We introduce the concept of body spheres into research on advertising. We consider four human body spheres (inside one's body, outside one's body, on one's skin, and hybrid) and products that affect human well-being within these distinct spheres. We denote these types of products as inside-my-body products, outside-my-body products, on-my-skin products, and hybrid products. We test the hypothesis that models shown in advertisements who are similar to the recipient are effective in affecting responses to inside-my-body products, while attractive models are effective in affecting responses to on-my-skin products. Our results are consistent with this hypothesis.

1. Introduction

Models are frequently depicted in advertisements. Substantial academic research has focused on the influence of the portrayals of models on consumer responses toward the advertised products. However, the results are mixed: sometimes a positive effect but mostly a null effect from the manipulations of model characteristics has been reported. We introduce a new concept, the concept of body spheres, into the research on the effectiveness of models shown in advertisements and use this concept to link product characteristics to two special model characteristics (similarity and attractiveness) to better explain model effectiveness. In the following, we provide some reasons that support developing and testing this approach.

The first reason arises from the finding that neither the fundamental similarity principle, which generally states that people like other people who are similar to them and dislike dissimilar people (e.g., Byrne 1971; Newcomb 1968), nor the basic attraction principle, which states that people like attractive others and dislike unattractive others (e.g., Baker/Churchill 1977; Chaiken 1979; Dion/Berscheid/Walster 1972; Eagly at al. 1991; Joseph 1982; Maddux/Rogers 1980; Miller 1970), properly predict the effectiveness of models. Researchers who varied the degree of model/recipient similarity or the degree of model attractiveness mostly reported a null effect. We will refer to these findings in a subsequent section. The second reason for testing this approach is that the validity of the “match-up” hypothesis, which was developed to predict the effectiveness of attractive models, was restricted to beauty products. For instance, Kahle/Homer (1985), Kamins (1990), Misra/Beatty (1990), and Till/Busler (2000) stated that attractive models and celebrities should be used to promote beauty products. However, other researchers also found a positive effect from model attractiveness for products such as facial tissues, which have little potential to make the user appear more beautiful (Caballero/Solomon 1984). As a third reason for developing a new approach, we refer to the following deficit in prior research: to the best of our knowledge, a match-up hypothesis indicating the types of products that are most appropriate for use with models with a high similarity to the ad recipients has not been developed and tested.

We posit that attractive models are effective for promoting products that intensely come into contact with one’s skin, and we denote these products as on-my-skin products. Moreover, we hypothesize that showing models who are similar to the targeted consumers is effective for promoting products that are ingested (e.g., food, beverages, and pills). We refer to these products as inside-my-body products. Our argument is that recipients of advertisements are likely to activate heuristic principles when they see models. We expect that recipients of advertisements are likely to activate heuristic principles when they see models. We expect that viewing beautiful models activates another heuristic principle,
which can be formulated as “This product is for people who feel good on the outside” (i.e., for people who experience well-being on and due to the exterior of their body); this principle is likely to be consulted for evaluating on-my-skin products.

How do we contribute to research on model effectiveness? As indicated above, we develop and test hypotheses that are less general than the similarity and attraction principles but more general than the match-up hypotheses that have been discussed and tested thus far. Why is knowledge about the postulated interaction relevant for practice? An examination of advertising practice shows that advertisers use both attractive and similar models to promote both on-my-skin products and inside-my-body products (examples are shown in Fig. 1). Our research aims to derive recommendations regarding which model type should be used by marketers depending on the promoted product’s type.

2. The body-sphere approach

Consumers who are confronted with products shown in advertisements may strive to satisfy the need to evaluate these products if they feel targeted. We focus on conditions in which consumers evaluate products favorably when the products contribute to maintaining or increasing their well-being in different body spheres. We do not consider products with a low potential to influence human well-being, e.g., functional products such as batteries or wrapping film.

2.1. Connecting products with body spheres

On a very general level, products can have an impact on well-being within different body spheres. We consider four body spheres as follows.

*Internal body sphere:* This sphere is the inside of the human body. Its well-being is affected by consuming inside-my-body products, i.e., products that are ingested such as food, beverages, and pills, because these products become part of one’s body. Moreover, drugs that are applied to the skin and are absorbed by the body (i.e., ointments) and cigarettes, because their smoke is taken into the lungs, are included in this product category.

*External body sphere:* This sphere is represented by the person’s surroundings. People can also maintain and enhance their well-being by making decisions about items that are unconnected to their body, including outside-my-body products (e.g., furniture, cars, household appliances and devices, and entertainment products).

*Intermediate body sphere:* This sphere separates the internal from the external sphere and, thus, is represented by the person’s skin. Regarding this interface, a person’s well-being is influenced by on-my-skin products, i.e., products that are strongly related to the skin or that affect skin (e.g., clothing, jewelry, cosmetics, perfume, glasses, tattoos, sun cream, and dish liquid).

*Hybrid body sphere:* This sphere exists because the internal and intermediate spheres overlap. Well-being in this sphere is affected by hybrid products. We denote products as hybrid if they neither become part of a person’s body, although they are taken in, nor stay on the person’s skin.
external skin during the consumption process (e.g., toothpaste, chewing gum, dental floss, and tampons).

2.2. Connecting body spheres with the advertising model's characteristics

Consumers are likely to experience uncertainty while evaluating the products shown in advertisements. In this situation, peripheral advertising cues such as the models' characteristics can activate heuristic principles, which are then used for product evaluations.

**Internal body sphere**: We posit that consumers reduce the uncertainty related to well-being in the internal body sphere by paying attention to people who look like themselves. Consumers may rely on the following relationship: if the body of a similar person obviously benefits from using certain products, my own body's well-being is likely to experience the same positive effect. We presume that viewing similar models activates a process of self-referencing (Debevec/Romeo 1992; Appiah 2007). Contact with similar people may evoke spontaneous sentiments such as “This person looks like me.” These sentiments could activate a heuristic principle that signals, “This product is for people like me.” This argument is adopted from Chang (2008, p. 21), who states that “when consumers are exposed to advertising messages, they implicitly make ‘for-me’ or ‘not-for-me’ self-categorizations based on ad execution.” According to Forehand/Deshpande (2001, p. 337), this process of self-referencing is a cognitively uncontrolled process triggered by perceptions of the model’s similarity to the recipient based on factors such as ethnicity, gender, economic status, or age. Thus, if models are shown in advertisements, perceived similarity to the model could serve as a cue that helps the consumer to judge whether the promoted product would be beneficial for enhancing and increasing his or her own well-being in the internal body sphere.

**Intermediate body sphere**: Moreover, we hypothesize that people intend to pursue well-being in their intermediate body sphere. We consider three conditions that are related to this type of well-being. First, well-being in this sphere may result from a person’s self-beliefs about the level of attractiveness. If people believe that they look nice, they expect to be admired by others and can presume that additional positive characteristics such as intelligence or trustworthiness are being attached to them, which fosters well-being (Miller 1970; Dion/Berscheid/Walster 1972; Chaiken 1979; Maddux/Rogers 1980). Second, well-being may also result from the belief that one’s skin is protected against threats from the external body sphere (e.g., one’s skin is protected from UVA rays causing sunburn). Third, well-being in this sphere may result from a pleasant feel on one’s skin. For instance, certain underwear could make people feel well in this body sphere (“It flatters my skin”) or a particular dish liquid could avoid chapped hands from washing, affecting the well-being of skin. We posit that people feel good in this sphere when one of these conditions exists, i.e.,

when they believe that their physical appearance is nice, when they are protecting their skin, or when they feel comfortable in their skin. Another person’s physical attractiveness is the best visible cue that can be used to infer that person’s overall well-being in the intermediate body sphere. Thus, in the case of advertising showing attractive models, the recipient could activate the heuristic “This product is for people who feel good on the outside” principle. As consumers strive to feel good about themselves in this sphere, this cue is likely to be used to evaluate on-my-skin products.

**Hybrid and external body spheres**: To evaluate the products affecting well-being in these additional spheres, the described heuristic principles cannot be used. Therefore, we propose that neither model/recipient similarity nor model attractiveness is efficient for affecting consumer responses toward these types of products.

2.3. Support for the body-sphere approach from prior research

We are not aware of research that directly compared the effectiveness of model similarity to the effectiveness of model attractiveness as we intend. However, numerous studies separately investigated either the effect of different degrees of model/recipient similarity (see Tab. A1 in the Appendix) or the effect of different degrees of model attractiveness (see Tab. A2 in the Appendix) on consumer responses toward the advertised product. In the following section, we provide a survey of findings from experiments in which female consumers were confronted with advertisements that showed female models. Because studies on the effect of male models shown in advertisements on male consumers’ responses are rather rare, we summarize the findings for male consumers at the bottom of this section.

**Inside-my-body products/female consumers**: Studies that tested model effectiveness for promoting in-my-body products most frequently found a positive effect from model/recipient similarity on product evaluations or behavioral responses (Chang 2005 for mineral water/similarity with regard to the degree of femininity of the model and the recipient; Chang 2008 for hamburger/similarity with regard to cognitive age; Nelson/Smith 1988 for laxatives/similarity based on the cognitive age of the model and the recipient; Simpson et al. 2000 for frozen meals/ethnicity-based similarity). Schlinger/Plummer (1972) also varied ethnicity-based model/recipient similarity and found a positive effect from similarity for the evaluation of cigarettes; cigarettes are not actually ingested, but the smoke affects the well-being of the inside of one’s body and even becomes part of the body. We only found one study whose results were not in line with the presumption of a positive effect of model/recipient similarity on the evaluations of an inside-my-body product (Nelson/Smith 1998: coffee creamer). On the contrary, the studies that determined the impact of model attractiveness did not find an effect on evaluations or on...
Bombe, Using the Body-Sphere Approach to Predict the Effectiveness of Similar and Attractive Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human body sphere</th>
<th>Products</th>
<th>Effect of models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal sphere (inside one’s body)</td>
<td>Inside-my-body products</td>
<td>Similar models activate the “This product is for people like me” principle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate sphere (on one’s skin)</td>
<td>On-my-skin products</td>
<td>Attractive models activate the “This product is for people who feel good on the outside” principle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid sphere (between the internal and the intermediate sphere)</td>
<td>Hybrid products</td>
<td>None of these principles is activated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External sphere (outside one’s body)</td>
<td>Outside-my-body products</td>
<td>None of these principles is activated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Advertising effectiveness of model characteristics depending on the body sphere

behavioral consumer responses (Baker/Churchill 1977 for coffee; Caballero/Lumpkin/Madden 1989 for soft drinks and cheese; Caballero/Solomon 1984 for beer; Onodera/Miura 1998 for diet drinks), Bower/Landreth (2001) tested the effect of model attractiveness on responses to acne treatment, and they also found a null effect. Acne treatments are applied to one’s skin to improve it, but the pharmaceutical ingredients must be absorbed by one’s skin, i.e., must become part of one’s body, to become effective. Hence, all of these findings are consistent with our presumption that model similarity is consulted and model attractiveness is ignored when models are shown in advertisements that promote inside-my-body products.

On-my-skin products/female consumers: We are not aware of any study whose authors reported a significant positive effect from model/recipient similarity on product evaluations or on behavioral responses. We identified eight studies whose authors manipulated model/recipient similarity based on common or different ethnicity; each of these studies found a null effect (Bush/Gwinner/Solomon 1974 for bath soap; Bush/Hair/Solomon 1979 for bras; D’Alessandro/Chitty 2011 for clothes; Green 1999 for perfume; Kerin 1979 for body oil; Solomon/Bush/Hair 1976 for paper towels; Stafford/Birdwell/van Tassel 1970 for lipstick; Tolley/Goett 1971 for sunglasses and clothes). In two studies, the authors tested the effect of similarity with regard to body shape; they also reported a null effect (Diedrichs/Lee 2011 for nine clothing and beauty products; Halliwell/Dittmar 2004 for deodorant). On the contrary, for model attractiveness, mostly a positive effect was found (Bower/Landreth 2001 for earrings, lipsticks, and perfume; Caballero/Solomon 1984 for facial tissues; Parekh/Kanekar 1994 for shampoo and soap); as an exception, Baker/Churchill (1977) were not able to report a positive effect of model attractiveness for perfume, probably due to small sample sizes. In sum, the findings are consistent with our presumption that model attractiveness is relevant while model similarity does not play a role in the evaluation of on-my-skin products.

Hybrid products/female consumers: Research on the effectiveness of models for the evaluation of products that target this specific body sphere is rare. Bush/Hair/Solomon (1979) used tampons as test objects and tested the effect of ethnicity-based model/recipient similarity on the attitudes toward the promoted tampons. Baunk/Dijkstra (2011) tested the effect of model attractiveness on evaluations of chewing gum. Neither similarity nor attractiveness turned out to affect the evaluations of these products.

Outside-my-body products/female consumers: D’Alessandro/Chitty (2011) tested the effect of ethnicity-based model/recipient similarity on evaluations of a gym and reported a null effect. Parekh/Kanekar (1994) developed ad versions for a stationary pad and a pen, and they found no effect from model attractiveness. Caballero/Pride (1984) found only a marginal effect from model attractiveness on the purchase rate of books that were promoted by the model. The findings indicate that neither similarity nor attractiveness have remarkable effects on the response toward these types of advertised products.

Male consumers: As indicated above, we found few studies that investigated male consumer responses to products that were advertised in conjunction with male models. For inside-my-body products, Simpson et al. (2000) found a positive effect from model similarity, while the researchers who tested the effect of model attractiveness did not report significant findings (Baker/Churchill 1977; Caballero/Lumpkin/Madden 1989; Caballero/Solomon 1984). For on-my-skin products, Caballero/Solomon (1984) reported a positive effect from attractive models. For outside-my-body products, Caballero/Pride (1984) did not find an effect from model attractiveness. In sum, these findings obtained for male consumers do not differ from the findings for female consumers.

As the empirical findings of prior research are highly consistent with the postulated principles described above, we conclude that model effectiveness and product types are connected through the relevant human body sphere (Tab. 1).

2.4. Hypotheses

We presume that consumers activate the heuristic principles described above when there is a fit between the product type and the model type. Because the prior empirical research focused on investigating either the effect of different degrees of model/recipient similarity or the effect of different degrees of model attractiveness, we
contribute to this research by comparing the effect of similar versus the effect of attractive models and test the following:

\( H_{1a} \): Models who are similar to the recipient are more effective than attractive models in affecting responses to inside-my-body products.

\( H_{1b} \): Attractive models are more effective than similar models in affecting responses to on-my-skin products.

Admittedly, these hypotheses can only be postulated for target consumers who do not look like an attractive model.

Ultimately, it is expected that a product will be evaluated more favorably when the fitting principle is activated. However, another possible explanation of the effect of product/model fit is task enjoyment. It is assumed that fit conditions are accompanied by positive feelings. Evaluating a product in a fit condition is likely to be more enjoyable than evaluating that product in a non-fit condition. These feelings may translate positively to product evaluations. In Fig. 2, we illustrate the postulated dual effect of a fit for product and model type.

Higgins and his co-authors proposed that people experience feelings of enjoyment regarding an activity when the thoughts that accompany the task are congruent. Performing tasks such as evaluating products may contribute to these activities. The authors argue that enjoyment results from the congruence of the thoughts that are present in the consumer’s mind while performing the task (Freitas/Higgins 2002; Freitas/Liberman/Higgins 2002; Higgins 2000; Higgins et al. 2003; Vaughn et al. 2006). Although this stream of research investigated the congruence of promotion and prevention thoughts, the concept of congruence is not limited to these types of thoughts (e.g., Laran/Tsiros 2013; Wheeler/DeMarree/Petty 2008). Adopting this approach, we posit that consumers can experience enjoyment while evaluating a product when there is a fit between the product and the model shown in the advertisement. Vaughn et al. (2006, p. 448) posit that the feelings resulting from congruent thoughts "can serve as information for judgments as long as people attribute these feelings to what they are judging." This argument is based on the feeling-as-information principle (Schwarz 1990, p. 527; Schwarz/Clore 1983; Schwarz/Clore 2007), whereby the experience of feelings while evaluating a product can be misattributed. The consumer mistakenly may believe that the desirable features of the promoted product are the source of pleasant feelings, though these feelings are in fact evoked by the congruence of product type and model type, and he/she thereby evaluates the product more positively. These considerations provide an additional argument for why the fit conditions may be advantageous. We therefore test the following:

\( H_{2} \): The fit conditions described in Hypothesis 1 evoke higher task enjoyment than the non-fit conditions, which positively contributes to product evaluations.

3. Study

3.1. Experimental design

We conducted a four (product type: inside-my-body product, on-my-skin product, hybrid product, outside-my-body product) × two (model type: similar or attractive) factorial experiment. The test participants were female students. Data collection took place in Germany. As we will explain below, we considered 17 products as representatives for the product types. Thus, we also included a product factor as a random factor that is nested under the product-type factor. In sum, data were collected for 34 experimental conditions that result from the 17 (products) × two (model type) factorial between-subject design.

3.2. Manipulation of the product type

We used a sample of seven products that represent goods that are ingested (green tea, dental care drops, vitamin pills, headache pills, fruit juice, cereal bars, and mineral water). Moreover, we included six products that obviously represent products that intensely contact one’s skin but are not ingested (socks, dish liquid, shower gel, a wet razor, deodorant, and a hairbrush). Wearing socks may flatten the skin; dish liquid, shower gel, and wet razors affect skin, and hairbrushes and deodorants may be considered beauty products. Additionally, we used two products that stand between these types of products and thus are denoted hybrid (dental floss and tampons). Finally, we used a TV set and a mobile phone as test objects that represent outside-my-body products.

3.3. Manipulation of the model type

In a pretest, we exposed a sample of 24 female students to ten portrayals of young females showing their faces and shoulders. We asked them to assess whether the depicted person would be likely for the depicted person to be engaged as a professional model due to her attractiveness on a 10-point scale. From this set of models, we chose one person who was rated highly on the first and moderately on the second dimension and one person who was...
rated moderately on the first and highly on the second dimension and denoted them the similar model and the attractive model, respectively. The results of this pretest are shown in Tab. 2. We paid particular attention to ensuring that the similar model was not simply less attractive than the attractive model. The similar model looked like the typical female student enrolled at the university where the data collection took place and, thus, was similar to the sample students with regard to perceived physical attractiveness. Moreover, this model was shown against the background of a lecture room. The models did not differ with regard to ethnicity, hair length, hair color, or the color of their shirts.

3.4. Test stimuli

For each of the 17 products, we created two versions of print advertisements. The ads contained a picture of the promoted product, a fictitious or unknown brand name and brand logo, some pieces of product information, and a statement from the depicted person in favor of the product. The ads differed only with regard to the model used.

3.5. Sample, procedure, and measures

We collected data from 1,064 female students from a university located in Germany (M.age = 22.98 years, SD = 2.331) during the time span between 2012 and 2014. We instructed our interviewers to contact students only. For the ad showing the “similar” model, the interviewers were asked to avoid contacting students who look dissimilar from the depicted model. The test participants were exposed to only one version of the ads. For each condition, there were at least 27 and at maximum 35 test participants. The test participants started by evaluating the presented product and agreed or disagreed with the statements “The product is very good,” “The product is very likeable,” and “The product is very appealing” (α = .770). In the next step, task enjoyment while viewing the ad was assessed (“It was fun to judge this product,” “I was very engrossed in the evaluation of the product,” and “I found it very interesting to review this product”, α = .769). These statements were adopted from the literature (e.g., Aaker/Brumbaugh/Grier 2000; Burnkrant/Unnava 1995; Johnson/Grier 2011; Lee/Fernandez/Martin 2002; Martin/Lee/Yang 2004). Finally, the participants reported their perceptions of the model’s similarity and attractiveness; they rated similarity by agreeing or disagreeing with the statement “The depicted person looks similar to me” and attractiveness by agreeing or disagreeing to the statement “The depicted person is highly attractive.” All scales were seven-point scales.

3.6. Manipulation check

We checked whether the perceptions of similarity were higher when the similar model was presented and whether the perceptions of attractiveness were higher when the attractive model was shown. We found that the similar model was perceived as being more similar to the test subjects on average than the attractive model (perceptions of similarity: M.sim.model = 4.09, M.atr.model = 3.60, t.062 = 4.977, p < .001) and the attractive model was perceived as being more attractive than the similar model (perceptions of attractiveness: M.atr.model = 4.91, M.sim.model = 4.19, t.062 = 8.463, p < .001).

3.7. Effects of product and model type on product evaluations

We started the data analyses by investigating the interaction effect from product and model type on product evaluations. The underlying data are shown in Tab. 3. We used a linear mixed-effects model with product type and model type as fixed factors and the product as a random factor nested under the product-type factor to test the interaction. We found a highly significant interaction from the fixed factors on product evaluations (F.1,1,044 = 12.039, p < .001). Hypothesis 1a suggested that similar models are more effective than attractive models for influencing evaluations of inside-my-body products; our results are consistent with this hypothesis (M.sim.model = 4.61, M.atr.model = 4.09, t.40 = 5.304, p < .001). In Hypothesis 1b, we expected that attractive models are more effective than similar models for improving evaluations of on-my-skin products. We can also provide evidence for this hypothesis (M.atr.model = 3.66, M.sim.model = 4.22, t.74 = -5.537, p < .001). For the hybrid product type, neither the attractive nor the similar model was more effective (M.sim.model = 3.70, M.atr.model = 3.77, t.32 = -.357, NS). For the outside-my-body products, the model type was also ineffective for improving evaluations (M.sim.model = 4.05, M.atr.model = 3.95, t.10 = .396, NS). On the product level, we did not find remarkable differences that contradict Hypothesis 1.
### 3.8. Effects of product and model type on task enjoyment and self-referencing

Next, we used task enjoyment and self-referencing as the dependent variables. We use the degree of self-referencing as a proxy of the activation of the “This product is for people like me” principle (Chang 2008). Again, we did not find remarkable effects relevant to the issue investigated here on the product level. Thus, we collapsed the data across the products and report the findings in Tab. 4 on the aggregate level for the product types.

The findings are consistent with the presumption that task enjoyment is higher in the fit conditions than in the non-fit conditions. For inside-my-body products, a similar model caused higher task enjoyment than an attractive model ($M_{\text{sim model}} = 4.46$, $M_{\text{attr model}} = 3.94$, $t_{440} = 4.424$, $p < .001$). For on-my-skin products, the reverse relationship was found ($M_{\text{sim model}} = 3.82$, $M_{\text{attr model}} = 4.33$, $t_{440} = -3.791$, $p < .001$). For hybrid products and outside-my-body products, the model type did not affect task enjoyment. Moreover, the findings provide evidence for the presumption that similar models activate a process of self-referencing when they are used to promote inside-my-body products because the degree of self-referencing was stronger in the similar-model condition than in the attractive-model condition ($M_{\text{sim model}} = 4.25$, $M_{\text{attr model}} = 3.33$, $t_{440} = 6.999$, $p < .001$).

### 3.9. Mediation analyses

We hypothesized the existence of two mediating effects: the effect through the activation of the fitting heuristic principle and the effect via task enjoyment. Evidently, it is difficult to directly assess whether a heuristic principle is or is not activated. For inside-my-body products, we used the self-assessed degree of self-referencing as a substitute for the activation of the “This product is for people like me” principle because the likelihood of this principle’s activation increases with self-referencing. For on-my-skin products, we did not develop measures that were suitable for inferring the activation of the fitting principle. We used the procedure suggested by Preacher/Hayes (2004) to investigate mediating effects separately for inside-my-body and for on-my-skin products. The coefficients of the paths are shown in Fig. 3. The results are as expected. For inside-my-body products, the process of self-referencing and the feeling of task enjoyment are more intense in the similar-model condition than in the attractive-model condition, and these processes improve product evaluations. For on-my-skin products, we did not analyze the mediating effect of the fitting principle; however, we also found support for the mediating effect of task enjoyment. In sum, our data support Hypothesis 2.
4. Implications
4.1. Implications for theory

Prior research found support for the hypotheses that people like similar and attractive others and dislike dissimilar and less attractive others. However, when the relevance of these principles was tested in an advertising context that manipulated the similarity or attractiveness of models, a missing effect was mostly observed. This finding suggests that liking the model does not spillover onto product evaluations. Another stream of prior research stated that attractive models are effective for promoting beauty products and found empirical evidence for this presumption. However, researchers reported that attractive models are also effective for promoting products that are not directly related to one’s attractiveness. This finding indicates that another type of fit (rather than the beautiful model/beauty product fit) may exist that fosters product evaluations. To fill this gap, we conducted a survey of prior research and found that model/recipient similarity matters when the promoted products become part of one’s body and that model attractiveness plays an essential role when the products are strongly skin-related. Based on these insights, one obvious approach is to develop a body-sphere approach and postulate the relevance of two heuristic principles that consumers are likely to apply when they are exposed to similar or attractive models in advertisements. We denoted these principles the “This product is for people like me” principle and the “This product is for people who feel good on the outside” principle. We found support for our hypotheses, demonstrating that this approach provides deeper insights about why models are sometimes effective and sometimes ineffective. In sum, we contribute to the literature by pointing to conditions where similar or attractive others influence evaluations.

4.2. Limitations and avenues for future research

We aimed to provide evidence for the relevance of the “This product is for people like me” principle and the “This product is for people who feel good on the outside” principle to provide explanations for why similar and attractive models are sometime effective and sometime ineffective. Hence, we must point to weaknesses in our study when investigating the relevancy of these principles. First, we did not develop measures that are suitable to determining whether the second principle is activated, and we provided only indirect evidence. In future research, measures for this concept should be developed. Second, we used a student sample. Because students are more homogeneous than a sample of all consumers, a student sample was convenient for testing the effect of model similarity. In future research, a broader sample could be used, and similarity could be manipulated by presenting a series of ads, each showing another type of typical consumer. For instance, Fielmann, a major retailer of glasses in Germany, uses this type of campaign. Third, our approach was based on the assumptions that consumers intend to maintain and enhance well-being by using products, evaluate product more favorably when they contribute to well-being, and intend to decrease uncertainty about the products’ potential to foster well-being by consulting model characteristics. There are numerous products that do not likely affect well-being at all or that are not associated with uncertainty (e.g., aluminum foil or fuel oil). For these products, the body-sphere approach is not appropriate, and the role of different model characteristics such as perceived competence should be investigated. Fourth, we refrained from considering luxury goods, which exist in any category of products that affect well-being. For instance, promoting a high-price champagne in an ad that shows a model who is similar to the average consumer would confuse consu-
mers because luxury and attractiveness are closely related in the consumers’ mind. Because we tested the effects for unknown brands, we did not consider the effects of product positioning. For instance, a company may decide to offer the most beautiful cookie or to offer the most “erotic” beer. Although cookies and beer are ingested, using less attractive models who are similar to the targeted consumers will contradict these products’ positioning. Future research may consider the aspects of luxury and product positioning.

Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Source of similarity</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Model similarity</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inside-my-body products/female consumers/female model:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Cognitive age</td>
<td>Hamburger</td>
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<td>Simpson et al. 2000</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Purchase intent</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Frozen meal</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stafford et al. 1970</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Purchase intent</td>
<td>3-point</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Lipstick</td>
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<td>Tolley/Goett 1971</td>
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<td>Purchase intent</td>
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<td>Sunglasses, clothes</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Purchase yes/no</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bush et al. 1979</td>
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<td>Product attitude</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Bra</td>
<td>4.99</td>
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<td>Kerin 1979</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>Perceived quality</td>
<td>7-point</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>3.56</td>
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<td>Green 1999</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Perfume</td>
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<td>3.96</td>
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<td>202</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Diedrich/Lee 2011</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>Product attitude</td>
<td>6-point</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Nine clothing and beauty products</td>
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<td>1.81</td>
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<td>D'Alessandro/Chitty 2011</td>
<td>88</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Clothes</td>
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<td>Bush et al. 1979</td>
<td>237</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Tampon</td>
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<td>4.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>D'Alessandro/Chitty 2011</td>
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<td>Purchase intent</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Slimming center</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.80</td>
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</table>

Notes: High values indicate more favorable responses.
* Values calculated on the basis of data provided by the authors.
a) The authors verbally report that consumer responses were more favorable in the high-similarity condition.
n.a.: Exact figures not available.

Table A1: Prior research on the effect of model/recipient similarity on product evaluations
### Table A2: Prior research on the effect of model attractiveness on product evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Model attractiveness</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker/Churchill 1977</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Purchase intent</td>
<td>7-point</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
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<td>2.93*</td>
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<td>Caballero/Solomon 1984</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Purchase yes/no</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Beer</td>
<td>.0017</td>
<td>.0020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caballero et al. 1989</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Purchase intent</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>Soft drink</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>Onodera/Miura 1998</td>
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<td>Diet drink</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bower/Landreth 2001</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>Product attitude</td>
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<td>Acne cover</td>
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<td>5.22</td>
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<td>Acne treatment</td>
<td>4.97</td>
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<td>7-point</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>3.27*</td>
<td>2.93*</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Purchase intent</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>Soft drink</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<td><strong>On-my-skin products/female consumers/female model:</strong></td>
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<td>Baker/Churchill 1977</td>
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<td>Purchase intent</td>
<td>7-point</td>
<td>Perfume</td>
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<td>2.97*</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Facial tissues</td>
<td>.0294*</td>
<td>.0187*</td>
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<td>Parekh/Kanekar 1994</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>Perceived quality</td>
<td>3-point</td>
<td>Shampoo, soap</td>
<td>2.79*</td>
<td>2.44*</td>
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<td>Product attitude</td>
<td>7-point</td>
<td>Lipstick</td>
<td>5.40*</td>
<td>4.31*</td>
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<td>73</td>
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<td>Perfume</td>
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<td>1.68*</td>
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<td>Purchase intent</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Product attitude</td>
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<td>Chewing gum</td>
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<td>4.93* a)</td>
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<td>.0028</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes: High values indicate more favorable responses.

* Values calculated on the basis of data provided by the authors.

a) We report the findings obtained for a subsample of the data (non-priming condition).

n.a.: Exact figures not available.

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