

June 2009

## Fabrizio Di Muro

Curriculum Vitae

University of Alberta  
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## Education

- 2005 – present    Ph.D. (Business Administration), The University of Western Ontario,  
London, ON Specialization: Marketing. Supervisor: Kyle B. Murray
- 2003 – 2005        M.Sc. (Applied Mathematics), The University of Western Ontario,  
London, ON Specialization: Financial Mathematics.  
Supervisor: Matt Davison
- 1999-2003         B.Sc. (Honours), Brandon University, Brandon, MB  
Double major in Math and Business Administration

## Dissertation

### Arousal-Congruency and Consumer Choice

**Status:** *Proposal Defended May 20, 2009. Data collection completed for two studies. Data collection for the next two studies is scheduled for Fall 2009. Defense expected May 2010.*

### Dissertation Committee:

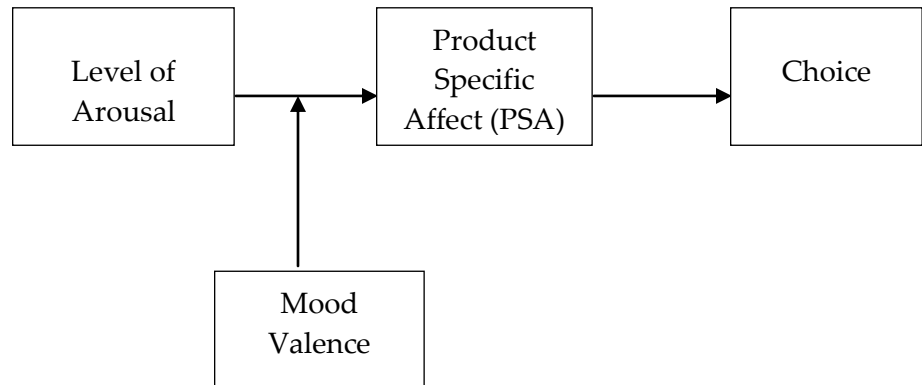
Kyle B. Murray (Chair)	School of Business, University of Alberta
June Cotte	Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario
Miranda Goode	Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario

### Abstract:

This dissertation proposes an in-depth investigation into the phenomenon of arousal-congruency – consumers' tendency to make choices that are congruent with their level of felt arousal. A theoretical model (shown below) detailing how arousal congruency influences consumer choice is developed. This model suggests that the effect of the interaction between

level of arousal and mood valence on choice is mediated by product specific affect (PSA). Four studies that test the relationships predicted in the theoretical model have been designed. Data collection and analysis has been completed for the first two studies. Data collection is scheduled for the final two studies is scheduled for September and October 2009.

### Theoretical Model:



Study 1 (Completed). The purpose of Study 1 is to establish the basic relationship between level of arousal and choice. This is accomplished by testing the congruency hypothesis: are consumers who are feeling low-levels (high-levels) of arousal more likely to choose a low-arousal (high-arousal) consumption experience?(H<sub>1</sub>) Level of arousal was manipulated through the use of color. In this study, participants were randomly assigned to one of the following experimental conditions: low-arousal condition (participants were exposed to a blue background screen) or high-arousal condition (participants were exposed to a red background screen). The results show that consumers experiencing low-levels (high-levels) of arousal are more likely to select low-arousal (high-arousal) consumption experiences. This finding provides initial support for the congruency hypothesis.

Study 2 (Completed). The purpose of Study 2 is to examine the potential mediating role of PSA in arousal congruent decision making. Two hypotheses are tested: (1) consumers will have more positive PSA towards engaging in an arousal-congruent consumption experience than towards engaging in an arousal-incongruent consumption experience (H<sub>2</sub>); and (2) PSA mediates the relationship between level of arousal and choice (H<sub>3</sub>). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the following experimental conditions: low-arousal condition (participants were exposed to a blue background screen) or high-arousal condition (participants were exposed to a red background screen). The results show that consumers in a low arousal state did indeed have more positive PSA to engaging in a low-arousal consumption experience than to engaging in a high-arousal consumption experience. Similarly, consumers in a high arousal state had more positive PSA to engaging in a high-arousal consumption experience than to engaging in a low-arousal consumption experience. Furthermore, a Barron and Kenny (1986) mediation analysis shows that PSA mediates the relationship between level of arousal and

choice.

Study 3 (In Preparation). The purpose of Study 3 is to examine the role that mood valence plays in the relationship between participants' level of arousal and consumer choice. In doing so, I aim to test the full moderated mediation model illustrated above. A 2 (Level of Arousal: low, high) x 2 (Mood Valence: positive, negative) between-subjects design, along with a control condition, will be utilized. Participants will be randomly assigned to the various experimental conditions.

Music will be utilized as the stimuli to manipulate mood valence and arousal, as prior research has suggested that music could influence both elements simultaneously (Thompson, Schellenberg and Husain 2001; Husain, Thompson and Schellenberg 2002). Consistent with prior research on music, level of arousal will be manipulated by asking participants to either listen to slow-tempo music (low-arousal) or to listen to fast-tempo music (high-arousal). Mood valence will be manipulated by asking participants to listen to music in a major key (positive mood) or to listen to music in a minor key (negative mood). The results are expected to support the full moderated mediation model illustrated above.

Study 4 (In Preparation). The purpose of this study is to provide a second test of the moderated mediation model using a different atmospheric variable: scent. This study will employ a 2 (Level of Arousal: low, high) x 2 (Mood Valence: negative, positive) between-subjects design, along with a control condition. Participants will be randomly assigned to experimental conditions. Scent will be utilized to manipulate participants' level of arousal and mood valence. Level of arousal will be manipulated through the use of Lavender and Grapefruit scents. Mood valence will be manipulated by altering the intensity of the scent, as prior research suggests that as the intensity of a scent increases, its pleasantness decreases (Henion 1971). I expect to find further support for the moderated mediation hypothesis – that is, the effect of the interaction between the level of arousal and mood valence on choice is mediated by PSA.

## Work In Progress

Murray, Kyle B., Di, Muro, Fabrizio, Finn, Adam and Peter Popkowski-Leszczyc. **“The Effect of Weather on Consumer Spending.”** (Expected Submission Date: July 2009. Target: Journal of Marketing Research).

There has been a great deal of anecdotal evidence to suggest that weather affects consumer decision making. In this paper, we provide the first empirical evidence that weather does affect consumer spending and we explain the psychological mechanism that underlies this phenomenon. Specifically, we propose that the effect of weather – and, in particular, sunlight – on consumer spending is mediated by negative affect. That is, as exposure to sunlight increases negative affect decreases and consumer spending tends to increase. We find strong support for this prediction across a series of three mixed methods studies in both the field and the laboratory.

Di Muro, Fabrizio and Kyle B. Murray. "The Effects of Mode of Processing and Assortment Size on Consumer Satisfaction"

In this research, we explore whether consumers' satisfaction increases when using experiential processing (instead of rational processing) as the size of the choice set increases. We are specifically interested in seeing whether there is an interaction between size of the choice set and mode of processing. Since experiential processing is non-conscious, participants using this type of processing will be able to avoid information overload, as non-conscious processing can handle large amounts of information (Dijksterhuis 2004). Furthermore, non-conscious processing leads to more a polarized representation of information, making it is less likely that negative emotions will be experienced (Dijksterhuis 2004). Due to the properties of experiential processing, we predict that consumers will be more satisfied with the choices they make when using experiential, as opposed to rational, processing. However, we expect that the magnitude of the effect will be moderated by the size of the choice set, such that as the size of the choice set increases (decreases), the effect of experiential processing on consumers' satisfaction will also increase (decrease), as compared to rational processing.

We plan to address our research question in an experiment utilizing a 2 (mode of processing: rational, experiential) by 2 (size of choice set: small, large) between subjects design. Mode of processing will be manipulated using a priming procedure developed by Godek and Murray (2008). In this procedure, participants in the rational condition will be asked about their future decision making, while participants in the experiential condition will be asked about their past decision making. Once mode of processing has been primed, participants will be asked to select a product from either a small (6 options) or a large (30 options) choice set, and to subsequently report their satisfaction with their choice.

Di Muro, Fabrizio. "Is All Money Created Equal? The Impact of Currency Aesthetics on Consumer Spending" (1<sup>st</sup> Study is in the Data Collection Phase).

In this research, I examine whether consumers are more likely to spend an old five dollar bill as opposed to a brand new five dollar bill. In the first study, consumers will be given two distinct five dollar bills: one that is old, and one that is brand new. Participants will be asked to indicate the likelihood that they would spend these bills, as well as how likely they are to donate these bills to charity, how likely they are to spend this money on a hedonic product, as well as on a utilitarian product. It is expected that consumers will be more likely to spend the older-looking bills. Subsequent studies will focus on developing and testing a theoretical model explaining why consumers are more likely to spend older-looking bills.

## Conference Presentations

"The Effect of Weather on Consumer Spending". *Administrative Sciences Association of Canada (ASAC) Conference*, Niagara Falls, Ontario, June 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

"The Effect of Weather on Consumer Spending", *University of Alberta Scholarly Marketing Retreat*, Edmonton, Alberta, May 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.

"The Effect of Weather on Consumer Spending", *Society of Consumer Psychology Conference*, San Diego, California, February 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

"The Effect of Weather on Consumer Spending", *INFORMS Marketing Science Conference*, Vancouver, British Columbia, June 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

"The Effect of Mode of Processing and Assortment Size on Consumer Satisfaction", *Southern Ontario Behavioral Decision Research (SOBDR) Conference*, Waterloo, Ontario, May 15<sup>th</sup> 2008.

"The Effect of Weather on Consumer Spending". *Southern Ontario Behavioral Decision Research (SOBDR) Conference*, London, Ontario, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

"The Effect of Weather on Consumer Spending", *Graduate Studies Showcase*, London, Ontario, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007.

"The Effect of Weather on Consumer Spending", *Association of Consumer Research Conference*, Memphis, Tennessee, October 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

## Research Interests

Consumer Judgment and Decision Making

Retail Atmospherics

Consumer Aesthetics

Information Processing

## Teaching

Sept 2008 – Dec 2008

### Lecturer, Management and Organizational Studies (MOS), The University of Western Ontario

I have taught “Principles of Marketing” at the Faculty of Management and Organizational Studies. I was responsible for all aspects of course delivery and grading.

*Course: Principles of Marketing – MOS 3320a*

*Rating (7 point scale): 5.9*

January 2007-April 2007

#### Teaching Assistant, The University of Western Ontario

Course: Retail Marketing Management (undergraduate)

- Taught by Kyle B. Murray
- Grading of assignments and final paper.

Sept 2003-April 2005

#### Teaching Assistant, The University of Western Ontario

Courses: Calculus I, Linear Algebra I

- Supervise tests and assignments.
- Help math students with their questions, explain concepts.

Sept 2000-2003

#### Teaching Assistant, Brandon University

Courses: Calculus I, Linear Algebra I

- Supervise tests and assignments.
- Help math students with their questions, explain concepts.

## Scholarships and Awards

May 2009	Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS)
2008-09	Plan for Excellence Doctoral Fellowship
May 2008	Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS)
May 2008	C.B. (Bud) Johnston Scholarship
2007-08	Plan for Excellence Doctoral Fellowship
May 2007	Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS)
2006-07	Plan for Excellence Doctoral Fellowship
2005-06	Plan for Excellence Doctoral Fellowship
May 2004	Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS)
Sept 2003	Special University Scholarship

Sept 2002 Roland Kitchen Scholarship in Math  
Garfield Weston Scholarship (Marketing)

Sept 2001 Roland Kitchen Scholarship in Math  
General Proficiency Scholarship 2<sup>nd</sup> Yr Arts  
CGA of Manitoba Scholarship  
Meyers, Norris, Penny & Co. Scholarship  
Garfield Weston Scholarship in Finance

Sept 2000 General Proficiency Scholarship 1st Yr Arts  
McKenzie Scholarship in Business Administration

Sept 1999 Terry Penton Memorial Entrance Scholarship

May 1999 Chartered Accountants Provincial Scholarship

## **Languages**

English

Italian

## **References**

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