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# Focal and Emotional Integration: Constructs, Measures, and Preliminary Evidence

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*This paper introduces two novel concepts regarding the role of the product in an ad. One concept (focal integration) reflects the extent to which the product is depicted as a central element in the ad. The second concept (emotional integration) reflects the extent to which the product is portrayed as a causal agent to the actor's emotions. Reliable measures of both constructs are developed and shown to be discriminable from related constructs and each other. Furthermore, a sample of existing ads is shown to vary on the constructs. An exploratory study investigating their effects showed that each construct is related to relevant advertising outcomes and that their effects differ for ads using positive vs. negative appeals. When appeals are negative, both integration constructs are related to ad effects. In contrast, when appeals are positive, high emotional integration appears unnecessary for enhancing ad effects, while high focal integration may be detrimental to ad effects. Implications for future research are discussed.*

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## Introduction

Research in advertising has yielded many important insights about the impact of advertising executional cues on viewer responses to ads. The impact of (1) source characteristics (e.g., similarity, credibility), (2) characteristics of the ad's music (e.g., valence, fit, familiarity, tempo), (3) visual elements (e.g., congruency, affect value), and (4) characteristics of message arguments (e.g., their strength and number) has been found to influence advertising effectiveness in a variety of ways (see Belch, Villarreal and Belch 1984; Gelb, Hong and Zinkhan 1985; MacInnis, Moorman and Jaworski 1991; Percy 1983; Percy and Rossiter 1992; Petty and Cacioppo 1986 for reviews). However, it is notable that research examining the role of the product (or service/company/issue) in the ad is relatively limited. (Hereafter, we use "product" to denote the target of a communication.) Some work has focused on the product's prominence in an ad. Stewart and Furse (1986), for example, found that the amount of time the product was on the screen had modest positive effects on recall, comprehension and persuasion (see also Ray and Olson 1983; Stewart and Koslow 1989; Stout and Burda 1989). However, other concepts reflecting a product's role in an ad may also be important.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce two concepts reflecting different roles for the product in an ad — focal integration and emotional integration. In our review, we find that these concepts have not been investigated empirically. Thus, in introducing these concepts we attempt to achieve three objectives. First, we define and describe both focal and emotional integration and distinguish them from related concepts and each other. Second, we develop reliable and discriminable measures of each. Third, we provide exploratory data suggesting that these constructs may warrant further investigation since (a) existing ads vary in their degree of focal and emotional integration; (b) the two constructs are related to measures of ad outcomes; and (c) these relationships differ depending on the presence of a moderator variable (in this case, the use of positive vs. negative appeals).

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We discuss the implications of the results for future research on the role of the product in ad executions.

## The Focal and Emotional Integration Constructs

### *Focal Integration*

*Definition.* Focal integration is defined as the extent to which the product is a central element in the ad. The notion of focal integration is consistent with Holman's (1986) observations that products are sometimes depicted as a central element and sometimes depicted as a background element— part of the context in which the product is used. The product's role as a central element reflects the extent to which the product plays an important role in the actions/setting/context of the ad (rather than the precise content of the ad execution).

Consider the following examples. An ad for Dawn dishwashing detergent would exhibit high focal integration if it showed the detergent cutting through greasy buildup and leaving dishes sparkling clean. The product, as a central element, is critical to much of the ad's action. The same ad would exhibit low focal integration if the ad's actors, shown discussing the success of their dinner party while cleaning up party debris, casually mention how good it is that they have Dawn. While the product is clearly part of the ad and may be on screen during the entire commercial, the focus is on the party; the product is incidental. Relatedly, a life insurance ad that focuses on the policy's long-term financial benefits would exhibit high focal integration since the policy is a central ad element. Another commercial showing a father talking to his newborn daughter about how lucky he is, including his luck at having a certain insurance policy, would exhibit low focal integration. Here the relationship between the father and baby represents the central focus, while the policy is more incidental.

*Relationship to Other Constructs.* Previous work on the role of the product in the ad has focused on the notion of prominence, often operationalized in terms of such variables as the number of seconds the product is shown overall, the number of product mentions, and the number of seconds the product is in each scene (Stewart and Furse 1986; Stewart and Koslow 1989; Ray and Olson 1983; Stout and Burda 1989; Page, Thorson and Heide 1990). While potentially related to prominence, focal integration is different since a product can be shown for many seconds without being a central element in the ad. When focal

integration is high, the product may often be prominent. However, the product will not be central in all ads for which the product is prominent. Hence, prominence and focal integration are conceptually distinct.

### *Emotional Integration*

*Definition.* Emotional integration is defined as the extent to which use, non-use or misuse of the product is depicted as a cause of emotions experienced by human, animal or animated characters in the ad. For example, the Dawn ad noted above would be high in emotional integration if the character in the ad showed dismay at the buildup of dirty dishes in her sink, but then expressed relief and happiness when Dawn helped her get the job done quickly. A public service announcement for drinking and driving would be high in emotional integration if it showed a distraught father crying at his son's grave site, asking passionately why his son had to drive while drunk. In both cases, the characters' emotions are caused by the product. If the emotions experienced by the characters in the Dawn ad were due to the success or failure of the dinner party, the ad would be low in emotional integration. Although the characters may express emotions, the emotions are not caused by the product.

*Relationship to Other Constructs.* Emotional integration is related to but conceptually distinct from focal integration. When the product is focal in an ad, it may be depicted with or without characters. Moreover, if characters are present, they may or may not have emotional reactions and the product may or may not be the basis for emotional reactions they do have. When emotional integration is high, the product is depicted as a central element, and the ad has characters whose emotional reactions are caused by the product. Thus, emotional integration is hierarchically related to focal integration since focal integration represents a necessary, but not sufficient condition for emotional integration.

The emotional integration construct is distinct from several related constructs. Puto and Wells (1984) propose that one key to successful advertising involves the use of transformational advertising, which they define as ads "which associate the experience of using (consuming/owning) the advertised brand with a unique set of psychological characteristics which would not typically be associated with the brand experience to the same degree without exposure to the advertisement" (p. 638). The first part of the definition is relevant to the emotional integration concept since the experience of using the product is depicted in the ad

as producing a unique set of emotional experiences. Note though that the transformational advertising concept focuses on an **effect created in the viewer** (see Puto and Hoyer 1990). In contrast, emotional integration reflects a **characteristic of an ad**. An ad which shows the product as causing the actor's emotions need not transform the experiences of the viewer. Likewise, an ad which transforms the experiences of the viewer need not even show characters, let alone the characters' emotional reactions to product use. Further, the transformation concept focuses on associations with "characteristics which would not typically be associated with the brand ..." Thus, transformation is related to new and unique associations in the viewer, whereas emotional integration is only related to the causal link between the product and emotions depicted in the ad. Thus, transformational advertising is a construct distinct from emotional integration.

The emotional integration construct also represents an extension to the growing body of research on emotions. Considerable research has focused on emotional responses **elicited** in viewers by ads and their potential mediational impact on ad and brand attitudes (Aaker, Stayman, and Hagerty 1986; Edell and Burke 1987; Holbrook and Batra 1987). However, less research has focused on emotions **depicted** by characters in an ad (for an exception see Stout, Homer and Liu 1990). The emotional integration construct is a specific type of these depicted emotions, reflecting emotions caused by the product.

### Why Study Focal and Emotional Integration?

#### *Variability Across Ads and Potential Impact on Ad Effects*

Beyond defining and providing measures of focal and emotional integration, interest in their study requires, at a minimum, that they exist in varying degrees among existing ads. If ads did not vary on these constructs, their degree of practical utility would be limited. Thus, one objective in assessing the potential importance of these constructs is to see whether they vary in a sample of existing ads.

Assuming ads do vary in their degree of focal and emotional integration, a more fundamental reason for their study is the expectation that each influences outcome measures of ad effects—such as consumers' feeling responses to ads, evaluations of ads (i.e., their relevance and credibility), ad attitudes (Aad), brand

attitudes and purchase intentions. Although it is our primary objective to introduce these constructs, their study is of limited interest unless they have some impact. Below we provide some thoughts about their potential effects.

*Focal Integration.* High focal integration may influence measures of ad effects (i.e., evaluations of the ad, reactions to the ad, Aad, and brand attitudes) by its effects on consumers' processing of the ad. First, the product's role as a central element may enhance the likelihood that the ad will communicate the product's role in meeting consumer needs. As such, it may enhance the ad's relevance to consumers, generating stronger identification responses (i.e., empathy, more intense product relevant feelings). Second, having the product as the central element in the ad may direct consumers' attention to the product as opposed to other (potentially-irrelevant) aspects of the ad. As such, ads for which focal integration is high may provide greater opportunity for consumers to elaborate on information about the product, establish bridging experiences, and consider the product's relevance to their needs (Krugman 1967). The fact that prior research has found that consumers can become distracted by elements within the ad (Edell and Staelin 1983; MacInnis and Park 1991; Munch and Swasy 1988; Park and Young 1986), and that this distraction can affect consumers' affective and cognitive reactions to ads (i.e., feelings, ad evaluations, Aad, and brand attitudes), makes the study of the product's relationship to the ad's action important.

*Emotional Integration.* The emotional integration construct also has a potentially important impact on ad effects. Ads high in emotional integration may enhance ad and brand reactions by providing a self-product linkage. Olson and Reynolds (1983; Gutman 1982; Gutman and Reynolds 1979) propose that successful advertising creates such a linkage between attributes of the product and desired end states (e.g., emotions, terminal values). Relatedly, Agres (1990) proposes that effective advertising is one that demonstrates the product's benefits and then links them to the emotional benefits of the user. Emotional integration may be one mechanism by which this self-product linkage is communicated. This linkage should enhance the perceived relevance of the ad to the consumer, which may affect ad reactions and ad and brand attitudes.

Emotional integration may also enhance ad and brand responses by affecting the nature of elaborative processing. First, depicting emotions related to

product usage may not only allow the consumer to vicariously experience the same emotions as characters shown using the product in the ad (i.e., create empathy; see Bagozzi and Moore 1990), it may also transform consumers' experiences of using the product through vicarious trial (Wells 1989). Vicarious trial, like actual trial (e.g., Smith and Swinyard 1983; Ha and Hoch 1989), may also create favorable attitudes and intentions. Thus, although emotional integration is distinct from transformational advertising, it may be an important factor in stimulating the transformation process.

### *Differentially Affected by Moderator Variables*

A third reason why focal and emotional integration may be important is that their effects may depend on the presence of moderator variables. While a number of variables (e.g., product relevance and expertise) may potentially moderate the impact of focal and emotional integration, the variable examined here is the extent to which the ad uses a positive vs. a negative appeal.

In this paper, an appeal is defined by the emotional tone of the ad (i.e., whether it is positive—warm, upbeat or optimistic, or negative—threatening or disturbing). The term negative appeal focuses on the emotional tone likely to be intended by advertisers, not feeling responses generally unintended by advertisers (e.g., irritation, skepticism, boredom; see Edell and Moore 1991). Thus, warmth appeals (Aaker, Stayman and Haggerty 1986) and fear appeals (Sternthal and Craig 1974) are examples of positive and negative appeals, respectively. Appeal type is thus *not* meant to reflect: (1) the extent to which the ad represents informationally or transformationally oriented motives of the user *per se* (Rossiter, Percy and Donovan 1991), although it may be related; (2) the extent to which the ad attacks competitors (e.g., James and Hensel 1991); or (3) the extent to which the ad focuses on gains from product use vs. losses from not using the product (i.e., positive vs. negative framing—see Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy 1990; Gardner and Wilhelm 1987).

We examine appeal type because it may indicate conditions under which focal and emotional integration have a greater or lesser impact on ad outcomes. Cohen and Areni (1991), for example, propose that some ads using positive appeals may work by fundamentally changing the meaning of owning or using the brand. Focal and emotional integration may rep-

resent ad executional variables that help consumers consider the product's relevance to their needs, which may affect a variety of other reactions to the ad (i.e., feelings, ad evaluations, Aad). However, other ads, designated as "feel good" ads, may "work" because they use affect-laden cues (i.e., pleasant pictures, music or sources) which generate immediate, positive reactions in viewers which can affect brand attitudes through peripheral mechanisms such as the mediational role of ad attitudes. For this latter (feel good) type of ad, focal or emotional integration may be less critical to ad effectiveness since the positive feelings generated by the use of a positive appeal may produce positive ad effects without requiring the presence of integration. Given these multiple routes to persuasion for ads using positive appeals, only one of which depends on focal and emotional integration, integration may be relatively less critical when appeals are positive.

In contrast to positive appeals, negative feelings generated by negative appeals may create negative evaluations of the ad and brand, particularly when processing is more peripherally based. When emotional and focal integration are low, persuasion may be undermined in negative appeals by negative feelings which appear unrelated to either the product or consumer needs (Bagozzi and Moore 1991). In order for negative feelings produced by the ad to have positive effects on ad outcomes, the ad must use mechanisms which more fundamentally change the meaning of the product to the consumer and show how the negative feelings generated by the ad are relevant to benefits of the product. Focal and emotional integration may stimulate this meaning change by enhancing the relevance of the product to the consumer (explicitly showing how the product eliminates or avoids these negative feelings), and/or stimulating empathy and vicarious experiences. Hence, for effective negative appeals, high focal and emotional integration may be important. In sum, high focal and emotional integration may be important only for ads using negative appeals. Integration may be relatively less influential for ads using positive appeals where peripheral persuasion can occur without integration.

Having defined the concepts of focal and emotional integration and provided some preliminary ideas about why they might warrant further study, our next objective is to develop measures of each construct. We then provide some preliminary evidence that (a) these constructs vary among a sample of ads, (b) that they affect ad outcomes, and that (c) their effects differ depending on the presence of the appeal

type moderator variable.

## Measures of Focal and Emotional Integration

In assessing focal and emotional integration, three studies were conducted. In each, measures of the constructs were tested and refined. In this section, we present the process of measure development and refinement. In subsequent sections, we discuss results relating to our other objectives.

### Study 1

An initial set of items to measure focal and emotional integration was developed based on the concept definitions. Some items were adapted from related scales (e.g., the VRP, Schlinger 1979), while others were derived by the authors. Based on discussions with colleagues, a set of three items representing focal integration and three items representing emotional integration were selected for further testing. Our first study provided a test of these preliminary focal and emotional integration scales. Although measures of ad outcomes were also collected, in this section we only report results related to the measurement of the two integration constructs.

*Procedure.* Seventy-eight television commercials secured from (1) off-air viewing and (2) a special conference on emotional advertising sponsored by the Marketing Science Institute were used. Subjects from an undergraduate marketing subject pool at a large southwestern university were recruited for a study on consumers' reactions to commercials. Each subject rated four commercials on several measures, including the three-item measures of focal and emotional integration. Subjects evaluated two ads per half-hour session, with sessions approximately two days apart. With 7 to 13 consumers viewing each commercial, a total of 642 observations was obtained.

*Results.* A factor analysis of the six-integration items using Varimax rotation confirmed two factors with eigenvalues above one (2.03 and 1.98), and the three items in each scale loaded on their respective factors. Factor loadings for each item were above .79 for both the focal and emotional integration factors. A confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL (Joreskog and Sorbom 1988) also showed the discriminant validity of the two constructs (detailed results of LISREL analysis of more refined scales are discussed below). Despite this encouraging evidence, however, coefficient alpha reliabilities (.75 and .62 for emotional and

focal integration) suggested that further refinement of the measures was necessary.

### Study 2

Based on the Study 1 results and further discussion with colleagues familiar with the research agenda, a refined set of items was developed: five for focal integration and three for emotional integration. Four seven-point items were also designed to assess subjects' perceptions of the type of appeal used in each ad. In addition, a three-item lecture/drama status scale, based on work by Deighton, Romer and McQueen (1989) was also developed (see Appendix for each scale).

*Procedure.* The items were tested with five graduate students in marketing familiar with the conceptual definitions of focal integration, emotional integration, appeal type, and the extent to which the commercial was a lecture or a drama (Deighton, Romer and McQueen 1989). These graduate students were used for two purposes. The first was to further refine our scales. The second was to have a set of "experts" rate the Study 1 ads on integration as well as appeal type and lecture/drama status for tests reported in subsequent sections. Therefore, the five judges rated each of the seventy-eight ads used in Study 1.

*Results.* A factor analysis yielded four factors with eigenvalues above one (6.71, 2.41, 2.08, and 1.40) with factors representing the two integration, appeal type and lecture/drama status constructs, respectively. The coefficient alpha reliabilities for emotional integration, appeal type and lecture/drama status were all high (.92, .96, and .88, respectively). However, analysis, as well as discussion with the raters, suggested that one of the focal integration items was not useful. By deleting that item, alpha for focal integration was raised from .64 to .93. Thus, a three-item emotional integration scale and a four-item focal integration scale resulted from Study 2.

### Study 3

*Procedure.* To further test the scales resulting from Study 2, a third study designed solely to test convergent and discriminant validity of the scales was designed. Sixteen television commercials found in pretests to vary on appeal type (positive vs. negative), focal and emotional integration, and product/service familiarity to subjects were used in the study. This variation was expected to yield a relatively broad test of the applicability of the measures of focal and emo-

tional integration and appeal type.

Twenty-six undergraduate students who received class credit for participating were used as subjects. Subjects were run in three groups (with seven, nine, and ten subjects). Each group viewed all sixteen commercials. Commercial presentation order was rotated among the groups (no systematic group effects were found).

Subjects were told that the objective of the study was to assess how viewers perceive television commercials. They were told that they would see a number of commercials, and would be asked their perceptions of each immediately after it was shown. It was emphasized that interest was not in viewers' evaluations of the commercials (i.e., whether they were good or bad) or their reactions to them (i.e., whether they felt amused, fear, etc.), but rather how they perceived them relative to the scales of interest. Subjects were provided with the four scales used in Study 2 (including the four-item focal integration scale) and were asked to review them. Subjects then viewed the commercials, completing the measures for each commercial immediately after it ended. After rating the last commercial, subjects also answered several general demographic questions (no systematic effects of these latter measures were found).

*Results.* Reliabilities for the two integration, ad appeal and lecture/drama scales were assessed for each of the sixteen commercials. The ad appeal and lecture/drama scales appeared internally consistent, with mean coefficient alpha across commercials of .96 and .89, respectively. Alpha for each commercial separately also revealed high degrees of internal consistency, with reliabilities greater than .85. For both focal and emotional integration, the mean coefficient alpha across commercials was .94. For the four-item focal integration scale, alpha for each commercial separately ranged from .87 to .98, while alpha for the three-item emotional integration scale ranged from .88 to .98. Thus, each scale appears to be internally consistent.

To assess discriminant validity, indicators of focal integration, emotional integration, ad appeal type and lecture/drama status were factor analyzed using Varimax rotation. Four factors with eigenvalues greater than one emerged (6.76, 2.42, 1.96, and 1.29), with the four factors accounting for 89% of the variance. Each factor represented one of the four scales (focal and emotional integration, appeal type and lecture/drama status). With the exception of one lecture/drama loading of .63, all loadings were above .80 on their respective scales.

To further test convergent and discriminant validity, confirmatory factor analysis (using LISREL VII; Joreskog and Sorbom 1988) was used to test the focal and emotional integration scales (see Bentler and Bonett 1980; Fornell and Larcker 1981). The adjusted goodness-of-fit index for a two-factor model was .86, well above the .31 for a one factor model. In addition, the inter-factor correlation ( $\phi$ ) in the two factor model was significantly below one (.61), suggesting unique variance for the two factors, and thus discriminant validity. Finally, supporting convergent validity, reliabilities were .94 and .91 and average variance extracted was .84 and .82 for the focal and emotional integration factors, respectively.

In sum, Study 3 provides evidence for convergent and discriminant validity of the focal and emotional integration scales, showing that indicators of each construct converge and that indicators measure distinct constructs. The data discussed in this section does not, however, establish whether these constructs vary among existing ads or whether they influence advertising effects for ads using positive vs. negative appeals. The purpose of the next two sections is to provide preliminary evidence for such effects.

### Variation in Integration across Ads

One important indicator of the practical usefulness of the integration constructs is the extent to which ads vary in their level of integration. If variability is limited, study of the impact of integration on ad effectiveness is of little value. To assess variation in integration, we analyzed ratings provided by the five trained graduate students for the seventy-eight ads rated in Study 2. These seventy-eight ads are likely to provide a somewhat conservative test of variability since they were originally chosen to have some emotional content (so as to be useful in assessing the effects of emotional integration), and, hence, the level of integration observed here might be somewhat more restricted than what would be expected in a broader sample.

The data reflect the measures provided by the five Study 2 raters: focal integration, emotional integration, lecture/drama status, and positive vs. negative appeal. Based on the measurement properties of the focal integration scale observed in Study 2, the data reflect the four- vs. five-item focal integration scale, given the superior measurement properties of the former (the results do not differ substantively when the five-item measure is used).

Since five judges rated the seventy-eight ads, it was

important to determine the extent to which judges agreed with one another in the designation of ads as high vs. low in each construct. Thus, before assessing variation in integration, we first assessed interjudge reliabilities. We expected interjudge reliabilities to be high given that the constructs of interest are thought to be objective characteristics of ads which can be reliably coded by judges.

Interjudge reliability was calculated by examining the number of cases in which a given judge agreed with the average of the other four judges in the designation of an ad as high vs. low in each construct. For example, if Judge A rated ad #1 as a 5 in focal integration, and the average of the other four judges was 5.25, that judge was said to agree with the average of the other four judges that the ad was "high" (i.e., above the midpoint of 4) in focal integration. With five judges rating 78 ads, there were a total of 390 total judgments for each construct. Out of these 390 judgments, there were 16 (4%) disagreements for appeal type, 41 (10.5%) for focal integration, and 29 (7%) for emotional integration. Notably, most of the disagreements were cases in which the mean of the four judges' ratings was close to the scale mid-point. Based on these results, we conclude that interjudge reliability was high.

To assess overall variability in integration across the sample of ads, scores for focal and emotional integration were calculated by computing an overall score averaged across the five judges. Theoretically, scores could range from a minimum of 1.0 to a maximum of 7.0. Observed scores for focal integration ranged from a low of 1.0 to a high of 6.72. Scores for emotional integration ranged from 1.0 to 6.80. Thus, there appears to be considerable variability in focal and emotional integration, even in this somewhat restricted sample of ads.

We next sought to examine the extent to which this variability was co-dependent across focal and emotional integration. Specifically, given the hierarchical nature of the constructs proposed above, we expected that emotional integration would be high only when focal integration was high. Consistent with expectations, we only observed cases in which commercials were rated as high in focal integration and high in emotional integration, high in focal integration and low in emotional integration, and low in focal integration and low in emotional integration. Thus, we observed no cases in which commercials rated as high in emotional integration were low in focal integration.

We also examined the extent to which variability in

integration covaried with our other two measures—lecture/drama status and appeal type. Since very few (three) of the ads were lectures (given the way we collected the sample of ads), we could not examine the extent to which integration varies across lecture ads. However, the data do demonstrate that integration can vary for the 75 drama ads (the overall ranges above apply also to the 75 drama ads).

Finally, we examined whether commercials high and low in focal and emotional integration are relevant for both positive and negative appeals (i.e., independent of appeal type). Based on midpoint splits using the mean for the five raters, the 75 drama ads were classified as positive (N=54) vs. negative (N=21) in appeal type. As anticipated, focal and emotional integration varied across appeal type. Among the positive appeals, 17 ads were low in focal integration and low in emotional integration, ten were high in focal integration and low in emotional integration, and 27 were high in focal and high in emotional integration. Among the ads classified as negative appeals, seven were rated as low in focal and emotional integration, seven as high in focal and low in emotional integration, and seven as high in focal and emotional integration.

In sum, the data above suggest that (1) commercials vary in focal and emotional integration, (2) focal and emotional integration are hierarchically related, and (3) focal and emotional integration are relevant in ads using both positive and negative appeals. These results suggest sufficient variation in the integration constructs to make study of their impact useful.

## Effects of Integration on Ad Outcomes

To examine the effects of focal and emotional integration, we used Study 1 subjects' ratings of the seventy-eight ads in terms of their effects (i.e., feelings, relevance, credibility, ad attitude and brand attitudes), and Study 2 judges' ratings of the same seventy-eight ads as high vs. low in emotional integration, focal integration and appeal type. We used judges' (vs. subjects') ratings to classify ads in their level of integration and appeal type for two reasons. First, the measures of these constructs were more reliable and valid in Study 2 vs. Study 1 (see measure development section). Second, use of the Study 2 judges as expert raters allowed us to classify ads independent of Study 1 subjects' responses to the ads. Since only three of the 78 ads were lectures, the results below reflect only the drama ads, and thus in essence control for lecture/drama status. The final pool thus contains 75

ads classified as positive or negative appeals with low/low, high/low, or high/high focal and emotional integration.

## Measures

To assess the impact of focal and emotional integration on ads with positive vs. negative appeals, a sample of variables indicating ad effects was collected. Several covariate measures were also collected.

*Empathy* was assessed by a seven-item scale. Since previous research has suggested two forms of empathy (cognitive and emotional; Hoffman 1977), items were constructed to tap each form (e.g., "I tried to understand the characters in the commercial by imagining how things looked from their perspective"; "I felt as though I was experiencing the same emotions as the characters in the ad"). A factor analysis indicated that items representing these constructs were not empirically distinguishable. All loadings were above .73, and one factor explained 73% of the variance in scores (eigenvalue = 4.92). Therefore, one scale representing the mean of the seven items (alpha = .92) was used.

*Feelings* from the ad and feelings about the ad were assessed by a fifteen item inventory modified from Edell and Burke (1987). Consistent with recent research by Edell and Moore (1991), a factor analysis identified two types of positive feelings—warm (alpha = .79; warmhearted, sentimental, serene) and upbeat (alpha = .66; amused, excited, interested), one type of negative feeling probably intended by advertisers (hereafter termed fear/guilt; alpha = .86; fear, guilty, sad, shameful, tense), and another type of negative feeling probably unintended by advertisers (hereafter termed irritation; alpha = .89; angry, disgusted, irritated, offended). All loadings on the respective factors were above .58, and most were above .71.

A factor analysis was conducted to determine if indicators of empathy and indicators of feeling responses were empirically distinguishable. As expected, the analysis revealed five factors with eigenvalues above 1 (8.61, 5.13, 2.46, 1.55 and 1.09). Indicators of each construct (the four feelings and empathy) loaded above .61 on their respective factors.

*Evaluations of the Ad* were assessed using thirteen seven-point items. A factor analysis identified two factors, credibility (eigenvalue = 3.21; alpha = .85; believable, credible, phony, pointless, ridiculous) and relevance (eigenvalue = 4.42; alpha = .92; important, informative, meaningful, valuable, convincing), with five items each. (A third construct indicating ad nov-

elty was also identified. Since it is regarded more as a description of an ad than an effect created in the viewer, it is not discussed further.)

*Aad* was assessed by seven-point semantic differential scales (like/dislike, positive/negative, good/bad, appealing/unappealing). All items loaded on one factor and reliability was high (alpha = .93).

*Brand attitude* was also assessed by seven-point semantic differential scales, (good/bad, favorable/unfavorable, useful/useless, and likable/unlikable). Purchase intentions were assessed by a three-item seven-point semantic differential scale (highly unlikely/highly likely, very improbably/very probably, and impossible/possible that they would use the advertised brand or service the next time they needed to make a purchase from the product category).

A factor analysis including indicators of brand attitudes, purchase intentions, ad attitudes, and ad evaluations (i.e., relevance and credibility) resulted in four factors with eigenvalues above one (9.43, 3.20, 1.83, and 1.05). One factor included indicators of brand attitudes and purchase intentions, a second represented indicators of Aad, and the third and fourth comprised indicators of relevance and credibility respectively. Based on these results, indicators of brand attitudes and purchase intentions were combined in a single summated scale (alpha = .96).

*Covariates.* Since subjects' evaluations of and reactions to ads may depend on their experience with the brand and/or product category depicted in the ad, and/or the extent to which the product category is relevant to them, multi-item measures of brand and product category experience and product category relevance were also developed. Product category experience had three items (e.g., "I know a lot about the products/services in this category"). Brand experience was indicated by two items (e.g., "I have used this brand/service before"). Product category relevance was indicated by three items (e.g., Using a product/service such as the one advertised is important to me). Each was found to form a reliable index (alpha = .87;  $r = .79$ —2 items; alpha = .75 for items indicating category experience, brand experience and category relevance, respectively).

The two integration constructs and ad appeal were found to vary systematically with product category and brand experience. Specifically, consumers had more experience with products and brands advertised using a positive appeal, and when emotional and focal integration were high. Therefore, product category and brand experience were included as covariates in subsequent analyses. Results reported



are ANCOVAs (using ANOVAs did not cause any fundamental changes in the pattern of results).

## Results

To reiterate, the purpose of this aspect of the research was not to test specific hypotheses about how integration and appeal type influence each of the dependent variables studied. Rather, showing relationships between integration and ad outcomes, particularly ones moderated by appeal type, would support their practical importance and underscore the need for their further study. Given this purpose, in reporting the analyses we emphasize whether there are greater than chance relationships between integration and ad outcomes across the nine variables studied, rather than specific results for any one variable. A pattern of significant relationships would indicate the usefulness of further study of the integration constructs as defined and operationalized here. Guidelines for their further study based on both the general pattern of results and their effects on specific independent variables are, however, provided in the discussion section.

We report significance levels at 0.10 for tests of a pattern of relationships and 0.10, 0.05 and 0.01 for specific tests. We use 0.10 for tests of pattern since the number of individual comparisons used to assess each pattern is relatively small and a 0.10 level would not be as sensitive to a few idiosyncratic results (using a 0.05 level did not change the results substantively). Since the purpose of our tests of specific relationships is exploratory, rather than testing (and potentially accepting) specific hypotheses, type II error is a particular concern in this research. We thus report a variety of significance levels for specific tests, including 0.10, to give more complete direction as to what effects might be worthy of further study.

*Order Effects:* Recall that subjects in Study 1 rated two ads in each of two sessions. Since order of ads was not rotated among subjects, we first assessed potential effects of order on the results. First, ANCOVA comparisons of the effects of appeal type and integration were conducted for those ads in Position One versus ads in all four positions aggregated across order. Ads in Position One are essentially unaffected by prior exposure to ads or measures and are thus immune to order effects. In addition, an analysis for ads only in Position One is completely between subjects. The results revealed that only nine of the 54 ANCOVA results would lead to different conclusions when using a .10 level of significance (since there is

greater than a 15% chance that as many as nine tests would differ [using a 50% chance of differences occurring for any one effect] these differences due to order do not appear to be significantly different from chance). Second, we entered position as a covariate in the overall ANCOVAs. For only one of the nine dependent measures was position a marginally significant ( $p < .10$ ) covariate. These differences due to order are not significantly different from chance, since a difference of 1 of 9 is expected using a .10 level of significance. Given these findings, the patterns of results discussed below do not appear to be substantively influenced by order. Based on these results and the exploratory nature of this research, the analyses below aggregate across order.

## Ad Effects

The introductory sections proposed that both focal and emotional integration may influence a variety of ad effects and that their impact may vary for ads using positive vs. negative appeals. First we explore the effects of high vs. low focal integration. We then assess the effects of high vs. low emotional integration only for ads high in focal integration.

*Focal Integration.* We first conducted a 2 x 2 omnibus MANCOVA analysis to determine if the effect of focal integration on the nine dependent measures differed by appeal type. As expected, the interaction was significant ( $F_{9,602} = 4.20, p < .001$ ; Wilks' lambda = 0.94). To test the impact of pooling across ads, we conducted another MANCOVA analysis including ads as a factor nested within condition. The ad factor was not significant, indicating similar effects across ads. However, when conducting this pooling test for each dependent variable separately (using ANCOVAs) significant interactions ( $F_{4,602} > 2.50; p < .05$ ) between ads, appeal type and integration were observed for five of the nine dependent variables (empathy, warm and upbeat feelings, credibility, and relevance). Given the omnibus finding we report 2x2 ANCOVAs below. However, the significance of the ad factor in the separate tests suggests that interactions between appeal type and focal integration in the ANCOVAs may vary by ad. We discuss potential reasons for this result in the discussion.

A number of significant effects in the ANCOVAs were found (at  $p < .05$ ). First, significant main effects of focal integration were found for four of the nine dependent variables (empathy, warmth, credibility and Aad;  $F_{1,606} > 4.0$ ). Second, significant interactions between focal integration and appeal type were

**Table 1**  
**Effects of High vs. Low Focal Integration In Ads Using Positive vs. Negative Appeals**  
**ANCOVA Analyses**

Dependent Measures	NEGATIVE APPEALS		F	POSITIVE APPEALS		F
	Low Focal Integration (n=56)	High Focal Integration (n=109)		Low Focal Integration (n=147)	High Focal Integration (n=299)	
Empathy	3.84	4.26	4.22**	4.58	3.89	-23.42***
Warm Feelings	3.06	2.94	<1.00	4.56	3.81	-20.90***
Upbeat Feelings	3.05	3.24	2.74*	4.34	4.08	-3.52**
Fear/Guilt	2.42	2.85	1.41	1.44	1.46	<1.00
Irritation	2.52	2.27	2.00	1.26	1.46	7.34***
Credibility	5.29	5.71	4.00**	5.54	4.94	-23.44***
Relevance	4.27	4.87	4.58**	3.98	3.62	-6.73***
Aad	4.35	4.91	6.02**	5.47	4.78	-17.20***
Brand Attitude	4.46	5.18	17.04***	5.01	4.94	<1.00

\*  $p < .10$

\*\*  $p < .05$

\*\*\*  $p < .01$

found for six of the nine dependent variables (empathy, upbeat feelings, credibility, relevance, Aad, and brand attitude;  $F_{1,606} > 5.0$ ). These findings provide rather clear evidence that focal integration impacts measures of ad effects, and that the effects are likely to vary by appeal type. Finally, appeal type influenced all four measures of feelings, with positive appeals producing more positive feelings and fewer negative feelings than negative appeals. These results are in essence manipulation check measures of appeal type. Table 1 presents means for each condition.

To further explore the impact of appeal type on focal integration, comparisons of the effect of high vs. low integration within each appeal type were conducted (see Table 1). Since previous ANCOVA analyses indicated that the covariates were significant, we conducted one-way ANCOVA analyses including the covariates.

As Table 1 indicates, for negative appeals, six of the nine comparisons of the effects of high vs. low focal integration are significant at the .10 level, with five significant at the .05 level. All significant comparisons show that for negative appeals high focal integration is associated with more positive ad effects than low focal integration (e.g., greater empathy, relevance, credibility, Aad, and brand attitude.)

Focal integration also appeared to influence ad ef-

fects for positive appeals (see Table 1). For seven of the nine dependent variables the difference between high and low focal integration was significant at the .05 level. Unexpectedly, all significant comparisons showed that for positive appeals, high vs. low focal integration is associated with *less* positive ad effects (i.e., less empathy, positive feelings, credibility, relevance, Aad). Combined, the results indicate that focal integration matters, and that it matters both for ads with negative and positive appeals. Notably, we expected that differences in the effect of focal integration across ad type would be due to a greater impact of focal integration for negative than positive appeals, rather than a detrimental impact of focal integration for positive appeals.

*Emotional Integration.* 2 x 2 ANCOVAs were also conducted to examine whether the effects of emotional integration vary by appeal type. Consistent with the proposed hierarchical relationship between focal and emotional integration, the effects of high vs. low emotional integration were examined only for ads high in focal integration. Six of the main effects of emotional integration were significant at the .05 level (warmth, fear/shame/guilt, irritation, credibility, relevance, Aad;  $F_{1,403} > 4.0$ ). Furthermore, five of the nine interactions between emotional integration and appeal type were significant (fear/shame/guilt, irrita-

**Table 2**  
**Effects of High vs. Low Emotional Integration In Ads Using Positive vs. Negative Appeals**  
**ANCOVA Analyses**

<i>Dependent Measures</i>	<b>NEGATIVE APPEALS</b>		<i>F</i>	<b>POSITIVE APPEALS</b>		<i>F</i>
	<i>Low Emot'l Integration</i> (n=54)	<i>High Emot'l Integration</i> (n=55)		<i>Low Emot'l Integration</i> (n=215)	<i>High Emot'l Integration</i> (n=84)	
Empathy	4.12	4.41	1.78	4.00	3.84	<1.00
Warm Feelings	3.25	2.62	-4.23**	4.75	3.51	-24.53***
Upbeat Feelings	3.21	3.28	1.22	4.08	4.08	<1.00
Fear/Shame/Guilt	2.27	3.44	11.33***	1.39	1.47	1.16
Irritation	1.75	2.79	11.50***	1.43	1.47	<1.00
Credibility	5.54	5.88	1.76	4.80	4.99	1.66
Relevance	4.30	5.47	17.44***	3.62	3.62	<1.00
Aad	4.65	5.18	4.42**	4.72	4.80	<1.00
Brand Attitude	4.88	5.50	12.00***	5.17	4.85	-1.12

\*  $p < .10$

\*\*  $p < .05$

\*\*\*  $p < .01$

tion, relevance, Aad, brand attitude;  $F_{1,403} > 4.0$ ). As with focal integration, emotional integration appears to matter, and its effects appear to differ by appeal type.

To further examine these effects, one-way ANCOVAs were conducted comparing the impact of emotional integration on ads with positive vs. negative appeals (see Table 2). For negative appeals, emotional integration influenced six of the nine dependent measures. In five of the six cases where significant differences were found (all except warmth), ad effects were higher when emotional integration was high vs. low (i.e., greater relevance, and more favorable ad and brand attitudes). For positive appeals only one of the nine analyses revealed an effect for emotional integration (warm feelings; results here also show less warmth when emotional integration is high vs. low). These results suggest that emotional integration matters for ads using negative appeals, but seems less important for ads using positive appeals.

## Discussion

This paper introduced two hierarchically related concepts, each reflecting somewhat different roles for a product in an ad. Focal integration reflects the ex-

tent to which the product is depicted as a central element in the ad. Emotional integration reflects the extent to which the product is portrayed as a causal agent to the actor's emotions. While related concepts, including ad content factors such as product prominence and ad effects such as product use transformation have been studied, relatively little research has been done on the specific role which products play as the focus of the scenes or action in an advertisement. In this research, we developed reliable measures of each construct which were discriminable from each other and from other constructs (such as whether the appeal is positive or negative). We also found that a sample of commercials varied widely on each construct and that commercials high in focal integration could be high or low in emotional integration (but not vice versa, suggesting a hierarchical dependency of emotional integration on focal integration).

We also conducted an exploratory test of the influence of integration on ad outcomes and examined whether that influence varied by appeal type. Our focus was on whether focal and/or emotional integration would matter in influencing a number of ad outcomes (beyond what would be expected by chance). Such an outcome would suggest that not only are the two integration constructs definable and measurable, but also that further research into their effects is

likely to have practical implications.

The results revealed that high focal integration affected a number of measures of advertising effects, including those about relating to the ad on a personal basis (i.e., empathy, relevance), and ad and brand attitudes. Analyses that controlled for focal integration (reflecting the hierarchical relationship between the integration constructs), revealed that emotional integration appeared to influence outcomes only for ads using negative appeals. For such appeals, high emotional integration led to more intense feeling responses, enhanced ad relevance, and created more favorable ad and brand attitudes.

While we had predicted more moderate effects of focal and emotional integration on ad effects for positive than for negative appeals, the results suggested that high focal integration may be detrimental when appeals are positive. In retrospect, this outcome may not be surprising since in an ad with a positive appeal too much focus on the product may appear forced, may preclude thoughts about the self and its interaction with the product, and may make the ad seem less believable. Future research that explores the basis for this detrimental impact appears warranted.

While we did consistently find significant effects for both focal and emotional integration, the effects were not always consistent across the nine ad outcomes studied. In assessing the specific effects, the most significant result appears to be an asymmetry in effects on more direct outcomes such as empathy and feelings versus the more downstream credibility, relevance and ad and brand attitude measures. Either focal or emotional integration but not both appeared to affect empathy and feelings. Specifically, focal integration affected positive empathy and upbeat feelings while emotional integration affected negative feelings, fear/shame/guilt and irritation. In contrast, both focal and emotional integration affected more "downstream" responses such as credibility, relevance and ad and brand attitudes (as evidenced by main and/or interaction effects in the ANCOVAs). This outcome may be due to a model in which integration affects downstream outcomes through the mediation of empathy and feelings. Since each type of integration influences some mediators, both would be found to influence the more downstream variables. Such a mechanism and the specific results in general (e.g., why focal integration appears to influence positive feelings while emotional integration appears to influence negative feeling) suggest areas for future research.

As reported above, analyses conducted to assess

whether the effects of integration and appeal type were observed across ads in the same condition revealed interactions between ad, appeal type, and integration for several dependent variables. These effects suggest that for at least some ad effects the relationship between integration and appeal type is attenuated or depends on other aspects of the ad. Several factors may explain this effect.

From a methodological perspective, using a median split to define high vs. low integration and high vs. low appeal type rather than preselecting ads equally high or low on each construct resulted in ads in the same condition heterogeneous in their levels of integration and appeal. This heterogeneity may have reduced the likelihood of finding the hypothesized interactions across ads within a given condition. For example the hypothesized interaction between integration and appeal type may be weak or non-existent when integration and/or appeal type are just above or below the median. Alternatively, ads within condition may vary on other factors that moderate the relationship between appeal type and integration. For example, the proposed effect of integration on relevance and empathy for ads using negative appeals may depend on a match between what the consumer desires from a product and how it is portrayed in the ad (i.e., a match between consumer needs and the product's focal integration or emotional integration portrayal). While some of the ads might have reflected that match (and thus produced the proposed interaction), others may not have. Finally, it is possible that the effect of integration and appeal type may simply be more systematic for some dependent measures than others. Thus, while emotional and focal integration may have systematic effects on some dependent variables regardless of heterogeneity in appeal type strength, integration or other factors varying across ads, for other dependent variables the existence of the proposed interaction may depend on these factors.

Although the sources of heterogeneity discussed above may have produced interactions with ads for some of the dependent variables, the fact that (1) such interactions were not observed for other dependent variables, and that (2) such interactions were observed in the aggregate despite such heterogeneity suggests that the effects of focal and emotional integration are robust and deserving of future research. Additional research which creates homogeneity among ads (i.e., experimentally manipulating integration and appeal type), and/or which identifies and models other factors which predict when the interaction between

integration and appeal type will and will not occur, is clearly warranted.

*Limitations.* The present study used a correlational design which limits the inferences that can be drawn about the causal relations among constructs. Moreover, the correlational nature of the study introduces potential confounds which could affect the results. However, given the study's objective of providing preliminary indication of the value of these constructs, a correlational design represents a reasonable first step. Furthermore, the likelihood of confounds is limited in the present study given the relatively large sample of ads. The correlational design also has several advantages. First, it allows us to determine whether a sample of naturally occurring ads varies on focal and emotional integration. If they do not, the practical value of studying integration would be limited. Second, the design employed here enhances ecological validity, ascertaining the potential impact of these constructs in the context of professionally produced ads for real products. Third, using a large sample of ads enhances construct validity because we have sampled from the domain of each construct. An experimental design which uses one replicate to operationalize each independent variable would not achieve this effect.

The study is also potentially limited by the nature of the sampling procedure used to select ads. One methodological direction this study might have taken was to purposely select ads extreme on focal and emotional integration and appeal type. While this might have been a useful in a number of ways, our use of a sample that did not preselect on this basis suggests that these constructs are potentially important because they vary among the sample and still have significant effects.

*Future Research.* Notably, while the present study was outcome oriented, focusing on the direct effects of focal and emotional integration on measures of advertising effects, the ideas presented earlier in the paper suggested that focal and emotional integration may affect brand attitudes through its impact on processing opportunity, processing motivation (i.e., enhance relevance), or the type of elaborative processing (i.e., empathy). Since the exploratory nature of the present study does not allow for an assessment of the processes by which integration affect Aad and Ab, additional research on these processes is warranted (Petty and Cacioppo 1986).

In addition to examining how focal and emotional integration may affect motivation, some interesting questions can be asked about the impact of motiva-

tion in moderating the relationship between focal and emotional integration and ad effects. On the one hand, one could argue that high integration is more important for low vs. high involvement consumers since it may focus their attention on the product. Furthermore, highly involved consumers may wish to produce their own linkages with the product, and not have linkages drawn for them. Hence, effects similar to those found in the conclusion drawing literature may exist for focal and emotional integration (Kardes 1988; Sawyer and Howard 1991). On the other hand, high involvement consumers may expect to see the product as focal and anticipate the characters' emotions in light of product experiences. If so, lack of integration may prompt counterarguing. The moderating role of motivation thus appears to be an important avenue for future research.

It may also be important to examine the role of emotional and focal integration when the ad strategy revolves around more informationally vs. more transformationally based motivations of consumers and/or when the advertised product reflects a high vs. a low risk decision (see Rossiter and Percy 1987; Rossiter, Percy and Donovan 1991). Showing the product as a causal agent to characters' emotions in an ad may be important for ads based either on an informationally oriented motive like problem avoidance or a transformationally based motivation like sensory stimulation. However, high emotional integration (and thus necessarily high focal integration) may be more important when the decision making context involves a high vs. a low involvement product (i.e., one that entails considerable vs. limited decision making risk). As Rossiter and Percy (1987) point out, high involvement decisions involve search and conviction prior to purchase. High emotional integration may facilitate these effects since focusing on the product may satisfy search requirements, and vicarious trial stimulated by linking emotional outcomes to the self may enhance conviction. Rossiter and Percy (1987) note that for high involvement decision making, changes in beliefs about the product's abilities to satisfy needs may be required. Although beliefs were not examined in the present research, emotional integration may have the effect of establishing beliefs about self-efficacy (i.e., beliefs that one can receive the same rewards or punishments of a model) in a manner following Bandura's (1982) self-efficacy theory. Notably though, since emotional authenticity is critical for ads based on transformationally oriented motivations, the product-emotion causation may need to be credible, not just present, to produce positive ad effects.

Thus, a number of questions arise about the important role of focal and emotional integration, both in a variety of consumer and advertising strategy situations, and their effects on dependent measures not directly examined here.

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**Appendix**

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***Appeal Type***

1. The ad could best be characterized as one using a positive rather than a negative appeal.
2. The ad focused on outcomes that might be considered bad or frightening (R).
3. The tone of the ad was upbeat/optimistic.
4. The ad seemed to be designed to create negative feelings in the audience (R).

***Focal Integration***

1. The product/service did not seem to be related to what went on in the ad (R).
2. The product seemed to be more of a background component of the ad, rather a central character in the ad (R).
3. This ad could be used for a different product/service without changing it very much (R).
4. The ad did *not* seem to focus much on the product at all (R).

***Emotional Integration***

1. The thoughts/feelings of the character(s) were directly related to their use of the product/service and its usefulness to them.
2. Most of the character's thoughts or feelings seemed to be a direct consequence of their experience with the product/service.
3. The outcome of the commercial was directly related to the characters' use of the product/service advertised.

***Lecture/Drama***

1. The ad seemed to be narrated in that the character(s) spoke directly to me, the audience.
  2. I felt like the character(s) in the ad were lecturing to me about the benefits of the product/service.
  3. The characters in the ad seemed to speak directly to the audience.
-