F(1, 82) = .45, p = .50$ , or evaluations of producer knowledge,  $F(1, 82) = 2.63, p = .11$ . Hence, although the multivariate analysis produced a marginal main effect for producer payment, none of the dependent measures demonstrated significant differences due to this independent variable ( $p$  values all  $>.10$ ). The mean evaluations of product quality, producer competence, and producer knowledge for each condition can be located in Figures 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

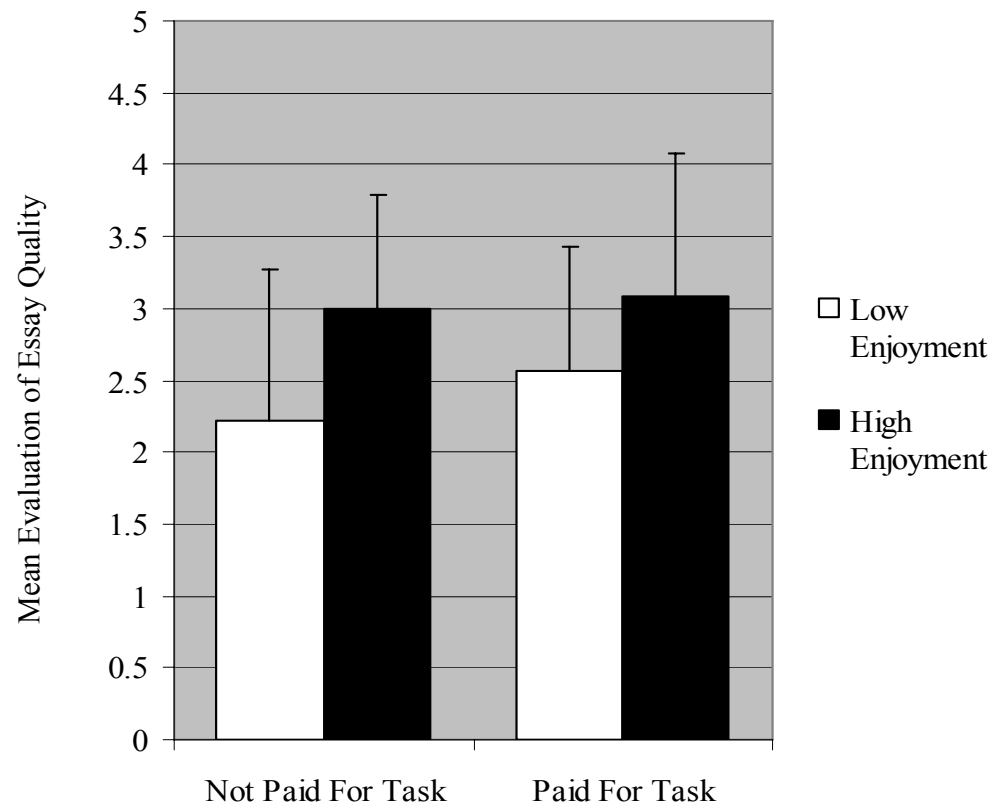


Figure 3. Study two. Mean ratings of product quality.

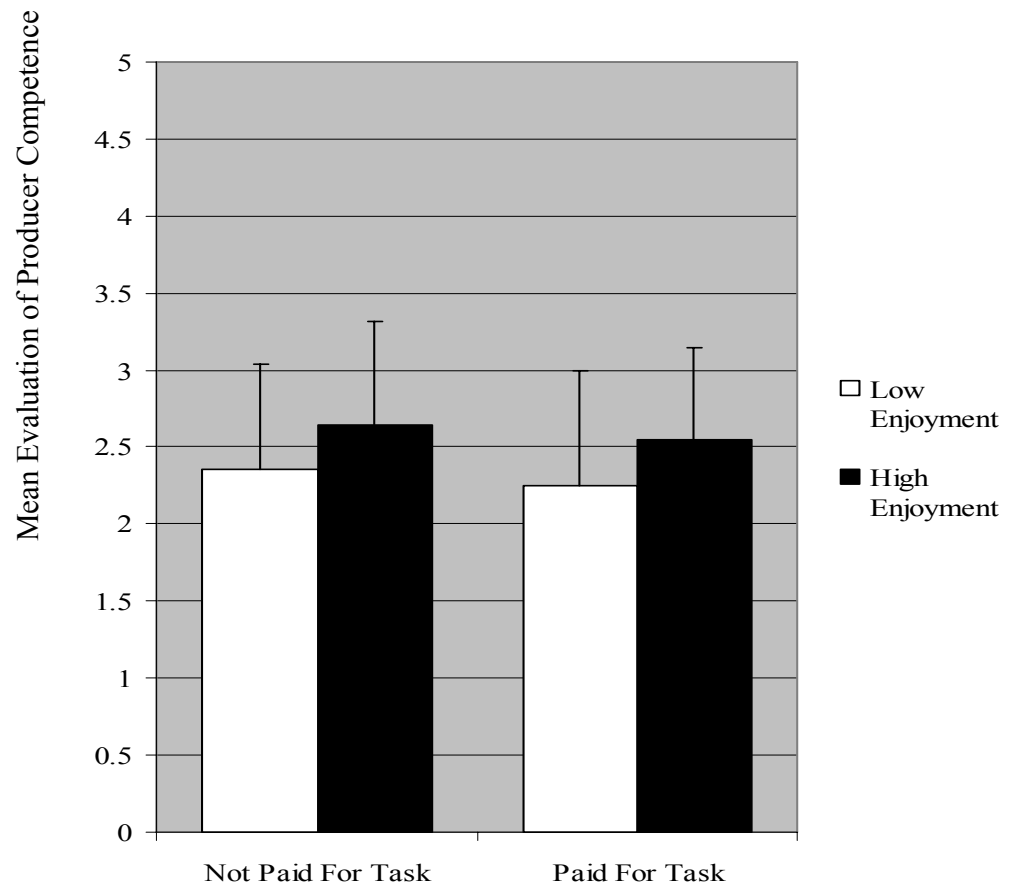


Figure 4. Study two. Mean ratings of producer competence.

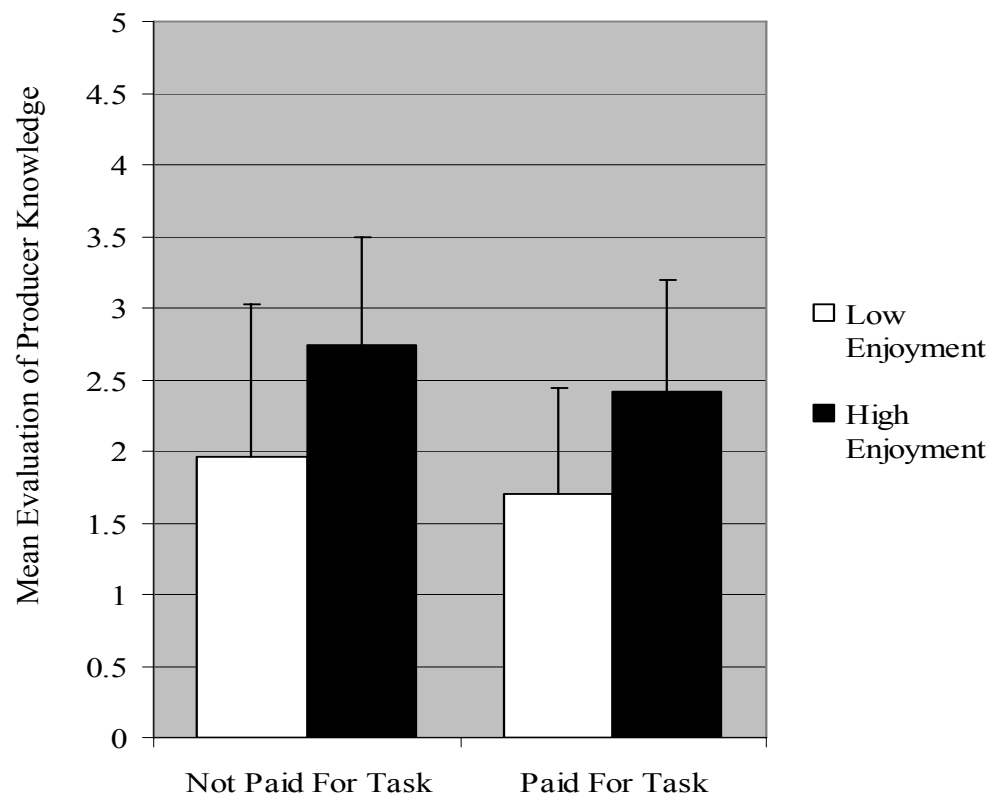


Figure 5. Study two. Mean ratings of producer knowledge.

*Ancillary Analyses*

Study one examined whether certain producer characteristics were able to affect participants' responses on dependent measures. To examine whether these producer characteristics were related in the current study, a series of Pearson bivariate correlations was conducted. Producer enjoyment scores were reverse coded, and therefore negative correlations indicate that as producer enjoyment increased, so did perceptions of producer knowledge and competence. As can be seen in Table 1, producer enjoyment was significantly related to both producer knowledge and competence. The relationship between producer enjoyment and producer competence is incongruent with the results of study one.

Table 1

*Correlations between Producer Characteristics*

	<i>Enjoyment</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>
Knowledge	-.40 **	
Competence	-.22 *	.43 **

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: Enjoyment is reverse coded with lower score indicating greater enjoyment



Given the significant correlations, it makes sense to question whether perceptions of producer competence and knowledge may actually account for the previously established effects. To establish mediating effects of multiple predictors, a regression analysis is most suitable (Barron & Kenny, 1986).

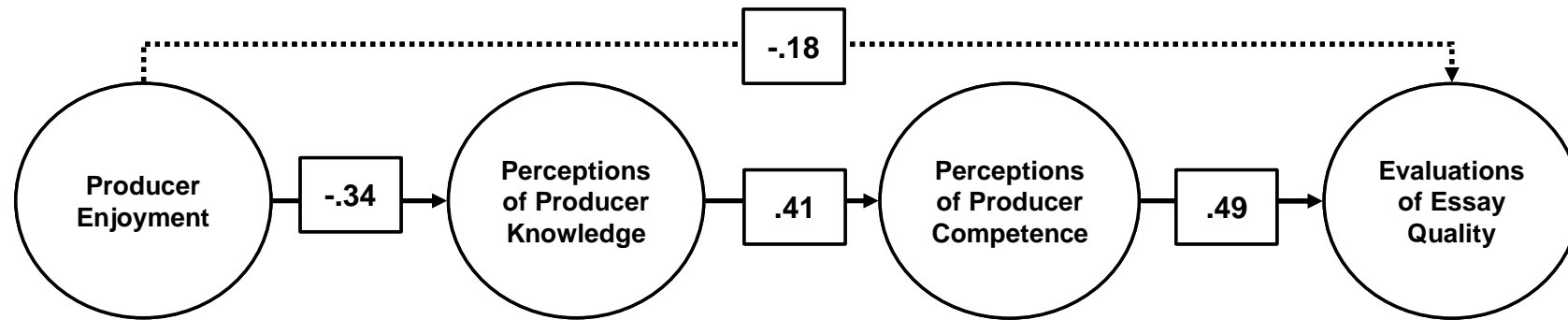
A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine whether perceptions of producer knowledge and competence mediate the relationship between producer enjoyment and evaluations of essay quality. At block one, producer enjoyment was included as a predictor of essay quality, and this predictor was found to be significant,  $F(1, 84) = 10.57, p = .002$  ( $t = -3.25, p = .002$ ). The model, was found to explain 11.20% of the variance in participants' evaluations of product quality,  $R = .33$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .10$ . This result is congruent with the results of the previous multivariate analysis.

At block two, perceptions of producer knowledge was added to the model as a predictor, given that perceptions of knowledge are assumed to precede perceptions of competence. Adding this variable increased the model's overall significance in predicting participants' perceptions of product quality,  $F(2, 83) = 10.45, p < .001$ . The model with two predictors was able to explain 20.10% of the variance in product quality,  $R = .45$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .18$ . When looking at the significance of the individual  $t$  values for the second model it can be seen that producer enjoyment, which was previously significant in model 1 ( $t = -3.25, p = .002$ ), becomes only marginally significant as a predictor in model two ( $t = -1.89, p = .06$ ). Meanwhile, perceived producer knowledge was found to be a significant predictor ( $t = 3.05, p = .003$ ). This analysis suggests that perceptions of producer knowledge appear to

mediate the relationship between producer enjoyment and evaluations of product quality.

To examine if the relationship between perceptions of producer knowledge and evaluations of product quality was mediated by perceptions of producer competence, competence was added to the regression model at block three. At block three, the model increased in significance,  $F(3, 82) = 18.17, p < .001$ . The model of three predictors was now able to explain 39.90 % of the variance in evaluations of product quality,  $R = .63$  Adjusted  $R^2 = .38$ . When looking at the significance of the individual  $t$  values for the third model it can be seen that producer enjoyment remained unchanged as a marginally significant predictor  $t = -1.90, p = .06$ . Perceptions of producer knowledge, however, lost its significance as a predictor of product quality,  $t = 1.24, p = .22$ . Finally, congruent with the results of the previously conducted regression, perceptions of producer competence was found to be the strongest predictor of product quality,  $t = 5.20, p < .001$ . A complete table of regression results for this analysis can be located in Appendix C4.

The results of study two therefore suggest that perceptions of producer knowledge mediate the relationship between producer enjoyment and evaluations of product quality. However, the relationship between perceptions of producer knowledge and evaluations of product quality appear to be mediated by perceptions of producer competence. The discussed mediational effects can be examined in Figure 6. Furthermore, when other predictors are controlled, producer payment directly affects evaluations of product quality.



\* Standardised beta weights included in boxes

- > Marginal predictor ( $p < .10$  - controlling for all other predictors)
- > Significant predictor ( $p < .05$  - controlling for all other predictors)

Figure 6. Suggested mediational relationship established in study two.

### *Discussion*

Two hypotheses were advanced for study two. The first hypothesis anticipated that participants would evaluate the essay to be better in quality when the producer enjoyed writing it, than when he did not. This hypothesis was supported, although this effect was found to be mediated by perceptions of producer knowledge. Additionally, the relationship between evaluations of producer knowledge and essay quality were found to be mediated by perceptions of the producer's competence. The second hypothesis, that producer enjoyment would have less influence on evaluations of product quality when the producer was paid, failed to be supported. A more comprehensive discussion of these results follows.

#### *The Effect of Producer Enjoyment on Evaluations of Product Quality*

This study addressed whether producer enjoyment would be as persuasive when participants had the opportunity to base their evaluations on the essay directly, rather than only on producer information. In support of hypothesis one, the results of the current study provide further evidence that producer enjoyment *is* persuasive, and *does* impact people's evaluations of a product's quality, even in circumstances where the product itself is present for evaluation. Although the essay examined was identical across experimental conditions, the essay was evaluated to be better in quality when the producer enjoyed Greek mythology and writing the essay than when they did not.

The difference in these evaluations essentially suggests one of two things. Firstly, participants may ignore the content of the essay itself, and instead use only

the producer's enjoyment to evaluate the quality of the essay, like in study one. This is not believed to be the case, however, given that participants appeared to spend adequate time reading the essay. It is more likely that participants interpreted the identical essay in ways which were congruent with their knowledge of the producer's enjoyment.

In study one, it seemed logical for participants to rely on producer enjoyment to formulate evaluations in the absence of an essay. However, in the current study, producer characteristics seem fairly inconsequential once the product is actually on hand to directly appraise. Hence, participants would have been most objective by formulating their evaluations of essay quality based on the essay only, and not on the producer characteristics. This being said, it is quite challenging to use only the essay if participants failed to possess the ability to differentiate a superior essay from an inferior one. Perhaps the most obvious explanation for participants' relying on producer enjoyment is that they may have lacked the relevant topic-related knowledge required to objectively evaluate the quality of the essay.

Accordingly, it would have been more effective to include an additional dependent measure relating to participants' knowledge of Greek mythology. Doing so would have provided clearer insight into whether participants were relying on producer characteristics because they lacked knowledge on the topic (and must rely on peripheral information), or at least would have allowed for the potential elimination of this proposal. If this explanation was found to be valid, the results would have provided evidence that producer enjoyment is influential in situations where elaboration likelihood is low. Furthermore, it may have been more effective to

have participants read an essay on a topic that they *are* familiar with, as this would enable an examination of the persuasiveness of producer authenticity in situations where elaboration likelihood is higher. Although no definite conclusions can be drawn, the results are encouraging. Later studies will examine the persuasiveness of producer authenticity in circumstances where elaboration likelihood is controlled.

*Producer Enjoyment: To Dilute or Enhance That Which Is Diagnostic*

The effect of producer enjoyment on evaluations of product quality can also be explained in terms of a ‘dilution’ or ‘enhancement’ effect (Peters & Rothbart, 2000). Originally established by Nisbett, Zukier and Lemley (1981), the ‘dilution effect’ refers to the tendency for diagnostic information to be diluted in the presence of non-diagnostic information. Nisbett et al. (1981) assert the dilution effect to be the result of non-diagnostic information reducing how representative a stimulus person/product seems of a target. As the number of non-diagnostic characteristics increases, the stimulus may seem less representative of the target. For example, an individual may be judged more representative of a ‘grade A’ university student when individuals are told that he studies 40 hours every week (diagnostic information), than when they are told he studies 40 hours a week (diagnostic) but goes out every Friday and Saturday night (non-diagnostic).

Research by Peters and Rothbart (2000) suggests that typical dilution effect studies (Nisbett et al., 1981; Zukier, 1982) are somewhat deceptive given that the type of non-diagnostic information used in these studies is usually *atypical* of the target (as observed in the above example). According to Peters and Rothbart (2000),

the dilution effect can be created, eliminated or even reversed, depending solely on the typicality of the non-diagnostic information used. When atypical non-diagnostic information is used, a dilution effect *occurs* because it alters people's evaluation of the diagnostic information, and any incongruency weakens the impact of the diagnostic features. Non-diagnostic information that is unrelated to either the target or stimulus person *eliminates* the dilution effect, given that the non-diagnostic information has no influence on how individuals perceive the diagnostic information. Finally, the dilution effect can be reversed, resulting in an 'enhancement effect' which occurs when the non-diagnostic information is typical of the target (E.g. Diagnostic: John studies 40 hours a week. Non-diagnostic: John enjoys going to the library). According to Peters and Rothbart (2000, p. 178), any single piece of "non-diagnostic information may influence the interpretation of the diagnostic information."

The results of the current study support Peters and Rothbart's (2000) assertions. In this situation, the target for comparison is a superior essay. Steve's essay is the stimulus to be compared. Given that the essay is present for evaluation, this should be the only diagnostic information participants need for making a judgement of its quality. Producer enjoyment may therefore be considered non-diagnostic of product quality. Like any *atypical* piece of non-diagnostic information, Steve's low enjoyment for the task seems to have negatively influenced participants' evaluation of the diagnostic information (the essay itself). Participants within the non-authentic condition evaluated the same essay to be lower in quality than those in the authentic condition, suggesting the occurrence of a dilution effect. In the

authentic condition, Steve's high enjoyment for the task seems to have influenced participants' interpretation of the diagnostic information in a positive way (the essay itself) thus strengthening the typicality between the stimulus and the target essay (Asch, 1946; Peters and Rothbart, 2000). Consequently, this resulted in higher evaluations of Steve's essay. These results suggest an 'enhancement effect' (Peters & Rothbart, 2000).

#### *The Mediating Effect of Producer Knowledge and Competence*

The producer who enjoyed writing the essay was perceived as being significantly more knowledgeable *and* more competent than the producer who failed to enjoy the task and topic. The significant effect of producer enjoyment on evaluations of these variables, particularly producer knowledge, implies possible mediational relationships, and as determined in the ancillary results section, this was indeed found to be the case.

Perceptions of producer knowledge were found to mediate the relationship between producer enjoyment and evaluations of product quality. Furthermore, perceptions of producer competence were found to mediate the relationship between perceptions of producer knowledge and evaluations of product quality. Thus, the producer who enjoyed writing the essay was perceived to possess higher knowledge than a producer who did not enjoy the task. Subsequently, the more knowledge a producer was perceived to possess, the more competent they were perceived to be at writing the essay. Finally, a competent essay writer was perceived to write a significantly better essay than an essay writer who was deemed less competent.



First, why did producer enjoyment influence perceptions of how knowledgeable a producer is? Given the results of the first study, it was suggested that producer enjoyment is persuasive in the present context primarily because it implies that the producer will exert greater enthusiasm and dedication to the task than a producer who fails to enjoy the topic. Given that it seems impossible to be born with a natural knowledge of Greek mythology, being dedicated and enthusiastic for the task may necessitate (amongst other things) an extensive exploration of the relevant literature, which would subsequently lead to a greater knowledge on the topic.

This is by no means to suggest that a person who *doesn't* enjoy writing essays on Greek mythology can't be knowledgeable. The point to be made is, if writing essays on this topic is authentic to the essay writer (i.e. enjoys writing the essay and is passionate about the topic), it seems he/she would perhaps spend more time accumulating knowledge on the topic because it is enjoyable, than would a non-authentic individual who finds it uninteresting. Research supports such a proposal (Hindi & Baird, 1986; Schiefele & Krapp, 1988). Given that the purpose of an essay is to communicate relevant knowledge to its readers, it is logical that perceptions of producer knowledge would influence evaluations of the essay's quality. Furthermore, the relationship between perceptions of producer knowledge and evaluations of product quality were found to be mediated by perceptions of producer competence. Once perceptions of producer competence were controlled for, perceptions of producer knowledge had little effect on evaluations of product quality.

It seems logical that perceptions of the producer's knowledge would contribute to evaluations of how competent the individual is in writing an essay, given that without the requisite knowledge, the essay would fail to serve its purpose. As revealed in the correlational analysis, evaluations of producer knowledge and competence were found to share common variance. If the essay writer is perceived to have a great deal of knowledge on the topic, it provides the impression that he would be more competent than an individual who was perceived to lack knowledge on the subject. However, perceptions of competence depend on more than just perceptions of knowledge. As suggested in study one, competence is likely to be defined by an individual's academic ability to write essays *in addition* to their level of topic-related knowledge. This would explain why producer enjoyment had a much larger effect on knowledge evaluations than competence evaluations. Whilst the motivation to acquire extensive knowledge on a topic is proposed to be proportionately driven by the producer's level of passion or enjoyment for the topic (Hindi & Baird, 1986; Schiefele & Krapp, 1988), a producer's enjoyment *can not* completely account for how competent that producer is. Producer enjoyment's marginal effect on competence is thus proposed to be the result of both variables sharing common variance with perceptions of producer knowledge.

Similar to the results of study one, perceptions of producer competence were found to be the strongest predictor of essay quality in the current study. However, *unlike* study one, the producer's enjoyment *was* found to affect perceptions of producer competence in the current study. It therefore seems that in study one, participants *might not* have considered the authentic producer more knowledgeable

than the non-authentic producer. If they had, differences in evaluations of competence should have been detected. In study one, the fact that the essay writer (in all conditions) had participated in numerous courses on Greek mythology may possibly explain why participants evaluated both producers equally competent. It might be expected that after such extensive topic-related study, the producer would not need to acquire further knowledge for writing the essay. Alternatively, the writer in study two, having taken only one course in a general history subject, may have been perceived as needing to acquire more knowledge, which is largely motivated by their enjoyment. It should also be noted that producer enjoyment was found to remain marginally significant as a predictor of product quality even when perceptions of producer knowledge and competence were controlled for. This suggests that producer enjoyment may have had a marginal persuasive influence on essay evaluations for reasons other than those directly relating to producer competence.

It is perhaps possible that the producer's enjoyment implies that the producer treated their essay as an extension of their self. Therefore, when participants read this authentically written essay, it afforded them the opportunity to experience genuine authenticity, whilst in the low enjoyment condition it did not. This is one possible explanation for why the essay was evaluated more favourably in the high enjoyment condition for reasons other than producer competence. This explanation is, however, believed to be more relevant for products that are more explicit reflections of the self (i.e. music, acting, fictional writing, cultural products), and this may explain why producer enjoyment was only marginally predictive of product evaluations.

Additionally, given that participants are only provided with the opportunity to evaluate the product rather than purchase it, it again seems that a connection to an authentic self will be less important in the current context than it might in others.

Another possible reason for why producer enjoyment maintained a marginally significant relationship with evaluations of product quality may relate to a belief that the producer wrote the essay with greater care and precision when it was enjoyable in comparison to when it was not. This explanation relies on the assumption that participants lack the ability to distinguish a superior essay on Greek mythology from an inferior one from reading the essay only. Being intellectually capable and knowledgeable does not necessarily ensure that the producer wrote the essay to the best of their ability. Therefore, genuine enjoyment may provide the impression that the producer was more thorough in writing the essay, than one who lacked enjoyment. Of course, these explanations are speculative at best. It would have been useful to include an open ended measure asking participants to provide some rationale for their responses on the dependent measures, as this would have provided valuable insight into the reasons participants consider producer enjoyment to be persuasive.

#### *The Failure to Discount Producer Authenticity*

In the current study, it had been hypothesised that participants would discount the producer's enjoyment once the essay producer was paid for his efforts. Hence, producer payment was hypothesised to decrease the persuasive appeal of producer enjoyment, given that the producer's apparent enjoyment may instead be

attributed to the financial payment involved, rather than *genuine* task-derived enjoyment. Hypothesis two was based on discounting theory (Deci, 1971; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1972; Morris & Larrick, 1995; van Overwalle & van Rooy, 2001).

Failing to replicate the findings of Study one, the results indicated that producer payment did *not* make participants any less susceptible to the influence of producer enjoyment for any of the three dependent measures. Participants continued to perceive the essay as superior in quality when the producer enjoyed its production, irrespective of whether the producer was paid to write the essay or not. Producer payment also failed to influence participants' perceptions of the producer's knowledge or competence. Although one would expect that producer payment would have no effect on how competent the producer is, it was reassuring to see that perceptions of knowledge were driven by enjoyment rather than payment.

These findings again indicate that participants perceive the producer's enjoyment to be the genuine, underlying motivation for the production of the essay (Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Jones & Harris, 1967; Ross, 1977). It seems that getting paid can simply be considered an added gratuity. Interestingly, when producer enjoyment was low, payment also failed to influence essay evaluations. In Study one, producer payment in the low enjoyment condition resulted in similar essay evaluations to both high enjoyment conditions. Examining the graph in the results section, the same trend observed in Study one, although not significant, can be observed in Study two. In any case, the producer payment manipulation appears to not have been as effective in Study two as it was in Study one. This may be largely

to do with the essay being present in the current study, whilst in the former study participants may have wanted as many indications as possible that the quality of the essay would be high. Future studies addressing whether producer enjoyment can be discounted in situations where there is no product to evaluate, should make payment manipulations explicit, where in one condition the producer is paid, and in the other condition the producer is working for *free*.

### *Implications of Study Two*

Results of the current study have several important implications. From an advertising perspective, it should be acknowledged that a product's appeal to consumers can be increased simply by having the producer enjoy the production of that product. Because this study used an essay as the focal product of evaluation, such results can only be generalised with confidence to settings where the same product is used. As the results of Study two have indicated, producer enjoyment has the ability to indirectly influence perceptions of essay quality, even when the essay is provided for evaluation.

The results of Study two have significant implications for perhaps authors selling their books, teachers responsible for marking student assessment in school and university settings, journalists publishing articles and so on. It is already well documented within the education literature that teachers often (either intentionally or inadvertently) use grades to reward and punish students for their behaviour, attitude, appearance, family backgrounds, and lifestyles, as well as writing ability (Scott, 1995). The current results further expose the degree to which any teacher or lecturer

may be either positively or negatively biased in marking students' work, based purely on their perception of a student's authenticity when completing the assessment. This is concerning, considering it is entirely possible to detest a prescribed assignment and still produce an excellent piece of assessment. Consequently, those responsible for evaluating the written work of others should resist any tendency to rely on the writer's enjoyment for the task (or lack thereof) when attempting to make objective judgements. The results of this study provide another argument for blind marking of written work.

In conclusion, the results of Study two provide further evidence that the enjoyment authenticity of the producer does exert an influence on product evaluations whether it be directly or indirectly. Not only does producer enjoyment have the ability to alter perceptions of a product, it has the capacity to induce more favourable perceptions of *producer* characteristics. Hence, as producer enjoyment emerges as a decisive factor in the persuasion equation, it now seems appropriate to examine the persuasiveness of this producer characteristic for a different type of product.

## CHAPTER 9

### Study Three: The Effect of Authenticity on Acting Performance and Film Quality

#### *Rationale and Hypotheses*

As discussed in chapter one, the initial series of studies in this research aim to establish authenticity as a persuasive producer characteristic across a diversity of products and services. Thus, whilst an essay was employed as the evaluated product in the former two studies, the current study will have individuals evaluating the performance of an actress within a motion picture film. A film was selected as it is believed to be a product with which most people are familiar. According to the Australian Film Commission (2004), 72% of Australians go to the movies at least once a year.

The most recent 'Survey of Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events' revealed that 92.1% of Australians aged between 18 and 24 years and 81% of 25-34 year olds went to see at least one film at the cinemas during 2001 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). The last set of statistics is important, given that the sample for this study will consist of undergraduate university students in this age group.

Furthermore, as discussed in chapter three, performances that seem 'real' or 'authentic' seem to be valued more by consumers than performances that appear scripted and less genuine (Boyle, 2004; Gardyn, 2001; Jagodozinki, 2003; McDowell, 2001; Rose & Wood, 2005; Schreier, 2004). Interviews with consumers have indicated that authentic performances can also enhance evaluations of the



broader product in which such performances are embedded (i.e. the television show, movie, etc). However, as soon as the impression of ‘realness’ fades, evaluations of the show/movie may become less favourable (Gardyn, 2001; McDowell, 2001; Schreier, 2004). The rise and fall in the popularity of the Blair Witch Project (Angelbunny, 2004; Loy, 1999; McDowell, 2001; Schreier, 2004), and reality television (Boyle, 2004; Gardyn, 2001) provide examples of this.

For the purpose of the current study, it therefore seems pertinent to examine how actress authenticity influences participants’ evaluations of not only the actress’ immediate performance but also the film from which it comes. Unlike the essay on Greek mythology, it seems that most people have some personally established criteria for evaluating what makes a good film, and a good performance within a film. The aim of Study three, therefore, is to examine whether actress authenticity is also important when evaluating a film.

Given the previously mentioned statistic pertaining to film attendance, it may also be proposed that most people would have an approximate understanding of how much a movie ticket costs. Therefore, Study three will again attempt to examine how producer authenticity influences evaluations of the movie’s value along with its quality. Whilst in Study one, the large variance in evaluations of product value was believed to underlie participants’ difficulty in estimating an appropriate price for an essay, it is not expected that this issue will arise in the current context considering that purchasing a movie ticket is a relatively common social activity.

To ensure that film genre biases do not occur and confound results the film will not be shown but will rather be discussed through the medium of a magazine

interview transcript. It is anticipated that most individuals will be familiar with these sorts of interview formats, where an actress/actor promotes their latest movie through a question/answer session with a journalist. The genre of the film will not be disclosed within this transcript and the storyline provided will be reasonably vague. A fictional actress will be used so that participants have no preconceived opinions of the source. Therefore, in the current study, participants will have no direct experience with the film itself but instead must rely upon information about both the film and the actress' performance from the provided interview transcript. In this respect, the design of Study three is similar to that used in Study one.

Given that the genre of the movie will be undisclosed in the current study, actress authenticity cannot be manipulated in terms of the actress' cultural or ethnic authenticity for performing in that specific role. This is not to suggest that cultural authenticity could not be persuasive in such a context. If, for example, a martial arts film was used, it might be expected that individuals would perceive an Asian actress to give a better performance in comparison to a Caucasian actress. However, given the intent to control for film genre bias it is necessary to employ another cue to actress authenticity.

Actress enjoyment may intuitively seem the more reliable route to authenticity for the current study. An actress' enjoyment for playing a role may indeed imply that performing comes naturally to her (Rahilly, 1993; Salmela, 2005; Turner, 1999). Furthermore, as discussed by Grandey et al. (2005), participants may evaluate an individual to be more competent at a task when they are perceived to enjoy it. However, an acting performance as a product is more complex than other

products, in the sense that the actress' enjoyment may suggest that she is being true to herself by playing the self of someone else. This seems somewhat paradoxical.

As alluded to in chapter five, producer enjoyment is only one of many possible indicators of producer authenticity. Although this thesis will primarily examine the persuasiveness of both cultural and emotion based authenticity, when it comes to evaluating a film the actress' ability to identify with her character may act as another cue to authenticity. The greater the congruence between the self of an actress and her character, the more real and therefore persuasive her performance may seem, given she would have an understanding of how to portray that role in convincing way. This cue may consequently reinforce the impression that playing that character is authentic to the actress' self. As discussed, consumers seem to value performances the more realistic they seem (Boyle, 2004; Gardyn, 2001).

Alternatively, when an actress is unable to identify with her character, it may imply that playing that role is *not* being true to her self. The role may consequently be perceived as more challenging for the actress given she has never been in that character's position and she may be judged to lack the knowledge of how to perform that role in an authentic way. The depiction of this character may consequently seem more forced and less convincing than when played by an authentic actress.

Within the discipline of acting, an actor or actress' ability to identify with one's character seems to be of considerable importance. Actors and actresses will often research their character and will even put themselves in a similar situation to acquire an understanding of that character. For example, all main actors in Steven Spielberg's 1998 War film, 'Saving Private Ryan', endured a week of boot camp

with a retired Marine, with the exception of actor Matt Damon (who played Private Ryan), who was excused from the exercise so that a real-life resentment of him by the others would be formed (Spielberg, 2004). This sort of exercise suggests that in order to increase the believability of one's performance, actors must have some sort of empathy for what their character has been through.

Therefore, there are two possible indicators of authenticity that could be manipulated within the current study. An actress' enjoyment may immediately suggest that the role comes easily, but it may be the actress' ability to identify with the character that sustains the notion that the role is authentic to the actress, which will consequently enhance how authentic her performance is. Although a good actor/actress may be defined as someone who can play a variety of characters in a convincing manner, it may be the performer's ability to constantly invest elements of their own authentic self that bring a sense of realness to their character (Belk 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981) and this may be most likely when an actress can identify with her character in some aspect. The author of the book 'The Actor's Menu,' Bill Howey (2005), concurs by emphasising that exceptional acting occurs when actors utilise their own experiences, emotions and imagination.

Three times Academy Award nominated actress, Annette Bening, was quoted in a recent interview as saying that "Good acting is about taking off a mask. Not putting one on." (Cited in Thomson, 2004). Bening's statement, like Howey's (2005) above, indicates that successful acting involves being true to one's authentic self. Furthermore, as stated by French actress Jeanne Moreau, "Acting deals with very delicate emotions. It is not putting up a mask. Each time an actor acts he does not

hide; he exposes himself” (Cited in “Born to motivate,” n.d). A quote by British actress, Glenda Jackson also supports the importance of revealing one’s true self when playing a role. “Acting is not about dressing up. Acting is about stripping bare.” (Cited in “Born to motivate,” n.d). Thus, although the notion of an ‘authentic actress’ may seem somewhat of an oxymoron, this may not necessarily be the case. Being a convincing performer may necessitate the investment of one’s authentic self.

Thus, it was decided that for the design of this study, the actress would seem most authentic by both enjoying her role *and* identifying with her character. Conversely, the non-authentic actress will not enjoy the role or be able to identify with her character. These indicators will then be used to examine the effect of actress authenticity on three dependent measures; evaluations of the actress’ performance, participants’ self-reported payment to see the film, and evaluations of the film’s quality.

There are numerous factors that influence individuals to see a film (e.g. actors involved, the script, awards the film has won, genre, plot etc). The proposed quality of the performances within a film is only *one* of these possible influences. However, given that little information about the film will be disclosed, it is expected that participants in this experimental context *will* base their evaluations of film quality and value on the perceived quality of the actress’ performance. Hence, obtaining predictions of the actress’ performance will enable an examination of whether this measure mediates the relationship between actress authenticity and the film’s evaluation.

Finally, in the former two studies it had been anticipated that participants would discount the producer's authenticity (internal motivation) when the essay writer was being paid for his efforts (external motivation) (Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1972). In Study one there was evidence that authenticity could be slightly discounted when payment was made salient, however this result was not replicated in Study two. However, given the inconsistency in findings and the fact that the product in the current study is no longer an essay, it seems necessary to establish whether discounting occurs in the current context. It is expected that if the discounting of producer authenticity is to ever occur, this is certainly the context to detect such an effect. In an industry where actors and actresses potentially earn millions of dollars for a single role, it may be more difficult to believe an actress to be genuine in her interview comments regarding her enjoyment and ability to identify with her role when such large payments are involved. Methodologically improving on the previous studies, Study three will manipulate producer payment by *explicitly* stating that the actress either worked for free, or was paid handsomely.

There are several hypotheses established for Study three examining the persuasive ability of these authenticity cues on movie evaluations;

1. It is hypothesised that participants will predict the authentic actress to perform better than the non-authentic actress.
2. a) It is hypothesised that participants will pay significantly more to see a film when the actress is authentic, than when the actress is non-authentic, b) however, this relationship will be mediated by participants' evaluations of the actress' individual performance.

3. a) It is hypothesised that participants will predict the film to be superior in quality when the actress is authentic in comparison to when the actress is not authentic, b) however, this relationship will be mediated by participants' evaluations of the actress' performance.
4. Finally, it is hypothesised that the authenticity of the actress will be less persuasive when the actress is paid for her role than when the actress is not paid for the role.
  - 4a. it is anticipated that hypothesis 4 will function for perceptions of product value.
  - 4b. it is anticipated that hypothesis 4 will function for evaluations of the actress' performance.
  - 4c. it is anticipated that hypothesis 4 will function for evaluations of product quality.

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Ninety-six participants were recruited for the current study. Participants were sampled from James Cook University and from the general population. Participants' ages ranged between 17 and 65 years, with the sample comprising forty-two males ( $M = 26.38$  years,  $SD = 12.79$  years) and fifty-four females ( $M = 23.17$  years,  $SD = 6.88$  years).

### *Design*

The design for this study was a 2 (Authenticity Manipulation: Authentic actress versus non-authentic actress) x 2 (Producer payment: Present versus absent) between subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to the four possible conditions. For the purpose of the current study, product evaluations were made without being exposed to either the actress' performance or the film.

### *Materials*

Dependent measures for this study were obtained by means of a pen and paper task. The task consisted of a vignette and three questions. The vignette provided participants with an excerpt from a fictional interview which was said to have been published in 'Who Weekly Magazine.' In the interview, a reporter questioned an actress regarding her feelings toward making her most recent movie. The minimal information provided about the movie was relatively vague and was identical across all four conditions. The actress' name was fictional. The vignette was designed to prevent participants from formulating their judgements based on irrelevant information such as the actress' popularity or the genre of the film. Participants in each condition received the same basic interview extract; however, some of the actress' responses were manipulated in two different ways across participants.

*Manipulation one: Authenticity manipulation.* Within each vignette, participants received information about the actress' feelings toward filming this movie. In the authentic actress manipulation, half of the sample were told that the



actress thoroughly enjoyed making the film and that it was a lot of fun. The actress also stated that she could strongly identify with her character. The remaining half of participants received the non-authentic actress manipulation and were informed that that the actress did not enjoy making the film, found it very challenging, and could not identify with her character at all. For the purpose of this study, authenticity is thus defined in terms of the actress' enjoyment for the role and her ability to identify with her character.

*Manipulation two: Producer payment manipulation.* To examine whether actress payment affected the perceived authenticity of the actress, participants received information within the interview extract regarding the actress' payment for making the movie. The first half of the sample were informed that the actress was paid very well for her effort, whilst the remaining half of the sample were informed that she acted in the film *unpaid* as a favour to the director, who was a friend of hers. Hence, unlike in the previous studies, the absence of actress payment is made highly salient.

Following this vignette, participants were asked to answer three questions. The first question required participants to state how much they would be willing to pay to see the discussed movie. This response was made in terms of a monetary value in dollars. It was anticipated that this question would work more effectively than the payment question for the essay in Study one, given that there exists an understood price standard for movie tickets. Furthermore, this price range across cinemas is relatively restricted, with prices typically ranging from approximately seven to fifteen dollars. In fact the average price for a movie ticket in Australian in

2004 was \$9.92, with the highest price being \$15.80 per ticket (Australian Film Commission, 2004).

The second question required participants to rate, along a five-point Likert scale, their estimates of how good a job they perceived the actress to do in this movie. Responses ranged from 'extremely bad,' to 'extremely good.' This dependent measure thus aimed to evaluate the predicted performance of the actress only. The third question involved an evaluation of the movie itself. Having read the interview excerpt, this question required participants to rate what they perceived the quality of the finished film to be. These responses were also recorded along a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'exceptionally bad' in quality to 'exceptionally good' in quality. (All four versions of the interview extracts can be located in Appendix D1. The three questions can be located in Appendix D2).

### *Procedure*

Participants were tested either individually or in small groups. On arrival at the laboratory, participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study. Confidentiality and consent were discussed and accepting participants then signed a consent form. Participants were asked to write their age and gender on a provided demographic sheet and were told that if they had any questions they should feel free to ask them at any stage during the testing. Participants were then provided with a piece of paper containing the interview excerpt and questions.

The vignettes were distributed to participants randomly, keeping the researcher blind as to what version the participant was completing. The researcher

then provided participants with the following instructions, “I want you to please read the following interview excerpt, and answer the three questions as honestly as possible.” The participants completed the scale at their own pace, and on completion were debriefed regarding the nature of the study and asked if they had any questions. Participants were then thanked for their time, and were free to leave.

### *Results*

Before proceeding, data were examined to establish whether they met the assumptions required for a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Normality tests revealed no extreme outliers on any of the dependent measures. The assumption of normality was found to be violated for all conditions with the exception of the non-authentic/low payment condition on both the film value, and film quality measures (all Shapiro-Wilk  $p$  values  $<.05$ ). Normality was violated for all conditions on the actress quality measure. As stipulated by Brace, Kemp and Snelgar (2003) and Pallant (2005), however, multivariate analysis is typically a robust analysis, even with modest violations of normality. Data across all dependent measures were found to be homogeneous.

### *Main Effects*

Given that the nature of this study was again primarily exploratory; all analyses were conducted using two-tailed tests. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests. A 2x2 between subjects MANOVA was conducted to establish whether the effects of actress authenticity and payment were significant across the

three responses in this study. As anticipated, the authenticity of the actress was found to have a significant effect on participants' responses,  $F(3, 90) = 5.62, p = .001, \eta^2 = .16$ . Conversely, actress payment was not found to significantly influence the responses of participants,  $F(3, 90) = 1.15, p = .33$ . Failing to support the fourth hypothesis, the actress authenticity  $\times$  actress payment interaction was also found not to be significant,  $F(3, 90) = 1.29, p = .28$ .

#### *The Effect of Authenticity on Task Responses*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the authenticity of the actress had on participants' responses for each of the three questions. In support of the first hypothesis, the authenticity of the actress was found to have a significant effect on participants' evaluations of her predicted performance,  $F(1, 92) = 15.08, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$ . Participants predicted the actress would do a significantly better job in this film when she enjoyed the role and could identify with her character ( $M = 2.55, SD = .79$ ) than when she failed to enjoy the role and did not identify with her character ( $M = 1.96, SD = .70$ ).

In support of hypothesis two (part a), the actress' authenticity was found to significantly affect how much participants were willing to pay to see the film,  $F(1, 92) = 7.71, p = .007, \eta^2 = .08$ . Results indicate that participants would pay significantly more money to see the film when the actress was authentic ( $M = \$7.12, SD = 3.66$ ) than when she was non-authentic ( $M = \$5.12, SD = 3.66$ ). Furthermore, in support of hypothesis three (part a), the authenticity of the actress was found to influence participants' perceptions regarding the quality of the movie,  $F(1, 92) =$

7.31,  $p = .008$ ,  $\eta^2 = .07$ . Participants reported that the quality of the movie would be significantly better when the actress enjoyed the role and identified with her character ( $M = 2.42$ ,  $SD = .80$ ) than when she did not, (non-authentic) ( $M = 1.94$ ,  $SD = .97$ ).

A Pearson's bivariate correlation was conducted to examine if the dependent measures of 'payment to see film' and 'product quality' were related in the current study. Results indicate these two variables are significantly related, showing that as evaluations of product quality increase, so does the price participants are willing to pay to see the discussed film,  $r(94) = .45$ ,  $p < .001$ , 2-tailed. The mean evaluations of perceived actress quality can be located in Figure 7. The mean evaluations the film's value and quality can be located in Figures 8 and 9 respectively.

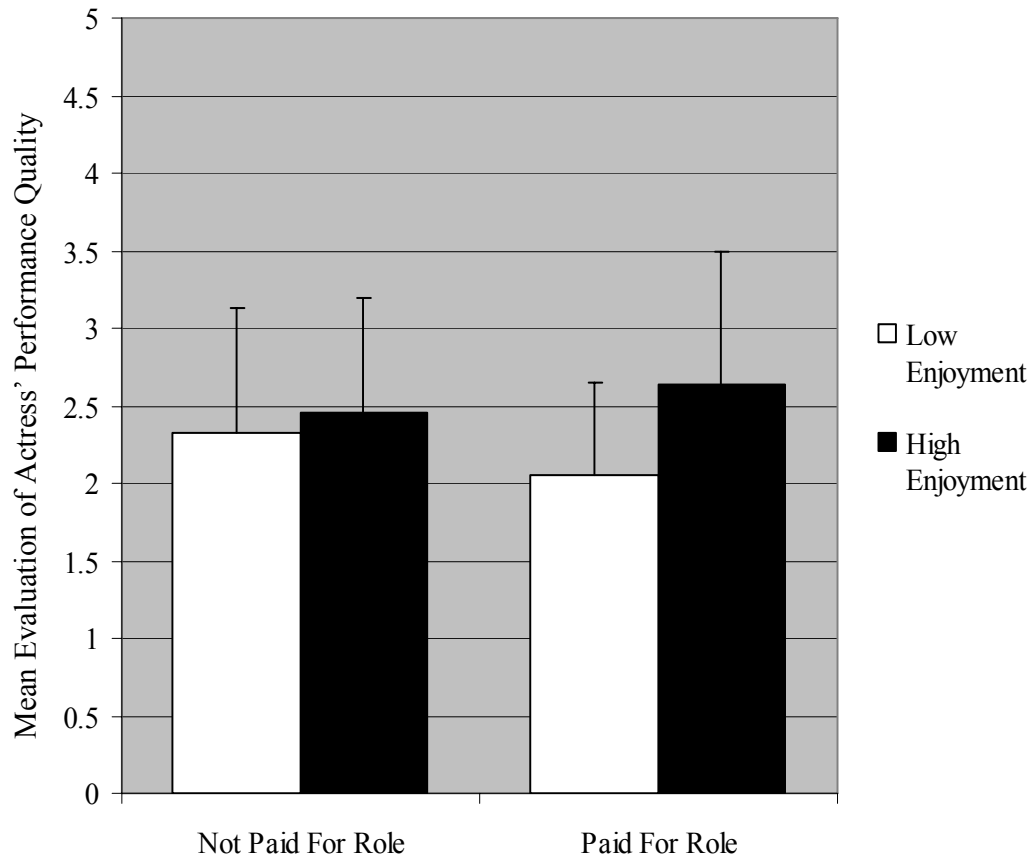


Figure 7. Study three. Mean ratings of actress quality.

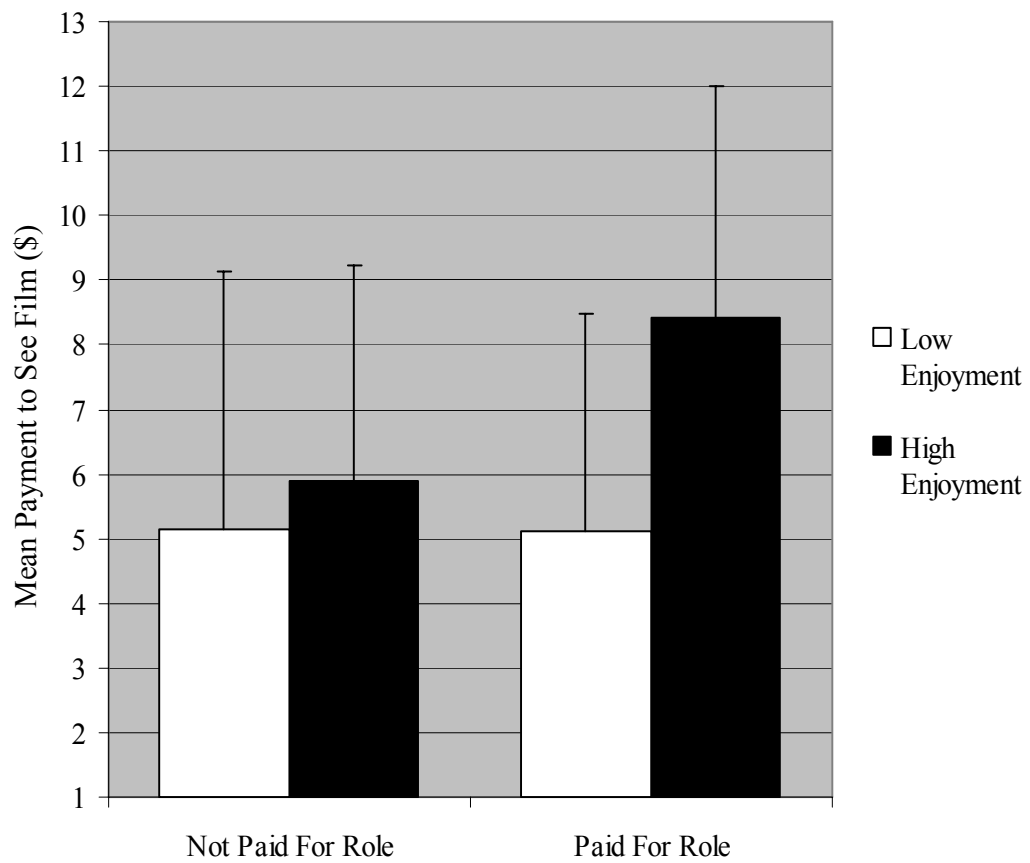


Figure 8. Study three. Mean payment to see movie.

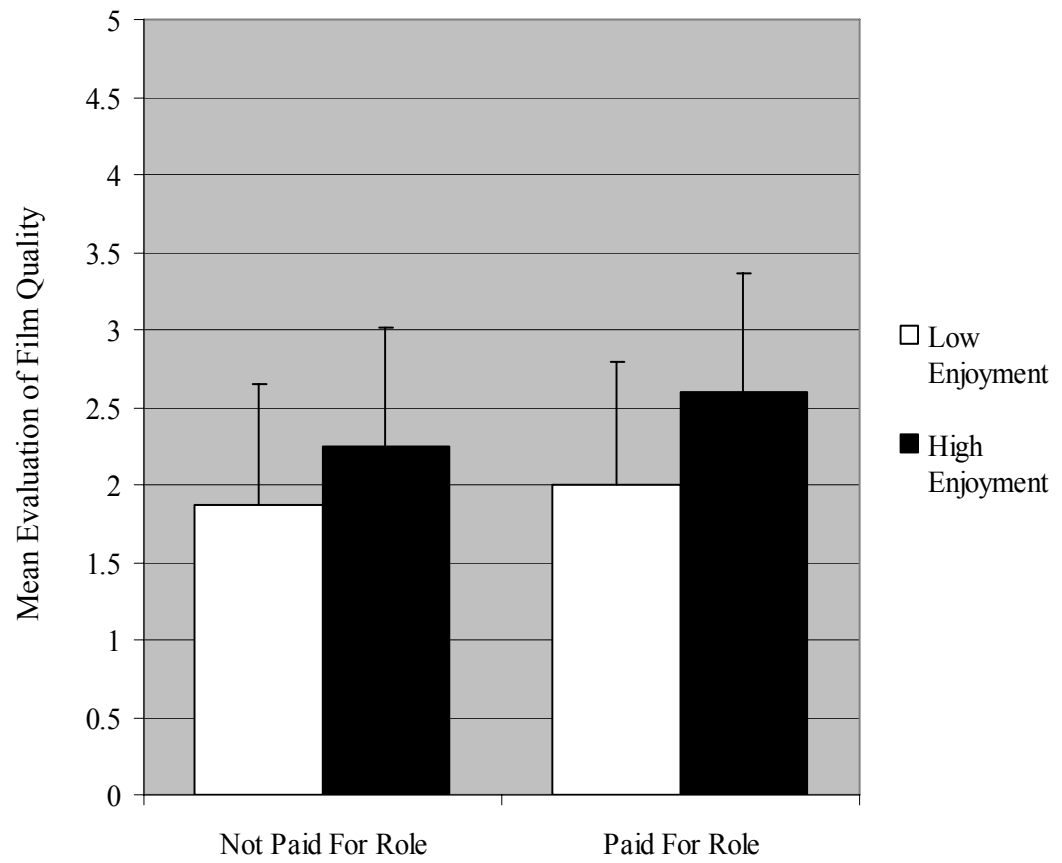


Figure 9. Study three. Mean ratings of film quality.



### *The Interaction between Actress Authenticity and Actress Payment*

Although the multivariate effect for the actress authenticity x actress payment interaction was not significant, the univariate results indicated that this interaction *was* having a *marginal* influence on participants' evaluations of the film's ticket value,  $F(1, 92) = 3.17, p = .08, \eta^2 = .03$ . Simple effects analysis using a series of independent samples t-tests revealed that when the actress was authentic, the actress payment manipulation *was* found to have an effect on evaluations of essay quality,  $t(45) = 2.54, p = .02$ . Participants reported that they would pay significantly more to see the film when the actress was paid for her role ( $M = \$8.43, SD = 3.57$ ) than when she was not ( $M = \$5.88, SD = 3.34$ ), *provided* she was authentic. However, when the actress was not authentic, her payment failed to affect participants' payments to see the film,  $t(47) = -0.04, p = .97$ . Results further indicated that actress authenticity failed to influence participants' payment to see the film when the actress was not paid for her role,  $t(46) = 0.69, p = .50$ . However, when the actress *was* paid for her role, participants reported that they would pay significantly more to see the film when the actress was authentic, ( $M = \$8.43, SD = 3.57$ ) than when she was not authentic ( $M = \$5.10, SD = 3.38$ ),  $t(46) = 3.32, p = .002$ . The mean payment to see the film for each condition can be examined in Figure 8.

### *Evaluations of Actress Performance as a Mediator Variable*

Given that perceptions of producer competence were found to influence dependent measures in earlier studies, it was questioned as to whether perceptions of the actress' performance quality would work in a similar fashion in the current study.

A MANCOVA was conducted using the perceived quality of the actress' performance as a covariate, to examine whether perceptions authenticity maintained its effect on the remaining dependent measures. Results showed that the perceived quality of the actress' performance had a significant main effect across dependent measures,  $F(2, 90) = 27.23, p < .001, \eta^2 = .38$ . Conversely, the previously significant main effect for authenticity became non-significant when perceived actress quality was controlled for,  $F(2, 90) = .90, p = .41$ , indicating that actress quality mediates the relationship between authenticity and the dependent measures. The main effect for incentive remained non-significant,  $F(2, 90) = 1.00, p = .37$ , as did the authenticity x incentive interaction,  $F(2, 90) = 1.93, p = .15$ .

Given that a main effect was found for perceived actress quality; a series of univariate ANOVAs were conducted to examine this covariate. The perceived quality of the actress was found to affect how much participants were willing to pay to see the movie,  $F(1, 91) = 14.10, p < .001, \eta^2 = .13$ . Perceived actress quality was also found to significantly affect what participants perceived the quality of the discussed movie to be,  $F(1, 91) = 50.12, p < .001, \eta^2 = .36$ .

Pearson's bivariate correlations were then conducted to examine the direction of the above relationships. Results indicate that as participants' perceptions of actress quality increase, so does the price they would pay to see the movie,  $r(94) = .43, p < .001, 2$ -tailed. Additionally, higher perceptions of actress quality also lead to higher evaluations of movie quality,  $r(94) = .64, p < .001, 2$ -tailed.

The previous MANOVA results indicated that perceptions of actress quality appear to mediate the relationship between authenticity and the dependent measures

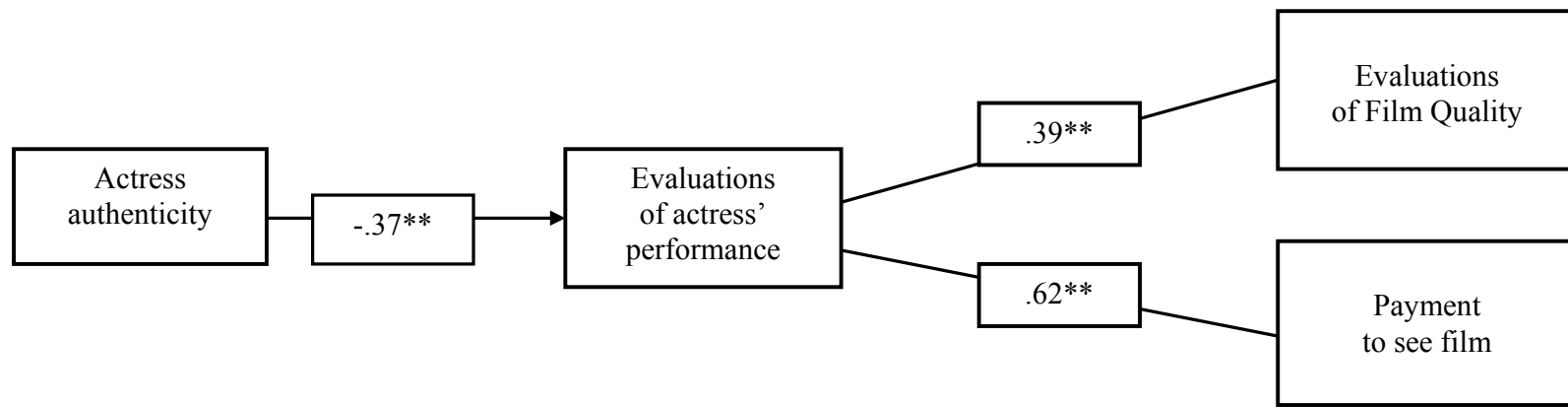
as hypothesised (See hypothesis 2b and 3b). To explore if this was the case, a hierarchical regression analysis was run to firstly predict how much participants would pay to see the movie. At block one, producer authenticity was included as a predictor and this model was found to be significant,  $F(1, 94) = 7.21, p = .009$ . This predictor was found to explain 7.10% of the variance in how much participants would pay to see the film,  $R = .27$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .06$ . The  $t$ -value for producer enjoyment was found to be significant ( $t = -2.69, p = .009$ ).

At block two, the perceived quality of the actress' performance was added to the model, which increased the model's overall significance in predicting how much participants would pay to see the discussed movie,  $F(2, 93) = 11.58, p < .001$ . The model of two predictors was now able to explain 19.90% of the variance in how much participants would pay to see the film,  $R = .45$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .18$ . When examining the significance of the individual  $t$  values for the second model it can be seen that the regression supports the previous multivariate results. Supporting hypothesis 2b, actress authenticity loses its former significance as a predictor ( $t = -1.24, p = .22$ ). The perceived quality of the actress' performance is, however, found to be a significant predictor of how much participants were willing to pay to see the film ( $t = 3.86, p < .001$ ). This analysis confirms the mediational effect of actress quality on the relationship between producer enjoyment and evaluations of payment to see the film.

To explore if this was also the case when predicting the overall quality of the movie, the hierarchical regression analysis was rerun with film quality as the dependent measure. At block one, producer authenticity was included as the only

predictor of film quality and this model was found to be significant,  $F(1, 94) = 7.16$ ,  $p = .009$ . This predictor could account for 7.10% of the variance in evaluations of film quality,  $R = .27$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .06$ . The t-value for this predictor was found to be a significant ( $t = -2.68$ ,  $p = .009$ ). As can be observed, these statistics are almost identical as those of block one in the previous regression using evaluations of film value as the dependent measure.

At block two, perceived actress quality was added to the model, which increased the model's overall significance in predicting evaluations of the film's quality,  $F(2, 93) = 31.83$ ,  $p < .001$ . The model of two predictors was now able to explain 41% of the variance in evaluations of film quality,  $R = .64$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .39$ . When looking at the significance of the individual t values for the second model it can be seen that the predictor authenticity loses its significance from model one ( $t = -.41$ ,  $p = .69$ ). However, the perceived quality of the actress' performance is significant as a predictor of film quality evaluations ( $t = 7.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In support of hypothesis 3b, the current analysis confirms the mediational effect of actress quality on the relationship between producer enjoyment and evaluations of film quality. The mediated relationships between producer authenticity and product evaluations can be examined in Figure 10. The complete regression results can be located in Appendix D3.



\*\* Standardised beta weights included in boxes (significant at  $p = .001$ ).

Note – Actress authenticity was negatively coded (lower scores = higher authenticity)

*Figure 10.* Suggested mediational relationship established in Study three.

### *Discussion*

To reiterate, four hypotheses were established for the current study. The first hypothesis, that participants would perceive the authentic actress to perform better than the non-authentic actress, was found to be supported. Hypothesis two (a) had proposed that participants would pay significantly more to see a film when the actress was authentic, than when she was not authentic. However, it was further anticipated (hypothesis 2b) that this relationship *would* be mediated by participants' evaluations of the actress' performance. Results of the current study were found to support both sub-hypotheses of hypothesis two.

The third hypothesis (part a), that participants would perceive the film to be superior in quality when the actress was authentic in comparison to when the actress was not authentic was again supported. In support of hypothesis 3b, however, this relationship was *also* found to be mediated by participants' evaluations of the actress' performance. Finally, it was hypothesised that the authenticity of the actress would be less persuasive, when the actress was paid extremely well for her role than when she was not paid at all. The current results failed to provide support for this fourth hypothesis on any of the three dependent measures. A discussion of the results follows.

#### *The Effect of Actress Enjoyment on Evaluations of the Actress' Performance*

Given that the relationships between actress authenticity and film evaluations were found to be mediated by evaluations of the actress' individual performance, the effect of actress authenticity on this dependent measure will be discussed first. In

support of hypothesis one, participants predicted the performance of the actress to be significantly better when she could identify with her character and enjoyed her role than when she was unable to identify with her character and didn't particularly enjoy her role. In addition to the results of study one and two, the current study therefore provides further evidence that producer authenticity influences evaluations of a product from a different domain to the previously examined essay.

This is interesting, given that it seems entirely feasible for a performance to be convincing, *irrespective* of the actress' degree of authenticity, especially considering that most film actresses are usually experienced and proficient in their craft. However, as the results have indicated, participants still considered the quality of the actress' performance to be better when she was authentic. It is important to emphasise that the differences between actress evaluations for each authenticity condition do not suggest that participants evaluate the authentic actress as good and the non-authentic actress as bad, but rather that the quality of the performance by the authentic actress is evaluated as *superior*.

Several proposals can be made for why participants perceived the authentic actress to provide the better performance. Firstly, actress enjoyment may imply competence (Grandey et al., 2005). Hence the actress may have been perceived by participants to invest more time into learning lines and rehearsing when she enjoyed the role and could identify with her character than when she did not enjoy the role. Conversely, the authenticity indicators employed in the current study may signify that the role came naturally to the actress. Accordingly, the authentic actress, genuinely able to identify with the experiences of her character, would most

probably not need to rehearse as much as an actress who is not authentic, given that the role seems natural.

Furthermore, participants may have perceived the actress who enjoyed the role and identifies with the character to impart more of her 'self' into her performance, resulting in a more realistic portrayal of her character than the actress who finds the role a little more challenging due to the lack of enjoyment and ability to connect with her character. This result supports Belk's (1988) notion of the extended self in that when an actress is authentic participants can directly experience a character that is also authentic. Thus, the extended 'self' of the actress endows the performance with an element of realness and consequently enhances the perceived quality of this performance.

Perhaps the most problematic issue with the current results relates to the fact that two indicators of actress authenticity were used. As discussed in the introduction for this study, using both the actress' enjoyment and identification with her role seemed the best way of reinforcing the actress' authenticity. However, as a result it is difficult to know whether one indicator was more responsible for the observed result than the other. Hence, since the primary objective of this study was to establish if evaluations of an actress' prospective performance could be influenced by how authentic the actress seemed within the role. As the results have indicated, this objective has been met.



*The Effect of Actress Authenticity on Evaluations of Film Value and Quality*

The current study also aimed to examine whether the authenticity of the actress could affect evaluations of the larger product; the film itself. Given that the authenticity of the actress was able to affect evaluations of the actress' individual performance, it was hypothesised that participants may also pay more to see the film, and evaluate it to be better in quality when the actress was authentic. As previously reported, this was confirmed this to be the case. Such results support the literature asserting that performer authenticity can influence evaluations of not only a performance, but the wider product from which that performance comes (Gardyn, 2001; McDowell, 2001; Schreier, 2004).

The effect of actress authenticity on film evaluations was not found to be direct, however. Not surprisingly, the relationship between actress authenticity and product evaluations (both quality and value) were found to be mediated by the predicted quality of the actress' individual performance. Therefore, the authentic actress was perceived to provide a better performance than the non-authentic actress, which then influenced participants to provide more positive evaluations of the film itself. Participants evaluated the film to be much better in quality and were actually willing to pay approximately two dollars more for a ticket when the actress seemed authentic in her role, than when she failed to relate to her character, and did not enjoy the role. Although two dollars may not seem much of a price difference, this increase in value actually seems quite substantial for a product that has a mean price across cinemas of \$9.92 (Australian Film Commission, 2004).

Given that the performance of one actress makes up only a single facet of any film, it was interesting to observe how minor details relating to an actress' ability (or failure) to identify with her character and her enjoyment (or lack there of) for the role, could indirectly influence people's appraisals of the film's predicted quality and value. It should be acknowledged, however that evaluations of film value and quality may not be as strongly determined by actress quality and authenticity outside of the experimental setting. Given that no information was provided regarding the genre of the film, the storyline of the film, the other actors involved and so on, it is hardly surprising that if actress authenticity is persuasive, the relationship between actress authenticity and product evaluations *should* be mediated by participants' evaluations of the actress' individual performance.

#### *The Effect of Actress Payment on the Persuasiveness of Authenticity*

Although the previous two studies have provided little compelling evidence for the discounting of producer authenticity when the producer was paid for the production of the respective product, it was believed that such results might possibly be attributed to methodological flaws, and previous product choice. In the current study the producer payment manipulation was made highly salient by having the actress either paid a large amount of money or no money at all. It had been hypothesised that participants would discount the actress' performance as being authentic when she was being paid for her role in the film, particularly in this context (Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1972; Van Overwalle & Van Rooy, 2001).

Emulating the findings of study two, however, this hypothesis garnered little support in the current study. Though the interaction between authenticity and actress payment was found to have a marginal influence on participants' payments to see the film, this interaction did not make participants any less susceptible to the influence of actress authenticity on the other dependent measures. Participants continued to perceive both the actress' performance and the film to be superior in quality when the actress was authentic, irrespective of whether she was paid or not. This is interesting, given that in real life, it could be proposed that many actors/actresses are contractually obligated to say things when interviewed that will entice readers to see the film (Campea, 2005). Therefore, these findings indicate that participants perceive the actress' enjoyment and ability to identify with the experiences of her character to be the genuine, underlying motivation for her performance. Getting paid to do what one loves is simply an additional bonus.

It is possible that participants discounted the actress' authenticity even when she was *not* being paid. Given that the role was a favour to the director, it is possible that participants inferred the actress to participate in that film and its promotion because she was obligated to rather than because she wanted to. This may or may not be an accurate explanation for the why the actress' authenticity had similar effects across both paid and unpaid conditions. Either way, the important point is that actress authenticity continued to have an effect, and even if this authenticity was discounted, it doesn't appear to have been completely ignored.

So why did participants take into account the actress' payment along with her authenticity when evaluating their payments to see the discussed film? It should be

strongly emphasised that the interaction between authenticity and actress payment on this dependent measure was only marginally significant. Any discussion of this result should subsequently be interpreted with caution.

Nonetheless, examining Figure 8 it can be observed that of all four conditions, the highest mean payment to see the film occurred when the actress was *both* authentic and paid for her role. Participants were found to pay at least two dollars more to see the film in this condition than in the other three conditions. In support of McClure (1992) and McClure et al.'s (1993) research, a conjunctive causal explanation, rather than attributional discounting may explain participants' responses in this context. Thus, it seems that actress authenticity was not discounted across payment conditions and rather, multiple sufficient causes (payment and authenticity) simultaneously add value to the film.

In the previous study, producer payment made no difference to evaluations of the product itself, nor to perceptions of producer characteristics. In study one, payment only enhanced product evaluations when the producer *lacked* authenticity. However, examining the trend in Figure 8, actress payment seemed to have a greater influence on how much participants would pay to see the film in the authentic condition. Why is this so? It is possible that participants only evaluated the film to be worth paying a certain amount of money for when it was believed the actress would be convincing in her role. Accordingly, it may not matter how much a non-authentic actress was paid, as she would still not possess the ability to provide a quality performance. As results have suggested, actress authenticity did result in higher evaluations of the actress' performance.

Consequently, in the authentic conditions the fact that the actress was paid well may have reinforced the belief that the authentic actress *would* provide a convincing performance which then increased the value of the film. However, when the authentic actress was not paid for her role, participants may have inferred that although competent, the actress would not be as prepared to invest as much of her self into her performance. This rationale would explain the failure of authenticity to have an effect on participants' evaluations of film payment when the actress was unpaid for her role. The key point to make here is that the payment of the actress does not seem to cast doubt on her authenticity. Hence, authenticity again seems to be perceived as genuine.

#### *The Relationship between Film Evaluation Measures*

Finally, the results of the current study revealed that participants' evaluations of film quality and film value were found to be related. This result seems at odds with the findings of study one, which found no relationship between such dependent measures. In study one, it was proposed that the lack of a relationship between these measures could be explained by methodological issues relating to the response format used for essay value, and the fact that most participants were unfamiliar with what constitutes a typical price for an essay. In the current study it can be observed that these issues seem to have been alleviated by employing a product with which most people are familiar with in terms of its value.

### *Study Three Implications*

The third study of this thesis has implications for both advertisers and consumers. It seems that film studios can encourage consumers to see their film, simply by having actors convey that they thoroughly enjoyed making the film, and could strongly identify with their character. This strategy is commonly used by film promoters. Actors are often contractually obligated to state such things during interviews (Campea, 2005).

It is further proposed that performer authenticity would be especially persuasive when consumers admire the actor/, given that people will often seek out the extended selves of others whom they value (Belk, 1988). If an actor invests their authentic self when portraying a character, consumers are therefore offered an insight into that actors' authentic self which may be considered quite valuable, and can potentially add some two dollars to a ticket price. This being said, actor authenticity could be easily ignored in the presence of other persuasive factors. For example, if a consumer detests romantic comedies, it is unlikely that he/she will show an interest in seeing the film just because the actor in it seems authentic.

Hence, though most viewers accept that the characters on a film screen will be fictional, this is not to suggest that consumers still don't want the characters to be authentic. In support of the three main hypotheses, the results of study three suggest that actress authenticity, as a producer characteristic, is another persuasive influence on evaluations of both an actress' performance, and the movie in which this performance is embedded. Furthermore, it seems that participants will pay significantly more for a product when an actress is authentic.

## CHAPTER 10

## Study Four: Authentic Preferences when Selecting a Cardiovascular Surgeon

*Rationale and Hypotheses*

The initial three studies have generated results that are both interesting and encouraging. In all studies, producer enjoyment (as a cue to authenticity) was found to influence evaluations of the product, with authentic production yielding more favorable evaluations. Furthermore, these results have shown that producer authenticity may in some circumstances have an indirect effect on product evaluations rather than a direct effect, with producer enjoyment influencing perceptions of other producer characteristics such as how knowledgeable, and therefore competent, a producer seems (study two). The results of study three also indicated that producer authenticity can exert a persuasive influence on product evaluations both at an immediate level (actress' individual performance) and at a broader level (overall evaluations of movie value and quality) somewhat like a halo effect (Thorndike, 1920).

These studies have all employed between-subjects designs, in that participants are only required to evaluate one product made by a solitary producer. However, outside of the experimental setting individuals are constantly required to choose between the products and/or services of multiple producers, service providers, manufacturers and so on. It therefore seems necessary to examine whether individuals prefer authentic service providers/producers over other viable service providers/producers present, who although not authentic, are still as potentially

credible in terms of their training or expertise. Instead of evaluating a product in the current study, it seems important to examine how service provider authenticity may impact evaluations of a service.

Within a vignette, participants will take the position of someone in need of cardiovascular surgery. The surgical procedure will therefore be the service, the potential service providers will be two cardiovascular surgeons. Being quite serious, this procedure was chosen as it is believed that it might cause individuals to carefully evaluate information and be particularly selective of who will perform the required service.

Given that a cardiovascular procedure requires years of specialist medical training, it is important to ensure both surgeons can be considered equally competent prior to manipulating authenticity. Within the vignette, both doctors will be described as having the same experience, the same workplace, graduated with identical grades, will be familiar with the required surgical procedure and will have experienced no mishaps during their time in the medical profession. However, aside from the technical aspect of any medical procedure, there is also a humane side. Medical research indicates that practitioner empathy is an important determinant of patient satisfaction in medical settings, and this characteristic is something patients look for when seeking the help of a health professional (Comstock, Hooper, Goodwin, & Goodwin, 1982; Warner, 1992). It therefore seems important for the doctor to not only be perceived as authentic as a surgeon, but also authentic in his bedside manner.



Given that the previous three studies have all used enjoyment as a perceived route to the producer's authentic 'self' (Dodson, 1996; Levin, 1992; Rahilly, 1993; Salmela, 2005; Turner, 1999), it seems valid to have the authentic surgeon expressing passion for his work and enjoying his job. As discussed in Grandey et al.'s (2005) research, enjoyment must be perceived to be genuine in order to be persuasive. To ensure the authentic doctor's passion seems genuine, this doctor will be said to have suffered from a similar heart condition as a child, which is what motivated his passion to become a cardiovascular surgeon. The doctor's passion should additionally reinforce his authenticity for both specialising in cardiovascular surgery and also empathising with the experience of the patient (Abram, 1978).

Alternatively, the non-authentic specialist will be said to have pursued this specialisation due to availability, rather than choice, given he had originally wanted to specialise in podiatry. Consequently, this doctor does not feel a personal connection to this area of specialisation. This information will attempt to reinforce that cardiovascular surgery is not authentic to this specialist, despite the fact that he is qualified and accomplished in the area. Furthermore, in this case, the non-authentic specialist will not be said to lack enjoyment for his job, although this may be inferred from his lack of passion.

Across the first three studies there has been minimal evidence to suggest that the presence of a monetary incentive for the producer causes participants to discount the authenticity of the producer. Consequently, the present and future studies will cease to further examine the hypothesis that discounting of producer authenticity occurs when an external financial motive for the production of a product is present.

Given the results of the previous studies and discussed literature, the following hypothesis is proposed;

1. Participants will prefer the cardiovascular surgeon who as the result of having had a heart condition as a child is highly passionate about his work (authentic) to the cardiovascular surgeon who originally desired to be a podiatrist (non-authentic).

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Fifty-four undergraduate students from James Cook University participated in this study. Participants' ages ranged between 18 and 35 years, with the sample comprising thirteen males ( $M = 21.77$  years,  $SD = 4.02$  years) and forty-one females ( $M = 20.54$  years,  $SD = 3.21$  years). No incentive was provided, with students participating voluntarily in this research.

#### *Design*

The design for this study was a single sample, forced-choice response design. This design was elected to examine if source authenticity would affect how participants made judgements when given a choice between two service providers. The service in the current study is a cardio-surgical procedure, and the service providers are thus two cardiovascular surgeons.

### *Materials*

The dependent measure for this study was obtained by means of a pen and paper task, consisting of a vignette followed by one question. The vignette provides participants with the character profiles of two cardiovascular surgeons. The vignette is set up so that the participant is made to feel that they have just been diagnosed with a serious heart condition. Additionally, a general practitioner has provided participants with information about two recommended cardiovascular surgeons. Within the vignette all participants are informed that both Dr. Brown and Dr. Smith graduated with high marks at the same time from prestigious universities, and have been cardiovascular surgeons at the local hospital for the last ten years. Both doctors are said to be diligent, highly familiarised with the required procedure, and have experienced no mishaps.

By including such information it is ensured that both the experience and competence of each doctor remains controlled. The vignette then provides information on each doctor individually. One is authentic and one is not. For the purpose of this study authenticity is thus operationalised in terms of the cardiovascular surgeon's passion and enjoyment, given that passion/enjoyment is usually derived from experiences where an individual can be their true authentic self.

*Authentic cardiovascular surgeon.* Within the vignette, participants are told that Dr. Brown was attracted to cardiology because he himself had suffered a heart condition as a child. As a result, Dr. Brown is extremely passionate about this area of medicine, and thoroughly enjoys his job.

*Non-authentic cardiovascular surgeon.* Within the vignette, participants were informed that Dr Smith fell into being a cardiovascular surgeon by chance given he had originally wanted to be a podiatrist. It was also stated within the vignette that Dr. Smith feels no personal connection with cardiology; however, he works hard and is a good doctor.

Following this vignette, participants were asked to select one of the described doctors to perform the required surgery. Responses were made by checking only one of the two provided boxes (one for each doctor). The order of the doctors' individual character profiles were counterbalanced, as were the response checkboxes to prevent order effects. The vignette and question for this study can be located in Appendix E1.

### *Procedure*

Participants were tested either individually or in small groups. On arrival at the laboratory, participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study. Confidentiality and consent were discussed and accepting participants then signed a consent form. Participants were asked to write their age and gender on a provided demographic sheet and were told that if they had any questions they should feel free to ask them at any stage during the testing. Participants were provided with the materials, and were instructed to read the provided vignette, and select which doctor they would honestly prefer. Participants completed the study at their own pace, and on completion were debriefed regarding the nature of the study and asked

if they had any questions. Participants were then thanked for their time, and were free to leave.

### *Results*

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was conducted and revealed that of the 54 participants, 47 (87%) elected to have the authentic doctor perform the surgery, whereas only seven (13%) elected to have the non-authentic doctor perform the surgery, which is significantly different from what would be expected by chance,  $X^2(1) = 29.63, p < .001$ .

### *Discussion*

In support of the hypothesis, the results of study four provide evidence that the authenticity of a service provider influences participants' judgements, in a similar fashion to an authentic producer. Although most of the research examining source characteristics has utilised between subjects designs, the results of the current study reveal that when two equally competent practitioners are available, the majority of participants were found to exhibit a preference for the authentic provider.

It should be understood that having had a heart condition in no way entails that the doctor will be a better surgeon than the specialist who has not suffered such a condition. This information was provided purely to convey to participants that the authentic doctor entered this profession of his own will as a result of his own experiences which caused him to develop an authentic interest in the area, and to be

genuinely passionate about it. This being said, both doctors were described as being equally experienced, familiar with the required procedure, and had never experienced a medical mishap.

As indicated by the results, however, the doctor perceived as authentic was still more popular than the non-authentic doctor. In part, this may have been due to reasons other than a successful outcome. Firstly, participants perceived the authentic doctor to be the only surgeon of the two that could genuinely know what it is to go through such an experience, which as the medical literature suggests, is important to patients when seeking the services of a medical practitioner (Comstock et al., 1982; Warner, 1992). This logic may also tap into source similarity as a persuasive cue influence (Perloff, 1993; Woodside & Davenport, 1974). Secondly, participants may have preferred the authentic surgeon because they perceived he would perform the surgery with greater care and dedication. Though these explanations are believed to be valid, they are essentially impossible to verify given that predictions about the perceived quality of the surgical procedure conducted by each surgeon were not obtained. Participants may have believed both surgeons to perform the procedure equally well, but may have simply preferred the authentic surgeon because he was believed to be genuine in his empathy and concern for the patient.

There were, however, still some participants who expressed a preference for the non-authentic doctor. It is possible that these participants recognised the hypothesis for this study and perhaps decided to respond in *opposition* to what they believed the experimenter wanted them to. It is also possible that participants wanted a healthy doctor operating on them rather than someone who had previously suffered

a heart condition himself. In conclusion, it was not the intention of this study to identify the processes underlying participants' preferences in the current study. Rather, this study was designed to simulate a typical real world situation involving a choice between two service providers, one of which was authentic. Given the remaining issues, however, it may be beneficial for future studies to include an open-ended measure whereby participants can provide some rationale for their responses. However, before discussing further studies, it is necessary to introduce the next study. Conducted concurrently with study four, study five also employs a forced choice design, however, rather than examining the effect of emotional authenticity, the next study aims to examine the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity.

#### Study Five: Authentic Preferences in Selecting an Acupuncturist

##### *Rationale and Hypotheses*

The last four studies have examined how emotional authenticity (i.e. enjoyment, natural passion) influences product and service evaluations and determines service provider preferences. Thus far the results have revealed authenticity to be very persuasive. The current study will examine the persuasiveness of *cultural* authenticity as a service provider characteristic.

As discussed in chapter five, there has been some evidence that people evaluate culturally specific products to be both better in quality and more valuable when they are made by culturally authentic producers rather than producers who are not culturally appropriate (Cohen, 1988; 2004; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Lowenthal, 1992; MacCannell, 1973; Martin, 1993; McIntosh, 2004; Swanson,

2004). However, many of these conclusions have been drawn from consumer comments made during qualitative field interviews, which although valuable, may not necessarily be representative of the wider population.

Therefore, study five aims to experimentally validate the belief that culturally authentic producers/service providers are preferred to those from outside of the appropriate culture when it comes to producing a culturally specific product or service. As stated in the last chapter, study four and study five were designed and conducted simultaneously. Hence, the current study also adopts a forced choice design, and as in study four, participants will be required to state a preference for one service provider over another. One service provider will be culturally authentic and the other will not. It was decided to use acupuncture as the service to be examined.

Although the origins of acupuncture have not been formally established, the earliest documentation of this therapeutic technique occurred in China around 2500 years ago (Chen, 1997). Acupuncture remains a conventional therapeutic practice within Chinese medicine. It was not until the early 1970s that acupuncture became popular in Western parts of the world (White & Ernst, 2004). Recent research suggests that one in seven Australian general practitioners use acupuncture as a therapeutic technique (Easthope, Gill, Beilby & Tranter, 1998), and Australian patients claiming rebate on acupuncture constituted about 0.5% of all Medicare claims in the financial year for 1996-1997 (Easthope, Gill, Beilby & Tranter, 1999).

Acupuncture therefore seems a useful service to employ for the current study. Given that it is believed to originate from Asia, this practice seems representative of traditional Chinese medicine. In spite of this, this technique is also



commonly administered within Australian society (Easthope et al., 1998; 1999) making it as reasonable for there to be Caucasian acupuncturists. For the purpose of the current study, one acupuncturist will therefore be Asian and the other will be Caucasian. Information will be presented within a vignette. Participants will take the perspective of someone in need of acupuncture having already tried a variety of other non-successful treatments for back pain. The vignette will include information about acupuncture to ensure participants are familiar with the procedure. The vignette will also include information about the origins of acupuncture and its transition to Western areas of the world.

It will be interesting to establish whether Australian participants will exhibit a preference for the Asian authentic acupuncturist. To ensure both practitioners are equivalent in all other respects, both acupuncturists will be stated as practicing for the same amount of time (20 years), and both will be described as being accredited members of the Acupuncture Society of Australia who have solid reputations. Given the literature discussed in this thesis, the following hypothesis is proposed;

1. Participants will prefer the culturally authentic Asian acupuncturist to the Caucasian acupuncturist, who lacks cultural authenticity.

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Forty undergraduate students from James Cook University participated in this study. Participants' ages ranged between 17 and 50 years, with the sample

comprising twenty males ( $M = 23.00$  years,  $SD = 5.57$  years) and fifteen females ( $M = 22.05$  years,  $SD = 7.49$  years). No incentive was provided, with students participating voluntarily in this research.

### *Design*

The design for this study was a single sample, fixed choice response design. This design was elected to examine if cultural authenticity would affect how participants made judgements when given a choice between two service providers. The product in the current study was an acupuncture procedure and the service providers were two qualified acupuncturists.

### *Materials*

Dependent measures for this study were obtained by means of a pen and paper task. The task consisted of a vignette and one question. The vignette provided participants with the character profiles of two acupuncturists. The vignette was configured so that participants imagined they had been experiencing recurring back problems which various treatments had failed to ease. It was then stated that their friend had recommended them to try acupuncture, to which they had agreed. Within the vignette participants were then provided with information about the history of acupuncture, which was followed by information regarding two recommended acupuncturists. One acupuncturist had a culturally authentic Asian name and the other was given a typically Caucasian name. Given that acupuncture originated from Asia it was anticipated that an acupuncturist of Asian descent would be considered

authentic where a Western doctor would not. For the purpose of this study authenticity was therefore defined in terms of the acupuncturist's cultural heritage. The vignette and questions can be examined in Appendix F1.

*Authentic acupuncturist.* Within the vignette, participants were told that Dr. Chuan Liu received his training at the Nanjing Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and has been practising this technique for two decades. He has also written several books on the topic.

*Non-authentic acupuncturist.* Within the vignette, participants were informed that Dr. Robert Hayden was trained at the Centre for Complimentary Research in Sydney in 1980. Since then, he has taught on the topic at a local health college, whilst administering acupuncture within the college's clinic.

Therefore, the two acupuncturists recommended were said to have been practising for approximately the same amount of time. Both acupuncturists were stated as being registered members of the Acupuncture Society of Australia and had solid reputations. Following this vignette, participants were asked to indicate a preference for one acupuncturist over the other for performing the required service. Responses were made by checking one of the two provided boxes (one for each acupuncturist). As in study four, the order of the acupuncturists' individual character profiles were counterbalanced, as were the response checkboxes to prevent order effects.

### *Procedure*

Participants were given this study to complete either individually or in small groups. Participants were approached in the Library on campus and those accepting were provided with an information sheet detailing the study. Confidentiality and consent were discussed and accepting participants then signed a consent form. Participants were asked to write their age and gender on a provided demographic sheet and were told that if they had any questions they should feel free to ask them at any stage during the testing. Participants were then provided with a piece of paper containing both vignette and question. The researcher then provided participants with the following instructions, "Please read the following scenario, and answer the following question as honestly as possible." The participants completed the study at their own pace, and on completion were debriefed regarding the nature of the study and asked if they had any questions. Participants were then thanked for their time, and questionnaires were collected.

### *Results*

A chi-square goodness of fit analysis was conducted and revealed that of 40 participants, 35 (88 %) elected to have the authentic acupuncturist perform the procedure. Only five (12 %) of the 40 elected to have the non-authentic acupuncturist perform the procedure, which is significantly less than would be expected by chance,  $X^2(1) = 22.50, p < .001$ .

### *Discussion*

The results of the current study support the hypothesis, that when it comes to electing a service provider for administering acupuncture, the majority of participants exhibited a preference for the culturally authentic Asian acupuncturist over the non-authentic acupuncturist. Only five participants of the forty elected to have the Caucasian acupuncturist to perform the required procedure. These results suggest that like enjoyment authenticity, the cultural authenticity of a service provider is also persuasive.

The Asian acupuncturist may have been preferred by participants for several reasons, which are by no means mutually exclusive. Firstly, participants may have felt that by having acupuncture administered by an authentic therapist, they would essentially be partaking in an authentic custom of another culture. The experience of receiving this traditional procedure may not seem as authentic when the acupuncturist is Caucasian. As previously discussed, there is literature which suggests that a product/service can only be deemed authentic when it is made or provided by a culturally authentic source (Cohen, 1988; Cornet, 1975; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Martin, 1993; McIntosh, 2004; Rose, 2003). This being said, there are probably less painful ways of partaking in culturally authentic customs.

Secondly, participants may have doubted that the Caucasian acupuncturist could possibly know how to perform the procedure in the traditional (and perhaps most effective) way that an authentic Asian acupuncturist could. By being Asian, the authentic acupuncturist may have been perceived to possess the 'natural ability' required to perform this procedure accurately. Though not required to provide any

rationale for their preferences, some participants did. Confirming this argument, a participant who chose the authentic acupuncturist stated “Dr. Liu is Chinese and the acupuncture method comes from China, and therefore I assume he knows what he’s doing.” Furthermore, another participant stated “Dr. Liu would have a better understanding of the procedure, its history, its significance.”

Finally, it is also possible that participants perceived the acupuncturist to be more skilled, having learned the technique in *China* rather than Australia. As stated by another participant. “Dr. Chuan Liu would most likely have been taught the traditional Chinese technique rather than the modified western version of Dr. Robert Hayden.” This rationale still implies that only culturally authentic individuals are able to teach the skills in the traditionally authentic way. Interestingly, this rationale also exposes the possibility that had a Caucasian practitioner been taught by an Asian practitioner, he/she too might be perceived as credible as an Asian acupuncturist. This is something that could be examined in future studies.

As with study four, there is no means of ascertaining the perceived quality of the service itself. Although it is known that participants favoured the authentic acupuncturist, it does not necessarily suggest they consider the medical outcome itself to be superior in quality to the service provided by the Caucasian acupuncturist. If participants were selecting the Asian acupuncturist as a means of partaking in a cultural experience, then it may be assumed that evaluations of the outcome itself would be similar for both practitioners. However, if participants believed that the authentic Asian acupuncturist would perform the procedure better by being of the appropriate ethnicity, or by being taught by the appropriate ethnicity,

then it may be proposed that evaluations of the treatment itself would be higher for the authentic acupuncturist than the non-authentic acupuncturist.

It is unlikely that participants would prefer the authentic practitioner in this particular context solely because it would enable them to experience a culturally authentic procedure. Given that participants were seeking treatment for pain, it is expected that participants based their preferences on who they perceived to be more skilled of the two acupuncturists, and had it been asked, participants would have evaluated the acupuncture to be better when conducted by the authentic practitioner.

Even so, as a result of the forced choice format of the dependent measure, it is again difficult to know the degree to which the authentic acupuncturist was favoured over the non-authentic acupuncturist. It is therefore necessary to examine the persuasiveness of a culturally authentic producer using a between subjects design in future studies, as it may provide greater insight into the quantitative distinctions in the evaluations of products made by a culturally authentic producer and those made by a non-authentic producer. In any case, the results of study five provide an effective foundation for further examining the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity.

Even so, five of the forty participants elected to have the acupuncture performed by the Caucasian doctor rather than the Asian doctor. As speculated in study four, participants may have inferred what was expected of them after reading the vignette and deliberately chose the non-authentic acupuncturist. However, there is also the possibility that some of these participants' responses can be attributed to prejudiced beliefs about Asians. There is literature to suggest that there is still a

persistence of intolerance against Asians within Australia (Das 2005; Dunn, 2003). Nonetheless, 87.5% of the sample still preferred the Asian acupuncturist, suggesting that cultural authenticity has, for the most part, the ability to make one service provider seem superior to another.

A minor issue, but perhaps worthy of note, relates to the stated experience of each practitioner within the vignette. When designing this study, it had been decided to have both acupuncturists having an equal amount of experience. However, to make the vignette seem more realistic, it was decided not to say that both therapists had graduated in 1980. Instead, the Asian acupuncturist was said to have been practicing for the last two decades, whilst the Caucasian was said to have graduated in 1980. This study was conducted at the end of 2003, and although unintentional, this means that the non-authentic, Caucasian acupuncturist actually had three more years experience than the authentic doctor. Once a practitioner has been in the field for a duration of twenty years, an extra three years of experience may not be considered that substantial. As stated by one participant, "Both have been practicing for the same amount of time." Even so, this is somewhat interesting as it potentially suggests that an authentic service provider might be preferred even when they are not as experienced as a non-authentic service provider. The following study of this thesis experimentally examines this possibility.

There is one other possible confounding factor which may account for the results observed in this study. Examining the vignette (Appendix F1) it can be observed that both doctors were made to sound credible by including a few pieces of additional information. The authentic Asian acupuncturist was said to have written



several books about acupuncture, whilst the non-authentic acupuncturist was said to teach at a local college and administer acupuncture within the college's clinic. It had been anticipated that this information would make both acupuncturists sound equally credible. In hindsight, it is difficult to know if this was actually the case.

Participants may have preferred the authentic acupuncturist, not because he was Asian, but rather because he seemed more credible having written several books on the topic. In fact one participant even wrote on her response form that "Dr. Chuan Liu has written books which make him seem more professional." However, another participant, who elected the non-authentic practitioner, wrote "Dr Hayden seems more practical. Dr. Liu appears to be more academic." To clarify the nature of participants' inferences, it seems important to examine how producer expertise and authenticity interact to influence participants' product evaluations in another study. Study six will address this prospect.

In conclusion, the results of this study are encouraging, providing evidence that the cultural authenticity of a service provider is important to participants when seeking a culturally authentic service. However, further studies are needed to examine the effect that cultural authenticity has on evaluations of both products and services. Furthermore, the persuasiveness of this characteristic should be established using between subjects designs. The next series of studies attempt to address these needs.

## CHAPTER 11

## Study Six: Examining Source Expertise as a Boundary Condition of Authenticity

*Rationale and Hypotheses*

Thus far, five studies have provided encouraging evidence for the persuasiveness of authenticity as a source characteristic. Is, however, producer/service provider authenticity always persuasive? When establishing any phenomenon, it is equally as important to identify its limitations. Hence, a key objective of this thesis is to identify some of the potential boundary conditions under which authenticity *loses* its persuasive ability. As a starting point, it was highlighted in study five that the authenticity and perceived expertise (having authored several books) of the acupuncturist may have simultaneously influenced participants to prefer the Asian acupuncturist over the Caucasian one.

This being said, would producer/service provider (source) authenticity continue to be as persuasive if the source is perceived to lack credibility in terms of their level of formal expertise, for example? Perhaps source expertise functions as a boundary condition for authenticity. It is possible that individuals might only use source authenticity to differentiate one source from another when the source has already met some criteria for being adequately expert in terms of formal training, etc. For the majority of studies leading up to the current study, it seems somewhat unlikely that participants would have endorsed the product or service had that source not been formally trained. For example, would participants in study four have exhibited a preference for the emotionally authentic surgeon had he not had any

training in cardiovascular procedures? Would participants in study five have continued to prefer the Asian acupuncturist if he had written *no* books on the topic but the Caucasian acupuncturist had written *ten*? Hence, a lack of source expertise may operate as one possible boundary condition for the persuasiveness of source authenticity.

The current study aims to test this notion by examining how different levels of source authenticity and source expertise interact with one another to influence product evaluations. Although it can be presumed from previous studies and literature (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Chaiken & Eagly, 1993) that both source expertise and authenticity will be independently persuasive, it is anticipated that the simultaneous manipulation of these characteristics will help ascertain whether the persuasiveness of source authenticity is restricted by the source's level of expertise.

Although most persuasion research has been predominantly concerned with the influence of single source characteristics on attitude change, there is some research which has considered the role of multiple source characteristics. Ziegler, Diehl and Ruther's (2002) research for example, revealed that when two source characteristics were incompatible (e.g. low source honesty, high source expertise) participants were found to rely on argument quality more than the peripheral characteristics of the source when formulating their attitudes. Conversely, when the source characteristics were compatible (e.g. low source honesty, low source expertise), participants relied more heavily on the source characteristics to make a judgement. Differing from the current research, however, Ziegler et al.'s (2002)

research did not use authenticity as a source characteristic but rather source honesty, likeability and expertise.

Furthermore, because the source in the current study is a producer or service provider, rather than a peripheral source simply 'presenting' information about a product or service (Ziegler et al., 2002), it is believed that these producer characteristics will be perceived more relevant to evaluations of the product/service, irrespective of the consistency or inconsistency between source characteristics. Hence, participants may not neglect source characteristics when they are incompatible, but may instead discount one source characteristic, using only the characteristic they perceive to have the greatest relevance for the quality of that product or service. Conversely, participants might incorporate the perceived effect of both characteristics when evaluating the product/service, even if they are incompatible.

For the purpose of the current study, source expertise will be operationalised in terms of the producer/service provider's level of formal training, given expertise is often defined this way within the literature. According to Braunsberger and Munch (1998), "Expertise is defined as having a high degree of skill in/knowledge of a certain subject area, which is obtained through some type of formal training" (p. 23). Price, Feick and Higie (1992) also assert that expertise is attained through formal training.

With regard to manipulating authenticity, it seems beneficial to examine the persuasiveness of *both* cultural authenticity and enjoyment authenticity as producer characteristics. To do this, two vignettes will be employed for the current study. The

first will examine the persuasiveness of producer expertise versus producer cultural authenticity. The second vignette will examine the persuasiveness of service provider expertise versus service provider enjoyment authenticity. Participants will complete both of these vignettes.

The product for the vignette examining producer expertise versus cultural authenticity will be a piece of Aboriginal-style art. Given that the study is being conducted in North Queensland, Australia, it seems relevant to examine how the cultural authenticity of Australia's Indigenous people influences perceptions of a culturally specific product. Participants will be shown a piece of Aboriginal style art and will be told that the artist is either Aboriginal (authentic) or Caucasian (non-authentic). Participants will also be informed that the artist has been formally trained in art (high formal expertise), or has received no formal training (low formal expertise).

Given that only one of the first five studies examined the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity, this vignette will be the first in this thesis to examine the influence of cultural authenticity using a between subjects design. Unlike the previous acupuncture study, which was designed to identify whether cultural authenticity could influence service provider choice, the current study will be the first to examine how the cultural authenticity of a producer influences product evaluations. Furthermore, the current cultural authenticity manipulation is employed for a product (art) rather than a service (acupuncture), and this art piece will also be provided for evaluation unlike the hypothetically proposed service used in the previous study. In this way, the design for the cultural authenticity vignette in this

study is similar to that used in study two where participants read a short vignette and then were provided with the essay itself.

For the purpose of the additional vignette, the expertise and enjoyment authenticity of a service provider will be manipulated. The service for this vignette will be a prospective computer repair service. Participants will be given a vignette which will involve having their computer crash whilst writing an assignment. The computer technician recommended for repairing the computer will either enjoy fixing the described problem (high enjoyment authenticity) or will not enjoy fixing the described problem (low enjoyment authenticity). Furthermore, for the purpose of the expertise manipulation, the service provider will be said to have a degree in Information Technology (high formal expertise) or a degree in Nursing (low formal expertise). Evaluations of art/computer service value and quality will be obtained in each vignette.

By using two vignettes, the interaction between source expertise and each type of authenticity can be independently examined. By simultaneously manipulating both source characteristics this study will be able to establish whether authenticity maintains its ability to influence product evaluations both when the source/service provider is formally trained (high expertise) but additionally, when they are not formally trained (low expertise). A further benefit of this design is that if the two producer characteristics are found to simultaneously influence product evaluations, it will be possible to examine which of producer expertise or producer authenticity is most persuasive in each of the vignettes.

It was proposed in chapter six that the cognitive processes underlying the persuasiveness of each type of authenticity cue may be distinct. As discussed within the literature, from the consumers' perspective, a product's association with authentic culture is often what makes it seem valuable, rather than the fact that a well-trained artist manufactured it (Duffek 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987). An example of this relevant to the current study is the recent case of Eddy Barrup, a renowned Indigenous artist who had won various grants and critical acclaim. After identifying herself as being a Caucasian named Elizabeth Durack, rather than Aboriginal, Eddy Barrup, the artist's works lost their value and were labelled inauthentic (Brown, 2001). It is believed that if individuals are genuinely interested in acquiring a culturally specific product, it is likely that they will also be interested in the cultural story that accompanies the product. Formal expertise may not seem as relevant when the producer is a member of that culture from which the product originates.

It can also be proposed that there exists a general lay perception that being artistic comes 'naturally' rather than from being formally taught. Any indication that the artist has natural skills may be more persuasive than the fact that they have a formal degree in art (Rozin et al., 2004). Jones (1989) supports this assertion, stating that when individuals use such attributes to formulate judgements "priority is typically assigned to uncontrollable, native ability factors while motivation and learned skills take a back seat" (p.480). If anything, it may seem somewhat questionable as to why a culturally authentic producer would *need* to be formally trained. Being culturally authentic should be enough, and particularly in the context

of indigenous art, formal expertise may, in fact, decrease perceptions of that artist's authenticity.

Alternatively, in the computer service vignette, it seems that formal expertise may be more important than the source's level of enjoyment for the repair task. Given that it is impossible to be born with knowledge of how to repair computers, some training is evidently necessary. Naturally, this training may be acquired in many ways (e.g. self taught, university degree, etc.). However, it is assumed that the more formal the appropriate training is, the greater the belief that the source has the required knowledge for repairing the computer as requested. In this case, expertise can be viewed as a prerequisite for quality. As previously discussed, without some level of expertise, enjoyment may be largely irrelevant to evaluations of the proposed repair service. What enjoyment may signify, however, is that that source (provided they are perceived as adequately expert) will *utilise* this expertise, performing the service to the best of their ability. Low enjoyment may alternatively imply that the task will not be performed to the best of that technician's ability which may result in less favourable predictions about the quality of the service.

Up until this point, producer/service provider ethnicity and enjoyment have been used as cues to the authentic self. However, there has been no formal measure to examine whether these manipulations of authenticity are being interpreted as such. Hence, the current study will also obtain participants' perceptions of source authenticity which are then able to operate as manipulation checks to ensure this manipulation is effective.



Participants' perceptions of source expertise within each vignette will also be obtained. As discussed in the literature review, authenticity may also be perceived as a form of natural credibility (Cebrzynski, 2005; Kivy, 1995; Lewis & Bridger, 2000; Rudinow, 1994). It is anticipated that perceptions of source expertise within each vignette will be influenced by the manipulation of source authenticity *in addition to* the source expertise manipulation. The design of this study will enable an exploration of this prospect.

Finally, another potential boundary condition for the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity may also relate to participants' attitudes and beliefs about individuals from other ethnicities and cultures. One possible reason for the small number of participants' failing to elect the authentic acupuncturist in study five may have related to a racially prejudiced attitude toward Asians. Given that the aim of the current study is to establish possible boundary conditions for the persuasiveness of authenticity, it also seems advantageous to examine whether participants' attitudes about the culturally authentic group influence their susceptibility to the cultural authenticity manipulation. Within the literature, there is evidence that there exists a significant racial intolerance for Indigenous Australians particularly amongst university samples in the North Queensland region of Australia (Brown, 2002; Paradies, 2005; Slugoski & Brown, 2004). It is therefore important that this study examine the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity whilst controlling for any discriminatory beliefs about Indigenous Australians that may be held by participants.

Participants will therefore complete an attitudinal measure specifically in relation to Indigenous Australians. Although it might be assumed that having a

prejudiced attitude toward Aboriginals may prevent participants from being persuaded by cultural authenticity, this may not be the case. Research by Farr (2004), examining how a source's race impacts judgements when credibility is both high and low, indicated that when credibility was perceived to be high, race had no effect on the judgments of competency or credibility. It is therefore possible that when the product is culturally specific, the producer's race strengthens perceptions of their credibility rather than detracts from it, irrespective of one's racist beliefs about that group. Hence, rather than these beliefs being a boundary condition of authenticity, culturally authentic products may in fact be a boundary condition for racist beliefs. This study will explore these assumptions.

An effective implicit measure for understanding whether individuals hold discriminatory beliefs about racial groups is McConahay's (1986) Modern Racism Scale (MRS). Items on this measure relate specifically to African Americans. For the purpose of this study, African Americans will be replaced by Indigenous Australians. By having participants complete this modified measure, analysis will be able to determine whether subtle racial attitudes towards Indigenous Australians decrease the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity. Although this study is primarily exploratory, the following hypotheses are advanced:

1. It is hypothesised that across both vignettes, participants will pay more for the product/service, when the producer/service provider is authentic.

2. It is hypothesised that across both vignettes, participants will evaluate the product/service to be superior in quality when the producer/service provider is authentic.
3. Given the assumed lay belief that art comes naturally, whilst computer repairs requires an accumulation of knowledge through learning, it is hypothesised that the producer expertise manipulation will be more influential on product evaluations in the computer vignette than in the art vignette.
4. It is hypothesised that the manipulation of producer authenticity will influence participants' perceptions of source expertise, particularly in the art vignette.

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Seventy-seven second-year undergraduate psychology students from James Cook University participated in this study. Participants' ages ranged between 17 and 57 years, with the sample comprising twelve males ( $M = 27.75$  years,  $SD = 11.85$  years) and 65 females ( $M = 25.77$  years,  $SD = 9.99$  years). As an incentive, participants received one course credit point for their participation.

#### *Design*

The design for this study was a 2 (Authenticity manipulation: Authentic producer vs. non-authentic producer – between subjects) x 2 (Producer expertise

manipulation: High vs. low – between subjects) x 2 (Vignette: Art (cultural authenticity) vs. computer repair service (enjoyment authenticity) – within subjects) mixed subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four possible conditions. Participants remained in the same allocated condition for both art and computer service vignettes.

### *Materials*

Dependent measures for this study were obtained by means of a pen and paper task. The task consisted of two vignettes, and nine questions. Participants also completed the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986). For the art vignette, participants were also shown a piece of Indigenous art, which can be located in Appendix G1.

*Cultural authenticity ‘art’ vignette.* This vignette examined the persuasiveness of producer ethnicity as a cue to cultural authenticity, and was designed so that participants were made to feel they were interested in acquiring a piece of Aboriginal style art for their home. Participants were told that money was no issue and that they should be willing to pay whatever they felt was warranted for the appropriate piece. Given that the sample consisted completely of students, this comment was felt to be necessary, eliminating the potential for participants’ financial constraints to influence purchase intentions. However, suggesting that payment values should be justified was expected to minimise overly indulgent valuations as well. Additional information in the provided vignette was then manipulated in two different ways across participants.

*Manipulation one: Producer authenticity manipulation.* Within each vignette, participants received information about the artists' ethnicity. In the authentic producer manipulation, half of the participants were informed that the artist was an Aboriginal woman named Naarta Nungurrayi. The remaining half of the participants received the non-authentic producer manipulation and were told that the artist was a Caucasian woman named Margaret Elliot.

*Manipulation two: Producer expertise manipulation.* Within each vignette, participants also received information about the artists' level of formal expertise. In the high expertise manipulation, half of the sample was told that the artist had a Masters degree in Fine Arts majoring in Indigenous art. The remaining participants received the low expertise manipulation and were informed that the artist had no formal training.

Following this vignette, participants were shown the piece of art and were asked to answer four questions. The first question required participants to state how much they would be willing to pay for the piece of art exhibited. Responses were made along an eleven-point Likert scale ranging from \$0.00 to \$10,000. The second question required participants to evaluate the quality of the piece along a five-point Likert scale. Possible responses ranged from 'extremely bad' to 'extremely good' in quality. The third and fourth questions required participants to give their perceptions of the producer's authenticity and expertise. Question three asked 'how naturally do you think painting this piece came to this person?' which is rated along an eleven-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all naturally' to 'extremely naturally.' The fourth question required participants to evaluate how expert they perceived the artist

to be in this particular style of art. Responses were again marked along an eleven-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all expert' to 'extremely expert'. (The manipulations for the art vignette can be located in Appendix G2. The three questions can be located in Appendix G3.)

*Indigenous styled art piece.* The art piece used in the current study was located on an online website featuring Indigenous art. The artist was listed as anonymous. The art was put on a power point slide and presented as being 122cm in height and 88cm in width (See Appendix G1).

*Enjoyment authenticity 'computer service' vignette.* This vignette evaluated the persuasiveness of enjoyment as a cue to producer authenticity and required participants to imagine they were completing an assignment on their computer when the operating system failed and could not be repaired. Requiring the services of someone who could immediately repair the problem, their flatmate recommends a friend named Michael. The vignette then states that Michael fixes computers in his spare time for extra money, and has never had a customer complain. This information is included to ensure the service provider maintains a basic level of credibility across the following manipulated conditions.

*Manipulation one: Producer authenticity manipulation.* Within each vignette, participants received information about Michael's level of enjoyment for fixing computers. In the authentic producer manipulation, half of the participants were told that Michael thoroughly enjoys working on computers and gets 'a real kick' out of fixing these sorts of problems. The remaining half of participants were told that

Michael does not enjoy working on computers and finds fixing these sorts of problems to be quite tedious.

*Manipulation two: Producer expertise manipulation.* Within each vignette, participants also received information about Michael's level of formal expertise. In the high expertise manipulation, half of the sample was told that Michael had completed a degree in information technology (IT). The remaining participants received the low expertise manipulation and were informed that Michael had completed a nursing degree.

Following this vignette, participants were again asked to answer four questions. The first question required participants to state how much they were willing to pay Michael for the day's work. Responses were rated along an eleven-point Likert scale ranging from \$0.00 to \$200.00. The second question required participants to evaluate the predicted quality of Michael's work along a five-point Likert scale. Potential responses ranged from 'extremely bad' to 'extremely good'. The third and fourth questions again required participants to give their perceptions of both the service provider's authenticity and expertise.

Question three asked 'how important are Michael's technological skills to his sense of who he is?' This measure was believed to be a means of measuring participants' perceptions of Michael's authenticity. Responses were rated along an eleven-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all important' to 'extremely important.' The fourth question required participants to evaluate how much of a computer expert they perceived the service provider to be. Responses were again marked along an eleven-point Likert scale ranging from 'not at all expert' to

‘extremely expert.’ The experimental manipulations for the computer service vignette can be located in Appendix G4. The three questions can be located in Appendix G5.

*Rationale for responses.* Participants were also required to provide a comprehensive rationale for their responses across each vignette. This measure was open-ended, and a single A4 sheet was provided and participants could write as much or as little as they desired.

*Modern Racism Scale.* Participants also completed a modified version of the Modern Racism Scale (MRS) (McConahay, 1986). This measure was selected given it has been the most commonly utilised measure of subtle racism within the literature (Phelps, Cannistraci & Cunningham, 2003). Scores on the MRS have been found to predict a variety of variables related to racism, including the endorsement of racial stereotypes, perceptions of unfair advantages and anti-black feelings (Kinder & Sanders, 1996). Given that the scale was to be administered to an Australian sample, the phrase ‘African Americans’ was modified to ‘Indigenous Australians.’ The instrument contains seven items which participants are asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with using a five-point Likert scale. Possible scores range from zero to 35. Higher scores indicate higher levels of subtle racism and lower scores indicate lower levels of subtle racism. An example of an item is “Over the past few years, Indigenous Australians have gotten more economically than they deserve.” Given the high face validity of the scale, the seven items were embedded amongst eight filler statements relating to social issues. In previous university



student samples, the reliability coefficient for the MRS has ranged from .86 to .91 (McConahay, 1983). The scale and filler items can be located in Appendix G6.

### *Procedure*

This first part of this study was conducted at the beginning of a second year undergraduate psychology lecture. All participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study. Confidentiality and consent were discussed and accepting participants then signed a consent form. Participants were asked to write their age and gender on a provided demographic sheet and were told that if they had any questions they should feel free to ask them at any stage during the testing. Participants were then provided with a piece of paper containing both vignettes and questions. The vignettes were distributed to participants randomly, keeping the researcher blind as to what version the participant was completing. Participants were asked not to start until they were given instructions to.

The order of vignettes was counterbalanced to prevent order effects. On the inside of the questionnaire pack was a coloured sticker to inform participants of the vignette order. Those with a blue sticker on their page received the computer service vignette first and were asked to start the activity ten minutes before those with the yellow sticker (art vignette first). This time lapse ensured all participants in the blue condition had enough time to complete the computer service vignette before the entire sample was exposed to the piece of art. This procedure was also executed to ensure both yellow and blue groups had identical exposure time to the art piece. The art itself was projected on a power point slide, with its corresponding measurements.

Attached to the back of each questionnaire pack was a page with the final question asking participants to provide a rationale for their responses across the two vignettes. On completion the sample was debriefed regarding the nature of the study and asked if they had any questions. Participants were then thanked for their time, and continued with their lecture.

Two weeks later, the researcher returned to the lecture and the same participants were asked to fill out the modified Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986), which was introduced as a questionnaire on social issues. To prevent suspicion, participants were informed that the questionnaire was for a fourth year student's Honours project, and were provided with an information sheet and consent form. Six participants from the previous phase of testing were not present and did not complete the MRS. On completion participants were debriefed regarding the true purpose of the questionnaire.

### *Results*

Given that the some of the dependent measures differed between the vignettes in this study, two separate multivariate analyses were conducted. The first analysis examined the effect of manipulated producer/service provider (source) authenticity and expertise on evaluations of the product/service itself. Furthermore, the results of this analysis will indicate whether the dependent measures are differentially influenced by the type of vignette (art vs. computer service). The second analysis will examine the effect of source authenticity and expertise on

participants' perceptions of these source characteristics within each vignette *independently* (Analysis 2a: Art vignette. Analysis 2b: Computer vignette).

*Analysis 1: The Effect of Source Authenticity and Expertise on Product Evaluations*

*Main Effects*

All data were found to meet the assumptions of multivariate analysis and all analyses were conducted using two-tailed tests. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests. Evaluations of product value within each vignette were transformed into standardised z-scores to allow for statistical comparison across the two vignettes.

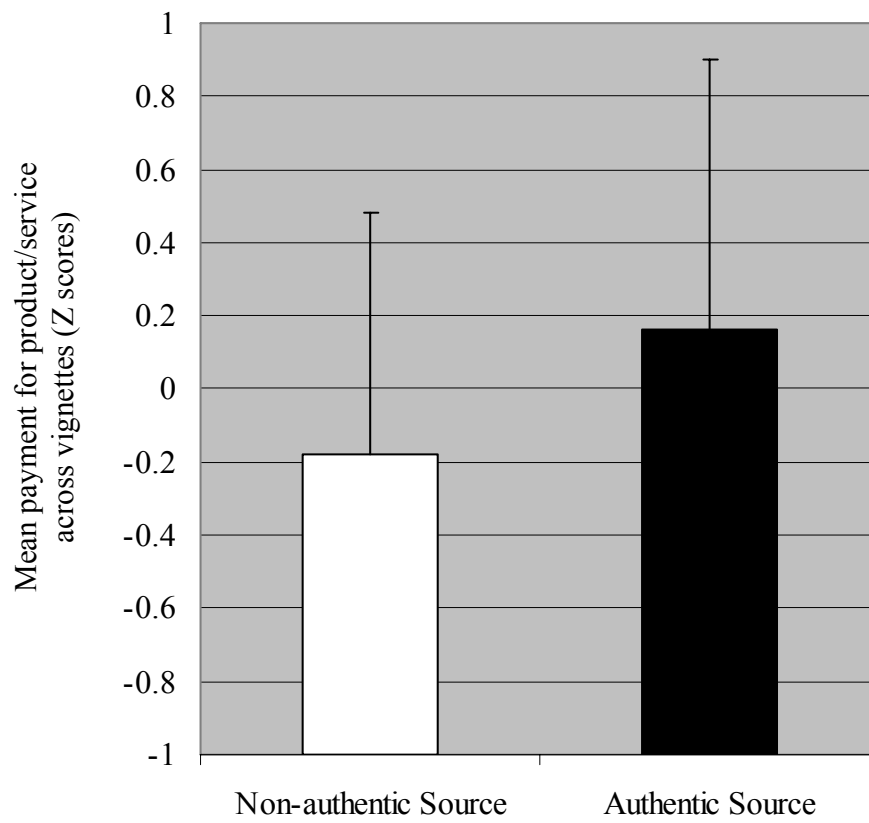
A 2 x 2 x 2 mixed MANOVA was computed to examine whether the authenticity and expertise of the source had an effect on participants evaluations of the product/service across each vignette. As hypothesised, source authenticity was found to have a significant effect on product evaluations,  $F(2, 72) = 7.65, p = .001, \eta^2 = .18$ . Conversely, the expertise of the source failed to influence product evaluations ( $F(2, 72) = 1.74, p = .18$ ), as did the type of vignette ( $F(2, 72) = 1.75, p = .18$ ).

All possible two way and three way interactions between the three independent variables (source authenticity, source expertise, and type of vignette) were found to be non-significant with the following exceptions. The source authenticity x source expertise interaction was found to have a marginal effect on product evaluations,  $F(2, 72) = 2.77, p = .07, \eta^2 = .07$ . The source expertise x vignette interaction was also found to have a significant effect on product

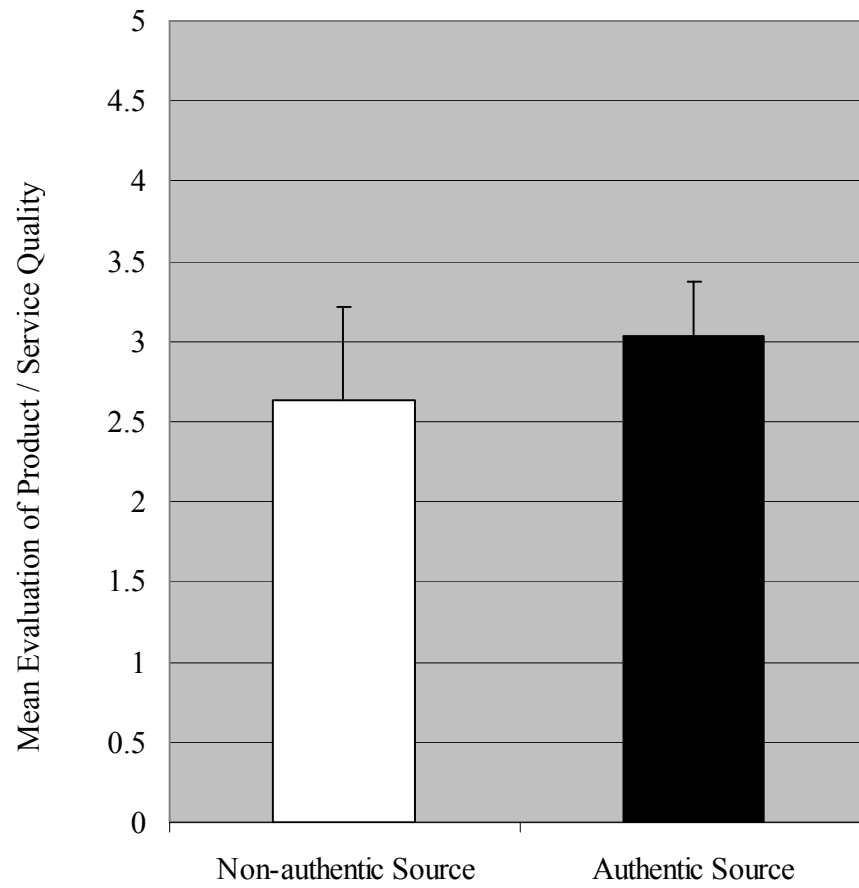
evaluations,  $F(2, 72) = 3.24, p = .045, \eta^2 = .08$ . A complete table of means for Study six can be examined in Appendix G7.

### *The Effect of Authenticity on Product Evaluations*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the authenticity of the producer/service provider had on participants' product evaluations. In support of hypothesis one, source authenticity was found to significantly affect perceptions of product value,  $F(1, 73) = 5.16, p = .026, \eta^2 = .07$ . Across both vignettes, participants were prepared to pay more money for a product or service manufactured by an authentic source ( $M_{z\text{-score}} = 0.16, SD = 0.74$ ) than the non-authentic sources ( $M_{z\text{-score}} = -0.18, SD = 0.66$ ). Furthermore, in support of hypothesis two, participants were found to evaluate the product/service to be significantly better in quality when it was made or provided by an authentic source ( $M = 3.03, SD = 0.34$ ) than a non-authentic source ( $M = 2.63, SD = .59$ ),  $F(1, 73) = 14.64, p < .001, \eta^2 = .17$ . The effect of source authenticity on evaluations of product value can be examined in Figure 11. The effect of source authenticity on evaluations of product quality can be examined in Figure 12.



*Figure 11.* Mean evaluations of product/service value across vignettes (z-scores).



*Figure 12.* Mean evaluations of product quality across vignettes.

*The Interaction between Source Authenticity and Source Expertise*

Given that the source authenticity x source expertise interaction was approaching significance at the multivariate level ( $p = .07$ ), further univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine this interaction's effect on the individual product evaluations. Interestingly, the interaction was not found to affect participants' evaluations of product value ( $F(1, 73) = 1.75, p = .19$ ) or product quality ( $F(1, 73) = 1.81, p = .18$ ) at the univariate level. Given the lack of significance, no further statistical examination of this specific interaction were conducted.

*The Interaction between Type of Vignette and Source Expertise*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine how the interaction between source expertise and type of vignette was influencing participants' product/service evaluations. The results suggest that the type of vignette x source expertise interaction had no influence on evaluations of product value,  $F(1, 73) = .13, p = .72$ . This being said, the interaction did, however, affect evaluations of product/service quality,  $F(1, 73) = 6.51, p = .013, \eta^2 = .08$ . Simple effects analyses using independent sample t-tests reveal that in the computer vignette, source expertise had a significant effect on participants' evaluations of product quality,  $t(75) = -2.41, p = .02$ . Participants predicted the computer service to be significantly better in quality when it was to be provided by the source with the IT degree (high formal expertise) ( $M = 3.13, SD = .60$ ) than the source with the nursing degree (low formal expertise) ( $M = 2.77, SD = .68$ ). Conversely, in the art vignette, there failed to be any difference

in evaluations of product quality based on the artist's level of formal expertise,  $t(75) = 1.37, p = .18$ . Such results provide support for hypothesis three.

Finally, repeated measures t-tests with Bonferroni correction revealed that when source expertise was low (Nursing degree/No formal art training) there were no differences in evaluations of product quality between the two vignettes ( $M_{\text{computer vignette}} = 2.77, SD = .68; M_{\text{art vignette}} = 2.85, SD = .87, t(37) = .47, p = .64$ ). However, when the source's formal expertise was high (IT degree/Fine Arts degree) there was a significant difference in the evaluations of product quality for each vignette. Whereas in the computer vignette having an IT degree was found to increase evaluations of product quality ( $M = 3.13, SD = 0.60$ ), in the art vignette, having a Fine Arts degree seemed to *reduce* evaluations of product quality ( $M = 2.60, SD = 0.77, t(38) = -3.17, p = .003$ ). This interaction can be examined in Figure 13.



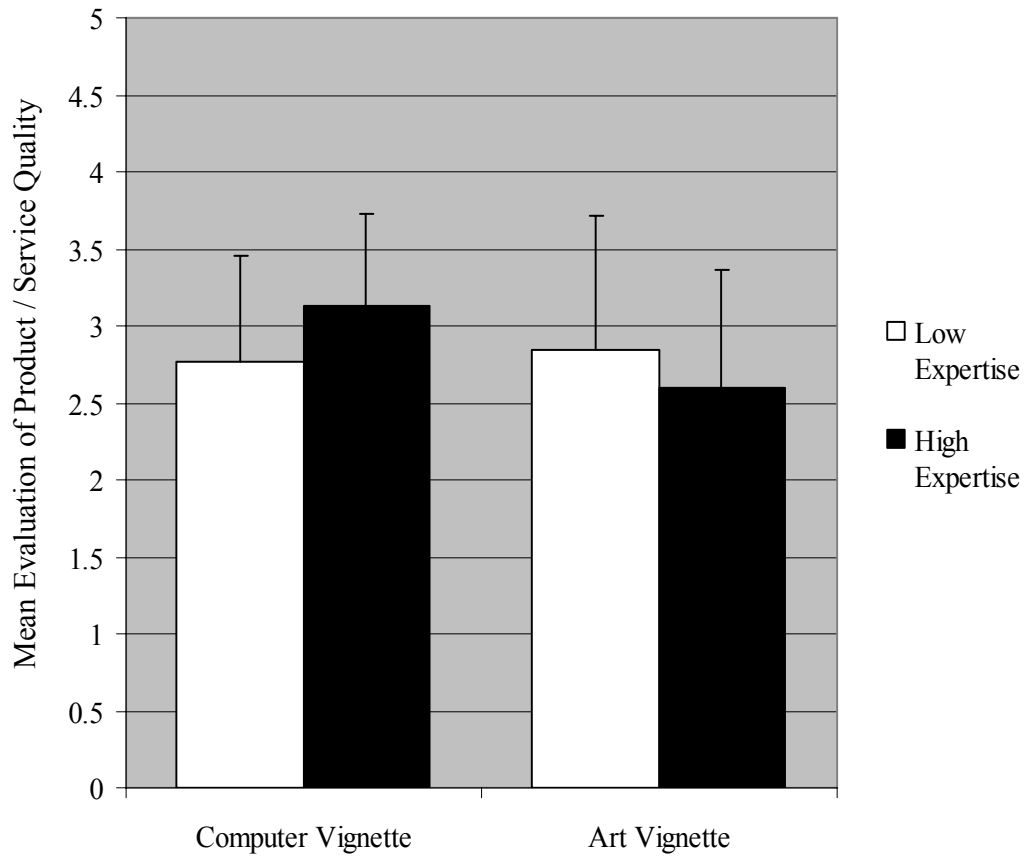


Figure 13. Mean evaluations of product quality for each vignette.

*Analysis 2a: Measures Relating to Producer Characteristics for Art Vignette*

*Main Effects*

All data were found to meet the assumptions of multivariate analysis and further analyses were conducted using two-tailed tests. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests. A 2x2 between subjects MANOVA was computed to examine whether the manipulation of artist authenticity and expertise had an effect on participants' evaluations of these characteristics within the art vignette. As anticipated, the cultural authenticity of the artist was found to have a significant effect on participants' artist evaluations,  $F(2, 72) = 10.07, p < .001, \eta^2 = .22$ , as was the manipulated expertise of the artist,  $F(2, 72) = 3.90, p = .025, \eta^2 = .10$ . The artist authenticity x expertise interaction was also found to be significant,  $F(2, 72) = 5.93, p = .004, \eta^2 = .14$ .

*The Effect of Artist Authenticity on Perceptions of Producer Characteristics*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the authenticity manipulation had on participants' perceptions of artist authenticity and expertise. As expected, the cultural manipulation was found to have a significant effect on participants' perceptions of how naturally painting the piece came to the artist. Participants perceived the Aboriginal artist to be significantly more authentic ( $M = 6.84, SD = 2.01$ ) than the Caucasian artist ( $M = 4.69, SD = 2.46$ ),  $F(1, 73) = 16.89, p < .001, \eta^2 = .19$ . Interestingly, in support of hypothesis four, participants were also found to evaluate the artist as significantly more expert when she was said to be

Aboriginal ( $M = 6.88$ ,  $SD = 2.13$ ) than when she was said to be Caucasian ( $M = 4.99$ ,  $SD = 2.63$ ),  $F(1, 73) = 14.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .17$ .

#### *The Effect of Artist Formal Expertise on Perceptions of Source Characteristics*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the formal expertise manipulation had on perceptions of artist authenticity and expertise. As expected, the expertise manipulation failed to influence perceptions of how authentic the artist was at painting the art piece,  $F(1, 73) = .45$ ,  $p = .51$ . Furthermore, the expertise manipulation was found to have only a marginal influence on participants' evaluations of artist expertise,  $F(1, 73) = 3.59$ ,  $p = .06$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ . Participants were found to evaluate the artist as marginally more expert when she was formally trained ( $M = 6.36$ ,  $SD = 1.87$ ) than when she was not ( $M = 5.58$ ,  $SD = 3.07$ ). Mean evaluations of artist authenticity can be examined in Figure 14. Mean evaluations of artist expertise can be examined in Figure 15.

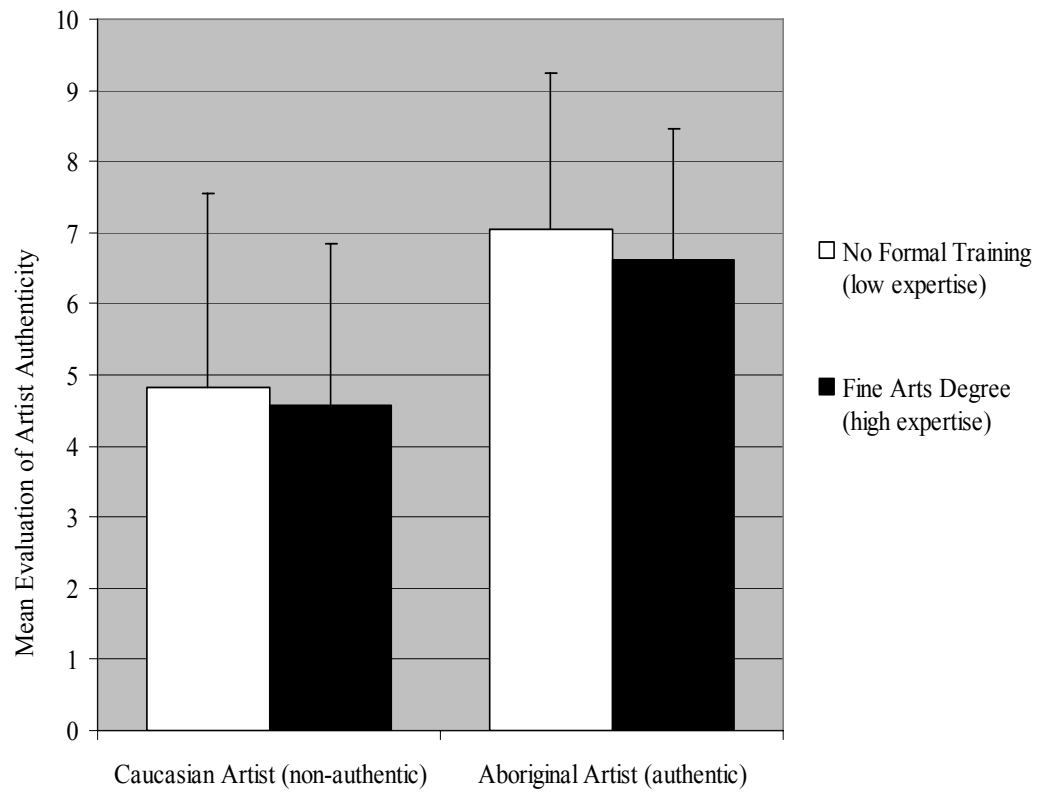
#### *The Interaction between Artist Authenticity and Expertise*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine which evaluations were being influenced by the artist authenticity x expertise interaction. This interaction failed to affect participants' perceptions of producer authenticity,  $F(1, 73) = .04$ ,  $p = .85$ , however, an interaction effect was found for participants' perceptions of artist expertise,  $F(1, 73) = 8.86$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $\eta^2 = .11$ .

Examining Figure 15, it can be observed that artist expertise only exhibited an effect on participants' perceptions of expertise when the artist was Caucasian (low

cultural authenticity),  $t(35) = -3.23, p = .003$ . Hence, the Caucasian artist with a degree in Fine Arts was perceived as significantly more expert ( $M = 6.14, SD = 2.13$ ) than the Caucasian artist with no formal training ( $M = 3.65, SD = 2.57$ ). However, when the artist was Aboriginal, participants seemed to have inferred the artist to be expert, irrespective of the expertise manipulation,  $t(38) = .82, p = .42$ . The authentic artist with no formal training ( $M = 7.14, SD = 2.53$ ) was perceived to be just as expert as the authentic artist with a Fine Arts degree ( $M = 6.59, SD = 1.59$ ). In fact, the trend can be observed that when the artist was Aboriginal, a lack of formal training resulted in higher evaluations of artist expertise than when the artist had a degree in Fine Arts. This finding is in opposition to the results observed in the low cultural authenticity condition. The trend observed between the authentic conditions should be interpreted with caution, however, given that it was not statistically significant.

Furthermore, when the artist had no formal training, the Aboriginal artist was perceived as significantly more expert ( $M = 7.14, SD = 2.53$ ), than the Caucasian artist ( $M = 3.65, SD = 2.57$ ), ( $t(36) = -4.20, p < .001$ ). However, when the artist had a Fine Arts degree, both the Aboriginal and Caucasian artist were evaluated by participants as being relatively equal in their level of expertise, ( $t(37) = -.75, p = .46$ ).



*Figure 14.* Mean evaluations of artist authenticity

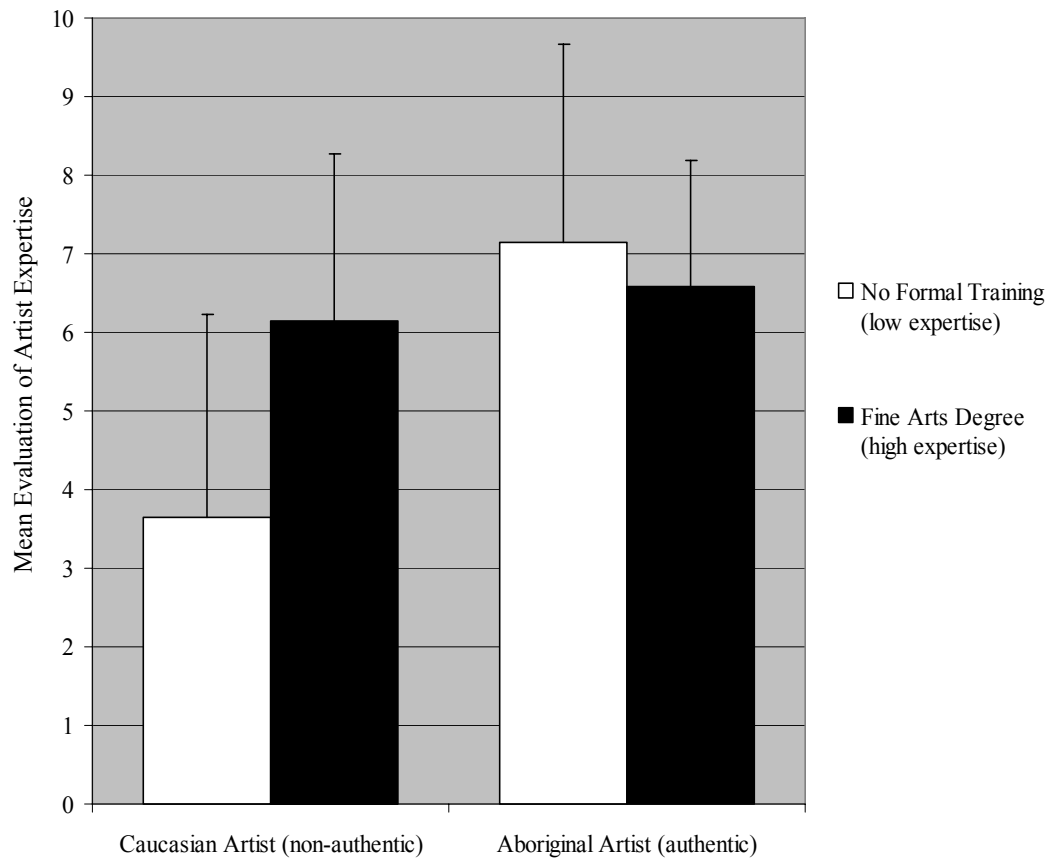


Figure 15. Mean evaluations of artist expertise

*Analysis 2b: Measures Relating to Producer Characteristics for Computer Vignette*

*Main Effects*

All data were found to meet the assumptions of multivariate analysis and further analyses were conducted using two-tailed tests. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests. A 2x2 between subjects MANOVA was computed to examine whether the manipulation of service provider enjoyment and expertise had an effect on participants evaluations of these characteristics. As anticipated, the enjoyment of the service provider was found to have a significant effect on participants' service provider evaluations,  $F(2, 72) = 20.30, p < .001, \eta^2 = .36$ , as was the manipulated expertise of the service provider,  $F(2, 72) = 9.77, p < .001, \eta^2 = .21$ . The service provider authenticity x expertise interaction was not found to be significant across dependent measures,  $F(2, 72) = .01, p = .99$ .

*The Effect of Service Provider Enjoyment on Perceptions of Source Characteristics*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the enjoyment of the service provider had on participants' perceptions of his authenticity and expertise. As expected, the authenticity manipulation was found to affect perceptions of how authentic repairing computers was to that service provider. Participants perceived the service provider to be significantly more authentic when he enjoyed fixing computers ( $M = 6.93, SD = 2.12$ ) than when he did not enjoy it ( $M = 4.22, SD = 2.54$ ),  $F(1, 73) = 33.16, p < .001, \eta^2 = .31$ . Providing further support for hypothesis four, participants were also found to evaluate the service provider as

significantly more expert when he enjoyed fixing computers ( $M = 6.76, SD = 1.38$ ) than when he did not ( $M = 5.43, SD = 1.79$ ),  $F(1, 73) = 16.11, p < .001, \eta^2 = .18$ .

#### *The Effect of Source Expertise on Perceptions of Source Characteristics*

Univariate ANOVAs were completed to examine the effect that the formal expertise of the service provider had on participants' perceptions of his authenticity and expertise as a computer technician. Unexpectedly, the manipulation of service provider expertise was found have a significant effect on participants' perceptions of his authenticity as a computer technician,  $F(1, 73) = 14.70, p < .001, \eta^2 = .17$ .

Participants perceived the technician to be significantly more authentic when he had a degree in Information Technology (IT) ( $M = 6.46, SD = 2.57$ ) than when he had a Nursing degree ( $M = 4.76, SD = 2.55$ ). Furthermore, the expertise manipulation was again found to have a significant effect on participants' evaluations of the computer technician's level of expertise,  $F(1, 73) = 9.24, p = .003, \eta^2 = .11$ . Participants were found to evaluate the technician with the IT degree as more expert ( $M = 6.60, SD = 1.53$ ) than the technician with the Nursing degree ( $M = 5.63, SD = 1.78$ ). Mean evaluations of service provider authenticity can be examined in Figure 16. Mean evaluations of service provider expertise can be examined in Figure 17.



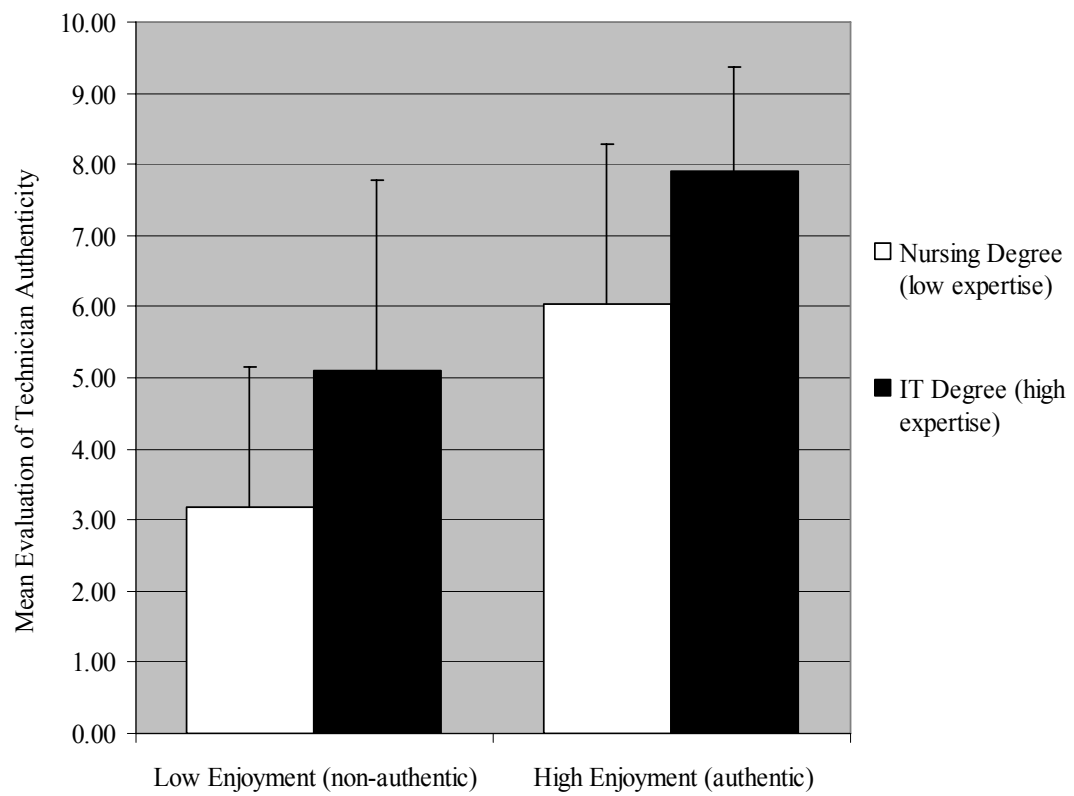


Figure 16. Mean evaluations of computer technician authenticity

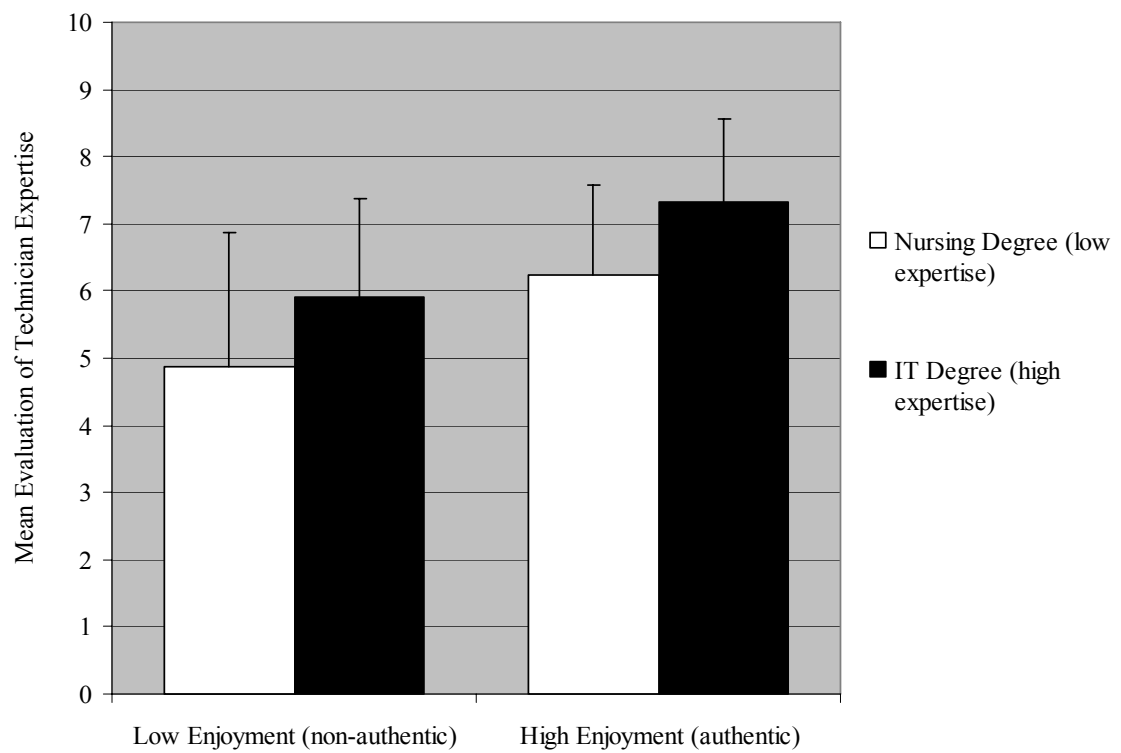


Figure 17. Mean evaluations of computer technician expertise

Finally, given that both source expertise and source authenticity were found to have an impact on participants' perceptions of technician expertise, a series of point-biserial correlations was conducted to examine which of the two source manipulations (expertise and authenticity) impacted perceptions of source expertise the most. These correlations can be observed in Table 2. Congruent with the General Linear Model, both source manipulations were positively related to participants' perceptions of source expertise. This result provides support for the fourth hypothesis that authenticity denotes expertise.

Table 2

*Point-Biserial Correlations between Source Manipulations and Perceptions of Computer Technician Expertise*

	Participants' perceptions of source expertise
Authenticity manipulation (high versus low enjoyment)	$r(74) = .38, p = .001$
Expertise manipulation (IT degree versus Nursing degree)	$r(74) = .27, p = .02$

*Ancillary Analyses: The Effect of MRS Scores as a Covariate*

The first multivariate analysis of variance was repeated using participants' MRS scores as a covariate to examine whether racist beliefs towards Indigenous Australians would influence the previously significant effect of source authenticity on product evaluations. Six participants did not complete the MRS and to ensure sample size was maintained, their missing values were replaced with the mean MRS score for their respective condition. The mean MRS score for the current sample was 10.32 ( $SD = 5.13$ ). The minimum MRS score for the sample was 0, the maximum MRS score was 23 out of a possible maximum score of 35.

*Main Effects*

The MRS scores within each condition were found to be linear and normally distributed (all Shapiro Wilks values  $p > .05$ ). The analysis was again conducted using two-tailed tests with an alpha level of .05. Evaluations of product value within each vignette remained as standardised z-scores to allow for statistical comparison across the two vignettes. A 2 x 2 x 2 mixed MANCOVA was computed to examine whether the authenticity and expertise of the source had an effect on participants' evaluations across each vignette, whilst controlling for MRS scores.

MRS scores, as a covariate, failed to have a significant effect on dependent measures,  $F(2, 71) = 1.13, p = .33$ . Despite controlling for MRS scores, source authenticity continued to have a significant effect on product evaluations,  $F(2, 71) = 7.58, p = .001, \eta^2 = .18$ . The expertise of the source again failed to influence product

evaluations ( $F(2, 71) = 1.70, p = .19$ ), as did the type of vignette ( $F(2, 71) = .02, p = .98$ ).

All possible two way and three way interactions between the three independent variables (vignette, source authenticity and source expertise) continued to be non-significant with the following exceptions (which are the same as the former MANOVA results). The source authenticity x source expertise interaction again was found to have a marginal effect on product evaluations,  $F(2, 71) = 2.50, p = .09, \eta^2 = .07$ , even when controlling for MRS scores. The vignette x source expertise interaction remained significant,  $F(2, 71) = 3.15, p = .049, \eta^2 = .08$ .

When including MRS scores as a covariate, the univariate results remained consistent with the original results. Hence, beliefs towards Indigenous Australians (as indicated by MRS scores) failed to influence the relationship between source authenticity and product evaluations. To examine whether racist beliefs towards Indigenous Australians would impact the previously significant effect of source authenticity on perceptions of artist expertise and authenticity in the art vignette, the former 2x2 between subjects ANOVA was repeated using participants' MRS scores as a covariate.

Results revealed that MRS scores, as a covariate, had no effect on perceptions of producer characteristics,  $F(2, 71) = .96, p = .39$ . Furthermore, despite controlling for MRS scores, source authenticity continued to have a significant effect on perceptions of these characteristics,  $F(2, 71) = 9.95, p < .001, \eta^2 = .22$ , as did the manipulated expertise of the artist,  $F(2, 71) = 4.06, p = .021, \eta^2 = .10$ . The artist

authenticity x artist expertise interaction continued to be significant,  $F(2, 71) = 5.54$ ,  $p = .006$ ,  $\eta^2 = .14$ .

Hence, when including MRS scores as a covariate, the univariate results were again found to be consistent with the previous results. Therefore, participants' beliefs towards Indigenous Australians (as indicated by MRS scores) failed to influence the relationship between source authenticity and perceptions of artist expertise and authenticity.

### *Discussion*

Although the current study was for the most part exploratory, four hypotheses were established. The first hypothesis anticipated that across vignettes, participants would pay more for the product/service when the source was authentic. This hypothesis was found to be supported. The second hypothesis proposed that participants would evaluate the product/service to be better in quality when the source was authentic. Across both vignettes, this was confirmed to be the case. The third hypothesis proposed that source expertise would have a greater impact on product evaluations in the computer vignette than in the art vignette. This hypothesis was again found to be supported. Finally, it had been hypothesised that the manipulation of producer authenticity would influence respondents' perceptions of source expertise in each vignette. This hypothesis was also supported. A more comprehensive discussion of these results, along with the additional findings follows.

*The Effect of Source Authenticity on Evaluations of Product/Service Evaluations*

As mentioned, in support of the first two hypotheses, source authenticity was found to have a favourable impact on participants' product evaluations. Across both vignettes and in support of hypothesis one, participants were found to pay significantly more money for both the art piece and the computer service when it was painted/provided by the authentic source. This result is consistent with the results of study three, where participants were willing to pay higher amounts to see a film where the actress was authentic than when she was not. In support of hypothesis two, participants evaluated the art piece/computer repair service as being significantly better in quality when the source was authentic than when they were not. This result is consistent with the results of studies one, two and three. In support of the literature it seems that authenticity indeed denotes quality (Cebzynski, 2005; Kivy, 1995; Rose & Wood, 2005).

It is encouraging that both cultural and emotional authenticity cues were persuasive within their respective contexts. This is the first study in this program to examine the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity using a between subjects design. For this reason, the results on the art vignette are of particular interest as they provide empirical support for the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity and its effect on product evaluations beyond that of the qualitative observations made within the literature (Cohen, 1988; 2004; Cornet; 1975; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Lowenthal, 1992; MacCannell, 1973; Martin, 1993; McIntosh, 2004; Rose & Wood, 2005; Swanson, 2004).

Before attempting to establish *why* source authenticity was persuasive in this study, the first question to be addressed is whether authenticity was interpreted identically within each vignette, or was authenticity persuasive across vignettes for different reasons? Recall that participants were asked to provide rationale for their responses across the two vignettes. It was anticipated that these responses would be useful for providing qualitative insight into participants' psychological processing. Examining the open-ended responses collected, there is some evidence to suggest that the adopted cultural and enjoyment authenticity manipulations were persuasive for relatively different reasons. It is emphasised that the rationales were collected to help interpret the quantitative results and are by no means representative of a wider population. Therefore, these comments should be interpreted with some degree of caution.

#### *Qualitative Insight into Responses for the Art Vignette*

Within the art vignette, many participants seemed to be persuaded by a belief that cultural authenticity implied some form of 'natural ability.' Although thematic in both vignettes, this rationale featured very strongly in the art vignette. Within the literature it has been asserted that personal authenticity implies a natural credibility for producing that product (Rudinow, 1994), and as articulated by Evans-Pritchard (1987), it is very common for individuals to draw such inferences within a cultural context. Comments provided by participants within the current study such as, "She would have already have the natural skills having come from an Aboriginal background" and "This painting would come naturally to her (the artist) as she is



Aboriginal and it is her culture paint this piece” and “I feel that the spirituality and cultural understanding required to create Aboriginal art may be inherent, to a degree, in an aboriginal person” provide support for this literature. Although ‘natural ability’ as an explanation for source authenticity’s persuasiveness was discussed in earlier studies (i.e. study three and five), these comments provide some indication that this explanation may indeed be valid, at least in respect to the current culturally specific product.

It also seemed that participants viewed painting the piece as coming quite easily to the Aboriginal artist in comparison to the Caucasian artist. This premise is again supported in the literature. As stated by Jones (1989), products may be viewed as “...the reflection of high effort compensating for low ability (learned expertise), or of high ability requiring minimal effort (natural expertise)” (p.478). This quote encapsulates the different ways in which participants interpreted the production process based on the ethnicity of the artist. For example, one participant in the high authenticity condition commented “The art piece was probably created fairly easily due to the nature of her background (cultural). Her family has most likely been doing these types of paintings for years” whilst another participant in the non-authentic/high expertise condition commented “The person has a masters degree in fine arts majoring in Indigenous art so it has taken awhile for her to master the art. Because of this I don’t think it comes naturally to her.” Kruger et al. (2004) asserts that such beliefs may consequently influence product evaluations in the sense that a product can “seem inferior to one that comes more easily, if for example the latter is thought to be a product of inspiration, and the former a struggle” (p. 97).

Consistent with findings reported in the literature on cultural authenticity (Cohen, 1988; Cornet, 1975; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Martin, 1993; McIntosh, 2004), several participants provided rationale indicating that their evaluations were primarily based on the authenticity of the artwork itself. This being said, however, perceptions of the art's authenticity seemed strongly influenced by perceptions of *artist* authenticity. Some of the responses made by participants who were in the low cultural authenticity condition include, "I don't feel it (the painting) can be classed as a fully authentic, Aboriginal, original piece of art if the artist is not Aboriginal," "She (the artist) is not an Aboriginal so the art does not seem as authentic," "I don't think that a Caucasian artist would have a naturally inspired reason for painting such a painting, more of an Aboriginal art work, and therefore not worth much in terms of authenticity" and "An indigenous artist would have provided authenticity to this painting."

These comments are interesting, largely because they suggest that the production process bestows upon the piece some extra quality that cannot be seen by looking at it alone. Without knowing the history of its production, a piece may look authentic, however, this interpretation could change rapidly if the authenticity of the artist was questioned. It would have been quite interesting to include a third authenticity condition whereby no information about the artist was provided, to examine whether participants would have inferred the piece to be authentic by default.

Nonetheless, the comments above parallel the findings from Fine's (2003) research on authentic art, which essentially established that evaluations of a piece

can become more desirable when perceptions of authenticity increase. By purchasing an authentically painted art piece, individuals believe they have the opportunity to own something ‘genuine’ - a true representation of an authentic experience, a commodified portrayal of Indigenous culture. And as indicated within the literature on cultural authenticity, owning an authentic relic is certainly appealing to consumers (Rose & Wood, 2005) particularly in a cultural context (Cohen, 1988; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; McIntosh, 2004).

On this subject, another common theme amongst participants’ rationale for art evaluations relates to authenticity bestowing some ‘magical property’ upon the product that it would not possess had it been painted by a non-authentic artist. Bear in mind that participants were shown the same completed artwork in both high and low cultural authenticity conditions. Given that the painting was present, one might expect evaluations to be based on the appearance of the art itself, rather than on information provided about the artist. As the results have indicated, however, this was not the case.

Rather, it seems that it was the imperceptible quality of authenticity that influenced evaluations of the artwork most strongly. Furthermore, this effect was particularly influential on participants’ interpretations of the artwork’s *value*. As stated by one participant, “The art product is very good and indistinguishable from authentic native art. However, with the artist being a Caucasian, there is no inherent value.” Other comments continue to support this theme. “It wouldn’t be worth as much as a piece done by an Indigenous Australian,” “I would not consider this to be an original Aboriginal painting. It is not worth as much as what a traditional piece

would be” and “I would say that the art was average because the artist is not of Aboriginal origin so I think it loses a bit of its meaning and value. I don’t think this style came naturally to them.” Like the art consumers of the previously discussed artist, Eddy Barrup (Brown, 2001), it seems that individuals view artwork as a reification of authentic culture when it is painted by an authentic Aboriginal artist, which is consequently deemed much more valuable than when painted by an artist lacking cultural authenticity. These comments also reflect similar sentiments as those made by tourists interviewed in Evans-Pritchard’s (1987) research on jewellery made by native Indians versus non-authentic jewellers in Santa Fe, Mexico.

In summary, authenticity seemed to be persuasive in the art vignette for several reasons. Being a cultural product, many participants perceived the culturally authentic artist to have the natural ability required to paint a high quality piece. Because of this perception, many participants then interpreted both the quality and value of the same painting differently depending on perceived authenticity of the artist. Secondly, given that participants were said to be looking for an Indigenous styled painting, many seemed focused on acquiring an art piece which could be considered authentic. Examining participants’ responses, it seems that authenticity provided meaning to the piece and made it more valuable than a non-authentic piece. These perceptions of the art’s authenticity, however, were based on more than just the look of the piece, however. Rather, the art’s authenticity seemed largely dependent on the *artist’s* authenticity, causing the authentic artist to again be more influential than the Caucasian artist.

### *Qualitative Insight into Responses for the Computer Vignette*

In relation to the computer service vignette, it could intuitively be assumed that the authenticity of the actual service itself might not be as important to the consumer as product authenticity was in the context of purchasing an art piece. This is not to say that authenticity is disregarded with *all* services, however. With a cultural service, such as acupuncture for example, it is certainly possible that participants evaluate that service based on how authentic it feels. However, with a computer service, it was anticipated that individuals have a basic need to have the required service completed and have little more investment in the process than that.

This being said, it *was* still believed that authenticity would exert an influence on service evaluations. Particularly in the context described (computer crashed whilst finishing an assignment), it is anticipated that individuals would be more inclined to seek confirmation that the service provider would repair the computer to the best of their ability. Given that enjoyment typically denotes a level of personal investment, it seems only logical that this authenticity cue would imply to participants that the service provider would do a better job in comparison to someone who found the task less enjoyable (Grandey et al., 2005; Price et al., 1995). Like in the art vignette, participants also provided rationale for service evaluations in the computer vignette. These responses were examined to explore the prospect of the technician's enjoyment signifying greater personal investment, effort or care.

In support of the quantitative findings, participants' open-ended responses revealed technician enjoyment to be a popular determinant of service value and quality. Furthermore, as expected, enjoyment as an authenticity cue did seem to

suggest different things to participants in this vignette compared to the art vignette. Rather than believing that authenticity signified greater technician ability or increased the authenticity of the service itself, the majority of participants seemed to view enjoyment as an indicator of effort or ability *invested* when repairing their computer. Take the following comment as an example; “Because he (the technician) enjoys what he does I would expect nothing but excellence because his interest goes beyond simply doing his job.” Alternatively, perceptions of the technician’s personal investment appear to decrease once the technician’s enjoyment was seen to be low; “Michael is obviously unenthusiastic and would probably do a quick fix, bad job on my computer,” “He obviously does not enjoy his work and therefore I am not sure that his job on my computer would be efficient,” and finally “If he is uninterested, it makes me feel like he would rather be somewhere else. I would expect him to just fix it and not do a great job. I still expect him to know what he is doing.” This last comment is interesting because it shows that it is not the technician’s ability that is doubted but rather his utilisation of this ability.

Though it is possible for a service provider to detest their job yet still do it effectively, it seems that many participants were not willing to take that chance. In fact only one participant rationalised the technician’s enjoyment to be irrelevant, commenting “Just because Michael doesn’t like working with computers doesn’t mean he is not good at it.” For the most part, however, increased perceptions of enjoyment seemed to result in increased perceptions of effort and care taken. This occurs both when the service provider had an IT degree and when he did not.

Within the art vignette, participants often perceived artist ability as being innately bestowed upon the authentic artist, however, in the computer vignette it appears that participants inferred ability to increase with experience. This is reasonable considering that individuals are not usually recognised as being born with computer repairing skills. The following comment epitomises this notion; “Because he loves information technology, he would have a passion for fixing computers and would possibly be extremely good at it by now.” Again, it seems that passion or enjoyment acts as an indicator that the person will be intrinsically motivated to pursue that activity. Furthermore, if a task is enjoyable, it is likely that the process will be perceived as coming easily to that individual, which in turn increases perceptions of ability (Kruger et al., 2004).

In summary, these results, along with those of the art vignette, add to the evidence accumulated across earlier studies suggesting that producer/service provider authenticity is persuasive and indeed possesses the potential to enhance evaluations of a range of products and services. As the results have revealed, the influence of authenticity is not dependent on the vignette, with participants evaluating both the quality and the value of a product/service, provided the source seemed authentic. This being said, the interpretation of authenticity across vignettes did seem to be context driven, with each cue persuading participants for what seemed to be different reasons.

### *The Influence of Producer Expertise*

Whilst source authenticity was found to have a persuasive influence on product evaluations across both vignettes, source expertise was found to be effective in the computer vignette only. In the art vignette, participants evaluated the value and quality of the piece to be the same regardless of whether the artist was described as having had no formal training or having completed a Fine Arts degree. Although it had been hypothesised that source expertise would be more persuasive in the computer vignette than in the art vignette, its failure to have any effect at all in the art vignette was a little surprising, especially considering the wealth of literature supporting the persuasiveness of source expertise (Braunsberger & Munch, 1998; Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Farr, 2004; Homer & Kahle, 1990; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Woodside & Davenport, 1974).

There are several explanations for the source expertise failing to impact product evaluations within the art vignette. Firstly, it could be proposed that the authenticity manipulation was actually a more successful expertise manipulation which participants then utilised when formulating evaluations. Recall that even when the artist had had no formal training (low expertise condition), the Aboriginal artist was perceived by participants as being significantly more expert than the Caucasian artist. In fact, the Aboriginal artist with no formal training was perceived to be just as expert as the Aboriginal artist with the Fine Arts degree and was actually perceived slightly *more* expert.

Hence, more favourable evaluations in the high authenticity/low expertise condition would have increased the overall mean for the low expertise condition,



causing expertise to have no effect. If the authenticity manipulation did interact with the expertise manipulation in the art vignette, however, the results should have revealed a three way interaction between these variables. And given that this interaction failed to be significant, there is little evidence to support this proposal.

A more plausible explanation relates to the persuasiveness of source expertise (by means of formal training) being more context dependent than the persuasiveness of source authenticity. Appreciably, not all products are valued for being the outcome of a highly trained producer. Art, for example, may be a product where formal training is perceived as being less important. As proposed in the rationale for this study, there seems to exist a general lay belief that true artistic ability comes from ‘within’ rather than being taught, and is valued accordingly (Fine, 2003). Consequently, when an artist has undergone formal training it may suggest that the artist’s expression is not their own, but rather the techniques and methods taught during their education. This may then make that piece seem less appealing (Brown, 2001).

If this were the case though, the results should have revealed expertise to have a negative impact in the art vignette, with evaluations becoming *less* favourable as the level of formal training increased. Examining the results detailed in Figure 13, it can be observed that evaluations of art quality *are* lower in the high expertise condition than in the low expertise condition, providing some support for this explanation. This difference is not significant, however, and this explanation should therefore be interpreted cautiously. Even so, comments articulated by participants continue to provide some support for this premise; “You either think of someone as

being (artistically) talented or not regardless of training” and “The person has a Masters degree in fine arts majoring in Indigenous art so it has obviously taken awhile for her to master the art.”

A lack of expertise should have greater consequences for a computer service than an art piece. Because the artwork was already painted and directly available for evaluation, the artist’s formal expertise may be less important than it would have been *prior* to viewing the piece. Alternatively, participants evaluated the computer service prior to knowing the outcome, which may have made expertise an important driver of service quality. Furthermore, with the appreciation of art being relatively subjective in nature, it is entirely possible that a piece painted by an artist with no formal training could be considered more appealing than a piece painted by a well-trained expert. With a computer service, however, satisfaction with the outcome is more restricted. The problem is either fixed or it is not. These factors may therefore provide yet another explanation for the expertise manipulation being effective in the computer vignette only.

Interestingly, the results did reveal expertise to have opposite effects on evaluations of product/service quality within each vignette. Whilst in the computer vignette having an IT degree (high expertise) was found to *increase* evaluations of service quality, in the art vignette, having a degree in Fine Arts was found to *decrease* evaluations of product quality.

Given that repairing computers is not typically understood to be a skill that one is born with, it is logical that formal training was perceived as a more powerful determinant of product evaluations in the computer vignette than in the art vignette.

Again, the rationale provided by participants in the computer vignette support this notion. Some participants' comments include "Due to his lack of a degree in computers I would not expect his skills to be that good and would not pay him as much as I would pay a computer expert," "If Michael is not professionally trained in computers I don't think his help warrants a lot of expense," and "He has a degree so he should be good." Hence, when it comes to the computer vignette, having an IT degree certainly seems related to more favourable evaluations of service quality.

A final explanation for why source expertise influenced quality evaluations in the computer vignette only may relate to participants' interpretation of the expertise manipulations. Recall that participants evaluated the technician who had completed an IT degree as being significantly more authentic than the technician who had completed a nursing degree. However, in the art vignette, the formal training of the artist had no impact on perceptions of artist authenticity. It is therefore possible that formal expertise functioned as an authenticity cue within the computer vignette. This would provide a further explanation as to why the expertise manipulation impacted evaluations of product quality in the computer vignette but not the art vignette.

Given that the enjoyment authenticity cue had a significant effect on *both* service quality and value in this vignette, it seems peculiar that expertise would only affect quality evaluations if it were also functioning as an authenticity cue. Hence, even though a history of formal expertise may reinforce perceptions of technician authenticity, it is more likely that expertise was persuasive in only the computer

vignette because source training is more relevant for repairing computers than painting art.

Whilst on this subject, the question should be raised as to why the expertise manipulation failed to influence perceptions of service value in the computer vignette. Given that the authenticity manipulation was found to influence perceptions of service value, there is no argument for the value measure being methodologically flawed. Instead it is likely that for this type of service participants were not interested in paying extra money, *except* when there was an indication (such as enjoyment) that the technician would be highly invested in the process. This is logical given that consumers are likely to have expectations that standard fees are paid purely for a service provider's expertise. The additional value comes from their investment of authenticity.

#### *The Absence of an Interaction between Source Characteristics*

The results of the first multivariate analysis failed to provide any evidence that source authenticity interacts with source expertise when it comes to influencing product evaluations. This indicates that expertise is *not* a boundary condition of authenticity. Authenticity continues to be influential even when the person lacks formal expertise. This is not to suggest that formal training is irrelevant when the source is authentic. Rather, it suggests that on occasions where a source is lacking in expertise, evaluations of a product or service may be enhanced by making authenticity salient. It should be noted, however, that this finding may have been

context or product specific, and had other products been used, the results may have been somewhat different.

*Perceptions of Producer Characteristics: Art Vignette*

As expected, participants evaluated the Aboriginal artist to be more authentic than the Caucasian artist at painting the Aboriginal styled piece of art. This finding is consistent with Corsini's (2002) rationale that individuals who 'look the part' will seem authentic. In support of hypothesis four, participants also perceived the Aboriginal artist to have a higher level of expertise than the Caucasian artist. Alternatively, the formal training of the artist influenced perceptions of expertise when the artist was Caucasian only (low cultural authenticity). In other words, the Caucasian artist with a degree in Fine Arts was perceived as significantly more expert than the Caucasian artist with no formal training. Conversely, when the artist was Aboriginal, participants seem to perceive the artist as expert irrespective of the actual expertise manipulation. The Aboriginal artist with no formal training was perceived to be just as expert as the Aboriginal artist with the Fine Arts degree and was, in fact, perceived as even a little *more* expert. Of little surprise, the Aboriginal artist with no formal training was perceived as significantly more expert than the Caucasian artist with no formal training. It therefore can be proposed that by simply being of the cultural heritage that is congruent with a product, a source can immediately be granted expertise.

Remarkably, when the artist had a Fine Arts degree, both the Aboriginal and Caucasian artist were evaluated by participants as being relatively equal in their level

of expertise. This is interesting because it suggests that a white person may be evaluated as expert as an Indigenous artist provided the non-authentic source has training. One would expect that the Aboriginal artist would be considered more expert than a Caucasian with training. However, as participants' comments have indicated, an Indigenous artist who needed to be formally trained may lose some of their authenticity.

What is even more interesting about this result is that even though the Caucasian is considered as expert as the Aboriginal artist, product evaluations for each source were still found to differ. Participants were still found to pay more for the art and evaluate it to be better in quality when the artist was culturally authentic, in both high and low expertise conditions. So it seems that expertise is not everything. The authenticity ascribed to the painting as a result of having an authentic creator, makes that product all the much better in the participant's eyes.

#### *Perceptions of Producer Characteristics: Computer Vignette*

As expected, participants perceived the computer technician to be significantly more authentic when he enjoyed fixing computers than when he did not. This perception was also reflected in remarks made by several participants. Comments such as, "I don't think fixing computers defines himself because he doesn't enjoy it," and "What he likes is ultimately *who* he is" provide evidence that enjoyment indeed acts as a cue to one's authentic self (Rahilly, 1993; Salmela, 2005; Turner, 1999).

In support of hypothesis four, participants were found to evaluate the computer technician as being significantly more expert when he enjoyed fixing computers than when he did not. This effect was observed both when the technician had an IT degree and a nursing degree. Hence, as with the art vignette, participants incorporated the source's authenticity when evaluating how expert he was at providing the required service. This result provides further support for authenticity being acknowledged as a justified facet of source credibility (Cebrzynski, 2005; Kivy, 1995).

The expertise manipulation was also found to influence participants' perceptions of the technician in the computer vignette. Participants were found to evaluate the technician with the IT degree as being significantly more expert than the technician with the Nursing degree. Unexpectedly, participants were found to evaluate the computer technician as being significantly more *authentic* when he possessed a degree in Information Technology than when he had completed a Nursing degree. This is logical, however, given that if one is 'technically inclined' they may be more likely to seek out experiences (i.e. training etc) which reflect this inclination. Furthermore, as stipulated by Lewis and Bridger (2000), credibility is an effective way of providing an impression of authenticity.

As previously discussed, formal training may indeed operate as an authenticity cue within this particular context. This possibility is reflected in a comment made by one participant who stated; "Occupational skills are important in forming who you are, however, if you are unhappy performing these skills then they would not be good at creating a worthwhile sense of self." Interestingly, this comment indicates

that whilst learned skills may help an individual develop their 'self' (Goffman, 1959), it is the naturally occurring emotions which truly signify authenticity.

It would have been interesting to examine the influence of source enjoyment on evaluations of the art piece. If it is believed that art, as a product, is inspired from within and cannot be taught, enjoyment may have been as persuasive as cultural authenticity. It seems necessary to compare the persuasiveness of each type of authenticity cue on the same product. Study seven will examine how these characteristics interact with one another to create an impression of authenticity.

#### *Prejudiced Beliefs and the Persuasiveness of Cultural Authenticity*

Finally, recall that participants were given the Modern Racism Scale (MRS) to examine the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity whilst controlling for any discriminatory beliefs about Indigenous Australians. Interestingly, the cultural authenticity of the artist continued to have a persuasive effect on participants' perceptions of art quality and value. Participants evaluated the authentically painted piece more favourably irrespective of any prejudiced beliefs they may hold towards Aboriginals. These findings support the research conducted by Farr (2004), who found a source's race to have no impact on participants' judgements as long as the source's credibility was perceived to be high. In the current context, the artist is credible because of her race and the corresponding cultural style of the product, causing racial beliefs to be inconsequential.

Alternatively, another explanation for why MRS scores failed to impact the authenticity manipulation may be related to the fact that the distribution of MRS



scores was relatively restricted within the current sample. Although scores on the MRS can range from zero to thirty-five, the maximum score in the current sample was only twenty-three. If a sample with more extreme MRS scores had been used, it is possible that the results may have been different. However, it is believed that there was enough variation within the sample to detect subtle differences caused by prejudiced beliefs, and as the results have indicated, MRS scores as a covariate, failed to alter any of the previously discussed effects. Thus, pre-existing beliefs about a cultural group do not seem to act as a boundary condition for the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity. If anything, when it comes to the evaluation of a cultural product, it may actually be the case that cultural authenticity functions as a boundary condition of racial prejudice.

#### *Conclusion and Implications of Study Six*

The findings of study six are quite comprehensive and highly informative. Not only did the study continue to validate enjoyment as a persuasive source characteristic, this study provided evidence for the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity on product evaluations using a between subjects design. Both the enjoyment and cultural authenticity of the source were found to influence both perceptions of product/service quality and how much participants were willing to pay for that product or service. Source authenticity failed to interact with learned expertise indicating that expertise does not function as a boundary condition of authenticity in the contexts currently examined.

Whilst authenticity was persuasive in both vignettes, learned expertise was only persuasive in the computer vignette. Interestingly, participants interpreted the formal training of the computer technician to be an indicator of authenticity in the computer vignette, which may explain why the expertise manipulation was persuasive. Results examining participants' perceptions of source characteristics confirmed that both source enjoyment and ethnicity function as cues to authenticity. Interestingly, these results also confirm that authenticity impacts perceptions of source expertise, providing support for authenticity functioning as another facet of source credibility in addition to expertise and trustworthiness (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

These results have important implications for the marketing sector, suggesting that a product's appeal can be increased considerably by having its producer appear authentic. As the results have indicated, consumers are also willing to pay substantially more money for a product/service when that producer or service provider is perceived as authentic. Furthermore in situations where source expertise is lacking, making a source's authenticity salient may be particularly useful for enhancing evaluations of a product or service.

Although these results translate well to marketing as a discipline, they also have important consequences for other disciplines, particularly those involving the assessment of products or services. As discussed in study two, it is important for individuals within educational settings to be aware that their evaluations of students' work (whether it be art, essays, whatever) may be unintentionally biased as a result of that student's perceived authenticity (Brown, 2001). From a consumer

perspective, the results of the current study suggest to be aware when purchasing products claiming to be authentically made. Just because an advertisement promotes a producer to be culturally authentic does not necessarily mean this is the case. As discussed, there are many examples reported within the literature where countries have been forced to implement laws preventing misrepresentation of producer authenticity (Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Rose, 2003).

#### *Future Directions*

As discussed, it would be useful to examine how multiple authenticity cues function within a single context. Hence, the next study will examine how enjoyment and cultural authenticity cues interact with one another. Rather than using two independent vignettes, study seven will use one product to determine whether these cues influence product evaluations independently or interactively.

## CHAPTER 12

## Study Seven: The Interaction between Enjoyment and Cultural Authenticity

*Rationale and Hypotheses*

The results of the first six studies have provided evidence for the persuasiveness of both producer enjoyment and cultural authenticity. This being said, these authenticity cues have been examined in isolation up until this point. It also seems important to examine how these authenticity cues might interact with one another to influence product evaluations. Though it seems logical that producers appearing to be both culturally *and* emotionally authentic would increase perceptions of producer authenticity and result in the most favourable product evaluations, this idea is yet to be validated.

More interestingly, it is important to examine how conflicts between authenticity cues (e.g. high cultural authenticity but low enjoyment authenticity and vice versa) might interact to influence product evaluations. As observed in study six, authenticity continued to be persuasive in contexts where producer expertise was lacking. At this stage it is unknown whether each authenticity cue will remain persuasive when another authenticity cue is perceived to be lacking. For example, being culturally authentic but failing to enjoy the production experience may cause a producer to be perceived as *less* authentic. Likewise, enjoying the production process, but failing to be of the appropriate ethnicity or culture may also render that producer (and perhaps product) less authentic. In the same vein as authenticity, research on ‘naturalness’ by Rozin (2005) indicates that attempting to make an

already natural product seem even more natural will not improve product evaluations, given the product is already regarded in a highly favourable light. However, once perceptions of naturalness are compromised, even slightly, perceptions of naturalness *and* product evaluations decrease significantly. Hence, research indicates that the augmenting or discounting of naturalness result in disproportionate adjustments in product evaluations. Likewise, it is possible that introducing another authenticity cue into an environment where the source is already perceived as authentic may not increase product evaluations to the same extent that reducing perceptions of one type of authenticity may decrease product evaluations. Rather, it may simply reinforce the currently held perception. The current study aims to examine this possibility.

Given that the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity is likely to be limited to cultural products and services, it is necessary to examine the interaction between enjoyment and cultural authenticity cues using a product with some embedded cultural history. Given that producers will have a cultural connection to a product which is culturally congruent, it is probable that cultural authenticity by means of ethnicity may be of greater importance to participants than the producer's enjoyment when evaluating a cultural product. This study will examine this prospect.

Considering the discussed factors, the product to be evaluated in the current study will be coffee. Coffee seems an effective product to employ given that it has strong cultural origins (Ukers, 1953) with Brazil, Ethiopia, Morocco and Indonesia, just to name a few prominent coffee producing nations. Furthermore, coffee is a product that is consumed by a large proportion of individuals. In fact, the number of

coffees served each year in Australia has increased by 65 per cent over the past 10 years and the Australian industry is now worth \$840 million (Gerard, 2006).

Using coffee as a product also enables an examination of the influence of authenticity within yet another context. As observed in Studies two and six, participants continued to use producer authenticity to interpret the quality of a product that was directly available for evaluation. Likewise, participants in the current study will be given a sample of coffee and will be asked to evaluate both its quality and the price they would be willing to pay for a cup. Price per cup will be used as this price range is relatively standardised across both cafes and coffee brands. To ensure that the quality of the coffee sample is identical for every participant, participants will smell a sample of coffee beans rather than drink the coffee, as the coffee brewing process may leave too much opportunity for error.

Furthermore, only individuals who identify themselves as being coffee drinkers will be eligible to participate in the current research. This criterion was adopted on the basis that a dislike of coffee may result in low evaluations in individuals who would not drink coffee in the first place. Furthermore, it was believed that it may be difficult for non-drinkers to evaluate appropriate value for a cup of coffee if they are not accustomed to purchasing it.

Finally, an additional benefit of using an exclusive sample of coffee drinkers is that these individuals should be higher in elaboration likelihood (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), the most important determinant of high elaboration is the relevance of the message. If the message is perceived by participants to be relevant, they should invest a significant amount of

cognitive effort, forming an evaluative judgement based only on information perceived to be of relevance (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; 1983; 1986; Petty et al., 1987; Petty, Rucker, Bizer & Cacioppo, 2004; Petty et al., 1997).

It will be interesting to examine whether coffee drinkers are persuaded by producer authenticity or not. The sample should be motivated to evaluate the information about the coffee because it is relevant to them as regular consumers of the product. If coffee drinkers *are* persuaded by the source authenticity manipulations, it could suggest that producer authenticity is being processed as a central cue to persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). However, if producer authenticity cues fail to exert any influence on coffee drinkers' evaluations of the coffee, it might be inferred that within this context, authenticity may be being processed peripherally.

Recall that the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion does not discriminate between which variables operate as central cues and which act as peripheral cues (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1984). According to the ELM, source authenticity could function as a central or peripheral cue, dependent on the specific context. It is acknowledged that it would be particularly interesting to examine whether non-coffee drinkers are persuaded by source authenticity in the current context, given that they should process information by the peripheral route. Recall that this type of processing sees individuals rely upon simple extraneous cues as a result of low motivation and/or ability (i.e. stereotypes about authenticity) to arrive at a decision without the use of any issue-relevant information (i.e. the coffee itself).

As previously discussed, however, given the potential for bias, non-coffee drinkers will be excluded from the current study. Rather, Study ten will specifically address the possibility of authenticity being a central or peripherally processed cue. This will be done using the Need For Cognition (NFC) scale (Cacioppo et al., 1984), which has been repeatedly used within the persuasion literature to validate whether a variety of source characteristics are processed via the central or peripheral route (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984b; Petty et al., 1984; Petty & Wegner, 1998; 1999; Woodside & Davenport, 1974). Moving forward, it now seems relevant to address the authenticity cue manipulations to be used in the current study.

#### *Authenticity Manipulations – Enjoyment as a Cue to Authenticity*

In the previous studies, producers were explicitly described as either enjoying the task or failing to enjoy the task. While these manipulations have been successful in differentiating product evaluations, it also seems as important to examine the persuasiveness of producer enjoyment, if in the low emotional authenticity condition, rather than specifically stating that the producer ‘fails to enjoy’ making a product participants instead receive no information at all about producer enjoyment. Using this manipulation this research can establish whether producer enjoyment increases product evaluations, whether it was the producer’s ‘lack of enjoyment’ in earlier studies which *decreased* product evaluations, or *both*. The proposed modification of the emotional authenticity manipulation should also increase external validity, given that it would be quite rare for consumers to be informed that a producer *dislikes* producing products.



*Authenticity Manipulations – Culture as a Cue to Authenticity*

Many cultures are renowned for producing coffee. However, for the cultural authenticity manipulation, Brazilians seem to be the logical choice. In many ways, Brazil has promoted its culture as being centered on the production of coffee. The coffee plant is such an important symbol of Brazil it is featured in the national coat of arms (Wikipedia, 2006). Furthermore, as a result of Carnival, enjoyment and fun, along with coffee are portrayed as being key elements of the cultural ethos of Brazil. “Along with samba, carnival and soccer, coffee is one of the most important Brazilian symbols” (The coffee experiment, n.d.). For this reason, Brazilians seem a worthy choice given that it is necessary for producer enjoyment to be perceived as a congruent emotion for the culture chosen. If an African nation was elected, it possible that the enjoyment cue may not have maintained face validity to the extent that Brazilian culture would, given that so much of the media shown about Africa portrays poverty and despair. In fact the five images most commonly associated with Africa are; poverty, lions, the AIDS virus, starving children and war (Wall, 2006).

Attempting to establish the culture of producers in the low cultural authenticity condition is more of a challenge. Given that there are numerous prominent coffee producing regions around the world, it is difficult to identify a plausible culture for the low cultural authenticity condition. Whilst it may seem useful to use a culture that is obviously a non-coffee producing nation, it seems as important to ensure the manipulation is believable. Hence, to increase plausibility, but reduce the possibility of producers being perceived as a cohesive and culturally authentic entity, workers in the low cultural authenticity condition will be said to

come from a *variety* of places from around the globe. Several hypotheses are established for the current study. It is hypothesised that;

1. Participants will perceive the coffee produced by Brazilian workers (culturally authentic) to be significantly better in quality than the coffee produced by workers from around the globe (low cultural authenticity).
2. Participants will pay more money for a cup of coffee that has been produced by Brazilian workers than workers from around the globe.
3. Participants will evaluate the coffee produced by workers who enjoy producing coffee (high emotional authenticity) to be significantly better in quality than coffee than coffee produced by workers who have not been explicitly stated as enjoying the production of coffee (low emotional authenticity).
4. Participants will pay more money for a cup of coffee that has been produced by workers who enjoy working with coffee than those for whom nothing has been stated in relation to level of work-derived enjoyment.

At this stage no hypotheses have been established directly relating to the interaction between the two authenticity cues. In this respect, the

current study is exploratory and will use the results to advance hypotheses in additional studies.

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Sixty-seven undergraduate university students from James Cook University took part in the current study. Seven of these participants were eliminated from the dataset based on their self identification as not being coffee drinkers (After exclusion,  $n = 60$ ). Participants' ages ranged between 18 and 56 years of age, with the sample comprising 42 females ( $M = 26.98$  years,  $SD = 9.74$  years) and 18 males ( $M = 26.83$  years,  $SD = 10.18$  years).

#### *Design*

The design for this study was a 2 (Cultural authenticity manipulation: High cultural authenticity vs. culture undisclosed) x 2 (Enjoyment authenticity manipulation: High enjoyment vs. enjoyment undisclosed) between subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four possible conditions.

#### *Materials*

Materials for this study consisted of a pen and paper task, and a sample of coffee.

*Pen and paper task.* The task consisted of a vignette and three questions. The vignette provided participants with a company profile on a coffee manufacturer by the name of Tambem Coffee. This profile was as follows;

At Tambem Coffee, we treat our beans right, from start to finish - from selecting the best green beans, to creating blends, roasting, keeping beans fresh, and brewing. At every point in the process, we accept only the highest-quality beans and employ the highest standards, no matter what the cost. Established in 1936, our mission at Tambem Coffee is to provide an experience that makes the day better.

By including information about the company's standards and time of establishment, it was expected that the credibility of Tambem Coffee remained controlled across conditions. However, additional information within these vignettes was then manipulated in two different ways. These manipulations were additionally counterbalanced across participants.

*Manipulation one: Cultural authenticity manipulation.* Within the vignette, participants received information about the cultural authenticity of the coffee producers. Participants in the high cultural authenticity condition were told that the producers were native to Minas Gerais in Brazil. Participants in the non-authentic condition were told that producers came from a variety of places from around the globe (culture undisclosed).

*Manipulation two: Enjoyment authenticity manipulation.* Participants also received information about the enjoyment authenticity of the coffee producers. Participants in the high enjoyment condition were told that the producers thoroughly

enjoyed making coffee, whilst participants in low emotional authenticity condition received no information regarding the enjoyment of the producers.

Participants were also required to answer three questions. The first question required participants to state how much they would be willing to pay for a cup of Tambem Coffee. Participants responded to this question along a ten-point Likert scale, ranging from \$0.00 to \$4.50. The scale increased in increments of 50 cents. The second question required participants to rate the perceived quality of the coffee along a six-point Likert scale. This scale ranged from ‘exceptionally bad in quality,’ to ‘exceptionally good in quality.’ The third question was an open-ended measure, requesting participants to provide some rationale for their responses on the previous two measures. (All four versions of the vignette can be located in Appendix H1. The three questions can be located in Appendix H2.)

*Coffee sample.* The coffee beans used for this study were sampled from a freshly opened one kilogram bag of Vittoria espresso coffee beans. This bag was then divided into 100 zip lock bags, each containing approximately ten grams of coffee beans. Participants received one sample of coffee each. Coffee was kept in an airtight container to prevent it from losing its aroma. All participants were tested within a week, ensuring the strength of the coffee was maintained across the sample.

### *Procedure*

Participants were tested either individually or in small groups. On arrival at the laboratory, participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study. Confidentiality and consent were discussed and accepting participants then

signed a consent form. Participants were asked to report their age, gender and whether they were a coffee drinker on a provided demographic sheet and were encouraged to ask any questions should they feel the need. Those who identified themselves as not being a coffee drinker were eliminated from the study.

Participants were provided with the vignette and the sample of coffee beans. The vignettes were distributed to participants randomly, keeping the researcher blind as to what version the participant was completing. The researcher then provided participants with the following instructions, "Please read the following scenario. After you have read this information, please smell the sample of Tambem coffee you have been given." After examining the coffee, the experimenter then handed them the questions to complete and asked them answer these questions as honestly as possible. The participants completed the questions at their own pace, and on completion were debriefed regarding the nature of the study and asked if they had any questions. Participants were then thanked for their time, and were free to leave.

### *Results*

Before proceeding, the data was examined to establish whether they met the assumptions required for a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The assumption of normality was found to be violated for all conditions on the dependent measure of coffee quality (all Shapiro-Wilk  $p$  values  $<.05$ ). As stipulated by Brace, Kemp and Snelgar (2003), however, multivariate analysis is typically a robust analysis, even with modest violations of normality. Data across all dependent measures were found to be homogeneous.

### *Main Effects*

All analyses for this study were computed using two-tailed tests with an alpha level of .05. A 2 x 2 between subjects MANOVA was computed to establish whether the effects of cultural authenticity and enjoyment authenticity were significant across the first two questions in this study. Contrary to predictions, the main effect for cultural authenticity failed to be significant,  $F(2, 55) = .35, p = .71$ , as was the main effect for the enjoyment authenticity of the producers,  $F(2, 55) = 1.53, p = .23$ . The results, however, revealed a significant interaction between cultural authenticity and enjoyment authenticity,  $F(2, 55) = 3.48, p = .04, \eta^2 = .13$ .

### *The Interaction Between Cultural and Enjoyment Producer Authenticity*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the interaction between cultural and enjoyment authenticity had across dependent measures. The interaction between producer enjoyment and cultural authenticity was found to affect how much participants were willing to pay for a cup of Tambem coffee,  $F(1, 56) = 5.20, p = .03, \eta^2 = .09$ . The cultural authenticity x enjoyment interaction failed to have an effect on participants' evaluations of product quality,  $F(1, 56) = 2.79, p = .11$ .

To explore how this interaction influenced the value of the coffee, several simple effect t-tests were conducted. Results revealed that when producer enjoyment was high, participants were found to pay marginally more for the coffee produced by Brazilian producers ( $M = \$3.36, SD = .74$ ) than culturally non-authentic individuals ( $M = \$2.81, SD = .86$ ),  $t(27) = -1.77, p = .09$ . This result is only marginally significant however, and therefore must be interpreted with caution. Subsequently,

when no information was provided regarding the producers' enjoyment (low emotional authenticity), the cultural authenticity manipulation failed to influence the prices participants were willing to pay for a cup of the coffee,  $t(29) = 1.44, p = .16$ .

When producers were Brazilian (high cultural authenticity), participants in the high enjoyment authenticity condition were found to pay marginally more for a cup of coffee ( $M = \$3.36, SD = .74$ ) than those who were told nothing about the enjoyment of the producers (low enjoyment authenticity condition) ( $M = \$2.72, SD = .98$ ),  $t(25) = -1.84, p = .08$ . Again, this result is only marginally significant and should therefore be interpreted with caution. However, when the cultural authenticity of the producers was undisclosed, and workers were described as coming from around the globe, it did not seem to matter whether the producers enjoyed working with coffee or not,  $t(31) = 1.27, p = .21$ . The mean payment per cup of coffee for each condition can be located in Figure 18.



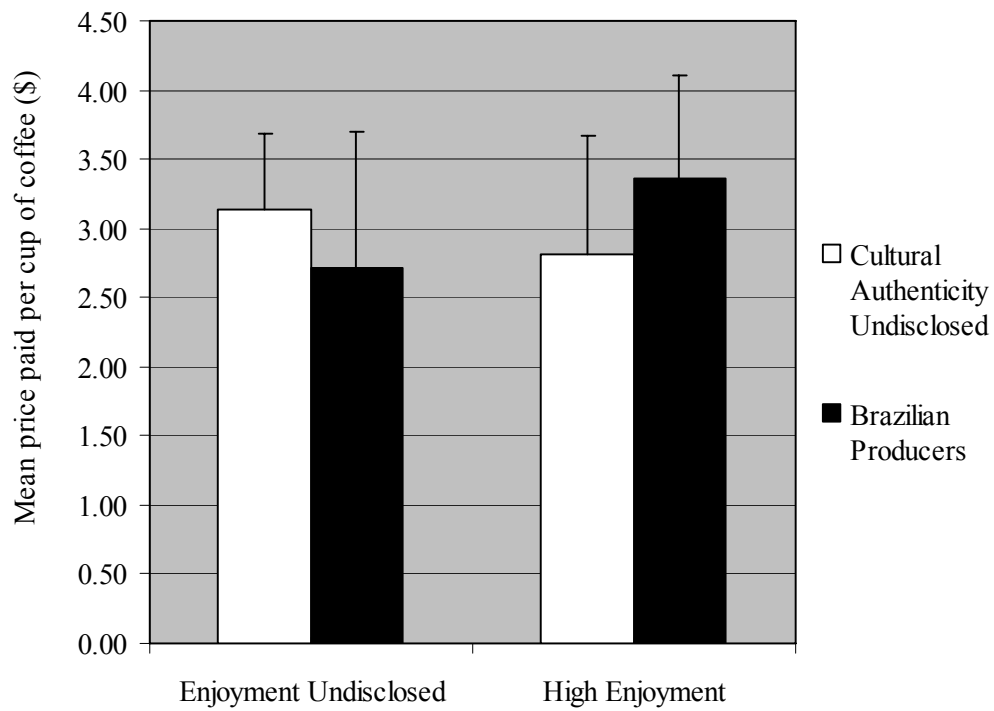


Figure 18. Mean price paid for a cup of Tambem coffee in each condition.

### *Discussion*

The results of this study provide marginal support at best for the established hypotheses. It had been anticipated that authentic producers would persuade participants to ascribe extra value to the coffee, and enhance perceptions of the product's quality over coffee produced by non-authentic producers. Unfortunately, the results failed to be this straightforward, with the persuasiveness of each authenticity cue being dependent on the other authenticity cue. To reiterate, four hypotheses were established for the current study.

The first hypothesis, that participants would perceive Brazilian producers to produce higher quality coffee than workers from around the globe, failed to be substantiated by responses on this measure. Furthermore, failing to support hypothesis two, participants failed to pay more for a cup of coffee when it was produced by Brazilian workers than when it was produced by culturally non-specific workers. What the results did suggest, however, was that participants *were* willing to pay more money for a cup of coffee produced by Brazilian workers *provided* they were explicitly said to enjoy working with coffee. Conversely, cultural authenticity had no effect on perceptions of coffee value in the condition where no information was provided about the workers' level of enjoyment.

Hypothesis three, that participants would evaluate the quality of coffee to be superior when workers were explicitly stated as enjoying working with coffee, was again not supported. Providing some support for hypothesis four, producer enjoyment was found to have a marginal effect on price paid for coffee *provided* the workers were culturally authentic (i.e. Brazilian). When producers were Brazilian,

participants paid marginally more for the coffee than when the producers' enjoyment was undisclosed. This effect was not observed in the low cultural authenticity conditions, however.

It therefore seems that the effect of each authenticity cue is dependent on the other authenticity cue being present. However, it should be noted that these interaction effects were found to have a marginal effect on price evaluations at best. The influence of these effects was not found to impact perceptions of coffee quality. The results will now be discussed in greater detail.

#### *The Failure of Authenticity to Influence Evaluations of Coffee Quality*

Failing to support both hypothesis one and three, participants were not found to be influenced by the producers' enjoyment nor their cultural authenticity when evaluating the quality of the coffee sample provided. This being said, the interaction effect on evaluations of coffee quality was close to approaching significance. This is interesting given that across earlier studies there is evidence that evaluations of product quality *were* susceptible to the influence of producer authenticity (both enjoyment and cultural authenticity). Furthermore, evaluations of product quality were influenced by these authenticity cues even in circumstances where the product was physically present for direct evaluation (i.e. study two and study six).

There is the possibility that individuals are less receptive to the influence of producer characteristics when evaluating coffee quality. Rather than using the producers' authenticity to interpret the product, people may base their evaluations primarily on the coffee itself. Unlike the products/services used in earlier studies,

coffee grows naturally and therefore exists *prior* to the production process. With other products and services such as art, essays, acupuncture, or film performances, the existence (and therefore quality) of the product/service is completely dependent on its producer/service provider. However, the quality of coffee as a product can only be considered *partly* reliant on its producers. Hence, coffee quality may be perceived to remain relatively stable irrespective of who produces it.

There is another explanation for why the authenticity cues failed to influence evaluations of product quality (interactively or independently). It is possible that the *quality* of the coffee was evaluated similarly by participants across all conditions, but what made the coffee more *valuable* was its authenticity. As observed in previous studies, participants are willing to pay higher prices when the product can be deemed authentic, and as discussed within the literature product authenticity is often determined by producer authenticity (Brown, 2001; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Martin, 1993). It is still perplexing that evaluations of coffee quality were not influenced if perceptions of coffee authenticity were increasing. One would assume that individuals would evaluate authentic coffee to be better in quality. It should be kept in mind that the effects of producer authenticity on price evaluations were only marginal, and were also approaching marginal significance for evaluations of coffee quality. As a final explanation, it is also possible that participants paid more in the authentic conditions because they wanted to support the Brazilian economy. This explanation was not reflected in any of the qualitative comments made by participants, however, and is therefore not believed to be a strong driver of price evaluations.

### *The Interaction between Cultural Authenticity and Enjoyment*

As discussed, cultural authenticity and enjoyment authenticity failed to *independently* influence product evaluations in the current study. This is interesting, considering that across earlier studies there was certainly evidence suggesting that producer authenticity is persuasive as a source characteristic when examined in isolation. Unlike former studies, however, the current study was the first to manipulate multiple authenticity cues.

It was proposed in the rationale for this study that perceptions of authenticity might not be as strong in conditions where the authenticity manipulations were inconsistent as they would be in the conditions where authenticity cues were congruent (i.e. high enjoyment, high cultural authenticity). As indicated by the results, both enjoyment and cultural authenticity cues were *only* persuasive in conditions where the other authenticity cue was also present.

As alluded to in Study six, any extraneous information which may make a producer seem less authentic may ultimately influence how persuasive an authenticity cue is. For example, a number of participants within study six made comments which suggested that the ‘authentic’ Aboriginal artist seemed less authentic if she needed to have formal training. In conditions where the cultural authenticity cue (Indigenous artist) was present, it seemed to be the expertise cue (formal training vs. no formal training) which often influenced how the authenticity cue was interpreted. Similarly, Brazilian workers within the current study may not have seemed as authentic in producing coffee if they were perceived to lack

enjoyment and passion. What's more, producer enjoyment may not be perceived as authentic when they are not members of an authentic coffee making culture.

There is still the issue that the observed interaction effects between authenticity cues were only marginally significant. It is possible that the adopted manipulations were not able to differentiate between conditions as strongly as expected.

#### *Issues with the Cultural Authenticity Manipulation*

Brazilian producers were used in the high cultural authenticity condition given the assumption that Brazil would be recognised by participants as a strong coffee producing nation. In the non-authentic condition, it was believed that by having producers come from a *variety* of places from around the globe, there would be less chance that participants could associate the producers with any one specific culture, and that this would preclude participants from perceiving producers in this condition as culturally authentic. As shown by the results, however, participants failed to evaluate the coffee in the non-authentic condition any differently to participants in the authentic condition. The only time the cultural authenticity manipulation was found to impact coffee evaluations was when producer enjoyment was high. In these conditions, the manipulation was found to have a marginal influence on evaluations of coffee value.

Firstly, it could be inferred that the cultural authenticity of the producer is not as persuasive as predicted in the given context, *or* that Brazilians were not regarded by participants to be authentic. If it were, product evaluations should have been a lot

higher in the culturally authentic condition than in the non-culturally authentic condition.

Recall that an open-ended response measure was included in the current study to provide insight into the rationale motivating participants' responses. Interestingly, the qualitative responses participants provided on this open-ended measure do not deny that Brazilians are perceived as authentic coffee producers. "It would be more appealing if the company said its coffee and workers were from Brazil." Only two participants made a negatively valenced statement about Brazilian producers in the high cultural authenticity condition. One individual mentioned that 'Hiring *only* Brazilians seems a little harsh.' This comment fails to imply that the authenticity of the producers is not important, but simply that the company seems biased in not hiring people from a variety of cultures.

Another patriotic participant stated "Buy Australian made, by Australian employees." Again, this comment does not refute the authenticity of Brazilians, or state that coffee made by Brazilians is poor, but simply suggests that consumers should spend money promoting Australian made products. Interestingly, not one participant stated that Brazilians lack the skills necessary to make great coffee, and furthermore, no one stated that producer culture was irrelevant. Thus, the cultural authenticity of the producers may have indeed been effective. Given the vast literature on the topic (Cohen, 1988; 2004; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Lowenthal, 1992; MacCannell, 1973; Martin, 1993; McIntosh, 2004; Swanson, 2004) this would make sense.

### *The Persuasiveness of 'Product' Authenticity*

The rationale provided by participants for their responses also provides some indication that the ethnic origin of coffee itself also matters. As one participant in the low cultural authenticity condition commented, "My perception of the coffee is based around the information that was provided. What I would like to know is what country this coffee is from." Firstly, this remark suggests that even in circumstances where the coffee itself is present, people will base their evaluations on information provided rather than on qualities of the product itself. More importantly, however, this comment suggests that a sound judgment about coffee quality might only be made when the country of origin is known. It therefore seems that *product* authenticity is also (and perhaps even more so) important when evaluating the value and quality of this product, given its existence does not rely solely on a producer.

Walking into the coffee aisle at any supermarket it can be observed that coffee companies make the cultural origin of coffee a strong focus point when marketing their products. As stated by an individual in the high cultural authenticity condition stated, "Brazilian coffee is said to be the best in the world!" Hence, it can be observed that there seems to be a general belief that coffee from certain areas of the world is superior to others. Within the media, coffee native to Brazil is often promoted as being exquisite in quality, and is consequently perceived as a superior product to those originating from less established coffee producing nations (Riva Coffee, Channel Ten, May 28, 2006).

Noteworthy is the fact that the majority of participants' comments related more to the authenticity of the coffee itself than producer authenticity. Although



literature suggests that a product's authenticity is often determined by the authenticity of its producer (Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987), it may not be the case with coffee as a product. To address the issue of product versus producer authenticity, study nine will examine the persuasiveness of both coffee *and* producer authenticity. Before examining the interaction between producer and product authenticity, however, it seems necessary to modify and retest the cultural authenticity manipulation

If individuals believe that coffee beans originating from a certain region of the world are superior, then it seems logical that individuals native to that region would be perceived most authentic at producing that coffee, given they possess the natural ability simply by being born into that coffee producing culture. As expected, a statement by an individual in the low cultural authenticity condition suggests that this may be the case.

Having workers come from around the globe doesn't give much detail about their background. They could be from Japan, places that don't grow coffee – might not really have much of an idea ...  
The authenticity of the coffee would be better if it said where Tambem coffee was (Brazil), and if their workers were also from Brazil.

This statement supports the presumption that Brazilian coffee is considered superior, but additionally provides support that good coffee requires *more* than just an authentic product. It suggests that the producer of that product needs to be

authentic as well and only by *being* Brazilian, would a producer have natural insight into producing an authentic product. So if the cultural authenticity of the producer is important, why did the results fail to support the hypothesis?

*The Problem with Not Being 'Culturally Authentic'*

An alternative explanation and possibly a more accurate one, is that perhaps the coffee produced by the culturally non-authentic producers was simply evaluated more *positively* than anticipated. Perhaps evaluations of coffee produced by Brazilian workers *were* more favourable, and it was simply the case that the culturally non-authentic condition *also* yielded similarly increased evaluations. Why would this occur? By stating that producers come from a variety of destinations from around the globe, it is possible that the manipulation evoked the impression that the product was 'world-class,' which consequently elevated perceptions of both the coffee's value and quality. So by attempting to induce perceptions of producers *lacking* cultural authenticity, the culturally non-authentic manipulation actually became persuasive, with the coffee potentially being perceived as a world-class product. If participants did interpret the low cultural authenticity manipulation in this way, there is little possibility that the evaluations of coffee made by culturally non-authentic producers could be compared accurately with the authentic condition. It would have been more beneficial to perhaps have manipulated the non-authentic producers as being native to a single country not recognised as an authentic coffee producing nation, such as Britain or China for example.

*Potential issues with the emotional authenticity manipulation*

Though producer enjoyment had a marginal effect on participants' evaluations of coffee value when the producers were Brazilian, it had no effect whatsoever on evaluations of coffee quality. Given the results of the previous studies it is possible that the emotional authenticity manipulation may not have been explicit enough. Because no information was provided about producer enjoyment (or lack thereof) in the low emotional authenticity condition, participants may have inferred producer enjoyment unless it had been stated otherwise. Examining participants' qualitative rationale for their coffee evaluations, there is evidence to support the persuasiveness of producer enjoyment. As stated by one participant;

Tambem state that their workers enjoy and are passionate about coffee. If this is so, the coffee will be good as it is made by people who know good coffee and I think this is essential in making good coffee. People who don't like coffee can't make coffee in my experience.

This theme is reflected within the comments made by many participants within the high enjoyment conditions. Why then do the results fail to provide any evidence of enjoyment having an effect on evaluations of product quality? If participants infer producer enjoyment by default, the low emotional authenticity manipulation may need to be made more explicit to prevent participants from continuing to make such assumptions. The manipulation used in earlier studies (i.e.

‘do not enjoy producing coffee’) may be more effective for examining the effect of emotional authenticity within this context.

*Is longevity of the company more persuasive than authenticity?*

Another factor that may be responsible for the small variance in coffee evaluations between the authentic and non-authentic conditions for both enjoyment and cultural authenticity is the standardised non-diagnostic information contained within the vignette. Commonly reflected upon in participants’ rationales was the detail regarding the longevity of the company itself. The coffee company was stated as being established in 1936, a fact that may have functioned as an indicator of company credibility and success. In fact many participants made comments which indicated their evaluations were motivated by this piece of information. “The coffee must be good for the company to have lasted so long” and “The company has been established for almost seventy years. If the coffee beans were not good, they would not have survived in the coffee market” are only two of the many comments reflecting the persuasiveness of the company’s date of establishment. For future studies, it would be beneficial to either exclude this detail or have the company established in the last 20 years rather than 70 years.

*Conclusions*

As indicated by the results, the interaction between cultural and enjoyment authenticity had a marginally significant effect on how much participants were willing to pay for a cup of coffee. Given the factors discussed, it seems necessary to

repeat this study, modifying it so that the discussed issues are no longer problematic. By doing so, it is anticipated that a better understanding of the interaction between multiple authenticity cues will be achieved. Methodologically, study eight will remain identical to the current study, however, in order to alleviate the problems associated with participants' interpretation of the non-authentic conditions, the low authenticity manipulations will be made more explicit. In the modified study, participants in the low enjoyment authenticity condition will now be explicitly informed that the producers *do not* enjoy working with coffee.

The same would happen with the cultural authenticity manipulation. As previously discussed, in order to prevent the interpretation of low cultural authenticity as 'world class', producers in the low cultural authenticity condition will be said to come from a single country not recognised as being an authentic coffee producing nation. This would allow for a straightforward comparison of product evaluations in culturally authentic and non-authentic conditions. The country used in the low cultural authenticity manipulation will be determined by pre-testing which nation is perceived as least authentic at producing coffee.

Additionally, to avoid possible confounds it would be ideal to remove the information about the longevity of the company from the vignette. However, in order to make comparisons with the current results, the vignette must remain unchanged). Hence, for the time being this information will remain within the vignette for the modified study only.

Although it would be useful to add a product authenticity manipulation in study eight, it was decided to duplicate the methodology used in the previous study,

so that the data can be collated with that collected in study seven to form a complete data set. By doing this, the database in study eight will permit an analysis of the differences between Study seven's subtle manipulation of non-authentic conditions and Study eight's more explicit manipulation of these same conditions. Study nine will introduce a product authenticity manipulation.

## CHAPTER 13

### Study Eight: Revisiting the Interaction between Enjoyment and Cultural Authenticity

#### *Pre-test Rationale*

As mentioned, because of the somewhat ambiguous results of the last study it was decided to make the both the enjoyment and cultural authenticity manipulations more explicit. However, to determine high and low culturally authentic groups, a pre-test is essential. Therefore the first component of this study will determine the ethnic groups regarded as most and least authentic at producing coffee. The ethnic group judged most authentic will be employed as the producers in the high cultural authenticity manipulation. Alternatively, the ethnic group judged least authentic will be employed as the producers in the low cultural authenticity manipulation. For the reasons formerly stated in study seven, only those professing to be coffee drinkers will be used in study eight.

#### *Pre-test Method*

##### *Participants*

Thirty-two undergraduate university students from James Cook University took part in the pre-test phase. Participants' ages ranged between 18 and 50 years of age, with the sample comprising 29 females ( $M = 28.97$  years,  $SD = 10.75$  years) and three males ( $M = 25.67$  years,  $SD = 3.06$  years). All participants self-identified as coffee drinkers.

### *Design*

The design for this study was a one-way (Cultural authenticity manipulation: Brazilian vs. British vs. African vs. Indonesian vs. American vs. Mexican vs. Indian vs. New Zealander vs. Chinese vs. Italian) within subjects design.

### *Materials*

The materials for the pre-test phase consisted of a ten-item questionnaire measure, which was used to identify authentic and non-authentic ethnic groups for the cultural authenticity manipulation in the next component of study eight. The statement “X (Ethnic group, e.g. Brazilians) are authentic at producing coffee.” was used to examine perceptions of authenticity for ten different ethnic groups (See Appendix I1). The ethnic groups examined were Brazilians, British, Africans, Indonesians, Americans, Mexicans, Indians, New Zealanders, Chinese and Italians. Responses were made on a five-point Likert scale for each item ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’.

### *Procedure*

Participants were tested either individually or in small groups. On arrival at the laboratory, participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the nature of the study. Confidentiality and consent were discussed and accepting participants then signed a consent form. Participants were asked to report their age and gender on a provided demographic sheet and were encouraged to ask any questions should they feel the need. Participants were then given the scale to



complete with the following instructions, "Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the ten statements below." The participants completed the scale at their own pace.

### *Pre-test Results*

All analyses for this pre-test were conducted using two-tailed tests with an alpha level of .05. Before proceeding, data were examined to establish whether it met the assumptions required for a one-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). Normality tests revealed no extreme outliers on any of the ten dependent measures. The assumption of normality was found to be violated for all dependent measures (all Shapiro-Wilk  $p$  values  $<.05$ ). However, as stipulated by Brace, Kemp and Snelgar (2003), ANOVA is typically a robust analysis, even with modest violations of normality. Sphericity was also found to be violated (Mauchly's  $W(44) = 84.63, p < .001$ ), and therefore a Huynh-Feldt adjustment was applied to produce a valid  $F$ -ratio.

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA using the Huynh-Feldt correction was conducted to examine the effect of ethnicity of the group on perceptions of coffee-producing authenticity. Results indicated that the ethnicity of the group did affect perceptions of cultural authenticity for producing this product,  $F(6.93, 214.94) = 16.40, p < .001, \eta^2 = .35$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni Correction revealed that Brazilians were evaluated as significantly more authentic at producing coffee ( $M = 3.31, SD = .74$ ) than any of the other nine ethnic groups. Additionally, the Chinese ( $M = 1.25, SD = .98$ ) and the British ( $M = 1.25, SD = .92$ ) were equally

perceived as the least authentic at producing coffee. The post-hoc analysis further shows that these two groups were perceived as significantly less authentic than Brazilians, Africans, Indonesians and Italians. Hence, Brazilians (highest authenticity evaluation) are perceived as significantly more authentic than Chinese or British individuals (equally lowest authenticity evaluation) when it comes to producing coffee. Mean evaluations of each ethnic group are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

*Mean Evaluations of Producer Authenticity for Producing Coffee*

Ethnic Group	Mean	Standard Deviation
Brazilians *	3.31	.74
British ∇	1.25	.92
Africans	2.50	1.11
Indonesians	2.03	1.03
Americans	1.78	1.13
Mexicans	1.88	1.07
Indians	1.53	1.16
New Zealanders	1.38	1.10
Chinese ∇	1.25	.98
Italians	2.44	1.11

\* Brazilians perceived as significantly more authentic at producing coffee than all nine other groups  
 ∇ British and Chinese perceived as significantly less authentic at producing coffee than Brazilians, Africans, Indonesians and Italians.

### *Pre-test Discussion*

Providing support for the high cultural authenticity manipulation employed in Study seven, Brazilians were evaluated by participants as most authentic at producing coffee of the ten cultural groups examined. This is interesting considering that coffee originates from Ethiopia and has only been grown and produced in Brazil since the early 1700s (Ukers, 1953). Hence, like in Study seven, producers in the explicit culturally authentic condition will be stated as being Brazilian in the experimental phase of Study eight.

Alternatively, of the ten ethnic groups, participants evaluated Chinese and British individuals to be the least authentic at producing coffee. Both groups were evaluated significantly less authentic than Brazilians and therefore either could be used as the explicit culturally non-authentic group in the experimental phase of Study eight. So which of the two ethnic groups should be used? Both Chinese and British producers seem highly effective in evoking perceptions of low cultural authenticity, however, the use of Chinese producers brings to mind some possible confounding factors that should be identified and discussed.

Chinese production is often associated with several stereotypical beliefs. Firstly, there is a conception that products made by Asians are usually inexpensive, which may subsequently denote that the product will be of poor quality (Cassia, 2006). Furthermore, Chinese production is often associated with cheap labour (Corsi, 2006). Hence, images of unjust working conditions with unreasonably low wages may come to mind, which may then consequently influence evaluations of the product over and above the effect predicted by the authenticity manipulation. In fact,

within this product's context, these issues may be especially pertinent. Why would Chinese individuals be producing coffee unless it was for exploitative purposes? For the discussed reasons, it seems problematic to use Chinese producers in the low cultural authenticity manipulation. The objective of the Study eight is to examine the persuasiveness of cultural versus enjoyment authenticity more explicitly, and in order to make any reliable assertions about the effect of cultural authenticity, manipulations should be as confound free as possible.

Fortunately, these concerns do not seem to be as potentially problematic if British producers were used for the low cultural authenticity condition. This assumption is based on the belief that British people are not stereotypically associated with having to work in unjust conditions, or producing cheap products. Using this non-authentic cultural group as producers of coffee, interpretations of evaluations should eliminate unnecessary error and allow for a clearer examination of the differences between high and low cultural authenticity conditions. The ratings of British producers also produced a smaller standard deviation (and therefore variance) than ratings for the Chinese producers, making it the more appropriate choice for the low authenticity manipulation.

Hence, for the purpose of the explicit cultural authenticity manipulation, Brazilian producers will be used in the high cultural authenticity condition and British producers will be used in the low cultural authenticity condition.

### *Experimental Phase - Rational and Hypotheses*

The purpose of the experimental phase for study eight is to replicate Study seven using more explicit manipulations of the two authenticity cues. Given the results of the pre-test, it is anticipated that the modified cultural authenticity manipulation will be more effective in differentiating between perceptions of authenticity. In relation to modifying the emotional authenticity manipulations, it also seems necessary to make the low condition more explicit.

Recall that in the previous study, participants in the low condition were given no information regarding producers' emotional authenticity. This methodology had been adopted to eliminate the possibility that it was actually the *lack* of enjoyment responsible for between group variance. Rather than enjoyment being persuasive and elevating evaluations, it was difficult to establish whether it may have been the lack of enjoyment *decreasing* evaluations. Interestingly, providing no information about producer enjoyment rather than information about a lack of producer enjoyment in study seven did provide *some* support for enjoyment influencing evaluations of product value in the high cultural authenticity conditions. Though this effect was only marginally significant, it provides important evidence that it was not only the producers' 'lack' of enjoyment that was decreasing evaluations in earlier studies. To make the low emotional authenticity manipulation more explicit for the present study, the low enjoyment manipulation used in earlier studies will again be introduced (i.e. 'do not enjoy producing coffee').

The amalgamation of the current data with that collected in Study seven will permit an examination of the effect that explicit versus non-explicit authenticity

manipulations have on participants' product evaluations. Furthermore, this dataset can be used to examine whether the previous interactive authenticity effects are strengthened with the modified vignette manipulations. Although this study is essentially a repetition of Study seven, the following new hypotheses are established:

1. Participants will perceive the coffee produced by Brazilian producers to be significantly better in quality than the coffee produced by producers low in cultural authenticity. However, this effect will be stronger when the producers are said to enjoy producing coffee (high emotional authenticity).
2. Participants will pay more money for a cup of coffee that has been produced by Brazilian workers than non-authentic producers. However, this effect will again be stronger when the producers are said to enjoy producing coffee (high emotional authenticity).
3. Participants will evaluate the coffee produced by workers who enjoy producing coffee (high emotional authenticity) to be significantly better in quality than coffee than coffee produced by workers in the low emotional authenticity conditions. However, this effect will be stronger when the producers are Brazilian (high cultural authenticity).

4. Participants will pay more money for a cup of coffee that has been produced by workers who enjoy working with coffee than those in the low emotional authenticity conditions. However, this effect will again be stronger when the producers are Brazilian (high cultural authenticity).
5. Given the high potential for error variance in Study seven, it is hypothesised that the culturally authentic producers will be significantly more persuasive in the explicit conditions than in the non-explicit conditions.
6. Furthermore, it is hypothesised that producer enjoyment will be significantly more persuasive in the explicit conditions than the non-explicit conditions.

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Fifty-eight students from James Cook University took part in the modified study eight (explicit manipulations). However, six participants were excluded from the dataset based on their identification of not being regular coffee drinkers (after exclusion,  $n = 52$ ). Participants' ages ranged between 18 and 67 years, with the sample comprising 15 males ( $M = 34.20$  years,  $SD = 15.61$  years) and 37 females ( $M = 30.95$  years,  $SD = 11.35$  years). The data from this component of the study was added to the data collected in Study seven (total  $n = 112$ ).

### *Design*

The design for this study was a 2 (Cultural authenticity manipulation: High cultural authenticity vs. low cultural authenticity) x 2 (Emotional authenticity manipulation: High emotional authenticity vs. low emotional authenticity) x 2 (Manipulation salience: non-explicit vs. explicit) between subjects design. New participants were randomly assigned to one of the four possible conditions.

### *Materials*

The materials for the current study remain identical to those used study seven. However, non-authentic conditions in the vignettes were made more explicit.

Manipulation one: *Cultural authenticity manipulation*. Within the vignette, participants again received information about the cultural authenticity of the coffee producers. Participants in the high cultural authenticity condition were again told that the producers of the coffee were native to Minas Gerais in Brazil, whilst this time the remaining half was not. Whilst in Study seven, non-authentic producers were said to have come from a variety of places from around the globe, in the current study, a lack of cultural authenticity was made more explicit by making non-authentic producers British. British producers were selected as a result of the pre-test.

Manipulation two: *Enjoyment authenticity manipulation*. Like in Study seven, participants received information about the enjoyment authenticity of the coffee producers. Participants in the high enjoyment authenticity condition were again told that the producers thoroughly enjoyed making coffee, whilst the remaining half were not. Therefore, the emotionally authentic producers in both study seven and the



current study were said to thoroughly enjoy working with coffee. However, the low enjoyment manipulation was made more explicit in the current study. Recall that in Study seven participants in the non-authentic condition were provided with no information regarding the producers' enjoyment. However, in the current study, a low emotional authenticity was made more explicit by deliberately stating that the producers were found not to enjoy working with coffee.

Manipulation three: *Manipulation Salience*. Manipulation salience was added as the third factor in the design. The data from the four new 'explicit' conditions was added to the original 'not explicit' data, to form the final data set for Study eight. The explicit manipulations used in the vignette can be examined in Appendix J1.

### *Procedure*

The procedure for this study used the identical procedure used in Study seven.

## *Results*

### *Main Effects*

All analyses for this study were computed using the combined data from studies seven and eight. Analyses were additionally conducted using two-tailed tests with an alpha level of .05. A three-way between subjects MANOVA was computed to establish whether the effects were significant across the two dependent measures. The cultural authenticity of producers was found to have a significant effect on participants' responses,  $F(2, 103) = 2.99, p = .05$ . No main effect was found

regarding the enjoyment authenticity of the producer  $F(2, 103) = .68, p = .51$ . The main effect for the salience manipulation was also found to be significant,  $F(2, 103) = 8.49, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$ .

The results revealed a significant interaction between cultural authenticity and enjoyment authenticity,  $F(2, 103) = 3.67, p = .03, \eta^2 = .07$ . The interaction between cultural authenticity and manipulation salience was found to be significant,  $F(2, 103) = 3.71, p = .03, \eta^2 = .07$ . The interaction between enjoyment authenticity and manipulation salience was also significant,  $F(2, 103) = 3.30, p = .04, \eta^2 = .06$ . However, the three-way cultural authenticity x enjoyment authenticity x manipulation salience interaction failed to be significant,  $F(2, 103) = .40, p = .67$ .

#### *The Effect of Cultural Authenticity on Task Responses*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect of cultural authenticity on participants' responses for each of the dependent measures. Regarding evaluations of product value, the cultural authenticity manipulation was found to have a significant effect on how much participants were willing to pay for a cup of coffee. Providing support for hypothesis two, results indicate that participants were willing to pay significantly more for a cup of coffee when the producers were culturally authentic ( $M = \$2.89, SD = 0.91$ ), than when they were not ( $M = \$2.59, SD = 0.94$ ),  $F(1, 104) = 5.19, p = .03, \eta^2 = .05$  (See Figure 19). The cultural authenticity of the producers was found to have only a marginal effect on perceptions of coffee quality. Participants rated the coffee quality more favourably when the producers

were Brazilian ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = .96$ ) than when they were not culturally authentic ( $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ),  $F(1, 104) = 3.08$ ,  $p = .08$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ .

#### *The Effect of Manipulation Salience on Task Responses*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the saliency of the authenticity manipulations had on participants' responses for each of the dependent measures. Regarding evaluations of product value, the saliency of authenticity manipulations was found to have a significant effect on how much participants were willing to pay for a cup of coffee. Results indicate that participants pay significantly more for a cup of coffee when the manipulations were not explicit ( $M = \$2.97$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ), than when the manipulations were explicit ( $M = \$2.46$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ),  $F(1, 104) = 10.45$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $\eta^2 = .09$ . The manipulation salience was also found to affect perceptions of coffee quality. Participants rated the coffee to be better in quality when the manipulation was not explicit ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = .80$ ) than when it was explicit ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ),  $F(1, 104) = 13.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .12$ .

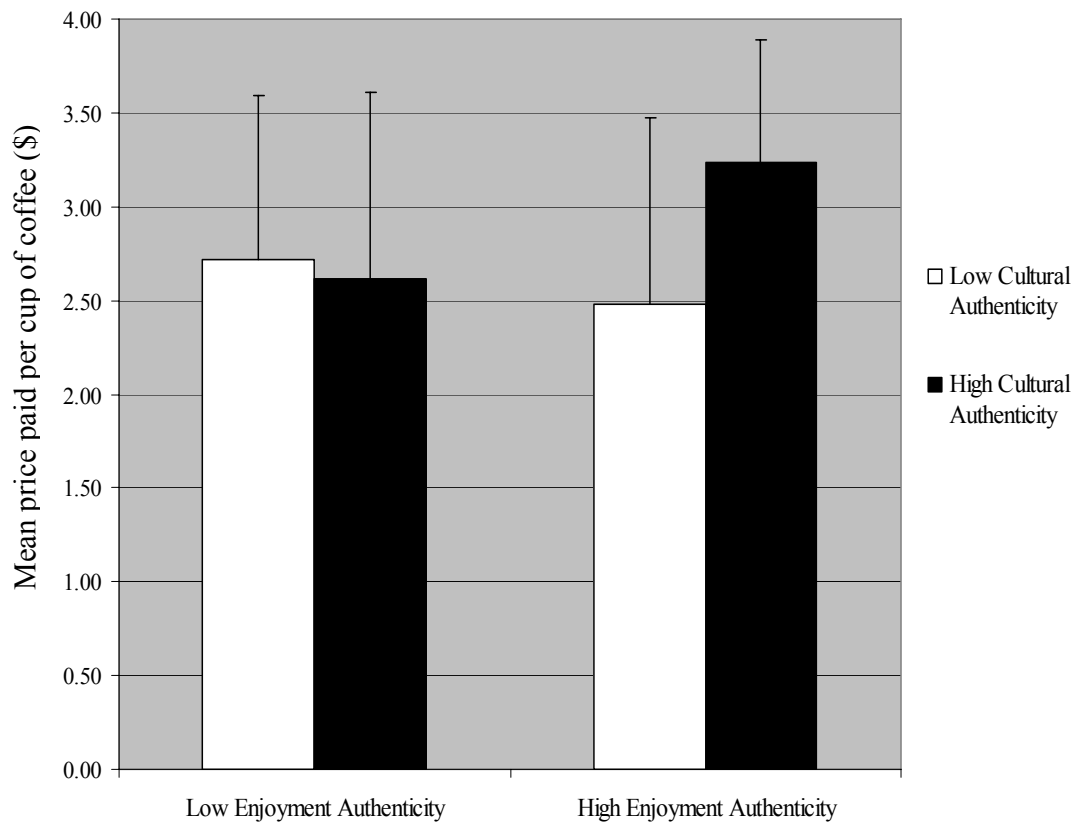
#### *The Interaction Between Cultural and Enjoyment Producer Authenticity*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the interaction between cultural and enjoyment authenticity had across dependent measures. Congruent with the result of Study seven, the interaction was found to significantly affect how much participants were willing to pay for a cup of Tambem coffee,  $F(1, 104) = 7.40$ ,  $p = .008$ ,  $\eta^2 = .07$ .

A series of independent samples t-tests were computed to independently explore the effect of each variable, across each level of the other variable. In support

of hypothesis two, the results show that when producer enjoyment was high, participants paid significantly more for the coffee when it was made by culturally authentic Brazilian producers ( $M = \$3.24$ ,  $SD = .65$ ) than when it was produced by culturally non-authentic individuals ( $M = \$2.48$ ,  $SD = .99$ ),  $t(52) = -3.18$ ,  $p = .003$ . However, when producer enjoyment was low there was no difference between the prices established by those in the high cultural authenticity condition ( $M = \$2.62$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) and those in the low cultural authenticity condition ( $M = \$2.71$ ,  $SD = .88$ ),  $t(56) = .40$ ,  $p = .70$ .

Furthermore, in support of hypothesis four, participants paid significantly more for coffee made by producers high in enjoyment ( $M = \$3.24$ ,  $SD = .65$ ) than those low in emotional authenticity ( $M = \$2.62$ ,  $SD = .99$ ) provided the producers were Brazilian (high cultural authenticity),  $t(51) = -2.61$ ,  $p = .01$ . When producers were not Brazilian (low cultural authenticity), their emotional authenticity had no effect on evaluations of coffee value,  $t(57) = .94$ ,  $p = .35$ . The interaction between cultural and emotional authenticity can be examined in Figure 19. A further univariate ANOVA indicated that the cultural authenticity x enjoyment authenticity interaction failed to influence evaluations of product quality,  $F(1, 104) = 1.13$ ,  $p = .29$ .



*Figure 19.* Cultural authenticity x enjoyment authenticity interaction. Mean price paid for coffee

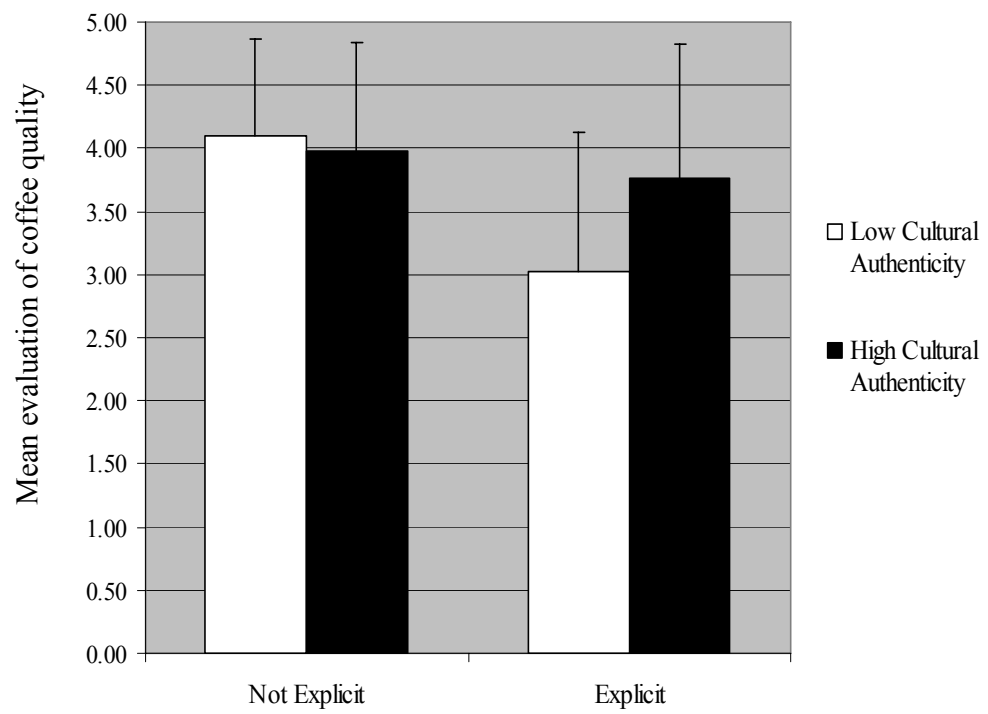
*The Interaction between Cultural Authenticity and Manipulation Salience*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the interaction between cultural authenticity and the salience of the manipulation had across dependent measures. Firstly, the interaction was found to have only a marginal effect on how much participants were willing to pay for a cup of Tambem coffee,  $F(1, 104) = 3.40, p = .07$ . The interaction between cultural authenticity and manipulation salience was, however, found to affect participants' evaluations of product quality,  $F(1, 104) = 6.73, p = .01$ .

A series of independent samples t-tests were computed to explore the difference between levels of one variable, on each level of the second variable in the interaction. As established in Study seven, cultural authenticity failed to affect participants' evaluations of coffee quality when the manipulation was not explicit,  $t(58) = .58, p = .56$ . However, when the manipulation *was* explicit, participants evaluated the coffee produced by Brazilians more favourably ( $M = 3.77, SD = 1.06$ ) than coffee produced by the British ( $M = 3.02, SD = 1.10$ ),  $t(50) = -2.49, p = .02$ . This result provides support for hypothesis five.

As expected, when the producers were Brazilian (recall that the high cultural authenticity manipulation was the same in *both* explicit and non-explicit conditions), evaluations of coffee quality were the same in both explicit and non-explicit conditions,  $t(51) = .79, p = .43$ . However, when the cultural authenticity of the producer was low, participants evaluated coffee quality more favourably when the manipulation was not explicit (workers come from around the globe) ( $M = 4.10, SD$

= .76) than when the manipulation was explicit and producers are British, ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ),  $t(57) = 4.43$ ,  $p < .001$ . The interaction can be examined in Figure 20.



*Figure 20.* Cultural authenticity x manipulation salience interaction. Mean quality evaluations.



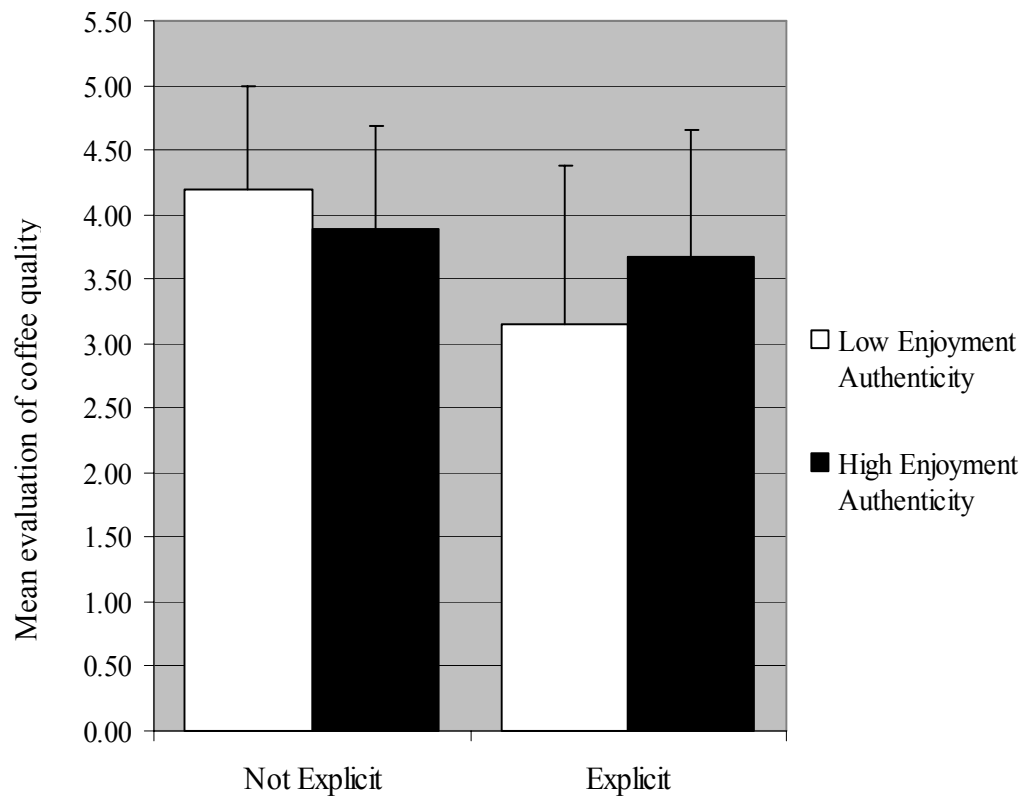
*The Interaction between Enjoyment Authenticity and Manipulation Salience*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the interaction between emotional authenticity and manipulation salience had across dependent measures. Again, the interaction failed to have a significant effect on how much participants were willing to pay for a cup of Tambem coffee,  $F(1, 104) = 0.03$ ,  $p = .86$ . The interaction between emotional authenticity and manipulation salience was, however, found to affect participants' evaluations of product quality,  $F(1, 104) = 5.90$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ .

A series of independent samples t-tests were computed to explore the difference between levels of one variable, across each level of the second variable in the interaction. Congruent with the results of Study seven, emotional authenticity failed to affect participants' evaluations of coffee quality when the manipulation was not explicit,  $t(58) = 1.57$ ,  $p = .12$ . When the manipulation was explicit, participants in the high enjoyment condition were found to evaluate the quality of the coffee to be marginally better ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = .98$ ) than those in the low enjoyment condition ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ),  $t(50) = -1.69$ ,  $p = .10$ .

As expected, when emotional authenticity was high (enjoyment manipulation was the same in both explicit and non-explicit conditions), manipulation salience had no effect on participants' evaluations of coffee quality,  $t(52) = .87$ ,  $p = .39$ . However, when the emotional authenticity of the producer was low, participants were found to evaluate the quality of the coffee more favourably when the manipulation was not explicit (i.e. nothing was stated about the enjoyment of the producer) ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = .79$ ) than when the manipulation was explicit and

participants were explicitly informed that the producers do not enjoy producing coffee, ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ),  $t(56) = 3.95$ ,  $p < .001$ . The interaction can be examined in Figure 21.



*Figure 21.* Enjoyment authenticity x manipulation salience interaction. Mean quality evaluations.

### *Discussion*

Given the somewhat ambiguous results of the last study, the aim of the current study was to replicate Study seven using more effective manipulations of the two authenticity cues. Doing so enabled an examination of the effect that both emotional and cultural producer authenticity cues have on people's product evaluations when authenticity manipulations were made more salient in comparison to when they were not. Furthermore, this design again enabled an examination of how different types of authenticity interact with one another to influence product evaluations. To reiterate, six hypotheses were established for the current study.

It had been initially proposed that participants would perceive the coffee produced by Brazilian producers to be significantly better in quality than the coffee produced by producers low in cultural authenticity. However, given the results of Study seven, it was hypothesised that this effect would be much stronger when the producers were said to enjoy producing coffee. The results of the current study failed to provide complete support for this hypothesis. Though the cultural authenticity of the producers *was* found to impact evaluations of coffee quality, this effect was observed in the explicit condition only, and more importantly *was not* found to be influenced by the emotional authenticity manipulation.

The second hypothesis stated that participants would pay more money for a cup of coffee produced by Brazilian workers than non-authentic producers. However, it was also expected that this effect would again be stronger when the producers were said to enjoy producing coffee. For the most part this hypothesis was found to be supported. Participants paid significantly more for a cup of coffee when

producers were culturally authentic. However, this effect was *only* observed when the producers were also said to be emotionally authentic. The effect failed to occur in the conditions where emotional authenticity was low.

The third hypothesis, that participants would evaluate coffee produced by emotionally authentic workers to be significantly better in quality, especially when the producers are Brazilian was not supported. The effect of producer enjoyment was marginal at best and was observed in the explicit condition only. Furthermore, the persuasiveness of the emotional authenticity cue failed to be influenced by the cultural authenticity manipulation.

The fourth hypothesis stated that participants would pay more money for a cup of coffee produced by emotionally authentic workers than non-authentic workers. It was again theorised that this effect would be stronger when the employees were Brazilian. The results showed that participants were found to pay more for the coffee when producers were emotionally authentic. However, this effect was again *only* observed when the producers were Brazilian. The effect failed to occur in the conditions where producers were not culturally authentic.

Given the high potential for error variance in Study seven, it was theorised that the explicit conditions would be more effective in differentiating between authenticity conditions than in the non-explicit conditions. As discussed, hypothesis five was supported for evaluations of product quality, with results indicating that the cultural authenticity of the producers was significantly more persuasive in the explicit conditions than the non-explicit conditions. This effect was not observed for evaluations of product value, however. Furthermore, hypothesis six gained *some*

support for evaluations of product quality, with results indicating that producer enjoyment was marginally more persuasive in the explicit conditions than the non-explicit conditions. This effect was again not observed for evaluations of product value. Hence, though none of the hypotheses were completely supported, this is not to suggest that authenticity failed to be persuasive. These results amongst other interesting observations will now be discussed in greater detail.

*Modifying Authenticity Manipulations: The Distinction between ‘Explicit’ and ‘Non-Explicit’*

Before exploring the more complex findings of this study, it seems important to discuss the distinction between coffee evaluations in the explicit and non-explicit manipulations highlighted by the results of the current study. Participants in the non-explicit conditions were found to pay more for a cup of coffee and evaluate it to be significantly better in quality than participants in the explicit condition.

When taking into account that the non-authentic manipulations for both the cultural and emotional authenticity conditions were modified so they would be perceived as less authentic in the explicit conditions, this result is not surprising. First, as discussed earlier, culturally non-authentic producers in the non-explicit conditions were said to come from around the globe which potentially gave an impression of the product being world class. Second, it is also possible that participants in non-explicit condition inferred producers in the emotionally non-authentic condition to enjoy producing coffee by default, given that there was no other information available to suggest otherwise.

When these issues are taken into consideration, it makes sense that coffee evaluations were lower when the non-authentic manipulations were made more explicit. These results therefore provide some indication that the explicit manipulations were more effective in producing perceptions of the producers lacking authenticity between the product evaluations in each authenticity condition than the non-explicit manipulations used in study seven. It should be noted that there failed to be any differences in the evaluations of product quality and value between explicit and non-explicit conditions when producers were authentic. This was naturally expected given that both the high emotional and cultural authenticity manipulations remained unchanged in both non-explicit and explicit conditions. It was only the low authenticity manipulations that were modified for the explicit conditions.

#### *The Effect of Producer Authenticity on Evaluations of Product Quality*

As discussed, the cultural authenticity of the producers was found to have a significant effect on people's evaluations of coffee quality in the current study. Important to note, however, is that this effect was much stronger in the explicit condition than in the non-explicit condition. As discussed, this result is not overly surprising giving the elevated evaluations of coffee value and quality in the non-explicit conditions (most likely the result of these producers being perceived as world-class, having come from a variety of global locations). This result is also congruent with the results of earlier studies where the cultural authenticity of a producer/service provider was found to influence evaluations of product quality (study six) and service provider preferences (study five).

More over, Brazilian producers were perceived to produce better quality coffee regardless of what was said about their enjoyment for their job. This result is congruent with that of other research supporting the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity as a source characteristic (Brown, 2001; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Martin, 1993; McIntosh, 2004; Rudinow, 1994). One possible reason that a lack of producer enjoyment failed to detract from the persuasiveness of the producers' cultural authenticity may simply be the case that failing to enjoy one's work could not mean that the producers were less *Brazilian* and therefore less knowledgeable on making a quality coffee product (i.e. impossible to escape one's ethnicity and blood line etc). Qualitative comments provided by participants in both the explicit high and low emotional authenticity conditions also suggest that the cultural authenticity of producers is important when evaluating the quality of the coffee (for example; "Brazilians make the best coffee in the world", "Brazilians have the best reputation for producing coffee").

By examining the qualitative responses, it was also evident that the low cultural authenticity manipulation was effective in the sense that British producers were *not* perceived by participants to be authentic. This in turn influenced their evaluations of coffee quality. "Whilst the information suggests that the British workers enjoy working with coffee, I think tea is more authentic to Britain than coffee" and "Who would trust the British to make a good coffee? Now if it were tea I'm sure this information would have a different impact." Therefore, the results of this study contribute further to findings within the authenticity literature that people



utilise the cultural authenticity of a producer when evaluating the quality of a product such as coffee.

Conversely, the enjoyment authenticity manipulation was not found to be as persuasive as the cultural manipulation when it came to evaluations of coffee quality. Participants in the explicit condition were found to evaluate the coffee to be only marginally better in quality when the producers enjoyed working with coffee compared to the condition where producer enjoyment was lacking. This result is interesting given that across earlier studies in this research, producer enjoyment was found to influence evaluations of product/service quality. It may be the case that within this particular context enjoyment is not perceived by participants to be a relevant cue to authentic self (Rahilly, 1993; Rudinow, 1994; Turner, 1999).

Making the low emotional authenticity manipulation more explicit was shown to be effective, however, with participants providing less favourable evaluations of coffee quality in the explicit non-authentic condition (producers *do not* enjoy working with coffee) than the non-explicit, non-authentic condition (where enjoyment level remained undisclosed). This result suggests that producer enjoyment may have been inferred by default in the non-explicit condition, as speculated in Study seven.

Though producer enjoyment seemed only moderately persuasive, qualitative comments made by participants in the explicit conditions suggest that producer enjoyment influences product evaluations. “Happy workers means high quality production and a high quality product!” or from the other perspective, “The fact that workers *don’t* enjoy picking coffee makes me think it will be worse in quality.” Such

comments parallel Grandey et al's research (2005) where participants were found to view sources as less competent when emotional authenticity was lacking.

It may be the case that within the current context (where multiple authenticity cues are present), information about a producer's cultural authenticity will take precedence over information about producer enjoyment, simply because his cue seems more relevant given the product's strong cultural origins.

#### *The Effect of Producer Authenticity on Evaluations of Product Value*

As reported, authenticity was also found to have a significant effect on people's evaluations of coffee value in the current study. Important to note, however, is that this effect was observed *only* when both cultural and emotional authenticity cues were complimentary. Congruent with the results of Study seven, the data combined from Studies seven and eight continued to reveal that the persuasiveness of either the cultural or emotional authenticity cue was dependent on the other one being present.

Participants were found to pay significantly more money for a cup of coffee made by Brazilian producers than culturally non-authentic producers *provided* the producers were said to be emotionally authentic. When emotional authenticity was low, the cultural authenticity of the producers failed to have any influence on evaluations of coffee value. Conversely, participants were found to pay significantly more money for a cup of coffee when the producers were said to enjoy working with coffee as opposed to when they were emotionally non-authentic *provided* the producers were Brazilian. When producers failed to be culturally authentic (British),

the enjoyment of the producers failed to affect price evaluations altogether. Hence, by combining the data from Studies seven and eight, the marginally significant interaction effects observed in Study seven become more statistically robust in the current study.

These results are interesting given that when it came to evaluations of product quality, cultural authenticity was found to be persuasive independently of the emotional authenticity cue. Furthermore, even though emotional authenticity produced only a marginally significant effect on evaluations of coffee quality, there again failed to be any indication that this trend depended on the producers being culturally authentic. Therefore, the results reveal both emotional and cultural authenticity cues to be independently persuasive when it comes to evaluations of product quality, but interactively persuasive when it comes to evaluations of coffee value. Why is this so?

This is by no means a straightforward result to explain. It could be postulated that because the producers are paid to produce coffee, they must do so to the best of their ability, ensuring quality remains at a certain standard. Whilst Brazilians may be perceived to be naturally better at producing coffee than British producers, it may not matter that the culturally authentic producers lack emotional authenticity when evaluating the quality of the coffee. However when it comes to actually spending money on an authentic product, people may be willing to pay extra *only* when they can be assured the product is as authentic as possible. As discussed in the literature review, products may seem equivalent in quality but what ultimately distinguishes

one product from another in terms of value, is its authenticity (Boyle, 2004; Cornet, 1975; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Lewis & Bridger, 2000).

To introduce another perspective, evaluating coffee quality doesn't necessitate an investment in the product where placing value on the coffee does. Within the current study the *quality* measure asks participants what they rate the quality of the coffee to be, whilst the *value* measure specifically asks how much they would be willing to pay for a cup of the coffee described. Perhaps when it comes to turning attitudinal perceptions into real behaviour, consumers may be more likely to incorporate all available information deemed relevant when deciding how much value they should place on a commodity (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The key point to be made is, that though it was anticipated that the introduction of more explicit authenticity manipulations might result in each authenticity cue being independently persuasive, the current results indicate otherwise and illustrate that when it comes to evaluations of product value the persuasiveness of each authenticity cue is still somewhat dependent on the other cue being present. Anything causing authenticity perceptions to be compromised may in turn make the coffee seem less valuable. This inference relates to Rozin's (2005) research, which suggests that once perceptions of naturalness are compromised, even slightly, the product becomes less appealing. Though further research would certainly be useful for understanding these results more comprehensively, it remains outside the scope of this dissertation, given the constraints of the research and the fact that there are more important objectives in need of addressing.

*Product authenticity: An immeasurable persuasive influence?*

Finally, it cannot be denied that the potentially persuasive influence of product authenticity itself remains an immeasurable factor within the last two studies. Like in Study seven, a number of participants again provided qualitative comments suggesting that they used the authenticity of the producers as a cue to infer product origin. “There is no statement about where the coffee has come from except for a link to Brazilian people,” “Coffee is more of a Brazilian product and I would expect Brazilian coffee to be better.” And, “I based my rating on the fact that the coffee is from Brazil” again emphasise the need for a study examining *whether* both producer and product authenticity simultaneously influence product evaluations and if so *how*? The current design makes it very difficult to rule out the possibility that the effects observed in the last two studies are actually attributable to the coffee’s authenticity (in terms of its origin) rather than producer authenticity. This issue should be resolved especially given the vast amount of literature supporting the persuasiveness of product authenticity (Cohen, 1988; 2004; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Lowenthal, 1992; MacCannell, 1973; Martin, 1993; McIntosh, 2004; Swanson, 2004). Study nine will examine this possibility using a similar methodology to that used currently with the addition of a product authenticity manipulation.

## CHAPTER 14

## Study Nine: The Interaction between Producer and Product Authenticity

*Rationale and Hypotheses*

Though the results of study eight provide evidence for the persuasiveness of producer enjoyment and cultural authenticity, there is also the possibility that the cultural authenticity manipulation of the producers was functioning as a cue to *product* authenticity, in terms of the coffee's country of origin. Though the literature indicates that a producer's authenticity *should* bestow authenticity on the resulting product (Evans-Pritchard, 1987), coffee is a slightly different case, in the sense that coffee exists in some form *prior* to the production process. Furthermore, some locations are renowned for good coffee beans more so than others. Therefore, it might be the case that inferences made about the coffee's authentic origins were actually accountable for the observed cultural authenticity effects in Studies seven and eight. To ascertain whether it was the authenticity of the 'producer' or 'product' (or perhaps the interaction of both) that resulted in differing coffee evaluations between conditions, it seems necessary to introduce a product authenticity manipulation (by means of coffee origin) whilst re-examining the producer authenticity manipulations.

Hence, three experimental manipulations will be examined within the current study. The same cultural and emotional authenticity producer cues used in Study eight will be used again in Study nine. In addition to these source characteristics, a product authenticity manipulation will be used. Based on the pre-test findings in

Study eight, coffee will be described as being grown in Brazil (authentic) or in England (non-authentic). Furthermore, in order to examine the effect of conflicting authenticity conditions (e.g. Brazilian coffee, British producers), a modified vignette will need to be used in the current study to ensure plausibility.

To enable the vignette to examine conflicting product and producer authenticity manipulations (i.e. low cultural authenticity/high product authenticity and vice versa), it was decided to have the producers described as a family, who run a coffee company in their congruent country of origin (Brazil versus Britain) or alternatively, travelled to Britain (Brazilian producers) or Brazil (British producers) to establish this company. This story was viewed as being the most confound free means of cross-examining authenticity manipulations. Based on the results of the previous two studies several hypotheses are established for Study nine:

1. Given the evidence obtained from participants' qualitative responses in the former coffee studies, it is hypothesised that coffee grown in Brazil will be perceived to be better in quality than coffee grown in England.
2. It is hypothesised that participants will pay significantly more money for a cup of coffee grown in Brazil than a cup of coffee grown in England.
3. It is hypothesised that coffee produced by Brazilian producers will be perceived to be better in quality than coffee produced by British producers.
4. It is hypothesised that participants will pay significantly more for a cup of coffee produced by Brazilian producers than coffee produced by British

producers, *provided* the family is stated to be emotionally authentic (high enjoyment).

5. It is hypothesised that coffee produced by emotionally authentic producers (high enjoyment) will be perceived to be better in quality than coffee produced by emotionally non-authentic producers (low enjoyment).
6. It is hypothesised that participants will pay significantly more for a cup of coffee when the producers enjoy working with coffee, than when they do not, *provided* the family is stated to be culturally authentic (Brazilian).

No hypotheses regarding the interaction of product authenticity with each type of producer authenticity cue has been established, as the inclusion of the product authenticity manipulation and its effect on coffee evaluations is for the most part exploratory.

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

One hundred and thirty-one undergraduate university students from James Cook University took part in the current study. It was a condition of the research that participants had to be coffee drinkers to ensure they had a basic level of product knowledge. Participants' ages ranged between 17 and 57 years of age, with the sample comprising 99 females ( $M = 25.24$  years,  $SD = 9.27$  years) and 32 males ( $M = 25.32$  years,  $SD = 8.92$  years).



### *Design*

The design for this study was a 2 (Product authenticity: High product authenticity vs. low product authenticity) x 2 (Cultural authenticity manipulation: High cultural authenticity vs. low cultural authenticity) x 2 (Enjoyment authenticity manipulation: High enjoyment authenticity vs. low enjoyment authenticity) between subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight possible conditions.

### *Materials*

The materials for this study consisted of a pen and paper task, and a sample of coffee beans.

*Pen and paper task.* The task consisted of a vignette and three questions. The vignette provided participants with a company profile on a family-owned coffee producer by the name of Novo Coffee. Participants were informed that Novo was started in 1988, and then further information within this profile was manipulated in the following three ways.

*Manipulation one: Product authenticity manipulation.* Within the vignette, participants received information about the authenticity of the coffee beans themselves. Participants in the high product authenticity condition were told that the coffee beans were native to Brazil and that the coffee is grown and produced exclusively at the 2000 acre family-run property in the state of Minas Gerais. Participants in the low product authenticity condition were informed that the coffee

beans were native to Britain and that the coffee is grown and produced exclusively at the 2000 acre family-run property in the south of England.

Manipulation two: *Cultural producer authenticity manipulation*. Within the vignette, participants received information about the cultural authenticity of the coffee producers. Again using the previously pre-tested manipulations, participants in the high cultural authenticity condition were told that Novo Coffee was owned and operated by the Dias family; a family of native Brazilians who started the company in 1988. Participants in the non-authentic condition were told that Novo Coffee was started by the Benton family; a British family. In conditions where there was incongruence between the product's authenticity and the producer's authenticity (e.g. British family, Brazilian coffee beans), the family was said to have emigrated to the country where the beans are grown (See Appendix K1 for all vignettes).

Manipulation three: *Enjoyment authenticity manipulation*. Participants also received information about the enjoyment authenticity of the coffee producers. Participants in the high enjoyment authenticity condition were told that when interviewed recently the producers had stated that they really enjoy producing this coffee, and are having a lot of fun with this venture. Alternatively, participants in the non-authentic low enjoyment condition were told that when interviewed recently, the producers had stated that they haven't found producing this coffee to be as enjoyable an experience as they had anticipated, but despite this they will continue in the venture. By stating that the producers would continue in the venture, it was ensured that perceptions of company longevity were somewhat controlled across high and low enjoyment conditions.

Participants were also required to answer three questions. The first question required participants to state how much they would be willing to pay for a cup of Novo Coffee, given the information they have read. Participants responded to this question on a 15-point Likert scale, ranging in monetary value from \$0.00 to \$3.50. The scale increased in increments of 25 cents. The second question required participants to rate the perceived quality of the coffee along a seven-point Likert scale. The scale ranged from ‘exceptionally bad in quality’, to ‘exceptionally good in quality.’ The third question was an open-ended measure requesting participants to provide rationale for their responses on the previous two measures. (All three vignette manipulations can be located in Appendix K1. An example vignette can be examined in Appendix K2. The three questions can be located in Appendix K3.)

*Coffee beans.* The coffee used for this study was sampled from two unopened gram jars of Moccona ‘Mystique’ ground coffee. Coffee was divided into 200 small zip lock bags, each containing approximately two grams of coffee. Participants received one sample of coffee each. Coffee was stored within an airtight container at all times to maintain freshness, and all studies were completed within one week of opening each jar.

### *Procedure*

Participants took part in the study either individually or in small groups. On arrival at the laboratory, participants were provided with an information sheet detailing the study. Confidentiality and consent were discussed and accepting participants then signed a consent form. Participants were asked to report their age

and gender on a provided demographic sheet and were encouraged to ask any questions should they feel the need.

Participants were then provided with the vignette and the sample of coffee beans. The manipulated vignettes were distributed to participants randomly, keeping the researcher blind as to what version the participant was completing. The researcher then provided participants with the following instructions, "Please read the following scenario. After you have read this information, please examine and smell the sample of Novo Coffee you have been given." After examining the coffee the experimenter then instructed participants to answer the questions they had been given to complete as honestly as possible. The participants completed the questions at their own pace, and on completion were informed about the comprehensive purpose of the study and asked if they had any questions. Participants were then thanked for their time, and were free to leave.

## *Results*

### *Main Effects*

All analyses for this study were computed using two-tailed tests with an alpha level of .05. A MANOVA was computed to establish the effects of product authenticity, producer cultural authenticity and producer enjoyment authenticity were significant across the first two questions in this study. As expected, the main effect for product authenticity was found to be significant,  $F(2, 122) = 5.48, p = .005, \eta^2 = .08$ . Furthermore, the cultural authenticity of the producer was found to have a significant effect on participants' product evaluations,  $F(2, 122) = 3.78, p =$

.026,  $\eta^2 = .06$ , as did the enjoyment authenticity of the producer  $F(2, 122) = 3.56, p = .031, \eta^2 = .06$ . The results failed to reveal any interaction effects between these three factors.

#### *The effect of product authenticity on product evaluations*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the authenticity of the product had across the two dependent measures. As expected, the authenticity of the coffee beans had a significant effect on how much participants were willing to pay for a cup of Novo Coffee,  $F(1, 123) = 5.36, p = .02, \eta^2 = .04$ . When the coffee was native to and grown in Brazil, participants were found to pay significantly more for the coffee ( $M = \$2.57, SD = .67$ ) than when it was said to be grown in England ( $M = \$2.29, SD = .78$ ). Furthermore, the authenticity of the product was found to have a significant effect on participants' evaluations of coffee quality,  $F(1, 123) = 10.48, p = .002, \eta^2 = .08$ . Participants evaluated Novo Coffee to be significantly better in quality when it was said to grow in Brazil ( $M = 4.02, SD = .99$ ) than when it was believed to be grown in England ( $M = 3.44, SD = 1.19$ ).

#### *The effect of producers' cultural authenticity on product evaluations*

Univariate ANOVAs were computed to examine the effect that the cultural authenticity of the producers had across the two dependent measures. As expected, the cultural authenticity of the family had a significant effect on how much participants were willing to pay for a cup of Novo Coffee,  $F(1, 123) = 4.03, p = .047, \eta^2 = .03$ . When the family were Brazilian (culturally authentic), participants were found to pay significantly more for the coffee ( $M = \$2.56, SD = .78$ ) than when the

family were British (culturally non-authentic) ( $M = \$2.31, SD = .67$ ). Furthermore, the cultural authenticity of the family was found to have a significant effect on participants' evaluations of coffee quality,  $F(1,123) = 7.07, p = .01, \eta^2 = .05$ . Participants evaluated Novo Coffee to be significantly better in quality when it was produced by the culturally authentic Brazilian family ( $M = 3.97, SD = 1.15$ ) than when it produced by the culturally non-authentic British family ( $M = 3.50, SD = 1.05$ ).

*The effect of producers' enjoyment authenticity on product evaluations*

Univariate ANOVAs were run to examine the effect that the enjoyment authenticity of the producers had across the two dependent measures. As expected, the enjoyment authenticity of the family had a significant effect on how much participants were willing to pay for a cup of Novo Coffee,  $F(1,123) = 5.83, p = .02, \eta^2 = .05$ . When the family enjoyed producing the coffee (high enjoyment authenticity), participants were found to pay significantly more for the coffee ( $M = \$2.58, SD = .70$ ) than when the family were stated to not enjoy producing the coffee (low enjoyment authenticity) ( $M = \$2.29, SD = .75$ ).

Furthermore, the enjoyment authenticity of the family was found to have a significant effect on participants' evaluations of coffee quality,  $F(1,123) = 5.04, p = .03, \eta^2 = .04$ . Participants evaluated Novo Coffee to be significantly better in quality when it was produced by the family who enjoyed the process ( $M = 3.94, SD = 1.20$ ) than when it produced by the family who failed to enjoy the process ( $M = 3.54, SD = 1.01$ ). Mean evaluations of product value and quality for each condition can be examined in Figures 22 and 23 respectively.

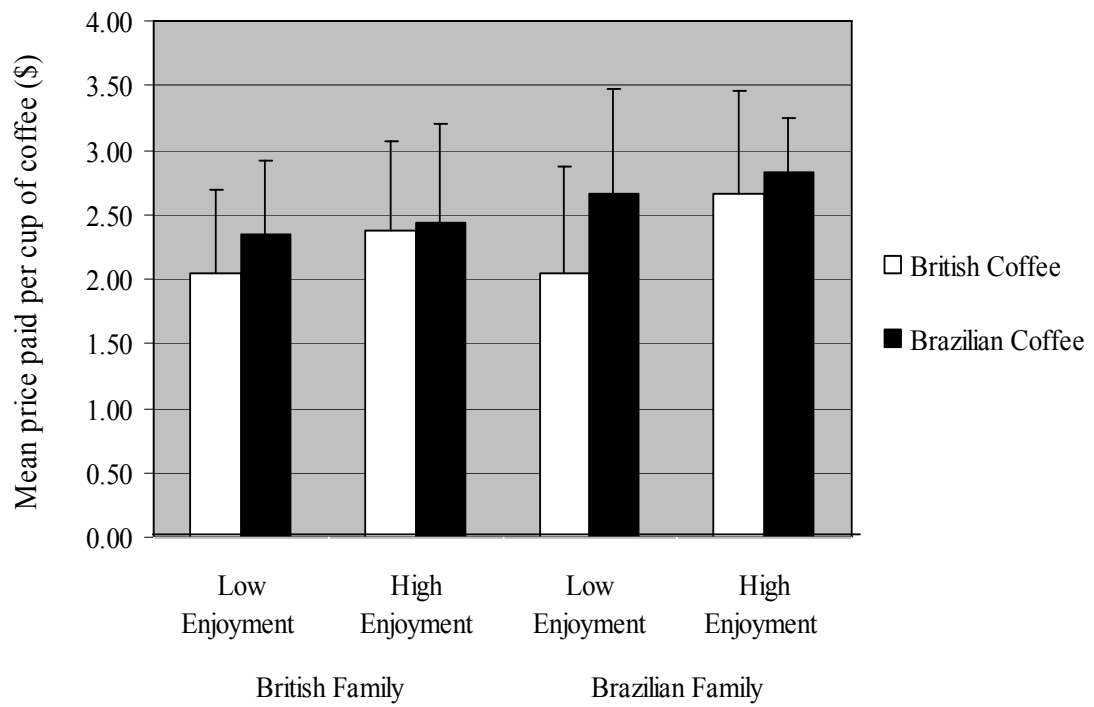


Figure 22. Mean price paid per cup of coffee for each condition

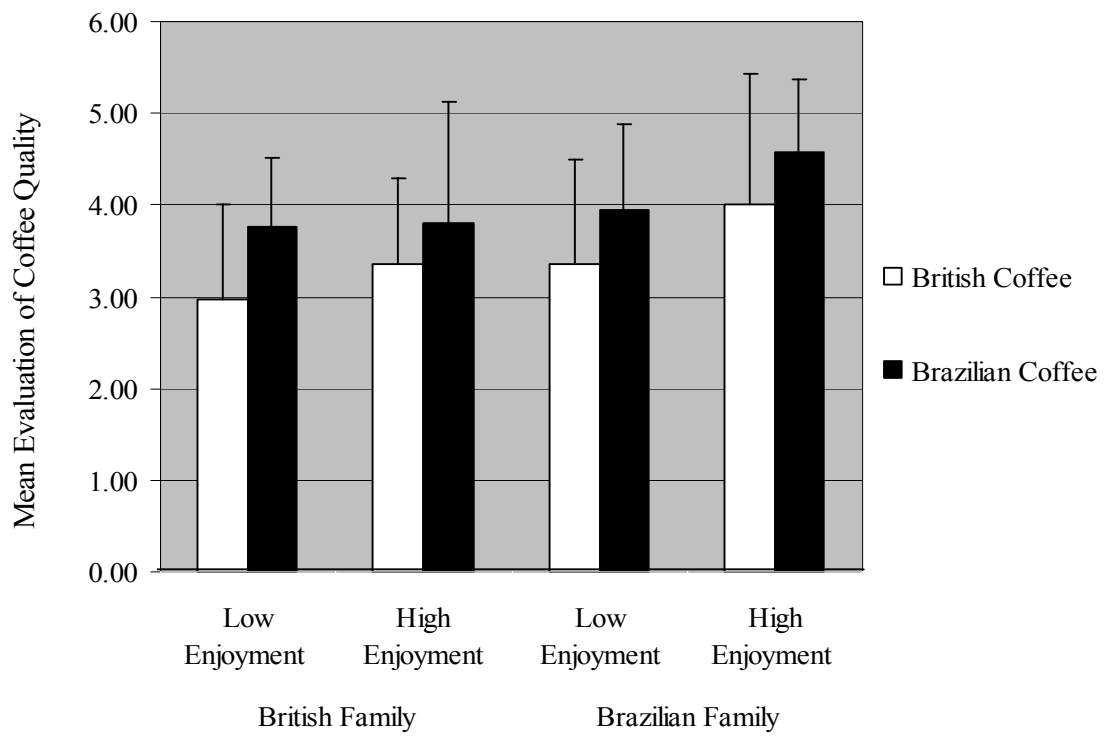


Figure 23. Mean evaluations of coffee quality for each condition



### *Discussion*

The aim of the current study was to examine the effect that both emotional and cultural producer authenticity cues have on people's product evaluations whilst additionally isolating and examining the effect that *product authenticity* might also exert. To reiterate, six hypotheses were established for the current study. Firstly, at the product level it was hypothesised that Brazilian coffee would be perceived as being better in quality than British coffee. The results were found to support this hypothesis. The second hypothesis, that participants would pay significantly more money for a cup of Brazilian coffee than a cup of British coffee was also supported by the data.

In terms of the two producer authenticity cues, it was stated in hypothesis three that coffee produced by Brazilian producers would be perceived to be better in quality than coffee produced by British producers. This hypothesis was based on the findings of the explicit cultural manipulation in study eight, and this finding was supported in the current study. The fourth hypothesis theorised that participants would pay more for a cup of coffee produced by Brazilian producers than British producers in the high enjoyment condition only. This interactional hypothesis was *not* supported in the current study. Rather, participants paid significantly more for coffee produced by the Brazilian family in *both* high and low enjoyment conditions, indicating that the effect of cultural producer authenticity was not reliant on the emotional authenticity manipulation within this context.

Hypothesis five proposed that coffee produced by emotionally authentic producers (high enjoyment) would be perceived better in quality than coffee

produced by emotionally non-authentic producers (low enjoyment). Though this hypothesis was based on only a marginally significant effect in study eight, the effect was found to be statistically validated in the current study. The final hypothesis anticipated that participants would pay more for a cup of coffee produced by the emotionally authentic family than the non-authentic family *but only* when the family was Brazilian (culturally authentic). Interestingly this hypothesis gained only partial support in the current study. Similar to the above results, participants were found to pay significantly more for coffee produced by the emotionally authentic family *irrespective* of the family's cultural authenticity. Hence, rather than an interaction between the two producer authenticity cues, the results of the current study indicate that authenticity cues are independently persuasive in this context. Finally, neither of the producer authenticity manipulations was found to interact with the product authenticity manipulation when influencing coffee evaluations. These findings will now be discussed in greater detail.

#### *The Effect of Product Authenticity on Coffee Evaluations*

As discussed, the cultural origin of the coffee itself was found to influence participants' evaluations of both the coffee's value and quality. This is not overly surprising given the number of qualitative comments in the last study which emphasised Brazilian coffee to be superior. Similar comments were again present in the current study. For example, "I think the coffee is exceptionally good because it comes from Brazil which has a great reputation for good coffee." And "I subconsciously associate quality coffee with an exotic country like Brazil. I assume

it [the coffee] is above average because it is from Brazil.” Conversely, “I would not expect great coffee because the coffee is from Britain which isn’t ideal”.

These responses suggest that consumers may use product authenticity within this particular context as an indicator of quality more so than an opportunity to experience something culturally unique by consuming an authentic product (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). As discussed by Cebrynski (2005) and Kivy (1995), authenticity is often considered synonymous with ‘quality.’ Furthermore, the qualitative comments relating to the origin of the product were somewhat rational, with many participants in the low product authenticity condition highlighting that coffee quality would be poor given that the British environment is inappropriate for cultivating coffee. “I don’t believe that a British climate (even in its south) is suitable for growing coffee”.

Though such assertions about coffee quality may seem logical, it is again interesting that participants seem to interpret the product in front of them using the information they were given rather than basing their evaluations on elements of the coffee alone, especially given that the sample comprised coffee drinkers only.

Either way, evidence now exists that the authenticity of the product can independently influence product evaluations. The comments made by participants in the current study refute the perception that product authenticity is dependent on producer authenticity in this particular context. Though literature suggests that authenticity is passed onto the product by an authentic producer, the products discussed within this literature are often items that fail to exist before the production

process and their quality is almost completely dependent on their producer (e.g. art, jewellery, etc) (Cornet, 1975; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987).

Coffee, on the other hand, grows naturally and exists prior to the production process. Consequently, the persuasiveness of its authenticity (growing in an authentic location) may be quite independent from that of producer authenticity (being genuinely authentic at making coffee). Furthermore, both product and producer authenticity cues seem to be simultaneously persuasive, contributing to the quality of the coffee in different ways. For example, even if the production process is completed perfectly by the most authentic of producers, there is still an element of product quality that is outside of the producers' control and is determined by the coffee plant itself.

Though the perceived cultural authenticity of the coffee may have influenced the results in study seven and eight, it is highly unlikely it completely accounted for the persuasiveness of the producers' cultural authenticity. As the results of the current study have verified, the cultural authenticity of the producer is persuasive in its own right. The persuasiveness of each producer authenticity cue will now be discussed in greater detail.

#### *The Persuasiveness of Producer Authenticity – Cultural Manipulation*

As previously reported, participants were found to pay more money for a cup of coffee produced by the Brazilian family than the British family. The quality of coffee produced by the Brazilian family was also considered superior by participants in comparison to the coffee produced by the British family. These effects were

observed both when the coffee was grown in Britain and Brazil, and also when the family were stated as enjoying the process but also when they were said to not enjoy the production process.

This result provides evidence that producer authenticity does factor in participants' evaluations of coffee as a product. Furthermore, although inferences about product authenticity may have had some influence on product evaluations in the previous two studies, it is likely that producer authenticity was also responsible for the results obtained. So why did participants believe the culturally authentic family would produce higher quality and more valuable coffee than the British family?

As discussed in the literature review (chapter 6), when a product's production can be considered authentic to that producer's self, it is also quite possible that that producer will take a great deal of pride in both the item and its production which is perceived to result in a higher quality product (Kruger et al., 2004; Rudinow, 1994). This logic is reflected in the qualitative comments made by a number of participants, for example, "Because they [the authentic family] are Brazilian they would put lots of care into making the coffee."

Rudinow (1994) further suggests that authenticity symbolises that the individual/s possess and demonstrates a genuine understanding and fluency for the process. Accordingly, when consumers encounter a producer(s) who seem culturally authentic, they may trust the product to be of a high quality. This assumption is also reflected within several participants' qualitative explanations. For example, "Brazilians know how to make good coffee. They've been doing it for years in their

culture.” And, “They [the British family] don’t have enough experience or tradition as, for example, Brazilian people have. I would only have a cup of this coffee if I didn’t have any other option.” And “Given that they [the family] are Brazilian, I am pretty sure they know what they are doing” provide indication that Brazilians are perceived to be natural experts at producing coffee. As a result, the quality is perceived to be superior.

It seems that the Brazilian family was perceived to naturally possess a wealth of knowledge and skills necessary for producing quality coffee, skills that remained exclusive to their culture. As stated by one participant; “There would be traditions passed down through generations and this product will have become part of the family. In return I will pay a great deal for such quality.” Interestingly, the coffee and its production process were viewed as being very much an expression of that family’s identity when they were Brazilian (Belk, 1988; 1995; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton; 1981; James, 1890; 1999; Kiesler & Kiesler, 2004; Locke & Axtell, 1968; Smith & Bond, 1999).

Though the above comments are insightful, it should be acknowledged that the majority of participants failed to mention the cultural authenticity of the producing family in their qualitative rationales. This being said, the cultural authenticity of the producers was found to have a statistically reliable effect on participants’ quantitative evaluations of coffee value and quality. One could speculate that this authenticity cue exerts a more implicit influence with participants not as cognisant of its effect as they are for the effect of product authenticity for example. Even so, a number of participants (both in this study and in earlier studies)

articulated that the cultural authenticity of the producer was a key driver of their product evaluations.

*The Persuasiveness of Producer Authenticity – Enjoyment Manipulation*

There is a great deal of evidence within the current study to suggest that consumers also view emotional authenticity as an effective cue for determining coffee value and quality. As previously reported, participants were found to pay significantly more money for coffee produced by the family when they enjoyed producing coffee than when they did not. The quality of coffee produced by the emotionally authentic family was also considered superior by participants in comparison to the coffee produced by the family failing to enjoy coffee production. These effects were observable both when the coffee was grown in Britain and Brazil, and also when the family were British and Brazilian.

Much of the manipulation's persuasiveness seemed to relate to a perception that enjoyment symbolises interest and consequently invested effort and care. Greater effort and care was in turn perceived to indicate a high quality product; "I believe the coffee would be very exceptional in quality if the family were more interested in its production." "The coffee is produced by people who enjoy what they do, which I believe helps to produce a quality product as they enjoy and have pride in what they do." From the other perspective, as stated by participants in the low enjoyment condition; "As the family do not enjoy producing coffee, I would infer that they do not take pride in their product and therefore it would not be of very good quality and not worth more than two dollars in my opinion," and "They don't like

making coffee. I wouldn't pay much. It would probably be better coffee if they were passionate about it!"

The notion of enjoyment as an indicator of authentic self was again reflected in many of the qualitative comments made by participants. "The family say they haven't found producing coffee that enjoyable. All advertisements for coffee suggest you have to put your heart and soul into coffee making! They sound inexperienced," "Their [the family's] attitude is less than positive, so how much of their selves is actually being put into the coffee production?" These comments suggest that enjoyment *is* perceived as an illustration of genuine authentic self (Dodson, 1996; Grandey et al., 2005; Levin, 1992; Turner, 1999). Such comments also provide support for the notion of an extended self (Belk, 1988). Subsequently, the extension of self into the coffee process also seems to assure evaluators of the product that it will be of superior quality. As illustrated by a participant from the low enjoyment condition, "If they [the family] don't put their heart into it, they may make shortcuts or do a half-arsed job." Of the three manipulation characteristics, enjoyment was the characteristic most discussed in participants' rationale for coffee evaluations. This is interesting, especially given that producer enjoyment was statistically *less* influential on product evaluations than each of the cultural authenticity manipulations (product and producer).

It could be speculated that producer enjoyment is a more obvious and seemingly rational cue to rely on when evaluating a product. Low producer enjoyment may be perceived to jeopardise product quality proportionally more so than low cultural authenticity. For example, coffee may not be judged favourably



when it is produced by British (non-authentic) producers. However, it is still possible that these producers would give it their all, and that some part of their self (other than their cultural self) may be invested in the process (Arnould & Price, 2000; Ashmore & Jussim, 1997; James, 1890; McAdams, 1997). Conversely, failing to enjoy the production process immediately suggests that the producer will be less interested in producing a quality product to the extent that someone thoroughly involved with and passionate about the process will.

Hence, it may be the case that enjoyment functions as a stronger indicator of 'self' than one's culture. Irrespective of whether the family are Brazilian or British, if they do not enjoy working with coffee, it may be more difficult to believe effort would be invested into the production process. This logic could also be applied for coffee produced in Brazil and Britain. It could be perceived that coffee quality is compromised if not made by producers willing to 'put their selves into it' and give it their all.

#### *Discrepancies with Earlier Studies*

The results of the current study are particularly encouraging, given that both producer authenticity cues remained persuasive when a product authenticity manipulation was included. Even so, there are some further observations in need of discussion. In both Studies seven and eight there was evidence to suggest that when evaluating coffee value, the persuasiveness of each producer authenticity cue was compromised when the other authenticity cue was absent. However, in the current

study these two cues (cultural and emotional authenticity) are *independently* persuasive with results showing no indication of an interaction effect.

Perhaps the most obvious rationale for this inconsistency is the vignette itself. Given that a product manipulation needed to be introduced, a new vignette was developed. The vignette used in the current study was also designed taking into consideration any methodological issues encountered during the two previous studies (e.g. the duration of the company's operation was adjusted from 70 years to 20 years).

The vignette adopted in the current study differs from the vignette used previously (Studies seven and eight) in that the producers - a family - were also the owners of the company and solely responsible for *all* aspects of the production process. It was also made clear to participants that the family embarked on the venture of their own volition. There was therefore some indication within the vignette that the family has strong investment in the venture and take the production process seriously. Conversely, the vignette used in Studies seven and eight discussed 'workers' rather than a family of owners, and it might be inferred that workers would be less invested in the process than those (i.e. the family) who are responsible for the success of the business.

Furthermore, to have been running a coffee company for the last 20 years may also communicate that the family is somewhat knowledgeable on coffee production, perhaps giving the producers in the current study greater credibility than workers described in Studies seven and eight. Finally, the fact the producers were a 'family' in the current study may also function as another cue for authenticity in the

sense that the coffee making runs through the lineage of the entire family. The family scenario may have even operated as another form of cultural authenticity in this sense. The rationale provided above is speculative at best, and there are possibly other interpretations. It is difficult to gain an accurate understanding for the discrepancy between studies without conducting additional studies. However, given the constraints of this research, such studies will not be able to be conducted within the scope of this dissertation.

### *Conclusions*

The findings of the three previous studies provides further evidence that producer authenticity is persuasive, influencing both evaluations of product value and quality, even when the product is physically available for evaluation. Furthermore, producer and product authenticity appear to be independently persuasive when evaluating the quality and value of coffee. The persuasiveness of coffee (product) authenticity does not appear to depend on the authenticity of its producers. Furthermore, the persuasiveness of each producer authenticity cue does not rely on the origin of the coffee (product authenticity). A potentially interesting direction to take this research in the future would involve a neurological examination of this study. It would be interesting to examine whether coffee smells better at the neurological level as a function of authenticity beliefs.

In the meantime, the implications of the current findings are clear. If a product like coffee is not from an authentic origin, there are other cues that can be used to persuade consumers. Subtle cues can be used in advertising, such as having

producers smiling and enjoying the production process, or hiring actors for the advertisement that are of the appropriate ethnicity to seem culturally authentic. These strategies are already evident within the realm of advertising, and as this research has indicated, are likely to be highly effective. An interesting question, however, is do these cues persuade everybody?

At this point, the research has established the persuasiveness of authenticity as a producer cue in various ways and across numerous contexts. Furthermore, the research has attempted to identify some of the potential boundary conditions of the phenomenon (e.g. Studies six to nine). As the final study in this research, Study ten aims to establish whether individual differences exist which cause certain individuals to be more susceptible to the persuasiveness of producer authenticity than others. This study also aims to clarify some of the issues raised in earlier studies by identifying some of the psychological processes involved when evaluating authentic products and services.

## CHAPTER 15

## Study Ten: Individual Differences and Authenticity Preferences

*Rationale and Hypotheses*

All nine studies conducted so far have provided compelling evidence for the persuasiveness of producer/service provider authenticity as a source characteristic. Across a range of products, services and contexts, both the emotional and cultural authenticity of producers has been found to influence evaluations of both product quality and value. Furthermore, producer authenticity has been found to exert an effect on product evaluations independently of producer expertise (Study six) or product authenticity (Study nine).

The primary objective of this final study is to explore and identify the psychological processes underlying the persuasiveness of producer authenticity. In other words, what drives people to believe that authentic producers produce higher quality and more valuable products and services? Furthermore, it is not expected that *all* individuals are persuaded by producer authenticity. Hence, it is also important to understand what causes people to be psychologically immune from this phenomenon. As both alluded to in chapter six, and implied by the results of earlier studies (particularly the qualitative comments) there are several common reasons that people find source authenticity persuasive. These will be presented and then the psychological factors contributing to these beliefs will be discussed.

The first reason people perceive an authentic producer to produce superior products is because they are perceived to innately possess the expertise, cultural

knowledge and abilities to do so (Cebrzynski, 2005; Kivy, 1995; Rudinow, 1994). Particularly in relation to cultural authenticity, participants seem to infer that because a product originates from some specific culture, individuals descending from that culture will inherently possess a greater understanding of the process relative to others. Study six, for example, provided convincing evidence of this when a culturally authentic artist was perceived as being more expert than a non-authentic yet formally trained artist, and their art piece was consequently regarded as being both more valuable and better in quality than the non-authentic artist's.

The second reason authenticity seems to be persuasive is because people understand source authenticity to signify greater pride and investment in the production process. Consequently, people envisage authentic producers to take greater care in producing the final product than a less authentic individual, possibly because producing the product is perceived to be part of who they are (Belk, 1988; 1995; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; James, 1890; 1999; Kiesler & Kiesler, 2004; Locke & Axtell, 1968; Smith & Bond, 1999). Observed in Study six, for example, many participants commented that the emotionally authentic service provider would be more invested in the service and would take more care than a non-authentic source. Moreover, participants evaluated the authentically delivered service to be better in quality.

Finally, underlying many of the studies was the observation that people prefer authentically produced products simply because it provides them with the opportunity to experience something 'authentic.' As discussed in the literature, there now seems to be a great desire for that which is 'real' as opposed to fake or non-

authentic (Boyle; 2004; Lewis & Bridger, 2000; Gergen, 1991; Goulding, 2000; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Tomkins, 2005). So, rather than preferences or evaluations being driven by the perceived quality of a product or service, *per se*, people may simply want to own or experience a piece of authenticity. Furthermore, products and services are often only classified as authentic when made by authentic producers or delivered by an authentic service provider (Cornet, 1975; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Fine, 2003).

To summarise, within the literature these are the three main reasons assumed to make authenticity appealing to consumers. These explanations have also been provided by participants in many of the studies conducted thus far. It is important to emphasise that these are by no means the *only* inferences people make when choosing an authentic producer or product. Furthermore, it is not assumed that the discussed reasons are made in isolation, nor are they considered to be mutually exclusive. Finally, the three inferences discussed are not believed to be relevant for all products, services, contexts or cues to authenticity, but are simply the most commonly observed and discussed in the research conducted thus far. What *is* important, however, is to identify and experimentally validate some of the psychological processes, perhaps lying below conscious articulation, causing people to adopt one (or many) of the discussed inferences, and hence also preventing others from making these inferences at all. Therefore, the three explanations discussed above provide an effective foundation for beginning a psychological exploration of this persuasive phenomenon.

### *Lay Perceptions of Essential 'Self'*

Doubtless, the crux of this phenomenon rests with people's lay perceptions of the 'self.' If authenticity is defined as being true to one's self (Lewis & Bridger, 2000), and the objective of the current study is to identify psychological differences which predict the persuasiveness of producer authenticity, examining participants' conceptions of self seem the most effective place to begin.

Chapter four presented a review of dominant Western theoretical conceptions of self which ranged from 'self' being conceived as essential and enduring to being little more than a social construction. What do these theories mean, however, for the way in which the everyday person conceptualises the self? For example, if individuals deny the possibility of an essential self and instead view it to be fluid, malleable and socially constructed, it is unlikely that they will be persuaded by source authenticity because there is no enduring self in which a person can actually be authentic to (Anton, 2001; Gergen, 1991). Without some belief that an authentic self is achievable, it would be unlikely for *any* of the three inferences (about producer authenticity) discussed earlier to be made when evaluating an authentically made product. Based on this logic, the first goal of this study is to examine how lay beliefs of 'self' influence people's susceptibility to be persuaded by producer authenticity.

An extensive review of the literature revealed no validated scale capable of measuring people's beliefs in a stable or malleable 'self,' as such. Given that 'self' may prove difficult to operationalise from a lay perspective, this is not to be unexpected. Implicit theories of human character, however, have featured strongly



within the personality and social psychology literature, and there is a plenty of research relating to people's conceptions of personality (e.g. such as one's traits) as being stable and static *or* dynamic and malleable (Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Dweck et al., 1995; Haslam et al., 2004; 2005; Hong et al., 1997; Levy et al., 2001).

According to this literature, individuals who subscribe to a belief that human character is 'fixed' are referred to as 'entity theorists.' Entity theorists believe that traits in other people and groups are essentialistic, static and stereotypical (Hong, Coleman, Chan, Wong, Chiu, Hansen, et al., 2004). As stated by Hong et al. (1997), "entity theory assumes that an individual's personal attributes are fixed entities that can not be changed" (p. 297). The congruence between an essentialist conception of 'self' and the entity theory of personality is emphasised. On the other side on the continuum are 'incremental theorists,' who view even the most basic of human characteristics as dynamic and shifting depending on the social context (Dweck, Hong & Chiu, 1993). It is again emphasised that the incremental theory of personality seems reflective of a belief system where the possibility of an enduring and essential self is denied.

So how do these implicit theories influence perceptions? The existing literature suggests that implicit theories of personality play an important role when it comes to person cognition (Hong et al., 1997). As stated by Dweck et al., entity theorists "are more prone to making sweeping judgements about traits, often from quite minimal evidence" (1993, p.645). Research by Levy, Stroessner and Dweck (1998) and Bastian and Haslam (2006) has indicated that entity theorists endorse stereotypes of ethnic and occupational groups more strongly than incremental

theorists, even when both groups are equally informed of the stereotype. Hence, it could be theorised that entity theorists would be more likely than incremental theorists to assume that when it comes to purchasing a culturally authentic product, *any* person from the appropriate culture could be considered authentic, even though there may be little additional information to substantiate this.

Research also suggests that when attempting to make sense of a target individual's ability or behaviour, entity theorists focus on dispositional explanations, where incremental theorists focus on explanations that are conditional, mediational and provisional (Dweck et al., 1993). For example, research conducted by Dweck and Leggett (1988) and Dweck (2001) found that incremental theorists typically view intelligence as being something which is malleable, increasable and within a person's own control. Alternatively, entity theorists view intellectual ability as being fixed and uncontrollable. It is hypothesised that a similar effect may be observed when examining how individuals select between an authentic and non-authentic service provider.

Those subscribing to the incremental theory of personality should be less likely to make a judgement based on face value. If attributes are not viewed as 'fixed,' but dynamic, authenticity should be of less importance. Rather, incremental theorists should be more likely to evaluate each provider on qualities like the training they have completed, their experience etc. before making a decision. Entity theorists, however, should be more inclined to perceive an authentic source as being better than a non-authentic source because they are perceived to naturally possess the qualities required to produce a product or provide a service. From this perspective, it

is unlikely that a non-authentic source could ever become as good as an authentic source because ability is fixed, occurring at birth. By employing an implicit theory of personality measure (as a proxy for essentialism), this study will be able to examine this possibility.

*Other Perspectives of 'Self': Idiocentrism versus Allocentrism*

So far this research has been predicated on a Western view of 'self.' The persuasiveness of source authenticity established in earlier studies used Australian samples which are assumed to hold individualistic conceptions of self consistent with a Western ideology (For a review of individualism and collectivism see Hofstede, 1980). Given that one of the objectives of this study is to identify factors which render individuals to be psychologically immune to the persuasiveness of source authenticity, it is pertinent to ask whether source authenticity is persuasive in non-western parts of the world where a collectivist, and thus *interdependent* ideology of the 'self' is held rather than an individualistic one?

Whilst genuine cross-cultural comparisons are beyond the scope of this thesis, it is well recognised that conceptions of self differ between cultures, and there has been a long history of research exploring the psychological differences between individualist and collectivist cultures. Over time, it became apparent that people could exhibit individualist tendencies in a collectivist culture and vice versa (Hui & Triandis, 1986). Subsequently, research began examining these syndromes from an individual perspective rather than a cultural one (Dutta-Bergman & Wells, 2002). To minimise confusion, Triandis, Leung, Villareal and Clack (1985) proposed the terms

‘idiocentrism’ to refer to personal individualism and ‘allocentrism’ to refer to personal collectivism.

Like Hofstede’s (1980) conceptualisations of self from an individualist and collectivist perspective, idiocentrists hold an independent view of the self. They conceptualise individuals as being distinct and value uniqueness and consistency in others (Carpenter & Radhakrishnan, 2000). Allocentrists, on the other hand, have an interdependent view of the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis et al., 1985; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai & Lucca, 1988) and place less emphasis on self-differentiation (Campos, Keltner, Beck, Gonzaga & John, 2007).

Given that idiocentrists and allocentrists conceptualise the self quite differently, it is hypothesised that, inter alia, individuals exhibiting higher levels of idiocentrism should be more persuaded by a producer’s authenticity than individuals exhibiting a more allocentric orientation, primarily because idiocentrists acknowledge and value the notion of a unique and consistent self. Because allocentrists hold an interdependent view of self, the self of any *single* individual is of less importance (Carpenter & Radhakrishnan, 2000). Hence, there may be less emphasis on a producer’s individual authenticity and more attention given to what a producer has learned from their surrounding context (i.e. friends, family, teachers, peers etc). Moreover, because self is context-based, and contexts constantly change, it essentially makes any conceptualisation of an enduring self (even if collectively defined) more difficult (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

There has been cross-cultural research which suggests that idiocentrists place more emphasis on personal qualities when making judgements than allocentrists.

Research conducted by Miller (1984) and Morris and Peng (1994) indicates that collectivists are more likely to make situational attributions whilst individualists are more inclined to make dispositional attributions. Given that allocentrism and idiocentrism are supposed to parallel collectivism and individualism it could be assumed that idiocentrics may also focus on the unique personal qualities (e.g. cultural authenticity) of a source when evaluating their abilities, whilst allocentrics may look to the context before making the same evaluation.

Extensive research has been conducted into other differences between allocentric and idiocentrics (Bochner, 1994; Carpenter & Radhakrishnan, 2000; Triandis et al., 1985; Yamaguchi, 1994; Yamaguchi, Kuhlman & Sugimori; 1995) and there is even evidence to suggest that allocentrism and idiocentrism impacts consumer behaviour (Dutta-Bergman & Wells, 2002; Lee, 2000). Research by Yamaguchi (1994) and Yamaguchi et al. (1995) found idiocentrism to be correlated with a need for uniqueness (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977) in both collectivist and individualist cultures. Research by Lee (2000) also found that idiocentrics are more concerned than allocentrics with purchases which increase their personal uniqueness and status. This is interesting, given that people's interest in experiencing that which is authentic (inference three) could in *some way* be attributed to feeling unique from others. If this logic is correct, then individuals exhibiting idiocentric tendencies should be more attracted to an authentic producer/service provider than allocentrics.

Research by Dutta-Bergman and Wells (2002) also found idiocentric individuals to be more brand-conscious and impulsive than allocentrics, and take pride in the fact that others view them as 'buying the best.' In terms of appreciating

other cultures, idiocentric individuals have been found to be more interested than allocentrics in visiting other cultures and going to new places. They are also more likely to visit art galleries and museums than allocentric individuals (Dutta-Bergman & Wells, 2002). Given this observation, it could be hypothesised that idiocentrics would therefore have a greater interest in culturally authentic products and services than allocentrics. Again, this result possibly stems from idiocentrics appreciating that authenticity is possible and seeking out experiences where authenticity can be observed. However, for allocentrics, authenticity (in the sense of being true to a unique and genuine self) is irrelevant and unlikely to motivate the type of experiences these individuals seek out. Rather, allocentrics are more likely to seek out experiences, products and services which will have collective benefits for their ingroup (Lee, 2000).

Thus, there seems to be sufficient circumstantial evidence to hypothesise that the more idiocentric an individual, the more likely they are to value authentically produced products. This hypothesis is based on both the different conceptualisations of self, but also idiocentrics' need to differentiate themselves from others, especially by being seen to purchase goods and experiences perceived to be 'the best.' And what better product and service is there than one that comes from the real deal, one that is the product of a truly unique self, one that is *authentic*. By examining participants' level of idiocentrism, this hypothesis can be experimentally explored in the current study.

In summary, being persuaded by source authenticity is far more likely when an individual holds an essentialistic view of the self. Without this, authenticity is

effectively unachievable, as there is no self in which a person can be authentic to. Therefore, participants' conceptions of self (both in terms of essentialism and idiocentrism-allocentrism) will be examined to explore their influence on susceptibility to the persuasiveness of source authenticity. This, however, is not the end of the story by any means. Returning to the earlier discussion of the three inferences commonly made by people when persuaded by source authenticity, there are certainly other psychological processes which contribute authenticity's persuasiveness. These will now be discussed.

#### *Susceptibility to 'Magical Thinking'*

As discussed in chapter six, perceptions of authenticity will often depend on the application of magical thinking (Grayson and Martinec, 2004). Magical thinking is typically characterised by a belief in spurious cause and effect relationships, and common examples range from typical superstitious beliefs (e.g. if a person walks under a ladder they will have bad luck) to religious beliefs (e.g. good things happen to people who pray). Moreover, these beliefs have been found to be relatively common (Hume, 1740/ 1967; Jahoda, 1969; Zusne & Jones, 1982).

Also noted was that there are two common forms of magical thinking that are believed to play a role in the persuasiveness of source authenticity. These are the 'law of contagion' and the 'law of similarity' (Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994). Contagion relates to the belief that things which have been in contact with one another continue to act on one another forever afterwards. Alternatively, similarity refers to the belief that things which are felt to be similar in some properties are considered to be

fundamentally similar in general (Rozin et al., 2000). Thinking about the common reasons underlying the persuasiveness of source authenticity presented earlier, it is evident that magical thinking, by means of contagion and similarity, is occurring at least at some level.

Take, for example, the belief that culturally authentic producers ‘naturally’ possess the ability to produce a culturally authentic product or service (Lowenthal, 1992). Underlying this reasoning may be a belief that abilities and knowledge are transmitted to others within a culture, whether that be through genetic means or by social absorption. Whilst it may be more rational to think knowledge and abilities can be passed to other cultural members through social learning (Bates & Plog, 1990), it is perhaps less rational to believe such knowledge can be genetically passed on. This belief seems to involve some element of magical thinking, particularly the law of contagion. From another perspective, the law of similarity may also be influential when it comes to cultural authenticity, with individuals reasoning that if a person seems similar to the original producers of a product, they may also infer they possess the qualities to produce the product to the same standard. This may, for example, justify why some people would perceive *all* Asians to be authentic at making sushi. It would be interesting to verify whether people do hold such magical beliefs, and if so, whether these individuals would be more susceptible to persuasion by culturally authentic producers.

Furthermore, to believe that one can actually experience authenticity by purchasing an authentically produced product or delivered service warrants at least some belief that authenticity is passed from maker to product. In other words, the



product or service becomes infused with the extended authentic self of its producer (Belk, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). As discussed by Kivy (1995), authenticity confers upon a product, service, or performance, some magical property it did not possess before. And to consider a product superior simply because it possesses some invisible quality, again requires some element of magical thought.

The law of contagion again seems to be in use here. Why would knowing that a product was produced by an authentic source increase perceptions of its value *unless* some of that authenticity was perceived to have been transmitted to the product through the production process? Recall the results of Study six. For all intents and purposes, the artwork was identical in both conditions. All that changed was the authenticity of the artist, which subsequently increased perceptions of the art's value and quality. Qualitative findings supported this, with many participants commenting that it was the art's authenticity which made it valuable.

Given that magical beliefs play at least some role in individuals' susceptibility to this source characteristic, it seems necessary to examine some of these beliefs as an individual difference measure in the current study. Again, it is expected that *not all* people will equally be persuaded by producer authenticity. If magical thinking *is* a possible determinant of people's susceptibility to this persuasive cue, the stronger a person's tendency to partake in magical thinking, the more persuasive source authenticity should become. This study aims to examine whether this is indeed the case.

### *Need for Cognition*

Also discussed in chapter six was whether provider authenticity is processed via the central route (high elaboration) or peripheral route (low elaboration) to persuasion. A comprehensive discussion of the possible reasons producer authenticity might be processed either centrally or peripherally was there provided, and will therefore only be briefly reiterated in the current rationale.

Possibly the most utilised individual difference measure examining how people process persuasive information is the 'Need for Cognition Scale' (Cacioppo et al., 1984). Recall that need for cognition refers to an individual's tendency to engage in effortful cognitive processing. Individuals low in need for cognition are typically more susceptible to peripheral cues when forming judgements than those high in need for cognition. Alternatively, those high in need for cognition are more likely to assess *all* information for relevance before making a judgement (central processing) (Cacioppo et al., 1997). Need for cognition has been commonly used within the persuasion literature to examine the persuasiveness of source characteristics under both high and low elaboration (Cacioppo et al., 1986).

For the purpose of the current study, what hypotheses can be made about the relationship between people's need for cognition and their susceptibility to the persuasiveness of source authenticity? As discussed in chapter six, there are potentially several conflicting perspectives that can be taken as to how this persuasion cue is psychologically processed.

The first is that people find source authenticity persuasive simply because of a general conception that authentic sources are better. Furthermore, this belief may

be held without taking the time to consider *why* they might be better. If this ‘authentic is good’ heuristic (Cebrzynski, 2005; Kivy, 1995) indeed exists (just like an ‘experts can be trusted’ heuristic), it would be expected that individuals low in need for cognition would be more persuaded by source authenticity than individuals exhibiting a higher need for cognition. This assumption is based on the evidence that individuals are more reliant on peripheral cues and cognitive heuristics when elaboration likelihood is low (Cacioppo et al., 1986).

From another perspective, if the authenticity of a source is considered relevant to quality and value of a product (due to any of the three inferences discussed earlier), then individuals high in need for cognition should also be persuaded by this source characteristic. “It makes sense that authenticity would generally be perceived as relevant to the true merits of the product when scrutinised carefully” (R.E. Petty, personal communication, September 18, 2005). Given that participants have provided what they perceive to be logical reasons for the persuasiveness of source authenticity in earlier studies, it makes sense that such inferences would be taken into consideration when carefully evaluating an authentic producer and their ability to produce a given product. Furthermore, if producer authenticity is relatively simple to process, it may be possible for this cue to be *thoughtfully* processed even under low elaboration (Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999a). If so, it could be hypothesised that source authenticity should be equally persuasive to individuals both high and low in need for cognition.

This being said, there may be some subtle differences in the ways each type of processing influences source preferences and product evaluations. Given that high

need for cognition individuals are more likely to evaluate all information provided, these individuals should take a more utilitarian based approach (von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1947), assessing the relevance and importance of *all* information presented about the source prior to forming any judgement (Cacioppo et al., 1997). If source authenticity is *not* believed to be the most important determinant, then it could be assumed that their evaluations of the authentic source should be less extreme than low need for cognition individuals, who are less likely to consider all information, and are persuaded by that which is simple to process (such as authenticity).

In terms of coming to a final hypothesis, it is the belief of the author that, holding other factors constant (such as conceptions of self, magical thinking, etc) authenticity is perceived by many individuals as being relevant when evaluating products and services. This belief developed as a result of the existing literature on authenticity, the results of the studies conducted thus far, but most importantly, from being exposed to the qualitative rationales provided by participants for their product and service evaluations. This being said, there is a great deal of research suggesting that source characteristics are more persuasive when elaboration likelihood is low (Cacioppo et al., 1986; Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Petty et al., 1987; Petty et al., 1997; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; 1984). This evidence should not be disregarded, especially given that authenticity can be perceived as a type of source credibility (Rudinow, 1994).

In conclusion, though provider authenticity may persuade high need for cognition individuals in some circumstances, given the factors discussed, it is

hypothesised that individuals exhibiting a low need for cognition will be *more* persuaded by this source characteristic than those high in need for cognition.

*Susceptibility to Cognitive Shortcuts: The Representativeness Heuristic*

Substantial evidence indicates that people will often rely on cognitive heuristics when making judgements (Fischhoff & Bar-Hillel, 1984; Gilovich, Griffin & Kahneman, 1992; Nisbett et al., 1981; Slugoski, Shield & Dawson, 1993; Schwarz, 1994; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). These ‘cognitive shortcuts’ are typically utilised to reduce the complexity of mental tasks at hand (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). If there is the possibility that heuristic biases can explain the persuasiveness of producer authenticity, it also seems necessary to examine such psychological processes in the current study. There are a variety of documented heuristics within the judgement and decision making literature, however, people’s persuasion by cultural authenticity (in particular) seems most related to the use of the representativeness heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

The representativeness heuristic suggests that people will often judge the likelihood of an individual’s membership in a category to the extent that they show similarity to, or ‘represent,’ the category’s salient features (Plous, 1993; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). For example, if Jack is generally conservative, careful, and ambitious, shows no interest in political or social issues and spends most of his free time on hobbies which include home carpentry, sailing and mathematical puzzles, most people may judge him to be more likely to be an engineer than a lawyer, even

when there are a higher percentage of lawyers in the relevant sample (Kahneman & Tversky, 1973).

The same logic may be used by people when evaluating the producers of cultural products. For example, if producing some product is authentic to individuals from an eastern culture, but an individual living within a western culture shares the same ethnicity as the authentic culture (both of Asian ethnicity), it may be easy for people to judge this person as authentic simply because they share the relevant ethnicity. Especially given that ethnicity is likely to be the most salient indicator of cultural authenticity. Individuals who ‘look the part’ will seem ‘outwardly real’ (Corsini, 2002; Hamm, 1995). This logic also parallels the ‘law of similarity’ discussed in relation to magical thinking (Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994; Rozin et al., 2000). As observed over the last few studies service providers and producers were perceived to produce better products and services, simply because their cultural background was congruent with that of the product or service.

There is also the possibility that producer authenticity is heuristically processed as an indicator of quality (Cebrzynski, 2005; Kivy, 1995). Particularly if individuals intuitively perceive authentic producers as being representative of someone who would produce a quality product, but do not actually spend time processing *why* this might be the case. Over time, individuals may learn to rely on this cognitive shortcut as quickly as others such as ‘experts are credible’ or ‘scientists can be trusted.’

Hence, there are two ways in which heuristic processing might occur when processing producer authenticity. The first is by perceiving producers to be culturally

authentic simply because they are of the appropriate ethnicity. The second, by perceiving authentic sources to signify quality (Cebzynski, 2005; Kivy, 1995). Therefore this study aims to establish whether individuals persuaded by source authenticity are also more susceptible to relying on cognitive heuristics, specifically the representativeness heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

### *Study Design and Hypotheses*

To explore as many psychological determinants as possible, a cultural authenticity manipulation will be used in the current study. To effectively examine the psychological drivers of people's preferences for an authentic producer/service provider, it is important to employ a within-subjects design where the dependent variable is actually *service provider preference* rather than a product evaluation. By using this sort of design, the study can examine which psychological factors discriminate between individuals choosing an authentic service provider, a non-authentic service provider, or actually exhibiting no preference.

The current study will adopt a modified version of Study five's design where participants are asked to select an acupuncturist for the treatment of back pain (see chapter ten). However, given that the objectives of the current study involve examining what differentiates those who are persuaded by source authenticity from those who are not, the response options will be modified. Instead of having to choose between a culturally authentic and non-authentic acupuncturist, participants will be asked to express a preference for the authentic acupuncturist (Asian) or all other possible preferences (no preference/ preference for non-authentic provider). Given

that it is not the purpose of the study to discriminate between the psychological determinants of choosing a non-authentic provider versus having no preference; these potential responses will be grouped into a single choice category for ease of comparing authentic preferences versus all other preferences.

Qualitative rationale for preferences will also be collected to provide insight into the underlying psychological preferences, and similarly to Study six, participants will be asked to evaluate the perceived expertise of each service provider to examine whether *only* those persuaded by source authenticity believe them to be more expert than non-authentic service providers (inference one).

Several hypotheses are proposed for Study ten;

1. It is hypothesised that only participants exhibiting a preference for the authentic service provider will evaluate the authentic service provider to possess greater expertise than the non-authentic service provider.
2. Participants persuaded by service provider authenticity will hold a more essentialist conception of human character than participants not persuaded by source authenticity.
3. Participants persuaded by service provider authenticity will exhibit higher levels of idiocentrism than participants not persuaded by source authenticity.
4. Participants persuaded by service provider authenticity will exhibit a greater tendency to participate in magical thinking than participants not persuaded by source authenticity.



5. Participants persuaded by service provider authenticity will be lower in need for cognition than participants not persuaded by source authenticity.
6. Participants persuaded by service provider authenticity will be more susceptible to reliance on the representativeness heuristic than participants not persuaded by service provider authenticity.

### *Method*

#### *Participants*

Fifty-seven undergraduate students from James Cook University participated in this study. Participants' ages ranged between 17 and 51 years, with the sample comprising 9 males ( $M = 26.22$  years,  $SD = 7.84$  years) and 48 females ( $M = 26.98$  years,  $SD = 9.69$  years).

#### *Design*

This study used a single sample, fixed-choice response design. Similar to study five, this design was elected to examine whether cultural authenticity would affect how participants made judgements when choosing an acupuncturist. Participants were provided with information about two acupuncturists. One acupuncturist was Asian and the other was Western. Rather than choose one acupuncturist over the other, however, participants were given a choice between the

authentic Asian acupuncturist, and either a non-authentic Western acupuncturist or no preference.

Responses on this measure were then used as the independent variable (Preference: Authentic vs. non-authentic service provider/no preference) in subsequent designs, the first, a 2 (preference for acupuncturist: Authentic vs. non-authentic/no preference – between subjects) x 2 (acupuncturist authenticity: authentic Asian vs. non-authentic Western – within subjects) mixed subjects design. The second, a series of means comparisons. Finally participant preferences were used as the dependent variable in a predictive modelling design. Participants were thus assigned to the preference condition in each design by their preferences on the initial forced choice measure.

### *Materials*

The grouping acupuncturist preference measure consisted of one vignette and four questions. Individual difference measures examined were an implicit theory of personality scale (Hong et al., 2004), a 29 item idiocentrism-allocentrism scale (Triandis et al., 1988), a magical beliefs scale (MBS), the 18 item Need for Cognition (NFC) scale (Cacioppo et al., 1984), and two questions purported to measure individuals' susceptibility to rely on the representativeness heuristic (Tversky, Kahneman & Slovic, 1982).

*Acupuncture vignette.* Like in study five, the vignette used in the current study provided participants with the character profiles of two acupuncturists. Again, the vignette was configured so that participants imagined they had been experiencing

recurring back problems which various treatments had failed to ease. Participants were then provided with information about the history of acupuncture, which was followed by information regarding two recommended acupuncturists. One acupuncturist had a culturally authentic Asian name and the other was given a typically Caucasian name. Given that acupuncture was stated as originating from ancient China in the vignette itself, it was anticipated that an acupuncturist of Asian descent would be considered authentic where a western doctor would not. For the purpose of this study authenticity was therefore defined in terms of the acupuncturist's cultural heritage.

*Authentic acupuncturist.* Within the vignette, participants were told that Dr. Chuan Liu received his training at the Nanjing Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

*Non-authentic acupuncturist.* Within the vignette, participants were informed that Dr. Robert Hayden was trained at the Centre for Complimentary Research in Sydney.

Furthermore, both acupuncturists were said to have been practising for the same amount of time (15 years). Both acupuncturists were stated as being registered members of the Acupuncture Society of Australia, and had solid reputations. Following this vignette, participants were asked to indicate a preference for either the authentic Asian acupuncturist, or if participants had either no preference or a preference for the Western doctor, they were asked to elect this option. The 'no preference' option was included in the current research so that those participants

indifferent to choice of acupuncturist were able to respond truthfully rather than being forced to choose one therapist over the other.

Responses were made by checking one of the two provided boxes (one for Dr. Chuan Liu, one for Dr. Robert Hayden/no preference). As in study five, the order of the acupuncturists' individual character profiles were counterbalanced, as were the response checkboxes to prevent order effects. The vignette and questions can be examined in Appendix L1 and L2 respectively.

Following the choice question, participants were asked to answer three additional questions. The first two were counterbalanced, to prevent order effects. Participants were asked to rate how skilled they perceived both the authentic Asian acupuncturist and the Western acupuncturist to be at administering the service. Responses were made along a seven point Likert-scale ranging from 'not at all skilled' to 'completely skilled'. Finally, participants were asked to provide rationale for their preference. This measure was open-ended, and participants could write as much or as little as they desired.

*Implicit theory of human character scale (essentialism measure).* Taken from Hong et al., (2004), this measure assesses perceptions regarding the stability of moral character. The scale consists of three items: "A person's moral character is something very basic about them and cannot be changed much," "Whether a person is responsible and sincere or not is deeply ingrained in their personality," and "There is not much that can be done to change a person's moral traits." It is believed that this scale will discriminate between individuals who hold essentialist perceptions of self and those who hold more fluid conceptions of self.

The scale has been repeatedly used within the literature (Chiu, Hong & Dweck, 1997; Dweck, et al., 1995; Hong et al.; Levy et al., 1998) to differentiate those individuals who are entity theorists (essentialistic, static conception of human character) from those who are incremental theorists (adaptive, dynamic conception of human character). Participants are asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the three statements on an eight point scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (8). Lower scores represent more essentialist beliefs. The Cronbach's alpha for the three items in the present study was .61, although the validity and reliability of this measured have been verified elsewhere (Chiu et al; Dweck et al.; Hong et al.; Levy et al.). The scale can be located in Appendix L6.

*Idiocentrism-allocentrism scale.* The idiocentrism-allocentrism scale is used to assess whether an individual holds a more idiocentric or allocentric based ideology. The adopted scale was taken from Triandis et al.'s (1985) research on idiocentrism-allocentrism and consists of 29 items. The scale has been reported within the literature as having a good reliability with Cronbach's alpha estimates of .71 and above (Al-Zahrani & Kaplowitz, 1993). Questions relate to one of three key themes. The first is 'self reliance.' An example of an item is "In the long run the only person you can count on is yourself.' The second theme evaluates individuals' concern for their ingroup. An example of an item is 'I would not share my ideas and newly acquired knowledge with my parents.' The third theme relates to distance from in-groups. An example item is 'I am not to blame if one of my family members fails.' Items are rated along an eight-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (0) to 'strongly disagree' (7). Total scores range between zero and 203. Lower scores

reflect greater idiocentrism, whilst higher scores represent greater allocentrism. The scale can be examined in Appendix L3.

*Magical beliefs scale (MBS)*. Participants also completed a scale designed to measure people's tendency to partake in magical thinking. Questions for this scale were intended to tap into individuals' susceptibility to the law of contagion and the law of similarity (Nemeroff & Rozin, 2000), along with other religious and superstitious beliefs as such beliefs are believed to involve magical thinking (Frazer, 1911; Nemeroff & Rozin, 2000). Items purported to measure people's susceptibility to the law of contagion (MBS items 1, 3, 5, 8) were taken from the disgust literature (Haidt, McCauley & Rozin, 1994; Haidt, Rozin, McCauley & Imada, 1997; Rozin, Fallon & Mandell, 1984; Rozin, Millman & Nemeroff, 1986). An example of an item is "I would not eat soup that had been stirred with a used, but thoroughly sterilised fly swatter."

Other scale items were devised to tap into the cognitive domains discussed above. An example of a question proposed to measure the law of similarity is "If my great grandmother was good at something, it is likely I will be too." An example of a superstitious belief item is "I would have no problem walking under a ladder" (Reverse coded). An example of a religious belief item is "Good things happen to people who pray."

The scale contains nine items in which participants rate their level of agreement along an eight-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (8). Total scale scores range from zero to 72. The scale is essentially reverse scored. Lower scores indicate higher levels of magical beliefs and

higher scores indicate lower levels of magical beliefs. The scale was found to have only mediocre reliability ( $\alpha = .56$ ). The full magical beliefs scale can be located in Appendix L5.

*The Need for Cognition Scale.* The Need for Cognition (NFC) Scale (Cacioppo et al., 1984) is used to measure individual differences in intrinsic motivation to engage in effortful cognitive endeavours. The scale consists of 18 statements that pertain to one's reactions to demands for effortful thinking in a variety of situations (e.g. "I find satisfaction in deliberating long and hard for hours," "I prefer to think about small, daily projects to long-term ones"). Participants rate how characteristic each of the 18 statements are of themselves along a nine point scale ranging from 'completely false' (0) to 'completely true' (8), with a neutral point (4). Higher scores indicate a higher need for cognition (i.e. greater intrinsic motivation to engage in effortful cognitive analyses). Reliability for this measure is high and had been documented as ranging from .81 to .90 (Cacioppo et al., 1984; Spotts, 1994). The scale has been validated across a variety of studies (Cacioppo et al., 1984; Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein & Jarvis, 1996; Spotts, 1994). The scale can be examined in Appendix L4.

*Representativeness: Base rate error.* Taken from Kahneman and Tversky (1973), the 'lawyers/engineers problem' is a popular test of individual's susceptibility to commit the base rate error. For this problem, participants (who are given both base rate and individuating information) are asked to estimate the probability that a target individual belongs to a particular category. Participants given this problem typically utilise the representativeness heuristic (Tversky et al.,

1982) which causes them to ignore the base rates provided and instead focus on the individuating information present (See Appendix L7).

*Representativeness: Conjunction fallacy.* Taken from Tversky and Kahneman (1983), this task has participants assess the probability that an individual belongs to a conjunctive category versus a less typical but objectively more probable category. Subjects are given a personality description of an individual named Bill. Bill's profile is stereotypical of an accountant. Participants are then asked to assess the probability of eight outcomes based on the information they have read. Amongst these eight outcomes is the following three; 'Bill is an accountant', 'Bill plays jazz for a hobby' and 'Bill is an accountant who plays jazz for a hobby'. Participants rate the probability of each outcomes being true along an eleven-point Likert scale ranging from 0% to 100%. Though the probability of the conjunctive explanation (jazz and accountant) should be lower than the probability of the single constituent (Bill plays jazz), individuals susceptible to using the representativeness heuristic typically rate the conjunctive explanation as being more probable. This outcome typically occurs because it seems more representative of the personality profile presented to participants earlier. The dependent measure for this task is the difference score between the conjunctive description and the single constituent (Bill plays jazz). Higher positive scores indicate greater susceptibility to the conjunction fallacy.



*Procedure*

Participants were again tested either individually or in small groups. On arrival at the laboratory, they were provided with an information sheet detailing the study. Confidentiality and consent were discussed and participants accepting then signed a consent form. Participants were asked to write their age and sex on a provided demographic sheet and were told that if they had any questions they should feel free to ask them at any stage during the testing. Participants were then provided with the acupuncture vignette followed by the battery of individual difference measures. The researcher then provided participants with the following instructions,

I want you to read the following vignette. After you have finished this, please read and answer the following questions as honestly as possible. After you have finished the first task, please make your way through the rest of the questionnaires at your own pace. Please feel free to ask questions at any stage of the research.

On completion, participants were debriefed regarding the nature of the study and asked if they had any questions. Participants were then thanked for their time, and were free to leave.

### *Results*

A frequency analysis was conducted to examine the proportion of the sample within each preference option. See Table 4 for the distribution of the sample into each response preference.

Table 4.

*Response Choice for Exhibiting Acupuncturist Preference*

Response choice	Frequency
Authentic acupuncturist (Asian)	29
Non-authentic acupuncturist (Western) / No preference	28

*The Effect Preference on Perceptions of Acupuncturist Expertise*

A two-way mixed ANOVA was computed to examine the effect that acupuncturist authenticity and participants' acupuncturist preferences had on the sample's evaluations of acupuncturist expertise. Data were found to be normally distributed and linear and thus met the assumptions for a mixed ANOVA. Results indicate that acupuncturist authenticity had a significant effect on evaluations of each therapist's perceived expertise,  $F(1, 55) = 23.28, p < .001, \eta^2 = .30$ . However, participants' preference for an acupuncturist had no effect on their perception of acupuncturist expertise,  $F(1, 55) = .59, p = .45$ . The interaction between participant preference and acupuncturist authenticity was also found to be significant,  $F(1, 55) = 22.88, p < .001, \eta^2 = .29$ .

### *The Interaction between Preference and Acupuncturist Authenticity*

To examine the effect that acupuncturist preference had on participants' evaluations of each acupuncturist's expertise, a series of independent t-tests were computed. Results indicate that when evaluating the expertise of the authentic Asian acupuncturist, acupuncturist preference had no effect,  $t(55) = -1.25, p = .22$ . However, when evaluating the expertise of the non-authentic Western acupuncturist, participants' preferences were found to exert an effect,  $t(55) = 2.24, p = .03$ . Participants who preferred the Asian acupuncturist evaluated the Western acupuncturist to be significantly less expert ( $M = 4.35, SD = 1.05$ ) than other participants, ( $M = 4.92, SD = 0.88$ ).

To examine the effect of acupuncturist authenticity on perceptions of acupuncturist expertise, a series of repeated measures t-tests were computed. Results indicate that the cultural authenticity of the acupuncturist had no effect on participants' evaluations of acupuncturist expertise in choosing the Western acupuncturist/no preference option,  $t(27) = .11, p = .92$ . However, for those participants who expressed a preference for the Asian acupuncturist, the authenticity of the service provider was found to have a significant effect on their expertise ratings,  $t(28) = 4.98, p < .001$ . Participants favouring the Asian acupuncturist evaluated him as being significantly more expert ( $M = 5.17, SD = 0.55$ ) than the Western non-authentic acupuncturist ( $M = 4.35, SD = 1.05$ ). These results therefore provide support for the first hypothesis. Mean expertise ratings can be examined in Figure 24.

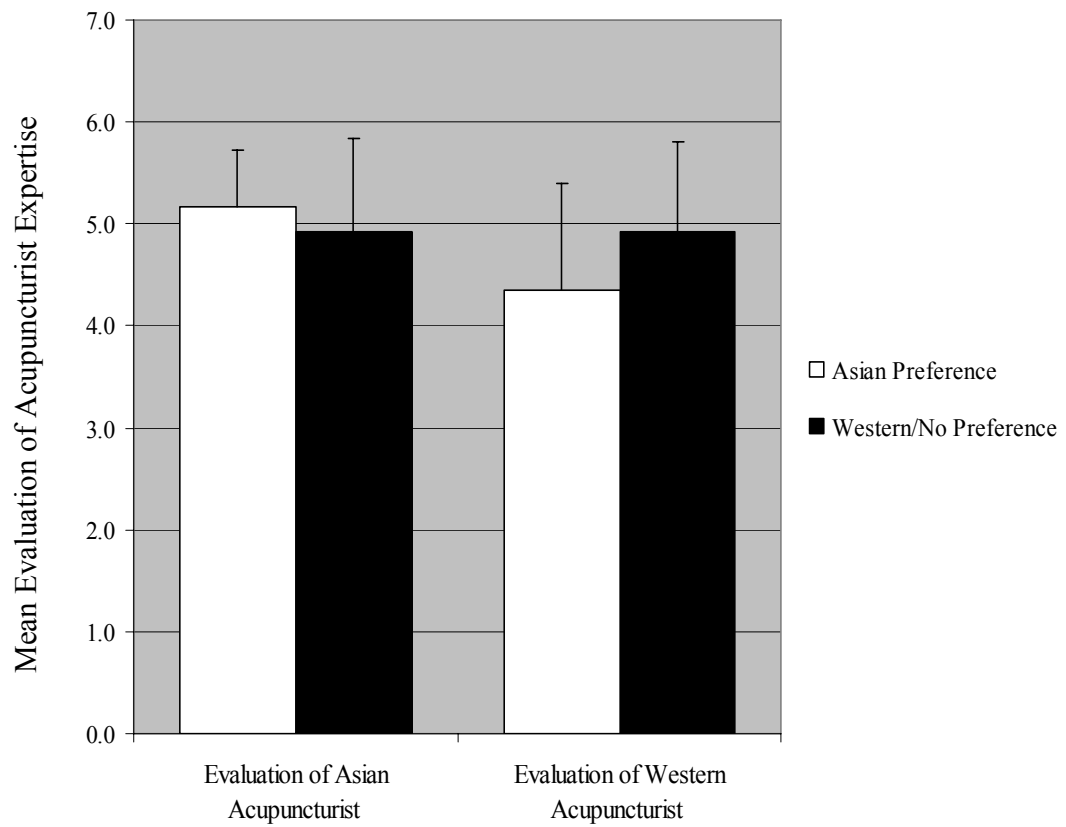


Figure 24. Mean evaluations of acupuncturist expertise

*Magical Beliefs Scale: Understanding the Underlying Psychological Constructs*

Before attempting to gain greater insight into the psychological differences underlying a preference for an authentic service provider, it is necessary to gain a greater understanding of the magical beliefs scale. Given the scale was constructed for this research, a principal components analysis with direct oblimin rotation was conducted to examine the factor structure of the scale items. The various indicators of factorability were found to be sound and the residuals indicate the solution to be robust. Three components with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were found. The scree plot also indicated three components. The correlations between items can be located in Table 5. The items loading on each of these components can be examined in Table 6.

Table 5.

*Correlations between Magical Beliefs Scale Items*

Item	(#2)	(#3)	(#4)	(#5)	(#6)	(#7)	(#8)	(#9)
(# 1) Dead man hotel room	-0.07	0.13	0.15	0.13	0.26*	-0.04	-0.05	0.03
(# 2) Abilities can be transmitted	1.00	0.00	-0.19	0.07	-0.07	0.19	0.17	0.09
(# 3) Bedpan		1.00	-0.01	0.64**	0.10	0.09	0.66**	0.11
(# 4) Ladder			1.00	0.15	0.15	0.05	0.07	-0.19
(# 5) Soup Fly Swatter				1.00	0.00	0.12	0.47**	-0.01
(# 6) Prayer					1.00	0.41**	0.07	0.20
(# 7) Share grandmother's abilities						1.00	0.01	0.45**
(# 8) Pet food in lunchbox							1.00	0.07
(# 9) Lineage of doctors								1.00

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .001$

Table 6.

*Factor Loadings for Magical Beliefs Scale Items*

Magical Beliefs Item	Component 1 Consumption Disgust (25.54% variance)	Component 2 Law of Similarity (18.56% variance)	Component 3 General Magical Beliefs (16.06% variance)
(# 1) Dead man hotel room	0.10	0.15	<b>0.61</b>
(# 2) Abilities can be transmitted	0.16	0.23	<b>-0.56</b>
(# 3) Bedpan	<b>0.89</b>	0.14	0.05
(# 4) Ladder	0.10	-0.07	<b>0.69</b>
(# 5) Soup fly swatter	<b>0.82</b>	0.05	0.13
(# 6) Prayer	0.06	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.46</b>
(# 7) Share grandmother's abilities	0.10	<b>0.84</b>	-0.05
(# 8) Pet food in lunchbox	<b>0.83</b>	0.07	-0.09
(# 9) Lineage of doctors	0.07	<b>0.73</b>	-0.24
Reliability (alpha)	$\alpha = .81$	$\alpha = .58$	$\alpha = .20$

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Note: Factor loadings  $\leq \pm 0.30$  have not been used to interpret factors (Nunnally, 1967).

*Discussion of Principle Components Analysis and Interpretation of Factors*

The results of the principal components analysis specify that there are three clear dimensions underpinning the MBS. Eight of the nine items (with the exception of MBS item six “good things happen to those who pray”) load on only one of the three factors. Thus, achieving such a clearly defined loading matrix makes the interpretation of these factors less complicated.

Examining the factor solution for factor one, it can be seen that all three items loading on the factor have loadings above 0.80. Interestingly, all three items loading on this factor were proposed to measure the law of contagion and were taken from Haidt et al’s (1994) research on disgust. Given that the three items relate to the thought of *consuming* something perceived to be disgusting, this factor will be regarded as ‘consumption disgust.’ As indicated in Table 6, the consumption disgust factor was found to account for 25.54% of the variance in all original scale items. A reliability analysis was conducted to examine the internal consistency of these items if used as a subscale of the MBS. The consumption disgust MBS subscale was found to be highly reliable ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

The second factor is slightly more complicated to interpret. Two of the items loading on this factor (MBS # 7 and MBS # 9) were designed to measure participants’ susceptibility to the law of similarity. Given that in both questions, related (and therefore similar) individuals are assumed to share similar abilities as well. In some respects, these two items could be interpreted to tap into the law of contagion, if abilities are perceived to be contagiously passed on through genetics.



Either way, the first two items loading on this factor relate to some belief in sympathetic magic.

Item six – “good things happen to those who pray” is the third item to load on this factor and seems less related to the other two items. Rather it seems more related to a tenuous belief in cause and effect, or perhaps even religiosity in the sense that those holding religious beliefs will agree more with this statement than less religious individuals. This item is the least correlated with the factor and is also found to load on the third factor. Examining the correlation matrix in Table 5, it can be seen that the item (MBS #6) relating to prayer is significantly correlated with a belief in sharing abilities with one’s relations (MBS #7) which may provide some rationale for its loading on the second factor. For the purpose of identification, this second factor will be referred to as magical beliefs in ‘similarity’ given that two of the items strongly share this theme. This factor accounts for 18.56% of the variance in all original MBS items. The reliability of this MBS subscale was adequate considering the small number of items ( $\alpha = .58$ ).

The remaining factor is the most complex to interpret. Four MBS items load on the factor, and it is difficult to identify a clear underlying theme. The item “good things come to those who pray” was found to load again on this factor, though less strongly than it did on the second factor. As mentioned earlier, this is the only item loading on multiple factors. MBS item four “I would have no problem walking under a ladder” also loads on factor three and reflects a common superstitious belief. This belief is persuasive to those who perceive such an action is capable of causing a negative outcome or bad luck. MBS item one, “It would not bother me to sleep in a

nice hotel room if I knew that a man had died of a heart attack in that room the night before” also loads on this factor and is difficult to interpret in the sense that though it is designed to measure disgust sensitivity (sleeping where a person died) it may also involve erroneous perceptions of cause and effect (If that person dies there, so might I).

Finally, item two, “Abilities can be transmitted from person to person through generations even when they have not met” conceptually seems as if it should load on the second factor rather than the third. As Table 6 shows, however, the loading on factor two was very minimal. It may be the case that participants failed to interpret this statement as being a genetically transferred ability but rather telepathic or paranormally transferred. Such a belief is consistent with superstitious ideologies, like the ladder item, and possibly like the hotel room item. Furthermore, the law of similarity appears to underlie MBS items seven (inherited abilities) and nine (lineage of doctors), but less on item two (abilities can be transmitted), providing further rationale for why these items load on different factors.

There is one common psychological theme that underlies three of the four items on factor three (MBS # 1, MBS # 4 and MBS # 6). It relates to avoiding actions which may result in negative outcomes (MBS # 1, MBS # 4), and pursuing actions which are likely to result in positive outcomes (MBS # 6). Such beliefs again rely on tenuous perceptions of cause and effect which characterise many magical beliefs (Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994).

At this stage, it is felt that only speculations can be made regarding the true underlying nature of this third construct. For the purpose of naming the factor, it will

be referred to as 'general magical beliefs', given that the items are believed to evoke thought processes which generally underpin a variety of magical and superstitious beliefs. The general magical beliefs factor accounted for 16.06% of the variance in all original MBS items. The inconsistent nature of the items loading on this MBS subscale was supported by a poor reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = .20$ ).

#### *Representativeness Tasks: A Single Underlying Construct?*

In contrast to Slugoski et al. (1993) who found base-rate and conjunction tasks to load on a single factor consisting of a larger battery of representativeness items, individuals' responses on both of the examined heuristic processing tasks failed to be correlated in this study ( $r(57) = .20, p = .13$ ). It had been anticipated that an underlying construct could be used in additional analysis to examine the relationship between authentic preferences and susceptibility to the representativeness heuristic. However, given the weakness of the correlation between the two representativeness tasks, it was decided to remove these tasks from any further analysis because they did not seem to be tapping a single underlying dimension.

#### *The Effect of Acupuncturist Preference on Individual Difference Measures*

Having previously established that approximately half the sample exhibited a preference for an authentic service provider, whilst the remaining half did not, it seems necessary to examine individual differences as a function of acupuncturist preferences. To assess this, a series of independent t-tests were computed. Of the

four individual difference measures (need for cognition, overall MBS, essentialism, and idiocentrism-allocentrism), acupuncturist preference was found to have a significant effect on all but one, being need for cognition scores. This being said the effect of acupuncturist preference on this individual difference measure was still marginally significant.

Results indicate that in support of hypothesis two, individuals exhibiting a preference for the culturally authentic Asian acupuncturist held significantly more essentialist beliefs than those exhibiting either no preference or a preference for the culturally non-authentic Western acupuncturist. Consistent with this result and in support of hypothesis three, participants electing the Asian acupuncturist were significantly more idiocentric in ideology than those exhibiting either no preference or a preference for the Western acupuncturist. Furthermore, those exhibiting a preference for the Asian acupuncturist exhibited a greater tendency to partake in magical thinking than those exhibiting either no preference or a preference for the Western acupuncturist, providing support for hypothesis four. Finally, although only marginally significant, this analysis does provide some indication that those exhibiting a preference for the Asian acupuncturist are lower in need for cognition than those exhibiting no preference or a preference for the Western provider. This finding provides marginal support for hypothesis five

Though it was decided to eliminate the representativeness heuristic factor from any further analysis, a series of t-tests were conducted to establish whether acupuncturist preference would influence heuristic processing on either of the representativeness tasks. Examining the mean scores, it can be seen that all

participants irrespective of their acupuncturist preference, were equally susceptible to this heuristic across both tasks. Hypothesis six therefore failed to be supported by the current results. Mean scores according to acupuncturist preference can be examine below in Table 7.

Table 7.

*Mean Comparisons for Individual Difference Measures*

	Preference				Significance
	Authentic		Non-authentic/ No Preference		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Essentialism Score	8.76	4.06	11.29	4.32	$t(55) = 2.28, p = .01$
Overall MBS Score	30.48	8.51	35.43	9.70	$t(55) = 2.05, p = .02$
Allocentrism Score	97.79	29.62	111.21	24.59	$t(55) = 1.86, p = .03$
Need For Cognition Score	90.59	24.78	98.46	14.30	$t(55) = 1.46, p = .08$
Conjunction Task	5.03	15.24	7.32	14.71	$t(55) = 0.59, p = .28$
Base-Rate Task	53.62	26.08	46.54	20.99	$t(55) = -1.13, p = .13$

*Note: All means comparisons are calculated using one-tailed t-tests.*

Given that earlier analysis showed the MBS to be defined by three key dimensions, a means comparison using independent t-tests was computed to examine whether one dimension over another was responsible for the effect of acupuncturist preference on overall MBS scores. Examining Table 8, it can be observed that acupuncturist preference was related to magical beliefs in the law of similarity only. Results reveal that those exhibiting a preference for the culturally authentic acupuncturist are significantly more likely to believe in the magical law of similarity than those participants exhibiting either no preference or a preference for the Western acupuncturist.

Table 8.

*Mean Comparisons for MBS Factors*

	Preference				Significance
	Authentic		Non-authentic/ No Preference		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Law of similarity *	-0.37	0.96	0.39	0.91	$t(55) = 3.07, p = .002$
Consumption Disgust *	-0.10	1.06	0.11	0.94	$t(55) = 0.79, p = .22$
General Magical Beliefs *	-0.01	1.00	0.01	1.01	$t(55) = 0.10, p = .46$

\* = Factor Score

*Note: All means comparisons are calculated using one-tailed t-tests.*

*Lower factor scores indicate higher magical beliefs on each factor*

*Individual Differences: Susceptibility to the Persuasiveness of Source Authenticity*

A logistic regression analysis was also performed with acupuncturist preference as the dependent measure and three individual difference measures (need for cognition, idiocentrism-allocentrism, and essentialism) as predictors.

Furthermore, given the results of the means comparison, the magical beliefs in the law of similarity factor was also included as a predictor variable, as it is believed to be responsible for differences observed in overall MBS scores.

The results indicate the model to be statistically reliable,  $\chi^2 (4) = 25.86, p < .001$  (Hosmer and Lemeshow Test:  $\chi^2 (8) = 7.81, p = .45$ ). The model accounted for between 36.5% (Cox and Snell) and 48.6% (Nagelkerke) of the variance in acupuncturist preference, with 75.9% of predictions for the authentic acupuncturist being accurate, and 75% of the predictions for the non-authentic/no preference option being accurate. Overall 75.4% of predictions about participants' acupuncturist preferences were found to be accurate.

All four individual difference measures were found to be reliable predictors of participants' preferences. The magical beliefs in similarity factor was found to be the most effective predictor of acupuncturist preference, followed by the essentialist beliefs measure. Need for cognition was found to be a significant predictor of acupuncturist preference, as was the idiocentrism-allocentrism measure.

The beta weights in the logistic regression support the relationships established in earlier means comparisons. That is, the more an individual subscribes to the magical law of similarity, the more likely they are to choose the authentic service provider. The more essentialist participants' ideology about the stability of

personality, the more likely they are to choose the authentic service provider. The lower one is in need for cognition, the more likely they are to choose the authentic service provider. Finally, the more idiocentric the individual, the more likely they are to elect the authentic service provider. The logistic regression coefficients can be examined in Table 9.

Table 9.

*Logistic Regression Coefficients*

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E</i>	Wald	<i>df</i>	Significance	Exp(B)
Law of Similarity ▪ *	-1.32	0.45	8.56	1	0.003	0.27
Essentialism Score ▪	-0.26	0.10	7.57	1	0.006	0.77
Need For Cognition Score	-0.05	0.02	5.23	1	0.02	0.96
Idiocentrism-Allocentrism Score	-0.03	0.01	4.92	1	0.03	0.97

▪ *Reverse coded scale*

\* *Factor Score*

Hence the results of the logistic regression reveal that the majority of individual difference measures account for unique variance in acupuncturist preference. For the purpose of understanding the relationships amongst these predictive measures, a correlation analysis was conducted. Examining Table 10, it can be observed that none of the predictor variables are related.



Table 10.

*Correlations between Predictive Individual Difference Measures*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Need For Cognition	1.00	-0.07	0.05	-0.06
(2) Idiocentrism-allocentrism		1.00	-0.06	0.10
(3) Essentialism			1.00	-0.04
(4) Law of similarity				1.00

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .001$

*Discussion*

The primary objective of this final study was to identify the psychological processes underlying the persuasiveness of service provider authenticity. Five individual difference measures were used to examine people's susceptibility to this persuasion cue, being essentialist conceptions of self (implicit personality theories), idiocentrism-allocentrism, magical beliefs, need for cognition and reliance on the representativeness heuristic. Six hypotheses were established for the current study, five of which were supported. These findings will now be discussed.

### *How Prevalent is a Preference for Source Authenticity?*

Approximately half of the sample exhibited a preference for the authentic Asian acupuncturist, whilst the remaining half either had no preference or preferred the non-authentic practitioner. These preference frequencies are quite different to those observed in Study five (88% authentic, 12% non-authentic preference) and are most likely the result of the different response options provided in each study. It is believed that the inclusion of a 'no preference' response option in the current study resulted in the relative preference frequencies being more evenly distributed (51% authentic, 49% no preference/non-authentic preference). This is not to suggest that the results of Study five are not informative. If anything, they indicate that when forced to make a choice (as people do in everyday life) authentic service providers are preferred. Furthermore, of the 28 participants selecting the 'no preference/western acupuncturist' option, only two people provided qualitative comments suggesting that they preferred the Western acupuncturist (due to potential language barriers with the Asian service provider). The rest indicated that they had no preference.

### *Qualitative Rationale for Service Provider Preferences*

Before discussing the quantitative results, a discussion of participants' qualitative responses will first be provided. This is important because these comments provide important insight into the reasons *why* participants exhibited their preferences and will be useful when interpreting the quantitative results.

As highlighted earlier, the cultural authenticity of a service provider appears to be persuasive for at least one of three fundamental reasons. The first explanation is that culturally authentic individuals are perceived to be ‘natural experts’ at delivering culturally relevant services. The second reason relates to the perception that authenticity signifies personal investment and greater care taken in the delivery of services considered part of one’s self (Belk, 1988; Kruger et al., 2004). The third reason relates to many people’s desire to purchase or experience something authentic (Boyle, 2004; Lewis & Bridger, 2000).

When asked to explain their preferences, all three explanations were again found to feature prominently for those choosing the culturally authentic acupuncturist in the current study. It was common for the Asian service provider to be perceived better at acupuncture than the Western acupuncturist. Comments such as “Even though Dr Liu may be Australian, I would still prefer him as it seems to me that he may have more cultural knowledge in acupuncture” and “Dr Liu is Asian and should be naturally better” and “I would expect a Chinese doctor to have an additional understanding of acupuncture and hope that this would, in some way, provide a more holistic treatment than a non-Chinese therapist,” indicate that Asian acupuncturists are perceived as being naturally expert and have a greater knowledge and understanding of acupuncture technique than the Western therapist.

Furthermore, some participants seem to conceive this authentic knowledge and ability as being passed throughout the culture to all members; “Acupuncture is a Chinese medicine and Dr Liu is Chinese. They (the Chinese) have used it for years, as it has been passed from generation to generation.” Interestingly, for some of the

participants, it was the place of training that was persuasive. These participants commented that Asian training would be better than Australian, simply because it is the country from where the treatment originates. “Dr Liu has grown up in the region where acupuncture has originated and I assume he would have the best and most comprehensive training” and “The quality of teaching is higher in the country of origin” “Learning in a traditional setting would open (a trainee) up to better ways of doing it”.

These comments suggest that the authenticity of the *training* may be as important as the authenticity of the service provider. Do these comments suggest that the skills necessary to deliver this service are perhaps *learned* rather than inherited, however? From another perspective, to believe that Asian training is better still suggests that only Asian individuals (who are again culturally authentic) are capable of teaching it. As stated by one participant, “Traditional teachers are better skilled at teaching others their craft.” Furthermore, given the treatment requires the placement of needles on specific points on the body, it is unlikely that anyone believes it possible be born with this knowledge. Therefore, whilst some training may be necessary, only those from the Chinese culture may possess the ability to understand and therefore teach this method in the culturally authentic way. An interesting study (unfortunately outside the scope of this research) would be to examine whether a culturally non-authentic individual who had been trained by an authentic source would be considered as expert as a culturally authentic individual.

A perception of greater expertise is not the only reason participants preferred the authentic acupuncturist, however. In fact, 35% of the participants exhibiting the

authentic preference evaluated both the Asian and Western acupuncturists to be equally expert. Other comments made by individuals electing the Asian acupuncturist support the notion of an extended self (Belk, 1988) by endorsing the belief that an Asian would have greater pride and would be more personally invested in delivering this service than the non-authentic acupuncturist, “Although I would consider both acupuncturists to be equally skilled, I feel that Dr Liu may have more pride in his profession as acupuncture is traditionally Chinese.”

Finally, preferences for the culturally authentic acupuncturist also seem motivated by the desire to experience authenticity for many participants. Comments such as “Dr Liu’s cultural background will give an added advantage with the treatment as it is a Chinese traditional medicine” and “They are equally expert, but I still prefer Dr Liu because of the traditional history” suggest that it may not always be the actual service itself that increases evaluations of service value and quality. Rather, people may appreciate the added benefit of being able to experience authenticity when this service is provided by someone from the appropriate culture.

For participants electing the other preference option (Western preference/no preference), there seemed to be a great deal of consistency in the qualitative responses provided. With the exception of the two people indicating that language barriers may be a concern with the Asian acupuncturist, the majority of these participants viewed both service providers to be equally competent. “Both acupuncturists have amount of experience, are both equally qualified, have good reputations. I assume both training places teach the same material,” “They both appear to have had similar training regardless of the training’s country of origin” and

“I have no preference as they both seem equally skilled with good reputations” represent the general gist of comments made by this group.

In summary, these comments add to the evidence accumulated across earlier studies suggesting that producer/service provider authenticity is often persuasive for the three reasons discussed earlier. As these comments have revealed, the influence of authenticity is of great importance to those exhibiting a preference for the Asian acupuncturist, however, it does not seem to feature at all in participants' preference rationales when they exhibit no preference.

#### *Are Authentic Service Providers More Expert?*

As indicated by the results of Study six and the qualitative responses above, culturally authentic service providers are often evaluated to have greater expertise than non-authentic providers. Underlying this perception seems to be a belief that those who are culturally authentic possess a natural understanding of the process that can not be taught (Rudinow, 1994). Based on this logic, it had been theorised that individuals exhibiting a preference for the Asian acupuncturist would quantitatively evaluate him to have greater expertise than the non-authentic acupuncturist. The results provide support for this hypothesis, and are consistent with the results observed in Study six. Interestingly, this effect was not observed for remaining participants (Western preference/no preference) who evaluated both Asian and Western service providers to be equally expert.

Hence, the moderating effect of acupuncturist preference suggests that there are potentially different psychological processes occurring within each preference

group. Based on the qualitative responses discussed, it could be reasoned that for those selecting the Asian doctor, expertise is primarily evaluated in terms of cultural authenticity. Alternatively, for those *not* persuaded by the authentic acupuncturist (Western preference/no preference), expertise may be evaluated in terms of training, experience and reputation, which were perceived comparable for both acupuncturists. As indicated by the results of this research, there are several underlying psychological processes which can influence preferences for culturally authentic service providers. These will now be discussed.

#### *The Effect of Essentialism on Service Provider Preferences*

Recall that “authenticity” is defined as the quality or condition of being true to one’s ‘self’ (Lewis & Bridger, 2000). Of the five individual difference measures explored, participants’ essentialist beliefs were found to be one of the most effective predictors of acupuncturist preference. In support of hypothesis two, participants exhibiting a preference for the authentic service provider were found to hold more essentialist conceptions of human character (entity theorists) than those who did not. Given that authenticity becomes less meaningful as the belief in an essential and unified self diminishes (James, 1890), this result is not that surprising.

It is important to emphasise that acupuncturist preference has not been used in the current study to categorically differentiate entity theorists from incremental theorists (dynamic view of human character). However, for the purpose of connecting the current results back to the existing literature, it is assumed that those

exhibiting the authentic preference would (on average) be more likely to be entity theorists than those failing to exhibit an authentic preference.

As discussed, the results also indicate that those choosing the authentic acupuncturist perceived him to be more expert than the non-authentic acupuncturist. Can individual differences in essentialist beliefs account for this result? The existing literature suggests that entity theorists are more prone to characterising groups in terms of certain stereotypical attributes than those subscribing to a more dynamic view of self (Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Levy & Dweck, 1999; Levy et al., 1998). Given that acupuncture is authentic to China, a Chinese acupuncturist should seem much more authentic at providing this service than a Caucasian acupuncturist. Their ability to perform the procedure should also be perceived by entity theorists as ‘fixed.’ Furthermore, because entity theorists have a tendency to make dispositional inferences rather than situational ones (Levy & Dweck, 1998; 1999), it makes sense that these individuals would place greater emphasis on the acupuncturist’s perceived authenticity when evaluating their ability than they would on their training, experience or reputation.

Alternatively, individuals holding a dynamic view of human character are more likely than entity theorists to take other factors (besides dispositional characteristics) into consideration when evaluating others (Levy & Dweck, 1998). As proposed, participants exhibiting either the non-authentic preference or no preference seemed less inclined to make assumptions about each acupuncturist’s ability based on their ethnicity. As stated by one participant failing to choose the Asian acupuncturist, “I do not have a preference. I do not make assumptions about



the ability of practitioners just because of their name and presumed cultural background.”

Research suggests that as perceptions of human character becomes less essentialist, individuals become more process focused in their evaluations of others (Levy & Dweck, 1998). As commented by many of the participants, their decision to exhibit no preference was based more strongly on the processes perceived to develop ability, such as training and experience, rather than dispositional qualities. Given that these characteristics were similar for both therapists, the no preference response seems the sensible choice for these participants.

Hence, the results of the current study provide further evidence that implicit theories of human character can guide social judgement and determine the appeal of service provider authenticity. There are potentially a few minor limitations relating to the essentialism measure adopted in the current study. The first relates to the fact that the essentialism measure used examines people’s implicit theories about *moral* character (Hong et al., 2004) rather than a more general view of human character, or even the ‘self.’ This is not perceived to be of major concern, however, as numerous other pieces of research have used this measure to discriminate between a fixed and dynamic view of human character (Chiu et al., 1997; Gervey, Chiu, Hong & Dweck, 1999; Hong et al., 1997; Hong et al., 2004).

The second issue that should be taken into consideration relates to the scale’s reliability. Whilst the scale has achieved high reliability in other studies (Hong et al., 2004), it only achieved moderate reliability in the current study ( $\alpha = .61$ ). Given that

the scale only consists of three items, however, it remains compelling that individual differences on this measure were able to predict acupuncturist preferences.

### *The Effect of Magical Beliefs on Service Provider Preferences*

The existing literature on authenticity suggests that the desire to experience that which is authentic is common amongst post-modern consumers (Boyle, 2004; Gergen, 1991; Lewis & Bridger, 2000; Tomkins, 2005). As indicated within the literature (Fine, 2003; Loy, 1999; Schreier, 2004) and across earlier studies (specifically Studies two and six), evaluations of identical products can change dramatically once the invisible quality of authenticity is mentioned. It has been asserted that the appeal of authenticity will often depend on the application of magical thinking (Grayson and Martinec, 2004).

It was hypothesised that individuals' tendencies to partake in magical thinking would partially explain the persuasiveness of acupuncturist authenticity in the current study. As indicated by the results, this was found to be the case. In support of hypothesis three, individuals exhibiting a preference for the culturally authentic service provider were found to display greater magical thinking than those exhibiting either of the other preference options. Furthermore, more complex analyses revealed that the devised magical beliefs measure could be operationalised in terms of three smaller sub-components. Only two of the components were found to be both conceptually interpretable and statistically reliable. The first component was believed to measure participants' susceptibility to the law of contagion by means of consumption disgust. Though statistically robust, this sub-component failed to

discriminate between participants' acupuncturist preferences, and therefore could not account for the persuasiveness of acupuncturist authenticity in the current context. A discussion of possible reasons for this result will be discussed toward the end of this section.

The second sub-component of the devised magical beliefs measure was theorised to measure people's use of the law of similarity, and was actually found to be the strongest predictor of acupuncturist preferences. Provided the interpretation of this construct is accurate, what does this result signify for understanding the persuasiveness of acupuncturist authenticity? Recall that the law of similarity relates to the magical belief that things which resemble one another share fundamental properties (Rozin et al., 1986).

It is reasoned that the perceived similarity between the ethnic origins of the service (acupuncture) and Dr. Liu caused participants to perceive the Asian acupuncturist to be authentic at delivering the service. The qualitative rationales provided by individuals selecting the Asian acupuncturist support this logic, "I would want Dr Liu, because acupuncture is a Chinese medicine and Dr Liu is Chinese." Alternatively, given the disparity between the ethnicity of the Caucasian acupuncturist and the cultural origins of acupuncture, it may have been more difficult for these participants to believe the Caucasian acupuncturist could perform the Chinese technique as well as his Asian (and therefore similar) counterpart.

In contrast, as individuals' magical beliefs in the law of similarity (no preference/Western preference) decrease, the cultural congruence between the Asian acupuncturist and the origin of the technique may seem less compelling. As indicated

by the qualitative responses of this preference group, this seemed to be the case, “At first I was leaning toward Dr Liu due to his cultural background and the consistent background of acupuncture. But then considering both Dr’s experience, training and registration I feel either will be fine.”

It should be also emphasised that there are potentially other interpretations of this MBS subcomponent which differ from that discussed above. Given the relationships between magical belief items, the items theorised to measure the magical belief in ‘similarity’ may also access people’s belief in genetically or socially transferred abilities (See MBS items #7 and #9 in Appendix L5). If so, the persuasiveness of cultural authenticity may rely on not only judgements of similarity, but rather also on perceptions that all culturally congruent service providers are authentic because the authenticity required to perform this technique is viewed as genetically diffused. Further research is needed to clarify this issue, however, but for now there is enough evidence to suggest that magical thinking does play some role in the persuasiveness of service provider authenticity.

Another interesting finding relating to the MBS measure and its influence on acupuncturist preferences, relates to the observation that the religious MBS item loaded on the predictive MBS ‘law of similarity’ dimension. Though not the most straightforward result to interpret, it does potentially suggest that religious individuals might be more persuaded by service provider authenticity than less religious individuals. This would be an interesting future study.

Finally, it is important to discuss the general limitations of the Magical Beliefs Scale (MBS) which may have prevented further insights from being gained

in the current study. First and foremost, the nine item MBS measure was found to be only moderately reliable. Though the scale is in need of further revision, it is encouraging that at least one of its sub-components (beliefs in the law of similarity) was quite effective in distinguishing between authentic and non-authentic preferences.

This being said, it was quite unexpected that the 'consumption disgust' factor failed to influence participant preferences. In hindsight, several explanations can be provided for why this occurred. As discussed by Rozin et al. (1986), however, magical beliefs can be either positive or negative in valence. Whilst the consumption disgust items of the MBS are in accordance with the law of contagion, they may relate more strongly to beliefs in negative magic (where affected items become devalued) (Haidt et al., 1997). Personal authenticity, as a contagious quality, may cause any affected items to *increase* in value (relying on beliefs in positive magic). Rozin et al.'s research also indicates that negative contagion effects are more potent than positive contagion effects, and are typically motivated by negative events. In contrast, positive contagion effects, as a rule, depend on *interpersonal* factors (i.e. authenticity). The different factors leading to beliefs in positive and negative contagion may therefore provide some explanation for why the consumption disgust items failed to predict acupuncturist preferences in the current study.

Another potential explanation for why the law of contagion factor failed to influence authentic preferences may relate to the fact that a service (as opposed to a product) was used in the current study. It could be theorised that a belief in law of contagion may be of greater importance when evaluating authentic products,

particularly if they are perceived as a vessel for connecting consumers to that which is authentic. Without some magical belief in the contagious quality of authenticity, there would be little reason to view a product as being any different to an identical replica. Yet there is much research (including that conducted as part of this dissertation) to suggest that people do evaluate identical products differently based on producer authenticity (Brown, 2001; Duffek, 1983; Evans-Pritchard, 1987; Martin, 1993). With an authentic service, however, individuals have direct exposure to the authentic provider, and the belief in a magically transmitted essence may seem less important. Future research should examine whether magical beliefs in the law of contagion (particularly positive beliefs) can predict both preferences and higher evaluations of authentically produced products as opposed to services.

#### *The Effect of Need for Cognition on Service Provider Preferences*

One of the key objectives of this research was to establish whether service provider authenticity is cognitively processed via the central or peripheral route to persuasion. Individual differences in need for cognition were used to address this issue. Although it was theorised that this cue might be processed under both high and low elaboration conditions (Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999a), it was proposed that low need for cognition individuals should be *more* persuaded by service provider authenticity than high need for cognition individuals. This hypothesis was based on the tendency of low need for cognition individuals to rely on simple cues to arrive at a decision as opposed to evaluating all issue-relevant information (Cacioppo et al., 1997). Providing support for hypothesis five, individuals exhibiting the preference

for the authentic acupuncturist were indeed found to have lower need for cognition scores than participants electing the non-authentic/no preference response.

What does this result suggest for the persuasiveness of service provider authenticity? Firstly, it can be inferred that when need for cognition is low, authenticity operates as a simple and efficient cue to rely upon when attempting to choose a service provider. Provided that individuals are familiar with the cultural origins of a product or service, selecting a culturally congruent source should involve less cognitive effort than evaluating other relevant information. Many of the qualitative comments made by participants preferring the authentic acupuncturist mentioned *only* the authenticity of the acupuncturists, which suggests that it may indeed have been the sole (or at least primary) decision criteria for these participants.

The beneficial aspect of relying on service provider authenticity under low elaboration relates to the fact that this cue can at least be considered relevant to the quality of the service, unlike many of the other source characteristics documented within the persuasion literature (Cacioppo et al., 1986; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; 1984). Is authenticity processed thoughtfully by those persuaded by it, however? Given that these individuals were found to exhibit a lower need for cognition, it seems necessary to examine the degree of cognition underlying authentic preferences. Returning to the qualitative comments discussed earlier, it can be seen that some participants reliance on authenticity seem to activate some previously stored decision rule suggesting that ‘authentic is good’ (van Overwalle & Siebler, 2005). As stated by one participant;

I would still be inclined to choose the Asian doctor for the superficial reason that he's Asian and trained in Asia so maybe he is better. Probably not at all accurate and not a good way to choose, but instinctively I would choose an Asian doctor for an Asian procedure.

Though this comment may suggest authenticity is processed heuristically, there is evidence that other participants exhibiting this preference seem cognitively sophisticated in their logic (e.g. "I think both practitioners would be equally skilled but to me a big part of alternative medicine is psychological, so I would want the Chinese practitioner because the experience would seem more authentic you know?"). As discussed earlier, over one third of participants exhibiting the authentic preference evaluated both the Asian and Western acupuncturists to be equally expert. Furthermore, these individuals were not found to be any higher in need for cognition than those evaluating the Asian acupuncturist to be more expert.

What this result may suggest is that there is more than an 'authentic is good' heuristic occurring when participants select the authentic service provider, with many participants genuinely believing the Asian acupuncturist's authenticity to be important. As suggested by Kruglanski and Thompson (1999a) and van Overwalle and Siebler (2005), there is no reason a relevant cue, such as authenticity, cannot have a persuasive impact under peripheral processing conditions, provided that the cue is relatively simple to process.



Even so, acupuncturist authenticity was rarely mentioned by participants selecting the other response option (non-authentic preference/no preference). Does this imply that acupuncturist authenticity is considered irrelevant by individuals exhibiting higher need for cognition? Not necessarily. As stated by one participant, “At first I was leaning toward Dr Liu due to his cultural background and the consistent background of acupuncture. But then considering both Dr’s experience, training and registration I feel either will be fine.” This being said, this was the only participant to make mention of authenticity as having any potential relevance.

Nevertheless, because these participants were also found to hold less essentialist notions of human character and be less prone to magical thinking, the alleged ethnicity of each acupuncturist should seem less meaningful, and therefore less relevant. Because multiple psychological processes are influencing acupuncturist preferences, it is quite difficult to draw any precise conclusions about the way in which service provider authenticity is processed under high elaboration.

Though the results imply service provider authenticity to be more persuasive as need for cognition decreases, it is impossible to definitively state whether this cue is processed heuristically or thoughtfully. Answering this question requires further research, and potentially other methods of manipulating elaboration likelihood. Given that the mean need for cognition scores for both preference groups were above average, it may be useful to conduct further research with a non-university based sample. It might also be useful to conduct some implicit reaction time study where various service provider attributes are examined. By examining the speed with which

service provider authenticity is evaluated as good, bad or irrelevant, may help understand the way in which this cue is processed.

#### *The Effect of Idiocentrism-Allocentrism on Service Provider Preferences*

Similar to the essentialism measure discussed earlier, participants' independent versus interdependent conceptions of self (idiocentrism-allocentrism) were also found to be effective in discriminating between participants' acupuncturist preferences. Providing support for hypothesis three, individuals preferring the authentic acupuncturist were found to hold a more idiocentric ideology than those exhibiting either a preference for the non-authentic service provider or no preference at all.

Recall that whilst idiocentrics acknowledge and value the notion of a unique and consistent self, allocentrics view the self as being interdependent with its context (Triandis et al., 1988). It is consequently assumed that the concept of personal authenticity becomes more meaningful as idiocentrism increases. After all, to believe in authenticity is to believe in a consistent self in which a person can be authentic to. Consequently, authenticity is less relevant to allocentrics. As stated by Markus and Kitayama; "An interdependent self can not be characterised as a bounded whole, for it changes structure with the nature of the particular social context" (1991, p.226). Hence, the results of this study suggest that authenticity becomes more persuasive as idiocentrism increases.

Individual differences in idiocentrism-allocentrism have also been found to influence the ways in which individuals evaluate others. Individuals holding a more

interdependent view of the self, for example, characterise others in terms of their contexts rather than dispositional qualities (Miller, 1984; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Morris & Peng, 1994). The qualitative results of the current study provide further support for this finding. Exhibiting lower idiocentrism, individuals failing to pick the authentic acupuncturist rationalised that the training, reputation and experience of the practitioners were the most important factors to consider when choosing a service provider. In contrast because those exhibiting a preference for the authentic acupuncturist were more idiocentric, it is not surprising that the dispositional quality of authenticity was the most influential determinant of their service provider preferences (Carpenter & Radhakrishnan, 2000).

As discussed, authenticity is believed to be quite rare and extremely valued within modern Western culture (Boyle, 2004; Lewis & Bridger, 2000). Furthermore, because idiocentrism has been found to be correlated with a need for uniqueness and personal status (Lee, 2000; Yamaguchi, 1994; Yamaguchi et al., 1995), experiencing an authentically delivered service may help participants feel more unique in comparison to others who may receive acupuncture from a non-authentic therapist. The fact that those electing the authentic Asian acupuncturist exhibited greater levels of idiocentrism than other participants also supports Dutta-Bergman and Wells' (2002) research, which found idiocentric individuals to be more interested than allocentrics in experiencing other cultures.

In summary, individual differences in idiocentrism-allocentrism have provided additional insight into the psychological factors causing individuals to prefer authentic service providers. To provide further insight, future research should

examine whether the observed effects are again observed using individuals from collectivist cultures as well as individuals from an individualist culture.

*Susceptibility to Heuristic Processing and its Effect on Service Provider Preferences*

Failing to support hypothesis six, participants were found to be equally susceptible to heuristic processing on the provided representativeness tasks, irrespective of their acupuncturist preferences. Considering that significant differences in law of similarity beliefs and need for cognition scores were observed for each preference group, this result is somewhat perplexing. After all, individuals who are low in need for cognition are more likely to utilise heuristics for making judgements than high need for cognition individuals (Petty & Wegner, 1998), and judgements of representativeness also seem related to the law of similarity. Recall that reliance on the representativeness heuristic in this context should involve the following judgements: Members of an authentic culture (x) possess certain attributes, such as ethnicity (y), hence individuals with those attributes (y) can also be perceived as belonging to the authentic culture (x). Examining the qualitative responses made by participants exhibiting the authentic preference on the acupuncture vignette, it does seem that many individuals inferred the acupuncturist's ethnicity to denote authenticity, suggesting some reliance on judgements of representativeness (e.g. "I would choose an Asian doctor for an Asian procedure").

Perhaps the most straightforward explanation for why this individual difference measure failed to predict acupuncturist preference is because it could not discriminate between the performance of each preference group on the conjunction

and base rate tasks. There is evidence within judgement and decision making literature suggesting that these are not as effective in measuring individual differences in heuristic processing as once thought (Stanovich & West, 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; 2000).

Rather, these tasks promote the normative information provided (base rates) to be less important than the non-diagnostic information (personality description), for two key reasons. The first is that providing non-diagnostic information *after* the base-rates violates conversational norms (Hilton, 1995). Hence participants perceive it to have relevance to their judgements, otherwise why mention it? The second issue relates to the fact that the base rates provided are non-causal and therefore lack relevance (Stanovich & West, 2000). Interestingly, though most individuals completing these tasks take the personal description provided into consideration, those higher in cognitive ability and need for cognition tend to be *more* persuaded by this information than those lower in cognitive ability and need for cognition, which contradicts other findings, especially those using causal base rates (Stanovich & West, 1998c).

Stanovich and West's (1998c) research thus provides an effective platform for understanding why both preference groups were found to rely more heavily on the descriptive information than the normative information in the base rate and conjunction tasks used. Further examination of representativeness heuristic and its proposed influence on authenticity preferences is therefore required. However, it would be more effective to use causal as opposed to non-causal base rates for

examining individual differences as these should prevent the discussed factors from occurring again.

### *Conclusions*

To summarise, there are several psychological differences which have been found to exist between individuals who exhibit a preference for culturally authentic service providers, and those who do not. Possibly the most interesting observation is that each of the individual difference measures (with the exception of susceptibility to representativeness heuristic) was found to independently contribute to the persuasiveness of service provider authenticity.

Hence, there are a range of psychological factors contributing to the persuasiveness of service provider authenticity. Not all may necessarily be required to achieve persuasion and each may account for different reasons this characteristic is persuasive. Most importantly, the results of the current study provide an effective platform for understanding some of the psychological processes in play when exhibiting a preference for an authentic service provider.

In relation to further research, there are numerous issues worthy of further exploration. Firstly, it would be interesting to examine whether the psychological factors explored also result in more favourable evaluations of product and service quality. The qualitative comments made by participants in the current study suggest that differences in service evaluations would exist; however, it would be nice to confirm this quantitatively.

Furthermore, having adopted a cultural authenticity manipulation in the current study, it would be interesting to examine whether these psychological processes are also involved when evaluating an emotionally authentic source. Importantly, the current study examines the psychological process underlying the persuasiveness of one authenticity cue, and one service. Though the results of the current study are informative, it is necessary to repeat this study using different products and different authenticity cues, as this will be the most effective means of truly understanding the psychology of authenticity's persuasiveness.

## CHAPTER 16

### Conclusions, Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This final chapter aims to synthesise the findings of the ten studies conducted with reference to the specific research questions identified in chapter one. This chapter will also discuss the implications and limitations of this research, and identify some of the potential directions in which further research on this topic could be conducted. To reiterate, three research questions were established at the beginning of this thesis:

1. Is the authenticity of a producer or service provider persuasive?
2. If so, what are the boundary conditions of the phenomenon?
3. Finally, what are the underlying psychological mechanisms causing producer authenticity to be persuasive?

Having explored the persuasiveness of producer and service provider authenticity across a variety of contexts, it is with little doubt that this cue is influential, increasing evaluations of product quality and value where applied. In relation to the first research question, the results of the studies conducted have provided compelling evidence that individuals will pay significantly more for a product (Studies three, six, seven, eight and nine) and evaluate it to be superior in quality (Studies one, two, three, six, eight and nine) when it has been made by a producer who is presented as being authentic, whether that be through cultural or enjoyment cues to authenticity. Furthermore, service provider authenticity was found



to influence individuals' preferences when choosing from a range of providers (Studies four, five and ten). Though this source characteristic was persuasive when a product was not provided for evaluation (with participants relying on provided information about the source to evaluate products/services), it was also persuasive when the product *was* provided (Studies two, six, seven, eight, nine). Hence, even in circumstances where a product is directly available for evaluation, individuals still appear to use the authenticity of a producer/service provider to interpret the quality and value of these products and services.

In relation to identifying potential boundary conditions of this phenomenon (research question two), the results are rather interesting. The results of Study six, for example, provided little evidence to suggest that producer/service provider authenticity becomes less persuasive when the source lacks the relevant tertiary training for producing that product or delivering that service. In fact, the results indicate that authenticity functions as an effective indicator of expertise (Studies six and nine). Other results revealed that producer enjoyment failed to be discounted when the producer was paid for completing the task (Studies one, two and three). Participants' racist beliefs (about the authentic producer's ethnic group) also failed to influence the persuasiveness of producer authenticity when it came to evaluating a cultural product (Study six).

Furthermore, this research provided little evidence of producer authenticity losing its persuasive appeal even in circumstances where 'product' authenticity was questionable (Study nine). Interestingly, even when multiple authenticity cues were in conflict (i.e. high cultural authenticity, low enjoyment), each authenticity cue

generally remained persuasive. The only indication of a potential boundary condition occurred for evaluations of product *value* when the producers were described as coffee workers, as opposed to company owners (Studies seven and eight). Recall that the results showed evaluations of product value to increase *only* when authenticity cues were complimentary (high cultural authenticity, high enjoyment). For the most part, however, producer authenticity cues appear to remain persuasive even in the presence of conflicting information. This being said, due to the constraints of this dissertation, only a few of *many* possible boundary conditions have been explored in this research. Other potential boundary conditions which might be examined in future research are discussed later in this chapter.

Finally, in response to answering the third research question, the results are highly informative. Study ten provided valuable insight into the psychological processes underlying the persuasiveness of service provider authenticity. These results reveal that there are indeed clear ideological and dispositional differences between those who exhibit preferences for an authentic service provider, and those who do not. Essentialist beliefs of self, magical beliefs in the law of similarity, idiocentric beliefs and a lower need for cognition were all characteristic of those exhibiting authentic preferences. The absence of these characteristics can consequently be perceived as perhaps the most powerful and most challenging boundary conditions to overcome.

### *Research Implications*

This research has several implications, the first being for the persuasion literature. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1981), source credibility is depicted by one of four fundamental source characteristics. These consist of the perceived expertise, trustworthiness, similarity and attractiveness of the source. Given the evidence for producer authenticity as an indicator of expertise, and the ability of producer authenticity to influence attitudes, it seems reasonable to conclude that authenticity be incorporated into this model as another persuasive facet of source credibility. Especially considering it is challenging to think of an example where producer authenticity does not signify credibility (Rudinow, 1994).

Social psychology, however, is not the only discipline that can utilise the current research. If this research has taught marketers anything, it is that many consumers have a desire for that which is authentic and are consequently willing to pay more for products and services that seemed authentically produced.

If producer authenticity is a unique selling proposition that can be plausibly applied to a company's products and services, they stand to be in a very lucrative position relative to competitors. When examining the market certain niches (i.e. luxury brands, technological brands, quality brands, cheap brands, etc) are already heavily saturated. However, when it comes to the niche of authenticity this space is less competitive. After all, not all companies can claim authenticity. As stated by Sun Tzu in 'The Art of War'

Attack where there is no defence, and defend where there is no attack. So it is that good warriors take their stand on ground where they cannot lose, and do not overlook conditions that make an opponent prone to defeat (Trans. Cleary 1988, p. 90).

In the battle for consumer attention, authenticity is therefore a proposition that few products can claim, making it exceptionally challenging to be attacked by other competitors. This also makes authenticity easy to defend. As indicated by this research, people have clearly defined schemas of what constitutes authentic and what does not. Thus, the marketing strategy becomes focused on telling consumers what they already know. Hence, marketers do not need to tell consumers that Brazilians are authentic at making coffee; they just need to tell consumers that their producers are Brazilian. As stated by Paul Bowers, National Director of Strategy at Enhance Management Market Research Firm, “The most persuasive argument involves confirming already held beliefs” (P.A. Bowers, personal communication, May 8, 2007).

Another advantage for companies promoting producer authenticity is that unlike other unique selling propositions, it will take longer for other companies to compete in that niche. Though companies can become the cheapest over night by dropping prices, it takes greater time and effort to be perceived as authentic. It may even involve a complete retooling of a company’s production process. For example, a coffee company may need to move their production plant from Asia to Brazil to promote authenticity. Hence, this research provides direction to existing producers

on how to position their production methods. Furthermore, producer authenticity, as a unique selling proposition, is advantageous for small companies who cannot compete based on economy of scale or marketing budgets. They can enter the market pitching their product at an increased price point as a result of the claim of authenticity. Though speculative, the claim of producer authenticity may even seem more credible for a smaller company than a larger company.

Though these claims may seem more relevant for cultural authenticity, this research is still important for marketers utilising emotional authenticity to promote products. Enjoyment, though persuasive, is one cue that is perhaps more challenging for marketers to utilise effectively. It is much easier to misrepresent one's emotional state than one's ethnicity, and consumers may be aware of this. It is possible that enjoyment as a producer cue would also be more persuasive when the company is small and there are therefore less producers to make broad generalisations about the emotions of as a cohesive group. Clearly there is much research to be done, and directions for future research will be discussed shortly. The key message for marketers, however, is that this is one cue that if used effectively, will persuade consumers.

From a consumer perspective, there is also much to learn as a result of this research. One of the most interesting observations to emanate from this research relates to the difficulty with which people have in assessing product quality, even in the presence of a product. This is not unexpected given that consumers, for the most part, are not afforded the opportunity to observe the production process, or do not have the knowledge to effectively understand what defines a quality product. Rather,

consumers rely on cues as surrogate indicators of quality. In such cases secondary cues, such as authenticity, become increasingly important, especially for individuals low in need for cognition.

Such cues also become increasingly important as consumers become more time poor. Consumers need to eliminate products quickly when faced with choice. Consider the typical trip to the grocery store. A consumer may purchase up to 100 products, each having multiple brand offerings. Given time constraints, it is simply not possible for consumers to thoughtfully assess every brand in every product category, even if they knew how to. Cues such as producer authenticity enable consumers to make efficient if not optimal decisions.

This being said, this research has an educative value, increasing consumers' awareness that they may rely on these cues. Marketers are aware of this and will take advantage of consumers by charging a premium price for a low quality product simply by emphasising its authenticity. From this perspective, this research will serve as a cautionary tale for consumers. The lesson to be learned may be to use these cues in conjunction with other information at hand, even if it is also secondary.

### *Limitations*

While this dissertation has enabled a relatively comprehensive exploration of the persuasiveness of authenticity in a variety of contexts, some limitations should be acknowledged. Many of these have been discussed within the contexts of the individual studies and those discussed below are more general in nature.

Though qualitative comments were used to provide further insight into the quantitative findings of the research, these verbatim comments can by no means be considered representative and should be interpreted with caution. This being said, these comments were invaluable in illuminating the reasons people find authenticity persuasive and consequently made the interpretation of results less ambiguous. It would be insightful to conduct a series of focus groups involving a direct discussion on how people conceptualise authenticity, and whether people even believe that being authenticity is indeed possible. Furthermore, these groups could explore a range of conditions to identify where this cue is persuasive and where it is not. Such discussions would also provide greater insight into the results obtained in this research.

Possibly the most obvious limitation of this research relates to the fact that results relied upon vignettes and hypothetical purchase intentions. Though participants' evaluations of product quality should be reflective of participants' thoughts about the products, there is little way of assessing whether participants would indeed pay as much in real life, as they stated they would in the vignettes. It is therefore important to be mindful of this when interpreting the discussed results. It would be certainly valuable to conduct a study within a more realistic context, where participants actually stake their own money on a product.

#### *Directions for Future Research*

The results of this research provide an effective platform for understanding the persuasive nature of source authenticity. This being said, this is only the tip of the

iceberg in understanding the nature of authenticity's persuasiveness and there is certainly the potential for more research to be conducted in this area. Firstly, this research has examined only a few products and services. Are there certain products and services, however, where producer authenticity may be less persuasive? Subsequent research may explore this possibility. It would also be interesting to manipulate the actual quality of products examined by participants to explore whether individuals would evaluate a poor quality product more favourably if said to be made by an authentic producer than a high quality product made by a non-authentic producer.

Whilst this research has established the persuasiveness of both enjoyment and culture as cues to authenticity, there is a considerable amount of research that could be conducted to explore the persuasive impact of other authenticity cues. Other emotions, for example, might be explored for suitable products (e.g. the effect of sadness as a cue to authenticity when evaluating a blues song). Alternatively, the current research provides some indication that having undergone an experience may make that producer or service provider seem more appealing (e.g. Study four's heart surgeon being elected as a result of having previously experienced a heart condition himself). It was implied that this information does function as another cue to authenticity, though this is yet to be experimentally validated. Future research could examine this potential authenticity indicator and its influence on consumer behaviour more comprehensively. As indicated by Lewis and Bridger (2000), making a product 'original' also gives it potential to be authentic. It would be interesting to examine whether being the first to produce something makes that producer's products more



appealing to individuals than other products in that category. This cue could be applied at an individual producer level or to an entire company (e.g. Coke as the original producers of cola).

There is also great opportunity to examine further boundary conditions of producer authenticity not examined within the current research. Authenticity competes with a variety of other source characteristics within the market and it would be interesting to explore some of these. Possible examples would be source celebrity, trustworthiness, honesty, attractiveness, and similarity. Though the results of the current research failed to suggest that the formal expertise of the producer functions as a boundary condition for producer authenticity (study six), it is possible that the context was not critical enough to observe an effect. If the service was a surgical procedure, or car brake repairs, it may be unlikely that authenticity would remain persuasive when the service provider was lacking formal training. Future research could examine this.

It would also be informative to examine whether producer authenticity loses its appeal if that producer mass-produces that product. It seems that part of the charm of authenticity relates to the perception that it is unique, distinctive, and its production perhaps even exclusive. It would be interesting to examine whether people would pay more for a product and rate it to be better in quality if that producer, though authentic, produces masses of that product per year. If not, this would suggest that producer authenticity is not persuasive *only* because it denotes investment, expertise and therefore product quality. Rather, there is also an element

of desiring something unique and rare. This is certainly a concept worthy of empirical exploration.

On this note, large scale production typically leads to large scale marketing budgets and omnipotence in the media. Another relevant question to ask, therefore, is whether the mass-marketing of producer authenticity limit the perceived authenticity of a product? Is authenticity the sole domain of cottage industry? It would be interesting to examine whether advertising producer authenticity actually devalues the claim of authenticity.

As discussed in chapter 15, it would be valuable to replicate Study ten using enjoyment authenticity as opposed to cultural authenticity. It would *also* be useful to examine the persuasiveness of both producer authenticity cues (enjoyment and culture) using a non-Western sample. Though the results of Study ten provide evidence that authenticity is less persuasive to individuals holding a more interdependent view of the self, it would be useful to establish whether these results translate at a cultural level.

It would also be interesting to examine whether the authenticity of sources *other* than producers and service providers is persuasive. As discussed within the persuasion literature, most of the source characteristics examined relate to individuals promoting a persuasive message as opposed to producers or service providers. In line with this research, it would be interesting to examine whether the authenticity of individuals advocating products/ services or messages is persuasive and influences individuals' product evaluations and purchase intentions.

In another vein, this research indicates that authenticity functions as a type of source credibility in the sense that authentic producers are perceived more expert and competent than non-authentic sources. Within the literature, there is evidence that attitude change resulting from source credibility usually decays with time, as is the case with most peripheral cues (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984a; 1984b; Reardon, 1981). It would be interesting to explore whether a product produced by an authentic service provider continues to be evaluated more favourably over time than a non-authentic counterpart. If so, this would provide some indication that authenticity is processed centrally, given that centrally processed information is likely to result in more enduring attitudes than information which is processed peripherally (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984b). This being said, source characteristics are extraneous to products, where producer characteristics are intimately entwined with the product.

Finally, specifically in relation to cultural authenticity, it would be valuable to explore the persuasiveness of a non-authentic producer who had been trained by a culturally authentic source. This would provide further insight into whether cultural ability is perceived as genetically transmitted within the culture or socially transferred through learning.

### *Conclusions*

To conclude, this research has provided compelling evidence that the authenticity of a producer or service provider is persuasive across a myriad of products and services. Though the research has provided an effective foundation for understanding the persuasiveness of this cue, there is great potential to conduct

further research in this area. In the meantime, this research has educated marketers on how to better position their products and services, and consumers on how to better scrutinise these products and services. This research has given both parties new weaponry to forge battle. May the most informed one win.

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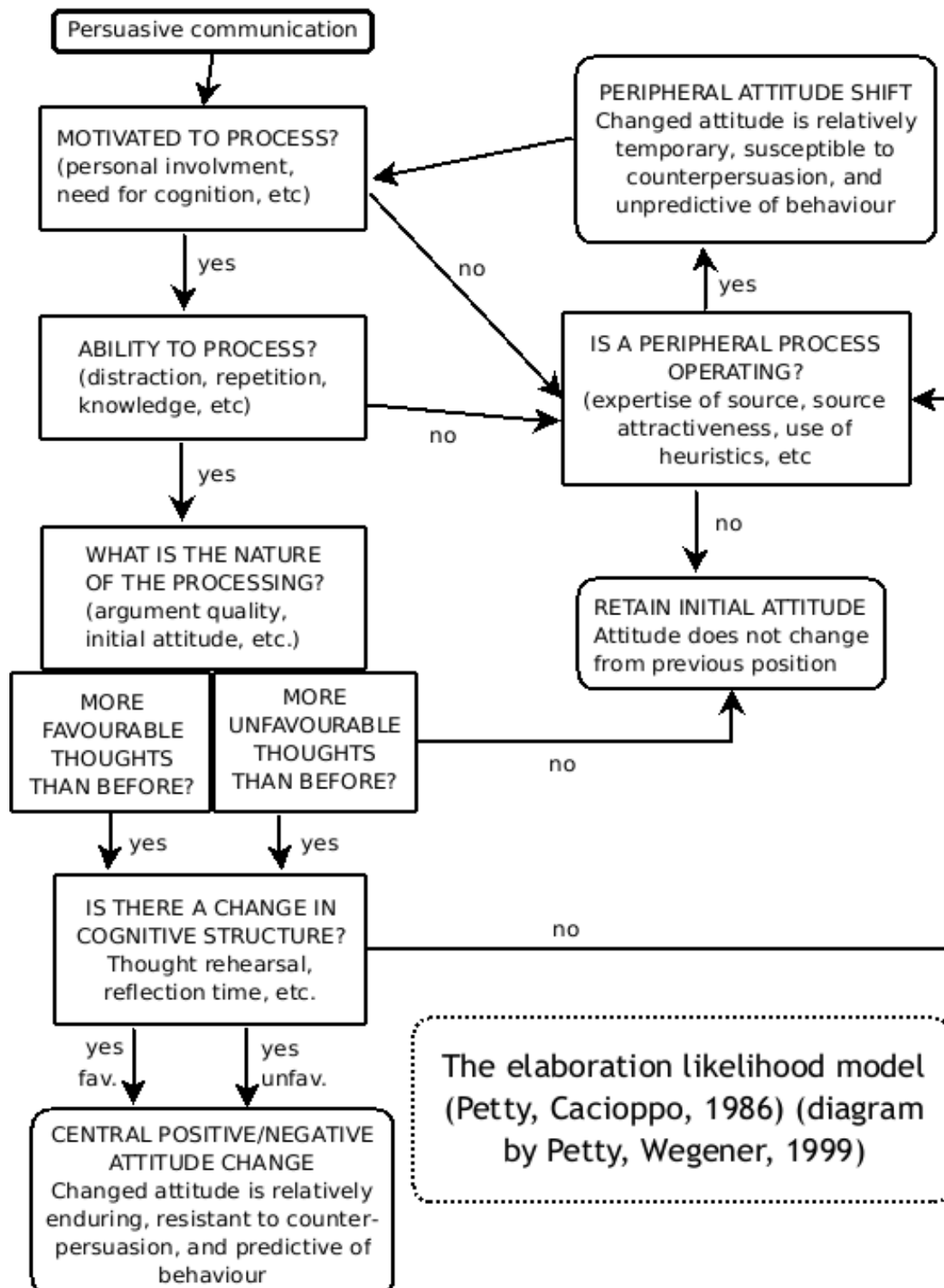
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## Appendices



## Appendix A1: Elaboration Likelihood Model



## Appendix B1: Vignette Manipulations for Study One

All conditions receive the following information;

You are currently involved in putting together an information booklet on the range of subjects available at James Cook University. One of the subjects is Greek Mythology, with which you have little knowledge on. Given that the booklet requires a brief essay on each topic, you quickly seek help. You decide to employ Essays.com, a web based company that provides its customers with professionally written essays on a broad range of topics. The company replies and informs you that one of their workers named Tom, will be writing the essay for you, given that he has completed extensive university courses in Greek mythology and subsequently received grades of high distinction for such studies.

Information is then manipulated in one of the following four ways;

*Vignette A: High enjoyment, producer payment withheld*

Tom thoroughly enjoyed learning and writing about Greek mythology and is very passionate about this topic.

*Vignette B: High enjoyment, producer payment made salient*

Tom thoroughly enjoyed learning and writing about Greek mythology and is very passionate about this topic. Tom will be paid very well for his work.

Appendix B1: Vignette Manipulations for Study One (cont).

*Vignette C: Low enjoyment, producer payment withheld*

Tom is not particularly interested in Greek mythology and finds this topic to be extremely boring.

*Vignette D: Low enjoyment, producer payment made salient*

Tom is not particularly interested in Greek mythology and finds this topic to be extremely boring. Tom will be paid very well for his work.

## Appendix B2: Questions for Study One

- 1) How much would you be willing to pay Essays.com to have this essay written by Tom?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) Given the information provided, how much do you agree with the following statement?

*“Tom is extremely competent at writing this essay”*

-----|-----|-----|-----|  
 Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

- 3) How good do you perceive the finished essay to be given the information provided?

-----|-----|-----|-----|  
 Exceptionally Bad      Bad      Average      Fair      Good      Exceptionally Good

### Appendix C1: Vignette Manipulations for Study Two

All conditions receive the following information;

Steve is a third year student who recently took ‘foundations of history’ as an elective subject at his university. Steve has a high grade point average and was consequently asked by his lecturer to write a three hundred word essay on Greek mythology to appear in the course handbook.

Information is then manipulated in one of the following four ways;

*Vignette A: High producer enjoyment, payment present*

Steve really loves Greek Mythology, and thoroughly enjoyed writing this essay for his lecturer. Steve was paid 50 dollars to for his efforts.

*Vignette B: High producer enjoyment, payment absent*

Steve really loves Greek Mythology, and thoroughly enjoyed writing this essay for his lecturer.

*Vignette C: Low producer enjoyment, payment present*

Steve has very little interest in Greek Mythology and did not enjoy writing the essay for his lecturer in the least. Steve was paid 50 dollars for his efforts.

*Vignette D: Low producer enjoyment, payment absent*

Steve has very little interest in Greek Mythology and did not enjoy writing the essay for his lecturer in the least.

## Appendix C2: Study Two Essay on Greek Mythology

Greek Mythology consists mainly of a body of diverse stories and legends about a variety of gods. Greek mythology has several distinguishing characteristics. The Greek gods resembled humans in form and showed human feelings. Unlike ancient religions, Greek mythology did not involve special revelations or spiritual teachings. It also varied widely in practice and belief, with no formal structure, such as a church government, and no written code, such as a sacred book.

Greek mythology emphasised the weakness of humans in contrast to the great and terrifying powers of nature. The Greeks believed that their gods, who were immortal, controlled all aspects of nature. So the Greeks acknowledged that their lives were completely dependent on the good will of the gods. In general, the relations between people and gods were considered friendly. But the gods delivered severe punishment to mortals who showed unacceptable behaviour, such as indulgent pride, extreme ambition, or even excessive prosperity.

The mythology was interwoven with every aspect of Greek life. The Greeks often offered sacrifices to the gods, usually of a domestic animal such as a goat. Greek mythology developed from the primitive religions of the people of Crete, an island in the Aegean Sea where the region's first civilisation arose about 3000 BC. These people believed that all natural objects had spirits, and that certain objects, or fetishes, had special magical powers. Over time, these beliefs developed into a set of legends involving natural objects, animals, and gods with a human form. Some of these legends survived as part of classical Greek mythology and are still prominent parts of Greek life even today.

## Appendix C3: Questions for Study Two

1) How good do you perceive this essay to be in terms of quality?

|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Exceptionally Bad      Bad      Average      Fair      Good      Exceptionally Good

2) How competent do you perceive Steve to be at writing this essay?

|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Extremely Incompetent      Incompetent      Neutral      Competent      Extremely Competent

2) Please rate the degree of knowledge you perceive Steve to have on this topic given the information provided.

|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Not Much At All      A Little      An Average Amount      A Moderate Amount      A Great Deal

### Appendix C4: Study Two – Three Block Hierarchical Regression Results

Block one predictors: producer enjoyment.

Block two predictors: producer enjoyment, knowledge

Block three predictors: producer enjoyment, knowledge, competence

Dependent variable: essay quality

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.334 <sup>a</sup>	.112	.101	.92968	.112	10.566	1	84	.002
2	.449 <sup>b</sup>	.201	.182	.88694	.089	9.291	1	83	.003
3	.632 <sup>c</sup>	.399	.377	.77380	.198	27.047	1	82	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Enjoyment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Enjoyment, Knowledge

c. Predictors: (Constant), Enjoyment, Knowledge, Competence

**ANOVA<sup>d</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.132	1	9.132	10.566	.002 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	72.602	84	.864		
	Total	81.734	85			
2	Regression	16.441	2	8.221	10.450	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	65.293	83	.787		
	Total	81.734	85			
3	Regression	32.636	3	10.879	18.169	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	49.098	82	.599		
	Total	81.734	85			

**Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	3.705	.313		11.840	.000			
	Enjoyment	-.652	.201	-.334	-3.251	.002	-.334	-.334	-.334
2	(Constant)	2.548	.483		5.277	.000			
	Enjoyment	-.395	.209	-.202	-1.886	.063	-.334	-.203	-.185
	Knowledge	.351	.115	.327	3.048	.003	.409	.317	.299
3	(Constant)	1.186	.496		2.391	.019			
	Enjoyment	-.347	.183	-.178	-1.896	.062	-.334	-.205	-.162
	Knowledge	.135	.109	.125	1.237	.220	.409	.135	.106
	Competence	.721	.139	.493	5.201	.000	.585	.498	.445



### Appendix D1: Study Three Vignette Manipulations

All participants receive the following information;

Following is an excerpt from an interview Who Weekly conducted with Gillian Rush following the opening of her latest film “Persuasion”. Please take your time reading it.

**Who Weekly:** Gillian, it’s so great to finally get the opportunity to chat to you. How are things for you?

**Gillian:** Wonderful. The movie premiered last Thursday and it’s been an exciting time for everyone involved.

**Who Weekly:** It’s an interesting film to say the least. What did you think when you read the script?

**Gillian:** I thought it was one of the most interesting scripts I’ve read. They leap out at you, the ones that are really ambitious. It’s very densely written. It’s intense visually, but also in terms of its ideas and its emotions. It’s not like a straightforward story.

The remainder of the vignette varied across the four conditions. Each version can be examined on the next page.

## Appendix D1: Study Three Vignette Manipulations (cont.)

*High Actress Authenticity, High Actress Payment*

**Who Weekly:** Your character is quite intense as well? How hard was it for you to identify with her?

**Gillian:** It was really easy for me to identify with “Maya” as a character. There are certainly aspects of who I am that strongly parallel her experiences. This role came extremely naturally to me. It was a joy.

**Who Weekly:** Overall, was this film an enjoyable one to make then?

**Gillian:** I have to tell you, I thoroughly enjoyed making this movie. It was honestly just so much fun to make!

**Who Weekly:** And you were paid very well for your efforts I hear?

**Gillian:** Yes, it’s nice to be recognised for my work.

*High Actress Authenticity, Low Actress Payment*

**Who Weekly:** Your character is quite intense as well? How hard was it for you to identify with her?

**Gillian:** It was really easy for me to identify with “Maya” as a character. There are certainly aspects of who I am that strongly parallel her experiences. This role came extremely naturally to me. It was a joy.

**Who Weekly:** Overall, was this film an enjoyable one to make then?

**Gillian:** I have to tell you, I thoroughly enjoyed making this movie. It was honestly just so much fun to make!

**Who Weekly:** You did this role unpaid as a favour to director Joel Quin. Is that correct?

**Gillian:** Yes. I owed him a personal favour and of course I agreed.

## Appendix D1: Study Three Vignette Manipulations (cont.)

*Low Actress Authenticity, High Actress Payment*

**Who Weekly:** Your character is quite intense as well? How hard was it for you to identify with her?

**Gillian:** I have to say that it was actually *really* difficult for me to identify with “Maya” as a character. Her experiences are so different from those of my own. As a result I found this role highly strenuous.

**Who Weekly:** Overall, was this film an enjoyable one to make then?

**Gillian:** I have to tell you, I honestly found this film one of the less enjoyable ones to make. It wasn’t a lot of fun. Very challenging at times.

**Who Weekly:** And you were paid very well for your efforts I hear?

**Gillian:** Yes, it’s nice to be recognised for my work.

*Low Actress Authenticity, Low Actress Payment*

**Gillian:** I have to say that it was actually *really* difficult for me to identify with “Maya” as a character. Her experiences are so different from those of my own. As a result I found this role highly strenuous.

**Who Weekly:** Overall, was this film an enjoyable one to make then?

**Gillian:** I have to tell you, I honestly found this film one of the less enjoyable ones to make. It wasn’t a lot of fun. Very challenging at times.

**Who Weekly:** You did this role unpaid as a favour to director Joel Quin. Is that correct?

**Gillian:** Yes. I owed him a personal favour and of course I agreed.

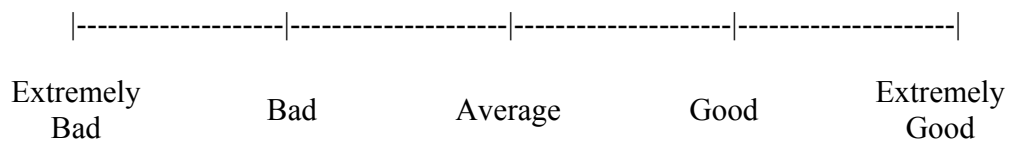
## Appendix D2: Questions for Study Three

Following are several short questions. Please answer to the best of your ability given the information you have been provided.

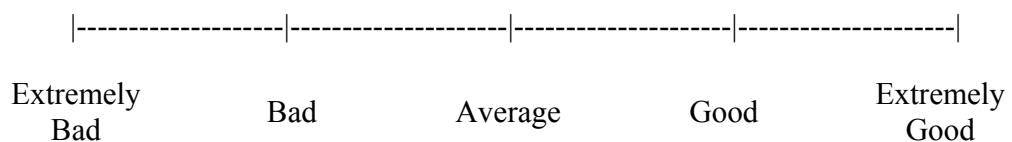
1. How much would you be willing to pay to see this movie starring Gillian Rush?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

2. Given the information you have just read, how good a job do you perceive Gillian to do in this film as an actress?



3. How good in quality do you estimate the movie to be given the information you have read?



### Appendix D3: Study Three Mediation Regression Analyses

Block one predictor: Actress authenticity.

Block two predictors: Actress authenticity, perceptions of the actress' performance

Dependent variable: Evaluations of film value (how much paid to see film).

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.267 <sup>a</sup>	.071	.061	3.65827	.071	7.208	1	94	.009
2	.447 <sup>b</sup>	.199	.182	3.41461	.128	14.894	1	93	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity, Actress Quality

**ANOVA<sup>c</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	96.459	1	96.459	7.208	.009 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	1257.999	94	13.383		
	Total	1354.458	95			
2	Regression	270.119	2	135.059	11.584	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1084.339	93	11.660		
	Total	1354.458	95			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity, Actress Quality

c. Dependent Variable: Payment

**Coefficients<sup>d</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	9.133	1.188		7.686	.000			
	Authenticity	-2.005	.747	-.267	-2.685	.009	-.267	-.267	-.267
2	(Constant)	3.427	1.848		1.854	.067			
	Authenticity	-.931	.751	-.124	-1.241	.218	-.267	-.128	-.115
	Actress Quality	1.818	.471	.386	3.859	.000	.431	.372	.358

a. Dependent Variable: Payment

## Appendix D3: Study Three Mediation Regression Analyses (cont.)

Block one predictor: Actress authenticity.

Block two predictors: Actress authenticity, perceptions of the actress' performance

Dependent variable: Evaluations of film quality

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.266 <sup>a</sup>	.071	.061	.89086	.071	7.161	1	94	.009
2	.637 <sup>b</sup>	.406	.394	.71586	.336	52.576	1	93	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity, Actress Quality

ANOVA<sup>c</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.683	1	5.683	7.161	.009 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	74.602	94	.794		
	Total	80.285	95			
2	Regression	32.626	2	16.313	31.833	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	47.659	93	.512		
	Total	80.285	95			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity, Actress Quality

c. Dependent Variable: Movie Quality

Coefficients<sup>d</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	2.911	.289		10.060	.000			
	Authenticity	-.487	.182	-.266	-2.676	.009	-.266	-.266	-.266
2	(Constant)	.664	.387		1.713	.090			
	Authenticity	-.064	.157	-.035	-.405	.687	-.266	-.042	-.032
	Actress Quality	.716	.099	.624	7.251	.000	.637	.601	.579

a. Dependent Variable: Movie Quality

## Appendix D3: Study Three Mediation Regression Analyses (cont.)

Block one predictor: actress authenticity

Dependent variable: evaluations of actress' performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.371 <sup>a</sup>	.137	.128	.74762	.137	14.978	1	94	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.371	1	8.371	14.978	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	52.540	94	.559		
	Total	60.911	95			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity

b. Dependent Variable: Actress Quality

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	3.139	.243		12.924	.000			
	Authenticity	-.591	.153	-.371	-3.870	.000	-.371	-.371	-.371

a. Dependent Variable: Actress Quality

## Appendix E1: Study Four Vignette

You have just been diagnosed with a serious heart condition, and are in need of immediate surgery. You are informed that there are two cardiologists working at the hospital who are available and are only too happy to help you make a fast and effective recovery. Before you make your decision, you enquire about each doctor. Your general practitioner provides you with the following information. Both Dr. Brown and Dr. Smith have been cardiologists at the Townsville Hospital for the last 10 years. Both graduated in 1992 from prestigious universities, where they each attained final marks of a high distinction.

Dr Brown was originally attracted to this specialised area as he himself had suffered a heart condition as a child. Although he has made a full recovery, his dedication to this area of medicine has strongly endured. He thoroughly enjoys his job and is extremely passionate about his work. Dr. Smith fell into being a cardiologist quite by coincidence. He originally had intended on being a podiatrist but two years into his general medical degree, this field of specialisation was removed from his university, causing him to instead become a cardiologist. He has never felt that this specialisation is really "him", but he is a good doctor and has worked hard. Both are incredibly experienced and diligent in their duties to their patients. Both doctors are highly familiarised with this procedure, and neither has had a mishap to date. Given what you have been told, what is your choice?

Dr. Brown

Dr. Smith



## Appendix F1: Study Five Vignette

You have been complaining of back pain for a few months now, and have tried several treatments, all which have shown to be of little use. A friend of yours asks you if you have tried acupuncture. Eager to know more, you go to the library and read that acupuncture is a form of ancient Chinese medicine which involves the insertion of fine needles into the body at specific points shown to be effective in the treatment of health problems. Although the Chinese have mapped these points over a period of four thousand years, the western world has more recently adopted this technique as a treatment for a range of health problems. Given that you feel there are few options left, you decide to give acupuncture a chance. However, given that you are having needles inserted into your back, you are somewhat selective about which acupuncturist you will use. You want to go to someone who knows what they are doing. You contact your friend and she recommends two acupuncturists. You look of the phone book and find their respective advertisements.

Dr. Chuan Liu received his training in acupuncture at the Nanjing Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine. He has been practicing this technique for two decades and has written several books on the topic. Dr. Robert Hayden was trained in acupuncture at the Centre for Complementary Medicine Research in Sydney in 1980. Since then he has taught acupuncture at the local health college whilst administering acupuncture to the public within the college's clinic. Both therapists are registered members of the Acupuncture Society of Australia and have solid reputations. Which is your preference for administering acupuncture on your back?

Dr Chuan Liu

Dr. Robert Hayden

Appendix G1: Study Six- Indigenous Aboriginal Art

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TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

## Appendix G2: Study Six Cultural Authenticity Vignette Manipulations

All participants receive the following information;

You have been looking for a piece of aboriginal style art for your home. Money is no object, and you are willing to pay whatever you think is warranted for the piece of art you end up selecting. You come across the following painting, and ask about the artist.

Participants then received one artist authenticity manipulation and one artist expertise manipulation.

Authenticity manipulations (cultural authenticity)

*High cultural authenticity*

The art gallery worker informs you that the artist is an Aboriginal woman named Naarta Nungurrayi.

*Low cultural authenticity*

The art gallery worker informs you that the artist is a Caucasian woman named Margaret Elliot.

Credibility manipulations (formal expertise)

*High formal expertise*

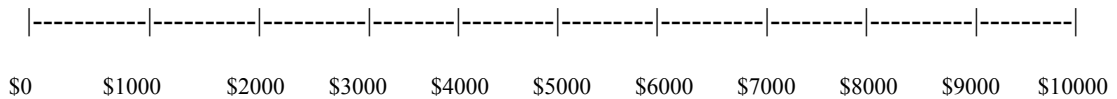
The artist has a Masters degree in Fine Arts majoring in Australian indigenous art.

*Low formal expertise*

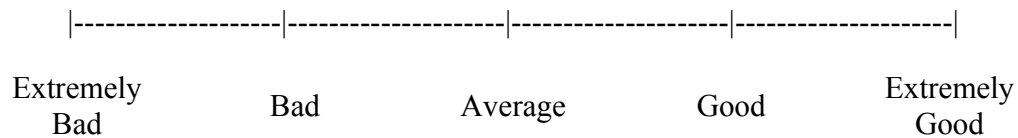
The artist has had no formal art training.

## Appendix G3: Study Six Art Vignette Questions

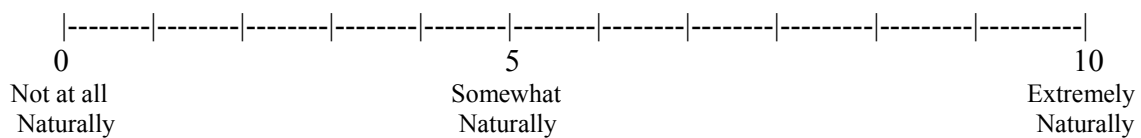
- 1) How valuable do you believe this *particular* piece to be in terms of monetary value?



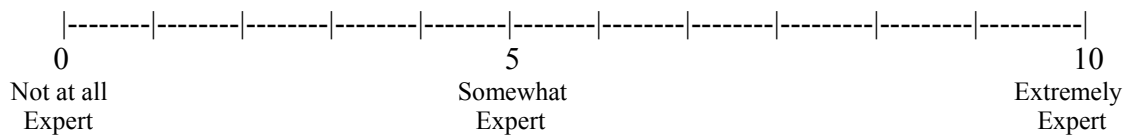
- 2) How good do you perceive this piece of art to be?



- 3) On a scale of 0-10, how naturally do you think painting this piece came to this person?



- 4) On a scale of 0-10, how expert do you perceive this person to be in this style of art?



#### Appendix G4: Study Six Enjoyment Authenticity Vignette Manipulation

All participants receive the following information;

You arrive home one afternoon, and sit down at your desk to complete an assignment. As you start typing away at your computer, it freezes and you cannot access anything. Your computer informs you that you have a system error and will not let you save, access, or open any information. When you turn off and then restart your computer, the windows interface is gone. You have a black screen only. In desperation, you call your flatmate in and tell them what has just happened. He recommends a guy called Michael, who he works with.

Credibility manipulations (formal expertise)

*Low expertise*

Michael has a degree in nursing, but fixes computers in his spare time for extra money and no customer has ever complained.

*High expertise*

Michael has a degree in information technology and fixes computers in his spare time for extra money and no customer has ever complained.

Appendix G4: Study Six Enjoyment Authenticity Vignette Manipulation (cont).

Authenticity manipulations (emotional authenticity)

*Low enjoyment*

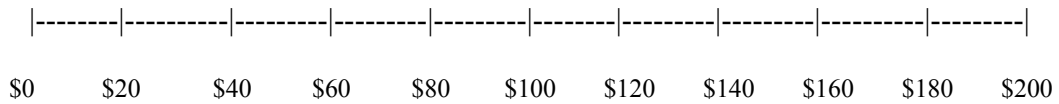
You contact Michael and he agrees to take the job. Unenthusiastically, he tells you that he doesn't particularly enjoy working on computers and finds fixing these sorts of problems to be quite tedious.

*High enjoyment*

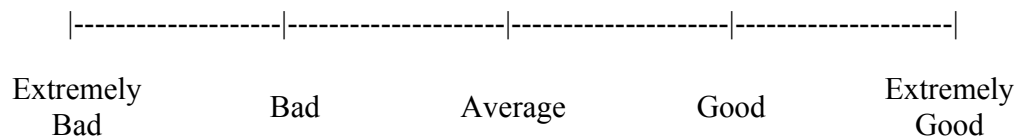
You contact Michael and he agrees to take the job. Excitedly, he tells you that he really enjoys fixing computers and gets a real kick out of solving problems like the one you have.

## Appendix G5: Study Six Computer Vignette Questions

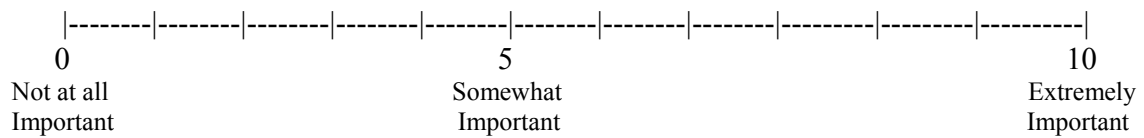
1) How much are you willing to pay Michael for a day's work?



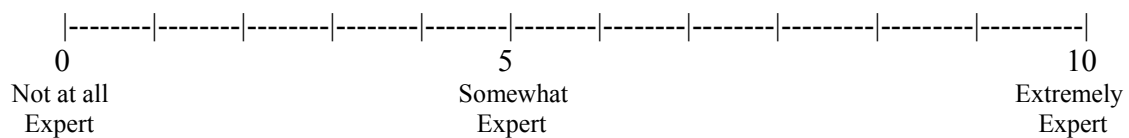
2) How good a job do you think Michael will do fixing your computer?



3) On a scale of 0-10, how important are Michael's technological skills to his sense of who he is?



4) On a scale of 0-10, how much of a computer expert do you perceive Michael to be?



## Appendix G6: Adapted Modern Racism Scale with Distracter Items

1. It is easy to understand the anger of Indigenous people in Australia.
2. With the news media being so focused on negative news, we lose sight of the good things in our world. \*
3. Indigenous Australians have more influence upon school de-segregation plans than they ought to have.
4. If immigrants didn't live together in such large groups, we wouldn't have such a problem with gangs in large cities. \*
5. Indigenous Australians are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.
6. If politicians spent less money traveling, partying and entertaining overseas guests, this money could be used for building better health and educational facilities.\*
7. Over the past few years Indigenous Australians have gotten more economically than they deserve.
8. The problem with universities is that lecturers spend so much time stuck in buildings; they lose sight of the real world. \*
9. Over the past few years the government and news media have shown more respect to Indigenous Australians than they deserve.



## Appendix G6: Adapted Modern Racism Scale (cont.)

10. The more we encourage single women to have children via IVF etc, the more the notion of a family unit is damaged. \*
11. If jail terms were stricter, it is unlikely that people would re-offend. \*
12. Indigenous Australians should not push themselves where they're not wanted.
13. If there wasn't so much pressure for women to be good wives, good mothers and good workers, relationships wouldn't break down so often. \*
14. Discrimination against Indigenous Australians is no longer a problem in Australia.
15. Daycare is a waste of government resources. Mothers should be mothers. \*
16. The violence on television never caused any harm in the real world.\*

\* Distracter items

## Appendix G7: Study Six Means Table

## The Effect of Source Authenticity and Source Expertise on Evaluations of Product Value and Quality

	Low Authenticity				High Authenticity			
	Low Expertise		High Expertise		Low Expertise		High Expertise	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Art vignette: Evaluation of product value (Z score)	-0.30	0.77	-0.28	0.77	0.05	0.95	0.51	1.28
Art vignette: Evaluation of product value	\$1,564.71	1278.15	\$1,597.50	1262.88	\$2,142.86	1561.27	\$2,894.74	2105.41
Art vignette: Evaluation of product quality	2.57	1.01	2.52	0.88	3.08	0.68	2.68	0.64
Art vignette: Evaluation of artist authenticity	4.82	2.74	4.58	2.27	7.05	2.18	6.61	1.85
Art vignette: Evaluation of artist expertise	3.65	2.57	6.14	2.13	7.14	2.54	6.59	1.59
Computer vignette: Evaluation of service value (Z score)	-0.15	1.32	0.01	1.00	-0.20	0.60	0.35	1.01
Computer vignette: Evaluation of service value	\$82.35	47.90	\$ 88.00	36.36	\$80.48	22.02	\$100.53	36.89
Computer vignette: Evaluation of service quality	2.44	0.74	2.94	0.67	3.05	0.50	3.32	0.45
Computer vignette: Evaluation of technician authenticity	3.18	1.98	5.10	2.67	6.05	2.25	7.90	1.48
Computer vignette: Evaluation of technician expertise	4.88	2.00	5.90	1.48	6.24	1.34	7.33	1.22

## Appendix H1: Vignette Manipulations for Study Seven

### *High cultural authenticity*

At Tambem our workers are Brazilian individuals native to Minas Gerais.

### *Cultural authenticity undisclosed*

At Tambem our workers come from a range of different places from around the globe.

### *High enjoyment authenticity*

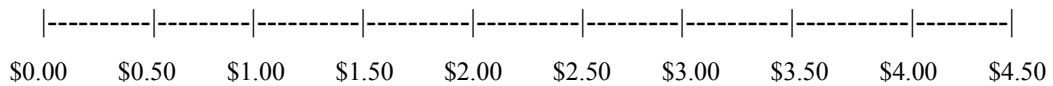
A recent survey of the staff concluded that these individuals thoroughly enjoy working with coffee

### *Enjoyment authenticity undisclosed*

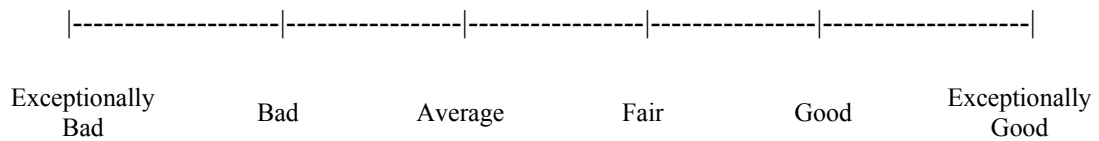
No information about the producers' enjoyment or lack thereof was provided to participants.

## Appendix H2: Studies Seven and Eight Questions

- 1) Given the above information, how much will you pay for a cup of coffee made by Tambem Coffee?



- 2) What do you perceive the quality of this coffee to be given the information provided?



- 3) What is your rationale for the above answers?

## Appendix I1: Pre-test Questions for Study Eight

Indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
-2	-1	0	1	2

1. Brazilians are authentic at producing coffee
2. British are authentic at producing coffee
3. Africans are authentic at producing coffee
4. Indonesians are authentic at producing coffee
5. Americans are authentic at producing coffee
6. Mexicans are authentic at producing coffee
7. Indians are authentic at producing coffee
8. New Zealanders are authentic at producing coffee
9. Chinese are authentic at producing coffee

## Appendix J1: Explicit Vignette Manipulations for Study Eight

### *High cultural authenticity*

At Tambem our workers are Brazilian individuals native to Minas Gerais.

### *Low cultural authenticity*

At Tambem our workers are British individuals.

### *High enjoyment authenticity*

A recent survey of the staff concluded that these individuals thoroughly enjoy working with coffee.

### *Low enjoyment authenticity*

A recent survey of the staff concluded that these individuals do not enjoy working with coffee.

## Appendix K1: Vignette Manipulations Used in Study Nine

### *High cultural authenticity - producers*

Novo was started in 1988 by the Dias family; a family of native Brazilians. This Brazilian family grow, pick and roast the beans themselves.

### *Low cultural authenticity - producers*

Novo was started by the Benton family; a British family. This family grow, pick and roast the beans themselves.

### *High enjoyment authenticity – producers*

When interviewed recently, the xxx family stated that they really enjoy producing this coffee and are having a lot of fun with this venture.

### *Low enjoyment authenticity – producers*

When interviewed recently, the xxx family stated that they haven't found producing coffee as enjoyable an experience as they had anticipated. Despite this, they will continue in this venture.

### *High cultural authenticity - product*

'Novo' coffee beans are native to Brazil and the coffee is grown and produced exclusively at the 2000 acre family-run property in the state of Minas Gerais.

### *Low cultural authenticity – product*

'Novo' coffee beans are native to Britain and the coffee is grown and produced exclusively at the 2000 acre family-run property in the south of England.

## Appendix K2: Example Vignette Used in Study Nine

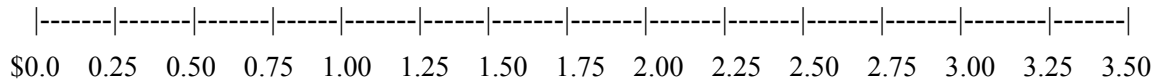
The example vignette provided below was used in the high cultural authenticity, high enjoyment authenticity, high product authenticity condition.

<p><b>NOVO</b> Coffee</p>	<p>This is a sample of 'Novo Coffee.'</p> <p>Novo was started in 1988 by the Dias family; a family of native Brazilians. This Brazilian family grow, pick and roast the beans themselves. 'Novo' coffee beans are native to Brazil and the coffee is grown and produced exclusively at the 2000 acre family-run property in the state of Minas Gerais.</p> <p>When interviewed recently, the Dias family stated that they really enjoy producing this coffee and are having a lot of fun with this venture.</p> <p>Please smell the sample and answer the below questions</p>
<p>THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS</p>	

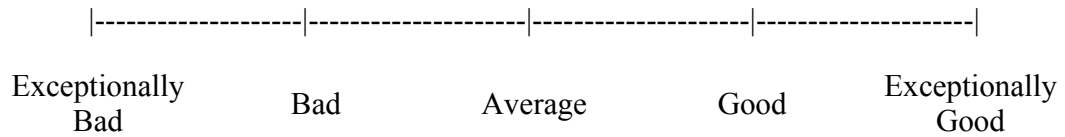


## Appendix K3: Questions Used in Study Nine

1) How much will you pay for a cup of Novo coffee?



2) What do you perceive the quality of this coffee to be?



3) What is your rationale for the above answers?

### Appendix L1: Study Ten Vignette

You have been complaining of back pain for a few months now, and have tried several treatments, all which have shown to be of little use. A friend of yours asks you if you have tried acupuncture. Eager to know more, you go to the library and read that acupuncture is a form of ancient Chinese medicine which involves the insertion of fine needles into the body at specific points shown to be effective in the treatment of health problems. Although the Chinese have mapped these points over a period of four thousand years, the western world has more recently adopted this technique as a treatment for a range of health problems.

Given that you feel there are few options left, you decide to give acupuncture a chance. However, given that you are having needles inserted into your back, you are somewhat selective about which acupuncturist you will use. You want to ensure you will get someone who knows what they are doing. You contact the local health centre and they tell you they have two acupuncturists to choose from.

Dr. Chuan Liu received his training in acupuncture at the Nanjing Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Dr. Robert Hayden was trained in acupuncture at the Centre for Complementary Medicine Research in Sydney. Both therapists have had 15 years of experience, are registered members of the Acupuncture Society of Australia and have solid reputations.

## Appendix L2: Study Ten Vignette Questions

1. Which is your preference for administering acupuncture on your back?

Dr Chuan Liu

No preference *or* Dr. Robert Hayden

2. How skilled do you think Dr Chuan Liu is in providing this service?

|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Not At All  
Skilled

Extremely  
Skilled

3. How skilled do you think Dr Robert Hayden is in providing this service?

|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Not At All  
Skilled

Extremely  
Skilled

4. Why did you have such a preference?

## Appendix L3: Idiocentrism-Allocentrism Scale

1. If the group is slowing me down, it is better to leave it and work alone.
2. To be superior a man must stand alone.
3. Winning is everything.
4. Only those who depend on themselves get ahead in life.
5. If you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself.
6. What happens to me is my own doing.
7. I feel winning is important in both work and games.
8. Success is the most important thing in life.
9. It annoys me when other people perform better than I do.
10. Doing your best isn't enough; it is important to win.
11. In most cases, to cooperate with someone whose ability is lower than oneself is not as desirable as doing the thing on one's own.
12. In the long run the only person you can count on is yourself.
13. It is foolish to try to preserve resources for future generations.
14. People should not be expected to do anything for the community unless they are paid for it.
15. Even if a child won the Noble Prize the parents should not feel honoured in any way.
16. I would not let my parents use my car (if I had one), no matter whether they are good drivers or not.
17. I would help within my means if a relative told me that he/she is in financial difficulty. \*

## Appendix L3: Idiocentrism-Allocentrism Scale (cont.)

18. I like to live close to my friends. \*
19. The motto “sharing is both blessing and calamity” is still applicable even if one’s friend is clumsy, dumb, and causing a lot of trouble. \*
20. When my colleagues tell me personal things about themselves, we’re drawn closer together. \*
21. I would not share my ideas or newly acquired knowledge with my parents.
22. Children should not feel honoured even if the father were highly praised and given an award by a government official for his contributions and service to the community.
23. I am not to blame if one of my family members fails.
24. My happiness is unrelated to the well-being of my coworkers.
25. My parents’ opinions are not important in my choice of a spouse.
26. I am not to blame when one of my close friends fails.
27. My coworkers’ opinions are not important in my choice of a spouse.
28. When a close friend of mine is successful, it does not really make me look better.
29. One need not worry about what the neighbours say about whom one should marry.

\* = reverse scored

## Appendix L4: Need for Cognition Scale

1. I would prefer complex to simple problems.
2. I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking.
3. Thinking is not my idea of fun.
4. I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities.
5. I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is likely a chance I will have to think in depth about something.
6. I find satisfaction in deliberating hard and for long hours.
7. I only think as hard as I have to.
8. I prefer to think about small, daily projects to long-term ones.
9. I like tasks that require little thought once I've learned them.
10. The idea of relying on thought to make my way to the top appeals to me.
11. I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems.
12. Learning new ways to think doesn't excite me very much.
13. I prefer my life to be filled with puzzles that I must solve.
14. The notion of thinking abstractly is appealing to me.
15. I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought.
16. I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort.

## Appendix L4: Need for Cognition Scale (cont).

17. It's enough for me that something gets the job done; I don't care how or why it works.
18. I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me personally.

## Appendix L5: Magical Beliefs Scale

1. It would not bother me to sleep in a nice hotel room if I knew that a man had died of a heart attack in that room the night before. \*
2. Abilities can be transmitted from person to person through generations even when they have not met.
3. I would refuse to drink juice from a bed pan even if it had never been used.
4. I would have no problem walking under a ladder. \*
5. I would not eat soup that had been stirred with a used, but thoroughly cleaned fly swatter.
6. Good things happen to people who pray
7. If my great grandmother was good at something, it is likely I will be too.
8. I would never store my lunch in a plastic container previously used to store pet food, even though it had been washed thoroughly.
9. It would be easy for me to think that a doctor, who comes from a long line of doctors, will be a better practitioner than someone who comes from a line of farmers.

\* Reverse scored item



### Appendix L6: Implicit Essentialist Beliefs Measure

1. A person's moral character is something very basic about them and cannot be changed much.
2. Whether a person is responsible and sincere or not is deeply ingrained in their personality.
3. There is not much that can be done to change a person's moral traits.

## Appendix L7: Base Rate Task

A panel of psychologists have interviewed and administered personality tests to 30 engineers and 70 lawyers, all successful in their relative fields. On the basis of this information, descriptions of each of these individuals have been written. You will find below a single description chosen at random from the 100 available descriptions. Please indicate your probability that the person described is a lawyer

*Jack is a 45 year old man. He is married and has 4 children. He is generally conservative, careful, and ambitious. He shows no interest in political and social issues and spends most of his free time on hobbies which include home carpentry, sailing and mathematical puzzles.*

The probability that Jack is a lawyer is \_\_\_\_\_ %

## Appendix L8: Conjunction Fallacy Task

Bill is 34 years old. He is intelligent, but unimaginative, compulsive and generally lifeless. In school, he was strong in mathematics but weak in social studies and humanities.

*Given this information, what is the probability that each of the following statements is true?*

1. Bill is a physician
2. Bill is an architect
3. Bill is an accountant
4. Bill plays jazz for a hobby
5. Bill surfs for a hobby
6. Bill is a reporter
7. Bill is an accountant who plays jazz for a hobby
8. Bill climbs mountains for a hobby