VARIED THRUSH MANUSCRIPT REVIEW HISTORY
REVIEWS (ROUND 2)

Editor Decision Letter

Thank you for submitting your revision to the Journal of Consumer Research. The manuscript and the revision notes were read by the AE and by me. Both of us feel that you have produced a better paper, overall.

The AE and I feel that the paper is ready for seeing the light of day. Thus, I am happy to conditionally accept it for publication in JCR. Congratulations!

There are a few more issues raised by the reviewers and the AE that need to be addressed. But these issues can be easily handled in a revision. There are a couple of issues that I would strongly urge you to address:

The discussion section -- in particular the discussion of the Effect of Political Debates on Advertising Effectiveness -- seems to be too prescriptive. I would urge you to either delete it or tone it down.

The AE has alerted me that the paper is too long and I completely agree. Please go through the paper with a microscope and delete what is not needed. I found quite a bit of citations (including self citations) that were really not needed. My sense is that you can cut your length by at least 5 pages. Of course I leave this to you. What I am saying is that PLEASE look for opportunities to pare the length.

Please shorten your title as well.

When you send your revision, please include a set of revision notes. Your revision will NOT be sent out to the reviewers. My hope is that it will be a 15-minute decision process for the AE and me, respectively, at the next stage.

AE Report

Comments to the Authors:

The reviewers and I agree that the authors have devoted care, time, and effort in revising the paper. The authors were responsive to the comments and concerns offered by the editors and the reviewers. Reviewer A writes, “The authors have been responsive to the reviewers’
comments and the manuscript has improved as a result.” Reviewer B comments, “Overall the authors did a good job addressing my comments. I like new Study 4 and the full analysis of this study.” The revised paper makes an important contribution to consumer research. Congratulations on crafting an interesting paper!

The reviewers have again generously devoted careful attention to reading the manuscript. In the spirit of helping readers to better appreciate your research and its contribution, the reviewers have identified a few issues that should be addressed. They are as follows:

1. Reviewer A highlights three remaining concerns that need to be addressed. Please be sure to address Reviewer A’s two conceptual concerns, point #2 and #3 in the paper. Addressing these concerns should help the reader to better understand the conceptual framework and thus the contribution of the research.

2. Reviewer B highlights a few issues that should be addressed in the paper. In particular, as described by Reviewer B, be sure to give consideration to crafting the introduction in a manner that more immediately draws the reader in and helps them to appreciate the focus and contribution of the research. In addition, be sure to address Reviewer B’s concerns regarding study 2 and 4. Reviewer B points out some implications of the mindset manipulation. Consider addressing these in the paper or the reviewers’ notes, as appropriate.

Please be sure to carefully proofread and polish the paper – be sure your intended meaning is conveyed and not hampered by typos, wording or grammar issues. In experiment 3, please consider how the description of Advocates for Children could more clearly convey the need for this organization to be fictional and “unknown to participants.”

As you address the reviewers’ concerns, maintain the integrity of the conceptual framework presented in the paper and focus on your conceptual contribution throughout.

**Reviewer A**

**Comments to the Authors:**

This revised manuscript addresses several issues raised in the first round. The authors have been responsive to the reviewers’ comments and the manuscript has improved as a result. I only have a few remaining comments.

1. The last sentence in the introduction should not refer to Toyota. It can be a general statement about attitudes toward brands or corporations.

2. I am still slightly confused about why a bolstering mindset does not have a differential effect when individuals are watching commercials for desirable products. Is it a ceiling effect or are there any theoretical reasons?

3. You suggest that when participants are politically independent, they should elaborate on the implications of the speech regardless of who delivers it and should develop a bolstering mindset (there is no page number but this sentence is from the second page of experiment 4). My question is why. My understanding is that a bolstering mindset is more likely for targets...
that are desirable or that have positive associations. In this situation, I expect both mindsets (bolstering or counterarguing) to be equally applicable.

I hope you find my comments helpful and wish you all the best in your future research.

Reviewer B

Comments to the Authors:

Overall the authors did a good job addressing my comments. I like new Study 4 and the full analysis of this study. There are still few issues that need to be addressed:
Introduction: I think the authors can make the introduction even shorter; I see your need in outlying the framework and prior research; but I think that in order to attract the reader to read the paper, you want to get to your main point earlier; I do not have specific suggestions how to do it; and you don’t have to agree with this suggestion, of course; it is just a suggestion to enhance readability of the paper.

Study 2: It is nice that you are able to demonstrate a null effect for the counterarguing mindset, and a positive effect for the bolstering. However, as I wrote in my previous review, I wonder if there are situations in which bolstering mindset can actually DECREASE the effectiveness of messages? That is, are there situations where bolstering mindset would have a boomerang effect, just as the counterarguing mindset could have (per your third study)?

Study 4: You hypothesize and find that participants with a strong a preference for one of the candidates would be motivated to support their candidate when watching a debate, resulting in a bolstering mindset. What is the theatrical account behind this? Why couldn’t it be the case that these participants will be actually motivated to oppose the candidate they do not support, resulting in a counterarguing mindset?

Finally, it looks like your mindset manipulation makes people process information in a manner different from the default: when the message is such that people are likely to oppose (study 2), counterargue is the default strategy, so inducing this mindset makes no difference. In contrast, inducing a non-default strategy (bolstering in this case) increases persuasion. Similarly, when people are likely to agree with the message (study 1), bolstering is default strategy, therefore inducing it makes no difference. I think this point could be highlighted when discussing the implications of your research.

Trainee Reviewer 1

Comments to the Authors:

I was a trainee reviewer on a previous version of this paper. Compared to that version, the authors have rewritten the paper, conducted new analyses, and collected new data. I think this version is a major improvement over the previous version, but, I still have several comments that hopefully can further strengthen the paper.
**Theoretical Issues and Contributions**

Authors extensively rewrote the theoretical background of the paper. They added literatures on cognitive responses to persuasive messages, effects of past experience, the role of mindsets in information processing. However, I still have difficulty in understanding how they come up with their hypotheses.

a. Why should we expect that a bolstering mindset will have less impact than a counterarguing mindset on reactions to an ad for a product that consumers expect to like, but will have more impact than a counterarguing mindset on reactions to an ad for a product they expect to dislike?

b. Theoretical support for the prediction that political independents should develop a mindset to counterargue when they watch a debate versus participants with an a priori preference for one candidate develop a counterarguing mindset when they hear a speech by the candidate they oppose is rather weak compared to the theoretical support for the other predictions.

c. Authors test that favorableness mediate the effect of mindset manipulations in studies 1 and 2. However, they do not provide any theoretical support for why favorableness should mediate the effect of mindset manipulations.

Repeating myself from the previous review of the paper, research shows that if processing resources are limited, spontaneously evoked affective reactions rather than cognitions have a greater impact on choice (Shiv and Fedorikhin 1999). Do the authors expect any difference in their results if processing resources are limited? Would the effect differ when the advertisement is based on emotions/affect versus cognitions?

Overall, although authors attempted to include the related literature to strengthen the theoretical background of the paper, I think there are still problems regarding the conceptual framework, the logic underlying the framework. One thing that authors may try to do is to explicitly write the hypotheses, which I believe would make the readability of the paper easier, and back up their hypotheses with related literature about why the reader should expect to have the predictions written in the hypotheses.

**Empirical Issues**

1. Study 1:
   a. How did the authors decide on highly favorable versus moderately favorable stimuli? Why did they not include low favorable stimuli?
   b. I think it would have been better if authors provide the advertisement stimuli for Igloo hotels and Milwaukee Art Museum.

2. Study 2:
   a. I think authors should provide the advertisements featuring exotic cuisine in Beijing.
   b. Did the authors conduct any pretests to develop their stimuli for exotic cuisine in Beijing.

3. Study 3:
a. Authors use a donation example. However, although they expect that it is difficult to refute the arguments, they again do not provide any theoretical support for this. Not all donations are hard to refute. What about the effects of sincerity, message of the ad, etc?

**Minor Issues**

- Authors should provide the page numbers.

**Overall View**

Overall, this paper has the potential to make a contribution. Addressing the issues outlined here may help to deepen the theoretical framework and enhance your contribution to the existing literature.

I wish you the best luck in your future research.