Application of
Construal Level Theory to
strategy implementation

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Abstract

This research aims to apply the Construal Level Theory to the strategy implementation. This research tests empirically whether messages based on different construal levels influence implementation. Therefore the hypothesis: '*Firms that formulate their message based on low-level construals will implement this message more successfully than firms that focus on high-level construals in their formulated message*', is tested. This hypothesis is tested on the basis of an experiment conducted at Wageningen UR. This research shows that whereas theoretically the link holds, practically there is no significant effect of construal level in a formulated message influencing the implementation of it. Nevertheless, the perceived psychological distance might be a moderating variable, which can be tested in future research.

Contents

1. <u>Introduction</u>

'Unfortunately, as important as a strategy can be to a company's success, a strategic plan without the process to implement it is just talk, a pile of worthless documents' (Hammer, 1996, p. 103 in Engert & Baumgartner, 2016).This quote demonstrates the importance of alignment between strategy formulation and effective implementation, which impacts the organisation's performance (Ramaseshan, Ishak & Kingshott, 2013). Strategy formulation can be seen as the process of developing a strategy including an internal and external analysis of the organization and further operationalization of objectives (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Whereas much research attempts to address the subject of strategy formulation, strategy implementation remains an under-investigated compared to strategy formulation (Yang, Guo-hui & Eppler, 2010) . According to Kotler (2001), strategy implementation is the process that turns plans into action. Also Nathan (2010, p. 38) gives this concept a definition that is in line with, and will be used in this research, saying that 'strategy implementation is about getting the strategy as formulated accomplished through employee initiatives'. An overarching reality is mentioned by Yang et al. (2010, p.168), saying that 'strategy implementation has become the most significant management challenge, which all kinds of corporations face at the moment'.

It is assumed that when a new strategy is developed, there is alignment in the behaviour at all levels of the organisation (Bourgeois & Brodwin, 1984; Nutt, 1989). According to Kaplan and Norton (1995), there often is a disconnection between the strategy formulation and the strategy implementation. This disconnection is called the strategy implementation problem and can be described as a failure of creating change after viable plans have been made in strategy formulation (Nutt, 1983). Since research has shown that strategy implementation is a challenge many organisations face nowadays (Yang et al., 2010), this research will focus on the strategy implementation, especially regarding marketing strategies since those are crucial in gaining a successful business performance (Ramaseshan et al., 2013). Existing research explores how organisational members make sense of strategic events and how their interpretations influence their actions (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Gioia & Thomas, 1996). In spite of the existing literature on the strategy implementation problem, it still exists (Candido & Santos, 2015). Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate a new perspective on the strategy implementation, namely with the Construal Level Theory (Trope & Liberman, 2003; Trope & Liberman, 2010).

The Construal Level Theory argues that the psychological distance of an event or object influences the response to this event or object by changing the way the event or object is mentally constructed (Trope & Liberman, 2003). The bigger the psychological distance, the more abstract the representations are and the closer the psychological distance, the more concrete and detailed the event or object will be Trope & Liberman, 2003), where more abstract representations are embedded in high-level construals and more concrete representations of an event or object in low-level construals. So different levels of psychological distance influence how the event or object is mentally represented and upon which information is acted (Trobe & Liberman, 2003). Thereby more desirable mental representations are constructed of events that are distant from the self and now, and the more an event is psychologically close, the more the focus will be on the feasibility of the event.

According to the review of Trope, Liberman and Wakslak (2007), Construal Level Theory is a leading theory of mental construals, with many implications and applications in consumer science (Fiedler, 2007). Construal Level Theory already has rich implications and applications in explaining and predicting consumer behaviour in diverse areas, from purchasing decisions to negotiations to risk taking (Fiedler, 2007). But according to Trope and Liberman, the Construal Level Theory might be a unifying theoretical framework in various dimensions, even in seemingly unrelated psychological phenomena (Fiedler, 2007).

This thesis will examine the effectiveness of strategy implementation based on the way a strategy is formulated, with a focus on high-level construals or low-level construals. When a strategy is formulated, the most prominent focus of the management concerns the achievement of a final goal, for example achieving a competitive advantage (Grant, 1991). This focus on a final goal, leads to a strategy that consists of very abstract concepts. While implementation of a strategy is often based on more concrete events and concepts of what it is that needs to be done. This setting of abstract and concrete concepts and events, shows that strategy formulation and implementation are based on the perceived psychological distance, allowing an examination of the validity of the Construal Level Theory in the strategy implementation problem.

In accordance with this perspective, it is expected that the formulation and implementation of a strategy rely on the way the strategy is presented by the management, and how these representations take place in the minds of the employees. As mentioned above, much research addresses the strategy formulation, but the strategy implementation problem remains unsolved. Therefore this research will focus on the strategy implementation problem and will examine the expectation that the strategy implementation depends on the way employees mentally construct the strategy. This will be researched by doing a literature review and an experiment that consists of interviews where different formulated messages are shown and questions on implementation will be asked.

2. Literature review:

2.1. Construal Level Theory

The original theory is developed by Trope and Liberman, who in later articles give a clear and concise definition of the construal level theory. In one of those articles, following Trope and Liberman (2003), the construal level theory explains how people present their plans for the future in their minds. The theory says that 'people construct different representations of the same information depending on whether the information pertains in the near or distant future' (Trope & Liberman, 2003, p.405). This shows that it is the psychological distance someone experiences, that influences how these representations are constructed. The psychological distance is 'a subjective experience that something is close or far away from the self, here and now' (Trope & Liberman, 2010, p.440). The psychological distance is thus egocentric, since its reference point is the self, here and now, from which events can be close or distal (Trope & Liberman, 2010). In constructing the different representations according to the perceived psychological distance and in order to be able to make predictions about future actions, mental construals are used. These mental construals are based upon the memories of the past, the predictions of the future and speculations of people's reactions (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Events or objects that are psychologically distant to the self, are construed at higher levels than events or objects that are psychologically closer. In those mental representations, the link between the psychological distance and the construal level is often overgeneralized, leading to more abstract construals of events that are psychologically distant versus psychologically closer, even while the available information of the event is equivalent for both distances (Fujita, Henderson, Eng, Trope & Liberman, 2006). Psychologically distant events, are represented by high-level construals, which are construals that are abstract, simple and prototypical (Liberman, Trope & Stephan, 2007). And which focus on the total picture of an event or object, which is then again desirable or undesirable and therefore is wanted or unwanted (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Therefore they ensure that the goal is clear. Missing in high-level construals are concrete plans of how and when to reach the goal. When an event is psychologically closer, it is represented by low-level construals, which are more concrete, contextualized and contain detailed information (Liberman et al., 2007). So, those construals focus on the details, the feasibility and the way to reach or avert that event (Trope & Liberman, 2010). In other words, high-level construals fit with the desired goal and low-level construals are more concerned with the feasibility to reach the goal at that moment.

Psychological distance is made up of four dimensions: temporal (future – past), spatial (physical space), social (distance between groups) and hypothetical (likely or unlikely to happen) (Liberman et al., 2007). All of these dimensions are correlated (Bar-Anan, Liberman & Trope, 2006) and therefore a change in the distance of one dimension can influence the distance of another dimension (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Moving across psychological distances, means moving from abstract to concrete representations, or the other way around. As distances of an event grow, some aspects of the focal stimulus are focused on, whereas others are omitted (Liberman, Sagristano & Trope, 2002; Trope & Liberman, 2010). Leaving the ones that are closely related to one abstract representation. Therefore in temporal distances, an increase in distance is related to a more abstract representation, with less ambiguous and simple construals, meaning more high-level construals. As temporal distance is about transcending from the future or past to the 'now', spatial distance is about transcending from the distance to the 'here' (Henderson, Fujita, Trope & Liberman, 2006).

Research has shown that an increase in spatial distance from an event leads to more general, abstract and global construed representations of this event (Henderson et al. 2006), and is therefore construed with more high-level construals. The level of construal can also be influenced from a social perspective, meaning the distance between the self and others, in-group or out-group and familiar of unfamiliar (Liberman et al. 2002). Where also here, socially distant events are represented with more abstract construals, when unfamiliar, others and out-groups are compared to the self. When situations are expected to be more distant in time, space and social distant, they are to be seen as less likely to happen, since they are more abstract compared to likely events. So, this hypotheticality is mapped on the other dimensions and therefore less likely events are characterized by being more distant in time, space and social distance (Trope & Liberman, 2010).

But, where do you draw the line between psychological close or distant events? One answer to this might be to delve into the egocentric perspective of the self, here and now, which represents psychological close events (Trope & Liberman, 2010). An example can be given using the spatial distance, where the five senses determine the physical distance between oneself and an object or event (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Tasting, touching and smelling, can be classified as proximal senses, which could be associated with low-level construals and psychological closeness. Whereas seeing and hearing are senses that enable a person to expand their perceptual distance, linking to more high-level construals and an increase in psychological distance (Trope & Liberman, 2010).

Research has shown that interpersonal similarity is a form of social distance, since interpersonal similarity has important consequences for the way in which various social distances between groups are processed (Liviatan, Trope & Liberman, 2008). Where people that are to be thought of as similar to the self, are perceived as socially closer than dissimilar others (Prentice, 1990). People have a strong sense of feeling belongingness, the need to belong to a certain group (Vonk, 2013). When in a group, people identify themselves with people from that group based on various kinds of similarities, be it on attitudes, personality characteristics or background variables (Heider, 1958). Having a closer relationship with people from the ingroup, leads to them being more familiar to the self. Therefore those people will be thought of as more complex and concrete, leading to a focus on low-level construals in mental processing. Whereas people from the outgroup are perceived as having more commonalities, are unfamiliar to the self and are therefore processed with a focus on high-level construals (Andersen, Glassman & Gold, 1998; Prentice, 1990).

The original article of Trope and Liberman (1998) already examined the differences in the construal level based on temporal distance, but how are those construal levels construed? Therefore a study was carried out, measuring the number of categories created for various situations, going on a camping trip for example, that was either in the near future or in the distant future (Liberman, Sagristano & Trope, 2002). Consistent with the prediction, people used broader and more abstract categorization when planning for a situation that was in the distant future and used more detailed and concrete categories for a situation in the near future (Liberman, Sagristano & Trope, 2002). This is consistent with the Construal Level Theory, since it shows that events with a bigger temporal distance are processed with a focus on high-level construals using less and broader categories than for events that were temporally closer and used low-level construals. So, when describing and interpreting temporarily distant

behaviour, people use more generalized, abstract concepts such as traits and values (Nussbaum, Trope & Liberman, 2003).

Also hypotheticality influences the way people mentally construct certain situations (Wakslak, Trope, Liberman & Alony, 2006). Hypotheticality is at the same time a unique dimension, as it also shares similarities with the other dimensions (Wakslak et al., 2006). Just like time, space and sociality, also probability is related to abstractness (Wakslak et al., 2003), meaning that when an even is likely to happen, people approach it with more concrete representations, linking to low-level construals, whereas unlikely events are further away from the now, leading them to be processed with a focus on more abstract processing and high-level construals (Wakslak et al., 2003). Research by Wakslak et al. (2003, p. 651) even showed that 'probability influences our perception of the outcomes' very nature', instead of that it only evaluates the weights of the values given to certain outcomes, as was previously assumed.

The level of construal influences the judgements and behaviour of people (McCrea, Wieber & Myers, 2012). There are two types of goals as a consequence of the level of construal, superordinate and subordinate goals (McCrea et al., 2012). As mentioned before, when an event is psychologically distant, it is processed in terms of high-level construals (Liberman et al., 2007). When an event is mentally represented in high-level construals, those mental representations are more abstract and involve the question, 'Why does one pursue a goal?' (Liberman & Trope, 1998). Linking to this question are superordinate goals. The more superordinate the goal is, the smaller the number of broad, higher order categories there are in which the event or object can be placed (Liberman, Sagristano & Trope, 2002). An example of a superordinate goal is, when studying for an exam, wanting to 'do well' (Trope & Liberman, 2010), which is very abstract since it doesn't specify how you are going to do it. The question, 'How does one pursue a goal?' (Liberman & Trope, 1998), is a more concrete question which is generated by engaging in low-level construal processing and leads to a focus on short-term, subordinate goals (Trope & Liberman, 2010). An example of such goals is 'reading a book' when studying for an exam (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Those mental construals are placed into a larger number of narrow, lower order categories (Liberman et al., 2002).

A study on psychological distance on perceptual construal level by Liberman and Förster (2009), shows that psychological distance and construal level are not only semantically associated, but also perceptually. In this study, the paradigm of composite letters (Navon, 1977) was used. Navon's test (1977) examined the relative efficiency of global versus local perception. Participants were presented large letters that were made of small letters and asked to identify whether a target letter was used in the large letters. Liberman and Förster's study used this test to find out whether psychological distance would influence the facilitation of global letters and impede the facilitation of local letters. This research showed that the effects of primed psychological distances influenced the level of perceptual construal. Priming of more distant events, led to participants responding faster to global letters and slower to local letters, the inverse was found as well for events that were psychologically closer (Liberman & Förster, 2009). As low-level construals immerse in more immediate environments, they focus on the local details and particularities of the event (Kalkstein, Kleiman, Wakslak, Liberman & Trope, 2016). Whereas high-level construals move away from the here and now, and focus on the more stable and central stimuli (Kalkstein et al., 2016). This argument shows that there are

various concepts that influence the construal level, and are presented in the research of Van Dam (2016), showing the differences between high- and low-level construals.

Table 1
Differences between high and low construal level (Van Dam, 2016).

Construct	Low construal	High construal	Selected source
Psychological distance	Proximal	Distal	
Temporal distance	Present	Remote past or future	
Hypothetical distance	Certain	Possible	Trope & Liberman 2010
Social distance	Family and friends	Strangers	
Physical distance	Here	Far away	
Cognitive Factors			
Representation	Concrete, detailed, complex	Abstract, simple, coherent	Bar-Anan et al 2006
	Idiosyncratic	Prototype and/or Stereotype	Pfeiffer et al 2014
Reasoning	Pragmatic	Idealistic	Irmak et al 2013
Classification focus	Differences	Commonalities	Lee et al 2010
Categorisation	Narrow	Broad	Förster et al 2009
Evaluation of outcomes	Feasibility	Desirability	Fujita et al 2008
Evaluation of actions	Process focus (How)	Outcome focus (Why)	Freitas et al 2004
Motivational Factors			
Goal focus	Situational, context-based, means	General, primary, ends	Fujita et al 2008
Goal pursuit	Loss oriented, prevention	Gain oriented, promotion	Lee et al 2010
Motivation	Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Freund et al 2010

The recent study of Liberman and Förster (2009), shows that the priming of a certain processing style in one context, can influence the subsequent behaviour in another (unrelated) context. This suggests that construal level in mental representations can be induced. So, the priming of global processing is expected to lead to judgements with a bigger temporal, social, spatial and hypothetical distance. Whereas priming of more concrete, local processing will lead to a smaller psychological distance in the judgements of an event. Showing that when a focus is placed on superordinate goals in the stimulis, this will influence not only the judgments (Freitas, Gollwitzer & Trope, 2004) but also the behaviour (McCrea et al., 2008) on the tasks. In light of the strategy implementation problem, this indicates that when a strategy is formulated with a focus on superordinate goals, the strategy will also be interpreted and implemented by employees with global processing, focusing on high-level construals, which influences their judgements and behaviour. Further specification of how those construals can be applied to the strategy implementation problem, will be discussed in the next paragraph.

2.2.Applying the Construal Level Theory to the strategy implementation problem
When applying the Construal Level Theory to the strategy implementation problem, there are two areas that need to be considered, the strategy formulation and the strategy implementation. As mentioned before, strategy formulation is the process of developing a strategy (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). And strategy implementation the process that turns plans into action (Kotler, 2001).To provide new insights and to cope with the challenges arising from the crucial transition from strategy formulation to strategy implementation, the construal level theory will be applied.

'After spending a good deal of time working through the strategy formulation process, most executives report that they clearly understand the strategic direction in which the organization must move and, more or less, the kinds of actions that will power the move in that direction' (Mintzberg, 2002 in Leonardi, 2015, p.18). This quote shows that when managers have made viable plans, they often translate this into a broad direction with superordinate and abstract goals. Contributing to the formulation of superordinate goals that focus on high-level construals are the different psychological distances. From the perspective of a manager, the end goal is perceived as psychologically distant. When designing a strategy, having an end goal in mind, this end goal is further away in time, and is thereby temporally distant to the manager. Looking at larger firms, also the social distance is large because the manager himself is not the person to truly implement the strategy. The ones to implement the strategy are the employees, and are thereby socially distant to the manager. Next to the temporal and social distance, there is also the spatial distance. When a strategy is created and is to be implemented in the same place, the spatial distance is small, whereas it is large when the strategy is formulated at one place and the implementation is somewhere else, perhaps in a different city, or even a different country, so this distance is dependent upon the situation. The final psychological distance is hypotheticality. As hypotheticality is mapped on the other dimensions of psychological distance (Trope & Liberman, 2010), it shows that when temporal, social and spatial distance are large, the strategy is less likely to be implemented effectively. This because the manager will have less control over the different actors and on the way they perceive and implement the strategy.

The first cause of the strategy implementation problem can be found by taking together all dimensions. This shows that the perceived psychological distance is larger when the end goal of the strategy is further away in time, space and social distance. And is thereby less likely to be implemented well. An explanation for this, provided by the construal level theory, is that when the strategy is perceived as psychologically distant, the strategy itself will be formulated with a focus on superordinate goals and therefore in terms of high-level construals. Those high-level construals are characterized by being abstract, simple and prototypical (Liberman et al., 2007). They are linked to superordinate goals, which focus on the total picture, the end goal and the question 'Why do we pursue this strategy?', and do not consider concrete tasks that to be done in order to successfully implement the strategy and to reach to desired goal.

The second cause of the strategy implementation problem lies in the strategy implementation. The initial question is, 'Where lies the responsibility for implementation?'. Responsibility for implementation can be described as the personal accountability for the implementation (Gottschalk, 2001). Many research on strategies shows that there is a focus on the strategy formulation, overlooking the strategy implementation (Hambrick, 2004). Here, it mainly focuses on the way managers influence the strategy formulation, overlooking the employees that truly implement the strategy (Bartunek, Rousseau, Rudolph & DePalma, 2006). This happens while employees may have different ideas of how to reach the desired goals than managers do (Bacharach, Bamberger & Sonnenstuhl, 1996). Since employees are the ones who eventually will implement the strategy by executing concrete tasks in daily business, it is important that those ideas on how to reach the end goal are clearly identified.

When a strategy has reached the employees, it is expected that they effectively implement it. Employees have to focus on the subordinate goals of the strategy, related to the question 'How to pursue the strategy?'. Since the strategy formulated by management often mainly focuses on high-level construals, employees have to fill in the blanks by themselves on how to actually implement it in daily business. Those daily tasks involve the self, here and now, and can thereby be classified as psychologically close to the employees. Further analysing this in terms of the different dimensions psychological distance, shows that employees implement the strategy based on low-level construals, driven by practical feasibilities. Decisions about how the implement the strategy in daily work, are in the now, and are thereby for example temporally close to the employees. When managers formulate a strategy the main focus lies on superordinate goals with high-level construals. This means that the end goal is clear, but the steps needed to reach the end goal are not as clearly identified. Therefore it is expected that the employees will not implement the strategy in the right way, or, even more probable, not implement it at all. As the strategy is formulated with a focus on high-level construals, and there is no clear path on how to reach the goal, employees will not know how to appropriately implement it and will therefore put it aside.

This shows that there is a disconnection between the way managers formulate a strategy and the way employees interpret and implement this strategy. Managers might have totally different ideas on how to implement a strategy, but since they only focus on superordinate goals and high-level construals in strategy formulation, those concrete ideas are not explicitly mentioned, leaving room for different interpretations and employees not implementing the strategy at all. This might lead to a failure of successful implementation of the strategy, and thereby a failure of reaching the end goal. Those two parts, the strategy formulation and implementation, together, show that the strategy implementation problem can be explained linking to the construal level theory.

2.3.Solutions of the Construal Level Theory for the strategy implementation problem
As the Construal Level Theory can be applied to the strategy implementation problem, also the solutions provided by the Construal Level Theory might be of use in solving the strategy implementation problem. Since literature on the Construal Level Theory only applies to consumer science, the solutions are focused on solving issues in this field of studies. For a better understanding, the solutions provided by the construal level theory will first be explained after which they will be applied to the strategy implementation problem.

There are two solutions for when the desired end goal is not in line with the feasible end goal (Ülkümen & Cheema, 2011). This gap can take place when people's processing style is solely based on high-level construals or when people only process in terms of low-level construals. For the first issue, the solution is to not only process in terms of high-level construals but to also descend from high-level construals to low-level construals (Malkoc & Zauberman, 2006). The solution to the second issue is to look at the bigger picture once in a while instead of only focussing on the details, so to transcend to high-level construals (Malkoc & Zauberman, 2006). Both solution will be explained with help of an example, respectively from the perspective of goal commitment and the negotiator perspective.

Descending from high-level construals to low-level construals leads to considering more detailed information. This idea is explained in the small wins strategy, which says that it is best to focus on winning a series of smaller events rather than only focussing on the bigger goal (O'Connor & Keil, 2017). The small wins strategy is the opposite of the first issue in the construal level theory. When people try to motivate others, they tend to describe the goal with big words to show its importance (O'Connor & Keil, 2017). What then happens is people not knowing what to do to contribute to the goal. Therefore the small wins strategy says that it is better to descend from the bigger words and use more detailed information in order to motivate others (O'Connor & Keil, 2017).

The second solution can be explained relating to the taking step back method and is discussed in Dreu, Giacomantonio, Shalvi & Sligte (2009), who have conducted an experiment on negotiators and their goals. This solution says that when an obstacle is faced, it is best to look at the entire picture. In that way, other paths to the same end goal can be defined (Dreu et al., 2009). Here, the obstacle is detailed information on how to fulfil a task, be it in low-level construals. When returning to the total picture once in a while, the obstacle will not prevent the end goal to be reached since other paths may be discovered. Therefore, when focus is on events that are thought of in low-level construals, it is important to keep in mind the desired end goal.

These two solutions can be applied to the two parts of the strategy implementation problem, the strategy formulation and the strategy implementation. The first solution can be applied to the strategy formulation. When a strategy is formulated, managers' main focus is the end goal, creating a strategy that is formulated in terms of high-level construals. It is then expected that the employees implement the strategy, while they tend to process the strategy in low-level construals. How to exactly reach this end goal is often not mentioned in the formulated strategy leading to employees not knowing what their concrete tasks are and resulting in employees not implementing the strategy at all. A solution to this problem might be for managers to not only describe the strategy in high-level construals, but to further operationalize the strategy into concrete tasks that need to be fulfilled in order to reach this end goal. Thereby translating the high-level strategy into more concrete tasks, based on more low-level construals. When this issue is overcome, it is now up to the employees to carry out the concrete tasks. But this does not automatically guaranty successful implementation of the strategy.

As mentioned before, employees tend to process information based on low-level construals. When those concrete tasks and detailed information are provided by the management, and employees focus on implementing their tasks, the issue might face that nobody looks at the

total picture anymore, eventually leading to actions that lead you further and further away from the desired end goal without even noticing yourself. The solve this, the second solution provided by the construal level theory can be used. Applying the second solution to this issue, it says that when employees implement a strategy, it is important that they do not solely focus on the events based on low-level construals, but also once in a while look at the bigger total picture, the desired end goal.

To summarize, in order for a strategy to be implemented, two situations must hold. First, managers must keep in mind to not only focus on high-level construals, but also on low-level construals in strategy formulation. And second, employees must keep notice that in strategy implementation, they do not only focus on their concrete tasks, thinking in low-level construals, but also keep the desired end goal in mind. So, in strategy formulation it is necessary to not only think in high-level construals but to also descend from high-level processing to low-level processing. While in strategy implementation it is important to not only focus on the self, here and now, processing in terms of low-level construals, but to also translate those low-level construals into more high-level construals focusing on the desired end goal. When both issues are overcome by both managers and employees, the path is free to an successful implementation of the strategy.

2.4. Conclusion and hypothesis
As discussed in the previous paragraph, the construal level theory can be applied to the strategy implementation problem. It even provides seemingly suitable solutions. The second solution is the one that is applicable to the implementation problem from the perspective of the employee, and therefore is the one that will be tested. Meaning that several types of constructions of a message will be created which will be in terms of high-level construals, low-level construals or both and are treated as the independent variable. It is expected that this independent variable, the message, influences the actual implementation of that message, the dependent variable. This leads to the hypothesis: *Firms that formulate their message based on low-level construals will implement this message more successfully than firms that focus on high-level construals in their formulated message.*

The following research design shows the relation mentioned above:

Figure 1
Model of influence
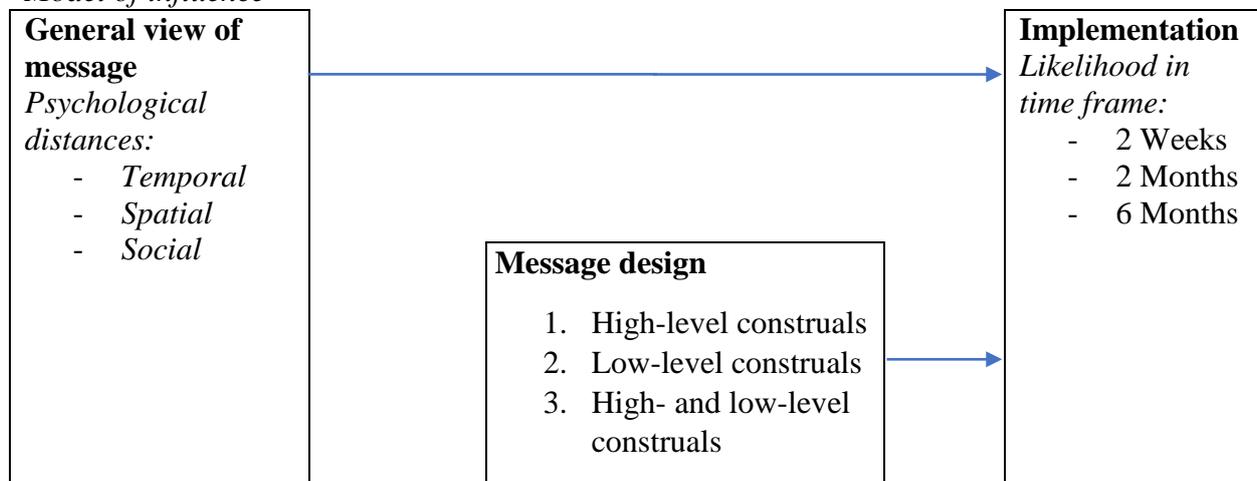
3. <u>Methodology:</u>

To test whether the results obtained from the literature review also hold in practice, an experiment will be performed. To gain data that are relevant for this research, a specific case is chosen. This explorative research will investigate the message Wageningen UR has formulated and wants to spread, namely 'One WUR'. Since the message of Wageningen UR is part its bigger strategy, it can be analysed as a strategy implementation problem.

3.1.One Wageningen

The application of the Construal Level Theory in practice will be analysed in the internal environment of Wageningen UR. In 1998, Wageningen University and Wageningen Research became one. Since September 2016, going under the name Wageningen UR (WUR, 2017a). Together with this new name came a lot of other changes, such as name changes of all involved research institutes and a new strategy (WUR, 2016). As part of this new strategy, the new message Wageningen UR wants to spread is 'One Wageningen', in short 'One WUR'. By changing the name of all involved research organisations into Wageningen (type of research institute) Research (WUR, 2016), Wageningen UR wants to spread the message of 'One Wageningen' within and around Wageningen UR (WUR, 2017b). Wageningen UR mentions that 'By our profiling as one organisation, the width of the knowledge of Wageningen UR will be even more accessible' (WUR, 2016). Also, the head of Corporate Communications and Marketing of Wageningen UR emphasis that 'The new brand policy must ensure that Wageningen UR shows one strong face to the world' (Ramaker, 2016), showing the end goal of the strategy. This study will investigate when a message is successfully implemented, namely when a message is formulated with a focus on high-level construals, low-level construals or both.

3.2.Research design

This research aims on finding a causal relationship between the way a strategy is communicated and how it is implemented. Since in the strategy implementation problem, the communication takes place before the strategy implementation, a causal relationship might be identified. This causal relationship in the strategy implementation problem, will be investigated with help of the construal level theory. This theory is grounded in the positivistic perspective of doing research, and is therefore appropriate to investigating a causal relationship. Since the basis of the construal level theory is in consumer science, there is almost no existing literature regarding the link between the strategy implementation problem and the construal level theory. Therefore, this is an explorative research.

The relationship between the strategy implementation problem and the construal level theory will be investigated with help of an experiment. This experiment, will be performed in the shape of interviews. This form is used since performing the experiment face-to-face provides the opportunity to make sure that the participants are not affected or influenced by any other information they may find about the subject when they are not watched. Thereby minimizing the influence of other factors.

As this research will be positivistic, the generated data will be quantitative and will be analysed using SPSS, where an analysis of covariance will be executed. Also, a between subject design is used. This between subject design enables the comparison of the different

outcomes of implementation between the differently construed messages. Further details about the interviews are explained in the next section.

3.3.Participants

Participants for the experiment are employees from various chair groups of Wageningen UR. In order to get data that is representative for the entire university, there will be as many variation in the interviewees from different departments as possible. Since it is expected that the participants have a tight time schedule and therefore limited time, the interviews will be about five minutes. This time frame gives the opportunity of performing the experiment on more employees, and to thereby generate more representative data.

3.4.Procedure

Since employees are very busy, it is likely that not many employees are willing to help for this research. To ensure that enough employees cooperate, employees from chair groups that are in the same field as this study, the field of social sciences, will be contacted. The participants will consist of lecturers from diverse courses of the bachelor business and consumer studies. To improve representativeness, the participants will be from at least 3 different chair groups, and will be contacted through e-mail. To ensure responsiveness, many possible participants will be e-mailed. As this experiment is considered a proof of principles, there is no stated minimum number of participants.

The Construal Level Theory provides an understanding of the strategy implementation problem based on construal level. It is hypothesized that the strategy implementation problem is caused by managers focusing on high-level construals in strategy formulation, and by employees implementing a strategy based on low-level construals. This research focuses on the implementation of a given strategy and will therefore take the message 'One WUR' for granted. For this original message, the psychological distances will be asked and are treated as the control variables. In order to be able to find a causal relationship, there are different ways in which the message is formulated, namely with a focus on high-level construals, low-level construals or high- and low-level construals. Those three differently construed variations on 'One WUR' are:

1. The initial message, 'One WUR', including extra information that is solely focused on high-level construals: Spreading the message of 'One WUR' to create a uniform corporate image to facilitate external communication.
2. The initial message, 'One WUR', including extra information that is solely based on low-level construals: Referring to Wageningen UR as 'One WUR' in every document you publish.
3. The initial message, 'One WUR', including extra information that is based on high- and low-level construals: Spreading the message of 'One WUR' by mentioning it in every document you publish in order to create a uniform corporate image to facilitate external communication.

The initial message, 'One WUR', will be the starting point and will be considered the reference point. In order to check whether the manipulated message influences the implementation, the original message 'One WUR' is used as a control variable for which the various psychological distances of time, space and social distance will be measured. Whereas hypotheticality also is a dimension on psychological distance, this dimension will not be asked on the general message. Hypotheticality is considered as part of the implementation and

will therefore be included in the measure for implementation. After the questions concerning the psychological distance, it is investigated whether it holds that if strategy formulation is based on high-level construals, no implementation takes place. And that when a strategy descends to lower-level construals, this leads to more successful implementation. Finally also a third messages will be construed based on high- and low-level construals, as it is expected that a combination of construal levels might also lead to implementation. This third variation is used as an possible alternative and will be discussed in the discussion. Therefore, three different groups of employees of Wageningen UR are created, each group answering questions about implementation regarding a differently formulated message. The results from this study will show whether the hypothesis holds and will possibly show which solution leads to the most successful implementation.

To conclude, it will be tested whether the message design influences the implementation of the message. As the message design will be manipulated, the controlling variables, the psychological distances towards the original message, will be asked first. After which the message will be manipulated in terms of construal level and successful implementation will be tested.

The questions will be translated to Dutch, since the interviewees speak Dutch.

3.5.Experiment
As mentioned before, the experiment will be carried out using interviews. In the beginning of the experiment, the researcher will introduce herself. After this, the subject of the interview will be mentioned and explained, namely the strategy implementation problem, and the application of it to Wageningen UR and its name change. When the introduction is over, the original message of 'One WUR' will be given without any more explanations. This is to prevent that the explanation of the researcher already influences the interpretation of the participant in terms of high- or low-level construals.

As explained in the previous paragraph, the experiment will be carried out in three groups. In each group, the participants will be asked to interpret the original message in terms of psychological distance. The different psychological distances, namely temporal, spatial and social distance, will be used to provide quantitative data. This quantitative data will be obtained by asking the participants what their perceived psychological distances are on a scale from one to five.

- 'One WUR':
  1. To what extent do you consider this message to be close or further away in time?
  2. To what extent do you consider this message to be close or further away in space?
  3. To what extent do you consider this message to be close or further away from yourself?

Responses are assessed on a five point scale, ranging from 1, very close, to 5, far away. Where these few questions only focus on the interpretation of the original message, the questions hereafter will focus on the implementation of the message. Those questions will concern the implementation in time frames that are in the near future, and time frames in the more distant future, providing insights in how likely it is that the message will be successfully

implemented. Where messages that will be implemented in the near future are of greater likelihood than messages that will be implemented in the more distant future.

The participants are randomly placed in one of the three groups. As mentioned before, every group gets the same information and questions regarding the original message 'One WUR'. After this, each group gets more specific information regarding this message, be it in high-level construals, low-level construals or in high- and low-level construals. Then, it is tested whether these differently formulated messages lead to successful implementation or not. Also for the questions regarding the implementation, scales that range from zero to five will be used.

The first group will be asked to answer the questions about message implementation regarding a variation in the initial message that is focused on high-level construals. As this message focuses on the superordinate goal and those construals are very abstract, it is expected that no implementation will take place.

The second group will be provided with a variation on the initial message that is based on low-level construals. So, this message gives more details on how to really implement the message in the daily work of the employees. Therefore, it is expected that this message that is based on low-level construals, will lead to a successful implementation.

The third group will also get a variation on the initial message of 'One WUR'. The variation that is used in this group will be based on both high-level construals and low-level construals. This because, taking into account the solutions provided by the construal level theory, they show that a message is most successfully implemented when this combination is used. Therefore, the results on this variation can provide a basis for further research. By construing the message in both high- and low-level construals, we expect that employees will know what to do and will implement the strategy while at the same time keeping in mind the desired end goal.

For every group, the same questions will be asked regarding the implementation. But, as explained before, based on a differently formulated message. The questions regarding the strategy implementation are:

- How likely is it that you will implement this message in your daily work?
- How likely is it that you will implement this message between now and two weeks?
- How likely is it that you will implement this message between now and two months?
- How likely is it that you will implement this message between now and six months?
- How likely is it that you will implement this message in every correspondence, meaning in your powerpoints, articles and e-mail?

Also the responses to these questions are assessed on a five point scale, ranging from one, very unlikely, to five, very likely. The results of the interviews will show which type of message design leads to the most successful implementation and the hypothesis will be accepted or rejected. For the detailed interview guide, see Appendix A.

3.6. Data analysis
The quantitative data generated by the interviews, will be analysed in SPSS. SPSS is a statistical computer program for the social sciences. All scales will be imported, after which all scores will be assigned from each group. Since this research uses a between subject design,

the findings will be analysed using an analysis of covariance, Ancova. The reason for including the covariate, the level of perceived psychological distance, is to eliminate unmeasured variables that confound the results. Entering the covariate into the regressions model first and only after this the experimental manipulation, enables to see the effect of the independent variable, the message, after the effect of the covariate (Field, 2014).

Applying this to the experiment, the different formulated messages are the independent variable and are therefore categorised in high-, low- or high- and low-level construal based. The dependent variable is the implementation.

To be able to analyse the differences, factor scores need to be calculated. In order to test whether the variables that concern the psychological distance can be computed into one variable and that the questions regarding implementation can be computed into one variable, measurement properties are assessed with a Principal Component Analysis. And to ensure the reliability of the sample, also Crohnbach's Alpha is tested, where values above 0.7 will be accepted for the implementation variable and values around 0.7 for the perceived psychological distance variable as this experiment deals with psychological constructs (Kline, 1999). The Principal Component Analyse will be executed to find the number of needed variables for the group of variables. This will be done using the method of extracting factors with eigenvalues higher than 1 and looking at the point of inflexion in a scree plot. Variables are computed into factors as they are a better measure than using group means. Factor scores correct for the errors in the means as they give more weight to the factor loadings with bigger errors, providing a more accurate measure.

Now the variables on psychological distance and the variables regarding implementation are computed into factors, they can be used in the Ancova. In this Ancova, the factor scores will be adjusted for the covariate and differences between the groups can be measured. Here, it tests for equal group variances using Levene's test and tests of between-subjects effects are done.

The hypothesis tested in the Ancova are:

H0: There is no difference in implementation between the different messages.

H1: There is a difference in implementation between the different messages.

To test the hypothesis, a significance level of 0.10 is chosen, meaning that at least 90 per cent of the findings must show a difference in implementation between the different messages. If this outcome of the analysis of variance is lower than 0.10, the zero hypothesis will be rejected and the alternative hypothesis adopted.

This one-way analysis of covariance only tells us whether there is a difference in implementation, and does not tell where this difference is. This can for example be between group one and two or between group one and three, also a test of planned contrasts will be executed. Using planned contrasts enables to compare the outcome of the different groups and find groups that significantly differ, showing which message leads to the most successful implementation. Thereby creating the opportunity to find out whether the original hypothesis holds, that firms who focus on low-level construals in strategy formulation implement the strategy more successful than firms that focus on high-level construals in strategy formulation.

As there were two groups of variables, one concerning the psychological distance of the original message, and one concerning the implementation, both groups are reduced to one component that represents the standardized mean of the group. The table below presents results from the Principal Component Analysis and Crohnbach's alpha. For both groups, one component is chosen to represent the outcome on those variables. For the component regarding the psychological distance, one component is chosen although the latent root of the second component was a little bigger than 1. The reason for accepting one component as appropriate is that the number of questions was very small and therefore extracting one question would lead to a component with not enough information. As the variance accounted for and Crohnbach's alpha are near the criterium, those values will be accepted. Also for the factor regarding implementation, the PCA suggests one component is chosen since the first component already holds for 85 per cent of all variance accounted for and Crohnbach's alpha is near 1, namely 0.953, see table 2. Also the scree plot shows that one component should be chosen since the scree plot indicates a decrease in latent root from the first component to the second component to a value beneath one.

Table 2
Measurement scale properties

| Measure	Number of items	Latent root second component	Variance accounted for	Lowest item loading	Crohnbach's alpha:
- Psychological distance	3	1.022	57%	0.579	0.625
- Implementation	5	0.348	85%	0.856	0.953

For the syntax of the SPSS analyses, see Appendix B.

4. <u>Results:</u>

The graphs below show the factor scores for each group on psychological distance and implementation. What is interesting to note is that graph 1 shows that the factor scores on psychological distances are close to each other, showing that before the manipulation, there were no big differences in construal level. Graph 2 shows that the factor scores on implementation are now quite different. What is interesting, is that the graph shows that the factor score for the second group, which got the message based on low-level construals, is the highest.
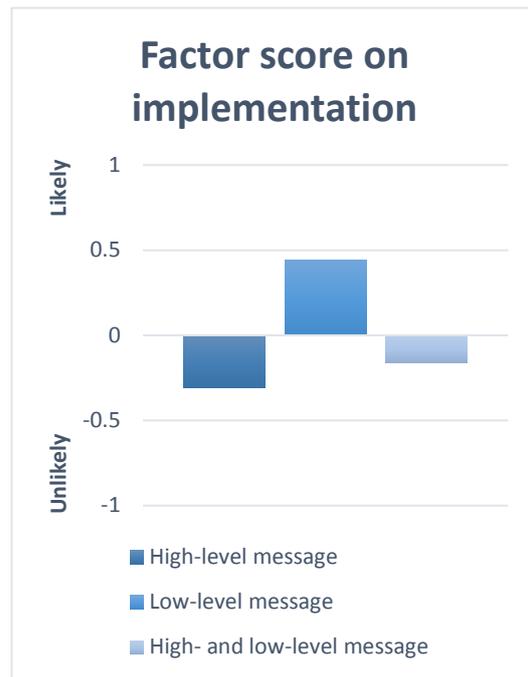
Graph 1

Factor score per group on psychological distance
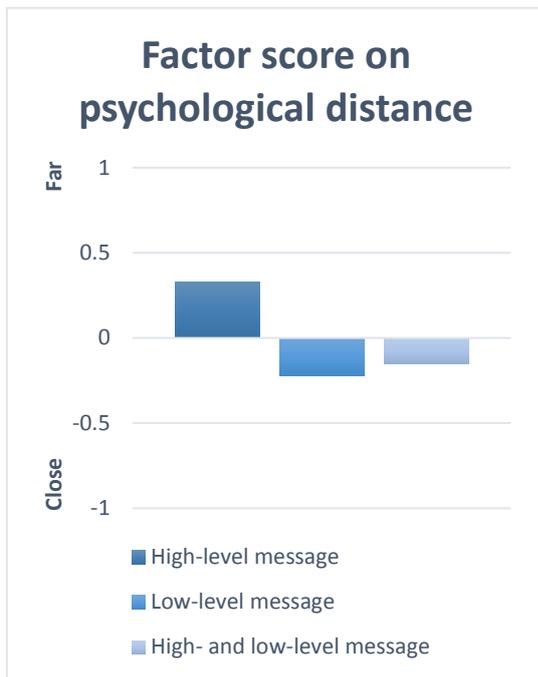
Graph 2

Factor score per group on implementation

Using computed factor scores, as those are strongly correlated to the actual means and are calculated on the basis of the scores on factor loadings, an Ancova is executed, with the results shown in table 3 below. The covariate, the perceived psychological distance, was significantly related to the implementation , $F(1, 18) = 4.198$, $p = 0.055 < 0.10$. There was not a significant effect of formulated message on implementation after controlling for the effect of the perceived psychological distance, $F(2, 18) = 0.866$, $p = 0.438 > 0.10$.

Table 3

Influence of group on implementation

Source	df	F	Sig.
Factor psychological distance	1	4.198	0.055
Group	2	0.866	0.438
Error	18		

Table 4, concerning the regression analysis on the influence of the covariate, psychological distance, on implementation, shows that the coefficient is -0.464. As assumed in the literature review, also this regression analysis shows that the bigger the score on psychological distance,

meaning the further away the event is perceived to be, the lower the score on implementation, meaning the less likely it is that the message will be implemented.

In order to measure the difference on implementation between the different groups, dummy variables are applied. As dummy variables correct for the covariate, they enable us to find out which message ensures the highest score on implementation. Table 4 below shows that the message based on low-level construal was more likely to be implemented than the message based on high-level construals. This is shown by the first dummy variable, that has a score of 0.516. As can be seen graph 1 above, this is in line with the calculated means of the factor scores. Dummy variable 2, concerning the high-low message, is 0.052. This shows that there is a small difference between the message based on high- an low-level construals and the message based on high-level construals. The message based on high- and low-level construals is less likely to be implemented than the message based on high-level construals. These results suggest that a message based on low-level construals leads to the most successful implementation, but as shown by the coefficients this results is not significant.

Table 4
Influence of psychological distance on implementation

Measure	Implementation
Coefficients	-0.464 (p. 0.30 > 0.10)
N	22
R Square	0.216
F	5.495
Dummy variable 1	0.516
Dummy variable 2	0.052
Sig.	0.30

Notes: Unstandardized coefficients are reported.

Even results from the post-hoc t-test showed to be not significant. When combining groups one and three, there still was found no significant result of messages based on low-level construals leading to more successful implementation than messages containing high-level construals.

5. <u>Conclusion:</u>

This research uses the Construal Level Theory to understand the strategy implementation problem.

Having used the existing literature on the construal level theory in the field of consumer behaviour and applying it to the strategy implementation problem, led to the discovery of possible new solutions for the strategy implementation problem. Two solutions are taken into consideration. The first solution is to descend from high-level construals to low-level construals in strategy formulation. And the second solution is to once in a while transcend from mentally construing the strategy in low-level construals to high-level construals. To test whether construal level influences implementation, an experiment is conducted. In this experiment different messages were formulated since a message can be seen as the communication of a strategy.

As the Ancova discussed in the previous paragraph shows, the hypothesis: '*Firms that formulate their message based on low-level construals will implement this message more successfully than firms that focus on high-level construals in their formulated message*', is not supported. The experiment has shown no significant results on the effect of the differently formulated messages on the implementation. Looking at the model created for the experiment, the way in which a message was presented, be it in low-level construals, high-level construals or both, did not have an significant effect on the successful implementation. Nevertheless, a pattern was discovered since the effect of the perceived psychological distance before the manipulation on implementation was significant. Therefore some link might be true between the construal level and strategy implementation, but to investigate the exact application of the construal level theory on the strategy implementation problem, further research is recommended.

6. <u>Discussion:</u>

The results of the empirical research obtained from the experiment, have shown that there was no significant difference on implementation based on different formulated messages. Therefore the hypothesis is not supported. There are several limitations to this research that might explain this finding, one of them being the context in which the experiment was conducted. These limitations, as well as managerial implications, contribution to literature and recommendations for future research are discussed below.

While no significant results were found in the experiment, there were some differences in implementation regarding the differently formulated messages. Those measured differences also contradict the assumption that messages based on both high- and low-level construals lead to more successful implementation than messages based on solely high-level construals or solely low-level construals. The experiment showed that messages based on low-level construals lead to more successful implementation than messages including high-level construals, but as this result still was not found significant, further research is recommended.

6.1.Limitations
There are two main limitations regarding this research. The first limitation concerns the effectiveness of the manipulation. One of the participants mentioned that the reason for not implementing a message based on low-level construals, and therefore the reason for the difference between the expected outcome and the results, could be explained by the context in which the experiment was conducted. The participant reasoned that as the experiment was conducted within Wageningen UR, the participants were highly educated individuals with their own ideas concerning their work and the organisation as a whole, leading to them being less likely to just accept any message provided by the management. Building onto this, is that therefore the participants were less likely to implement a message when they were exactly told what to do. The messages based on more high-level construals, mentioned a direction to go in, thereby opening the possibility for own interpretation and implementation, leading participants to a more open attitude towards the message. As another participant mentioned, "Every year all employees of Wageningen UR receive a survey asking them questions concerning the organisation and on how to improve. This interview about implementation reminds me of the last question in the survey of Wageningen UR, which asks 'How big do you consider the distance to be between the management and the employees?'. The results on this particular question were interesting, since people scored the distance between the management and the employees to be very high". This shows that there is already a gap between the management and the employees, and therefore might have influenced the findings of the experiment, as employees were in general not likely to directly implement a strategy that was provided by the management. Those arguments show that the context in which the experiment took place, was not efficient. As the manipulation was not effective in this context, the effects found in the experiment are weakened. Future research on the application of the Construal Level Theory on the strategy implementation problem is therefore best when this moderating variable, the context, is taken into consideration.

Another limitations concerns the number of participants for the experiment. As there were only 22 participants, the results of this research cannot be considered as self-contained results.

6.2. Managerial implications

Since this experiment assumes that implementation is dependent on formulation, most managerial implications can be drawn from the formulation of a message. In this research the experiment was conducted in an environment where the distance between the management and the employees was large, leading to employees that were not likely to implement a message given by the management. Therefore it might be true that in situations where the distance between the management and the employees is small, a formulated message has a bigger influence on the implementation.

As the results suggest, a message based on low-level construals leads to the most successful implementation. In contrast to the expectations described in the literature review, results have shown that messages based on high- and low-level construals, lead to the least successful implementation. Also the results show that messages based on high-level construals lead to similar implementation. This suggests that messages including high-level construals lead to the least implementation. This could be taken into account when formulating a message, where it appears to be most effective to focus on low-level construals to reach successful implementation.

6.3. Contribution to literature

This research has examined whether strategy implementation is based on the way employees mentally construe this strategy. While the expectation that messages based on low-level construals lead to more successful implementation than messages based on high-level construals did not hold, this research did find that the perceived psychological distance is a predictor of implementation. Since all research regarding the Construal Level Theory was based in the consumer science, this finding is a start in the application of this theory in the business field.

6.4. Recommendations for future research

An important finding in the results, which can be tested in future research, is that strategies based on low-level construals lead to the most successful implementation. This pattern has the potential to provide solutions to strategy implementation using the Construal Level Theory. This is not in line with the solutions to the strategy implementation problem provided by the Construal Level Theory as this theory proposes that strategies based on high- and low-level construals can solve the strategy implementation problem. But, as the hypothesis was not supported by this experiment, further research is needed. Possible recommendations for future research are to increase the number of participants and to increase representativeness by conducting the experiment in multiple organisations.

What did prove to be of significant influence on the implementation, was the perceived psychological distance before the manipulation. This shows that whereas the perceived psychological distance before manipulation was only used as a control variable, it has a large influence on the implementation in cases where the distance between the management and the employees is substantial. To be able to extract further conclusions on this effect, further research is needed, where more questions are used to operationalize the different psychological distances and to extract meaning from those outcomes.

Thus, while no significant results were found on the hypothesis that messages based on low-level construals lead to a more successful implementation than messages based on high-level construals, this research has shown that the psychological distance is a significant predictor

for implementation, especially when applied to an appropriate context. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Construal Level Theory can be applied to the business field. In order to establish a full sense of knowledge on the application of the Construal Level Theory in business science, further research is recommended.

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Introductie:

Hallo, ik ben Caroline Majoor en ik zit in mijn derde jaar van bedrijfs- en consumentenwetenschappen. Dit interview is voor mijn bachelor scriptie. Ik schrijf mijn scriptie bij de marketing and consumer behaviour groep. Mijn scriptie gaat over het strategie implementatie probleem en zal worden toegepast op Wageningen UR. Onder het strategie implementatie probleem wordt in mijn scriptie verstaan dat 'een strategie op hoger niveau geformuleerd wordt en vervolgens niet op de juiste manier geïmplementeerd wordt op de werkvloer'.

Aangezien Wageningen UR in de afgelopen maanden een naam verandering is doorgaan en hierbij een nieuwe boodschap is bedacht, zal dit onderzoek zich richten op de implementatie van deze boodschap, namelijk 'One WUR'. Allereerst is deelname aan het interview vrijwillig en kunt u stoppen wanneer u wilt. Ook zal de verkregen informatie vertrouwelijk worden behandeld en zullen de resultaten worden geanonimiseerd.

Controle vragen:

Allereerst stel ik u een aantal vragen over de algemene boodschap. Hierna zal deze verder worden toegelicht. Verder kunt u antwoorden geven op een schaal van een tot vijf. De algemene boodschap van de naamverandering van Wageningen University and Research is zoals ik eerder al noemde: 'One WUR'.

1. In hoeverre beschouwt u deze boodschap als dichtbij of ver weg op het gebied van tijd? Hiermee bedoel ik, is deze boodschap relevant voor nu of voor later in de tijd?

   Dichtbij   Ver weg

   |———————————|———————————|———————————|———————————|
   1   2   3   4   5
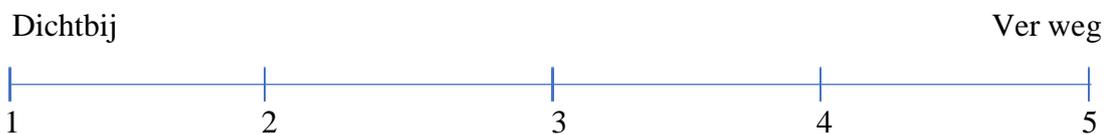
2. In hoeverre beschouwt u deze boodschap als dichtbij of ver weg op het gebied van ruimte? Hiermee bedoel ik, hier op deze plek of ergens anders in de wereld?

   Dichtbij   Ver weg

   |———————————|———————————|———————————|———————————|
   1   2   3   4   5

3. In hoeverre beschouwt u deze boodschap als dichtbij of ver weg van uzelf? Dichtbij uzelf of ver weg van uzelf?

   Dichtbij   Ver weg

   |———————————|———————————|———————————|———————————|
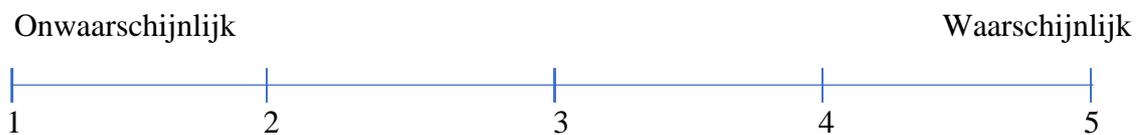   1   2   3   4   5
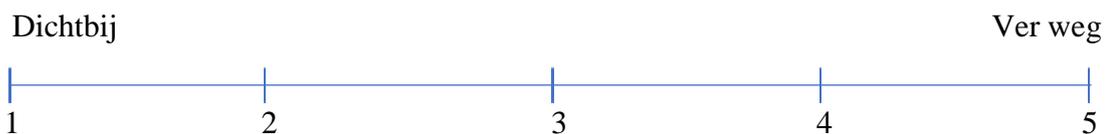
Groep 1:

De algemene boodschap 'One WUR' kan worden uitgelegd als: Het verspreiden van de boodschap 'One WUR' om een uniform bedrijfsimago te creëren die de externe communicatie verbetert.
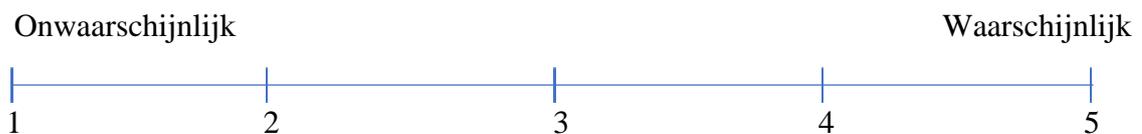
1. Hoe <u>waarschijnlijk</u> is het dat u deze boodschap in uw dagelijkse werk implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

1	2	3	4	5

2. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap binnen nu en twee weken implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

1	2	3	4	5

3. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap binnen nu en twee maanden implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

1	2	3	4	5

4. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap binnen nu en zes maanden implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

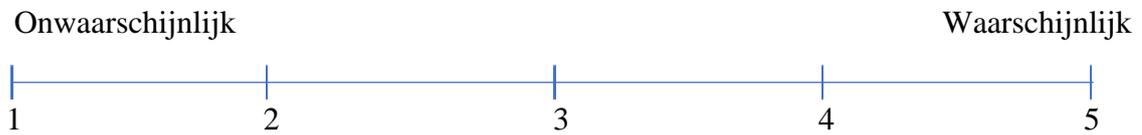| 1	2	3	4	5

5. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap in al uw correspondentie implementeert, zoals uw PowerPoints, artikelen en e-mail?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

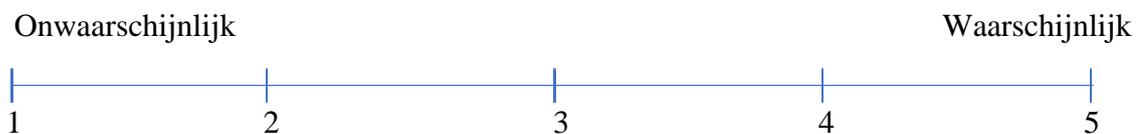| 1	2	3	4	5
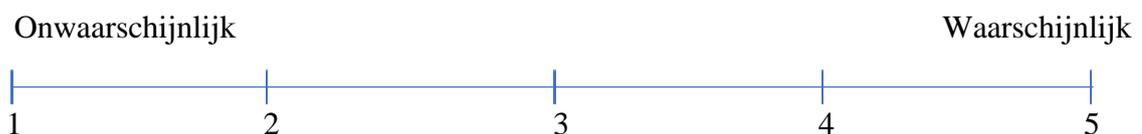
Groep 2:

De algemene boodschap 'One WUR' kan worden uitgelegd als: Het vermelden van de boodschap 'One WUR' in elk document dat u publiceert.
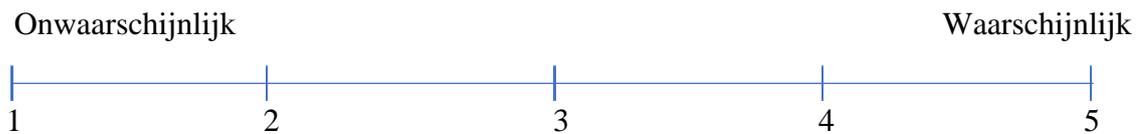
1. Hoe <u>waarschijnlijk</u> is het dat u deze boodschap in uw dagelijkse werk implementeert?
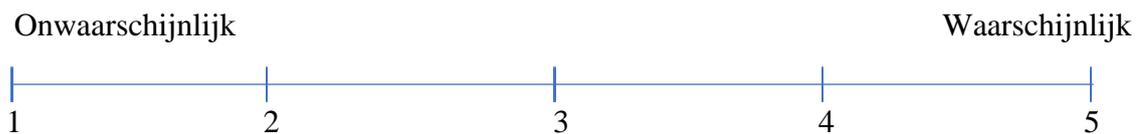
Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

1	2	3	4	5

2. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap binnen nu en twee weken implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

1	2	3	4	5

3. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap binnen nu en twee maanden implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

1	2	3	4	5

4. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap binnen nu en zes maanden implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

1	2	3	4	5

5. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap in al uw correspondentie implementeert, zoals uw PowerPoints, artikelen en e-mail?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

1	2	3	4	5

Groep 3:

De algemene boodschap 'One WUR' kan worden uitgelegd als: Het verspreiden van de boodschap 'One WUR' om een uniform bedrijfsimago te creëren die de externe communicatie verbetert door de boodschap te vermelden in elk document dat u publiceert.
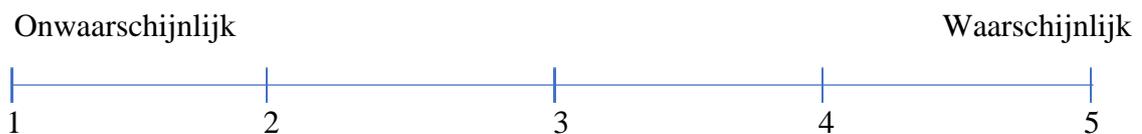
1. Hoe <u>waarschijnlijk</u> is het dat u deze boodschap in uw dagelijkse werk implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap binnen nu en twee weken implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap binnen nu en twee maanden implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap binnen nu en zes maanden implementeert?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

5. Hoe waarschijnlijk is het dat u deze boodschap in al uw correspondentie implementeert, zoals uw PowerPoints, artikelen en e-mail?

Onwaarschijnlijk   Waarschijnlijk

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Zoals ik net al benoemde ging dit interview over het strategie implementatie probleem bij de boodschap 'One WUR'. Maar dit was niet alles, de onderliggende theorie waaraan ik dit probleem wil linken is de Construal Level Theory. Hiermee wil ik testen of de manier waarop een boodschap is geformuleerd, invloed heeft op de implementatie ervan. Hiervoor heb ik drie

groepen gemaakt die de boodschap op een andere manier uitgelegd kregen, om te onderzoeken of de verschillende boodschappen invloed hebben op de implementatie en zo ja welke boodschap zorgt voor de meest succesvolle implementatie.

Hartstikke bedankt voor het meewerken aan het interview! Wilt u nog op de hoogte worden gesteld van de resultaten?

Appendix B: Syntax results

* Encoding: UTF-8.

FACTOR
  /VARIABLES Question_01 Question_02 Question_03
  /MISSING LISTWISE
  /ANALYSIS Question_01 Question_02 Question_03
  /PRINT INITIAL KMO EXTRACTION ROTATION
  /PLOT EIGEN
  /CRITERIA FACTORS(2) ITERATE(25)
  /EXTRACTION PC
  /CRITERIA ITERATE(25)
  /ROTATION VARIMAX
  /METHOD=CORRELATION.

FACTOR
  /VARIABLES Question_01 Question_02 Question_03
  /MISSING LISTWISE
  /ANALYSIS Question_01 Question_02 Question_03
  /PRINT INITIAL KMO EXTRACTION
  /PLOT EIGEN
  /CRITERIA FACTORS(1) ITERATE(25)
  /EXTRACTION PC
  /ROTATION NOROTATE
  /SAVE REG(ALL)
  /METHOD=CORRELATION.

RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=Question_01 Question_02 Question_03
  /SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /SUMMARY=TOTAL.

RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=Question_01 Question_03

```
 /SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL
 /MODEL=ALPHA
 /SUMMARY=TOTAL.


FACTOR
 /VARIABLES Question_04 Question_05 Question_06 Question_07 Question_08
 /MISSING LISTWISE
 /ANALYSIS Question_04 Question_05 Question_06 Question_07 Question_08
 /PRINT INITIAL KMO EXTRACTION
 /PLOT EIGEN
 /CRITERIA FACTORS(2) ITERATE(25)
 /EXTRACTION PC
 /ROTATION VARIMAX
 /METHOD=CORRELATION.


FACTOR
 /VARIABLES Question_04 Question_05 Question_06 Question_07 Question_08
 /MISSING LISTWISE
 /ANALYSIS Question_04 Question_05 Question_06 Question_07 Question_08
 /PRINT INITIAL KMO EXTRACTION
 /PLOT EIGEN
 /CRITERIA FACTORS(1) ITERATE(25)
 /EXTRACTION PC
 /ROTATION NOROTATE
 /SAVE REG(ALL)
 /METHOD=CORRELATION.


RELIABILITY
 /VARIABLES=Question_04 Question_05 Question_06 Question_07 Question_08
 /SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL
 /MODEL=ALPHA
 /SUMMARY=TOTAL.


MEANS TABLES=FAC1_2 BY Group
 /CELLS=MEAN COUNT STDDEV.
```

```
ONEWAY FAC1_2 BY Group
  /MISSING ANALYSIS
  /POSTHOC=SNK LSD ALPHA(0.05).



UNIANOVA FAC1_2 BY Group WITH FAC1_1
  /METHOD=SSTYPE(3)
  /INTERCEPT=INCLUDE
  /CRITERIA=ALPHA(0.05)
  /DESIGN=FAC1_1 Group.


COMPUTE LOW=0.
EXECUTE.
IF  (Group = 2) LOW=1.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE HIGHLOW=0.
EXECUTE.
IF  (Group = 3) HIGHLOW=1.
EXECUTE.


REGRESSION
  /MISSING LISTWISE
  /STATISTICS COEFF OUTS R ANOVA CHANGE
  /CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10)
  /NOORIGIN
  /DEPENDENT FAC1_2
  /METHOD=ENTER FAC1_1
  /METHOD=ENTER FAC1_1 LOW HIGHLOW.


T-TEST GROUPS=LOW(0 1)
  /MISSING=ANALYSIS
  /VARIABLES=FAC1_2
  /CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```