



# The joint effects of regulatory focus and argument strength of product related information on choice behaviour



Anirban Som \*

Indian Institute of Management Trichy, Tiruchirappalli 620015, Tamil Nadu, India

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 18 August 2015

Revised 3 July 2016

Accepted 31 July 2016

Available online 29 August 2016

### Keywords:

Argument  
Strength  
Information  
Promotion  
Prevention  
Fit

## ABSTRACT

Past research studying the effects of regulatory fit on consumer choice decisions indicate that consumers possess favourable attitude towards products that are compatible with their regulatory orientations. The current research contends that regulatory fit by itself may not be sufficient for attracting consumers to purchase a product. Consumers will show a favourable attitude towards products that match their regulatory orientations only when the information related to the products that match their regulatory focus has a strong argument quality. The effects of regulatory fit will be reversed if the argument quality becomes weak. Findings from a series of experiments support this hypothesis. Regulatory focus was used as a chronic variable and a situational variable (between subjects) in the experiments. Argument strength was used as a between subjects variable. Choice favourability and choice likelihood measures were used as the dependent variables.

© 2016 Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## CHINESE ABSTRACT

过去关于调节性匹配对消费者选择决定的影响研究表明，消费者对与他们的调节性取向相容的产品持赞同的态度。目前的研究主张单靠调节性匹配可能不足以吸引消费者购买产品。只有当符合消费者调节性关注点的产品相关信息具有强有力的论据时，消费者才会对符合他们调节性取向的产品表现出赞同的态度。如果论据变得软弱无力，调节性匹配的实效将逆转。一系列的实验结果支持这一假设。调节性关注点被用作实验中的一个慢性变量和情境变量（主体之间）。论证力度被用作主体间变量。选择好感度和选择可能性的措施被用作因变量。

© 2016 Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Research suggests that consumers' choice decisions are influenced by their regulatory focus (Bullard and Manchanda, 2013; Motyka et al., 2014). In fact, consumers evaluate product related information more favourably when the product features match their regulatory focus as compared to when they do not match their regulatory focus. This phenomenon is known as regulatory fit (Bullard and Manchanda, 2013; Khajehzadeh et al., 2014). For example, product related information for sunscreen is more effective for persuading prevention-focused consumers when the message frame emphasizes its effectiveness rather than the ease of use; whereas the reverse occurs for promotion-focused consumers (Lee et al., 2010). Results from a study by Bullard and Manchanda (2013) suggest that companies offering sustainable products will successfully attract consumers if their target market predominantly consists of prevention-focused consumers. Studies by Avnet et al. (2013) and

Hsu and Chen (2014) suggest that consumers feel a sense of righteousness when they make product choices that match their regulatory focus. Righteousness implies a sense of correctness that an individual experiences when he realizes that a decision that he has taken is appropriate (Camacho et al., 2003). Findings from previous research in the field of regulatory fit, such as Lee et al. (2010) and Avnet et al. (2013), imply that the presence of regulatory fit is influential enough to persuade a consumer to purchase a product. The findings from the present research extend this implication. Taking cue from the works of Petty and Wegener (1998), Wheeler et al. (2008) and other relevant articles, the current research expands the framework of the regulatory fit theory by suggesting that the effects of regulatory fit would be more (vs. less) effective in persuading consumers to purchase a product when argument quality of the product related information that is provided by marketers is deemed as strong (vs. weak) by consumers. Petty and Wegener (1998), Wheeler et al. (2008) and other related articles show that regulatory fit combined with weak argument strength of product related information makes consumers indifferent when making a choice between products that match or mismatch their regulatory focus. The current article builds upon their work and shows that

\* Corresponding author. Fax: +91-431-2501124.

E-mail address: [asom@iimtrichy.ac.in](mailto:asom@iimtrichy.ac.in).

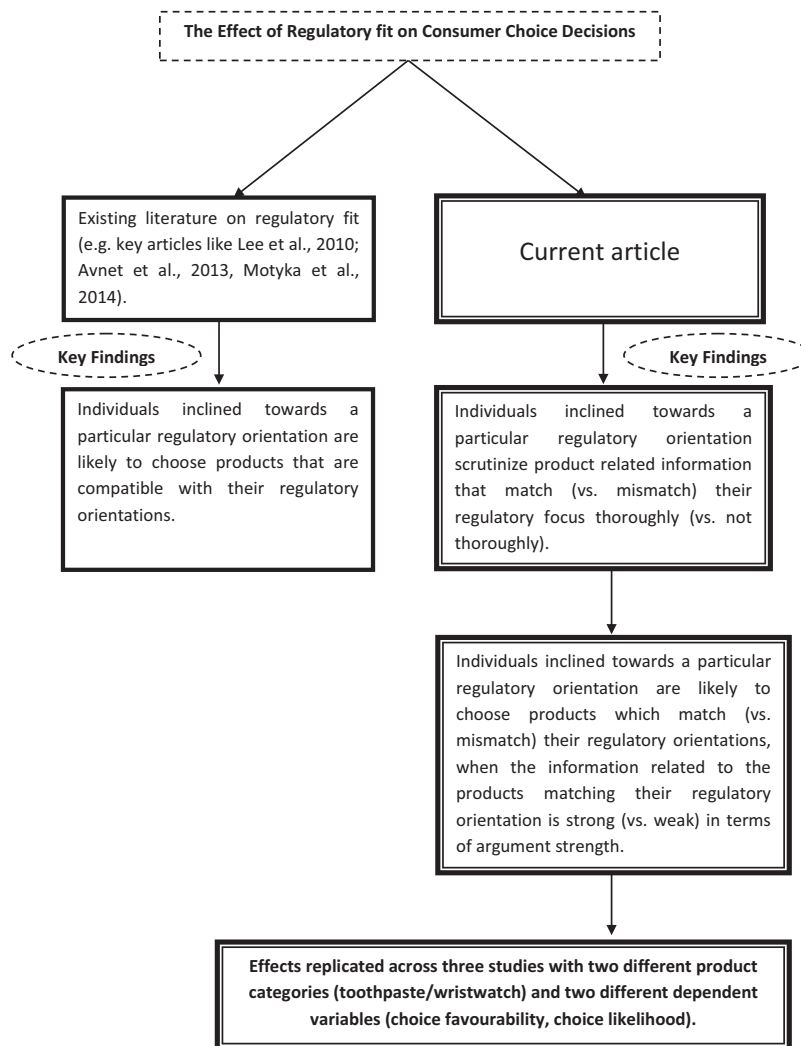


Fig. 1. The effect of regulatory fit on consumer choice decisions.

regulatory fit combined with a weak argument quality of product related information induces consumers to reject a product that matches their regulatory focus and select a product that mismatches their regulatory focus. The framework of the current research along with its main contribution is highlighted in Fig. 1.

Till date, very few studies, with exceptions such as Kao (2012), have actually studied the interaction effect of regulatory focus and argument strength of product related information on consumer choice decisions. Interestingly, the findings of Kao (2012) indicate that promotion-focused individuals tend to show more favourable attitudes towards product related information that has weak argument strength whereas prevention-focused individuals tend to show more favourable attitudes towards product related information that has strong argument strength. However, Kao (2012) indicates that a product related information with strong argument strength is the one that focuses mainly on basic product attributes whereas a product related information with weak argument strength is the one that focuses mainly on additional product attributes. The findings of the current research are different from Kao (2012) in the sense that the current research does not manipulate argument strength of product related information based on basic or additional product attributes. Rather, the current research manipulates argument strength of product related information based on the extent to which details about product related attri-

butes are provided in the information, notwithstanding whether the attributes are basic or additional. The research of Kao (2012) compares the responses of promotion-focused and prevention-focused consumers towards product related information which differ in terms of their focus on basic or additional product attributes. The current research builds upon the work of Kao (2012) by comparing the responses of promotion-focused and prevention-focused consumers towards product related information which differ based in terms of the quality of attribute related information. In addition to the studies conducted by Kao (2012), there have been studies, like Petty and Wegener (1998) and Wheeler et al. (2008), on the interaction between argument quality of product related information and individual's personality. The personality constructs used in Petty and Wegener (1998) and Wheeler et al. (2008) were: Need for Cognition, Extraversion/Introversion etc. The current study extends the findings of Petty and Wegener (1998), Wheeler et al. (2008) etc. by testing the interaction between product related information having varying argument strengths and a different personality construct named regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997).

Until now, researchers studying the effect of regulatory fit on consumer choice decisions (e.g. Avnet et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2010; Motyka et al., 2014) were of the view that consumers will evaluate a product favourably if the product description or the advertisements related to the products contained information that

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5110960>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5110960>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)