

# Researcher versus participant

How to measure the persuasiveness of public information documents



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## Abstract

*The present study was conducted to investigate possible differences in the outcomes of three experiments on the persuasiveness of public information documents on HIV/AIDS, in which different versions of exemplars are used. In two experiments that were carried out at an earlier stage, the researcher's perspective on persuasiveness was taken; in a new experiment that formed part of the present study, the participant's perspective on persuasiveness was taken. Taking the participant's perspective implies asking the participants directly if they think a text is persuasive; taking the researcher's perspective implies trying to find out indirectly if a text is persuasive, for example by giving the participants a number of assertions and asking them to indicate to which extent they agree or disagree with these assertions.*

*According to O'Keefe (1993) it would be reasonable to expect differences between the results from experiments in which various perspectives are taken: O'Keefe (1993) points out that measuring possible effects from the researcher's perspective would differ from measuring effects from the participant's perspective, because participants may be influenced by their commonsensical beliefs about persuasion.*

*Furthermore, the possible influence of the gender and ethnic background of the participant on the persuasiveness of public information documents about HIV/AIDS in which different versions of exemplars are used, was investigated, as was the possible influence of gender and ethnic background of the participant on the effects of the two perspectives of measuring.*

*In the present study, the outcomes of the three experiments were compared with each other. In all three experiments the same general text about HIV/AIDS in South Africa was used, and an exemplar was added of a person living with HIV/AIDS, John. In each experiment, there were two different versions of the exemplar. In one version, John clearly was not responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS, in the other version John could be regarded as responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS.*

*In the new experiment that was conducted, a total of 171 participants took part, all students from Stellenbosch University, South Africa, who were equally divided after gender and ethnic background.*

*The results of the present study revealed no differences between the outcomes of the three experiments. Also no evidence was found that either gender or ethnic background of the participant had any influence on the outcomes of the experiments.*

*In conclusion: the present study did not confirm the premise of O'Keefe (1993) that the outcomes of an experiment may be expected to differ depending on the perspective from which the dependent variables are measured (from the researcher's perspective or from the participant's perspective).*

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## Preface

After finishing my bachelor thesis, my supervisor advised me to write my master thesis about HIV/AIDS in South Africa, because it links on to my interests in countries which are less developed. At that time, I had heard about the possibility to go to South Africa, but it was never an option for me because I already had studied abroad. Nevertheless, I decided to have a try and during the lectures about HIV/AIDS and cultural differences my enthusiasm increased. Then I decided to try to go to Stellenbosch.

The six months I have spent in Stellenbosch were in one word: fantastic. Stellenbosch is a little paradise with nice houses, a beautiful university and is fitted with all modern conveniences, but also shows big differences between rich and poor people and between black, coloured and white people. South Africa is an unique nation, where I've seen and done a lot of special things. It is a beautiful country with marvelous nature, very friendly people and a lot of diversity. Regretfully, one disease is threatening this country: AIDS.

I am very grateful that I had the opportunity to use my skills in communication science to attribute -even a little bit- to our knowledge about persuasion, in order to inform all people about HIV/AIDS and persuade them to act responsible for themselves and other people.

I would like to use this opportunity to say thanks to some people. First of all, I want to thank my supervisors, prof. dr. C.J.M. Jansen and prof. dr. L.G. de Stadler, for their help to make my stay at Stellenbosch possible, for their quick suggestions and corrections and their critical views up to the very last moment. Prof. de Stadler, also a lot of thanks for the kind hospitality and guidance during my stay in Stellenbosch. Moreover, I would like to thank all the people of the Language Centre of Stellenbosch University for their help with conducting my experiment and dr. Kidd and dr. Hornikx for their statistical help.

A special thanks goes to my family and friends, also my 'Stellenbosch-maties', for their support, help, motivation, listening and reading, re-reading and checking my thesis.

Jacqueline Lips,

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## 1. Introduction and theoretical framework

Argumentation and persuasion are common in everyday life. Gigantic billboards are everywhere on the streets, people constantly try to convince each other of their beliefs and convictions, commercials show up at every radio and television station and news papers and magazines are filled with advertisements with attractive texts and pictures. In brief, persuasion is hot.

Many researchers have tried to answer the question ‘what is the best way to test whether a text is persuasive?’ So far it is not clear, whether taking the perspective of the participants or taking the perspective of the researchers would be the best approach to test the persuasiveness of a text. Taking the researcher’s perspective implies that the researcher determines the influence of text version on opinions of the participant about relevant assertions, and uses these opinions to draw conclusions about the effect of text version on the persuasiveness. Taking the participants’ perspective implies asking the participants directly to which extent they think a given text is persuasive. In other words: taking the participants’ perspective implies asking the participants directly if they think a text is persuasive; taking the researcher’s perspective implies trying to find out indirectly if a text is persuasive.

The present study focuses on the possible differences between the outcomes of an experiment if either the perspective of the participants is taken, or the perspective of the researchers. The case for which these two approaches will be compared is an experiment in which the effects are studied of so called ‘exemplars’ in public health documents about HIV/AIDS.

The focus of this first chapter is literature about possible effects of exemplars. After that, studies about possible differences in testing the persuasiveness of a text from the participants’ perspective or from the researchers’ perspective on persuasion will be discussed.

### *1.1 Exemplars*

Exemplars are a type of anecdotal evidence. With anecdotal evidence, an example is used to make a point of view more acceptable to the readers of a text. In contrast with other

anecdotal evidence, exemplars are not always based on facts; they are often exaggerated and they often are intended to shock, amuse, cause sensation and so on (Brosius, 2000). An example of an exemplar is given in Hoeken and Hustinx (2007):

*'Sonja and David are normal, ordinary people. They have three children. A happy family? Yes, until their eldest daughter died. Eventually, this tragedy destroyed their family life. David neglected his job, Sonja stayed at home ill and is out of work. The income decreased while the debts increased. The bailiff knocked repeatedly on their door and now David, Sonja, and their children have to live on the street. Homeless!'*  
(Hoeken and Hustinx, 2007, p. 596)

Gibson and Zillmann (1994) investigated the effect of exemplars on the persuasiveness of a message on carjacking. Carjacking is the forcible stealing of a vehicle from a motorist. The researchers manipulated news articles about carjacking and presented exemplars which differed in the extremity of the robbery. The results showed that the extremity of the exemplars affected the judgments of the readers. The more extreme the exemplars were, the more the recipients overestimated the frequency of carjacking. The results also showed that the more extreme the exemplars were, the more serious the problem of carjacking was felt by the participants and the more carjacking was seen as a national problem. The results also showed, however, that the more extreme the exemplars were, the less the participants felt personally threatened.

Kopfman, Smith, Ah Yun en Hodges (1998) investigated the cognitive and affective reactions to persuasive health messages using, among other things, exemplars. The aim of this research was to acquire insights in the cognitive and affective reactions to statistical evidence and to exemplars about organ donation, in order to establish why these different sorts of evidence types might be persuasive. First, the cognitive reactions were investigated, and after that, the classification of the messages and the estimated causal relevance was tested. The results revealed great differences between the evidence types: the messages with statistical evidence produced better results in terms of all cognitive reactions, whereas the exemplars produced better results for all affective reactions.

Brosius (2000) studied the effects of exemplars in news reports and the reason why and under what conditions exemplars have such a strong persuasive power in comparison with common texts from journalists. Brosius (2000) investigated this power by comparing the outcomes of several experiments, studies and theoretical explanations. Brosius (2000) found that exemplars, the way they are distributed and the extent of the extremity of the exemplars may have a strong impact on people's beliefs and perceptions. Exemplars prove to be capable of influencing the perceived opinion of the population at the long term, even if the effect on one's opinion is mostly levelled out by preconceptions. Brosius (2000) suggests that the effect of extreme exemplars is stronger than less extreme exemplars, because they make a problem seem more severe than it actually is. Brosius (2000) explains these findings by stating that the impression of reality as 'seen with one's own eyes' appears to be more reliable and more useful than summary-type descriptions of reality from journalists.

Green and Brock (2000) investigated the role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives, which are comparable to exemplars; they both are a type of evidence in which an example is used. They define transportation as 'a distinct mental process, an integrative melding of attention, imagery, and feelings' (Green & Brock, 2000, p.701). They see transportation as a convergent process, where all mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative. According to Green and Brock (2000) and Green (2008), transportation may reduce negative cognitive responses, it may make narrative experience seem more like real experience and it is likely to create strong feelings towards the story characters. Another advantage of transportation is, according to Green (2008) that stories that evoke strong emotions are more likely to be passed on to others and are more likely to affect behaviour. It is very important for transportation that people can identify with the characters in the stories: the protagonist (the main character in a text) is the driving force of the text and attachment to the protagonist may play a critical role in narrative-based belief change. According to Green (2008) the characters of the stories may be a source of information and influence for readers, if the characters are experienced as sympathetic. Green and Brock (2000) predict that belief change based on a narrative will lead to stronger and more persistent beliefs than belief change based on rhetorical evidence. "The three premises underlying this prediction are a) a human affinity for narrative as the preferred organizing and retrieving mental structure, b) narrative, more than rhetoric, can effectively marry affective and cognitive contributions to opinion

formation, and c) attitudes based both affectively and cognitively (...) are more persistent” (Green & Brock, 2000, p. 719). Narratives can have a greater impact on people because the blending of both affective and cognitive bases is routinely attained in narrative persuasion, which is not the case in rhetorical persuasion. According to Green (2008), narratives can be made in a way which is most effective for the readers. Transportation can be increased by matching some elements in the story with a reader’s experience. An example that Green (2008) gives is a story about a fraternity. ‘The readers of a story set in a college fraternity were more transported into it the more they knew about the fraternity system’ (Green, 2008, p. 50).

### *1.2 The impact of exemplars in fund-raising letters*

Hoeken and Hustinx (2002, 2003) did a series of studies consisting of four experiments about the possible differences in persuasiveness of different types of evidence, the use of exemplars in particular. They found that the use of any kind of evidence was more persuasive than not using evidence at all. Furthermore, they found that the evidence had to be of high quality, otherwise the text is perceived as of a lower quality than texts without evidence. In one of the experiments, Hoeken and Hustinx (2002, 2003) investigated the use of the exemplar as a type of anecdotal evidence. They investigated if the length and the vividness of an exemplar would have an influence on the persuasiveness. The results showed that there was an interaction effect of the quality and length of evidence; they did find a difference between the short version of the exemplar with qualitative strong and weak evidence, but no differences between the long version of the exemplar with the qualitative strong and weak evidence. Hoeken and Hustinx (2007) conclude that in long exemplars the quality of evidence is obscured by the extra information. In short exemplars the reader evaluates the quality of evidence better.

In another study, Hoeken and Hustinx (2007) investigated the impact of exemplars in fund-raising letters on the effectiveness of these letters and on the responsibility stereotype of the group funds. In three experiments, the participants received a fundraising letter with an exemplar in which the protagonist was or was not hold responsible for his or her problems. In the first experiment in this series, both the influence of the perceived responsibility of a protagonist in an exemplar on the perceived responsibility of the group of patients that the protagonist in this exemplar belonged to and if the perceived responsibility

of the protagonist would influence the attitude towards donating money were investigated. The protagonist in the exemplars that were studied was suffering from HIV/AIDS. The cause of the protagonist suffering from HIV/AIDS was manipulated, however. In one version of the text he could be regarded as responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS, in another version he clearly was not responsible for contracting the disease. The results from this experiment showed that the perceived responsibility of the exemplar indeed did influence the perception of the responsibility of HIV/AIDS patients in general. The perceived responsibility of the protagonist, however, did not have an influence on the attitude towards donating money. A possible explanation for this is, that participants are willing to support a person, regardless of their responsibility for the trouble they were in, if the trouble was severe (Weiner, 1988 and Hoeken & Hustinx, 2007).

In their second experiment, the possible influence of responsibility stereotypes on the persuasiveness of a fund-raising letter was investigated, but this time they used four organisations for different diseases; HIV/AIDS, heart disease, homeless alcoholic and obesity. The outcomes of this experiment also showed that there was an influence of the perceived responsibility of the protagonist in the exemplar on the perception of people with that disease in general. They did not find an effect of exemplar's responsibility on the attitude towards giving money. But post hoc comparisons showed that the attitude towards giving money differed depending on the organisation. The attitude towards giving money for the more severe diseases was more positive than for the less severe disease, obesity. Many participants expressed that they had never heard about the organisation raising money for obesity, unlike the other three organisations.

In their third experiment, Hoeken and Hustinx (2007) investigated the influence of the responsibility stereotype on the response to a fund-raising letter from well known and from unknown organisations. The researchers found that the participants felt more certain that the well-known organisations did lots of good, compared to the unknown organisations. Again, the responsibility manipulation was successful: there was an influence of the perceived responsibility of the protagonist in the exemplar on the perception of people with that disease in general. Also, there was a main effect of kind of disease; people suffering from HIV/AIDS were held more responsible for contracting that disease than people with asthma. In contrast with what Hoeken and Hustinx expected, there were no significant effects of exemplar's responsibility for both the well-known and the unknown organisation.

The influence of the protagonist in the exemplar's responsibility was related to the severity of the disease; participants were always willing to donate money to the AIDS fund, regardless of the responsibility of the protagonist of the exemplar. But more participants were willing to donate money to the asthma fund-raising organisation when the protagonist of the exemplar was not held responsible than when he was held responsible. This proves that the severity of the disease has an influence on the attitude towards giving money.

In all the three experiments discussed above, the exemplar manipulation had an influence on the responsibility perception of the group as a whole. When the group as a whole was held responsible for the problems, the participants were less inclined to donate money, unless these problems were considered as particularly serious. The conclusion is that help giving behaviour is influenced by responsibility stereotype if the help requiring situation is not too serious.

### *1.3 Exemplars in HIV/AIDS documents*

Jansen et al. (2005) investigated the influence of exemplars in public information documents about HIV/AIDS, aimed at fighting the stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHAs) in South Africa. In their experiment, they used two different versions of a public information document. In one version, the protagonist in the text could be held responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS, in the other version, he could not be held responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS. The experiment was carried out among a group of students from Stellenbosch University with different ethnic backgrounds (black, coloured and white) and composed of an equal number of males and females.

In contrast with the findings of Hoeken and Hustinx (2007), Jansen et al. (2005) found no statistically significant relation between the perceived responsibility of the protagonist in the exemplar, and the attitude of the reader towards supporting PLHAs in general. However, they found that white participants have a considerably stronger conviction that PLHAs in general are responsible for their own infection than had black and coloured participants. Jansen et al. (2005) also found that people are significantly less inclined to support PLHAs when they think that PLHAs in general are responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS. Moreover, they found that men were significantly less inclined than women to support PLHAs when they felt that PLHAs in general are responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS.

Swinkels (2005) took the same approach as Jansen et al. (2005), but she tried to study the influence of the reader's gender on the persuasiveness of the text in more depth. Just as Jansen et al. (2005), Swinkels (2005) did not find a significant effect of the belief that in general PLHAs themselves are responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS on the text version. That is, in her experiment the participants (students from Stellenbosch University) did not find one of the text versions more persuasive than the other. She also did not find any main effects or interaction effects of the gender of the reader and text version on the persuasiveness of the text. Furthermore, in contrast to the outcomes reported in Jansen et al. (2005), Swinkels (2005) did not find a significant relation between the belief that in general PLHAs themselves are responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS and their attitude towards supporting PLHAs (the desert heuristic).

An explanation for this difference between the findings of Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005) may be that there were no black participants in Swinkels' experiment. A further analysis of data from Jansen et al. (2005) showed that the black participants in their study had a more negative attitude towards having contact with and supporting PLHAs than the white and coloured participants had. According to Swinkels (2005) this might, at least partly, explain the difference between the outcomes of Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005).

A correspondence between the outcomes of the experiments of Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005) is that in both studies the extent to which a text was perceived as realistic (from here: perceived reality) proved to have a positive influence on both the attitude towards supporting PLHAs and the attitude towards having contact with PLHAs. The more realistic the texts were experienced, the more positive were the attitudes towards supporting PLHAs and the attitude towards having contact with PLHAs.

While Hoeken and Hustinx (2007) did find an influence of the perceived responsibility of the exemplar on the perception of HIV/AIDS patients in general, Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005) did not find such an influence. It is not clear what the cause of this difference may be, but it could be related to differences in the nationality and ethnic background of the participants: the participants of the study of Hoeken and Hustinx (2007) were all Dutch, whereas the participants of the study of Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005) were South African with different ethnic backgrounds, viz black, white and coloured.

#### *1.4 Cultural differences*

As Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005), among many others, indicate in their studies, culture can have an influence on persuasion. Due to the different values and social norms of their cultures, a text can be quite persuasive for readers from one culture, and not persuasive at all for readers from another culture.

Hofstede (1991) discriminates between different cultures on the basis of five dimensions: power distance, collectivism vs. individualism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation. These dimensions assist in differentiating cultures. According to Hofstede, cultures differ in the things that are important to people and what motivates people. Some cultures attach importance to money, recognition, work and assertiveness. These cultures are called masculine cultures. Here, establishing a good reputation and having success is important. In these cultures, men are expected to act differently than women. The opposite of these cultures are feminine cultures; the roles of gender overlap, and both men and women impute importance to good social relations, spare time, tolerance and tenderness.

According to the studies of Hofstede (1991), The Netherlands and South Africa have more or less the same scores on the dimension 'masculinity / femininity'; see Table 1.1. However, Hofstede (1991) collected his data from IBM employees, during the period of apartheid in South Africa. Because of that, there's reason to believe that only the white South Africans were well presented in his study, and other ethnic groups may have been underrepresented. This could explain the similarities between the Hofstede-scores of South Africa and countries like New Zealand, Australia and Great Britain, and the differences between the Hofstede-scores of South Africa and other African countries.

If this view is correct, then the Hofstede-scores of other African countries would be a more appropriate indication for the Hofstede-scores of black people in present day South Africa (cf. Jansen, van Baal and Boumans, 2006), while the Hofstede-scores of present day white South Africans may be expected to correspond to the scores of South Africa, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand in the Hofstede study. And finally, coloured people in present day South Africa may be expected to have a position between those of black people and white people in present day South Africa, i.e. somewhere between the position of the Netherlands, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand in Hofstede's study on the one hand,

and the position of West Africa and South Africa in the Hofstede study on the other hand. Compare Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1.** *Position of the Netherlands, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, West Africa and East Africa on the Hofstede dimension ‘masculinity/femininity’, according to Hofstede (1991)*

	Masculinity / femininity
The Netherlands	14
Great Britain	9 / 10
Australia	16
New Zealand	17
[South Africa	13 / 14]
West Africa	30 / 31
East Africa	39
West Africa: Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone	
East Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia	

It seems likely that differences in cultures may cause people from these cultures to respond differently to particular situations. In the case of exemplars, for instance, where the protagonist suffers from HIV/AIDS, participants with different ethnic backgrounds could react differently to the story they read. As mentioned before, in general people from cultures which are typically feminine are expected to empathize more with other people and are more open and nurturing than people, especially males, from cultures which are typically masculine. Furthermore, if a person is used to and familiar with HIV/AIDS and knows people in his or her direct environment who suffer from HIV/AIDS, then he or she may be expected to be less anxious of and to sympathize more with other PLHAs.

Ethnic background proved to be one of the strongest predictors of HIV status in South Africa. Although HIV/AIDS is present among all ethnic groups in South Africa, it is much more common among blacks than among other groups (Parker, Colvin & Birdsall, 2006). This could make a difference in the general attitude towards people who are living with HIV/AIDS.

### *1.5 The participant’s perspective versus the researcher’s perspective*

In each of the experiments on the effects of exemplars discussed above, the persuasiveness of the texts was measured from the perspective of the researcher and not from the perspective of the participant. That is, in the experiments discussed above, the persuasiveness was measured *indirectly*, by presenting the participants before and after reading a text version a number of assertions about which they were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed. In other words: taking the researcher's perspective implies that the researcher determines the influence of text version on opinions of the participant about relevant assertions, and uses these opinions to draw conclusions about the effect of text version on the persuasiveness. Taking the participants' perspective implies asking the participants directly to which extent they think a given text is persuasive.

O'Keefe (1993) discusses the differences between taking this indirect researcher's perspective and taking the direct participant's perspective. O'Keefe claims that it will not be sufficient to reproduce the (naive) perspective of the everyday participant, if the intention is to understand how and why persuasive messages have the effect they do. He points out that people live in a meaningful, made-sense-of world. The values that people have, both individual and social, determine the way they act and think. That's why it is important to understand the everyday social participant's perspective of a person in order to get more insight in the conduct of a person.

As Schutz (1962) points out: 'The social world ... has a particular meaning and relevance for the human beings living, thinking, and acting therein. They have preselected and preinterpreted this world by a series of common-sense constructs of the reality of daily life, and it is these thought objects which determine their behavior, define the goal of their action, the means available for attaining them' (Schutz, 1962, pp. 5-6). When measuring from the participant's perspective, these common-sense constructs of the participants might have an influence on the outcomes of a study.

If the outcomes of a study are only measured from the participant's perspective, the commonsensical beliefs about persuasion of the participant may have an influence on the outcomes. When a respondent is asked whether he or she would probably be influenced by a given message, he or she will base his or her answers on his or her implicit or explicit beliefs about what persuades. But because these beliefs may not be correct, the judgments of the respondents of the likelihood of being persuaded may not correspond with the actual

likelihood of persuasion. Briefly worded, a participant is guided by his or her ideas about what persuades, even though it may in fact not be persuasive for the participant.

According to O’Keefe (1993), a measure of actual effect (from the researcher’s perspective) is to be preferred over measures of perceived or expected effect (from the participant’s perspective). O’Keefe also points out that it “would be incorrect to suppose that “since the actor’s perspective is mistaken, it can safely be ignored’. After all, the actor’s beliefs *do* form a basis for making certain sorts of judgments, and hence are a natural object of study” (O’Keefe, 1993, p. 236). According to O’Keefe (1993), the researcher’s perspective and the participant’s perspective are unlikely to correspond perfectly, but he says that they aren’t wholly unrelated either.

In O’Keefe (1993) the arguments are presented for O’Keefe’s premise about the differences between the participant’s perspective and the researcher’s perspective, but in his study, this premise is not put to the test in an experiment. So far, to our knowledge, there is no other research either which investigates the premise of O’Keefe (1993) in an empirical way.

### *1.6 Research questions*

As explained in section 1.5, the assumption of O’Keefe (1993) is that the outcomes of a study into persuasion could differ depending on the way of measuring; taking the perspective of the participant on persuasion or taking the perspective of the researcher.

The experiments of Jansen et al. (2005), Swinkels (2005) and Hoeken and Hustinx (2007) measured the persuasiveness of exemplars from the researcher’s perspective. In the present experiment, the persuasiveness of a public information document about HIV/AIDS will also be investigated, but this time from the perspective of the participant. The results of the experiments of Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005) will be compared with the results of the present experiment. This way, the premise of O’Keefe (1993), that differences might be expected in the outcomes of a study in which the participant’s perspective is taken, compared to a study in which the researcher’s perspective is taken, will be investigated.

A new experiment was carried out to answer the following question:

*'Are there any differences in the outcomes of experiments into the persuasiveness of exemplars in a public information document about HIV/AIDS when the researcher's perspective is taken, versus an experiment focusing on the same possible text effects when the participant's perspective is taken?'*

Two more questions are investigated, in order to study to what extent gender and ethnical background have an influence on the outcomes of the research question.

- Does the gender of the participant have an influence on the persuasiveness of public information documents about HIV/AIDS in which an exemplar is used, and does it make a difference if in an experiment investigating this influence the perspective of the researcher or the perspective of the participant is taken?
  
- Does the ethnicity of the participant have an influence on the persuasiveness of public information documents about HIV/AIDS in which an exemplar is used, and does it make a difference if in an experiment investigating this influence the perspective of the researcher or the perspective of the participant is taken?

## 2. Method

This chapter discusses the setup and implementation of the present experiment. First, the materials used in the present experiment will be discussed in section 2.1. The questionnaire and the participants will be discussed in section 2.2 and section 2.3. Next, the design is discussed in section 2.4 and in section 2.5 the instrumentation is described. The procedure is discussed in section 2.6.

### 2.1 *The materials*

The materials used in the present experiment consisted of a short introduction, which explained the aim of the experiment and what the participants could expect in the following pages of the questionnaire. The introduction was followed by an instruction about how to fill out the answers and how to use the scales in the questionnaire. Then, the public information document including an exemplar and the questionnaire followed (See Appendix).

#### 2.1.1 *The public information document*

The public information document that was used was divided in two parts. The first part included general information about HIV/AIDS in South Africa, how people can contract the HIV-virus, and how to deal with people who are living with HIV/AIDS. The second part consisted of an exemplar of a person living with HIV/AIDS, the protagonist.

The first part of the public information document was the same as in the experiment of Swinkels (2005) and was similar to the first part of the texts used in the experiment of Jansen et al. (2005), with a few small adjustments.

In the present experiment, two different versions of one exemplar were used. Both versions were the same as in Swinkels (2005). In one of the versions the protagonist (John) could be regarded as responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS. In the other version, he clearly wasn't responsible. In the version where John could be regarded as responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS, the text was:

*'Take the example of John, age 34, who has AIDS. He was contaminated by a girlfriend. John had quite a lot of different girlfriends, with whom he did not always have safe sex.'*

In the version where John was clearly not responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS, the text read:

*'Take the example of John, age 34, who has AIDS. He was contaminated by his wife. She had an affair with a colleague, which she hadn't told John about.'*

The only difference between the two public information documents was the exemplar. All the other parts of the text were exactly the same for both documents.

## *2.2 The questionnaire*

In the present experiment, the same questionnaire was used as in the experiments of Jansen, Croonen and De Stadler (2005) and Swinkels (2005), with the same adjustments as were made in Swinkels (2005).

The participants were asked to evaluate the persuasiveness of both texts, to compare the persuasiveness with each other and to indicate which text version they found more persuasive.

At the end of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to answer a few questions about their gender, age, nationality and ethnic background. (See Appendix for the complete questionnaire.) For the present experiment, only the questions discussed in this chapter are relevant. The other questions in the questionnaire are presented in the appendix. These questions were not relevant, however, in the context of the research question in the present study they took part of the questionnaire.

## *2.3 Participants*

A total of 171 participants took part in the experiment (86 women, 85 men). Every participant was a student from Stellenbosch University and had either a white, coloured or black ethnic background. One student, however, filled out 'other' ethnic background; her data were not used in the present study. In Table 2.1 a report of the characteristics of the other participants is given.

**Table 2.1** Characteristics of the participants: ethnic background, gender and age.

<b>Ethnic background</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Average age</b>
Coloured	Male	29	18-24	20.93
	Female	29	18-31	20.06
	<i>Total</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>18-31</i>	<i>20.49</i>
Black	Male	29	18-35	22.07
	Female	26	18-29	20.12
	<i>Total</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>18-35</i>	<i>21.10</i>
White	Male	27	18-27	21.85
	Female	31	18-24	20.32
	<i>Total</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>18-27</i>	<i>21.10</i>

#### 2.4 Experimental design

A within-subjects design was used, in order to have both text versions evaluated by every participant. Each subject was presented with two text versions; the order in which these versions were presented, differed for the two conditions. 51 % of the respondents first received the version of the brochure in which the protagonist could be regarded as responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS, followed by the version in which the protagonist was not responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS. The other 49 % of the participants first received the version of the brochure in which the protagonist was not responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS, followed by the version in which the protagonist could be regarded as responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS. See Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2** *Subgroups by version of the brochure*

<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Position of the text version</b>	<b>N</b>
Black	Male	Text 1 = nonresp Text 2 = resp	15
		Text 1 = resp Text 2 = nonresp	14
	Female	Text 1 = nonresp Text 2 = resp	13
		Text 1 = resp Text 2 = nonresp	13
Coloured	Male	Text 1 = nonresp Text 2 = resp	14
		Text 1 = resp Text 2 = nonresp	15
	Female	Text 1 = nonresp Text 2 = resp	14
		Text 1 = resp Text 2 = nonresp	15
White	Male	Text 1 = nonresp Text 2 = resp	14
		Text 1 = resp Text 2 = nonresp	13
	Female	Text 1 = nonresp Text 2 = resp	17
		Text 1 = resp Text 2 = nonresp	14

### 2.5 Instrumentation

In the present experiment, the following dependent variable was measured: the persuasiveness of the exemplar, measured from the perspective of the participant. Each participant was asked to indicate what his/her opinion was about the persuasiveness of the two public information brochures. The following statements were presented 'I find brochure A more convincing than brochure B', 'I find brochure B more persuasive than brochure A' and 'I can identify better with brochure A than with brochure B'. This last statement was added because the way people can identify with a text, was expected to possibly have an influence on the persuasiveness of that text. As Green and Brock (2000) point out, it is important that a person can identify with, and has feelings towards the story characters in order to be persuaded. All three statements were measured on a 7-point Likert-scale (totally

agree ... totally disagree). The reliability of the scale resulting from these three items was considered to be adequate (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .70$ ).

### *2.6 Procedure*

All participants were approached at the campus of Stellenbosch University and were asked if they were willing to participate in a research on brochures concerning HIV/AIDS. The participant then received one of the versions of the experiment, which they had to fill out on the spot.

First they were asked to read an introduction which explained what the aim of the research was and what the rest of the procedure would be like. Furthermore, in the introduction it was explained that the research was part of the Unit for Document Design of Stellenbosch University, in order to make sure the participant knew that this was a serious study, carried out with the approval of the university. Subsequently, a short instruction followed about how to fill out the questionnaire. Then the two versions of the brochure and the questionnaire were presented. The researcher was in the vicinity of the participant, so that the participant could ask any questions he or she wanted to ask about filling out the questionnaire. The anonymity of the participant was guaranteed; this was mentioned in the introduction. Filling in the questionnaire took about 5 - 10 minutes per person.

### 3. Results

In this chapter, the outcomes of the present study are reported, and possible differences will be discussed between the results of the present experiment, the experiment of Jansen, Croonen and De Stadler (2005) and the experiment of Swinkels (2005).

In the experiments of Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005), the persuasiveness of public information documents about HIV/AIDS was measured from the perspective of the researcher. In the present experiment the persuasiveness of public information documents about HIV/AIDS was measured from the perspective of the participant.

#### *3.1 Research question 1*

The first research question was whether there would be any difference between the results found when the researcher's perspective was taken, compared with the results found when the participant's perspective was taken.

In the experiments of both Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005), the participants didn't find one version of the texts significantly more persuasive than the other version. The results of the present experiment appear to be highly comparable in this respect: the participants in the present experiment didn't find one version more persuasive than the other version either. See Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1.** *Persuasiveness measured from participant's perspective in the present study, participants divided after gender and ethnic background*

	<b>All participants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Coloured</b>	<b>White</b>
<b>Text version in which the protagonist can not be held responsible is more persuasive</b>	46	26.90	23	23	16	18	12
<b>Text version in which the protagonist can be held responsible is more persuasive</b>	41	23.98	21	20	13	10	18
<b>Both text versions are equally persuasive</b>	84	49.12	41	43	29	27	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>58</b>

Almost 50% of the respondents thought both versions were equally persuasive; about 25% of the respondents thought the version in which the protagonist could be regarded as responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS was more persuasive than the version in which the protagonist wasn't responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS, and about 25% of the respondents thought the version in which the protagonist was not responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS was more persuasive than the version in which the protagonist could be regarded as responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS. In view of these percentages, there was no reason to perform any further statistical test; the data are really clear; the percentages speak for themselves.

In Table 3.2, the results of the experiments of Jansen et al. (2005), Swinkels (2005) and the present experiment are compared.

**Table 3.2.** Comparison of the results of the experiment of Jansen, Croonen, De Stadler, the experiment of Swinkels and the present experiment

	Jansen, Croonen, De Stadler	Swinkels	Lips									
<b>The protagonist is not responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS</b>	<p>Belief that PLHA's in general are responsible for being infected</p> <p>M = 3.34 (SD = 1.63)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Blacks</th> <th>Whites</th> <th>Coloureds</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>M = 2.80</td> <td>M = 4.00</td> <td>M = 3.19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SD = 1.79</td> <td>SD = 1.33</td> <td>SD = 1.55</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Blacks	Whites	Coloureds	M = 2.80	M = 4.00	M = 3.19	SD = 1.79	SD = 1.33	SD = 1.55	<p>No significant main effects found for 'text version', nor for ethnic background'; no significant interaction effect found either.</p> <p>No tables with more information available.</p>	<p>Text version in which the protagonist can not be held responsible is more persuasive:</p> <p>26.93 % of the participants</p>
Blacks	Whites	Coloureds										
M = 2.80	M = 4.00	M = 3.19										
SD = 1.79	SD = 1.33	SD = 1.55										
<b>The protagonist can be held responsible for contracting HIV/AIDS</b>	<p>Belief that PLHA's in general are responsible for being infected</p> <p>M = 3.56 (SD = 1.91)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Blacks</th> <th>Whites</th> <th>Coloureds</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>M = 3.09</td> <td>M = 4.55</td> <td>M = 3.14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SD = 2.03</td> <td>SD = 1.60</td> <td>SD = 1.75</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Blacks	Whites	Coloureds	M = 3.09	M = 4.55	M = 3.14	SD = 2.03	SD = 1.60	SD = 1.75		<p>Text version in which the protagonist can be held responsible is more persuasive:</p> <p>23.64 % of the participants</p>
Blacks	Whites	Coloureds										
M = 3.09	M = 4.55	M = 3.14										
SD = 2.03	SD = 1.60	SD = 1.75										
	<p>No statistically significant main effect found of the text variable; no interaction effect found of this variable and the variable 'ethnic background'</p>		<p>Both text versions are equally persuasive:</p> <p>49.43 % of the participants</p> <p>(No statistical test performed, in view of the results)</p>									

The results presented in Table 3.2 clearly suggest that the first research question must be answered negatively; in the three experiments the results were quite comparable. That is: in none of the experiments the participants found one version of the texts significantly more persuasive than the other version.

### *3.2 Research question 2*

The second research question was whether the gender of the participant would have an influence on the persuasiveness of public information documents about HIV/AIDS in which an exemplar is used, and if the researcher's or participant's perspective would result in different experiment outcomes. Both in the experiment of Jansen et al. (2005) and in the experiment of Swinkels (2005) no effects were found of the variable 'gender'. The results of the present experiment are, again, quite comparable to the results of the experiments of Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005); no relationship was found between the persuasiveness of the text and the gender of the participant.

### *3.3 Research question 3*

The third question was whether the ethnicity of the participant would have an influence on the persuasiveness of public information documents about HIV/AIDS in which an exemplar is used, and if the researcher's or participant's perspective would result in different experiment outcomes. In the experiment of Jansen et al. (2005) no effects were found of the variable 'ethnicity of the participant'. In the experiment of Swinkels (2005) there was no significant effect of the variable 'ethnicity' on the persuasiveness of the exemplar either.

The results of the present experiment were comparable to the experiment of Jansen et al. (2005) and to the experiment of Swinkels (2005): no relationship was found between the persuasiveness of the text and the ethnicity of the participant.

## 4. Conclusion and discussion

### *4.1 Research question 1*

In the present study, three research questions were asked. The first question was whether there would be any difference between the results obtained in experiments in which the researcher's perspective on persuasiveness was used, compared to an experiment in which the perspective of the participant was used. In all three experiments involved, the persuasiveness was measured of public information documents about HIV/AIDS in which exemplars were used. According to O'Keefe (1993) it would be reasonable to expect differences between the results from experiments in which these various perspectives are taken: O'Keefe (1993) points out that measuring from the researcher's perspective may be considered more valid than measuring from the participant's perspective, because participants can be influenced by their commonsensical beliefs about persuasion. When participants are asked whether they would probably be influenced by a given message, they may base their answers on their implicit or explicit beliefs about what persuades.

The results of the present study do not confirm O'Keefe's expectations. No differences were found between the outcomes of two earlier experiments in which the dependent variables were measured from the researcher's perspective and a new experiment in which the dependent variables were measured from the participant's perspective. In all three experiments, the participants did not find one version of the public information document significantly more persuasive than the other version.

### *4.2 Research question 2*

The second research question was whether the gender of the participant would have an influence on the persuasiveness of public information documents about HIV/AIDS in which an exemplar is used, and if the usage of researcher's or participant's perspective results in different experiment outcomes.

In none of the three experiments that were studied here, any influence of the gender was found, neither in the earlier experiments in which the researcher's perspective were taken, nor in the new experiment in which the participant's perspective was taken.

### *4.3 Research question 3*

The third research question was whether the ethnicity of the participant would have an influence on the persuasiveness of public information documents about HIV/AIDS in which an exemplar is used, and if the usage of researcher's or participant's perspective results in different experiment outcomes. As Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005) indicated in their studies, culture can have an influence in what persuades a person.

The results of this study do not confirm the view that people from different cultures react differently on particular situations. No influence was found of the ethnicity of the participants on the outcomes of all three experiments, both measured from the perspective of the researcher as measured from the perspective of the participant.

### *4.4 Discussion*

It is remarkable that the results of the experiment in which the participant's perspective was taken and the results of the experiments in which the researcher's perspective were taken appear to be highly comparable to each other with respect to the persuasiveness of the exemplars, the influence of the gender of the participants and the influence of the ethnicity of the participants. No differences were found between the results of the three experiments in the present study. According to O'Keefe (1993), however, the researcher's perspective and the participant's perspective are unlikely to correspond perfectly. In the present study no differences were found between the results of two experiments in which the researcher's perspective were taken and an experiment in which the participant's perspective was taken; there was a clear correspondence with respect to the persuasiveness of the exemplars, the influence of the gender of the participants and the influence of the ethnicity of the participants.

So far, to our knowledge, no empirical research has been done to investigate the premise of O'Keefe (1993) that was from the starting point of the present study. The outcomes presented here suggest that it may be worthwhile to do more research to test the expectations of O'Keefe (1993) and to investigate in more depth if indeed no differences are to be expected when measuring from the perspective of the researcher or from the perspective of the participant.

In the present experiment, the independent variable 'persuasiveness of the exemplar, measured from the perspective of the participant' was measured by three statements in which the participants were asked to compare the persuasiveness of the two texts with each other. Hence, participants weren't asked to evaluate the persuasiveness of the two texts separately. In future studies, it might be interesting to evaluate two (or more) texts separately, using a between subjects design. This way, the evaluation of one text has no influence on the evaluation of the other text, which is the case when the participants are asked to compare the persuasiveness of the two texts. In the present experiment, participants were asked to compare the persuasiveness of the two texts, but did not evaluate the persuasiveness of the texts separately. In this case, for example, when a participant found both versions not persuasive at all, the same score on the Likert-scale was filled in as when a participant found both versions very persuasive, because in both cases the participant did not think there was a difference between the persuasiveness of the one text and the persuasiveness of the other text. This way, the participant's perspective on persuasiveness of the texts is not measured very precisely.

In the present experiment and in the experiments of Jansen, Croonen and De Stadler (2005) and Swinkels (2005), no relation was found between the persuasiveness of the text and the gender, or the ethnic background of the participants. Several studies, however, found that these variables do have an influence on the outcomes of an experiment. For future studies, it could be interesting to investigate why the ethnic background and the gender of the participant had no effect on the persuasiveness of the exemplars in all three experiments of the present study.

In the experiment of Hoeken and Hustinx (2007), which also investigated the influence of the responsibility stereotype, as was done in the three experiments used in this study, the researchers did find an influence of the perceived responsibility of protagonist in the exemplar on the perception of HIV/AIDS patients in general. In the present experiment, the experiment of Jansen et al. (2005) and the experiment of Swinkels (2005) no such an influence was found. A possible explanation for this difference could be caused by the backgrounds of the participants of the experiments. The participants of the experiment of Hoeken and Hustinx (2007) were all Dutch, whereas the participants of the experiments of

Jansen et al. (2005), Swinkels (2005) and the present experiment were South African, with different ethnic backgrounds.

No differences were found between participants with different ethnic backgrounds in the present experiment and the experiments of Jansen et al. (2005) and Swinkels (2005). According to Hofstede (1991), people with different ethnic backgrounds may be expected to react differently on particular situations. In the present study, however, no relation was found between the ethnicity of the participants and the perceived persuasiveness of the various text versions they were presented with. A possible explanation is that there are indeed cultural differences that are related to the ethnic background of the participants, but that the participants in the three experiments with different ethnic backgrounds shared so many similarities (partly because they were all living in the same place and studying at the same university) that these similarities outweighed the group differences. Another possible explanation might be that the type of document played a part in the way the persuasiveness was perceived. In the present study, the study of Jansen et al. (2005) and the study of Swinkels (2005) the perceived persuasiveness was measured from a public information document about HIV/AIDS. As was found in the study of Hoeken and Hustinx (2007), the severity of the disease might have an influence on the persuasiveness. It is possible that all participants found the document about HIV/AIDS persuasive, because the document was about a serious, severe disease. According to Parker et al. (2006), HIV/AIDS is a disease which is present amongst all ethnic groups in South Africa and is one of the most important causes of death in the country. It is possible that all ethnic groups thought the same about the persuasiveness of the texts, because they all see HIV/AIDS as a serious disease, which could influence the perceived persuasiveness.

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## **Appendix: the questionnaire**

### **Research into brochures on HIV/AIDS**

The Unit for Document Design of the Stellenbosch University is doing research on brochures concerning HIV/AIDS. This questionnaire is part of that research.

- Please read the instructions on the next page. After reading the brochure on the third page, please fill in the questions on the pages that follow.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- This questionnaire is anonymous. You are not asked to give your name on the questionnaire and nobody will know who filled in this questionnaire.
- Please be as honest as possible. Don't spend too much time thinking about the answers. Your first reaction is probably the right one.
- If you do not understand a question, please ask for assistance.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

**Instruction**

We would like you to give us your opinion about the concept of the brochure by means of the following scale:

**South Africa has the best constitution in the world**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

*If you **totally disagree** with the sentence that states that South Africa has the best constitution in the world, tick in the **first** box.*

*If you **disagree** with the sentence that states that South Africa has the best constitution in the world, tick in the **second** box.*

*If you **disagree a bit** with the sentence that states that South Africa has the best constitution in the world, tick in the **third** box.*

*If you **neither disagree nor agree** with the sentence that states that South Africa has the best constitution in the world, tick in the **fourth (neutral)** box.*

*If you **agree a bit** with the sentence that states that South Africa has the best constitution in the world, tick in the **fifth** box.*

*If you **agree** with the sentence that states that South Africa has the best constitution in the world, tick in the **sixth** box.*

*If you **totally agree** with the sentence that states people with HIV/AIDS need moral support, tick in the **seventh** box.*

NOW PLEASE READ THE CONCEPT BROCHURE ON THE NEXT PAGE AND KINDLY ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

**I believe that having a close relationship with people (family members excluded)\* infected with HIV/AIDS is:**

**\* This relationship can be a relationship with a friend, a colleague, etc.**

Wise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unwise
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Stupid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Smart
Useful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Useless

**People with HIV/AIDS need moral support.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**People who care for people with HIV/AIDS do something good.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**People suffering from HIV/AIDS have to blame themselves.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**Brochure A**

As HIV/AIDS becomes more common in South Africa, more and more of our friends and family will be infected. Even you yourself may be infected. Our role is to stop judging ourselves, our family members and our friends. Instead we must face the challenge of caring for people living with HIV and AIDS and not condemn them. Unfortunately this is not always the case.

Take the example of John; age 34, who has AIDS. He was contaminated by his wife. She had an affair with a colleague, which she hadn't told John about. He has told his family, who are treating him very badly. They never want to touch anything that he has touched to the extent that they keep locking things away. A separate plate, cup, saucer and spoon are kept for his use. He feels rejected.

Friends and family members sometimes worry that they might be infected when caring for a person with HIV. HIV is not spread by everyday casual contact between individuals and objects. It cannot be passed on by touching, hugging, coughing or sharing eating utensils, but only:

- by having unprotected sex with an infected person,
- through contact with infected blood,
- from an infected mother to her unborn baby (but only some babies born to infected mothers become infected with HIV).

It is possible for people who are infected with HIV to live long healthy lives. You can help those who are infected by showing love, respect and support.

**In the brochure you are confronted with the example of John. The following statements are about that example and about the content in general.**

**I pity John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I'm angry with John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I sympathise with John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am disgusted by John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am ashamed of John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I don't respect John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**To which extent do you think John can be held responsible for contracting AIDS?**

Fully to blame	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Fully blameless
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------

**I find the content of the brochure:**

Realistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unrealistic
Uncommon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Common

**I find the example of John in the brochure:**

Realistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unrealistic
Uncommon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uncommon

**Brochure B**

As HIV/AIDS becomes more common in South Africa, more and more of our friends and family will be infected. Even you yourself may be infected. Our role is to stop judging ourselves, our family members and our friends. Instead we must face the challenge of caring for people living with HIV and AIDS and not condemn them. Unfortunately this is not always the case.

Take the example of John; age 34, who has AIDS. He was contaminated by a girlfriend. John had quite a lot of girlfriends, with whom he did not always have safe sex. He has told his family, who are treating him very badly. They never want to touch anything that he has touched to the extent that they keep locking things away. A separate plate, cup, saucer and spoon are kept for his use. He feels rejected.

Friends and family members sometimes worry that they might be infected when caring for a person with HIV. HIV is not spread by everyday casual contact between individuals and objects. It cannot be passed on by touching, hugging, coughing or sharing eating utensils, but only:

- by having unprotected sex with an infected person,
- through contact with infected blood,
- from an infected mother to her unborn baby (but only some babies born to infected mothers become infected with HIV).

It is possible for people who are infected with HIV to live long healthy lives. You can help those who are infected by showing love, respect and support.

**In the brochure you are confronted with the example of John. The following statements are about that example and about the content in general.**

**I pity John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I'm angry with John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I sympathise with John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am disgusted by John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am ashamed of John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I don't respect John.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**To which extent do you think John can be held responsible for contracting AIDS?**

Fully to blame	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Fully blameless
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------

**I find the content of the brochure:**

Realistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unrealistic
Uncommon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Common

**I find the example of John in the brochure:**

Realistic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unrealistic
Uncommon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Uncommon

**I find brochure A more convincing than brochure B:**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I find brochure B more persuasive than brochure A:**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I can identify better with brochure A than with brochure B:**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**Can you clarify your answers to the last three propositions?**

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**Now, we would like you to fill in some questions about your personality and your cultural background.**

**I am independent.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am shy.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am warm-hearted.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am assertive.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I have a strong personality.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am loyal.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am feminine.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am reliable.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am analytic.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I have executive skills.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am willing to take risks.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am understanding.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I make decisions easily.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am compassionate.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am honest.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**When somebody is hurt, I want to comfort him/her.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am conceited.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am dominant.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am masculine.**

Totally Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I have a warm personality.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am tender.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am inefficient.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am individualistic.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I like to measure up to others.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I like children.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am accommodating.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am ambitious.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**I am gentle.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**In my culture, it is important to have a job which is a personal challenge and gives personal satisfaction.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**In my culture, it is important to have a good relationship with your direct chief.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**In my culture, it is important to be sure you can keep working there as long as you want to.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**In my culture, it is important to work with colleagues which cooperate in a good way.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**In my culture, it is important to have the opportunity to earn a lot of money.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**In my culture, it is important to have the opportunity to get promotion.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**In my culture, it is important to have a job with which you can help others.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**In my culture, it is important to live in an environment which is pleasant for you and your family.**

Totally disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally agree
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------------

**Lastly, we would like to ask you some questions about yourself:**

**You are male / female**

**You are \_\_\_\_ years old.**

**Your nationality is**

\_\_\_\_\_

**You are Coloured / Black / White / Asian / other:**

\_\_\_\_\_

(We fully understand the sensitivity related to this question. It does not relate to racist issues, but combined with the other questions it reflects on cultural differences between people. We will deal with it with the utmost sensitivity.)

**Thank you very much for your cooperation!**