

What Wins Awards Is Not Always What I Buy: How Creative Control Affects Authenticity and Thus Recognition (But Not Liking)

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Being lauded is not the same as being liked; celebrated products that win awards frequently fail to stand out in terms of commercial success. This work documents how *creative control*, the extent to which the same entity takes responsibility for all stages of the creative process, impacts which products are singled out for recognition but does not play a comparable role in determining what consumers like and thus purchase. Using real-world data, study 1 demonstrates how songs by performers who write their own material are more likely to garner acclaim but do not excel in terms of sales. Study 2 replicates the pattern of results in the lab. Study 3 reproduces the effect in a new domain (beer) using different measures of recognition. Study 4 shows *creative authenticity*, the extent to which a product is considered a faithful execution of its creator's vision, mediates the effect of creative control on recognition. Further, study 4 highlights the contingent role played by the perceived trustworthiness of the creator on this relationship. Finally, study 5 presents a boundary condition such that when consumers do *not* feel confident in their appraisals of an experience, creative control's impact on recognition and liking runs in parallel.

Keywords: creativity, authenticity, creative control, product recognition, awards, music, product evaluation

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"The Grammys, if they want real artists to keep coming back, they need to stop playing with us . . . Beck needs to respect artistry and he should have given his award to Beyoncé, and at this point, we tired of it."

Kanye West to *E! News*

After Beck's *Morning Phase* beat out Beyoncé's self-titled fifth LP for Best Album of the Year at the 2015 Grammys, rapper Kanye West was incensed and bum-rushed the stage during Beck's acceptance speech. West went straight to the mic, then had second thoughts, smiled and sat back down. He had decided to wait until the ceremony was over to slam the Grammys for its decision. It was during a post-show interview that West questioned Beck's "artistry." His caustic comments resulted in West being ridiculed in the press, but he was unremorseful while

arguing his opinion was “a mass opinion.” “Isn’t it amazing that people are so constantly shocked by the commonly agreed-on truth?” West said in an interview with *The Sunday Times* (Cairns 2015).

The “mass opinion” West was referring to is clear. Beyoncé’s 14-song album broke iTunes records, selling 617,000 downloads in the three days following its release. It went on to cross the 2 million mark within six months. In contrast, one year after its release Beck’s album had sold a mere 300,000 copies (Lynch 2015). Simply put, being lauded is not the same as being liked. What people choose to recognize and what they choose to buy need not depend on the same criteria. Consider the credits on Beck’s and on Beyoncé’s albums. Comparing them exposes the absurdity in West’s “artistry” comment. More than 25 different artists received writing credit alone on Beyoncé’s (Knowles) album, including such renowned names in music as her husband Jay-Z (Shawn Carter), Justin Timberlake, Pharrell (Williams), Frank Ocean, and Sia (Furler). In contrast, *Morning Phase* was written, performed, and produced entirely by Beck (Hansen). In other words, as an artist, Beck is credited with having had complete control over his undertaking, whereas Beyoncé appears to have played a far less comprehensive role.

Beck’s album is hardly an isolated example of an unexceptional product in terms of sales standing out in terms of recognition, particularly when the award’s recipient is considered largely responsible for the creative process. Take, for example, the 2012 silent movie *The Artist*. It won more than a hundred awards including the Oscar for Best Picture but grossed a mere \$44 million domestically at the box office (what *Ice Age: Continental Drift* brought in its opening weekend the same year). The black-and-white film was both written and directed by Michel Hazanavicius, which, according to auteur theory, signals he was the creative visionary behind the film (Petrie 1973). Or consider the sitcom *30 Rock*. The show won 39 awards including three primetime Emmys for best comedy series. Yet during seven seasons on television its ratings with audiences were consistently “only a tad above ‘just OK’” (Eum 2013). One thing that set *30 Rock* apart is that the show was the “original vision of a single creator-producer-writer-star named Tina Fey” (Richmond 2013). Award-winning products that fail to become blockbusters are not limited to the arts. The Segway personal transporter won *Popular Science Magazine’s* Best of What’s New Award in 2002, yet by 2003 only 6000 units had been sold (Valentino-Devries 2010). Worth noting is that Segway inventor Dean Kamen, who reportedly toiled in semi-isolation for 10 years on his creation, like Hazanavicius and Fey was branded the creative “visionary” (Kohn 2002).

This research documents an important explanation for why products that fail to stand out in terms of commercial success nonetheless often go on to be recognized as exemplary. We argue that certain information is more or less

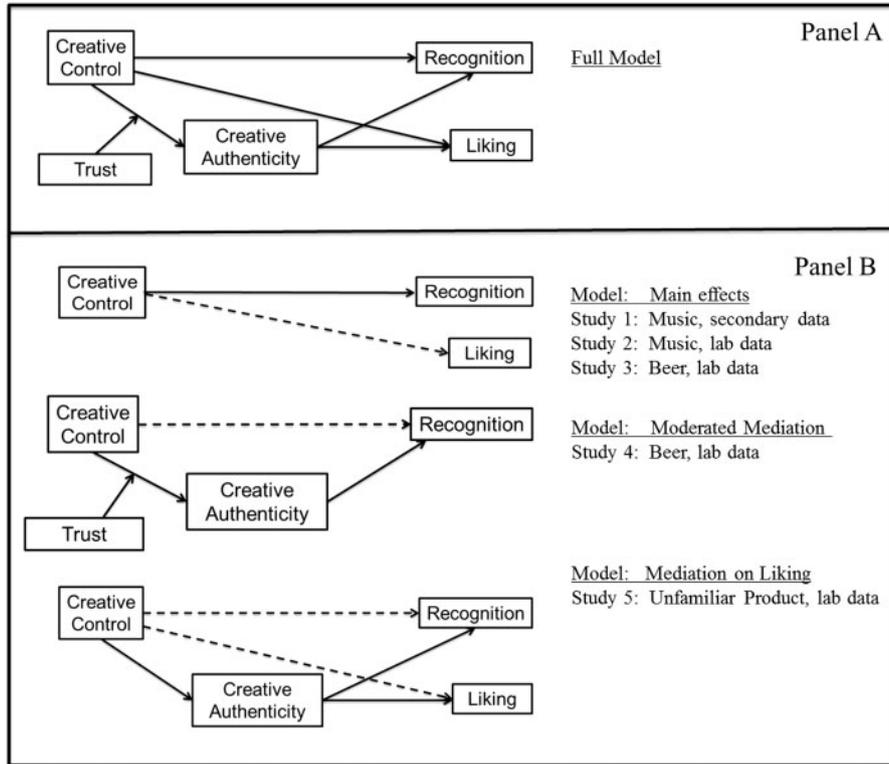
meaningful when individuals engage in two different types of evaluation: recognition versus liking. When choosing the *best* among a set of products, the focus is often on the recipient(s) of the recognition, triggering thoughts about the identity of the creator and how the product was created. As a result, judges take the extent to which the same entity (individual or organization) was responsible for the creative process, what we call *creative control*, into consideration. We find creative control matters because it is associated with perceptions of *creative authenticity*, a belief that the outcome closely adheres to the creator’s vision. The more control the executor exerts over the creative process, the more creatively authentic the outcome is perceived to be. We document how perceptions of creative authenticity mediate the influence of creative control on a product’s likelihood of being singled out for recognition (e.g., acclaim, awards, etc.). Further, we show that the relationship between creative control and creative authenticity is not automatic but is qualified by consumers’ *trust* in the creator. Trust is an attitude of optimism concerning the goodwill and competence of another and confidence the one being trusted acts or has acted as expected (Jones 1996). If consumers cannot trust the creator of a particular product, the fact that he or she exerts greater control over the creative process is insufficient to reassure consumers that the output is a faithful representation of the creator’s intentions.

In contrast to recognition, creative control plays a far less significant role when consumers evaluate how much they personally *like* a product. When deciding how much they enjoy something, consumers tend to focus on the experiential components of consumption, largely ignoring more peripheral information (Xu and Schwarz 2009) including details about how the product was created. One noteworthy exception is when consumers are unfamiliar with the product or category, which is often the case for unique and unusual experiences. For unfamiliar experiences, consumers typically do not feel confident in their own appraisals of a product experience. Under these circumstances, creative control is shown to have an effect on liking (actual and anticipated) that runs parallel to its effect on recognition. This is because greater authenticity acts as a positive cue that can compensate for the lack of self-assuredness in appraisals of liking.

We begin by briefly reviewing several relevant albeit distinct streams of literature that come together to form the foundation of our theorizing. Next, we test the hypothesized nomological network displayed in panel A of Figure 1.

The relationships illustrated in this model are tested across five studies (see panel B of Figure 1). Studies 1, 2, and 3 demonstrate the main effect of creative control on recognition. Study 1 employs three distinct real-world data sets involving popular music to demonstrate the robustness of this effect in the context of one of the

FIGURE 1
CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND TESTS OF THE MODEL ACROSS FIVE STUDIES



foremost *creative industries*. In study 2, we move into the laboratory where we replicate the pattern of effects with stricter controls. In study 3, we replicate the pattern again although this time in a new domain (beer). Further, in study 3, we get the same effects while employing different measures of recognition. In study 4, we document how creative authenticity mediates the key relationship between creative control and recognition. Further, we show how this is contingent on consumers' trust in the entity responsible for the creative process. A lack of trust in the creator's goodwill and competence moderates the effect of creative control on perceptions of creative authenticity. In study 5, we show that under certain circumstances, creative authenticity can mediate the relationship between creative control and liking, just as it does for recognition. Specifically, the effect on liking parallels that for recognition in the case of unfamiliar product categories, when consumers do not trust their own appraisals of an experience and instead base their evaluation in part on other cues. We conclude by discussing some implications of this research for marketers as well as possible avenues for future research.

BACKGROUND

Recognition and Awards

There are a number of ways in which products can be compared and, consequently, a number of ways in which to stand out. Different literature streams have discussed two broad categories of *contests* through which products come to be recognized. In the management literature, *certification contests* are described as providing evidence of superior performance associated with a specific technical or measurable difference in quality (Rao 1994). As an example, Rao cites the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration's five star rating for automotive crash tests. How a car performs in crash tests is widely viewed as being measured objectively in terms of the quantified impact on crash test dummies.

In the literature in sociology and anthropology, *tournaments of value* are described as symbolic distinctions establishing which products should be valued by society more than others (Appadurai 1986). A case in point are industry award ceremonies that are an attempt by a specific group or organization to assert that certain entities are exemplars

of excellence within a field and, by implication, others are not (Allen and Parsons 2006). Various awards shows (e.g., the Oscars), *best of* contests (e.g., Eurovision), as well as accolades outside of the creative industries (e.g., the Nobel Prize) have all been described by researchers as tournaments of value (Anand and Jones 2008; Moeran 1993). Turning again to automobiles, *Motor Trend* magazine's Car of the Year award depends on six principal criteria, a number of which stipulate adhering to a creative vision. These include Performance and Intended Function, defined as "how well the vehicle does the job its designers and product planners intended," and Engineering Excellence, which depends on the "integrity of total vehicle concept and execution" (www.motortrend.com/oftheyear). For our purposes, when deciding what qualifies as *recognition*, we focus on accolades that could be classified as tournaments of value.

Recognition versus Liking: Two Different Types of Evaluation

Recognition is a type of evaluation that is in many ways different from *liking*. As mentioned earlier, recognition requires singling out the *best* among a set of contenders, whereas liking involves a more personal appraisal of a single option (Yang et al. 2011). Work on joint versus separate evaluation reveals how decision makers pay attention to different types of attributes when comparing a set of options simultaneously as opposed to evaluating an option separately (Hsee and Hastie 2006; Hsee et al. 1999). Generally speaking, when charged with choosing winners, and by default losers, we expect the decision maker to resist affective influences and rely on attributes that are easy to justify (Hsee et al. 2003; Shafir, Simonson, and Tversky 1993). Consequently, when selecting the *best*, people are expected to rely more heavily on features or characteristics that are socially agreed upon to be highly desirable (Patterson, Cavazos, and Washington 2014). This includes, we argue, perceptions regarding the authenticity of a product's creative process. In contrast, when evaluating how much they like a product, people are inclined to focus on the experiential or embodied components of the consumption experience itself, disregarding peripheral information (Xu and Schwarz 2009).

We assert that information central to appraisals of recognition is often peripheral to evaluations of liking, and one type of such information pertains to the relationship between the output and the entity or entities responsible for its creation. The literature on cultural industries supports the view that recognition inevitably attaches symbolic value not just to a *product* but also to its *producers* (Bourdieu 1993; Cattani, Ferriani, and Allison 2014). This holds true even when the creative effort is at the organizational level, in which case awards and recognition typically reflect the quality of the activities undertaken by an

innovative organization (Soh, Mahmood, and Mitchell 2004). The critical takeaway here is that, even when an award designates a best product and not best producer, people are likely to consider the entity responsible for the output and its role in the creative process when deciding which product(s) stand out.

For the reasons just expressed, we do not expect information about the creative process and how the creator manages it to matter when consumers assess the extent to which they *like* a product. A noteworthy exception would be in situations where consumers lack confidence in their judgment of the experience, as is the case when they are unfamiliar with a product category. According to recent work on metacognition, consumers constantly assess the reliability of their own mental processes (Michaelian 2012). This includes *metaperception*, or judgments in the domain of perception (Dunlosky and Metcalfe 2009). While typically overconfident in their judgments (Alba and Hutchinson 2000), under certain circumstances, consumers are known to question the accuracy of their evaluative processes and may reject their own assessments as unreliable. Consequently, when they lack confidence in their own appraisals, consumers are expected to turn to external cues and sources of information (Koriat 2011) and would be expected to rely on information about the creative process as input for how much they like a product.

The Creative Process and the Notion of Creative Control

The literature discussed up until this point suggests that when it comes to recognition, the question of who managed the creative process is important. Here we elaborate on why. The literature on cognitive creativity suggests that in every creative process there are two key related stages: (1) the generation of new ideas that leads to the creation of preinventive abstract structures, and (2) the exploration of such ideas, which implies refinement and interpretation leading to more concrete concepts (Finke, Ward, and Smith 1992). A central tenet of the creative process holds that—because creative content emerges in both stages—it is only when a creator supervises the entire process that he or she can maintain the authority to decide how the creative outcome will ultimately appear. The same two-stage framework has been applied to situations in which the creative effort occurs at the organizational level (Amabile 1996). In marketing, new product development is traditionally represented with a first stage, often called the *fuzzy front end*, in which creative ideas are generated and accumulated, and a second implementation stage, in which the ideas are subjected to incremental improvements and translated into product concepts (Koen et al. 2002; Sethi, Smith, and Park 2001).

Consistent with the literature just cited, we consider the creative process as made up of two related stages, and we

further define *creative control* as the extent to which the same entity (individual or organization) takes responsibility for both stages. The more authority the creator exerts over the entire creative process, the more closely the final outcome is expected to conform to the creator's vision. In this sense, greater creative control attenuates uncertainty because it offers reassurance that an outcome is in fact a faithful representation of the creator's original vision, what we call *creative authenticity*. Our contention is that a product perceived as having greater creative authenticity should possess a greater chance of both it and its creator being singled out for recognition. We elaborate on this causal mechanism in the next section.

Creative Authenticity

The general concept of authenticity is an important construct in contemporary marketing (Belk and Costa 1998; Holt 1997; Kozinets 2001) and has been garnering increasing attention in the literature (Ilicic and Webster 2014). As a result, a number of definitions referring to a variety of different types of authenticity have emerged. We focus on two broad categories of meaning. First are definitions in which authenticity references a standard or referent, typically for an object or artifact. Grayson and Martinec (2004) define two types of authenticity with respect to consumer evaluations of market offerings. *Indexical authenticity* implies a product's origin or authorship is not in question and denotes whether something has a factual connection to history, including being created by the party given credit. *Iconic authenticity* implies the product is a faithful reconstruction or representation of something indexically authentic. Relatedly, Carroll and Wheaton's (2009) notion of *craft authenticity* similarly signals a consistent representation of the origins of a style, whereas *type authenticity* suggests "something is an authentic X if it is an instance or member of the class of X" (Davies 2001, 203).

The second category of meaning focuses on the consistency between the creator's vision and the end result. Baumeister (1987) discusses the *authentic self* in terms of whether one's own actions are in accord with personal inclinations rather than social obligations. Similarly, Dutton (2004) refers to *expressive authenticity* when referring to "an object's character as a true expression of an individual's or a society's values and beliefs." In marketing, Moulard et al. (2014) define *artist authenticity* in terms of an artist being intrinsically motivated and committed to his or her craft as opposed to being extrinsically (e.g., commercially) motivated (Beverland and Farrelly 2010). Authenticity in these contexts refers to "being true to the essence of the self" (Ilicic and Webster 2014, 346). To be authentic, therefore, it is critical that actions or expressions are not seen as *put on* or imitated merely to meet social conventions or make money (Cohen 1988; Holt 2002; Thompson and Tambyah 1999; Trilling 1972).

Our construct of *creative authenticity* captures the extent to which a product is perceived by consumers as a faithful execution of the creator's vision and thus describes the connection between the outcome and the process. We contend that creative control provides some assurance that customers can *trust* that what they see is an accurate reflection of the vision of the creator. A cross-discipline definition of trust is that it is a psychological state "based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Rousseau et al. 1998, 395). Being trustworthy is associated with such qualities as honesty, fairness, responsibility, competence, and benevolence (Dwyer and LaGace 1986; Rotter 1967, 1971). If customers cannot trust the creator, it is reasonable that they would doubt the outcome is a product of and closely adheres to the creator's vision. In other words, if, for instance, the creator is perceived as dishonest, unfair, irresponsible, incompetent, or malevolent, what is created cannot be perceived as creatively authentic, no matter what degree of creative control has been exerted (Morgan and Hunt 1994).

To summarize, information regarding creative authenticity is used as an input when consumers evaluate which products are deemed worthy of recognition because consumers value how a product came to be (the creative process) when making this type of judgment. Greater creative control reassures consumers about the creative authenticity of a product. This is, of course, unless other contradictory information undermines their trust in the creator.

REAL-WORLD EVIDENCE

We begin our empirical analysis by investigating the role played by creative control on recognition and liking in music, one of the most prominent creative industries and a \$7 billion market in the United States in 2014 (www.ifpi.org). The market for recorded music is an exceptional domain in which to study the impact of creative control as writing credits for a song are published by reliable sources and are often scrutinized and recognized publicly.

In study 1, we begin by analyzing real-world data involving 55 years (1958–2012) of #1 songs from *Billboard's* Hot 100 to test the fundamental hypothesis that creative control influences recognition but not liking. To test the robustness of our results, we replicate the pattern of results using four years (2009–12) of Top 40 songs and a single year (2012) of all 100 songs that made it onto the Hot 100. These three data sets, each composed of songs that achieved different levels of popularity, allow us to test reliably the extent to which a performer shares writing credit for a song (an indicator of creative control) influences whether or not the song stands out in terms of recognition as well as whether or not it achieved an extraordinary level of commercial success.

STUDY 1

The Data

Studying both recognition and liking necessitated identifying a well-defined set of songs for which we could find information about both recognition (a measure of exceptionalism in the field) and commercial success (an aggregate measure of individual liking). In an effort to do so efficiently, we turned to *Billboard's* Hot 100 singles chart. *Billboard* magazine is the preeminent source for assessing which songs of any genre are popular in the marketplace (Bradlow and Fader 2001). We began by collecting all 1029 hit singles that reached #1 on the Hot 100 between 1958, when the ranking was first introduced, and 2012, when our data collection ended. The 1029 #1 songs were performed by 613 unique artists (i.e., 176 performers had more than one #1 hit). The information identifying *Hot 100* songs was acquired initially from the music Web site www.umdbmusic.com before a sample was cross-checked using a variety of sources including Whitburn (1996), www.bullfrogspnd.com, and *Billboard* magazine's official Web site www.billboard.com.

Creative control, our primary explanatory variable, is operationalized as the extent to which the song's performer was involved in the writing process and thus credited with authorship. The people credited with writing each song were initially identified using www.bullfrogspnd.com, which listed writing credits for every song that entered *Billboard's* Hot 100 singles chart. A sample of the credits was cross-checked using the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (www.ascap.com), and Broadcast Music Inc. (www.bmi.com) Web sites. The extent of creative control (low, medium, and high) associated with each song was dummy coded with the performer receiving no writing credit (the baseline), partial credit (credit shared with one or more coauthor), and full writing credit (the performer was the only artist to receive writing credit). In the music industry, musical groups are considered a creative unit, and, for our purposes, songs written in part, or exclusively, by members of a group (e.g., John Lennon and Paul McCartney are credited with writing most of the Beatles' songs) were considered as partial writing credit and full writing credit, respectively. In our sample, 39% of the songs qualified as low (no credit), 30% as medium (partial credit), and 31% as high (full credit) creative control.

Our dependent measures assessed the two focal types of evaluations—recognition and liking—the latter reflected by exceptional sales. For recognition, we relied on a compilation of the “most recommended songs of all time” in order not to rely too heavily on any individual opinion or award. The All Time Top 3000 Songs list, published by the Web site www.acclaimedmusic.net, combines a number of best songs lists (best-of-year lists, best-of-all-time lists,

etc.) from a variety of critics and industry experts (e.g., the *Village Voice*, NPR, etc.). It therefore reflects a diverse range of opinions regarding excellence within the field. The first dependent variable of interest is the dummy variable Acclaim, indicating which of the 1029 top songs were present on this list at the end of 2012. Overall, 33% of #1 songs made the Top 3000.

The second dependent variable of interest is the dummy variable Platinum, indicating whether a song was certified as having sold more than a million copies. Platinum indicates which popular songs achieved exceptional commercial success in the marketplace, which serves as a gauge of liking. This level of sales signifies favoritism among what are already hit songs by reflecting what consumers actually buy apart from what is played on the radio (the *Hot 100* is based on an unspecified mix of both sales and airplay). We utilized the Recording Industry Association of America's Gold & Platinum Program searchable database to identify those songs (24% of the sample) that achieved certified Platinum status.

A number of covariates based on performer features were included to control for performer characteristics presumed among music theorists and observers of popular music to help explain recognition and/or commercial success (Frith 1983). In the case of groups, these variables refer to the lead vocalist or proverbial front man. First, Gender is a categorical variable indicating whether the primary vocalist is female, male, or the song is sung jointly by both a female and male lead. Second, Age is a continuous variable indicating the age of the performer at the time the song first entered the charts. And third, Race indicates whether or not the performer is white. When not explicitly identified in biographical information accessible online, race was judged based on pictures of the performer accessed in Google images. Two judges coded the lead vocalist's race as either white or nonwhite; the interjudge reliability was extremely high (Cohen $\kappa = 0.95$, 95% confidence interval [CI], 0.923–0.985). Finally, Composition is a categorical variable indicating whether the song is performed by a solo artist, a group, a duet, or a solo artist with the support of a backing group (e.g., Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch).

A priori, one might expect songs by performers with greater past exposure to more readily enter the consideration set of critics and fans. To control for this possibility, two additional covariates were included to serve as proxies for past exposure to the artist. The count variable Previous#1s denotes the number of previous #1 hits on *Billboard's* Hot 100 for the performer at the time when the focal song was released. Soundtrack is a dummy variable indicating whether the song appeared on a major motion picture soundtrack. Following the process implemented by Bradlow and Fader (2001), we drew our soundtrack data from Whitburn (1996), augmenting it with information from Amazon's Internet Movie Database site IMDb

(www.imdb.com). To control for how the music industry has evolved over time (Ordanini and Nunes 2015), we include a fixed effect of time employing 54 year dummy variables.

Results

We utilize a Bivariate Probit model as it allows us to test the effect of creative control (high, medium, or low) on both dependent variables, Acclaim and Platinum, simultaneously. We chose this particular specification because (1) for the same song, achieving Platinum status and Acclaim may not be independent and (2) given the nature of our data, we could not determine a strict causal order between the two variables (Greene 2012). The significance test for the rho parameter suggests our choice of models was judicious as the errors of the two different equations predicting Acclaim and Platinum are indeed correlated (Table 1). We accounted for the fact that 176 performers entered our data set more than once and hence their songs cannot be considered fully independent by employing robust standard errors clustered at the artist level.

As expected, the results reveal that creative control significantly impacts Acclaim (left side of Table 1). First and foremost, those songs written entirely by the performer and for which the performer shared writing credit were more likely to show up on the list of the All Time Top 3000 than songs for which the performer had no writing credit ($\beta_{high} = .70, p < .01$; $\beta_{medium} = .46, p < .01$). Additionally,

the impact is greater for songs with full credit than songs with partial credit, although the significance of this difference is borderline ($\chi^2 = 2.64, p = .10$). Our analysis also reveals significant effects for the control variables Composition, Gender, and Race.

To facilitate the interpretation of the model, we calculated the predicted probabilities of appearing in the list of Top 3000 Songs (Acclaim). Songs for which the performer had the greatest creative control (full writing credit) have a 44.1% chance of making the list, on average, whereas songs for which the performer had the lowest creative control (no writing credit) stand only a 23.7% chance. Songs partially authored by the performer fell in between with a 36.5% chance of making the list.

Contrasts for the predicted margins reveal that a song by a performer with the greatest creative control exhibited a 20% greater chance of garnering acclaim than a song by a performer with the least creative control ($\chi^2 = 28.81, p < .01$) and an 8% greater chance than a song from a performer with middling creative control (partial writing credit); the significance of the latter difference was borderline ($\chi^2 = 2.66, p = .10$). We also find that a song for which the performer is credited with partial writing credit has a 13% greater chance of receiving acclaim than a song by a performer with no writing credit and thus the least creative control ($\chi^2 = 10.29, p < .01$).

With respect to liking and in turn sales, creative control appears to have no significant effect on whether or not a song achieved Platinum status (right side of Table 1).

TABLE 1

STUDY 1: IMPACT OF CREATIVE CONTROL ON ACCLAIM AND PLATINUM STATUS (BIPROBIT MODEL)

Variable	Predicted Variable = Acclaim				Predicted Variable = Platinum			
	Coefficient	SE	z	p	Coefficient	SE	z	p
Creative Control								
High	0.70***	(.13)	5.31	.00	-0.31	(0.16)	-1.89	.06
Medium	0.46**	(.14)	3.24	.00	-0.16	(0.19)	-0.87	.39
Gender								
Male	0.46**	(.15)	3.03	.00	-0.17	(0.17)	-1.02	.31
Mixed	-0.05	(.15)	-0.33	.74	0.20	(0.16)	1.24	.22
Age	-0.01	(.01)	-1.41	.16	-0.01	(0.01)	-0.96	.34
Race	0.36*	(.13)	2.85	.00	0.12	(0.14)	0.88	.38
Composition								
Group	0.44***	(.12)	3.70	.00	-0.16	(0.15)	-1.03	.30
Duet	-0.01	(.21)	-0.04	.97	-0.02	(0.23)	-0.10	.92
Backup group	-0.10	(.24)	-0.41	.68	-0.82	(0.46)	-1.79	.07
Previous #1	-0.00	(.03)	-0.01	.99	0.09***	(0.03)	3.13	.00
Soundtrack	-0.27	(.18)	-1.48	.14	0.14	(0.19)	0.74	.46
Year dummies	Included				Included			
Constant	-0.29	(.40)	-0.74	.46	-1.13	(0.68)	-1.66	.10
Rho	0.30***	(.08)						

Wald test of rho = 0 $\chi^2(1) = 11.58 p > \chi^2 = .00$.

N = 992. At the time of the data collection, information with respect to various covariates was unavailable for 37 songs.

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

While the effect of high creative control is marginally significant, the coefficient's sign is negative, suggesting complete control would actually reduce the chance of selling more than one million copies ($\beta_{\text{Full}} = -.31, p = .06$), what one might dub the Beck effect. The only significant predictor of Platinum status in our model is Previous#1s. Not surprisingly, consumers are more likely to purchase songs by artists who exhibited past success in reaching #1 in the charts.

To ensure the effect did not depend on expectations, and thus exceptions to what are typical levels of creative control (in this case low), we took into account how rare or unusual and hence exceptional high creative control was at the time. We repeated the original analysis using only the data from 1969 to 1990. During these two decades, full authorship was at least as common and often more common than partial and no control (1969–90: High = 40%, Medium = 22%, Low = 37%). The pattern of results still holds (full results are presented the online appendix).

Robustness Checks. To further check the robustness of our results, we ran a series of additional analyses, summarized briefly here and described in more detail in the online appendix. First, we ran the same model while restricting our dependent variable (DV) to whether or not a song appeared in the top 1000 most acclaimed songs. Second, we included both Gold and Platinum sales status as ordinal indicators of exceptional commercial success. Moreover, to test the generalizability of our results, we repeated our analysis on all of the songs that made it onto *Billboard's* Top 40, albeit for a shorter timeframe and with a reduced set of covariates (2009–12). We also repeated our analysis on all songs that appeared on *Billboard's* Hot 100 in 2012, extending our findings from #1 and Top 40 songs to songs that are relatively much less popular (#41–#100), while employing a different DV to measure Recognition (appearing on *Rolling Stone* magazine's 50 best songs of the year at the end of 2012). All of the results are consistent with those originally obtained for #1 songs.

Song Characteristics. Finally, it occurred to us that performers exercising greater creative control may write different types of songs, which could vary systematically in terms of success (Nunes, Ordanini, and Valsesia 2015) and acclaim. A singer-songwriter could very well write different songs compared to pop stars who outsource songs to professional lyricists and composers. Their music may differ in terms of the song's structure and a number of other characteristics. To help mitigate this concern, we compared songs with different levels of creative control in terms of features including total length of the song, tempo (measured in beats per minute), key (major vs. minor), song structure (including AABA, verse-chorus, and other), instrumental richness (number of distinct instrument types audible to the listener), whether lead vocals were present or absent (i.e., the song was instrumental), whether backup

vocals were present or absent (an ensemble effect), and prominence of the chorus (proportion of the song length dedicated to repetitions of the chorus). We find songs by performers with full, partial, and no writing credit differ only in song structure, instrumental richness, and the presence of backup vocals. However, further analysis reveals that none of these features affects the likelihood of entering the All Time Top 3000 Songs. Full results from these analyses are available from the authors.

Undoubtedly, there are other dimensions of a song's quality that cannot easily be observed and are not captured in our analysis, although they may affect the chances of a song being recognized. In study 2 we set out to alleviate this concern by replicating our effects in a well-controlled lab study. By using the same songs and varying only descriptions of creative control, study 2 helps rule out quality differences across songs as an explanation for our results.

Discussion

The results from study 1 offer compelling real-world support for the notion that creative control has an impact on whether a song is singled out for recognition but offers no such evidence for an impact on whether a song stand out in terms of sales. We find #1 songs performed by artists with greater creative control were far more likely to be the recipient of recognition but were not more likely to achieve the elite benchmark of certified Platinum sales. We document a similar pattern of results among songs that entered the Top 40 as well as the entire Hot 100 utilizing a different operationalization of recognition. Recall we did not find any evidence that songs differ musically based on creative control. We maintain that creative control matters not because it results in a different type of song, but because it influences the decision of whether or not an outcome is deemed worthy of recognition. We test this hypothesis in study 2.

STUDY 2

Study 2 is a laboratory study that replicates the results from study 1 utilizing stricter controls. This enables study 2 to address three potential concerns with study 1. First, our measure of recognition until now has been based on the evaluations of music critics and industry insiders. Consumers' evaluations may differ from those of experts, and hence our results might not hold when measuring consumer decision making regarding recognition (Holbrook 1999). In this study, we utilize a relatively homogeneous group of music consumers as evaluators. Second, everyday consumers may possess less knowledge about creative control than critics and industry insiders. Therefore, it could be the type of information available rather than the type of evaluation that drives our earlier results. In this study, respondents always have full information regarding creative

control. Third, we control for any potential difference in the *quality* of the song by manipulating (rather than measuring) creative control while holding the song constant. Doing so mitigates the possibility that features of the songs are responsible for the effects observed in study 1.

In study 2, we manipulated creative control across conditions by varying whether the performer of a song was described as the sole force responsible for the song or whether the lyrics and music were attributed to an outside lyricist and composer. We then asked respondents to select those songs they deem worthy of recognition by choosing songs to put into a time capsule. We chose this particular dependent measure because time capsules are a universally understood and convenient device used to mark high points of human artistic, cultural, and technical achievements (Jarvis 2002). As such, the dependent measure is closely aligned with our conceptualization of recognition based on tournaments of value. The respondents' task was to listen to 30-second excerpts from a set of six songs and then choose the three best songs for the time capsule. Importantly, we did not expect our respondents to have preconceived notions about specific criteria that warranted a song's inclusion in a time capsule. In contrast, for example, the media has popularized numerous theories about what it takes to be voted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (an alternative measure of recognition we considered). We also asked respondents to rate how much they liked each song. While we expected respondents to take creative control into account when selecting songs for the time capsule, we did not expect this to be the case for their assessments of liking.

Method

Participants and Design. Seventy-four undergraduate business students (39% female) from the University of Southern California participated in this study for partial course credit. The study employed a single-factor between-subjects design that manipulated whether the performer of a song was described as having a High level of creative control—and as such was solely responsible for writing the lyrics and composing the music—or as having far less creative control with these roles assigned to a separate lyricist and composer (Low creative control). We presented each respondent with all six songs, half of which were described as written and composed by the performer and half of which were described as written and composed by other artists.

In an attempt to select songs that would be equally known and relevant across respondents in our sample (i.e., undergraduates), we avoided contemporary hits and selected singles that peaked between 21 and 40 on the Billboard *Hot 100* between 1996 and 2000. To keep the songs as similar as possible, they were all by female vocalists. The six songs were “I Try” by Macy Gray, “Crush” by

Jennifer Paige, “Adia” by Sarah McLachlan, “You Learn” by Alanis Morissette, “Foolish Games” by Jewel, and “From This Moment On” by Shania Twain. A pretest conducted among 60 participants recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) revealed respondents were not predisposed to put any of the six songs together into a particular group (the results are available from the authors). In other words, there was no evidence that natural sets existed among our chosen songs. This allowed us to assign arbitrarily each of six songs into two sets of three, which we could then manipulate in terms of creative control. In this study, set 1 always included “I Try,” “Crush,” and “Adia”; set 2 always included “You Learn,” “Foolish Games,” and “From This Moment On.” In condition 1, songs in set 1 were described as entirely under the creative control of the performer; songs in set 2 were described as written and composed by a fictional lyricist and composer. In condition 2, this was reversed (Table 2 provides the details). Respondents were unaware of this assignment and were asked to evaluate 30 second excerpts from all six songs presented one at a time in a random order.

While listening to each excerpt, participants were provided the song's title, year of release, and the name(s) and picture(s) of the performer as well as the supposed lyricist and composer. After listening to each snippet, respondents reported how much they liked each song on a 7 point scale. By consistently measuring liking first, this procedure made for a particularly conservative test of the predicted divergence between liking and recognition. Next, respondents were told the curators of the Smithsonian Institutions, the world's largest museum and research complex, were working on a project aimed at creating a time capsule intended to preserve music and culture from the 20th century. Participants were informed that they had been randomly selected to help choose the songs to be included from the second half of the 1990s (recall the songs came from 1996–2000). Participants were each instructed to select three songs they believed deserved to be included. No criteria were provided; participants were free to choose on whatever basis they saw fit including selecting those songs they liked most. A question at the end confirmed participants were not aware of the real identity of the lyricists and composers of any of the six songs.

Our unit of analysis is at the level of the set. We expected to find whichever songs were associated with full creative control (songs from set 1 in condition 1 and set 2 in condition 2) would be disproportionately chosen for inclusion in the time capsule. When a person is charged with assessing a song's worthiness of recognition, this pattern would imply creative control matters, even to nonspecialists (i.e., noncritics). We did not expect to observe a difference with respect to liking, which would imply creative control does not exert a comparable effect on appraisals of the consumption experience itself, even when information about creative control is readily available. The expected

TABLE 2
STUDY 2: DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF SCENARIOS

Condition	Creative control	Song	Performer	Lyricist	Music's composer
Condition 1	Set 1 (High)	"I Try"	Macy Gray	Macy Gray	Macy Gray
		"Adia"	Sarah McLachlan	Sarah McLachlan	Sarah McLachlan
	Set 2 (Low)	"Crush"	Jennifer Paige	Jennifer Paige	Jennifer Paige
		"Foolish Games"	Jewel	Eddy Smith	R.T. Silver
Condition 2	Set 1 (Low)	"From This Moment On"	Shania Twain	Liz B. Flirton	Carla Aria
		"You Learn"	Alanis Morissette	Liz R. Johnson	Ed Burney
		"I Try"	Macy Gray	Liz R. Johnson	Ed Burney
		"Adia"	Sarah McLachlan	Liz B. Flirton	Carla Aria
	Set 2 (High)	"Crush"	Jennifer Paige	Eddy Smith	R. T. Silver
		"Foolish Games"	Jewel	Jewel	Jewel
		"From This Moment On"	Shania Twain	Shania Twain	Shania Twain
		"You Learn"	Alanis Morissette	Alanis Morissette	Alanis Morissette

pattern of results would therefore be consistent with the pattern observed in study 1.

Results

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) utilizing the proportion of songs from each set included in the time capsule as the dependent measure reveals a significant main effect of creative control ($F(1, 72) = 5.28, p = .02$). The positive effect of creative control on inclusion in the time capsule is also significant when the DV is measured as a count instead of a proportion; using Poisson regression, the coefficient for creative control is positive and significant ($\beta = .22; p = .03$).

Focusing on set 1 and comparing across the two conditions, an analysis of the predictive margins of the variable creative control reveals that the average number of songs included in the time capsule is higher when the performer had greater creative control ($M_{\text{high}} = 1.65; SD_{\text{high}} = .69$ versus $M_{\text{low}} = 1.32; SD_{\text{low}} = .54$). The study's design implies an equivalent yet opposite result for set 2. In other words, set 2 songs from condition 2 were more likely to make it into the time capsule. Knowing certain songs are by performers possessing greater creative control (High) versus less creative control (Low) increases the percentage of songs included in the time capsule by 25% [$(1.65/1.32) - 1$]. It is critical to reiterate that regardless of which songs were described as the work of an individual (i.e., High creative control), these songs stood a greater chance of making it into the time capsule. This alleviates any concern that certain qualities of a song, or quality more generally, is responsible for our effects.

Liking measures collected for each song were averaged into separate scores for sets 1 and 2 for both conditions 1 and 2. These scores were compared to test whether creative control had an influence on liking. Results are consistent with earlier findings; liking did not depend on creative

control in either set 1 ($M_{\text{high}} = 3.72; SD_{\text{high}} = 1.33$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 3.77; SD_{\text{low}} = 1.34; t(1, 72) = -.17, p = .86$) or set 2 ($M_{\text{high}} = 4.34; SD_{\text{high}} = 1.30$ vs. $M_{\text{low}} = 3.92; SD_{\text{low}} = 1.02; t(1, 72) = 1.56, p = .12$).

Discussion

Study 2 demonstrates how creative control matters not only for experts, but also for everyday consumers when asked to assess a song's worthiness of recognition. Creative control did not appear to matter when respondents were asked to indicate how much they liked each song. By systematically varying whether the same songs were associated with more or less creative control across conditions, we were able to isolate the effect of creative control on one type of evaluation and not the other. In the lab, we were also able to ensure all respondents had equal access to full information about the role of the performer in the creative process and that features of the song itself remained constant while creative control varied. Even so, study 2 still has its limitations. Study 2, like study 1, focuses on the domain of music, limiting the generalizability of the results thus far. Additionally, using inclusion in a time capsule as our DV also limits the generalizability of our results by focusing on a distinct type of recognition that can depend on many different factors (e.g., notions of historical significance, representativeness of the era). In study 3, we replicate the pattern of results in a different domain (beer) outside of what are traditionally considered the *creative industries* while using different measures of recognition.

STUDY 3

In study 3, participants were told researchers were interested in understanding how people evaluate new businesses and in particular a microbrewery. We selected the domain of brewing for a few reasons worth mentioning.

Microbreweries and brewpubs have experienced phenomenal growth in recent years, as have the number of awards for beers (Carroll and Swaminathan 2000). In addition, beer is a domain in which new entrants are displaying considerable creativity, despite not being traditionally considered a *creative industry* (Brooks 2014). Finally, beer is a category in which consumers are frequently called upon to make judgments pertaining to recognizing the best (Ghoshal et al. 2014), making the task realistic.

Method

Participants and Design. Participants were recruited through MTurk. Eligible respondents were restricted to US residents with a 95% or higher approval rate and a completion rate of at least 50 hits. Participants were compensated 0.50 USD. We allowed only one response per Internet Protocol (IP) address (Goodman, Cryder, and Cheema 2013). Before beginning the survey, we asked potential participants to select from a list of beverages that they have drunk in the past two months. Our intention was only to survey consumers who have a minimum level of familiarity with the category. Those who did not report drinking beer were not allowed to advance and begin the survey. A total of 148 participants (32% females) completed the survey.

Our cover story described a fictional 40-year old New Yorker named Paul Darke who recently opened a microbrewery producing a new beer called Bushwick Pilsner. The design was a single-factor (Creative Control: High vs. Low) between-subjects design. Aside from managing the production of the beer, Darke was described as either personally creating the recipe as well as the bottle and label design (High creative control) or having outsourced both the recipe and packaging design (Low creative control).

Respondents were asked to evaluate this new business and its principal product, Bushwick Beer. While the recognition measure used in study 2 (likelihood of inclusion in a time capsule) is a measure of long-term recognition, we were interested in understanding whether our results would be robust if we used a different (short-term) measure of recognition. In study 3, the dependent measure for recognition therefore involved telling participants that “Every year a number of awards are presented in food and beverage that set exceptional products apart from the rest.” They were then instructed to imagine being “a judge in a competition held in the state of New York” and asked how willing they would be to recognize and/or reward Bushwick Pilsner on a 9 point scale. With respect to liking, respondents were asked the extent to which they believed they would like the beer, also on a 9 point scale. In addition, we also asked respondents to report their intention to consume Bushwick Beer, also on a 9 point scale.

Results

The analysis used Seemingly-Unrelated Regression, a case of multivariate analysis of variance that provides more efficient estimates when multiple DVs under investigation are not independent. This was likely in our design given our two DVs were drawn from the same respondent using similar scales (which was not the case in study 2). The Breusch-Pagan test for independence ($\chi^2(1) = 43.60$; $p = .00$) supports our choice. As expected, the adjusted predicted mean for Recognition in the High creative control condition was significantly greater than in the Low condition ($M_{\text{high}} = 5.86$; $SE_{\text{high}} = .20$ versus $M_{\text{low}} = 5.31$; $SE_{\text{low}} = .20$; $\chi^2(1) = 3.92$, $p < .05$). Also, as expected, the adjusted mean for Liking did not differ significantly across conditions ($M_{\text{high}} = 5.67$; $SE_{\text{high}} = .21$ versus $M_{\text{low}} = 5.74$; $SE_{\text{low}} = .21$; $\chi^2(1) = 0.06$, $p = .81$). Neither did the mean for intention to consume differ across conditions ($\chi^2(1) = 2.04$, $p > .15$), supporting the idea that liking and consumers’ consumption are aligned. The pattern of results in study 3 mirrors those observed in previous studies yet in a different domain using a different measure of recognition.

STUDY 4

In study 4, our primary objective is documenting process. This includes demonstrating that perceptions of creative authenticity mediate the impact of creative control on whether or not a product is deemed worthy of recognition. In addition, we set out to show that when consumers have reason not to trust in the creator (in this case by manipulating the creator’s reputation for being honest and decent), creative control no longer has the same impact on perceptions of creative authenticity. This is because creative control provides an assurance customers can *trust* what they see is a product of the vision of the creator; a violation of trust could lead consumers to think the image the creator projects was manufactured in a strategic, deceptive, or even illegal way (Carroll and Wheaton 2009). In other words, by introducing doubts about the honesty and decency of the creator, we moderate the effect creative control has on perceptions of creative authenticity.

Method

Our cover story was nearly identical to that in study 3 with the following exceptions. To manipulate trust in the creator’s probity, we varied the history of the brewmaster. This was accomplished by stating in the Untrustworthy condition that brewmaster Darke “had been accused of absconding trade secrets from his previous employer,” albeit in a different industry, and had been accused of “fraud and economic espionage for infringing on the ideas of his closest competitor.” The scenario went on to state that he

pleaded out his case and paid the competitor's company an undisclosed settlement. To make the point succinctly, respondents were told he had "developed a reputation as a devious and not fully forthright inventor." In the opposing condition, reflecting more natural situations, Darke should be perceived as more Trustworthy. In this scenario he was described simply as having "always loved beer and hoped to transform this passion into a career. He therefore sought out the opportunity to open a microbrewery."

Participants and Design. Participants were recruited through MTurk. Eligible respondents were restricted to US residents with a 95% or higher approval rate and a completion rate of at least 50 hits. Participants were compensated 0.50 USD. We allowed only one response per IP address (Goodman et al. 2013). As in study 3, we limited our sample to beer drinkers using the same screening mechanism. Overall, 345 participants (41% females) completed the survey. The design was a 2 (Creative Control: High vs. Low) \times 2 (Trustworthiness: Untrustworthy vs. Trustworthy) between-subjects design. We also included a hanging control (comprising 65 of the 345 respondents) in which nothing was said about creative control. This control condition, utilized in a secondary analysis, allows us to assess whether greater-than-expected creative control increases the chances of being seen as warranting recognition or, conversely, less-than-expected creative control hurts those chances, both as compared to a situation in which no creative control information is provided. This affords us a way to discern whether consumers have prior expectations with regard to typical levels of creative control. The hanging control therefore allows us to rule out expectations as an alternative explanation of our results.

As a mediator, we utilized a composite measure of creative authenticity based on the average of six individual scales. The scales were anchored as follows: (1) being personal (about self) versus being impersonal (about others), (2) being a form of self-expression versus being a form of interpretation, (3) being a form of art versus being a form of entertainment, (4) reflecting true inspiration versus reflecting commercial purposes, (5) being truthful versus being untruthful, and (6) being composed with integrity versus being composed without integrity. All measures were taken on a 9 point scale ($\alpha = .87$). We also included a single-item measure of authenticity on a 9 point scale.

In this study, we used a composite measure of recognition as the DV, composed of three different 9 point scales that accounted for different durations in time (short-, medium-, and long-term recognition). This added an additional dimension to the measures used in studies 2 and 3. The scales included the perceived likelihood of (1) being recognized in an annual competition as best in category, (2) being recognized in 10 years as having impacted the tradition and legacy of beer, and (3) being included in a time capsule to be opened in 100 years ($\alpha = .82$).

Respondents also rated the beer in terms of expected quality on a single 9 point scale.

Results

We tested a moderated-mediation model ($N = 280$, excluding the hanging control) in which the moderator affects the relationship between the independent variable (creative control) and the mediator (creative authenticity) (Hayes 2013, model 8). The model is estimated using Structural Equation Modeling in Stata software, which allows for both testing all the paths of the mediation framework simultaneously and comparing any effect (direct, indirect, total) across moderator conditions (Little et al. 2007).

We find that when the creator was described as trustworthy, the total effect creative control had on recognition is fully mediated by perceptions of creative authenticity (Table 3). This supports the notion that creative control affects recognition through its effect on perceptions of creative authenticity. In contrast, when the creator was described as untrustworthy, the total effect of creative control on recognition is negligible, and there is no evidence of a mediating role played by authenticity. These results are substantively the same if we replace our composite measure with the single-item measure of authenticity.

Trustworthiness is shown to moderate the effect of creative control on creative authenticity and in turn on recognition, a result that supports the proposed process laid out in our conceptual model (Figure 1, panel B). Indeed, by bootstrapping the two indirect effects and their difference, we note that such a difference between the indirect effects across conditions is significantly different from zero ($\beta = .65$, $SE = .27$, $CI, 0.09-1.21$), formally supporting the moderated-mediation hypothesis (bottom of Table 3). This analysis also validates the distinction we make between our independent variable and our mediator, creative control and creative authenticity, respectively.

Related to the last point, it is worth noting that a confirmatory factor analysis including the items of authenticity and those of recognition supports discriminant validity between mediator and DV: their squared correlation is 0.39; the average variance extracted is 0.58 for authenticity and 0.63 for recognition. Also, given that our mediator was measured in the same study as our DV, we tested for endogeneity using two-stage least squares for reassurance that these relationships were not biased (Bullock, Green, and Ha 2010). They were not (Wooldridge robust test scores: Trustworthy $\chi^2_{(1)} = 1.57$, $p = .21$; Untrustworthy $\chi^2_{(1)} = 3.49$, $p = .06$).

Additional Results: Does Greater Creative Control Help or Does Lesser Control Hurt? Using our hanging control condition, we were able to test whether greater creative control increases perceptions of creative authenticity or whether a lack of creative control has a deleterious effect.

TABLE 3
STUDY 4: KEY RESULTS FROM STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL (MODERATED MEDIATION)

Trustworthy condition				
Effect of creative control on reward	Coefficient	SE	z	p
Total	0.59	(0.27)	2.18	.03
Indirect (through authenticity)	0.87	(0.20)	4.46	.00
Direct	-0.28	(0.23)	-1.24	.21
Untrustworthy Condition				
Effect of creative control on reward	Coefficient	SE	z	p
Total	-0.22	(0.29)	-0.76	.45
Indirect (through authenticity)	0.22	(0.18)	1.24	.22
Direct	-0.45	(0.23)	-1.91	.06
Test of moderated mediation with bootstrapped SE (1000 samples)				
Effect of creative control on reward	Coefficient	Bootstrapped SE	95% confidence interval (bias corrected)	
Indirect (trustworthy)	0.87	(.19)	0.52	1.28
Indirect (untrustworthy)	0.22	(.19)	-0.15	0.62
Indirect (difference)	0.65	(.27)	0.09	1.21

To accomplish this we ran a separate 1 × 3 ANOVA employing the High and Low creative control conditions from within the Trustworthy condition as well as the hanging control as individual factors (the sample size for this analysis was 203 respondents). Our DV was creative authenticity. Results show the control condition lies in between the means for High and Low creative control ($M_{high} = 6.45$, $M_{control} = 5.71$, $M_{low} = 5.22$). Further, individual contrasts reveal that it is neither closer to High creative control ($M_{high} = 6.45$; $SD_{high} = 1.20$ vs. $M_{control} = 5.71$; $SD = 1.35$; $F(1,200) = 9.11$, $p < .01$) nor to Low creative control ($M_{low} = 5.22$; $SD_{low} = 1.65$ vs. $M_{control} = 5.71$; $SD = 1.35$; $F(1,200) = 3.92$, $p < .05$). This result has an interesting implication. If people have consistent prior expectations with regard to the level of creative control that prevails, and if it is an uncommon level of creative control that boosts their willingness to recognize a given product, we should find no difference between the condition aligned with consumers' expectations (either high or low creative control) and the control condition. This is evidently not the case. This result reinforces the position taken in study 1 that it is not consumers' expectations regarding the relative rarity of high creative control that drives our effects.

Additional Results: Authenticity and Quality. One may wonder whether our creative control manipulation unintentionally affected quality perceptions, which would suggest an alternative process to the one proposed. Therefore, we performed an ANOVA using our quality measure as the DV with Creative Control and Trustworthiness as our predictors (recall, without the hanging control our sample is 280 respondents). This analysis reveals an important additional related insight. Creative control had no effect on expected quality, negating the possibility that our results are

driven by differences in quality between products characterized by High versus Low creative control. This rules out creative control's influence on perceived quality as an alternative explanation for our results.

Discussion

In study 4, we set out to gather evidence for the proposed process detailed in our conceptual model (Figure 1, panel B). We find creative authenticity mediates the effect of creative control on recognition. We also find that trustworthiness, a critical characteristic of the creator, moderates the effect. When consumers have reason not to trust the creator, creative authenticity is unaffected by creative control. Taken together, these results provide strong support for our theorizing. In addition, study 4 provides some insight into the heterogeneity among respondents in terms of expectations about the naturally occurring levels of creative control. By including the hanging control condition, we were able to observe that it is neither expectations of especially High nor Low creative control that is responsible for moving the needle; for some respondents, high control appears to help; for others, it is low control that appears to hurt.

STUDY 5

While thus far the creative process has failed to exert an observable influence on appraisals of *liking* (studies 1–3), we expect this need not always be the case. In this study, we test an important boundary condition in terms of the observed pattern of effects. More specifically, we look at situations involving unfamiliar experiences (e.g., unique or unusual products) in which consumers are likely to feel ill

equipped to make an evaluation. In such cases, consumers are less likely to feel confident in their perceptual judgments of liking and more prone to rely on peripheral information (e.g., perceptions of creative authenticity) to inform their judgment. We chose restaurants as the domain in study 5 because, similar to music and beer, it is a category in which consumers are frequently called on to make judgments pertaining to recognition. Yet we chose a type of restaurant we expected to be unfamiliar to most respondents.

Method

In study 5, participants were told researchers were interested in understanding how people evaluate new businesses, in this case a restaurant. We chose to use a Cajun restaurant in the scenario because Cajun as a descriptive of a style of cooking was virtually unheard of 20 years ago and is still relatively unfamiliar (Cajun is one of a number of regional cuisines that taken together are purchased by less than 24% of consumers, according to market research firm Mintel). This choice helped ensure respondents were relatively unfamiliar with the cuisine and would have little confidence in terms of their own appraisals. Given 51% of respondents reported never having tried Cajun food, while 15% reported having tried it only one time, the assumption of relative unfamiliarity was confirmed. A priori, we expected that consumers who were unfamiliar with, and thus lacked confidence in their ability to evaluate this relatively uncommon type of restaurant, to be more likely to incorporate creative control into their assessment of liking. We manipulated creative control as follows. Respondents were told either the owner or chef of the restaurant was solely responsible for the creation of the recipes and menu as well as the decoration and theming of the restaurant (High creative control) or had sought out the help of an industrial chef and an expert in restaurant branding (Low creative control).

Participants and Design. Participants were recruited through MTurk. Eligible respondents were restricted to US residents with a 95% or higher approval rate and a completion rate of at least 50 hits. Participants were compensated 0.50 USD. We allowed only one response per IP address (Goodman et al. 2013). A total of 152 participants (49% females) completed the survey. The design was a single-factor (Creative Control: High vs. Low) between-subjects design.

We measured authenticity with the same 6 item scale introduced in study 4 ($\alpha = .87$). Similarly, we used the same composite measure of recognition composed of three 9 point scales, accounting for different durations in time (short-, medium-, and long-term) as a DV ($\alpha = .80$). In this study, we measured liking on a 9 point scale (1 = Not at

all, 9 = Very much). We also measured purchase intentions on a 9 point scale (1 = Not at all, 9 = A great deal).

Results

We tested a mediation model using Structural Equation Modeling in Stata because our conceptual framework includes a mediation effect that simultaneously affects both recognition and liking. Results indicate that high creative control has a positive and significant total effect on both recognition and liking and that this effect is, in both cases, fully mediated by perceptions of creative authenticity (Table 4). By bootstrapping the two indirect effects and their difference, we note that such difference is not significantly different from zero ($\beta = .06$, $SE = .13$, $CI, -0.20-0.36$), suggesting that, in line with our expectations, creative control has the same effect through authenticity on both DVs. These results do not change significantly if we replace liking with purchase intentions; the effect of creative control on purchase intention is still fully mediated by creative authenticity (indirect effect coefficient $\beta = .98$, $p < .00$). As in study 4, in study 5 our results are robust to tests of endogeneity (Wooldridge robust test scores: Recognition $\chi^2_{(1)} = .00$, $p = .97$; Liking $\chi^2_{(1)} = .14$, $p = .71$).

These results demonstrate that information about creative control and perceptions of creative authenticity can matter for liking just as they do for recognition. These results imply that this is likely to occur when consumers, on average, are unfamiliar with a product and hence do not feel confident in relying in their own appraisal. In this type of situation, they are more likely to rely on peripheral information when forming their evaluation. In this study, this situation was created utilizing a relatively unfamiliar experience (Cajun food). These results are consistent with, and thus support our conceptual framework (Figure 1, panel B).

Discussion

Study 5 reveals that it is not always the case that liking is unaffected by perceptions of creative control. We find that under certain circumstances (e.g., low familiarity), creative authenticity mediates the effect of creative control on liking, and the effect runs in parallel with its effect on recognition. This occurs when consumers rely on peripheral cues (creative control) when formulating their appraisals of liking. Worth noting is that in this study, we did not manipulate familiarity directly but rather selected a domain with which respondents were known to be unfamiliar (Cajun food). As a result, factors other than familiarity might also have been at play. Nevertheless, our intuition is that it is a lack of familiarity with the product category that induced consumers to rely on peripheral cues. Recall that in studies 1 and 2 we focused on popular music ubiquitous on the

TABLE 4
STUDY 5: KEY RESULTS FROM STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL (MULTIPLE DEPENDENT VARIABLES)

DV = Recognition				
Effect of creative control	Coefficient	SE	z	p
Total	1.05	(0.29)	3.63	.00
Indirect	1.06	(0.21)	5.04	.00
Direct	-0.01	(0.25)	-0.03	.97
DV = Liking				
Effect of creative control	Coefficient	SE	z	p
Total	0.88	(0.32)	2.78	.01
Indirect	0.99	(0.21)	4.68	.00
Direct	-0.11	(0.30)	-0.37	.71
Test of mediation effects with bootstrapped SE (1000 samples)				
Effect of creative control	Coefficient	Bootstrapped SE	95% confidence interval (bias corrected)	
Indirect (on recognition)	1.06	(.22)	0.67	1.54
Indirect (on liking)	0.99	(.23)	0.63	1.54
Indirect (difference)	0.06	(.13)	-0.20	0.36

radio, whereas in studies 3 and 4 we screened for beer drinkers (those respondents familiar with beer). In many domains, such as music and beer, consumers believe they know what they like, and they trust in their own appraisals. In the case of unique, unusual, or infrequent experiences, such as Cajun food in this instance, peripheral cues such as perceptions of creative control, and in turn perceptions of creative authenticity, are more likely to have an impact on liking.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Why is it that Oscar-winning films are typically not box office blockbusters, Grammy award winners are not always fan favorites, and that recipients of *Better Homes and Gardens* Best New Product awards are not always best sellers (e.g., Benton’s Caramel Coconut Fudge cookies)? Being lauded is not the same as being liked; the products that win awards need not be the ones consumers like most, and therefore, they are often not standouts in terms of commercial success. One explanation for the observed divergence between appraisals of what is *best* and what is liked most, as documented in this research, is the fact that these are very different evaluative processes that draw on different information. When deciding which products are deemed worthy of recognition, consumers consider information they do not consider very often while forming appraisals of liking.

In particular, we show how people take creative control, the extent to which the same entity takes responsibility for the entire creative process, into consideration when deciding which products to commend. This is because greater creative control is viewed as generating more creatively

authentic products, outcomes that are more faithful to the creator’s vision. We show this to be the case in the realm of cultural goods (music) as well as food and beverage (beer and Cajun food), the latter a domain in which new entrants are displaying considerable creativity, despite not being traditionally considered a *creative industry* (Brooks 2014). It is reassuring that we observe the same pattern of effects in the real world (study 1) as we did in the lab (studies 2–5), which supports the external validity of our results, an important criterion for impactful research in marketing (Lynch 1999; Winer 1999). We should point out that we believe that for creative control to matter, products must meet some threshold of quality, whether objective and explicitly defined or subjective and shared, yet tacitly held. For instance, all of the songs in study 1 and study 2 had made the Hot 100, ensuring a certain level of quality. Worth noting here is that this work reveals how recognition is different from—and need not even correlate with—quality. Showing factors other than quality matter for recognition is a contribution of this work.

In contrast to deciding which products are worthy of recognition, we find creative control had no discernible effect on how much consumers liked a product in most of our studies. We believe this is because liking depends on the actual consumption experience (information from internal processes) and extraneous information such as creative control does not typically affect such experiences. However, we do show (study 5) that there are cases in which consumers rely on peripheral cues (creative control) when formulating appraisals of liking. This includes those incidences when consumers are unfamiliar with the product and hence not very confident in their own appraisals. In this research, this was accomplished by focusing on a generally unfamiliar product category (a Cajun restaurant). In

a situation like this, the effect of creative authenticity on liking runs parallel to its effect on recognition. We should point out that we believe these cases are the exception rather than the rule, especially given that the literature has shown that consumers are typically overconfident in their judgments (Alba and Hutchinson 2000).

One thing worth mentioning is that in studies 3 and 5, regardless of whether we included liking or purchase intentions in our models, the pattern of results still hold. Thus our findings have important implications for better understanding which products we celebrate and which products consumers like most and therefore buy. It is crucial for marketers to understand when and how different information is integrated in the consumer decision-making process. This research demonstrates how the information consumers integrate into the decision of which products are deemed worthy of recognition has a limited influence on the consumption experience and might therefore have little bearing on their purchase decisions. While it is frequently the case that consumer purchases are driven primarily by consumer liking, based on an actual or expected experience, this need not always be the case. We suspect purchases are driven by liking more often when the purpose of the purchase is hedonic in nature. Hence future research could look at more functional products to see if our model applies.

We also suspect that our results hold when the purchase of one product does not cause the consumer to forgo the purchase of a different product in the same category. This was the case for most products studied in this research (songs, beer). For significantly more costly purchases, when consumers are faced with choosing one option over another, the notion of *value* is expected to loom larger in the decision-making process (Hsee et al. 1999). In these cases, consumers may trust less in their own appraisals and look for reasons that are easy to justify.

There are likely to be other classes of products for which the notion of *value* outweighs more hedonic inclinations. For example, when buying a piece of fine art, consumers might consider the investment value, which could well depend on the number of creative contributors. The painting *Olympics*, which Jean-Michel Basquiat and Andy Warhol created together in 1984, comes to mind. It sold at auction in 2012 for \$10,479,938 while at the same time an *untitled* Basquiat painting sold for \$26,402,500. Does this differential imply Basquiat's work with Warhol paid a price, with the commercially connected pop artist having diluted Basquiat's counterculture cachet? When and how collaboration helps or hurts value is an interesting question worth pursuing. In this case, it was quite clear that it hurt Basquiat in terms of recognition. Critics and art insiders were nowhere near as enthusiastic as buyers about the work that Basquiat and Warhol created in tandem. Whether the buyers actually liked the solo work or simply saw it as a rare piece destined to increase

in value begs for a better understanding of creative control, creative authenticity, and different types of purchase motivations.

DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION

All three authors were involved in the data collection for study 1. The first author, working with the second author, supervised data collection in the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business behavioral lab for study 2. All three authors were involved in the data collection utilizing Amazon's MTurk for studies 3, 4, and 5. All three authors are jointly responsible for the data analysis presented in the text.

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