Persuasive Effects of Matching Messages to Individual Differences in Need to Evaluate

THESIS

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Abstract

This study examined the persuasive effects of matching messages to individual differences in need to evaluate. Participants were presented with one of four messages that contained either strong or weak arguments and was written using evaluative or non-evaluative statements. Attitudes, behavioral intentions and thoughts related to the messages’ contents were recorded along with several individual differences (need to evaluate, need for cognition and topic importance). The results showed that matching messages to individual differences in need to evaluate influences attitude change under certain conditions: message evaluativeness influences attitudes for low need to evaluate individuals under conditions of moderate elaboration likelihood. Implications, limitations and avenues for future research are discussed.
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Introduction

Attitudes refer to an individual’s tendency to evaluate an attitude object positively or negatively (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Attitudes can serve adjustive, ego-defensive, value-expressive and knowledge functions (Katz, 1960) and are organized through affective, behavioral and cognitive experience. Attitudes provide a state of readiness and guide future emotions, actions and beliefs (Allport; 1935; Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960). The resulting strong relationships between attitudes and correspondent behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977) have provided the impetus for research on attitudes and attitude change. Attitude change and persuasion are pertinent to a number of fields (e.g. marketing, political science, influence operations) as changing an individual’s attitudes can lead to changes in correspondent behaviors. Thus, it is no surprise that understanding the factors and processes that lead to successful persuasion has been the focus of a great deal of research.

One of the key factors in understanding persuasion is elaboration. Elaboration refers to “the extent to which a person thinks about the issue-relevant arguments in a message” (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Elaboration describes how people relate the information they are presented to the existing knowledge in their heads and go beyond the message by applying relevant knowledge. Elaboration is an effortful process that requires sufficient motivation and ability. According to the Elaboration Likelihood
Model of persuasion (ELM; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), when motivation and ability to elaborate are high, the central merits of an argument are more likely to be attended to and processed, and persuasion is said to occur primarily via the central route. When motivation and ability to elaborate are low, the central merits of the argument are less likely to receive attention and be processed and persuasion is said to occur primarily via the peripheral route using information that requires less processing (i.e. peripheral cues). In other words, as motivation and ability to process increase, the influence of the central merits of the argument increases and the influence of peripheral cues decreases.

Motivation and ability to process messages are influenced by a number of variables. Factors including topic relevance, topic importance, expectancy violation, induced surprise, number of sources, need for cognition, mood, accessibility, accountability and self-generating arguments have all been shown to influence motivation to process. Ability factors that influence elaboration include distraction, vigorous exercise, posture, comprehensibility, speed of speech, knowledge and message repetition (see Petty & Wegener, 1998, for a review). Whereas people are generally motivated to hold correct attitudes, individual and situational factors can determine the extent to which elaboration is likely and whether persuasion occurs primarily through the central or peripheral route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

According to the ELM, elaboration is important because of its role in determining the lasting impact of attitude change. The same attitude change can result from different processes and have different consequences. The process of elaborating relates the central merits of the arguments to accessible related knowledge structures forming associations
in memory. Future exposure to the attitude object activates the accessible knowledge and the arguments and evaluations associated with them making them more likely to be used in guiding behavior. In other words, elaborating forms strong attitudes that persist over time, resist attempts at counterpersuasion and guide future thoughts and behaviors (see Petty, Haugtvedt & Smith, 1995, for a review). For these reasons it is important to understand the processes through which attitudes change.

The ELM provides a framework for describing the ways in which variables can impact attitudes, the conditions under which these variables play these roles and the impact each of these roles has on attitude change and strength (Petty, Wheeler & Bizer, 2000). The ELM states that the amount of elaboration can vary along a continuum and variables take on different roles at different levels of elaboration. When elaboration is at the lower end of the elaboration continuum, variables serve as cues and influence attitudes primarily through the peripheral route, affecting attitudes in accord with their valence. When elaboration is at the upper end the continuum, these same variables can serve as arguments, bias the direction of thoughts, or affect the structural properties of thoughts and influence attitudes primarily through the central route. When elaboration is not constrained to either end of the continuum, variables can affect the amount of issue-relevant thinking that occurs (Briñol & Petty, 2005).

The variables of interest in persuasive communication can be categorized as source (e.g. expertise), message (e.g. argument quality), channel (e.g. text), recipient (e.g. knowledge), or context (e.g., weather) variables (McGuire, 1968). In persuasive communication, the source delivers a message to a recipient through a channel within a
context. Any feature of these variables can serve as arguments or cues, bias the direction of thoughts or their structural properties, or influence the motivation or ability to process the message, including interactions among them (Briñol & Petty, 2006). The focus of this thesis is on whether or not persuasion variables “match” in some way. One form of matching is when a persuasive proposal aligns in some way with the recipient of that proposal. For example, features of a persuasive message can match people’s traits, identities, cognitive styles, or personality. So far, research has extensively examined the matching between messages and individual differences. The persuasive effects of message matching have been seen for a number of individual differences including self-monitoring (Snyder & DeBono, 1985), self-schemas (Brock, Brannon, & Bridgewater, 1990), need for cognition (See, Petty, & Evans, 2009), sensation seeking (Martin, Sherrard, & Wentzel, 2004), optimism (Geers, Handley, & McLarney, 2003), uncertainty orientation (Sorrentino, Bobocel, Gitta, Olson, & Hewitt, 1988), ideal versus ought self-guides (e.g., Evans & Petty, 2003), independent versus interdependent self-construals (Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000), dominance versus submission (Moon, 2002), introversion versus extraversion (Wheeler, Petty, & Bizer, 2005), sensitization versus repression (DeBono & Snyder, 1992), high versus low consideration of future consequences (Orbell, Perugini, & Rakow, 2004; Strathman, Gleicher, Boninger, & Edwards, 1994), locus of control (Williams-Piehota, Schneider, Pizarro, Mowad, & Salovey, 2004), and monitor-blunter coping styles (e.g., Williams-Piehota, Pizarro, Schneider, Mowad, & Salovey, 2005; for an extensive review of these and other variables, see Briñol & Petty, 2005).
One form of matching that has been extensively research involves matching the content of a persuasive message to peoples’ goals. For example, research on self-monitoring has used image-oriented appeals and quality-oriented appeals to advertise products. Individuals who are more sensitive to the image they project (i.e. high self-monitors) are more persuaded by messages whose contents match their desire to project the right self-image (i.e. image-oriented appeal) whereas individuals who are less concerned with the image they project (i.e. low self-monitors) and focus on the utilitarian functions products serve are more persuaded by quality-oriented appeals (Snyder & DeBono, 1985).

Another, less studied, form of matching involves matching message affordances to people’s processing tendencies. For example, research on matching messages to individual differences in need for cognition has found that messages framed as complex are processed more extensively by individuals who enjoy complex problem solving (i.e. high need for cognition) than messages framed as simple whereas individuals who tend to process less readily (i.e. low need for cognition) processed the simple message more extensively than the complex message (See, Petty & Evans, 2009). The current study falls in line with this type of matching – matching messages to recipients’ processing interests.

Much of the early research on the persuasive effects of matched messages indicated that matching led to more persuasion. However, more recent research has employed a processing perspective on matching and has demonstrated that matching does not necessarily result in greater persuasion. For example, Petty and Wegener (1998)
showed that matching can influence the likelihood of elaboration that in turn determines whether the central arguments of the message will be processed. If matching produces more thinking and the arguments are strong, matching will produce more persuasion. However, if the arguments are weak, more processing induced by matching will result in reduced persuasion.

The current thesis addresses matching messages to individual differences in need to evaluate. To date, no prior research has been published on this topic. Jarvis and Petty (1996) refer to the need to evaluate as individual differences in people’s tendencies to engage in evaluative thought. Individuals who are high in the need to evaluate enjoy evaluating and engage in it spontaneously. In contrast, individuals low in the need to evaluate do not spontaneously engage in evaluative thought and only do so when it is required, presumably because they do not enjoy the process of evaluating. The relative frequency with which people tend to engage in spontaneous evaluative thinking (i.e. need to evaluate) can be measured using the Need to Evaluate Scale (Jarvis & Petty, 1996).

In the current research, need to evaluate was examined in combination with two different kinds of messages that varied in their evaluativeness. One message was high in the number of evaluations it used to describe a proposal whereas the other message was low in the number of evaluations it used. That is, one message was framed as if the proposal had already been evaluated whereas the other message was presented as if the proposal had yet to be evaluated or still needed to be evaluated. Because individuals high in the need to evaluate enjoy the process of evaluating, it was hypothesized that they would find the message that still needed to be evaluated (low in evaluativeness) to be
more appealing than the message that was already evaluated (high in evaluativeness). In contrast, because individuals low in the need to evaluate do not enjoy evaluating and do not engage in it spontaneously, they were hypothesized to find the message that was already evaluated to be more appealing. In the current research, participants were required to evaluate a message and thus low need to evaluate individuals would find the evaluative message to be helpful in reaching this goal. Because high need to evaluate individuals would not need help in evaluating, the evaluative message would not be especially appealing.

To examine how appealing each message was, the messages of each type varied in the quality of the arguments they contained. Enhanced information processing will be inferred from the size of the argument quality effect on attitudes with a larger argument quality effect signifying enhanced information processing (Petty, Wells, & Brock, 1976). In particular, a 3-way interaction between Need to Evaluate, Message Evaluativeness, and Argument Quality was predicted for the key measure of attitudes toward the proposal and behavioral intentions. For individuals low in the need to evaluate, the argument quality effect was expected to be larger for the evaluative than the non-evaluative message. For individuals high in the need to evaluate, the argument quality effect was expected to be larger for the non-evaluative than the evaluative message.

Finally, as noted earlier in describing the ELM, the effects of variables such as matching on elaboration should be easiest to detect when other variables have not already preset the degree of elaboration to be especially high or low. Thus, two additional measured variables that relate to the degree of message elaboration were included in this
research – need for cognition and topic importance. Those high in both need for
cognition and perceived topic importance should be at the high end of the continuum and
matching should have little effect on information processing for these individuals.
Similarly, those low in both need for cognition and perceived topic importance should be
at the low end of the continuum and matching should likewise have little effect on
information processing for these individuals. Thus, the predicted three way interaction of
Need to Evaluate × Message Evaluativeness × Argument Quality should be most
apparent for individuals not at the extremes on these processing variables.

Matching of messages to individual differences in need to evaluate is of potential
importance because evaluation is prevalent in human judgment and is fundamental to the
formation and changing of attitudes. In sum, the main question in the research is under
what conditions does matching message content to participants’ need to evaluate result in
differential processing and greater attitude change.
Methods

Overview

Participants were informed that they would be asked to evaluate messages. The experimental materials, including the informed consent document, were presented via MediaLab software (Jarvis, 2006). Participants first completed the Need to Evaluate Scale (Jarvis & Petty, 1996). Next, participants were randomly assigned to receive one of four messages about a fictional foster care program that contained either strong or weak arguments and was written using evaluative or non-evaluative statements suggesting that the proposal either was already evaluated or needed to be evaluated. After reading the message, participants were asked to report their attitudes towards the program, behavioral intentions, thoughts and thought ratings. Participants were also administered the Need for Cognition Scale (Cacioppo, Petty, & Kao, 1984), rated importance of the issue, and completed demographic questionnaires and ancillary measures for exploratory purposes. Once participants were done with the study, they were debriefed, thanked for their time, and dismissed.

Participants

Five-hundred and two undergraduate students (285 females, 217 males) participated in this study for partial course credit in an introductory psychology course.
Seventeen of those participants failed both the attention check\(^1\) and had extraordinarily quick response times on other items.\(^2\) Deleting these individuals left a final sample size for this study of 485 participants (280 women, 205 men).

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited through the Ohio State University Introductory Psychology Research Experience Program website. The description of the study on that site informed participants that they would be asked to view and evaluate messages and that personality questionnaires would also be administered. Once participants arrived at the lab and gave consent to participate, they were asked to follow instructions described further in a written statement presented via MediaLab software (Jarvis, 2006). Participants were first asked to complete the Need to Evaluate Scale (Jarvis & Petty, 1996). Next, participants were informed that they would be presented with a message about the Rhode Island foster care program. They were instructed to pay attention as they would be asked to provide their impressions and answer some questions about the program.

Next, participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions that comprised a 2 (Message type: evaluative or non-evaluative) X 2 (Argument strength: weak or strong) factorial design. After reading the message, all participants were asked to record their thoughts about the program and then rate each of their thoughts in terms of its favorableness towards the Rhode Island foster care program.

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\(^1\) Attention check: “if you are reading this question select answer 4,”

\(^2\) More than one response time of less than 250ms for items requiring participants to read a sentence and choose from at least 5 response alternatives.
Next, participants were presented with a number of questions regarding their evaluation of the program, behavioral intentions toward the program, previously reported thoughts about the program, and how important foster care was to them. Participants were then asked to complete the Need for Cognition Scale (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Finally, participants were asked to complete a number of ancillary measures and demographic information. These measures were not focal variables and were included in the study in order to allow for an adequate description of the sample. Before being dismissed, participants were thoroughly debriefed and thanked for their time.

**Independent Variables**

*Argument Quality.* Argument quality was manipulated. The messages presented to participants were taken from messages developed by Petty, Schumann, Richman and Strathman (1993) and adapted to suit the needs of this study (see Appendix C for the messages used in this study). Each message presented four arguments in favor of adopting the Rhode Island Foster Care Program. However, the arguments presented in the weak messages were specious (e.g. “the Rhode Island program recognizes that children need other children to fight with”) whereas those present in the strong message were evaluated as being cogent and more persuasive (e.g. “the Rhode Island program recognizes that siblings are really important for the social development of the child”).

*Message Type.* Message evaluativeness was manipulated. The initial framing of the message, the wording of the arguments and the closing statements of the messages used by Petty et al. (1993) were modified and two versions of both the strong and the weak messages were created. One version, evaluative, was tailored to make it appear as
though the statements represented other peoples’ subjective evaluations of the program (e.g., "Based on these views, this program is really great") whereas the other version, non-evaluative, was tailored to make the statements appear to be more objective descriptions of the program (e.g. “Based on this description, this program really has an effect”). That is, in the evaluative version of the message, evidence for the foster care program was presented, evaluated, and pre-determined to be good whereas in the non-evaluative version, the statements contained in the message still needed to be evaluated if a judgment was to be formed. Argument quality and message style were combined to create four different messages: Weak Argument Quality with Evaluative Message Type, Weak Argument Quality with Non-Evaluative Message Type, Strong Argument Quality with Evaluative Message Type, and Strong Argument Quality with Non-Evaluative Message Type.

Need to Evaluate. Need to evaluate was measured with the 16 item Need to Evaluate Scale (Jarvis & Petty, 1996). Participants responded to each statement using 5-point scales with response options ranging from ‘extremely unlike me’ (1) to ‘extremely like me’ (5). This scale is designed to measure trait levels of need to evaluate, the tendency to engage in and enjoy making evaluations. Scores on the scale ranged from 1.56 to 4.87 with an overall mean of 3.09 and standard deviation of 0.60. The reliability of this scale was good (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.84).

Need for Cognition. Need for cognition was measured with the 18 item Need for Cognition Scale (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Participants responded to the items using 5-point scales with response options ranging from ‘extremely uncharacteristic’ (1) to
‘extremely characteristic’ (5). The Need for Cognition Scale measures trait levels of tendencies to engage in and enjoy thinking in general. This is an important individual difference to measure in ELM-based persuasion research as it has been shown to moderate the relations between other variables such as the extent to which attitudes are based on thoughts (see Briñol & Petty, 2005 for a review). Scores on this scale ranged from 1.33 to 5.00 with an overall mean of 3.26 and standard deviation of 0.65. The reliability of this scale was good (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.88).

*Topic Importance.* Topic importance was measured using responses to the following statement: “Foster care programs are important to me.” Response options ranged from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (9). The importance of the topic of a persuasive message is another variable that has been shown to moderate the relations between other variables (Regan & Fazio, 1977). Of most relevance here, importance of an issue is a determinant of the extent of processing regarding that issue (Petty & Cacioppo, 1990).

*Dependent Measures*

*Manipulation Checks.* Manipulation checks were included to identify whether the manipulations made to the Rhode Island Foster Care Program messages had the desired effects. Participants were asked “To what extent did you find that the message contained evaluative terms, and judgments about the program's effectiveness?” to determine perceived message evaluativeness. Response options ranged from ‘not at all evaluative’ (1) to ‘very much evaluative’ (9). Argument quality was assessed by asking participants “How strong or weak did you find the arguments we presented IN FAVOR of the Rhode
Island's Program to be (i.e., the arguments you read in the message)?” Response options ranged from ‘very weak’ (1) to ‘very strong’ (9).

*Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions.* Attitudes toward the Rhode Island Foster Care Program were measured using a 6 item 9 point semantic differential scale (i.e. good-bad, negative-positive, wise-foolish, unfavorable-favorable, against-in favor, harmful-beneficial). The reliability of this scale was very good (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.98).

Behavioral intentions to provide information and volunteer to help with the program were measured using a 5 item scale on which participants indicated how willing they were to provide personal information to the program, how many letters they were willing to write on the program’s behalf, the number of phone calls they were willing to make for the program, their willingness to sign a petition for the program and how many petition signatures they were willing to get from other people for the program. Responses were given using 9-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (no intentions to help) to 9 (maximum intention to help). The reliability of the behavioral intentions scale was good (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.83).

According to the Theories of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), behavioral intentions are the immediate determinants of behavior. Because attitudes and intentions are conceptually related and were highly correlated in this study (r = 0.71), the two measures were combined into a single evaluation dependent measure by averaging the scores. The reliability of this combined measured was $\alpha = 0.94$ indicating a high degree of internal consistency among the individual items.
Thought Valence. A thought index was computed using the procedures identified by Cacioppo and Petty (1981). Participants were asked to provide their thoughts about the program using the following instructions: “We would now like you to go back to the thoughts you just listed, and rate each one individually on the degree to which you think it is favorable, unfavorable, or neutral toward the Rhode Island Foster Care Program.” Once all their thoughts were listed, they were asked to go back through the thoughts they had reported and rate each one as favorable (1), unfavorable (-1) or neutral (0) with respect to the Rhode Island foster care program. This measurement technique was used to identify the overall valence of their thoughts by using the sum of their thought ratings (i.e., number of positive thoughts minus number of negative).
Results and Discussion

Manipulation Checks

Message Evaluativeness. A two-way ANOVA comparing the effects of message type and argument quality on perceived message evaluativeness showed a significant main effect of message type, $F(1,481) = 5.28$, $p = .02$, in the expected direction. Those receiving the evaluative message rated it as higher ($M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.83$) than those who received the low evaluative message ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.95$). In addition, a main effect of argument quality was obtained, $F(1,481) = 58.18$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the strong message ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.75$) was rated as more evaluative than the weak one ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.98$). However, both of these effects were qualified by a significant interaction, $F(1,481) = 3.88$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 1), indicating that the evaluation manipulation worked better when the arguments were strong rather than weak. A simple main effects analysis showed that the strong evaluative message ($M = 6.03$, $SD = 1.61$) was rated as significantly more evaluative than the strong non-evaluative message ($M = 5.31$, $SD = 1.81$; $p = .003$) as expected, but that the weak evaluative message ($M = 5.00$, $1.90$) was not seen as more evaluative than the weak non-evaluative message ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 2.07$; $p = .81$).

Argument Quality. A two-way ANOVA comparing the effects of message type and argument quality on perceived strength showed a significant main effect of argument
quality, $F(1, 481) = 83.85, p < .001$, with the strong message being seen as higher in strength ($M = 6.28, SD = 1.74$) than the weak one ($M = 4.63, SD = 2.22$). This main effect was qualified by a significant interaction, $F(1, 481) = 6.17, p = .01$ (see Figure 2). A simple main effects analysis showed that argument quality was significant for both the evaluative, $F(1, 481) = 67.36, p < .001$, and non-evaluative $F(1, 481) = 24.40, p < .001$, messages but was greater in size for the evaluative message. In other words, the difference between the strong evaluative ($M = 6.56, SD = 1.67$) and weak evaluative ($M = 4.46, SD = 2.22$) messages was greater than the difference between the strong non-evaluative ($M = 6.00, SD = 1.77$) and the weak non-evaluative ($M = 4.79, SD = 2.21$) messages.

**Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions**

To identify the effects of matching message evaluativeness to individual differences in need to evaluate on attitudes and behavioral intentions, regression analyses were used. In addition to the critical need to evaluate, message evaluativeness and argument quality variables, need for cognition and topic importance were included in the regression. These five variables were submitted to the regression analysis outlined by Aiken and West (1991), with manipulated variables contrast coded (-1, +1). Non-manipulated variables were mean centered, treated as continuous variables, and tested for significance at one standard deviation above and below their means. Analyses were conducted with these mean-centered variables, and the relevant cross products (e.g., need to evaluate $\times$ message evaluativeness) provided the interaction terms for the model.
Analyses were conducted in a hierarchical manner, and terms were interpreted in the first model in which they appeared (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). If a significant interaction was found, it was decomposed using simple slopes analysis (see Aiken & West, 1991).

The regression analysis showed significant main effects of argument quality, $B = 0.84$, $t(479) = 11.45$, $p < .001$, and topic importance, $B = 0.13$, $t(479) = 3.53$, $p < .001$, on attitudes and behavioral intentions. Strong arguments ($M = 5.77$, $se = .11$) resulted in more favorable attitudes and behavioral intentions than weak arguments ($M = 4.04$, $se = .10$). Attitudes and behavioral intentions toward the program also increased as perceived topic importance increased. These main effects were qualified by four significant ($p < .05$) interactions with the highest order being a 5-way interaction. All the main effect and interaction tests are presented in Table 1. Because each of the lower order interactions is qualified by the 5-way interaction, the results section will focus first on the presence (or absence) of the predicted 3-way interaction of need to evaluate, message evaluativeness, and argument quality. Next, attention is paid to the 5-way interaction that qualifies the predicted 3-way interaction along with all other interactions obtained.

To start, the predicted 3-way interaction of argument quality × message type × need to evaluate was assessed but was found not to be significant, $B = -0.19$, $t(459) = -1.41$, $p = .15$ (see Figure 3). Nonetheless, to understand the pattern of effects obtained, the interaction was decomposed by need to evaluate to identify any trends that conformed to the key hypotheses. This decomposition showed a marginal 2-way interaction of argument quality × message type for those low in need to evaluate, $B = 0.20$, $t(459) =$
1.94, \( p = .05 \), and a non-significant 2-way interaction for those high in need to evaluate, \( B = -0.01, t(459) = -0.09, p = .93 \).

For those low in need to evaluate the impact of argument quality was larger for the evaluative message, \( B = 1.00, t(459) = 7.07, p < .001 \), than the non-evaluative message, \( B = 0.59, t(459) = 3.79, p < .001 \) suggesting that those low in need to evaluate processed the evaluative message more than the non-evaluative message. For those high in need to evaluate, the impact of argument quality for the evaluative message, \( B = 0.93, t(459) = 6.32, p < .001 \), did not differ from the non-evaluative message, \( B = 0.95, t(459) = 6.43, p < .001 \) showing that those high in need to evaluate processed both messages equally.

The 2-way interaction of argument quality \( \times \) message type for those low in need to evaluate provided some initial indication of differential processing of messages in accord with one of the core hypotheses. However, the significant five-way interaction obtained suggests that the predicted 3-way interaction or the 2-way interaction of argument quality \( \times \) message type just mentioned for low need to evaluate individuals may be more apparent under some conditions than under others. As noted in the introduction, according to the ELM, processing effects should be most apparent when elaboration likelihood is not constrained to be too high or too low.

Two measured variables included in the study – need for cognition and topic importance – have been shown in prior research to affect the extent of thinking about a persuasive message. To determine whether these variables had this effect in the current research, individuals who were in the upper quartile on both variables were categorized
as a high elaboration likelihood group and those in the lower quartile on both variables were characterized as a low elaboration likelihood group. These two processing variables were uncorrelated, \( r(483) = .02, p = .59 \). A 2-way ANOVA comparing the effects of argument quality on attitudes and behavioral intentions for the high and low elaboration likelihood groups showed a significant interaction, \( F(1,32) = 4.57, p = .04 \) (see Figure 4). A simple main effects analysis showed that messages with strong arguments yielded more favorable attitudes and behavioral intentions than messages with weak arguments for participants in the high elaboration (Strong \( M = 6.15, SD = 1.75 \) vs. Weak \( M = 2.03, SD = .91; p < .001 \)) and low elaboration (Strong \( M = 5.27, SD = .70 \) vs. Weak \( M = 3.16, SD = 1.47; p = .003 \)) groups, though the argument quality effect was larger in the high than low elaboration group as expected. This differential sensitivity to argument quality is an indication that individuals high in both need for cognition and topic importance were processing the messages more than individuals low in both of these processing variables.

Given that when both need for cognition and importance were high, processing was greater than when both were low, each of these variables was included in the regression analysis as possible moderators of the predicted 3-way interaction. A significant 5-way interaction of message type \( \times \) need to evaluate \( \times \) argument quality \( \times \) need for cognition \( \times \) topic importance, \( B = .16, t(453) = 2.13, p = .03 \), was obtained using the regression analysis outlined by Aiken and West (1991) and treating the measured independent variables as continuous (see Figure 5), and suggested that the two processing
variables served as moderators. To understand this 5-way interaction, it was decomposed by first splitting the data by need to evaluate.

For low need to evaluate individuals, a significant 4-way interaction of message type × argument quality × need for cognition × topic importance was found, $B = -.17$, $t(453) = -2.29$, $p = .02$. To understand this 4-way interaction, the data were decomposed by need for cognition (low, high) and topic importance (low, high) into four 2-way interactions of argument quality × message type (see Figure 5, Panels 5, 6, 7 and 8). As can be seen in the figure, the argument quality × message type interactions were non-significant when need for cognition and topic importance were both low (see Figure 5, Panel 5) establishing a very low likelihood of elaboration, $B = -.14$, $t(453) = -.83$, $p = .41$, and when both processing variables were high (see Figure 5, Panel 8) establishing a very high likelihood of elaboration, $B = .14$, $t(453) = .65$, $p = .51$. In both cases there was only a significant main effect of argument quality (low-low: $B = .91$, $t(453) = 5.41$, $p < .001$, high-high: $B = .97$, $t(453) = 4.54$, $p < .001$).

However, the argument quality × message type interactions were significant when need for cognition was high and topic importance was low (see Figure 5, Panel 7), $B = .46$, $t(453) = 2.03$, $p = .04$, and when need for cognition was low and topic importance was high (see Figure 5, Panel 6), $B = .38$, $t(453) = 2.04$, $p = .04$, establishing a more moderate likelihood of elaboration. In each case, the interaction indicated that low need to evaluate individuals were more responsive to argument quality (i.e., processed the message more carefully) when they received the evaluative rather than the non-evaluative message. More specifically, when need for cognition was high and topic importance was
low, the argument quality effects were non-significant for those presented with the non-evaluative message, $B = .03, t(453) = .08, p = .94$, but significant for those presented with the evaluative message, $B = .94, t(453) = 3.15, p = .002$. When need for cognition was low and topic importance was high, the argument quality effects were non-significant for those presented with the non-evaluative message, $B = .46, t(453) = 1.62, p = .11$, but significant for those presented with the evaluative message, $B = 1.21, t(453) = 5.12, p < .001$.

In other words, the decomposition of the 5-way interaction qualified the finding that argument quality and message type interact for those low in need to evaluate by showing that this effect is most likely to occur when need for cognition and topic importance are inconsistent establishing a moderate elaboration likelihood. When need for cognition and topic importance are consistent (low-low or high-high) this interaction was not found. Including the two processing variables, need for cognition and topic importance, in the regression revealed that the effects of matching evaluative messages to individual differences in need to evaluate can be seen under certain conditions, but not under others. Taken together, the results indicate that, when elaboration is not constrained by other processing variables at very high or low levels, individuals who are low in need to evaluate are more likely to process the evaluative message than the non-evaluative message.\(^3\)

\(^3\) Additional effects were found. For low need to evaluate participants low in need for cognition there was a significant 3-way interaction of argument quality $\times$ message type $\times$ topic importance, $B = .13, t(453) = 2.09, p = .04$ (see Figure 5, Panels 5 and 6). For low need to evaluate participants low in topic importance there was a significant 3-way interaction of argument quality $\times$ message type $\times$ need for cognition, $B = .46, t(453) = 2.20, p = .03$ (see Figure 5, Panels 5 and 7).
In contrast to the results for those low in need to evaluate, for high need to evaluate individuals, no 4-way interaction was obtained, \( B = .03, t(453) = .36, p = .72 \) (see Figure 5, Panels 1, 2, 3 and 4). Rather, two main effects were obtained, for argument quality, \( B = .84, t(453) = 11.45, p < .001 \), and topic importance, \( B = .13, t(453) = 3.53, p < .001 \). Some additional interaction effects were obtained but these did not include the two core variables of need to evaluate and message evaluativeness.\(^4\)

*Thought Valence*

A mediation analysis was conducted to determine if the observed effects of the 5-way interaction (need to evaluate × need for cognition × topic importance × message style × argument quality) on attitudes and behavioral intentions were mediated by thought valence (see Figure 6). As stated above, the effects of the independent variables on attitudes and behavioral intentions produced a 5-way interaction, \( B = .16, p = .03 \). This 5-way interaction was also found to be significant predictor of thought valence, \( B = .31, p = .04 \).\(^5\) Furthermore, thought valence was a significant predictor of attitudes and behavioral intent while controlling for the effects of the 5-way interaction and all lower-order effects, \( B = .35, p < .001 \). However, when thought valence was controlled for, the 5-way interaction was a non-significant predictor of attitudes and behavioral intentions, \( B \)

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\(^4\) Specifically, for high need to evaluate participants there was a significant 2-way interaction of need for cognition × topic importance, \( B = -.17, t(453) = -2.83, p = .005 \), that was qualified by a significant 3-way interaction of need for cognition × topic importance × argument quality, \( B = .14, t(453) = 2.26, p = .02 \). Somewhat surprisingly, for high need to evaluate individuals, high need for cognition individuals were more likely to process the high than the low importance message whereas for low need for cognition individuals, the pattern was reversed.

\(^5\) The 5-way interaction of need to evaluate × need for cognition × topic importance × message style × argument quality on thought valence was split by need to evaluate mirroring the procedure used for analyzing attitudes and behavioral intentions. The 4-way interactions for those low in need to evaluate, \( B = -.22, t(453) = -1.53, p = .13 \) was in the same direction as for attitudes and intentions, but weaker. For those high in need to evaluate, \( B = .15, t(453) = .92, p = .36 \), the interaction was not significant.
=.07, p = .25. A Sobel test was performed that indicated that the decrease in the standardized regression coefficient between the 5-way interaction and attitudes and behavioral intentions when controlling for thought valence was significant, t(484) = 2.02, p = .04. The results of this analysis indicate that the impact of the five way interaction on attitudes and intentions is plausibly mediated by thought valence.
General Discussion

The results show that matching messages to individual differences in need to evaluate can influence attitude change under certain conditions. Specifically, message evaluativeness influenced information processing and attitudes for low need to evaluate individuals under moderate levels of elaboration likelihood. Furthermore, the mediation results are consistent with the view that valenced thoughts were responsible for the impact of the messages on attitudes. Under moderate elaboration conditions, the messages containing objective descriptions (non-evaluative) elicited less processing of the information among those low in need to evaluate compared to the messages that represented peoples’ subjective opinions (evaluative).

This differential processing is most likely due to the effects of matching on motivation to process as ability would not be expected to differ within those low in need to evaluate and these effects were isolated to certain conditions. It is possible that individuals who do not tend to engage in evaluative thought (i.e. low in need to evaluate) are more likely to be interested in processing the evaluations of others rather than engaging in effortful evaluation on their own when forming attitudes under certain conditions. Thus, when required to provide an evaluation, low need to evaluate individuals paid more attention to and processed the messages that contained evaluations...
more than the messages that did not. It is not clear if these effects would generalize to situations in which no evaluations are required as part of the task.

Conceptually similar results to those reported here have been found when matching need for cognition to complex and simple message framing (See et al., 2009). As described earlier, when presented with a message framed as simple, individuals who were low in need for cognition engaged in more processing than those who were high in need for cognition. The reverse was true for messages framed as complex; individuals high in need for cognition showed greater processing than those low in need for cognition. One explanation put forth for these effects is that the message framing serves as an indicator of how much effort will be required to process the message. Those who enjoy processing (i.e., are high in need for cognition), seek opportunities to engage in processing that the simple message does not provide. Those who do not enjoy processing (i.e., are low in need for cognition), are more willing to engage in processing when minimal processing is required.

This same logic can be applied to the processing of evaluative messages. Those who enjoy evaluating information (i.e., are high in need to evaluate), may seek opportunities for evaluating information. If so, individuals high in the need to evaluate would enjoy processing the message that was not already evaluated more than the one that was pre-evaluated. In contrast, those who do not enjoy evaluating (i.e., are low in need to evaluate), are more willing to engage in processing when minimal evaluating is required. Thus, they would be drawn to the message that was already evaluated over the
one that was not. Evidence was obtained for the hypothesized processing pattern for those low in need to evaluate but not for those high in need to evaluate.

Limitations and Issues

In the single item manipulation check of message evaluativeness, participants rated the weak evaluative message and the weak non-evaluative messages as equally evaluative. The writing style and language used in the weak evaluative message was closely matched to that of the strong evaluative message (with the exception of the specific arguments). It is not clear if ratings represent actual differences in the evaluativeness of the messages, if the item itself was unclear, or if participants conflated message evaluativeness with strength. The results indicate that message style influenced attitudes and behavioral intentions although there is some question as to whether these effects can be attributed to the evaluativeness of the messages or some other unintentionally manipulated variable.

Whereas there was evidence for matching based elaboration differences when both processing variables were included in the model, neither need for cognition or topic importance produced these differences when considered individually. The differential processing effects of matching need to evaluate to message evaluativeness were only observed when the two processing variables were inconsistent. As the processing variables were uncorrelated, it is likely they independently influenced motivation to process and it was only in the absence of clear guidance from these cues that participants sought guidance from other cues (i.e. fit between message style and evaluation tendencies).
Interestingly, an alternate explanation for these results can be considered. Specifically, one could make the argument that presenting an individual low in need to evaluate with an evaluative message (and vice versa) represents a mismatch, not a match. From this perspective, it is conceivable that mismatched messages (evaluative messages for low need to evaluate, non-evaluative messages for high need to evaluate) are leading to more processing in some conditions because the mismatch creates conflict, violates expectancies, is viewed as being discrepant or creates confusion that must be resolved through more thorough processing. To test these possible alternate explanations, measures of the perceived efficacy of and interest in processing will be included in a follow-up study. Only individuals who believe increased processing reduces the tension created by this conflict would be expected to process mismatched messages more carefully.

It is also likely that the goal of the task in the experiment played a role in influencing processing. When signing up for the study, participants were informed that they would be reading messages and would be asked to provide their evaluations. With this goal in mind, individuals low in need to evaluate likely viewed the evaluative messages as opportunities to get evaluations for reporting (those contained in the message itself) without actually having to engage in evaluation themselves. This opportunity to satisfy the requirements of the task without evaluating may have motivated these participants to attend to and process the evaluative message more carefully. Future research should determine if these effects would occur if no evaluative goal was provided.
Future Research

The current study only found matching effects for individuals low in need to evaluate. Based on the hypothesis, those high in need to evaluate should have processed the non-evaluative message more than the evaluative message as it affords them the opportunity to exercise their natural tendency to evaluate. However, the results from the current study did not provide support for this. Future research is needed to determine why matching effects were not found for individuals high in need to evaluate and to identify the necessary conditions under which matching messages to individuals high in need to evaluate influences attitudes. Need to evaluate refers to the extent to which people spontaneously evaluate objects (Jarvis and Petty 1996). However, forming evaluations does not necessarily require effortful processing. Evaluations can be formed via the central or peripheral routes. In the absence of clear motivational guidance (i.e. processing variables inconsistent), those low in need to evaluate may have relied on the cue provided by matching to determine processing (i.e. used the cue as an indication that the message was providing the type of information they needed to complete the task of evaluating). However, individuals high in need to evaluate in the same conditions may have relied on the motivation to evaluate to guide their actions making them less sensitive to the cue provided by the match. Perhaps providing individuals with more salient cues of message evaluativeness will increase their likelihood of identifying and using matching to inform behavior. This is one of the hypotheses of research that is currently under way. This research may help in further interpreting the effects found in this study.
In addition to addressing the issues and limitation identified above, future research is needed to identify functional aspects of need to evaluate. It is possible that evaluating serves different functions and goals for different people under different conditions. For example some people may evaluate to gain a better understanding of their environments whereas others may evaluate to form and express opinions. Those who evaluate to gain a better understanding of their environments would be expected to attend to and process messages that represent the evaluations of others more than individuals who evaluate to form and express their own opinions. If this is the case, than individual high in need to evaluate for expressing would be expected to show differential processing effects favoring non-evaluative messages in the inconsistent processing conditions. Research is currently being conducted to test this hypothesis.

Future research should also examine the affective (hedonic) and cognitive (functional) aspects of evaluating. That is, to what extent do people evaluate because they enjoy the act of evaluating (affective aspect) and to what extent to people engage in evaluation for utilitarian reasons (e.g. form attitudes, structure thoughts, and other functional reasons). Research in this area would further our understanding of when and why people engage in evaluative thought.

Conclusions

The present research has shown that messages can be matched to individual differences in need to evaluate to influence persuasion. Message evaluativeness influences processing and attitudes for individuals low in need to evaluate when elaboration likelihood is moderate by influencing thought valence. When elaboration
was not constrained to be high or low, low need to evaluate individuals processed messages containing evaluations more than messages that did not. Under these conditions, the composer of persuasive messages should pay particular attention to argument quality when using an evaluative style.
References


## Appendix A: Tables

### Table 1
Full Regression Models Predicting Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions

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Msg = message type, Imp = topic importance, NE = need to evaluate, AQ = argument quality, NC = need for cognition
Appendix B: Figures

Figure 1. Evaluativeness ratings of the four messages. AQ = Argument Quality.
Figure 2. Argument quality ratings of the four messages. AQ = Argument Quality
Figure 3. 3-way interaction of need to evaluate × message type × argument quality on attitudes and behavioral intentions
Figure 4. Effects of elaboration likelihood and argument quality on attitudes and behavioral intentions. AQ = Argument Quality
Figure 2: Effects of need to evaluate, image importance, need for cognition, message type, and argument quality on attitudes and behavioral intentions.
Figure 6. Mediation analysis using thought valence as a mediating mechanism of the effects of need to evaluate, topic importance, need for cognition, message type and argument quality on attitudes and behavioral intentions.
Appendix C: Messages

Strong Argument Quality, Non-Evaluative Message Style

“PLEASE READ SOME DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

THE RHODE ISLAND FOSTER CARE PROGRAM INCORPORATES FOUR FACTS TO BE LEARNED. FIRST, BACKERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM RECOGNIZE THAT SIBLINGS HAVE A ROLE IN THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD. BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE ALSO AN ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF SOCIAL CONTACT FOR THE CHILD. FOR THIS REASON, MANY CITIZENS IN RHODE ISLAND STATE THAT FOSTER PARENTS SHOULD HAVE OTHER CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY. SECOND, SUPPORTERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM UNDERSTAND IT IS CORRECT FOR CHILDREN TO HAVE THE PRESENCE OF THEIR FAMILY WHEN DEALING WITH LIFE CHALLENGES. THEREFORE, IN RHODE ISLAND, CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED TO STAY WITH THEIR FOSTER PARENTS UNTIL THEY ARE EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD RATHER THAN THE CUSTOMARY REQUIREMENT OF SIXTEEN YEARS. THIRD, THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM IS CONCERNED WITH THE FOSTER CHILD’S WELLBEING. TO AID THE CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT, RHODE ISLAND HAS A POLICY REQUIRING FOSTER CHILDREN TO MEET ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR STANDARDS. GOOD GRADES WILL BOOST THEIR SELF-CONFIDENCE AND MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS WILL HELP PROVIDE THE DISCIPLINE NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH LIFE’S STRESSORS. FINALLY, THE PERIODIC OVERSIGHT OF A LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER IS ONE WAY TO ENSURE THAT BOTH THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD AND THE CONCERNS OF THE FAMILY ARE ADDRESSED IN A TIMELY MANNER. THIS IS A PREVIOUSLY USED METHOD FOR HEADING OFF ANY POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT AND TO OFFER THE PARENTS AND CHILD WITH TOOLS THEY NEED TO ENSURE THEY MAKE A GOOD ADJUSTMENT. THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY AND CHILD IS THE FINAL COMPONENT OF THE RHODE ISLAND FOSTER CARE PROGRAM.

BASED ON THIS DESCRIPTION, THIS PROGRAM CONTAINS SEVERAL APPROACHES!”

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Weak Argument Quality, Non-Evaluative Message Style

“How PLEASE READ SOME DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

THE RHODE ISLAND FOSTER CARE PROGRAM INCORPORATES FOUR FACTS
TO BE LEARNED. FIRST, BACKERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM
RECOGNIZE THAT CHILDREN NEED OTHER CHILDREN TO FIGHT WITH.
BROTHERS AND SISTERS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS TO OCCUR.
FOR THIS REASON, MANY CITIZENS IN RHODE ISLAND STATE THAT
FOSTER PARENTS SHOULD HAVE OTHER CHILDREN IN THEIR FAMILY.
SECOND, SUPPORTERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM UNDERSTAND IT IS CORRECT FOR PARENTS TO HAVE POWER AND AUTHORITY OVER THE
FOSTER CHILD FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS
CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED TO STAY WITH THEIR FOSTER PARENTS UNTIL THEY ARE EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD RATHER THAN THE CUSTOMARY
REQUIREMENT OF SIXTEEN YEARS. THIRD, THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM IS CONCERNED WITH ITS RECORD. TO ENSURE A DEMONSTRABLE
RECORD, RHODE ISLAND REQUIRES THAT FOSTER CARE CHILDREN
MAINTAIN MEET ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR STANDARDS. DECENT
GRADES WILL MAKE SCHOOL TEACHERS AWARE OF THE PROGRAM AND MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS WILL CAUSE THE AVERAGE
CITIZEN TO THINK THE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM HAS THE CORRECT GUIDELINES. FINALLY, THE PERIODIC OVERSIGHT OF A LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER IS ONE WAY TO ENSURE THAT BOTH PARENTS AND CHILD ARE ALWAYS FOCUSED ON THE FACT THAT THIS IS A FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT. THIS IS A PREVIOUSLY USED METHOD FOR HEADING OFF
POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT, BECAUSE BOTH THE PARENTS AND CHILD MUST BE PREVENTED FROM DEALING WITH EACH OTHER AS THEY WOULD UNDER NON-FOSTER CIRCUMSTANCES. THE DISTANCED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY AND CHILD IS THE FINAL COMPONENT OF THE RHODE ISLAND FOSTER CARE PROGRAM.

BASED ON THIS DESCRIPTION, THIS PROGRAM CONTAINS SEVERAL
APPROACHES!”
Strong Argument Quality, Evaluative Message Style

“PLEASE READ SOME EVALUATIONS AND OPINIONS ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

THE RHODE ISLAND FOSTER CARE PROGRAM INCORPORATES FOUR PRINCIPLES TO BE EVALUATED. FIRST, BACKERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM ARE OF THE OPINION THAT SIBLINGS ARE HELPFUL IN THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD. BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE ALSO AN ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF CARING SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD. FOR THIS REASON, MANY CITIZENS IN RHODE ISLAND BELIEVE THAT IT IS DESIRABLE FOR FOSTER PARENTS TO HAVE OTHER CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY. SECOND, SUPPORTERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM BELIEVE IT IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THEIR FAMILY WHEN DEALING WITH LIFE CHALLENGES. THEREFORE, IN RHODE ISLAND, CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED TO STAY WITH THEIR FOSTER PARENTS UNTIL THEY ARE EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD RATHER THAN THE CUSTOMARY REQUIREMENT OF SIXTEEN YEARS. THIRD, THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM IS CONCERNED WITH THE FOSTER CHILD'S WELLBEING. TO AID THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT, RHODE ISLAND HAS A POLICY REQUIRING FOSTER CHILDREN TO MAINTAIN GOOD GRADES AND GOOD BEHAVIOR. GOOD GRADES WILL BOOST THEIR SELF-CONFIDENCE AND MAINTAINING GOOD BEHAVIORS WILL HELP PROVIDE THE DISCIPLINE NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH LIFE'S STRESSORS. FINALLY, THE PERIODIC OVERSIGHT OF A LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER IS A DESIRABLE WAY TO ENSURE THAT BOTH THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD AND THE CONCERNS OF THE FAMILY ARE ADDRESSED IN A TIMELY MANNER. THIS IS A GREAT METHOD FOR HEADING OFF ANY POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT AND TO OFFER THE PARENTS AND CHILD WITH TOOLS THEY NEED TO ENSURE THEY MAKE A GOOD ADJUSTMENT. THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY AND CHILD IS THE FINAL COMPONENT OF THE RHODE ISLAND FOSTER CARE PROGRAM.

BASED ON THESE VIEWS, THIS PROGRAM CONTAINS VALUABLE APPROACHES!”
Weak Argument Quality, Evaluative Message Style

“PLEASE READ SOME EVALUATIONS AND OPINIONS ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

THE RHODE ISLAND FOSTER CARE PROGRAM INCORPORATES FOUR PRINCIPLES TO BE EVALUATED. FIRST, BACKERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM ARE OF THE OPINION THAT CHILDREN NEED OTHER CHILDREN TO FIGHT WITH. BROTHERS AND SISTERS PROVIDE AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS TO OCCUR. FOR THIS REASON, MANY CITIZENS IN RHODE ISLAND BELIEVE THAT IT IS DESIRABLE FOR FOSTER PARENTS TO HAVE OTHER CHILDREN IN THEIR FAMILY. SECOND, SUPPORTERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM BELIEVE IT IS GOOD FOR PARENTS TO HAVE POWER AND AUTHORITY OVER THE FOSTER CHILD FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED TO STAY WITH THEIR FOSTER PARENTS UNTIL THEY ARE EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD RATHER THAN THE CUSTOMARY REQUIREMENT OF SIXTEEN YEARS. THIRD, THE RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM IS CONCERNED WITH ITS RECORD. TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE EVALUATED FAVORABLY, RHODE ISLAND REQUIRES THAT FOSTER CARE CHILDREN MAINTAIN GOOD GRADES AND GOOD BEHAVIOR. DECENT GRADES WILL MAKE THE PROGRAM LOOK GOOD TO SCHOOL TEACHERS AND MAINTAINING POSITIVE BEHAVIORS WILL CAUSE THE AVERAGE CITIZEN TO THINK THE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM IS DOING A WONDERFUL JOB. FINALLY, THE PERIODIC OVERSIGHT OF A LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER IS A DESIRABLE WAY TO ENSURE THAT BOTH PARENTS AND CHILD ARE ALWAYS FOCUSED ON THE FACT THAT THIS IS A FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT. THIS IS A GREAT METHOD FOR HEADING OFF ANY POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT, BECAUSE BOTH THE PARENTS AND CHILD MUST BE PREVENTED FROM DEALING WITH EACH OTHER AS THEY WOULD UNDER NON-FOSTER CIRCUMSTANCES. THE DISTANCED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY AND CHILD IS THE FINAL COMPONENT OF THE RHODE ISLAND FOSTER CARE PROGRAM.

BASED ON THESE VIEWS, THIS PROGRAM CONTAINS VALUABLE APPROACHES!”