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Reviewing Priming Theories Rooted In Both Prospective And Retrospective Models

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ABSTRACT

In marketing, primes are everywhere. Despite its widespread usage, there has yet to be a framework for categorising priming an approach that takes into account measurement problems and ways for giving primes, as well as providing researchers with guidance on how to think about and conduct priming-based research. Previous researchers have published summaries of priming studies, which have helped to establish the concept. Reviewing priming theories rooted in both prospective and retrospective models of memory. Developing a priming framework based on the ABC model of attitudes (affective, behavioural, and cognitive priming) that incorporates lexical priming, priming fluency effects, and methods for administering primes. Developing a priming framework based on the ABC model of attitudes (affective, behavioural, and cognitive priming. Positing the relevance of personal traits in priming, such as scepticisms' involvement in assimilation and contrast effects. As a roadmap for future study, the final model is presented and expanded upon.

KEYWORDS: Assimilation, Contrast effects**,** Priming, priming-based research.

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies indicate that conceptual and perceptual priming influence decision making behaviour subconsciously. In addition, mood has been found to have an impact on judgments; good mood encourages intuitive thinking while bad mood triggers elaborative thinking (Kahneman, 2013). This led to the idea that perceptual priming (as a logo) is more successful when people are in a good mood, while conceptual priming (as an ad) is more effective when people are in a poor mood, since the priming's match to the sort of thinking that mood causes.

Priming theory has been widely used in marketing tactics and has been proven to have a variety of effects on people's decisions. People's moods, on the other hand, frequently influence their judgements. Understanding how emotional factors influence perceptual and intellectual priming might help consumers make better decisions. Although much study has been done on the effects of perceptual priming, conceptual priming, and affective impact on consumer behaviour, there is still more to be done.

BACKGROUND

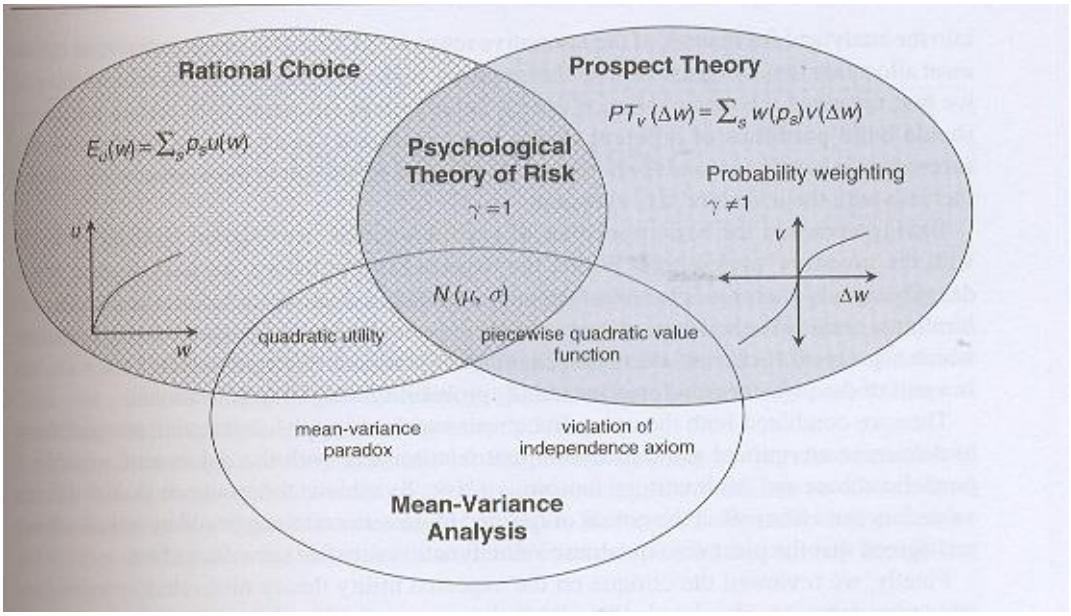
It is necessary to explore various ideas pertinent to this study in order to have a better grasp of the study's goal and methods. This section will offer an overview of priming, including conceptual and perceptual priming, as well as how emotion impacts behaviour.

EXPECTED UTILITY THEORY

Traditional economics is based on the assumption that people are rational. Built on this principle, economists have developed theories seeking to interpret people's behaviours and activities for centuries. Among all, the expected utility theory, also known as decision theory, is the heart of traditional economics. The theory provides a normative explanation to economic

decisions; that is individuals make decisions based on expected utility. Essentially, expected utility theory is a theory of rational choice, suggesting a way to predict the outcome of people's choices. The rationale is to gain the maximum utility one can possibly gain. When a rational being is facing a decision, he/she evaluates the utility from each possible option and selects the one that maximizes utility (Steele & Stefánsson, 2015).

The easiest way to understand expected usefulness is to look at an example. Assume that I am going for a walk and must determine whether or not to bring my umbrella. On a beautiful day, I would prefer not carry the umbrella, but I would rather confront rain with it than without it. I have two options: I can either take my umbrella or leave it at home. Which of the following acts shall I perform?



PRIMING

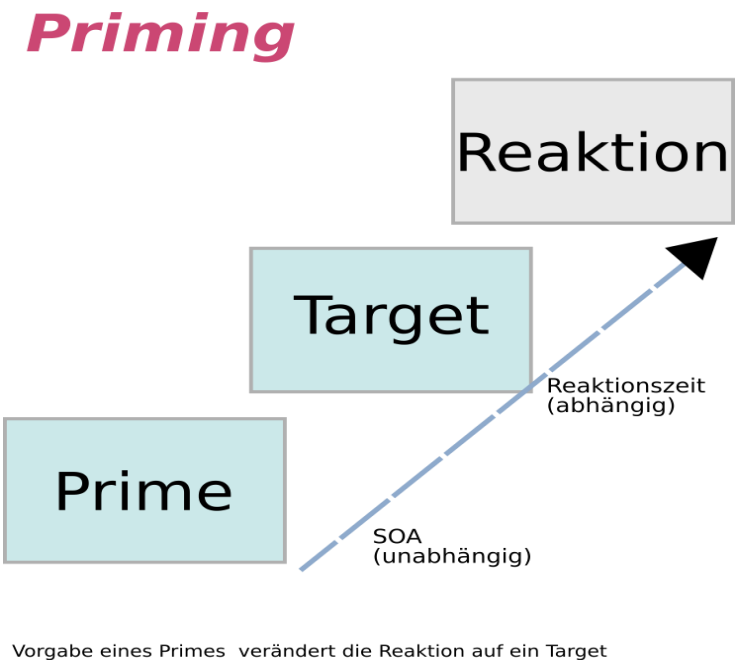
Among methods to influence people's decisions discovered by behavioral economists and psychologists, the findings of priming effects are game changers. The priming effect refers to an implicit memory effect whereby one's response to a stimulus is affected by their exposure to a prior stimulus (Kahneman, 2013). Since first explored in the 1960s (Segal, 1966), priming has been highly researched and applied in many areas. The "Florida effect" study, a classic priming experiment, gives a textbook example for the understanding of priming effects (Bargh et al 1994). Most broadly, priming refers to the incidental influence of environmental context on cognition and behavior (Logan, 1980).

IMPLICIT MEMORY AND PRIMING

The operative word "priming" has been used in various fields and sub-fields of psychology. Priming refers to the process by which previous experience increases the general accessibility of a conceptual category, thereby increasing the likelihood of that category being used to encode new information (Fiske and Taylor 1990). In social cognition, priming has been mostly exhibited with the usage of trait terms. Thus exposing people to positive or negative trait terms (e.g., reckless versus adventurous) causes people soon afterwards to interpret ambiguous behavior (e.g., shooting rapids in a canoe) as correspondingly positive or negative depending on the trait being primed and its corresponding meaning (Higgins, Rholes and Jones, 1977; Bargh and Pietromonaco, 1982; Srull and Wyer, 1979, 1980).

Graf and Schacter (1985) introduced the concept of implicit versus explicit memory, which was more of a descriptive as opposed to a process distinction. They stated that "implicit memory is revealed when performance on a task is facilitated in the absence of conscious recollection; explicit memory is revealed when performance on a task requires conscious

recollection of previous experiences". Thus performance on implicit memory measures is revealed only when priming occurs. It should be clarified here that priming does not always imply the operation of the hypothetical implicit memory system. Priming being an activation process can also underlie explicit memory (Ratcliff and McKoon 1988). In some of the literature however (Schacter, Delaney and Merikle, 1990) the term "priming" has been used interchangeably with implicit memory and is therefore a source of considerable confusion.



Vorgabe eines Primes verändert die Reaktion auf ein Target

CORRECTION AND PRIMING

People are often unaware of how many implicit associations and different connections are made when a concept is activated. Consequently, people are not always aware whether or how their subsequent behavior is influenced. However, once individuals become aware of this influence, they will try to correct for it (Wyer, 2008).

This same pattern of correction for biased information happens for priming attempts. When individuals are made aware that a priming task serves a purpose - influencing a subsequent task or judgment - they engage in conscious correction **(**Devine, 1989; Strack *et al.*, 1993) or nonconscious correction (Laran, Dalton, & Andrade, 2011**).** For example, Lepore and Brown (2002) concluded that priming high-prejudice and low-prejudice participants with the blacks category caused judgments of that same category to be respectively more negative and more positive. However, awareness of a connection between priming and impression formation tasks caused this pattern to be reversed.

This reversal caused by awareness of the influence of the priming task is found in other domains and it is often referred to as contrast effects (Lombardi, Higgins, & Bargh, 1987; Martin, 1986; Strack *et al.*, 1993). Researchers seem to agree that consciousness of the priming event will lead to contrast effects, or to the reversal of the intended effect.

AFFECTIVE INFLUENCE ON DECISION-MAKING

In Thinking Fast & Slow, Daniel Kahneman suggests that the operation of our thinking consists of two systems, which he refers to System 1 and System 2. System 1 “operates automatically and quickly with little to no effort and no sense of voluntary control.” It takes charge of automatically identifying impressions and feeling, and conducting instant responses. On the other hand, System 2 takes “information” collected by System 1 and translates it into thoughts (Kahneman, 2008).

PRIMING CONTROVERSIES

Several recent replication studies have failed to uncover evidence for priming phenomena, igniting often contentious arguments about priming effects' reliability. A few high-profile impacts have been at the heart of this discussion for years and have remained in the limelight.

Arguably the most prominent single effect in the discussion is reported in Experiments 2a and 2b from Bargh, Chen, and Burrows (1996). In these experiments, participants unscramble sentences that either contained words stereotypically associated with elderly Americans (e.g., often too early retired they) or not (e.g., they her see outside normally). The dependent measure was the amount of time taken to walk from the experimental room to a nearby elevator. The key observation was that participants exposed to the elderly primes took longer to walk to the elevator than did control participants. This result was taken to demonstrate that incidentally activating the elderly stereotype produced behaviour related to the stereotyped group (i.e., the elderly walk more slowly).

SUGGESTIONS

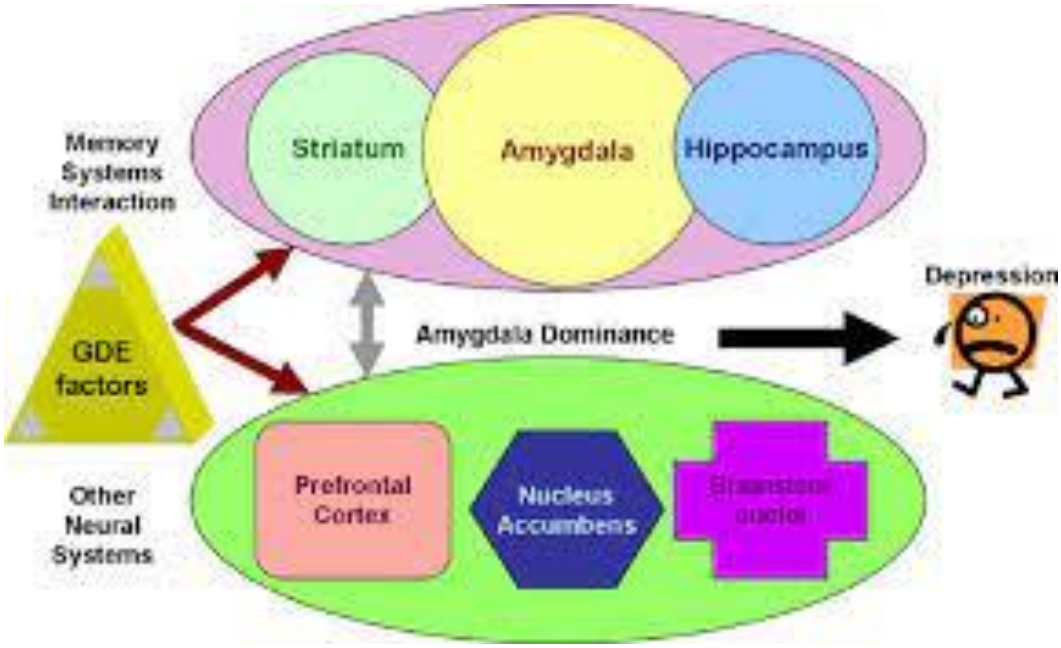
It is suggested that the framework provided by Richardson-Klavehn and Bjork (1988) with regard to direct and indirect tests and the retrieval intentionality criterion (RIC) be used in future research. The above framework does not appear to have been used in consumer research and is a fruitful area of inquiry. As a starting point it can be useful to determine, using the RIC, whether the construct of implicit memory using the implicit memory measures can be replicated in the consumer research context. Nedungadi (1990) has used word completion - an implicit memory measure in one of his studies.

MULTIPLE MEMORY SYSTEMS VIEW

Schacter (1987) has forwarded three main classes of theory to explain the distinction between explicit and implicit memory systems. The first of these is called the multiple memory systems view. and its major support arises from the observed independence or dissociation between explicit and implicit memory systems (Schacter, 1987)

These dissociations as Schacter (1987) Tulving and Schacter (1990) argue lead to the possibility of a single perceptual representation (PRS) which may exist separately from other memory systems and suggest that implicit and explicit memory performance are reflections of the operation of separate subsystems in memory.

The distinction between episodic and semantic memory has also been invoked to to account for this dissociation, (Tulving, 1972, Cermak et al., 1985; Kinsbourne and Wood, 1975; Parkin, 1982; Tulving and Schacter, 1982; Tulving, 1983). The episodic memory system is viewed as the basis for explicit recollection of specific events, whereas semantic memory is seen as responsible for performance on tasks such as word completion, lexical decision, and word identification which require subjects to make use of pre-existing knowledge of words and concepts. Other multiple memory systems have also been proposed to account for the observed data with regard to explicit and implicit memory systems (Johnson, 1985; Schacter and Moscovitch, 1984; Warrington and Weiskrantz, 1978).



A second theoretical account is proposed by the processing view in which the interaction between encoding and retrieval is the focus (Jacoby, 1983; Roediger and Blaxton, 1987a, Hunt and Toth, 1990). This relies on the distinction between conceptually-driven (top-down) and data driven (bottom-up) processing. Conceptually driven processes reflect subject-initiated activities such as elaborating, organizing and reconstructing; data-driven processes are initiated by the information or data that is presented in test materials. The major argument is that information encoded via one of these general types of processes is best retrieved using the same or similar process.

Thus most explicit tests emphasize concept-driven processing while most implicit tests draw on data-driven processing and performance dissociations between implicit and explicit tests are attributed to differences between conceptually driven and data driven processes. Hunt and Toth (1990) have reported some limitations in using this framework with regard to the effect of orthographic distinctiveness of words.

The third class of theories are those espousing the activation view. Activation holds that priming effects on implicit memory are attributable to the temporary activation of preexisting representations, knowledge structures or logogens (Graf and Mandler, 1984; Morton, 1979). This activation is automatic and decontextualized and is not affected by any ongoing elaborative processing.

FINDINGS

Several factors in social cognition have been found to influence the accessibility of using a primed trait. In other words the effects of priming on dimensions descriptively or evaluative related to the primed trait are increased (or assimilated) by:

a) Increasing the number of trait-relevant items used during the priming task (Srull and Wyer, 1979; 1980);
b) Decreasing the time interval between the priming task and the presentation of information about the target character (Srull and Wyer, 1979,1980);
c) Increasing time interval between the target character's information (behaviors) and the judgment (Srull and Wyer, 1980);
d) Increasing the ambiguity of the target character's behavior (Srull and Wyer, 1979);
e) Increasing expectations that category-relevant events will occur (Higgins, Kuiper and Olson, 1980);
f) Increasing frequency of activation of the category (Wyer and Srull, 1980) and
g) Increasing the strength of semantic relationships between the category and other activated concepts (Collins and Loftus, 1975; Warren 1972).

CONCLUSION

We believe that our presentation will serve as a powerful illustration of the still-underappreciated relevance of study design in terms of statistical power and research findings dependability. We also expect that our study pushes the argument away from the content region (social vs. non-social) and toward statistical power as an explanation for priming effect resilience. Unlike the first discussion, which leads to a dead end (i.e., don't look into social idea priming), the second debate informs how we assess and plan future priming studies.

Implicit memory is a rather solid foundation for many consumer behaviour applications. Customer researchers may be overlooking a potentially significant component of consumer appraisal and decision making if the concept of consumer memory is limited to conventional recall/recognition tests.

As a result, the idea of consumer memory may need to be broadened to incorporate implicit memory. However, researchers should be aware of the significant arguments that have yet to be addressed, most notably over the "proper" theoretical framework and the difference between task and process. It's a fascinating and still-evolving framework with a lot of potential applications in consumer behaviour.

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