

Why were you interested in trying to replicate the paper?

I have worked on replication papers in psychology and consumer behavior quite a bit in the last few years. Further, I have worked in the broader area of impression management (that is, looking at observers' impressions depending on relatively small cues, like response speed), and this paper seemed to fit in with both of these interests, as it investigated observers' impression formation depending on product size (the bigger you buy, the higher status people think you have). At the time, I wanted to involve my Master's thesis students at Grenoble Ecole de Management and have them do a replication project as part of their MS thesis, under my guidance and supervision. That year, we did a few projects like this on different papers, with different students. We decided to try and publish this because it was the nicest one, and the student (Xu Wenting) was brilliant. The paper (Dubois et al. 2012) has several studies in it, and I chose the most straightforward to be replicated. In this way, it would be feasible for a MS student in a MS thesis, with my advice.

Did you expect it to replicate in a different study population?

A priori, I thought there was about a 50% likelihood that this study would successfully replicate. On the one hand, a quick look at the original results' p-values showed that this effect seemed solid and it seemed to replicate across different products. On the other hand, it seemed quite unintuitive to me that buying a large slice of pizza or a large coffee would result in observers thinking you are high-status and important, so I was conflicted. As for the population, I think that if a study originally conducted with U.S. undergraduates is solid, it will replicate with U.S. American MTurk workers. There are a lot of examples of it in the literature, both looking at large-scale replication projects and one-off replication projects like the ones we did with Gilad Feldman at Hong Kong University.

What went through your minds when you were getting different results?

I was slightly disappointed but not too surprised - I suspected, based on own and other people's experience, that the replication rates in the field of consumer behavior are generally very low. My suspicion has later been confirmed by larger projects like the ["Data Replicada"](#) and by [the replication rates collected by Aaron Charlton on openmktg.org](#). I thought this was just another unreplicable finding like so many others that are published in consumer behavior journals. I also thought Wenting had done a good job, so I asked her if she would let me and Burak Tunca write her thesis up as a replication paper and send it to for publication to a journal, and she agreed. Burak was instrumental in writing this paper, as he double-checked everything, wrote a proper paper from a student's MS thesis, redid many analyses, and responded to reviewers' comments in a brilliant way. We did not even try to send this paper to the original journal where the paper was published (Journal of Consumer Research) as they do not typically publish replication papers. We also had a couple of rejections, from Journal of Business Research and from Recherche et Applications en Marketing, before this paper was finally accepted in Meta-Psychology.

How did you interact with Dubois and the other authors, and what was that like?

We only interacted with Dubois once, before data collection. We realized that there had to be a statistical mistake in the data reporting (some standardized effect sizes, i.e., the differences between product size conditions, did not line up with the p-value and the test statistics within the same comparisons between product size), so we emailed Dubois, asking for the original data. With the original data we could then autonomously recalculate the effect sizes. This would be useful to us to decide how large a sample size we needed to collect. Dubois replied that he was in the middle of moving and that he did not have the data handy at the moment. We did not follow up - my previous experiences in replication papers suggested that original authors (at least those who have already not shared data and materials in the paper) are not super keen to share data and materials, and even less keen to know that their study does not replicate. I am not sure this would have been the case with Dubois and his coauthors, but I did not want to go through it.

What implications do you think the unsuccessful replication has for the field?

We failed to replicate the first study in a multi-study paper that shows at least two interesting things. First, the multi-study paper published by Dubois et al (2012) showed that choosing larger products signals higher status; second, when people are in a condition of low-power, they desire larger products - by giving them status, larger products allow low-power consumers to recuperate some power. I think that since we showed that the link between product size and status signaling is less reliable than previously thought, and since there are some statistical irregularities that we found out (we wrote about them in the paper when it was finally published in *Meta-Psychology*), the consumer research field should be less confident in both of these effects to replicate further and to generalize to different populations or to field interventions (for instance, companies trying to use this to boost their sales of larger products). This means that they should be cited with less confidence and perhaps there should be a reflection at consumer research journals about lower replication rates, considering that this is just one of a series of unsuccessful replications. At the very least, if someone is interested in the same area of research and would like to build on it, they should try to replicate the other studies in the same paper before they embark on lengthy research projects about the connection between product size, status perceptions, and feelings of power. Personally, I would not recommend a PhD or a MS student to do research in this area that is not a close or very close replication of previously published findings.