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Trang Phuc Tran  
*SUNY Oneonta*

Joan Hubbard  
*University of North Texas*

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# **National Brands or Private Brands? A Regulatory Focus Perspective**

**Trang Phuc Tran**

*SUNY Oneonta*

**Joan Hubbard**

*University of North Texas*

## **ABSTRACT**

Drawing on existing literature, the current research is to investigate how regulatory focus moderates the influence of two aspects of message framing, i.e., attribute framing and risky choice framing, and their interactions on customer perception measured by four components: brand attitude, attitude toward the ad, purchase intention, and willingness to pay. A conceptual model was drawn to capture four hypothetical relationships: regulatory focus and attribute framing (H1), regulatory focus and brand type (H2), brand type and attribute framing (H3), and regulatory focus, brand type and attribute framing (H4).

An experiment was conducted using 430 participants and a 2 (regulatory focus: promotion versus prevention) x 2 (brand types: national versus private) x 2 (attribute framing: hedonic versus utilitarian) between-subjects factorial design was used. Two focal products were employed were shampoo and shoes. Two brands were used for shampoo: Head & Shoulders (national) and CVS (private), and two brands for shoes: Nike (national) and Starter (private). The results showed that out of 4 hypotheses, only H2 was supported for shoes and the remaining hypotheses were not supported. However, follow up contrasts for this supported hypothesis indicated that national brands are more persuasive than private brands no matter whether customers are promotion or prevention oriented, or H2a was supported, but H2b was not.

The current study attempted to address an increasing heated topic “How to create a positive attitude toward private brands?” which has been discussed in brand management literature. It answered this question by proposing a conceptual model reflecting the persuasion mechanism in which customer perception is moderated by regulatory focus and testing hypotheses using 430 participants. Although many of the results of the study were consistent with those of previous studies, the current research provided critical points that were not found in the previous literature, for instance, promotion oriented customers did not have higher level of persuasion while being exposed to hedonic attributes than to utilitarian attributes. Additionally, the study provides better insights into how regulatory focus moderates the effects of attribute framing on customer perception. It also has implications for both academicians and practitioners

## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Trang Phuc Tran (Ph.D., University of North Texas) is Assistant Professor of Marketing at the State University of New York College at Oneonta. His papers are accepted in several conferences, such as American Marketing Association, Society for Marketing Advances,

Academy of Marketing Science, and Association of Marketing Theory and Practice. His name also appeared on Journal of Macromarketing.

Joan C. Hubbard (Ph.D., Oklahoma State University) is Lecturer for the Department of Management, has a wide and varied background. In addition to being in the higher education arena for more than 20 years, she established a very successful management training and consulting firm in the Atlanta area and worked with companies throughout the United States. She was also a popular keynote speaker and used music to enhance the message she presented. Dr. Hubbard earned all of her degrees from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. During graduate school, she was affiliated with the Affirmative Action Department. She was a tenured, associate professor at Texas State University, San Marcos and a tenured, full professor at the University of West Georgia, Carrollton. Dr. Hubbard and her husband, Dr. Charles Hubbard, moved to the Denton area in September, 2003, and now reside in suburban Ponder. Together, they have four children and seven grandchildren.

