AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION

2023 AMA WINTER ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

Marketing During Times of Change

February 6 • Virtual
February 10-12 • Nashville, TN

PROCEEDINGS

Volume 34

Co-Chairs:

Nita Umashankar
San Diego State University

Monika Lisjak
Arizona State University

2023 AMA Winter Academic Conference

Reconnecting and Reconceiving the Marketplace
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Editors
Nita Umashankar, San Diego State University
Monika Lisjak, Arizona State University

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Foreword

Welcome to the 2023 AMA Winter Academic Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. This conference will shed light on how firms, customers, employees, policymakers, and other stakeholders interact, adapt, and potentially thrive during times of tremendous change. We received an impressive 661 submissions tackling these issues from various perspectives using various methodologies. This includes work on interfaces between artificial intelligence and marketing practice, frontline employees and COVID-19, sociopolitical risk and firm strategy, and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives and performance.

With the addition of a few noteworthy elements, this year's conference has been designed to be inclusive and engaging for all of its attendees. First, in addition to offering an in-person conference, we offer a virtual one that allows attendees from all over the world to participate. We received submissions from researchers living in 49 different countries! Second, we will feature a panel of marketing leaders from prominent companies who will inform us about opportunities and challenges in implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion in practice. Third, we have invited students from local universities, including the historically Black college and university (HBCU) Tennessee State, to attend the DEI panel and meet with faculty to learn about a career in academia. Fourth, we have arranged a networking session with junior and senior faculty to facilitate mentorship and research collaboration. Finally, we have bolstered the social events, including the Friday poster and dinner reception and the Saturday night post-dinner meet-up, to provide valuable feedback to doctoral students, reunite friends, and foster new connections.

This conference is made possible by the combined efforts of 23 track chairs, the AMA Academic Council President, Maura Scott, and the incredible team at AMA, including Hannah Finkelstein and Marilyn Stone. We are grateful to these amazing individuals.

We look forward to seeing you virtually or in person in Nashville at Winter AMA 2023.

Sincerely,

Monika & Nita
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Artificial Intelligence, Models and Methods

Title: A META-ANALYSIS OF ALGORITHM AVERSION

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Keywords: artificial intelligence, algorithm aversion, human, meta-analysis

Description: We conduct a meta-analysis to identify key factors that may drive algorithm aversion.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Research on consumer responses (both attitudinal and behavioral) to algorithms relative to human agents has exploded recently. Scholars in several domains have documented the prevalence of "algorithm aversion," while other studies have found that consumers exhibit "algorithm appreciation." Given these equivocal results, key research questions arise: how do consumers respond to algorithms vs. human agents, i.e., do we observe a general algorithm aversion? Why do consumers respond differently to algorithm than to human agents performing identical actions even in the same context? Likewise, why do similar algorithm characteristics lead to conflicting reactions from consumers in different contexts?

Method and Data

To identify relevant studies of consumer responses to algorithms (vs. human agents), we used keyword search procedure for journal publications and working papers from several electronic databases. We also contacted key authors working on algorithm/AI topics to request unpublished papers. We then reviewed the reference lists in previously obtained articles. As for inclusion criteria, we restricted to empirical studies that examine the relative effect of algorithms and human agents on a measure that can be interpreted as a consumer response, and that effect sizes could be directly derived from original studies or calculated with sufficient data. Our final database includes 67 papers, comprising 156 studies and 302 effect sizes from 2001-2022.

We select Cohen's d as the effect size metric, which is defined as the standardized mean difference between the effects of algorithms and human agents (on consumer responses), with the difference scaled by the pooled standard deviation (Cohen 2013). We coded main moderators and control variables based the information obtained from original studies. Since the effect sizes are nested within studies that are nested within articles, which could lead to error correlations, we use a three-level multivariate meta-analysis model with inverse variance weighting and the maximum likelihood method.

Summary of Findings

Based on our empirical analysis, we find a significant and small negative mean effect (Cohen's d= -.24), which implies an overall algorithm aversion. Moreover, several moderators can significantly reinforce or reduce algorithm aversion. Starting with algorithm characteristics, algorithm aversion is reduced when the algorithm provides advice as opposed to perform a task autonomously, when its description is detailed, and when a human being (vs. not) is involved in the decision process. On the other hand, trying to offset an algorithm's perceived lack of human

mind, e.g., by making it more compassionate or human-like, tends to reinforce algorithm aversion. Among human characteristics, consumers are less averse to algorithms when they are compared to non-expert human agents (vs. experts) and when the human agent is distant (vs. close) to the consumer (e.g., stranger vs. a friend or family member). As for task characteristics, tasks with high (vs. low) goal clarity, those perceived as less morally laden, and with lower privacy concerns are associated with lower algorithm aversion. With respect to industry characteristics, we find that algorithm aversion is reduced when the human-algorithm interaction occurs in more concentrated industries with less AI exposure.

Key Contributions

Integrating the growing multidisciplinary research on consumer responses to algorithm relative to human agents in our meta-analysis, we provide important contributions to academics and practitioners. First, we establish that consumers exhibits an overall algorithm aversion and find that such aversion varies systematically depending on a set of moderators and control variables. Second, by explaining the variation in effect sizes reported in the previous research, our meta-analysis provides a better understanding of how situational contingencies can account for variations in algorithm aversion and offers new insights on how to increase the adoption of algorithm in contexts where algorithm aversion is prevalent. Finally, our integrative meta-analysis allows us to identify gaps in theory and empirics, which provide important directions for future research.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE-EVOKED MENTAL IMAGERY: USING CHATBOT AND NEWS RECOMMENDATION SYSTEM FOR BRAND PERSUASION

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Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Chatbot, News recommendation system, Brand persuasion

Description: We drawing from the chatbot marketing efforts and news recommendation system from AI-powered brand cognitive present research examine the effects of brand persuasion relationship through AI marketing.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Bots on social media can transform the customer experience by turning service or product-focused interactions toward communication with an efficient artificial intelligence (AI) decision-making platforms (Klaus and Zaichkowsky, 2020). In the near future of AI marketing, a brand will rely on new tools such as chatbots to communicate directly with customers and develop brand-personal relationships with them (Appel et al., 2020). This new CMEs of social media marketing communications supported by AI-powered chatbots will become more commonplace. Furthermore, it will maintain an instant conversational interaction between brands and their online

customers and will control the more important decision-making process with customers (Appel et al., 2020; Klaus and Zaichkowsky, 2020). To explore the conceptualization of CMEs, this study provides extend literature on cross-industry applications of chatbots, along with three key dimensions namely customization, information, and accessibility (Brandtzaeg and Folstad, 2017; Yao, 2017; Zarouali et al., 2018). Customization represents the extent to which AI-driven chatbot marketing campaigns can provide customers with customized assistance to meet their needs (Godey et al., 2016). Information refers to one of the basic marketing efforts of chatbots, providing customers with information about a product or service or the brand itself (Yao, 2017). Accessibility refers to the timely and immediate evaluation and response to customer information through artificial intelligence technology. Accessibility has become one of the important media features that chatbots can bring to marketing communications (Zarouali et al., 2018).

Method and Data

This study adopted a survey research method and recruited 350 respondents from online survey. Measurements adopted: CMEs with three dimensions including customization, information, and accessibility (Chung et al., 2018; Godey et al., 2016); recommendation system for news (Diehl et al., 2016), AI use for social interaction (Chung, 2013), and AI brand persuasion (Diehl et al., 2016). Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used

for data analysis. All constructs were significantly converged ($p < 0.05$). The scales achieved discriminant validity, convergent validity and reliability. The effect of CMEs ($\beta = 0.42$), and NRS ($\beta = 0.38$) on AI social interaction are significant ($p < 0.001$). The effect of CMEs ($\beta = 0.51$), and NRS ($\beta = 0.46$) on AI brand persuasion are significant ($p < 0.001$). The effect of AI social interaction ($\beta = 0.49$), on AI brand persuasion is significant ($p < 0.001$). All hypotheses were supported.

Summary of Findings

Drawing from the CMEs and NRS from AI-powered brand cognitive present research examine the effects of brand persuasion relationship through AI marketing. Results show that CMEs and NRS positively influence AI-social interaction and brand persuasion. In addition, social interaction in AI drive brand persuasion. The findings of this research provide a rich academic and managerial implications.

Statement of Key Contributions

As an important marketing tool, artificial intelligence (AI) recommendation systems for brand engagement offer an opportunity for merchants to discovery potential consumption tendency. This study aims to explore the role of AI-driven chatbot marketing efforts (CMEs) and news recommendation system (NRS) in the establishment of relationships between brands persuasion and their customers, extending the link between relationship marketing and AI. Data are collected from 350

customers in the China, and using structural equation modeling is used for data analysis. Results show that customization, information, and accessibility are important CMEs components. CMEs have significant direct effects on the social interaction and brand persuasion with chatbot agents. In addition, NRS has a positive correlation in both AI social interaction and AI-brand persuasion; finally, social interaction has a significant positive effect on brand persuasion. The implications of this study can enable practitioners to understand the effects of AI on user perception and provide guidance for the development of CMEs and NRS strategies and brand relationship building.

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES AS MARKETPLACE: HOW CONSTRUAL LEVEL THEORY SHED LIGHT OF TENSION IN THE DATA ENVIRONMENT?

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Keywords: Autonomous Vehicle; Construal level theory; Personalization privacy paradox; Social presence; Well-being

Description: In this paper, we are interested in how the data management of a smart service within an autonomous vehicle can be perceived by consumers through the personalization process by relying on social presence and construal level theory.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Autonomous vehicles (AV) enable ever greater interaction between humans and technologies. Automation, and so data capture, allows the vehicle to become a new marketplace, largely relying on consumer data. Whoever controls vehicle data holds the power (and the future) of the automotive industry. We use a consumer perspective to better understand the privacy calculus users face while using personalized services. We aim to participate on the debate about consumer's data regulation, within a personalization-privacy paradox perspective. We investigate how various factors such as data sensitivity, data collection, social presence of the vehicle, and the personalization process can impact consumer adoption through construal level theory. In this way, we seek to support emerging regulations with consumer preferences and behaviors.

Method and Data

We conduct two scenario-based experiments done online with a professional panel provider and a representative sample of the German population. Participants ordered a meal in an AV, with a AI-based personalized suggestion using their personal data.

In our first study (n = 479), we use a 2 (sensitivity of data is low vs. high) x 2 (data collection is concrete vs. abstract) experiment. We manipulate sensitivity of data by asking the respondent to give vehicle geolocation, age, gender, occupation and browsing history (websites visited) in the "low" condition and vehicle geolocation, online shopping and purchase history for the "high" condition. We manipulate data collection by indicating the data supplier, either the vehicle (abstract condition) or third parties like Google, Facebook and Amazon (concrete condition).

In our second study (n = 1,440), we use a 2 (AV communicates through a screen (low social presence) vs. by voice (high social presence)) x 2 (personalization process is concrete vs. abstract). In the concrete condition, AV proposes to go to a restaurant where the consumer already went before and AV proposes to go to a new restaurant recommended by AI with similar characteristics in the abstract condition.

Summary of Findings

The value of personalization increases trust beliefs as well as the intention to order through the AV and to be delivered at home and the intention to order through the AV and to collect the food at the restaurant. The value of personalization also increases WB. WB in turn increases the intention to order through the AV and to be delivered at home and the intention to order through the AV and to collect the food at the restaurant. Risk beliefs decreases trust beliefs and decreases WB. Trust beliefs increases the intention to order through the AV and to be delivered at home and the intention to order through the AV and to collect the food at the restaurant.

More importantly, the use of sensitive (vs. no sensitive) data increase the value of personalization but decreases risk beliefs. An abstract (vs. concrete) data collection from the AV increases the value of personalization and decreases risk beliefs. A high social presence (vs. low) increases the value of personalization, and decreases risk beliefs. An abstract (vs. concrete) personalization process by the AV increases the value of personalization but has no significant impact on risk beliefs.

Key Contributions

We take part in the debate on the regulation by taking into account the consumers' perspective. The first study shows that data coming from the AV has more personalization value and induces less risk beliefs than data from third parties (Google, Facebook, Amazon). In line with the literature, we demonstrate that third parties are not the most relevant entities for the acquisition and management of consumer data. More unexpectedly, our results suggest that the use of sensitive data implies a decrease in perceived risks. We assume that more sensitive data allow a better personalization through more relevant data that better represents us.

Concerning the AV interaction in the second study, we show that an AV communicating by voice increases the value of personalization and decreases risk beliefs. A vehicle with a higher social presence improves the user experience by impacting positively behaviors. Voice vs written messages is therefore an important research direction that deserves further investigations. Abstract personalization process through AI is also perceived more favorably by users since the value of personalization increases without impacting risk beliefs, which suggests that recommendations that are less in line with consumer patterns are relevant in the context of personalized service consumption.

CONSUMERS' RESPONSE ON PRICE PROMOTION: EFFECT OF REFERENCE PRICE

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Keywords: Reference price, Brand choice, Purchase incidence, Modelling & Simulation

Description: This study investigates consumers' response on price promotion strategies and role of reference price.

ABSTRACT

We investigate consumers' response on price promotion strategies and role of reference price. Based on the reference price estimation, we modeled brand choice and purchase incidence probabilities. We propose an application of Agent-Based Modeling and Simulation to understand the impact of price promotion on consumer's reference price and brand choices.

INTRODUCTION

Reference price (RP) has become a central concept in analyzing how consumers respond to price in brand choice decisions (Lattin and Bucklin, 1989). Earlier research indicates that consumers not only consider the absolute values of the purchase prices of choice alternatives, but also compare these prices against some internal reference price. Internal reference price of a brand has been conceived as consumer's memory for past prices and, operationalized as a weighted average of the prices paid on previous purchases (Bucklin and Gupta, 1992). Our aim is to first study the impact of price promotion on RP and how RP influence brand choices specifically for repeat consumers. The promotion induced variation in consumer's RP leading to the change in brand sales can be an important determinant for identifying when and how to introduce price promotions. Therefore, we also want to investigate how brand managers can utilize consumer response to promotion in determining optimal pricing strategies for their products. To carry out our research objectives, we adopt a multi-stage approach consisting of

three stages. First, we explore and identify appropriate RP models from previous studies. Next, we combine three models of consumer decision, i.e., RP based brand choice model, purchase incidence model and purchase quantity model. We combined all the three models as because a standalone brand choice model is not adequate to determine brand sales. The scanner-panel data for pasta brands is used for training the models. The pasta category was selected as it falls into the frequently purchase goods. In final stage we operationalize these models in an agent-based simulation environment to generate patterns of consumer's brand choice, purchase timing and purchase quantities as well as weekly sales for various brands. By analyzing the output of simulation, we identify key insights about how these promotion parameters influence consumer RP and brand choices. Further, we analyze the generated sales pattern to identify optimal promotion pricing for various brands. Our empirical findings suggest that RP has a significant impact on brand choice and there is a direct effect of price promotion on consumer's response.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Price evaluation are important inputs to consumer decisions such as what, where and how much to buy (Niedrich et al., 2001). The RP reflects the expectations of the consumer, which are shaped by the past pricing activity of the brand. Following this, consumers establish and use some standard or a RP point to evaluate the purchase price of a product (Bucklin and Gupta, 1992; Briesch, et al., 1997). Moreover, incorporating RP effects has also been shown to be important in designing promotional strategies (Ailawadi et al., 2009). When previously encountered price information is used to model RP, the price judgment is assumed to be memory-based and when current price of another brand is used as a RP, price judgment is assumed to be stimulus-based (Lattin and Bucklin, 1989, Briesch et al., 1997). According to Briesch et al. (1997), memory-based RP models are based on prices of previously chosen brands (PASTCHBR), brand-specific past prices and (PASTBRSP) and brand-specific past

prices and other information (PASTINFO). For frequently bought product categories, an internal RP is more important construct in affecting consumer purchase behavior than an external RP because consumers are familiar about the prices of brands (Kalwani and Yim, 1992). Therefore, we identify and select the suitable RP models for how expected prices are formed and how consumers' price expectations can affect their brand choices (Niedrich et al., 2001). The model is composed of a probability of purchase component and a RP formation component. In this study, we have considered first two memory-based models to compute the RP which are described below (Briesch et al., 1997). The effect of price promotions on consumer decisions in terms of whether or not to buy in a product category (purchase incidence), which brand to select given that a category purchase will be made (brand choice) (Bucklin and Gupta, 1992) and quantity of that product purchased during the shopping (Ailawadi and Neslin, 1998). Therefore, in following section, we incorporated and examined purchase incidence, brand choice and purchase quantity models to estimate the sales volume.

Memory-based RP Models

We tested the two memory-based RP models to see which best fits for our specific context.

Model 1 (PASTCHBR): It assumes that consumers do not differentiate among prices of different brands and refer the price of the brand chosen on the prior occasion as the common RP to judge prices of different choice alternatives.

$$RP_{ht} = \alpha RP_{h(t-1)} + (1-\alpha) SP_{h(cb[t-1])(t-1)} \qquad \textit{(Equation 1)}$$

where, RP_{ht} is RP of household *h* on purchase occasion *t*, $SP_{h(cb[t-1])(t-1)}$ is the shelf price (SP) of the brands chosen by household *h* on past purchase occasion (*t*-1), and α is the price carryover parameter

Model 2 (PASTBRSP): It suggests that customers establish their RPs specific to each brand, based on the brand's price history

$$RP_{hjt} = \alpha RP_{hj(t-1)} + (1-\alpha) SP_{hj(t-1)} \qquad \textit{(Equation 2)}$$

where, RP_{hjt} is RP of household h for brand j on purchase occasion t, $SP_{hj(t-1)}$ is the shelf price (SP) of the brand j chosen by household h on past purchase occasion (t-1)

METHODOLOGY

A. Selection of RP model: As a first step, we use multiple memory-based RP models that are used to estimate the RP point for a product category for a population of consumers. We compare two different memory-based RP models (Equation 1 and 2), where we use brand choice data to identify most suitable RP model and the price carryover parameter (α).

B. Models of consumer decision: At first consumers decides whether he or she would purchase in the category. This is determined by the purchase incidence model. If the consumer does decide to purchase, he or she proceeds to make a brand choice decision. A brand choice model determines which brand consumers will select, given their RP and the prices of available brands. Once the decision is made to choose a brand, consumer decide on the purchase unit which is driven by a purchase quantity model. the subsequent subsections, we discuss the above models in detail and the model training approach.

C. Agent-based simulation system: In the final step, we operationalize these models within an agent-based simulation (described in following sections). These models are attached to the population of virtual consumers of the product so that each consumer has a RP, a purchase incidence model, a brand choice model and a purchase quantity model. For a set of given promotion parameters, simulator generates patterns of RP, purchase decisions at the individual consumer level and different brand sales at the aggregate level. We then use a simple optimization algorithm to determine the optimal promotion parameters for the set of products.

Consumer Behavior Models

Brand Choice Model: The model describes the process which consumers follow when making decisions about brand choices. This is a multinomial logit model as described in Briesch et al.,

(1997) where the conditional probability that a household *h* will choose brand *j* during shopping trip *t*, if it decides to buy, is given by

$$P_{ht}(j|inc) = \exp(u_{hjt}) / \sum_i^n \exp(u_{hit}) \qquad \textit{(Equation 3)}$$

where, u_{hjt} is the brand utility of brand *j* for household *h* on occasion *t*, *i* = 1, 2, . . ., *n*, are number of brands.

The brand utility is dependent on the price, RP and an additional factor which is brand loyalty. We considered a symmetric model i.e. gain (RP-P) and loss (P-RP) have symmetric effects.

$$u_{hjt} = \beta_{0,j} + \beta_p \mathrm{P}_{hjt} + \beta_{rp}\left(\mathrm{RP}_{hjt} - \mathrm{P}_{hjt}\right) + \beta_L LOY_{hjt} \qquad \textit{(Equation 4)}$$

Here, the loyalty attribute (LOY_{hjt}) is defined as a weighted sequence of past purchases of a brand. Consumers often show a preference to a particular package or size of a brand. Such preferences can be introduced as consumer attributes in the same way as brand loyalty.

$$\mathrm{LOY}_{hjt} = \lambda \mathrm{LOY}_{hj(t-1)} + (1-\lambda) I_{hj(t-1)} \qquad \textit{(Equation 5)}$$

where, LOY_{hjt} is loyalty of household *h* towards brand *j* on purchase occasion *t*, λ = loyalty carryover parameter, *and* $\mathrm{I}_{hj(t-1)}$ = 1, if brand *j* is purchased by household *h* at time (*t*-1), 0 otherwise.

Purchase Incidence Model: Second model determines the probability that household *h* will purchase the product category during shopping trip *t* (Bucklin and Gupta, 1992). The model is trained as logistic regression where probability of incidence in week *t* for household *h* is given by

$$P_{ht}(inc) = \frac{\exp(V_{ht})}{1+\exp(V_{ht})} \qquad \textit{(Equation 6)}$$

where, $V_{ht} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CR_h + \beta_2 INV_{ht}$, CR_h = the rate of weekly consumption for household *h*, INV_{ht} = inventory estimate for household *h*, at time *t*.

In order to estimate inventory, we consider that households draw down their inventory linearly based on their consumption rate. We initialize the inventory at zero for each household and then recursively compute the inventory using the following equation.

$$INV_{ht} = INV_{h(t-1)} + Q_{h(t-1)} - CR_h * I_{(t,t-1)} \qquad \textit{(Equation 7)}$$

where, $Q_{h(t-1)}$ is quantity bought on previous store visit by household *h*, $I_{(t,t-1)}$ is interval (in weeks) between store visit *t* - 1 and *t*.

Purchase Quantity Model: This third model determines the conditional probability of purchase quantity, once the decision of purchase has been made. In this paper we use Zero-truncated Poisson regression based on Ailawadi and Neslin (1998) to compute the conditional probability of purchasing *q* units (*q* >= 1)

$$P_{ht}(q \mid inc \,\&\, j) = \frac{(\lambda_{hjt})^q}{\exp(\lambda_{hjt}-1)q!} \qquad \textit{(Equation 8)}$$

where, $\lambda_{hjt} = \exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 Size_t + \beta_2 INV_{ht} + \beta_3 U_h)$, $Size_t$ = size in ounces of the chosen brand at time *t*, INV_{ht} = mean-centered household inventory, U_h = average number of units purchased by household *h*.

Data and Model Training

We have trained our models on a publicly available dataset (source: Dunnhumby dataset[1]). It contains household transaction data for pasta category covering 2 years. We selected the top 6 best-selling pasta brands comprising national and private labels. We split the data into initialization (first 30 weeks), prediction/training (42 weeks) and testing period (last 30 weeks). The initialization period is for initializing the model variables such as RP, inventory and loyalty from an initial value (0). As the models are suitable for repeat buyers, the consumers who have made at least 5 purchases in the training period and at least 10 purchases in the whole duration were considered.

Selection of RP Model: To identify the more suitable RP model and price carryover (α), we used the model fit of RP based brand choice model. We tested the model fit for a range of α (0.4 to 0.8) for both the models. The model 1 (Eq. 1) with α = 0.5 was the found to the best fit

[1] https://www.dunnhumby.com/source-files/

based on model parameter pseudo R^2 and log-likelihood of brand choice. The brand choice model is trained using the multinomial logistic regression (Eq. 3) which takes as input the consumer's memory-based RP, brand loyalty, brand prices and identifies the probability of choosing a specific brand out of available brands. The brand loyalty also has a carryover parameter which is identified by generating model fit for a range of values (best fit with $\lambda = 0.7$). The pseudo R^2 of the selected model is 0.6. The purchase incidence model (Eq. 6) is logistic regression-based model which is trained on average household consumption rate and household inventory (Eq. 7), Coefficient for both the factors (household inventory, consumption rate) are found to be significant ($p<0.01$). The purchase quantity model (Eq. 8) was trained as zero-truncated Poisson regression to decide the quantity purchased by the household. However, the model fit on the data with the current set of parameters is not within acceptable range. Hence, we considered product quantity =1 since most of the transactions (80%) has 1 purchase quantity.

Agent-based Simulation System

We operationalize these models using a simulator, which is an agent-based modeling and simulation platform called ESL (Clark et al., 2017) where each synthetic consumer is taken as an agent with their behavior described by the attached behavior models. The simulator takes as input synthetic population of consumers with the behavior models and range of promotion parameters (promotion depth, duration, and rigidity) for selected brands. Rigidity denotes the interval between two price changes (Cacchiarelli and Sorrentino, 2019).

Synthetic Population of Consumers: We generate a population of virtual consumers with a realistic representation of attributes such as RP, consumption rate, average units purchased, and demographic variables such as household size. We use a subset of existing consumers (having high repeat purchase) for our analysis. We clustered and found two subgroups based on their RP and use stratified sampling to generate synthetic population set. A total of 283

synthetic consumers was generated where 170 belongs to the group with low RP and remaining 113 belongs to high RP, maintaining the original distribution of repeat buyers present in the data.

Simulation Process: The simulator is run for a period of virtual simulation time and where on each sim-day (cycle), a subset of synthetic consumers whose purchase incidence model indicates that the time has come to visit the store, will visit the virtual store. On their virtual visit, they will face a specific combination of promotion parameters associated with various brands. The brand choice model of each virtual consumer will then decide which brand to purchase and how much quantity (currently it is kept at 1 for all brands). Next, for each synthetic consumer, the time dependent factors such as RP, brand loyalty and inventory are updated. This concludes the end of the current cycle. The process is repeated for the subsequent cycles till the end of period is reached. The simulator generates each consumer's RP, each brand's weekly sales for the specific brand in focus for the range of promotion parameters (depth – 10% to 50%, duration- 1 to 5 weeks and rigidity 1 to 5 weeks). The simulation is run for a period of virtual simulation time (30 weeks) to produce consumer responses and brand sales. The combination of promotion parameters which has generated the maximal sales for the selected brand/s is the optimal promotion parameters.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Identify Consumer Segments: Based on the generated RP, we cluster and found two distinct groups. Group 1 with 170 consumers has a lower mean RP (0.5 Euros) and Group 2 with 113 consumers have higher mean RP value (0.98 Euros). This distinction arises because group 1 was the primary buyers of lower prices brands (private label value), while group 2 were buyers of premium high price (national brands and premium private labels).

Impact of Price Promotion on Reference Price

We consider two brands - Brand A, top selling in Group 1 (40% of market share) and Brand B, top selling in Group 2 (15% of market share). The average base price of Brand A and B are 0.53 Euros and 1.07 Euros respectively.

Duration of Price Promotion Effects: We observe that when promotion duration in Brand A is low (1 week), Group 1 consumers maintain their RP close to the base price (~95% of base price). However, for the same group of consumers, the average RP dropped significantly (~83% of the base price) when promotion duration was high (five weeks). This is observed because with low promotion duration, the average RP does not fall significantly and recover to its original value of (0.5 Euros), however with high promotion duration RP falls significantly during promotion period and does not recover fully (Figure 1a).

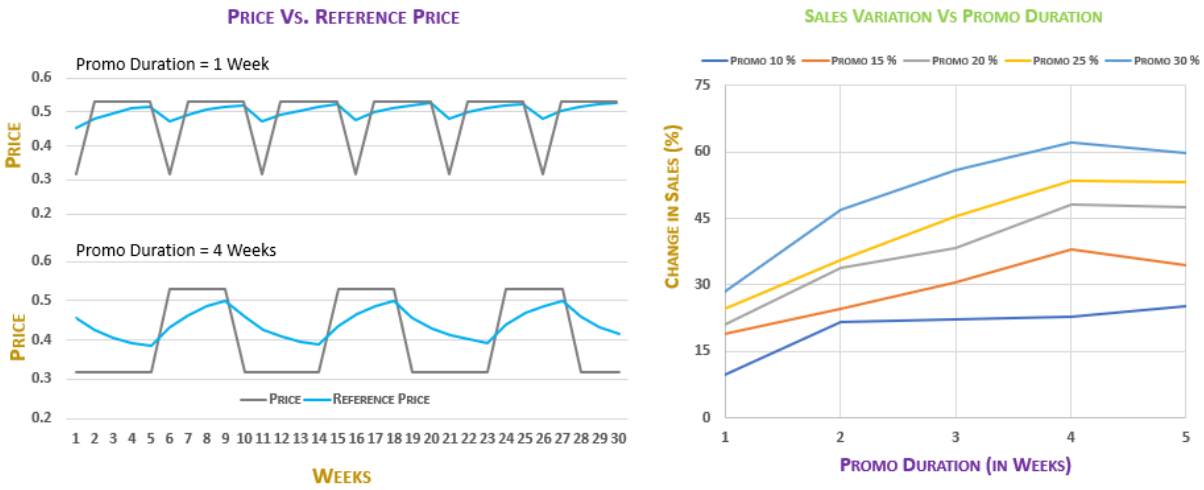

Figure 1a) RP variation with high and low promotion duration for Brand A, 1b) Sales variation with promotion duration for brand B

Similar effect was observed for Group 2 when promotion was given in Brand B. For this analysis, promotion depth and rigidity are kept constant (40% and four weeks respectively). This suggests that longer promotion durations adversely affect RP and lower consumer's perceived benefit which becomes apparent when we identify improvement in sales with increasing promotion duration. Initially, increasing promotion duration up to 4 weeks leads to increment in sales, however increasing duration further has a diminishing effect (Figure 1b).

Brand Specific Price Promotions

Across different combinations, the maximum change in sales for Brand A was 4% (for Price Rigidity - 4 weeks, Promotion Duration - 1 week and Promotion Depth - 20%. As Brand A is already the top selling brand, giving higher Promotion depth or longer Promotion duration doesn't induce much brand switching within Group 1(shift in consumers buying other brands). Also, Group 2 consumers with preference towards high price brands do not get attracted by promotion in Brand A and further lowering the price might hamper the overall sales. Hence, sales do not increase (rather decreases) with high promotion depth and promotion duration. We performed the same experiment for Brand B and the maximum change in revenue was 94% (for Price Rigidity - 3 weeks, Promotion Duration - 3 weeks and Promotion Depth - 50%).

Impact of Price Promotion on Brand Switching: We highlight the fact that the surge in sales for Brand B with high promotion depth is seen due to the brand switching behavior exhibited by Group 1 consumers towards Group B segment. As a result of high promotion depth (range of 40 to 50%), which leads to Brand B price coming nearly identical to price of Brand A (0.53 Euro). Therefore, consumers from Group 1 having low RP (~0.5 Euro) now see a high value in purchasing brand B which belongs to a popular national brand. This ultimately induce brand switching behavior towards brand B.

THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Earlier studies have considered how consumer formed RPs, retrieved and used for purchase decision. This work contributes by investigating the use of RP in examining consumers' brand choice behaviour and response on various price promotions. Our results indicate significant contributions to existing literature by measuring the effects of RP on brand sales, specifically for frequently purchased goods. Methodologically too, this research has a contribution, distinctively following a multi-stage approach, where we introduced a novel technique of agent-based modelling and simulation to better examine consumers' response related to the

effect of RP and price promotion parameters. Long duration promotions lower the consumer's RP, thus have an impact on brand sales. If a product is frequently on promotion, consumers may perceive the promotional price as normal price. To use price promotion effectively, managers must understand the link between pricing activity and consumer expectations. Therefore, optimal price promotion strategies should not impact the RP significantly, however helps to increase the brand sales. The results from this study can be generalized and implemented by a variety of retailer formats where they deal with frequently purchased goods. Retailers who are offering such products on their shelf, can use the novel approach and insights from this study to decide their optimal price promotion strategies and improve overall store performance.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The success of pricing and promotion generates immediate sales, however there is concern about the long-run implications (Ailawadi et al., 2009). Our finding also suggests that the frequency with which a brand is promoted has an immediate impact on sales however they may erode the long-run profitability of the brand if used too often. Similarly, longer promotion durations and aggressive price cuts affect RP point. Similar type of promotion does not have uniform impact across various brands. High promotion on relatively higher priced product, might attract additional buyers from low RP customer segment. Therefore, from a managerial viewpoint, retailer should promote their strong brands with limited promotions and adopt such strategies more frequently. Our study has some limitations that need to be addressed. In this research, we have not included promotion related factors which may impact the purchase incidence probability as suggested by Bucklin and Gupta (1992). Dimensions of planned shopping behavior are also not incorporated in this study. An interesting direction for future research is to investigate the long-term adverse effect of different forms of price promotion, such as coupons, cash refund offers and price packs.

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DELEGATION OF PURCHASING TASKS TO AI: THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED CHOICE AND DECISION AUTONOMY

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Keywords: autonomy, choice, decision, AI adoption, consumer decision-making process

Description: Our paper examines consumer autonomy as a determinant of AI utilization in the purchasing context and our results show that the delegation of purchasing tasks to AI that restricts choice and decision dimensions of consumers' perceived autonomy reduces the likelihood of AI adoption.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

While AI applications such as recommender systems and autonomous shopping systems ease purchase decision-making process, it may undermine consumers' sense of autonomy (André et al. 2018; de Bellis and Johar 2020). In this context, AI takes over two customer roles. First, it narrows choices to consideration sets. Thus, customers' perceived choice autonomy, which is their subjective sense of having the control to view and narrow down options freely without external influence, is reduced significantly (André et al. 2018; Werternbroch et al. 2020). Second, AI can go beyond filtering choices and take over final purchasing decisions. This action diminishes customers' perceived decision autonomy, that is, their subjective sense of having the control to make up their own minds about whether to buy, and if so, which brands or products (Lee et al. 2018; Werternbroch et al. 2020).

Given the increasing delegation of decision-making tasks to AI-enabled purchasing aids, our research seeks to answer three key questions. First, in a consumer purchase decision-making setting, *how do perceived choice and decision autonomy affect the likelihood that consumers adopt AI?* Second, *what are the boundary conditions of these effects?* Third, *what mechanisms explain the relationship between choice and decision autonomy with AI adoption?*

Method and Data

We conduct 3 online experiments involving different scenarios of an AI-enabled mobile application (app) that narrows choices and makes purchase decision for customers. We use participants' likelihood of adopting the app as the dependent variable across all studies. Study 1 (grocery shopping app) examines the impact of choice and decision autonomy on the adoption of AI-enabled technology. We use a 2 (choice autonomy: present vs. absent) × 2

(decision autonomy: present vs. absent) between-subjects design. The 535 Prolific panel members who participated in the study received monetary compensation.

Study 2 (running shoes app) examines if identity interacts with autonomy to affect AI adoption. We use a between-subjects experimental design: choice autonomy (present vs. absent) × decision autonomy (present vs. absent) × identity (i.e., the extent to which running constitutes customers' identity). 241 MTurk participants took part in the study in exchange for monetary compensation.

Study 3 (cooking app) tests the role of satisfaction with autonomy as a mechanism that explains the effect of choice and decision autonomy on AI adoption. We use a 2 (choice autonomy: present vs. absent) × 2 (decision autonomy: present vs. absent) between-subjects design. 260 MTurk panel members participated and received monetary compensation.

Summary of Findings

The results of ANOVA in Study 1, 2 and 3 indicate that choice autonomy and decision autonomy affect AI adoption. In Study 2 we also found that identity affects AI adoption, such that the stronger the customer identity, the higher the likelihood of AI adoption. Although no interaction effect is found between choice autonomy and identity, decision autonomy and identity appear to interact to affect customers' AI adoption. When running is not salient to the identity (i.e., identity is rated as low), participants in the autonomy-present condition are more likely to adopt the app than those in the decision autonomy-absent condition. In contrast, among participants who have strong and moderate identities as runners, we find no significant difference in the likelihood of adopting the AI-enabled app between participants in decision autonomy-present versus absent condition. The absence of decision autonomy as a deterrent to AI adoption is less prominent when identity is moderate and strong. Finally, study 3 indicates that (1) satisfaction with choice autonomy has a mediation effect on the relationship

between choice autonomy and AI adoption, and (2) satisfaction with decision autonomy mediates the relationship between autonomy of decision and AI adoption.

Key Contributions

First, by identifying the type of task along the decision-making process that can be delegated to AI we determine two dimensions of consumer autonomy (i.e., choice and decision). Second, we empirically examine the consequence of relinquishing customer autonomy to AI, which is currently scarce (André et al. 2018; Wertenbroch et al. 2020). We show that customers' perceived choice and decision autonomy are predictors of the adoption of AI-enabled purchasing aid and note the role of satisfaction with choice and decision autonomy as a mechanism that explains the effects. Third, by testing for a circumstance in which the negative effect of a lack of autonomy is attenuated, we highlight how the AI-enabled app can be designed to increase adoption.

From a managerial perspective, we offer a number of contributions. First, firms should enhance customers' perceptions of choice autonomy such as by improving the usability of their search tools in addition to offering AI -generating personalized choices. Second, as the identity salience of an activity (e.g., running) increases the likelihood of adopting the AI-enabled purchasing app for products essential to the activity (e.g., running shoes), firms should target customers based on their identity salience.

TITLE: EXAMINING THE DRIVERS OF PERCEIVED PERSONALITY IN AI ASSISTANT USAGE ADOPTION

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Key words: AI Assistant, Smart Speaker, Personality, Usage Adoption

Description: Present research draws from Stereotype Content Model to examine how the perceived personality of AI assistant exert impact on continuance usage adoption of AI assistant.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Enabled by Internet of Things, consumers can manage their daily activities and orchestra the variety of devices and services in their life in an unprecedent way. Artificial intelligent personal assistants play a pivotal role in the smart speaker, as they can fully integrate and interact with users, thereby providing a platform for artificial intelligence to enter consumer's everyday life. Despite the growing popularity of AI assistant adoption, our understanding on the underlying driving factors that influence their adoption is far from comprehensive. To address the research gap, present research

draws from Stereotype Content Model to examine how the perceived personality of AI assistant exert impact on continuance usage and purchase intention through AI assistant.

Method and Data

An initial pilot study was conducted using online survey method. Respondents with smart speaker usage experience were recruited to participate in the study and screening questions were used to validate their previous usage experience. Measurements adopted in the survey: anthropomorphism (Guido and Peluso, 2015); social presence (Roy et al., 2019); performance expectance, effort expectance, facilitating condition, social influence (Venkatesh et al. 2011); perceived competence, perceived warmth (Hu, et al., 2021); trust (Cyr et al., 2007); continuance intention measure (Bhattacherjee, 2001); purchase intention (Grewal et al., 1998). The result of the pilot study showed positive relationship on the proposed hypothesis.

Summary of Findings

Results show anthropomorphism and social presence drives perceived warmth. Performance expectance, effort expectance, facilitating condition, social influence drives perceived competence. Furthermore, perceived warmth and perceived competence facilitates trust, which in turn influence usage adoption.

Statement of Key Contributions

Present research draws from Stereotype Content Model to examine the underlying

factors that drive the usage of AI assistant. This research contributes by exemplifying the key factors that drives the personality traits of perceived warmth and perceived competence of AI assistant. Hence, by identifying the determinants that drives perceived warmth and perceived competence, present study provides an important ground where marketers can highlight to facilitate AI assistant usage adoption.

TITLE

Factors affecting SMEs' adoption of modern technology: a developing country perspective.

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Keywords: Adoption, modern technologies, SMEs

Description: this paper examines factors that affect SMEs' adoption of modern technology from the lens of the TOE framework.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – An increasing reliance on modern technologies is remarkably changing the trend of business activities. Accordingly, questions are being asked on the applicability and adoption of those technologies across contexts and countries. Many factors affect organisations' especially the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) decision to adopt modern technologies. On this note, this study set out to examine factors that affect SMEs' adoption of

Business Process Automation (BPA) technology. Using the Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) framework as a theoretical foundation, the study proposed and tested four hypotheses by identifying factors that align with the dimensions of the TOE framework, and gender as a moderating factor in BPA adoption

Method And Data – A scientifically designed questionnaire was used to generate responses from our informants. The measures were operationalised based on the established ones in the extant literature. IT adoption was adapted from Grover (1993), compatibility from Moore and Benbasat (1991), and organisational readiness from Buonanno et al. (2005). All measures were on a 5-point Likert scale. The samples were drawn from the management of SMEs in South-eastern Nigeria. The purposive approach was utilised to recruit informants via email. The study implemented a moderated regression analysis to test the formulated hypotheses. To ensure internal consistency and factor validity, the study conducted a reliability test using the AMOS plugin to establish composite reliability, while the validity was ascertained using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). In summary, the model for this study was fit, having all factor loadings above the 0.5 thresholds, while composite reliability was used to establish internal consistency showing that the factors loaded per item from 0.757 to 0.849 depicting high reliability.

Summary of Findings – Within the TOE framework, the study modelled compatibility, a factor under the technological component of the TOE as a predictor of BPA adoption. Our analysis shows that this assumption was not significant. Additionally, the second hypothesis which addresses the effect of organisational readiness on BPA adoption, was not supported. Furthermore, trading partners' interest which is an environmental

factor was modelled to have a linear effect on BPA adoption by SMEs. In terms of moderating effect of gender, all interactive effects were statistically non-significant.

Statement of Key Contributions – The findings suggest that the compatibility of BPA technology to existing processes and value systems of the SMEs does not lead to BPA adoption by the SMEs. This result aligns with a recent study by Skafi et al. (2020) that found compatibility insignificantly related to Lebanese-SMEs cloud computing adoption, and that of Lee and Kim (2007). The findings also imply that both technical and financial resources do not play strong roles for SMEs in the adoption of new innovative technologies. This result is somewhat a surprise because most established studies within the technology adoption context argued that technical and financial factors are important considerations for the adoption of innovative technologies (Abed, 2020; Rui, 2007). Going by our analysis, we found support indicating that trading partners' interest is a strong predictor of SMEs' adoption of BPA. In fact, going by the strong path coefficient, it shows that the interest of business partners is a critical element to consider before adopting a technology. This result agrees with Abed (2020) and Gutierrez et al. (2015) who found partners' interests to influence intention to adopt social commerce and other innovative technologies.

HOW ATTACHMENT AFFECTS HAPPINESS IN THE HUMAN-IVA RELATIONSHIP

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Keywords: autonomy, relatedness, happiness, attachment strength, intelligent voice assistance

Description: The current study investigates how the level of human attachment to IVA drives their engagement and happiness. The level of attachment is determined by users' perceptions of IVA's autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite the growing number of IVAs in the market and their prevalent use in various contexts (e.g., households, work, study), few studies have attempted to explore how users or consumers interact and relate to these devices. Most studies have focused

on explaining acceptance of smart devices using technology acceptance models, such as TAM, UTAUT (e.g., Venkatesh, Thong & Xu, 2012; Ashfaq et al., 2020).

The role of engagement in AI has also been studied in terms of consumer behavior (Perez-Vega et al., 2021), in the use of robots (Huang and Rust, 2021), or in personalized engagement (Kumar et al., 2019). However, there is no evidence of how such a relationship between consumers and IVAs can turn into a happy exchange driven by a close relationship. Consequently, the current paper has the following research question: How the level of consumers' relationships with IVAs, manifested in attachment strength, may affect their engagement with these devices, which leads to consumer happiness. Attachment (Bowlby, 1980) and engagement theories will be used to develop the conceptual model. The analogy of the relational bond between humans is drawn upon to conceptualize consumers' attachment (bond) to IVAs.

Method and Data

The data were collected from citizens of the United States (USA) through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. The scales employed to measure the constructs of autonomy, competence, relatedness, and attachment strength were adapted from Thomson (2006). Customer Engagement was based on So et al. (2014). This study deals with authentic happiness by measuring the meaningfulness of a human-IVA experience, the emotional component and personal fulfillment, based on Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2014). The questionnaire was prepared to minimize recall and common method bias through a memory message, commitment reinforcement and attention.

Of a total of 259 questionnaires received, only 222 were eligible due to excluding those with missing values, inconsistency, or extreme outliers. Almost half the participants

(48%) use Amazon Alexa, followed by Apple Siri (28%) and Google Assistant (17%). A large number (46,8%) have owned their personal voice assistants for more than two years. With respect to frequency of use, 37.4% of participants answered “Every day”, followed by “2 to 3 times a week” (24.8%). The least selected answer was “Less than once a month” (6,3%), which indicates that most participants use these devices frequently.

Summary of Findings

Autonomy is negatively associated with attachment strength (β= -0.151, t = 2.538, $p < 0.05$), but competence (β= 0.155, t = 3.399, $p < 0.001$) and relatedness (β= 0.647, t = 11.815, $p < 0.001$) are positively associated with attachment strength. Human-IVA engagement fully mediates between attachment strength and happiness. The direct effect of attachment strength on happiness (β= 0.853, t= 41.556, p=0.212) is not significant.

We determined the direct effect of each of the four dimensions of human-IVA engagement on happiness. The findings show that identification is the only dimension that does not exert a significant effect on happiness (β=0.030, t=0.392, p=0.695).

The results of the direct effects of the control variables reveal that they do not have a significant effect on Human-IVA engagement. However, they also reveal that household size strengthens the relationship between attachment strength → Human-IVA engagement and time owning the IVA tends to weaken the relationship between attachment strength → Human-IVA engagement.

We considered IVA usage and duration and frequency of IVA usage as control variables due to their potential effect on the level of interaction and knowledge about IVA, which can affect human-IVA engagement. None of these variables showed a significant relationship with engagement.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research adds to the academic marketing discipline by demonstrating that (1) self-determination theory supports the attachment strength between IVA and humans through autonomy, relatednesss, and competence, (2) human-IVA attachment strength contributes to humans feeling more confident, closer to IVA and more effective in their lives, and (3), human-IVA engagement exercises a significant mediation effect between attachment strength and happiness.

For IVA managers and societal stakeholders, the current research shows that human-AI engagement is a fundamental piece in achieving a happy relationship via attachment. Therefore, developers and brands must work to create AI agents that can create bonds with consumers and promote an enthusiastic relationship that captures their attention during the exchange. For example, given that absorption is an important determinant of a happy relation, brands should ensure that the relationship enables consumers to forget everything around them during the relationship to be completely focused on the dialog with the IVA. Enthusiasm is also an important characteristic to promote happiness. For example, consumers will soon have IoT-enabled appliances that can capture their daily routines. Using personalized patterns, AI-agents can be much more aware of how to engage with consumers by offering a personalized experience.

References are available upon request

IMMERSION TURNS INTO A NIGHTMARE: THE UNCANNY VALLEY EFFECT OF CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY IN METAVERSE

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Keywords: Metaverse, Uncanny valley effect, Narrative transposition effect, Flow theory, Mind-perception theory

Description: We provide companies with appropriate countermeasures, that how to balance and broaden the scope of profitability when users are ambivalent about presence and fear at the same time.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Meta-universe concept soars in popularity. Roundhill Ball Metaverse ETF, a U.S. metaverse fund, has more than $530 million in assets under management (Roundhill Investments, 2022). Users can use Augmented Reality (AR), Mixed Reality (MR), and Virtual Reality (VR) devices to achieve high immersion in the Metaverse (Shen et al., 2021), and the most popular device is VR (Flavián et al., 2019). Advances in science and technology let many things be anthropomorphized, which highly affects human mind-perception. When robots are over-anthropomorphism, individuals will begin to experience creepy and uncomfortable feelings, called uncanny valley (Mori, 1970),

often seen in human-computer interaction (HCI). Most studies have focused on the positive effects of VR on user immersion and experience but rarely explored when over-immersion occurs and what users are faced with. Presenting specific story scenes through VR and carrying out narrative transfer behavior, embodying modern storytelling marketing, bringing positive emotions and behaviors to users, and further enhancing market profits. However, when the valley uncanny effect occurs in the process of narrative transportation, it brings negative emotions and behaviors to users, which may affect the market value. Therefore, this study explores the positive and negative emotions of users immersed in the Metaverse. And the aim is to compare the effects of the three uncanny valley effects that occur in the course of narrative transportation.

Method and Data

The experimental tool used in this study is PICO NEO3 VR and the 6DoF game, _Madrid Noir, which was published by Astrea. Furthermore, to collect survey responses, this study will select a reputable marketing research firm, which has access to a variety of demographic sources, allowing for broad representation. Immersive technologies in the current Metaverse can simulate the senses of sight, sound, and touch, which presents a unique marketing opportunity for the market (Suh & Prophet, 2018; Scholz & Duffy, 2018). However, there is a lack of research on the uncanny valley effect caused by over-

immersion. This study provides a greater comprehension of digital marketing in the Metaverse. The findings hold implications for how to balance the presence and fear psychology of users in the future of enterprises.

Summary of Findings

This study adopts three stages of the research process. The first stage will focus on the narrative transposition effect in the flow theory. The purpose is to find out the effects of immersion (including realism, ubiquity, and interoperability), presence (including interaction, coexistence, and telepresence), and engagement (including cognition, psychology, and behavior). The second stage will focus on the uncanny valley effect in the mind-perception theory. The purpose is to find out the effects of the uncanny valley (including humanness, eeriness, and attractiveness), immersion, and engagement. The third stage compares the results of the first and second stages and uses SmartPLS 3.0 for data analysis, to explore the mediating and moderating effects.

Statement of Key Contributions

Numerous untapped opportunities between businesses and consumers are presented by the growth of the Metaverse. One can bring unique marketing opportunity is immersion, which is a unique technology that enhances the individual sensory experience. Many users use VR devices to achieve a high level of immersion, as a result, the majority of studies emphasize the satisfying sensations that immersion provides for users. However,

rarely research has been conducted on user fear caused by excessive immersion. Therefore, this study explores the narrative transposition effect of user flow in stage 1; then explores the uncanny valley effect of user mind-perception in stage 2, and uses PICO NEO3 VR as a tool. This study's final contribution will be to provide companies with appropriate countermeasures, that how to balance and broaden the scope of profitability when users are ambivalent about presence and fear at the same time. The findings have far-reaching implications for Metaverse digital marketing.

IMPROVING ATTITUDES TOWARDS SERVICE ROBOTS: THE ROLE OF SELF-VIEW AND ANTHROPOMORPHISM

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Keywords: Service robots, Attitude, Anthropomorphism, Similarity perception, Self-view

Description: This research revealed that the effect of self-view on a positive attitude toward service robots is serially mediated by self-robot similarity perception and attributing mental anthropomorphic traits to service robots.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Research shows that people have a deep-seated distrust towards autonomous agents and often feel threatened by them (Longoni et al. 2019; Luo et al. 2019; Yeonmans et al. 2019; Dietvorst et al. 2015; Mende et al. 2019). People tend to prefer human agents over autonomous agents because they perceive automated agents as greatly lacking in affective and cognitive capabilities (Castelo, Bos, and Lehmann, 2019; Longoni, Bonezzi & Morewedge, 2019). However, the bulk of studies showing negative attitudes towards autonomous agents have been conducted in the US and Europe. Anecdotal evidence, as well as industry figures on service robot adoption in Asian countries, suggests that the distrust of autonomous agents may not be universal. This research compares attitudes towards autonomous agents in consumers with interdependent and those with independent self-view. We propose that individuals with a dominant interdependent self-view (Asians) have a more positive attitude towards service robots than those with a dominant independent self-view (North Americans or Europeans). The

effect is mediated by differences in the tendency to anthropomorphize robots. In particular, we propose that individuals with a dominant interdependent self-view (vs. independent self-view) perceive greater similarity with service robots and ascribe more human-like mental traits to them, which in turn leads to more favourable attitudes. This relationship is moderated by the degree of physical human-likeness of service robots: an interdependent self-view leads to greater acceptance of service robots when the latter exhibit low (but not high) human-like physical appearance.

Method and Data

To test out hypotheses, we analysed real-world data and conducted four experiments, operationalizing self-views using culture (Study 1,2), chronic self-view (Study 3,4) and primed self-view (study 5). **Study 1,** using a 2 (culture: the US vs. China) x 2 (AI types: service robot vs. algorithm) mixed design, examined the effect of self-view on the likeability of service robots. We recruited 97 participants (61.9% female, M_{Age}=32.87, SD=11.63) on Prolific by using nationality (China vs. US). **Study 2** used the secondary data: a real-world database (ABOT) composed of 215 robot images from 18 countries (Zhao et al. 2019). We divided robots from the database into two groups: the high (Hofstede's index score: 70~91, N=113, US and European robots) and the low individualism group (score: 17~46, N=102, Asian robots). We, using a one-factor between-subjects design, examined the effect of self-view(culture) on the physical anthropomorphism of service robots. **In Study 3** (students, N=132, M_{AGE}=21, 67% female), we measured students' chronic self-views, presented with scenarios about three service robots and asked them to indicate their overall attitude toward each service robot and the degree to which they thought the robots possessed humanlike mental traits (i.e., warmth and competence). **In Study 4** (students, N=189, M_{AGE} =21, 67% female), we measured

students' chronic self-views, provides a scenario about a robot waiter and asked them to draw the service robot and indicate their attitudes toward the service robots and attribution of mental traits (i.e., warmth and competence). Also, students' drawing images (i.e., 14 appearance features: Torso, Arms, etc.) were assessed by coders recruited from Prolific (N=405, M_{AGE}=32, 44.7% female) (Phillips et al. 2018). **In Study 5,** we recruited Caucasians living in the UK (Hofstede individualism score: 89) (N=393, M_{Age}=44, 62% Female) on Prolific. This study adopted the self-view priming procedure (Aaker and Lee 2001; Gardner, Gabriel, and Lee 1999). We presented them with a scenario about an airport service agent robot and measured their attitude, self-robot mental similarity and the likelihood of attributing mental traits (i.e., warmth and competence) to service robots. We, using mediation analysis (Process model 83), examined the mediating role of self-robot similarity perception and attribution of mental anthropomorphic traits and the moderating role of physical anthropomorphic traits.

Summary of Findings

This study showed the impact of self-view (independent vs. interdependent) on attitude towards service robots. Robust findings from 5 studies show that individuals with a more accessible interdependent self-view have a positive attitude toward service robots than those with a more accessible independent self-view. Interdependent participants attribute more physical, as well as mental, humanlike traits to service robots than independent participants. The self-view effect on attitude toward service robots is mediated by the likelihood of attributing mental traits, not by the likelihood of attributing physical traits. Furthermore, the self-view effect on attitude toward service robots is serially mediated by self-robot similarity and the likelihood of attributing mental traits. When a service robot's anthropomorphic physical traits are high (vs. low), the indirect self-view effect is hampered. These results presented a way to increase a positive attitude toward service robots.

Key Contributions

This study extends prior literature on robot adoption by exploring the effect of self-view and identifies self-view as an antecedent to anthropomorphism. Our findings suggest a different role for the perceived mental and physical anthropomorphic features of service robots. This study has practical implications: it suggests that service providers whose customers tend to hold interdependent self-view should not be afraid to use service robots. For those whose customers tend to have a dominant independent self-view, this study suggests that providers could prime interdependence (Aaker and Lee 2001; Gardner, Gabriel, and Lee 1999) to foster greater acceptance. Also, this study implies that service robots should be designed to focus on positive mental features, suggesting competence instead of physical features.

INVESTIGATING CONSUMERS' HESITANT ADOPTION OF MEDICAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Keywords: artificial intelligence, healthcare, affective trust, digital autonomy, digital health literacy

Description: This paper investigates consumers' adoption of medical artificial intelligence by considering affective trust as a mediator and digital autonomy and digital health literacy as moderators.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Based on Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969), we propose that consumers' affective trust in medical artificial intelligence (AI) as the medical caretaker plays a pivotal role for its adoption. Even though the adoption of AI is essential for the exploitation of its full potential (Agarwal et al., 2020), research on the causes of the low adoption of medical AI and potential ways to address it remains scarce (Longoni et al., 2019; Cadario et al., 2021). The present study addresses this lack of research via three online consumer experiments identifying affective trust as an underlying mechanism explaining consumers' low adoption intention of medical AI. Further, this

study explores digital autonomy (i.e., consumers' preference for being capable of making their own choices with the help of digital self-service technologies instead of service personnel (based on Kim et al. 2016)) and digital health literacy (i.e., consumers' ability to find and process digital health information (Norman and Skinner, 2006)) as potential levers to increase consumers' affective trust building and, consequently, medical AI adoption.

Method and Data

We employed two-factorial between-subjects designs using scenarios in medical contexts involving either a human doctor or medical AI. With chronic diseases being promising use cases for medical AI (U.S. National Health Council, 2014), Study 1 and 2 were set up in the context of an online diabetes risk analysis, Study 3 featured the diagnosis of a chronic headache via a health app. Study 1 tests whether affective trust mediates the relationship between the healthcare provider (AI vs. human) and consumers' adoption intention (H1 and H2). Studies 2 and 3 additionally consider digital autonomy (measured, H3, Study 2) and digital health literacy (low vs. high, H4, Study 3) as potential moderators. In Study 3, we provided participants in the high digital health literacy condition a short step-by-step guide that introduced the functionality of the health app they were using. Participants in the low digital health literacy condition did not see the step-by-step guide.

Summary of Findings

The results of Study 1 demonstrate that the healthcare provider (AI vs. human) influences consumers' adoption intention. Consumers' adoption intention is higher for the human healthcare provider compared to the medical AI. More importantly, mediation analysis reveals that affective trust fully mediates the relationship between healthcare provider and consumers' adoption

intention. Compared to the human healthcare provider, consumers appear to adopt medical AI less due to a lack of affective trust. These results support H1 and H2.

Study 2 validate and extend the findings of Study 1, showing that consumers' digital autonomy significantly moderates the effect of the healthcare provider on affective trust. Thus, low digital autonomy strengthens the effect of the healthcare providers on affective trust, whereas high digital autonomy weakens it, providing evidence for H3.

In Study 3, the indirect effect of the healthcare provider on adoption intention via affective trust was again significant. Moreover, Study 3 confirms digital health literacy as a situational factor that significantly attenuates the effect of the healthcare provider (AI vs. human) on affective trust, providing support for H4. Increasing digital health literacy appears to be an effective measure to influence consumers' affective trust building in medical AI and, consequently, adoption intentions.

Statement of Key Contributions

The contribution of the present study to academia and practice is threefold. First, despite consumers' persistent hesitation to adopt medical AI, the underlying mechanisms of consumers' low adoption of medical AI are rarely explored (Longoni, Bonezzi, and Morewedge 2019; Promberger and Baron 2006). Applying insights from interpersonal trust research to AI-human interactions, our research adds to prior literature by proposing affective trust as an underlying mechanism explaining consumers' low adoption intention for medical AI. Second, we contribute to a better understanding of influencing factors that may strengthen consumers' affective trust in medical AI and, consequently, their adoption intention. Specifically, we shed light on the impact of consumers' digital autonomy and digital health literacy as two potential moderators. Finally, based on our findings, we provide healthcare stakeholders seeking to foster acceptance of

medical AI, such as medical companies, physicians, companies marketing medical AI, and policy makers, with practical guidance on how to increase consumers' affective trust in and adoption of medical AI.

References are available upon request.

New Insights into Virtual Reality in the Metaverse: The Role of Ad Valence

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Keywords: Virtual reality, Consumer engagement, Advertising, Narrative transportation, Immersion

Description: In this research, we investigate whether ad viewing through a high-immersion virtual reality (VR) headset can improve marketing outcomes (relative to a low-immersion channel) and the underlying psychological mechanism.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Virtual reality (VR) and the metaverse are two contemporary topics of rising prominence, due in large part to the purchase of Oculus VR by Facebook (now Meta) in 2014, and strong, 146% rise in sales for that business unit (Rosolillo, 2021). Yet, despite the current increasing popularity of the metaverse and VR technologies, it is still unclear how VR may play a role in influencing marketing outcomes.

In this article, we focus on the effectiveness of VR as an advertising channel, a subject that recent scholarly articles have highlighted as particularly necessary and promising (Kim, 2021). Specifically, we explore the effects of ad viewing with VR head-mounted displays (HMDs). We aim to answer two research questions:

1. How does viewing ads with highly immersive VR HMDs improve the effectiveness of advertising for marketing outcomes?
2. What are the conditions under which this effect can be reversed?

METHOD AND DATA

Study 1. In a high vs. low immersion study, two groups watched a 360º video either with a VR smartphone HMD or on a laptop for a Pepsi product. The high-immersion condition had higher attitudes (M_{HI} = 9.64; M_{LI} = 8.54, $p < .001$).

Study 2. For two YouTube videos for the same game (one high-immersion, the other low-immersion), we measured engagement through likes, comments, and sentiment. The high-immersion video received more likes per day ($\text{Likes/Day}_{LI=}$ 262.89; $\text{Likes/Day}_{HI=}$ 647.40) and comments per day ($\text{Comments/Day}_{LI=}$ 6.36; $\text{Comments/Day}_{HI=}$ 18.82) with higher tone (Tone_{HI} = 55.32, Tone_{LI} = 46.17; $p < .01$).

Study 3. A lab study tested mediation (immersion: high vs. low). The DV was engagement, and the mediator was narrative transportation. The high-immersion VR bolsters engagement (M_{HI} = 5.54; M_{LI} = 4.06, $p = .03$). Narrative transportation was a mediator ($\beta = .40$, 95% CI = [.05, .88]).

Study 4. A single-factor (immersion: high vs. low) experiment tested for reversal due to negative ad valence. Participants watched a Johnnie Walker ad on drunk driving. The high-immersion condition exhibited lower engagement (M_{HI} = 4.88; M_{LI} = 6.09, $p < .08$) and attitudes (M_{HI} = 6.53; M_{LI} = 7.34, $p < .05$).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In sum, across four studies, this paper presents a multi-methods approach, including a secondary study and three experiments. Our results indicate that 360º ad viewing via VR maximizes marketing outcomes and is thus a particularly effective channel for advertising, and that advertising valence influences such effectiveness. These effects are found across different product categories and stages of the product life cycle. Therefore, managers interested in jumping into the metaverse should be confident that 360º ads deployed in VR will engage their audience. This is also relevant for businesses of all sizes, as our studies find a robust beneficial effect of VR whether the ad stimuli are those made by real advertising agencies or by the research team. However, we caution that negatively-valenced ads might in fact backfire, resulting in worse marketing outcomes.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper broadens the scope of VR research into commercial advertising and establishes three contributions. First, we show VR advertising can be successful across several product categories through four studies.

Second, we build on the literature on narrative transportation to show how this psychological process shapes VR ad viewing outcomes. Ads through high-immersion VR HMD channels can better immerse consumers. We rule out enjoyment as an alternative explanation.

Third, whereas our findings suggest that VR favorably impacts marketing outcomes, the positive effect of VR on marketing outcomes reverses when viewing negative ad content.

Our study also provides important managerial insights. If businesses want to maximize marketing outcomes, our findings indicate that VR is a desirable channel to deploy 360o advertisements, bolstering marketing outcomes. Study 1 suggests that outcomes can be positively influenced even when consumers are exposed to ads developed with consumer-grade equipment

– therefore, businesses of all sizes can find it beneficial to create a presence in the metaverse and experiment with deploying VR advertising through current platforms such as YouTube. Finally, we caution businesses to think carefully about the message that their VR advertisements convey, because negative ad content can negatively impact marketing outcomes.

References for this manuscript are available upon request.

ROBOTS IN THE MARKETPLACE: WHEN DO CONSUMERS ANTAGONIZE THEM AND WHY

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Keywords: Artificial intelligence, service robots, dehumanization, consumer antagonism, uncanny valley, service encounter
Description: The current research examines the phenomenon of consumer antagonism toward service robots and shows that a critical factor that influences antagonism is the type of service robot consumers encounter in the marketplace.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Companies are increasingly deploying Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled robot technology in consumer-facing roles traditionally held by humans (Kim and Duhachek 2020; Puntoni et al. 2021). The steady increase in firm deployment of AI-enabled robots in the marketplace has been accompanied by an unanticipated and costly consequence: consumer antagonism toward service robots. The current research examines when and why, in the absence of robots' transgression, consumers are more likely to display antagonism toward service robots and what managerial interventions can be used to neutralize and even reverse this firm-damaging effect.

We examine humanoid vs. non-humanoid service robots and propose that consumers will be more antagonistic toward humanoid (vs. non-humanoid) robots because they are dehumanized. Dehumanization, the process of stripping away another human off human mind (Haslam and Stratemeyer 2016), has been theorized to also apply to humanoid robots (Wang et al. 2015). Building on this theorizing, we show that although initially people may be more likely to humanize humanoid robots, due to their tendency to spontaneously attribute human mind to human faces (Fiske and Neuberg 1990; Wheatley et al. 2011), upon further consideration, consumers realize that humanoid robots are not truly human and strip them off these attributions, which constitutes dehumanization. Further, research shows that dehumanization unleashes antagonistic, even violent treatment of social targets (Haslam 2006, 2015) making such antinormative behavior more permissible due to moral disengagement and disinhibition that dehumanization facilitates (Bandura 1999). We provide further hypothesis support by testing

strategies known to counteract dehumanization. First, consistent with dehumanization research we show that the antagonism effect can be reduced by individuating a social target. Second, we demonstrate that consumers are less likely to antagonize humanoid robots when consumers' moral values are activated.

The focal humanoid robot antagonism effect and underlying dehumanization psychological mechanism are tested across six experiments that employ video stimuli of multiple robots, service roles, and managerially-relevant measures of antagonism. The data was collected using student and online samples (Studies 1-5), and at a restaurant that uses a service robot (Study 6).

Across six studies we show that consumers tend to behave more antagonistically toward humanoid service robots than toward non-humanoid service robots. In Studies 1 and 2, we demonstrate that consumers behave more antagonistically toward humanoid service robots compared to both non-humanoid service robots and human service employees. We further demonstrate that this effect occurs because people dehumanize humanoid, relative to non-humanoid, service robots (Study 3). Importantly, we examine managerially relevant and actionable interventions that attenuate (Study 4) and reverse (Study 5) the focal effect. Study 4 provides further evidence for the dehumanization account via moderation. In this study, we show that individuating a service robot, a known antidote to dehumanization, attenuates antagonistic behavior toward humanoid robots. Study 5 explores a managerially-relevant strategy of activating consumers' moral values, which deactivates dehumanization and leads to the reversal of the antagonism effect. Finally, in Study 6, we demonstrate the effect in a real-life service environment at a restaurant that deploys a service robot.

This research makes multiple theoretical and substantive contributions to the emerging marketing literature on the use of robots in the marketplace (Blut et al. 2021; Holthöwer and van Doorn 2022; Mende et al. 2019). In spite of growing interest in the area, research examining behavioral responses to service robots is scant and predominantly focuses on comparing consumer reactions to robots relative to human service employees (Čaić et al. 2020; Holthöwer and van Doorn 2022; Mende et al. 2019). And the literature in robotics has mainly focused on examining attitudinal responses toward robots in laboratory settings without a social context (Akdim, Belanche, and Flavián 2021). Thus, to our knowledge, we are first to demonstrate in a real consumption context that deploying humanoid service robots can lead to an active and firm-

damaging response in the form of consumer antagonism, even without a legitimate reason (e.g., a service failure) that may justify a punitive response (Crolic et al. 2022). Finally, whereas prior robotics research has speculated that people may dehumanize humanoid robots (Wang, Lilienfeld, and Rochat 2015), we are first to empirically test this psychological process and its outcomes, and to examine managerially relevant interventions that may serve as antidotes to such dehumanization.

Title: Sharing the Same Workspace: The Effect of AI Task Deployment on Frontline Service Employees' Job Satisfaction and Customers Outcomes

Abstract

Organizations are progressively using service robots in frontline settings to enhance consumer experiences as we see an increasing trend in humans and robots working together in restaurants, airports, and banks. In this research, we examine the impact of tasks deployed to humanoid frontline service robots (FLSR) on frontline employees' (FLEs) job satisfaction and their feeling of being replaced. Through five experiments and a survey, this research shows that FLEs experience reduced job satisfaction when FLSRs performs tasks that primarily require empathetic intelligence (EI) than the tasks that primarily require mechanical intelligence (MI). This is because the perceived humanness of EI tasks is higher than that of MI tasks. We also found that the relationship between tasks deployed to FLSR and FLE job satisfaction depends upon the industry type and the meaningfulness of tasks that FLE is performing. We also found the negative effect of the task deployed to FLSR on customer outcomes and provide guidelines for managers.

Key Contributions

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on the use of AI and service robots in frontline settings and its impact on frontline service employees and customers. While most previous studies in service have examined consumer perception and attitude, this research primarily focuses on the impact of FLSR in service settings both on employee satisfaction and consumer attitudes. Based on the intelligence categorizations introduced by Huang and Rust (2018), this research investigates how the types of intelligence (MI vs. EI) related to tasks deployed to FLSR affect frontline service employees' (FLEs) job satisfaction and feeling of being replaced as well as customers attitudes towards the brand by conducting five

experiments and a survey study. This research provides empirical evidence that when tasks that requires EI (vs. MI) is deployed to FLSR, FLE's job satisfaction decreases and feeling of being replaced increases because of the perceived humanness of EI tasks. However, this negative impact can be alleviated when managers give FLEs meaningfulness to their job. We also provide the negative impact on consumer attitudes that when EI tasks are allocated to FLSR, they show lower attitudes towards brand and purchase intention and perceive lower service quality. Ultimately, this study provides guidance for managers in how they should determine which tasks should be performed by FLE when considering humanoid FLSR on service frontline.

Main Body (extended abstract)

Due to recent advancement and sophistication of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies (Huang and Rust 2018) AI can perform wide range of tasks, which led to increased deployment of frontline service robots (FLSR) in service industry. In fact, the sale of service robots hit the record high of 6.5 billion dollars in 2020 (World Robotics 2021) and the market is expected to grow 3 times bigger by 2025 (Fortune Business, 2020). We see AI being used in banks as ATMs, in retail stores and airports as self-service kiosks, and in restaurants as ordering machines or in the form of waiting staff. The research shows that presence of AI in the frontline can increase the quality of service by increasing standardization in routine tasks, and by offering personalized services to consumers (Hollebeek et al. 2021; Mende et al. 2019). However, the use of FLSRs in service settings can also alter frontline employees' (FLEs) perception of the organization and their job roles (Paluch et al. 2021; Belanche et al. 2020), especially employees resist towards automation and AI deployment due to the

perceptions of loss of status and role incongruence, which ultimately drive role conflict (Meyer et al. 2020).

Although these AI based FLSR are expected to gradually take over many day-to-day tasks performed by humans, the realistic scenario of FLSR integration in service is expected to be less aggressive. That is, FLE and FLSR will be working together, rather than replacing FSEs with FLSR altogether (Wilson and Daugherty 2018). In fact, the scenario of FLSR and humans working together as a frontline task force is on rise. For instance, FLSR have started to appear as waiting staff in restaurants or as informative assistants at airports (Mende et al. 2019; Doorn et al. 2017). However, they are not yet capable of performing complicated, intelligent tasks. Ultimately, scholars argue that as the deployment of FLSEs progresses in the service setting, human employees are to take on cognitively challenging, more intelligent tasks/jobs that most FLSR cannot perform (Hung and Rust 2020).

These suggest that intelligence related to the tasks are key to the successful deployment of FLSRs in service industry. Huang and Rust (2018) suggest that there are four types of intelligence that is required to complete job tasks; mechanical, analytical, intuitive, and empathetic. On the one hand mechanical intelligence (MI) ascribe to basic learning and application and placed at the lower end of the intelligence spectrum. On the other hand, empathetic intelligence (EI) ascribes to more complicated learning, understanding of emotions and application based on experience, placed at the higher end of the spectrum (Hung and Rust, 2018; 2020) Service frontline jobs consist of both MI and EI tasks from checking inventory and repetitive tasks (MI) to understanding and responding to individual customer needs (MI). The importance of perceived intelligence in influencing job satisfaction has been documented in the research, as intelligence is a critical characteristic required to perform any task efficiently (Schutte et al. 2001; Ganzach 2003). Research shows that when

perceived intelligence related to the task is not challenging, interesting, or meaningful, it is likely to lower employee satisfaction (Ganzach 1998).

Against this background, this research examines the possible integration of FLSR from the task intelligence point of view. Especially, we investigate the effect of tasks (MI vs. EI) deployed to FLSR on FLEs' job satisfaction and feeling of being replaced. We primarily focus on "humanoid" FLSRs, the AI robots that looks or sounds like humans to some extent (McLeay et al. 2021) as they are specifically considered as threating to human employees because of their human embodiment (McLeay et al. 2021; Asfour et al. 2018; Mansard et al. 2009). Through six studies conducted in varied frontline settings, we demonstrate that as the perceived intelligence of task deployed to humanoid FLSR move from mechanical to empathetic, the job satisfaction goes down. This is because the perceived humanness of empathetic tasks is higher than mechanical tasks and deploying AIs for EI tasks stirs feelings of being replaced. But this effect can be mitigated if organizations try to increase the meaningfulness of tasks deployed to FLEs. We also found the effect of tasks deployed to AI on consumers. Specifically, consumers prefer EI tasks to be performed by humans rather than their AI counterparts.

Hypotheses

Firstly, we predict that when EI tasks are deployed to humanoid FLSRs, human FLEs' job satisfaction will suffer and increase the feeling of being replaced. Secondly, we explain mediating role of perceived humanness of the task and predict that FSEs perceive tasks that require EI fall into the human domain because emotions are subjective responses towards an object and are specific to an individual's personality (Mesquita et al. 2016; Ekman 1999). Thirdly, we explain the important moderating role of tasks meaningfulness in alleviating the negative impact of task deployment on job satisfaction as increased meaningfulness can help

FLE maintain the job identity and importance (Hackman and Oldham, 1975; Erez, 2010 Schnell et al. 2013). Finally, we test the impact of FLSR task deployment on customer outcomes such as brand attitude, perceived service quality and purchase intention as FLSR in the frontline can also affect consumers' perception of the service (Robinson et al. 2020). While the presence of FLSRs can increase the perception of innovativeness, it can also damage its societal reputation for replacing humans with AI (McLeay et al. 2021). See Figure 1 for the conceptual model of this study.

H1a: FLEs' job satisfaction is lower when EI (vs. MI) tasks are deployed to humanoid FLSR

H1b: FLEs' feeling of being replaced is higher when EI (vs. MI) tasks are deployed to humanoid FLSR

H2: Perceived humanness of task mediates the relationship between the task deployed to humanoid FLSR and FLE job satisfaction.

H3: Enhancing task meaningfulness will lower the negative effect of AI task deployment on FLE's job satisfaction

H4: Consumers will have a lower attitude toward the brand if AIs are deployed EI (vs. MI) task.

Definitions of Study Constructs

- **Empathetic Intelligence (EI)**: A task with Empathetic Intelligence is one that requires the ability to understand, respond to and influence other people's emotions.
- **Mechanical Intelligence (MI):** A task with Mechanical Intelligence is the one that requires less empathy or creativity but high precision in performing automated routine, repeated tasks.

- **Perceived humanness**: The perceived humanness refers to the extent it has characteristics that are attributed to humans (Söderlund and Oikarinen 2021)
- **Task meaningfulness**: The feeling that arises from undertaking work that is worthwhile, valuable, and useful (Kahn 1990 p.704)
- **Job satisfaction**: Employees subjective evaluation and feelings towards job

Overview of the Studies

We ran six experimental studies followed by a survey to test our predictions. In study 1, we tested the effect of EI vs. MI task deployed to FLSR on FLEs job satisfaction and perception of being replaced (H1a and H1b). In study 2, we examined the process of our main effect from study-1 by testing perceived humanness of task as the mediator (H2). In study 3(a) and 3(b) we showed that this effect is relevant to industry. We tested industry type (3a: manufacturing and automobiles, 3b: healthcare) as boundary condition. In study 4, we tested task meaningfulness as our moderator (H3). In study 5, we conducted survey to replicate our findings with actual employees currently working with AIs. In study 6, we tested the effect of task deployed to AI on consumers' attitude towards the brand along with perceived service quality and purchase intention (H4).

Sample Procedure

Study-1 is set in a shoe store context and is designed to test the effect of task intelligence deployed to FLSR on FLE job satisfaction and feeling of being replaced. We created a set of tasks for FLEs working in shoe store. Each of these tasks were pretested with participants for whether performing that task needs high EI or MI. Based on participants' scores, we selected three tasks that require high EI and three tasks that require high MI. We only selected the tasks which has non-significant difference in importance attributed to them.

For the main study, we recruited 351 participants (Mean Age=25.2, 73.7% females) from Prolific. To enhance the realism of our study, we used customer-facing filter option on Prolific to recruit only those participants who were currently working in a customer facing job such as banks, hospital etc. First, participants read the scenario in which they were requested to imagine they are working as a FLE for a shoe brand called ShoeHub. Participants wrote a short paragraph on their day-to-day activities in the store as a FLE. Next, participants read that ShoeHub has recently implemented a humanoid FLSR named Ricky to enhance the overall efficiency of frontline workers and enhance consumer experience. Resultantly some of the existing tasks were deployed to Ricky. In MI condition, Ricky was deployed tasks that require high MI such as calculating the right shoe size for customers, accurately locating the shoe options available at the store and performing stockkeeping activities such as detecting and indicating which stocks are running low etc. In EI condition, Ricky was deployed tasks that demonstrate high EI such as greeting customers, understanding their preferences, and directing them to right aisle, engaging in light banter and changing speech tone based on consumer's mood. In both conditions, participants were told that there was no effect in their salary because of change in their job role. In both conditions, participants wrote their feelings about the introduction of FLSR. Next, participants completed manipulation checks randomized for order: "To what extent task deployed to Ricky involves MI" (1=No MI, 7=Very high MI); "To what extent task deployed to Ricky involves EI" (1=No EI, 7=Very high EI). Participants were shown definitions of both MI and EI (adopted from Hung and Rust 2018).

Participants then completed items related to job satisfaction ("Introduction of Ricky as a frontline employee will negatively affect my job performance", "Introduction of Ricky as frontline employee will decrease my job satisfaction", "Introduction of Ricky as frontline employee will negatively affect my job motivation"), satisfaction with brand ("I would be

satisfied working at this shoe store", "This shoe store would be a good employer to work for", "I would enjoy working at this shoe store", "Overall I would be satisfied with this shoe store"), and perception of being replaced ("Introduction of Ricky will make me feel replaced as frontline employee", "Introduction of Ricky will make me feel threatened about my job position"; 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree. We controlled for polychronicity, the extent to which individuals prefers multitasking ("I like to juggle several activities at the same time", "I believe people do their best work when they have many tasks to complete", "I believe it is best for me to be given multiple tasks and assignments to perform", "I would rather complete several different tasks everyday than complete one entire task"), and personal innovativeness ("I tend to be among the first to use new technology", "Among my peers, I am usually the first to explore new technology", "I am receptive to new technology"). Similar procedures were taken for all experimental studies.

Results

All hypotheses were supported and the overview of each study and results are summarised in the following page.

Study	Frontline Stimuli	Relationship Tested	Results
Study-1	Shoe Store **Purpose:** To test the main effect **Detail:** 351 participants frontline worker participants (Mean Age=25.2, 73.7% females) from Prolific	Task Deployed to AI (EI vs. MI)-> Job Satisfaction	FLEs feel more replaced *(M_{EI}=4.93 vs. M_{MI}=4.13, p<0.01, F (1,349) =18.6)*, show lower job satisfaction *(M_{EI}=4.15 vs. M_{MI}=3.29, p<0.01, F (1,349) =26.60, R-coded) and* brand *(M_{EI}=4.09 vs. M_{MI}=4.47, p=0.01, F (1,349) =6.54)* when EI tasks (than MI tasks) are deployed to FLSR.
Study-2	Airline **Purpose:** To test the mediating effect of perceived humanness of task	Task Deployed to AI (EI vs. MI)->Perceived Humanness of Tasks-> Job Satisfaction	*Lower job satisfaction (α =0.860) (MEI=3.08 vs. MMI=2.69, p=0.021, F (1,324) =5.39, R-coded) and brand satisfaction (α =0.95) was lower (4.86 vs. 5.25,*

	Detail: 326 (Mean Age=31.3, 55.7% females) frontline workers participants were recruited from Prolific		*p<0.01, F (1,324) =7.79)* when EI tasks (than MI tasks) are deployed to FLSR. ***Mediation:*** *The results showed expected process path (Task Deployed to AI->Perceived Humanness of Task->Job Satisfaction) at 95% confidence interval [CI: -.6560, -.2875], making direct effect insignificant [CI: -2201, 0.3794] and suggesting a full mediation for 5000 bootstrap samples.*
Study-3(a)	Healthcare Industry	Task Deployed to AI (EI vs. MI)-> Job Satisfaction	*Compared to participants in MI condition, those in EI condition felt more replaced (α =0.95)*

	Purpose: To test our main effect in EI-based industry **Detail:** 243 participants (Age=30.80, Female=71.6%) working in healthcare industry		*(MEI=4.57 vs. MMI=3.82, p<0.001, F (1,241) =10.24) less satisfied with job (α =0.90) (MEI==4.18 vs. MMI=3.21, p<0.001, F (1,241) =18.99), and brand (α =0.97) (MEI=4.38 vs. MMI=5.07, p<0.001, F(1,241)=11.86)*
Study-3(b)	Car Service Garage **Purpose:** To test our main effect in MI-based industry **Detail:** 246 participants (Age=30.80, Female=71.6%) working in manufacturing industry	Task Deployed to AI (EI vs. MI)-> Job Satisfaction	*There was no significant difference in feelings of being replaced (α =0.86) (MEI=4.19 vs. MMI=4.14, p>0.05), satisfaction with job role (α =0.91) (MEI=3.45 vs. MEI=3.37, p>0.10). Although satisfaction with brand (α =0.96) was lower*

			in EI than MI condition (MEI=4.56 vs. MEI=4.93, p<0.05, F(1,244)=4.30).
Study-4	Shoe Store **Purpose:** To test the moderating effect of Task Meaningfulness **Detail:** 600 participants working in customer-facing jobs were recruited from Prolific (Mean Age=29, 52% female)	Task Deployed to AI (EI vs. MI) * Task Meaningfulness (High vs. Control)-> Job Satisfaction	*There was an interaction effect of task intelligence and task meaningfulness (F=4.96, p=0.02), suggesting as task intelligence move from MI to EI the impact of meaningfulness on job satisfaction increases*
Study-5	Employee Survey **Purpose:** To test our main effect through employee survey	Task Deployed to AI (EI vs. MI)->Perceived Humanness of Task-> Job Satisfaction	*Effect of task intelligence on perceived humanness of task [R=0.148, F (1,365) =8.20, p<0.01] and feelings of being replaced [R=0.206, F*

	Detail: 367 participants working with specific AI technologies whose job responsibilities have changed because of AI task deployment		*(1,365)=16.15, p<=0.01) was significant while the effect of task intelligence on job satisfaction was partially significant [R=0.103, F(1,365)=3.92, p=0.06]. The effect of perceived humanness of task on job satisfaction [R=0.235, F (1,365)=21.40, p<0.01] and feelings of being replaced [R=0.360, F(1,365)=54.48, p<0.01) was fully significant.*
Study-6	Airline **Purpose:** To test the effect of task intelligence deployed to AI on consumer attitude	Task Deployed to AI (EI vs. MI)-> Customer Attitude toward brand	*Consumer shows lower attitude toward brand (4.30 vs. 4.88, F(1,348)=12.46, p=0.00)and purchase intentions(4.30 vs. 4.78,*

	Detail: 326 participants were recruited from Prolific		*F(1,348)=7.89, p=0.00) when the task deployed to service robot was EI than MI*

Discussion:

As the presence of FLSR is expected to dramatically increase in the service industry in the next 3 years (Fortune Business 2020) service organizations will be required to make critical decisions of which set of tasks should be performed by FLSR and FLEs. Although the notion of FLSR fully replacing human FLEs for a specific job is still futuristic in many industries, we have started to see these robots and human employees sharing the same workspace to enhance customer experience. While FLSRs are expected to increase the productivity and efficiency of the organization, their effect on frontline employees' motivation is not properly understood (Paluch et al. 2021; Meyer et al. 2020). As such, organizations may be at risks of endangering the FLEs' organizational commitment by implementing FLSRs even if this practice does not affect FLE's wages or broader job roles. This can be detrimental to service organizations as lower employees' engagement (including job satisfaction) has negative impact on customer engagement, such as customer loyalty and purchase intentions (Kumar and Pansari 2016).

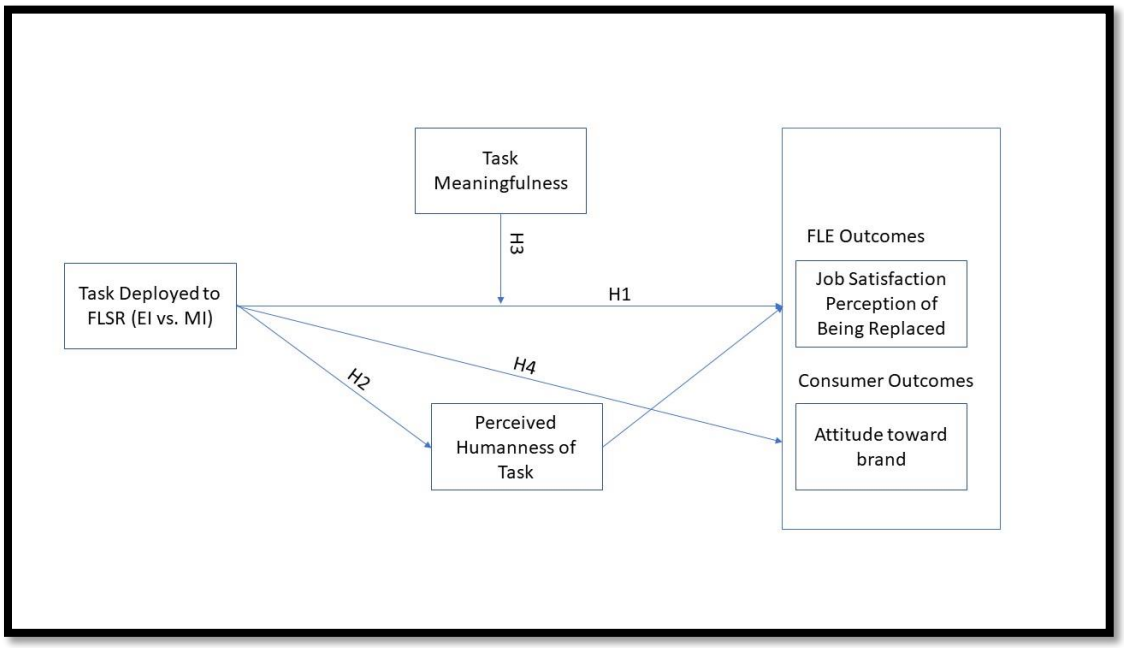
In this research, we focused on the intelligence required performing tasks and showed that deploying EI tasks to FLSR can be counteractive to an organization's strategy. Through six studies we demonstrated the negative effect of task intelligence (EI) deployed to FLSR on FLE job satisfaction. Overall, findings suggest that when tasks that require EI are allocated to FLSR, FLE's job satisfaction suffers and increase the feeling of being replaced by the FLSR compared to when tasks that MI are allocated to FLSR. This is because of the belief that EI tasks fall in the domain of human expertise and are tied to human identity. In other words, perceived humanness of the EI tasks is higher than MI tasks. This effect is more pronounced in industries that are traditionally perceived to require EI (such as healthcare) and less

prevalent in industries that are perceived to require MI (such as car servicing). We found that increasing the meaningfulness of tasks allocated to FLEs, giving them monitoring authority and controlling over the FLSR, can offset the negative consequences. Task meaningfulness can be increased in several ways, First, by restructuring employee tasks to include the same skills (EI skills in a different domain) or by communicating the significance of current tasks to mainstream job responsibilities. In study-4 we found that this approach was particularly useful in the EI condition as participants who high task meaningfulness condition (vs. control) showed a higher level of satisfaction compared to participants who were not clarified about their job role. We also conducted a survey of employees who are currently working with AI technologies and provided that the effects of AI task deployment on their job satisfaction and perception of being replaced are likely to be replicable beyond frontline service settings. Finally, our research provides potential negative effect of EI task deployment on FLSR in frontline service setting on customer outcomes as when tasks that requires EI are performed by FLSR, it lowers attitudes towards the brand, perceived service quality and purchase intention.

Subsequently, we suggest mangers of service organisation to consider the intelligence required to perform tasks are important in deciding the allocation of tasks between FLE and humanoid FLEs. When tasks are considered to be humanly and/or require EI, managers should allocate these to FLEs rather than FLSR to maintain FLEs motivation at work. Addition, even if they have to allocate EI tasks to FLSR, giving FLE an authority to control FLSR, communicating the importance of their tasks and providing training for handling FLSR may negate the effect of deploying EI tasks to FLSR.

Figure

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



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TELL ME WHAT IS THE MOST RISK-FREE PLAN OF ALL? THE INFLUENCE OF AI ANTHROPOMORPHISM ON RISK AVERSION

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Keywords: AI, anthropomorphism, risk aversion, political ideology, risk attachment

Description: *This research examines whether anthropomorphizing AI affects consumers' risk aversion in financial decision-making.*

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Anthropomorphizing AI has undeniable relevance in the contemporary marketing landscape, such as humanoid robotics and emotion AI algorithms. Despite its significance and relevance, the downstream impact of anthropomorphism remains underexplored. Curiosity arises in whether such anthropomorphizing strategies vary consumer psychology, and if so, how?

Consumers prevalently encounter financial offerings by AI, in which multiple investment options might be proposed with varying levels of risk and return. Given the prevalence of human-like AI in the finance sector, this research sets out to investigate whether AI anthropomorphism alters consumers' risk preference. As anthropomorphism imbues non-human entities with human-like traits and characteristics, the way individuals approach interpersonal interactions might affect how they respond to anthropomorphized entities.

Accordingly, as a pivotal concept explaining cognition and behavior in social science, political ideology – defined as individual beliefs that capture the desired societal structures and orders – corresponds to fundamental motivations in social interactions. Therefore, this research bolsters the literature by identifying a novel situational factor (i.e., AI anthropomorphism), and looking into its interplay with a novel individual difference (i.e., political ideology).

Method and Data

We derive two hypotheses:

H_1: The effect of AI anthropomorphism on risk aversion depends on consumers' political ideology. Politically liberal consumers will manifest greater risk aversion when AI is anthropomorphized. In contrast, anthropomorphism will not vary politically conservative consumers' risk aversion tendency.

H2: The conditional effect of AI anthropomorphism is mediated by psychological risk attachment.

Three experiments were conducted. Study 1 (n = 215) features a 2 (AI-enabled chatbot anthropomorphization: non-anthropomorphized vs. anthropomorphized) between-subjects design on participants' lottery choice. Participants in this experiment were exposed to one of two AI-enabled chatbot recommending lottery options that was either portrayed as a non-anthropomorphized entity or an anthropomorphized human-like figure. We additionally measured participants' political ideology.

Additionally, Study 2 (n = 343) features similar design to that of Study 1 and examined risk attachment as the underlying mechanism in an investment scenario. Finally, Study 3 (n = 321) consolidated the findings by temporally priming participants' political ideology.

Summary of Findings

Across three studies, the findings document that, in a financial decision-making context, anthropomorphizing AI leads to significantly greater risk aversion in investment decision-making among politically liberal consumers (Study 1). This occurs because anthropomorphizing AI activates greater psychological risk attachment, which enacts consumers to manifest stronger risk aversion tendency (Studies 2 and 3).

Statement of Key Contributions

This research adds to a more fine-grained understanding of the application of where AI, financial services and marketing intersect. This work attempts to address this void by looking into the downstream impact of AI anthropomorphism on consumers' risk preferences. The findings delineate that anthropomorphization significantly heightens risk attachment. This research also identifies a novel underlying causal mechanism regarding why risk preference might be altered. Compared to prior work positing either a risk-sharing account, loss aversion, or need for certainty, our findings put forth to a *psychological risk attachment* account. By uncovering this novel psychological factor, it facilitates a more fine-grained understanding towards the way consumers approach decisions involving risks and what factors are at play.

This research offers fruitful insights for industry practitioners. Marketers can harness the findings to elevate/attenuate the tendency of risk-aversion in consumers. For example, in the setting of financial investment and gambling-based decisions, it seems optimal to objectify the communication agents as it motivates them to behave in a more risk-seeking way. On the other hand, in services such as insurance purchase, one might wish to anthropomorphize AI chatbots, as anthropomorphization leads to an elevated risk aversion.

References are available upon request.

Extended Abstract

TITLE

The Effect of Anxiety on Preference for Robot vs. Human: The Role of COVID-19 Anxiety and Social Anxiety

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Keywords: COVID-19 Anxiety, Social Anxiety, chatbots, perceived competence, and perceived warmth

Description: This research posits that people with COVID-19 anxiety prefer human whereas people with social anxiety prefer chatbots.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – 200 Words

This research is interested in whether the type of consumers' anxiety (i.e., COVID-19 anxiety and social anxiety) may influence their perception of chatbots. This research posits that people with COVID-19 anxiety prefer human whereas people with social anxiety prefer chatbots.

Although fear of COVID-19 decreases people's social distance, people with COVID-19 anxiety desire social interaction because positive social contact reduces stress (Kumar et al. 2022). Thus, in an online interaction context, where individuals have no risk of being infected, people with COVID-19 anxiety prefer human service providers. In contrast, people with social anxiety are afraid of communicating with others. Even in a virtual context, they are more likely to prefer chatbots (Zhu and Deng 2021; Pierce 2009). Moreover, this research posits that people with COVID-19 anxiety may misattribute their preference for human service providers to the competence dimension instead of the warmth dimension. In contrast, people with social anxiety attribute their preference for chatbots to the warmth dimension because the non-human essence makes them more comfortable when communicating with chatbots because they do not have to fear how robots evaluate them (Zhu and Deng 2021).

Thus,

H1: People with COVID-19 anxiety are more likely to perceive human service providers as more competent than chatbots.

H2: People with social anxiety are more likely to perceive chatbots as warmer than human service providers.

H3a: People with COVID-19 anxiety tend to have a more positive brand attitude toward human service providers rather than chatbots and this effect is mediated by perceived competence.
H3b: People with social anxiety tend to have a more positive brand attitude toward chatbots rather than human service providers and this effect is mediated by perceived warmth.

Method and Data– 200 Words

65 participants recruited in the online survey were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions (service provider identity: human vs humanized Chabot) between-participant design. First, participants were required to assume the role of a consumer who plans to apply for a credit card. They were searching on the Internet for information and found that some banks provide services that consumers can apply for a credit card online through a human service provider or chatbot (corresponding with the assigned condition). Then, they were shown an image of a sample chat log with the service provider (human or humanized Chabot). The chat log images in the two conditions are almost the same except for the identity of the service provider. Finally, participants were asked to answer their attitude toward the brand, perceived competence, and warmth toward their services providers (adapted from Kim, Schmitt, and Thalmann 2019), COVID-19 anxiety scale (Kumar et al. 2022), and social anxiety scale (adapted from Fergus et al. 2012).

Summary of Findings – 200 words

To test H1, regressions were conducted with perceived competence or perceived warmth as dependent variables, identity condition, COVID-19 anxiety, and their interaction as independent variables. The results revealed that people with COVID-19 anxiety are more likely to view human service providers as more competent than chatbots (coefficient: -0.234, p-value: 0.032). Meanwhile, when perceived warmth is a dependent variable, the interaction effect does not exist (coefficient: -0.149, p-value: 0.196).
Similarly, people with social anxiety are more likely to view chatbots as warmer than human service providers (coefficient: 0.257, p-value: 0.028), supporting H2. Meanwhile, when perceived competence is a dependent variable, the interaction effect does not exist (coefficient: 0.166, p-value: 0.164).
A mediation analysis with the R psych package was conducted and the results supported H3.

The path analysis showed that perceived competence was significantly influenced by the interaction of service provider identity and COVID-19 anxiety (d= -0.23; p-value=0.032). Meanwhile, perceived competence significantly affected brand attitude (b= 0.55; p-value<0.001). Moreover, the mediation effect existed (coefficient: -0.13; CI: 0.03-0.04), supporting H3a.
Besides, the path analysis showed that perceived warmth was significantly influenced by the interaction of service provider identity and social anxiety (d= 0.26; p-value=0.029). Meanwhile, perceived warmth significantly affected brand attitude (b= 0.51; p-value<0.001). The results also revealed that the mediation effect existed (coefficient: 0.13; CI: 0.03-0.04), supporting H3b.

Statement of Key Contributions – 200 words

For theory contribution, this research contributes to robot-related literature by examining the moderating role of anxiety type on perceived warmth, perceived competence, and brand attitude. Although prior research has studied the effect of humanized chatbots when participants are high in COVID-anxiety or social anxiety (e.g., Kumar et al. 2022; Zhu and Deng 2021), this research does not reveal the underlying mechanism (i.e., perception toward service providers and the affect misattribution). This study focuses on the effect of the identity of service providers under the condition that service providers have the same conversation ability and considers the moderation effect of two types of anxiety simultaneously.

For managerial implications, this study guides for marketers to design online customer services for different kinds of consumers. Despite the popularity of chatbots, people with COVID-19 anxiety are more likely to desire social interaction with real humans and thus prefer human service providers because of the decreased social contact during a pandemic. Besides, they are likely to misattribute their preference for human service providers to the competence dimension. In contrast, people with social anxiety tend to avoid the social situation and thus prefer chatbots because non-human features provide a sense of security.

References are available upon request

THE EFFECTS OF VIRTUAL REALITY GAMES ON THEIR USERS

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Keywords: Virtual Reality; VR Gaming; Virtual World; Netnography; Effects of Technology

Description: By identifying four themes related to VR games and their effects on users, we add to the literature on the effects of new technology.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

When a technology like VR shows the promise of being an integral part of our lives, it is imperative that we examine the numerous ways in which it may affect people in order to promote judicious usage. Despite the increasing popularity of VR games, its effects on humans remain under-explored. Surprisingly, evidence in existing literature was majorly oriented towards investigating the benefits of VR from a consumption angle (e.g., Ben-Ur, Mai, and Yang 2015; Deng, Unnava, and Lee 2019). This stream of research was also limited by the researchers trying to confirm to their own expectations using hypothesis testing means. Methodologically, the present study contrasts with extant research in two ways: first, by the analysis of archival data, and second, by the application of netnography as a method to understand VR's effects on users. Contextually, this research stands out by focusing exclusively on VR video games as opposed to it being used just as a setting for related explorations.

Method and Data

To understand the effect of VR games on users, the current study uses netnography, a specialized form of ethnography that suits the computer-mediated requirements of today's social world. Netnography can uncover the richness in archived online data (Kozinets 2010, 2012). With the objective of understanding consumer experience in video game industry, the first author became active in the online gaming environment three years ago. To understand the effects of these VR games, we selected five games from the Steam platform each from different genre. We finally gathered 12,323 customer postings from Beat Saber (1676), Blade

(2526), Boneworks (3561), Gorn (1880) and Skyrim (2680). We downloaded the publicly available online postings from the selected game pages and used the data for analysis and interpretation in August 2021. Two research assistants separately manually coded the data (94% agreement rate). After filtering for the human effect, we were able to extract 1,386 such reviews. The first author went through all the postings to confirm the effects and finally confirmed 1,379 reviews.

Summary of Findings

Our analysis indicates the possibility of several effects of VR on users' thoughts and behaviours when players engage in VR games. These are broadly classified into four different themes and are described in detail below.

Loss of the Sense to Distinguish Between the Real and the Virtual Worlds: One of VR's key characteristics is its power to immerse users in the VR setting. Our findings show that participants often blur the boundary between the real world and virtual world.

As Escape from Routine and Stressed Life: Our findings revealed that the thoughts and emotions that players experiences while playing stay with them even after the game ends. Many participants mentioned such effects on their thoughts and emotions were life changing.

A platform for Manifesting Gender-based Violence and Aggressive Behaviour: Our findings show that when players engage in real life-like experiences with players or characters from a different gender category, the game environment frequently becomes a platform for violence and socially undesirable behaviour.

Tools for Physical, Psychological, and Pro-social Improvements: Many of VR games involve players' physical movements in the real world (e.g., going around the room, moving your body to see your virtual persona undertake, etc.

Key Contribution

VR is an emerging technology that is being increasingly applied to various fields of human endeavour. With the help of our netnographic investigation, we were able to identify four themes which explain the diverse effects of VR on its users: loss of capacity to distinguish between real and virtual world; escape from mundane life and stress; platform for gender-based violence and aggressive behaviour, and; tool for physical, psychological, and pro-social improvements. We contribute to the literature on the after-effects of technology use. Second, we add to the existing literature on immersion in an activity. For practice, our findings show the importance of designing virtual games with the optimal amount of immersion.

THE INFLUENCE OF ATTITUDE TOWARD AND BRAND EXPERIENCE WITH VOICE ASSISTANT PROVIDERS ON BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS TO USE THIRD-PARTY SKILLS

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Keywords: Voice Marketing, Voice Assistants, Attitude, Brand Experience, Behavioral Intention

Description: This study conducts a quantitative survey to analyze the influence of attitude toward the voice assistant providers Amazon Alexa and the Google Assistant on the intention to adopt their third-party skills.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Voice assistants (VA) enable consumers to receive information and to fulfill tasks in an easier, more natural, and more convenient way (Neumeyer 2019). Beyond receiving information and processing requests, VAs such as Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant offer a variety of value-adding applications, also known for example as Alexa skills or Google Actions (Sabir, Lafontaine, and Das 2022). Such applications allow brands and companies to interact with their target groups in a new way through the development of individual skills (third-party skills).

Several existing studies examine the drivers of why consumers adopt VAs and the reasons why consumers avoid using them (e.g., Lau, Zimmerman, and Schaub 2018; McLean and Osei-Frimpong 2019; Pitardi and Marriott 2021). However, investigations on third-party skills are rare. Therefore, it remains unclear if the voice assistant provider (VAP)–that means Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant–has an influence on whether consumers intent to adopt third-party skills. This raises the following question: When brands use popular VAPs such as Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant to offer their third-party skills, do consumer attitudes toward the VAPs and earlier experiences with them have an influence on the perceived value of the third-party skills and on their usage intention?

Method and Data

We investigated the research question by conducting a quantitative survey in Germany in the spring of 2022. The survey encompassed two versions: One version described Amazon Alexa and Amazon Alexa skills in the introduction, while the other described the Google Assistant and Google Actions. The versions were distributed to participants in a randomized manner to

meet the methodological requirements.

We measured the construct “Brand Experience” (BE) based on the 12-item scale developed by Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009), the constructs “Perceived Value” (PV) and “Behavioral Intention to Adopt” (BI) through the 4-item scales of Kim, Chan, and Gupta (2007) who adapted the original scales of Pal et al. (2020), and used the questions of Spears and Singh (2004) to measure the 5-item construct “Attitude toward Voice Assistants” (AtVA). We measured all items on 7-point Likert-type scales, except for the AtVA items, which we assessed through a seven-point semantic differential scale.

The data collection was based on the snowball principle and generated a sample of n = 139. After cleaning the data we obtained in total 130 questionnaires from which 66 questionnaires referred to Google Assistant and 64 questionnaires to Amazon Alexa. We analyzed the data using SPSS.

Summary of Findings

We ensured that the structural equation models met the recommended model fit indices. The results for Amazon Alexa and the Google Assistant differ fundamentally. While the AtVA for Amazon Alexa has a strong and significant effect on both PV of third-party skills and BI to them, consumers’ BE with Amazon Alexa has no significant effect. Additionally, no mediating effect of PV on BI is visible.

In contrast, the AtVA for Google Assistant has a lower but still a significant influence on consumers’ PV of third-party skills which further mediates the BI to adopt third-party skills. Contrary to Amazon Alexa, the attitude toward Google Assistant has no direct effect on the BI to adopt third-party skills. In the context of the VAP Google Assistant, this variable is influenced indirectly through the mediation of PV and directly through BE.

To sum up, while AtVA plays an important role for the BI of third-party skills on Amazon

Alexa, it has only an indirect effect regarding the BI of third-party skills on Google Assistant. Furthermore, BE is relevant regarding the BI to adopt third-party skills on the Google Assistant while BE has no significant effect regarding the BI of third-party skills on Amazon Alexa.

Statement of Key Contributions

For scientific researchers, this study is of great value as it extends the knowledge about third-party skills on VAs: First, it increases the knowledge about consumer motives to use third-party skills under the consideration of different VAPs. Second, we extended the research on the Value-based Adoption Model by examining additional factors that influence the perceived value as mediating variable for the behavioral intention to adopt smart voice-based products. Third, we adapted the well-established brand experience scale of Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) and evaluated the validity of this scale in the context of smart voice products. We found that mainly behavioral items are relevant to investigate the brand experience in terms of smart voice products.

For practitioners, first, this study provides valuable insights to increase the probability that consumers use their third-party skills. Second, this study helps companies to better understand the influencing factors regarding the behavioral intention of consumers to use their third-party skills on Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant. Third, when companies know that their target group has a negative attitude toward Amazon Alexa, they should not develop a third-party skill for Amazon Alexa due to the correlation between consumers' attitude and consumers' behavioral intention.

References are available upon request.

Special Session Proposal

TITLE: The Intuition Behind Machine Learning and Endogeneity

Discussion Leaders: Vivek Astvansh (Indiana U.; astvansh@iu.edu) and Wreetabrata "Wreeto" Kar (Purdue U.; wkar@purdue.edu)

Description

We propose a special session that will focus on the intuition behind machine learning and endogeneity. We emphasize intuition because we believe that the several articles, books, and videos on these two topics do not present the information intuitively. The intuitive appeal is critical because it empowers as opposed to intimidate audience.

Proposal

The AMA Winter Academic Conference is uniquely positioned as the "big tent" conference for marketing academics and practitioners. With the academic community, the Conference is attended by faculty members and doctoral students who are diverse on two key dimensions. First, they vary on substantive area (consumer behavior, CCT, quantitative modeling, and marketing strategy), and methodology (e.g., experiments, interviews, ethnography, machine learning, game theoretic models, optimization/mathematical models, reduced form econometrics, structural econometrics, choice models). Second, the attendees come from different universities that operate at different stages of research intensity.

Consistent with this diversity among attendees, we aim to offer them a tutorial that focuses on the *intuition* behind machine learning (ML) methods and endogeneity. Our content and style aim to instill in the attendees confidence that they can use these methods as opposed to intimidate them (because teaching technical stuff can easily intimidate attendees).

Vivek will first present on ML models for 40 minutes (including Q&A), followed by Wreeto discussing endogeneity, its causes, and its solutions for the same number of minutes.

The breakdown of Vivek's session follows.

1. Vivek will begin with the intuition behind each word in the terms "machine learning," and "artificial intelligence." The intuition will allow him to state what is *not* machine learning.

2. He will next offer three case studies of real projects where he will demonstrate how and why ML adds value to alternative methodologies of experiments and regressions. He will emphasize the complementarity of ML studies with experiments, interviews, regressions, and game theoretic models.

   These case studies will subtly introduce the following technical terms to the participants: supervised vs. unsupervised, deep vs. "shallow"; text mining/analysis vs. ML, TF-IDF vs. word embedding, and topic modeling.

3. Vivek will introduce the audience to novel sources of consumer- and firm-generated text data that are freely available.

The breakdown of Wreeto's session follows.

1. He will present two research questions—one where the key independent variable is company-level and one where the independent variable is consumer-level—and establish the intuition behind what is endogenous to what, and why it matters. He will also state when endogeneity is *not* a problem—the reasons could be the research question, the method adopted, or both.

2. He will next discuss—again, intuitively—what makes the independent variable endogenous to the empirical model of the dependent variable.

3. Next is the most important part of his talk. How to solve this "problem" of endogeneity? Wreeto will talk about "instrument-driven" and instrument-free methods. Within the former, he will offer the intuition on the two methods of 2SLS and control function and how they solve the problem. He will offer screenshots of the code and offer an intuitive interpretation of the code and the output. Lastly, he will crisply state the statistical evidence one needs to provide to support the validity of the chosen instrument. Next, he will introduce the common instrument-fee method of Gaussian copula, showing the code, and making intuitive sense of it.

4. Lastly, he will touch upon four alternative methods of (a) matching + DiD, (b) DiD, (c) regression discontinuity, and (d) doubly robust causal inference methods using ML. He will present four case studies so that the audience can understand how context determines method (and not the other way round).

About the Presenters

Vivek Astvansh is an assistant professor in the department of marketing at the Kelley School of Business, Indiana University, United States. He is also an adjunct professor in the department of data science at the Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering at the Indiana University. He wrote compute code for livelihood for 12 years before deciding to become an academic. More about him at https://kelleyschool.iu.edu/astvansh.

Wreetabrata "Wreeeto" Kar is an assistant professor in the academic area of marketing at the Krannert School of Management, Purdue University. He substantive interest lies in studying causal effects of marketing intervention. He has been trained in structural models and in empirical applications which exploit ML and econometrics judiciously to reach inference. More about him at https://krannert.purdue.edu/directory/marketing.php#.

THE STING OF BETRAYAL: CONSUMERS HAVE LOWER PURCHASE INTENTIONS FOR RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS WHEN THEY FEEL BETRAYED BY THEIR VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

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Keywords: virtual assistant, relationship betrayal, artificial intelligence, recommendation agent, purchase intention

Description: Consumers who perceive their virtual assistant has betrayed them feel less relational closeness to their virtual assistant and exhibit lower purchase intentions for a product subsequently recommended by the virtual assistant.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

If consumers can develop interpersonal relationships with their virtual assistants that yield positive outcomes for the firm, can firms also be exposed to negative consequences when

consumers perceive that the virtual assistant has committed a relationship violation? Specifically, can a consumer perceive that their virtual assistant has betrayed their trust, and if so, does the act of betrayal affect the closeness of the relationship between the consumer and virtual assistant? Does the betrayal and its impact on relational closeness affect subsequent interactions with the virtual assistant, such as consumers' intentions to purchase products recommended by the virtual assistant?

Method and Data

Three experimental, online survey-based studies were conducted with participants recruited from Amazon's MTurk. The experiments employed two scenarios in which the consumer was wrong (vs. right) in a fact-based social disagreement settled by the consumer's virtual assistant, pretested to ensure the scenarios elicited the psychological discomfort and affect expected to be associated with betrayal. Study 1a/1b (n = 78/84) tested whether the psychological discomfort (α = .94) would generate feelings of betrayal (α = .77) and result in the participant feeling less close to the virtual assistant (α = .86). Study 2 (n = 85) tested whether the effects of betrayal shown in Study 1a/1b held only when the virtual assistant told the consumer they were wrong in the presence of others, compared to when the consumer was alone with their virtual assistant. Study 3 (n = 79 users of Amazon's Alexa) employed the same procedures as Study 1b, followed by a mathematical distractor task. After the distractor task, participants read a scenario in which they asked Alexa for a product recommendation. Participants rated their purchase intentions (α = .93) for the top result returned by Alexa. All data were analyzed with Hayes' PROCESS Model 6 with 5,000 bootstrapping resamples.

Summary of Findings

Study 1a/1b revealed that being wrong in a fact-based social disagreement settled by the consumer's virtual assistant resulted in the consumer feeling less close to the virtual assistant, sequentially mediated by increased psychological discomfort and increased perceptions of betrayal. Study 2 revealed the nuance of the betrayal. The effects shown in Study 1a/1b held only when the consumer was wrong in the disagreement settled by the VA in the social setting (i.e., in front of others), not when the consumer and virtual assistant were alone. Study 3 tested the entire model. Sequential mediation showed that being wrong in the social disagreement settled by the VA increased psychological discomfort, psychological discomfort increased feelings of betrayal, feelings of betrayal result in feeling less close to the virtual assistant, and feeling less close to the virtual assistant reduced purchase intentions for the product recommended by the virtual assistant.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research shows that the consumer-virtual assistant relationship can expose firms to negative outcomes when the consumer perceives the virtual assistant has violated a relational expectation. Specifically, consumers can feel betrayed by their virtual assistant, which reduces their perceptions of relational closeness. Consumers who feel less close to their virtual assistant as a result of betrayal report lower purchase intentions for products recommended by the virtual assistant. This work offers new insight into how virtual assistants can affect consumer choice, and suggests that developers may need to consider the potential for designing artificial intelligence to mitigate or resolve relationship violations.

TOWARDS A THEORY OF LUXURY BRANDING IN THE METAVERSE- A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH OF BRAND CULTURE SEMANTICS IN CYBER-PHYSICAL REALITIES

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Keywords: literature review, Marketing science, the Metaverse, cyber-physical reality, luxury, culture, experience

Description: The paper is possibly the first paper immersed in the most important and relevant literature studies and analyses of all the marketing science literature based on the complete content of the 17 top journals in marketing science and the most significant Metaverse literature. The study paves the way for a solid rapprochement for the fields of marketing science and the Metaverse to merge in a manner that is beneficial for the viability of marketing, for better and historically driven innovation and evolution in the Metaverse, and for the benefit of the actors involved thus contributing towards a sustainable world.

ABSTRACT

In a situation based on ambiguity and disruption, this research paves a designerly path towards unconcealing the new frontier of luxury branding in the Metaverse. By using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) methods the authors have analyzed close to 30,000 articles to account for a histography of marketing science and the Metaverse.

INTRODUCTION

To arrive at the intellectual space of dealing with the phenomenon of luxury branding as an artifact of taste, design, meaningfulness and self-actualization, and cultural refinement within the contemporary zeitgeist, a new pathway for thought needs to be set. Cyber-physical reality

as an emerging design and meaning search space within the evolution of technicity and historicity of man is thoroughly defined. While many see the Metaverse as a new platform or interface, the purpose of this research, however, is to give this phenomenon within the contemporaneous cyber-physical unison and convergence the place of a new emerging reality, but moreover, to give the physical reality a non-frangible token (NFT), a digital identity and a hybrid and concurrent duality, also known as twining and pairing in concert within a new, pervasive, and immersive facticity. In a way the Metaverse embraces most of the high-tech advances such as: artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), deep learning (DL), data science (DS), blockchain technology (BCT) and virtual and augmented realities (AR) and mixed reality (MR). Some even observe the Metaverse as the new iPhone, while Meta Kovan, the Singapore based crypto, NFT and digital art investor, whose real name is Vignesh Sundaresan and was famous over night as the art critique and collector by buying of Beeples NFT- art called *"The First 5,000 days"* for 69 million dollars. He stated: *"If America is an idea, crypto is the new America. It is freedom and open borders"* (MetaKovan 2021). This culture shift within digital humanities embodies a structural disruption in a generational habitus, as it conveys a new story and thus gives birth to a new reality embracing a change, which is observed from the Instagram emerged persona to an embodied personal twin of an avatar in the Metaverse, from physical art hand-down over the history to digital NFTs as the most influential evolutions in arts, from brand ambassadors and social media influencers to AI-driven influencers from a normative point of view and to develop indigenous theories and frameworks enabling traditional marketing driving these innovations equally and not leaving the disruptive capacity of contemporary evolution purely maneuvered by firms based in the linearity of technicity.

METHODOLOGY

Generally, conceptual articles are not very much free from some intellectual bias. The authors' essential goal was to avoid conceptual bias when extracting topics from many articles in the field of marketing and Metaverse. Therefore, we used LDA methods, which are a form of unsupervised machine learning algorithms. With this, we establish an unbiased labeling of *"topic-keyword relations"* within each article. The LDA approach is based on purely probabilistic models, thus the degree of objectivity is increased. The LDA assumes that each topic is associated with multiple terms and vice versa terms can belong to multiple topics but with a different impact on the overall topic distribution. We have analyzed textual data of 17 journals: 1) Academy of Management Journal; 2) AMS Review; 3) International Journal of Research in Marketing; 4) Journal of Supply Chain Management; 5) Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science; 6) Journal of Business Logistics; 7) Journal of Consumer Psychology; 8) Journal of Consumer Research; 9) Journal of Marketing; 10) Journal of Marketing Research; 11) Journal of Operations Management; 12) Journal of Retailing; 13) Journal of Service Research; 14) Manufacturing & Service Operations Management; 15) Marketing Science; 16) Operations Research, and 17) Production and Operations Management. The authors included every article published in the respective journals from their foundation until our analysis began in spring 2022. A total of **28,253** articles were selected and analyzed. The journals with the most articles in this analysis are the Journal of Operations Research with a share of 18.9%, the Journal of Marketing with 12.4%, and the Journal of Marketing Research with a share of 10.2%. For the analysis, the authors collected all keywords, and where there were no keywords (especially in the early issues of longer established journals, no keywords were indicated), the authors used the titles of the papers to analyze their content.

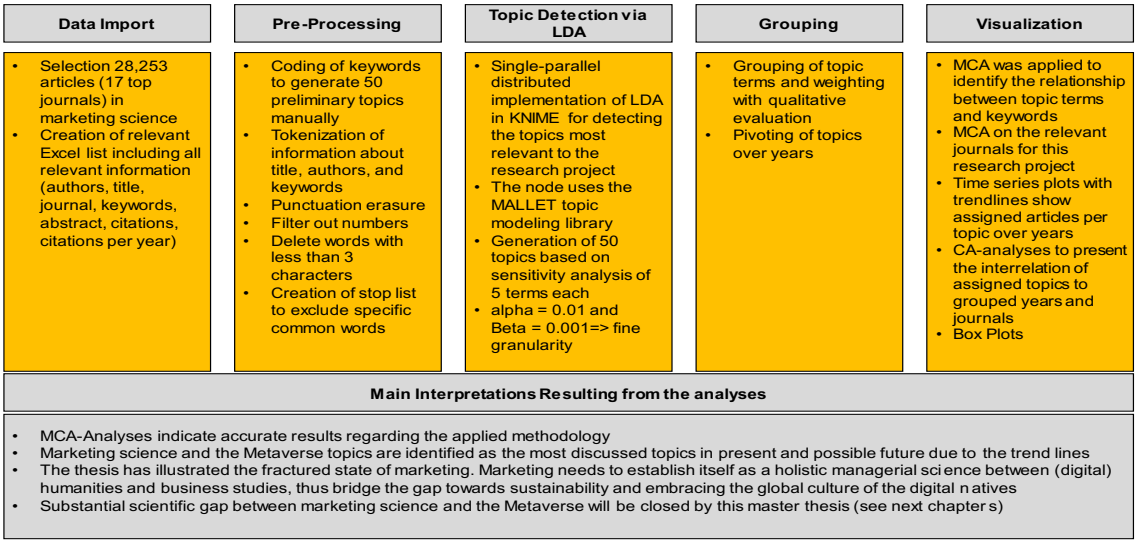

Figure 1: Methodology of the Analysis

The general process of our analysis is displayed in figure1 above.

RESEARCH RESULTS

After performing the LDA analysis, we labelled the extracted topic by interpreting the associated keywords per topic. The results are displayed in figure 2. To map the proximity of topics to time period, we conducted a Correspondence Analysis (CA), which is a form of dimension reduction for textual data, similarly to the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) for numerical input data. For visualization purposes, we chose a 2-dimensional factor representation. The two dimensions of the map in figure 2 below can be interpreted as follows: The horizontal dimension separates older topics (on the left) from newer ones (on the right), except for some themes, which were established during the 1990's, "Avatar" and "User Interfaces", most of the topics are new and vibrant fields of study. Whereas the vertical axis separates topics focusing from a qualitative assessment with a focus on "Gamified Hybrid Spaces"; "Cyber-Physical Interaction" and "Educational Technology" (at the top) and "Business Model Innovation", "Hybrid Design, "Service Management" and "Computer

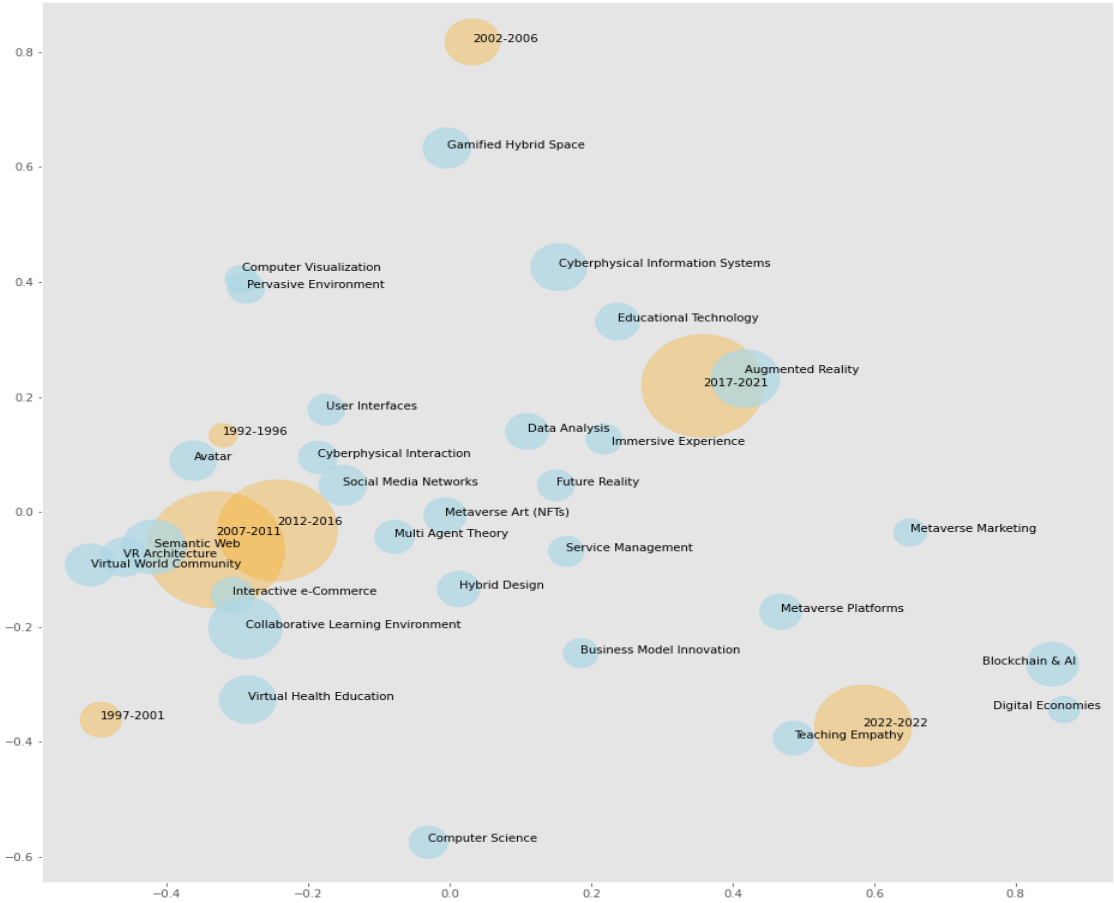

Figure 2: Content Analysis for Topic Groups Over Time

Science" topics (at the bottom). These dimensions reflect "poles" of topical orientation within the Metaverse literature. The combination of the two dimensions provides insights into the relationships between the topics. The timeline follows a spiral form of evolution of the themes. Furthermore, on the top and lower left are older articles with topics such as "avatar" and "User Interfaces". Below that are articles from the 1990s, when topics as "Virtual Health Education", were relevant. The more recent topics are illustrated in the bottom right quadrant, when especially topics as "Teaching Empathy", "Digital Economies", and "Blockchain & AI" have become important. This trend found-out in during the years 2012-2016 and 2011 and 2017 continues until today. At the top right we find the essential topics. There is a clear trend towards "Semantic Web", "Computer Visualization", and pervasive Environments" (top right), but also

other topics such as “Cyber-Physical Interaction”, “Interactive E-Commerce” are strongly associated with the contemporaneous era. It is also worth pointing out that the research has identified so called “evergreen” topics affiliated to all decades, therefore placed in the center of figure 2 such as “Hybrid Design”, “Business Model Innovation, “Multi Agent Theory”, “Service Management”, “Data Analysis” and “Social Media Networks”. Our research indicates that the importance of channel management as a founding pillar of marketing has been ubiquitous in the development of marketing and throughout its history. Contrary to the general assumption of many in the research community, the notion of digital marketing and technologically driven e-commerce activities to have emerged as a new type of marketing, our collected history illustrates, that the rise of the internet has had no significant effect on the constant rise of importance of channel in marketing. While themes as franchising, retailing, and distribution have been essential throughout the evolution of channel management. The essential dimension of consumer behavior for marketing and that the field has delivered many solid contributions for marketing science. However, as illustrated in figure 3, the separation of the field from marketing science towards consumer behavior evolves since 1974. After 1974 we observe a strong decline in the number of publications associated with consumer behavior. The topic of international markets shows a constant volatility. However, the importance of the topic can be observed with a constant rise of academic publications within the field. While the topic of macro-marketing has had a constant rise, the number of publications has been comparatively low until today. This could be due to the field of economics which is foundationally concentrated on the macro frameworks and structures of the markets. The topic of marketing science has been of importance throughout marketing history, especially after the year 1973, when the journal of the academy of marketing science was founded, with additional peaks in 1987, 1992, 2007, and 2020. The notion of relationship management has had a slower

start than other topics observed so far, yet the years 2010 and 2011 illustrate an increased interest in the topic in recent years.

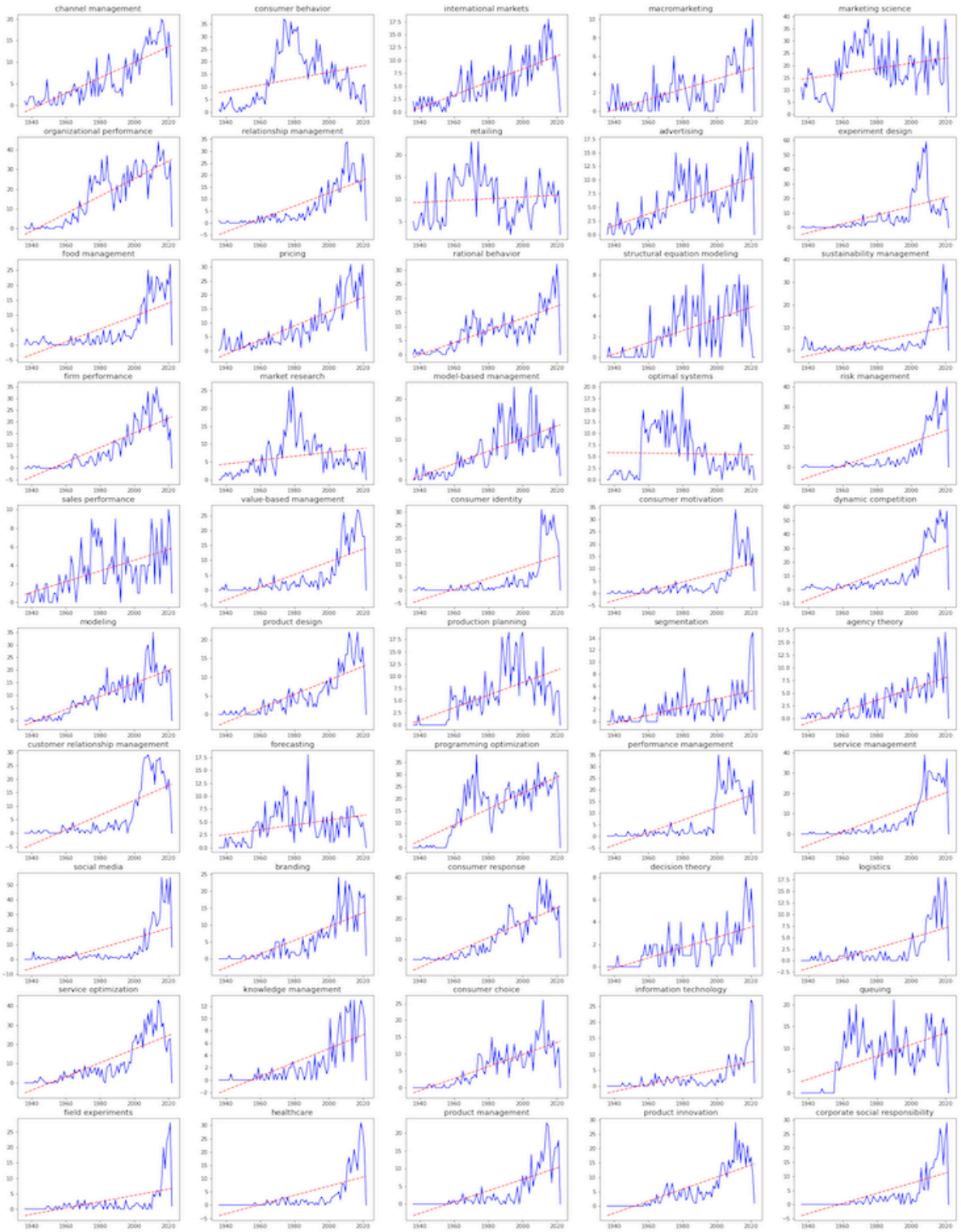

Figure 3: Time Plots of the Topic Groups Over Time

Retailing has been a founding pillar of marketing and therefore kept its steady level of publications through most of history of marketing. The most interest in the topic can be observed between 1955 and 1985. Based on the Google Ngram viewer search history, the theme distribution has had a huge impact on the evolution of marketing, followed by the notion of advertisement, which has been highly influential on marketing as well. However, within the course of academic publishing, the topic of advertising has increased with the introduction of mass media such as the television or social media, which explains the higher number of publications after 1970 and 2008. The theme of expert design has become momentum only since the years 1999 with the sharp fall between 2009 to 2011and thus not really recovering from the downward turning but only with a minor peak in 2020. This could also be to the covid-19 pandemics as no real experiments in terms of physical participation of the participants could be designed. The importance of food within marketing can be sensed in the early 2000s, while the essential peak has happened in 2008, and this trend has been constant until today due to a rise in health consciousness of the general population. Pricing, based on the Google Ngram Viewer, has had the lowest number of book publications compared to advertising, distribution, promotion, product management and marketing. In terms of academic publications, however, the topic has steadily increased in importance with peaks in 1995, 2007, 2014, and 2020. As pricing decides what type of marketing we are conducting, there is no discussion about the importance of pricing within the context of marketing. The first peak of the topic market research can be observed in 1964, when the journal of marketing research was founded. While much attention was paid to the theme with large peaks in 1977 and 1979, with another peak in 1984, however, afterwards a steady decline can be observed. Due to the rise of the internet and creativity-based entrepreneurial pursuits, a data-based world does not require mailed-out surveys or market research activities that have been of vital necessity in the 1970s and 1980s. Therefore, especially after 2000, market research has not been of much interest in the marketing

field. Data management has contributed towards more competitive dynamics by the firms, wherein modeling, customer choice, and consumer behavior were the essential themes. The author has organized the themes deriving from the topics under the umbrella of model-based-management. The notion of optimal systems has been found based on the evolution of statistical and operational research, wherein diverse measurements of performance were developed to create an optimal model of efficiency management. Risk management within the holistic marketing literature derived started its peak in 2007. This development was due to the global financial crises, where in 2015 it peaked again, and where additional upward movements (peaks) could be observed due to the global Covid-19 pandemics, which started in late 2019 in China and then spread throughout the globe. The notion of sales has been essential for the raison d'être of marketing with a high volatility throughout the evolution of the marketing literature. Value-based management is the contrary approach to price-based and competition-based marketing, wherein the perception of value to the customer is the locus of innovation. This approach has contributed towards creating vast amounts of growth, productivity, and hence, towards the evolution of branding within marketing. Many firms as Apple (iPhone) and traditional companies as Steinway & Sons have profited from this approach. Those companies were able to market products with a much higher price than their competitors by increasing the value perception of their customers. While many diverse publications embedding consumer identity throughout the years, a huge peak in interest can be observed since 2011. This rise in interest has been stable and could stem from a rise of internet-based technologies wherein consumer behavior in general can be thoroughly observed. Consumer motivation has been the primary driver of marketing. While many publications have been observed throughout the years, a huge peak has been observed in the year 2011 and the interest in this topic seems to be on fruitful grounds for the field and for a good customer relationship management. There are many strategic games e.g. pricing, focus, differentiation, etc. that are foundational towards the

evolution of the theme dynamic competition; wherein multiple games of strategy have been played to achieve optimal results for the firm. The peaks in this topic are in parallel to the evolution of technology and post-PC devices (e.g. mobile phones) whereby much competition for the attention of consumers has been pursued. The evolution of modeling within marketing can be derived from the manyfold of statistics that were integrated into marketing, thus, to translate adequate data into information and intelligence for the marketing managers to make better decisions or understand the dynamics of the markets. The essence of product design was always foundational in customer choice. However, based on the evolution of digital gadgets, mainly deriving from the introduction of the first iPhone in 2004 and additional design-based production strategies, wherein the notion of design science research, information sciences, and designing has become a core capability of diverse technology-based companies. This evolution substituted the focus on value-chain activities, which were based on in-bound and out-bound logistics and production to be outsourced, while channel relationships and direct consumer strategies within the cyber-physical duality has been considered as the core activity of marketers. This evolution has been based on the foundations of total quality management and efficiency research, where much attention was put towards scheduling, service management, production, and quality respectively production facility design. As segmentation has been the foundational pillar on which marketing has nurtured, the evolution of segmentation has been ubiquitous and important. This essentiality has not been decreased and in contrary has increased within the times of hyper digitality. The notion of agency theory has had its steady rise during the mid 80‘s with some drops in late 90’s possible due to the Asian financial crises and the late 2000’s due to the 2007 and 2008 financial crises. However, a great rise in academic interest was observed during the years 2016 and 2020. CRM has been a foundation al topic for branding and marketing in general. While the theme was discussed during the many publications of marketing, a strong rise of the topic was observed after 1996. This possibly due

to the rise of e-commerce and the internet. The topic has not lost its importance and based on the diverse digital tools and frameworks developed much more is expected to be possible, especially with the rise of AI-driven organizational capabilities. Forecasting has been a major topic in SCM. As the author see SCM to be the third job of marketing (deliver value to the customer), the theme regardless of the artificial boundaries created by the academic reductionist approaches for SCM to be separated from marketing the author sees this differently and to the contrary. While, seen from the operations and efficiency management side the importance of forecasting cannot be underestimated, the main peaks were observed during the late 80‘s with some declining interest after that. The essence of programming optimization had its great rise in academic interest in the 60’s with a huge peak in 1973 and 2009. This notion is due to the huge interest in AI-and algorithmic modeling of stochastic models and networks. The theme performance management had a huge peak in academic interest during 2001and 2007. While some decline is sensed during the early 2000’s, additional interest has been sensed in 2021, where the many themes such as performance, quality, technology, and manufacturing have been of interest. The essential interest in the theme” service” was launched by the publication of Lusch and Vargo’s (2006) book, where the concept of “Service Dominant Logic”. An update in continuing the evolution of SDL was introduced in 2008, which brought the broader dimension of service into the academic marketing discourse (cf. Vargo and Lusch 2008). So far, the SDL could be regarded as a major theoretical framework adding to the body of knowledge of marketing and thus its cognitive identity. The birth of social media marketing could be derived to February 4th, 2004, where the firm went online. The first peaks in publications could be sensed in 2006, 2012, 2019 and 2021. Social media marketing has been essential to the growth and birth of many companies, entrepreneurial endeavors and jobs that could be considered as one of the revolutionary moments in channel management of marketing thought. Branding is a major foundation of marketing, wherein the ubiquity of quality, trust,

and continuity of service in loyalty is ubiquitous. Branding has had many smaller peaks, however diverse research contributions peaked in the early 2000's with a brief decline in 2007 but additional peaks in 2010, 2018 and 2021. The essence of a good marketing planning and campaign is to collect solid feedback based on the dimension of consumer response. The effects of advertisement, the processing of the information collected and redistributing the corrected iterative actions towards the marketing objectives is the key to firms' success. A brief peak in publications could be sensed in 1992 with decade of decline and rise again in 2010 and 2014. Since then, some decline is noticed. While more insights could be drawn from our research, the distinguished reader is referred to figures 2and 3 above for more in-depth insights

Thus, time series illustrations account for the holistic history of marketing and the multiple streams of topics that were and have been relevant within the field. We see that most the topics are based on "Marketing Science", "Consumer Behavior", "Organizational Performance", "Programming and Optimization", "Dynamic Competition", "Consumer Response" and "Retailing" etc. While additional themes as illustrated in a single figure below demonstrate that many topics are relevant, we still see the dependence of marketing to CB as the second most essential theme to which 1516 articles were assigned, while marketing science captures just a few more with 1628 articles. Here marketing is possible better served to put some of essential intellectual output into the themes of the Metaverse as the essence of this work. Hence, marketing must cope with the digital and not leave the developments within the digital field to chance.

RESEARCH RESULTS THE METAVERSE

The topics of the Metaverse were based on the same methodology but only included the essential publication regarding the Metaverse. As illustrated in figure 4 below, our research indicates the following results.

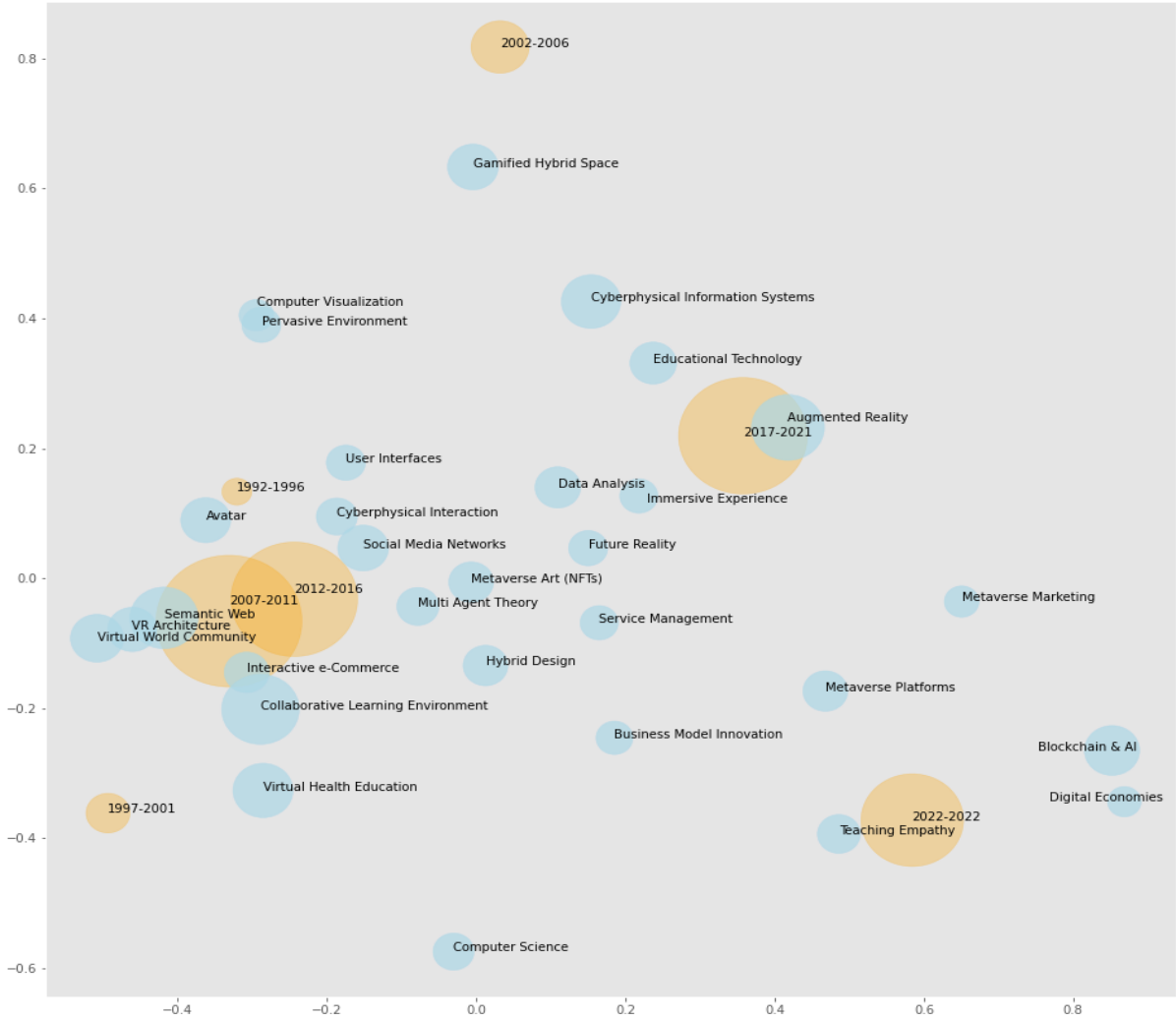

Figure 4 Content Analysis for Topic Groups in the Metaverse Over Time

AR experienced its first major peak in the year 2002, while most publications on the other hand appeared from 2016 to 2022. Avatar describes a highly volatile topic with a decreasing trendline since 2015, but a rapid increase in appearance since 2021. Blockchain & AI experience a first peak in 2012, with a second peak around 2018, but most articles appearing from 2020 onwards. This cycle can be derived back equally the cryptocurrency cycle. Business model innovation is a highly volatile topic with a rapid increase since 2020. Computer science experiences several peaks, such as in 2015, but was more relevant between 2006 and 2011 and indicates future importance due to the appearance from 2020 and onwards. Collaborative Learning Environments experienced a high around 2009 with a strong decrease up to 2016.

Afterwards it became of higher relevance once again. Computer Visualization has been highly volatile throughout the entire analyzed timespan and experienced several peaks between 2005 and 2010 and in 2021. Cyber-physical Information Systems indicate a strong upwards trendline and being of high relevance in future research. Cyber-physical Interaction once again is a highly volatile topic throughout the entire time horizon, with the highest relevance in 2015. Data Analysis first experienced a significant peak in 2009, with it then being in decline, until its relevance rose again by the beginning of 2020. Digital Economies experiences some minor peaks until 2020 but was a less significant until 2020 when it became a relevant. Educational Technology has been volatile throughout the entire timespan, with significant peaks in 2009 and most recently in 2021. Future Reality is a topic discussed since 2000 and is highly volatile and has gained dramatic importance since 2020. Another highly volatile topic, is Gamified Hybrid Space with several peaks but it has not been extensively discussed for more than 2 years in a row. The topic of Hybrid Design has been a relevant topic from 2007 to 2015 but afterwards research stopped discussing it. But since 2020, a rapid increase can be experienced. Immersive Experience has been mostly discussed between 2005 and 2012 and was irrelevant until 2020 afterwards. In present research it gains attention again. Interactive E-Commerce is a highly volatile topic, mostly discussed between 2008 and 2010. Afterwards it was less important but since 2020 an increased attention in research can be recognized. Metaverse Art was rarely discussed until 2020 as it is a contemporaneous theme. Within Metaverse Marketing and Metaverse Platforms some articles have been written before 2020, but present and future research will discuss this topic more extensively. Multi Agent theory has been highly volatile since 2000, having its high in 2011 and 2021 indicating a high future relevance. Pervasive Environment is extremely volatile having its high in 2010. Nevertheless, research did not discuss the topic since 2020. Semantic Web was firstly discussed in 2006 and received most attention in 2011. Afterwards a high volatility can be recognized, although the trendline is

decreasing. Service Management first appeared in 2007 but was rarely discussed. A significant increase in 2021 can be recognized, indicating that it will become more important in the future according to the trendline. Social media networks have been intensively discussed in literature since 2008 showing a high volatility. The trendline indicates that this topic is heavily dealt with in present research and possibly in the future research. In contrast, the topic of Teaching Empathy was irrelevant until 2020, but since 2021, research heavily deals with this topic indicating a possible future research field. User interfaces was unknown until 2006. Afterwards a high volatility can be observed until 2013, before a rapid increase in the topics' appearance started in 2021. Virtual Health Education has already been discussed in the 1990s with a gap between 2000 and 2007. Afterwards the topic was highly volatile and decreasing until 2020 but indicates an increasing in 2021 and 2022. The Virtual World Community has been volatile between 2007 and 2015 and was nearly irrelevant until 2021. Since then, an increasing trendline can be observed. VR Architecture as a topic was discussed already since 1990, but between 2005 and 2012 research strongly focused on this topic. Afterwards, the focus shifted towards other topics supported by the decreasing trendline.

CONCLUSIONS ON MARKETING LUXURY IN THE METAVERSE

Marketing the holistic nature of books was a game chamber for Amazon Inc., thus, equally luxury branding could mean for the Metaverse to place many numbers of top brands in the web 3.0 zone. To answer, what luxury means in the Metaverse, we need to ask what prerequisites must be met, wherein luxury in the Metaverse as a unified field of innovation within this sphere could be paved and how it could evolve? Hence, the Metaverse brings forth diverse possibilities, which are foundational not only for the firms to meet their diverse objectives, but moreover we see opportunities for good brands' behavior and thus resulting to better and sustainable consumer experiences. Some precise points that could support this argument and how luxury could help are defined below:

1. **Twining** of the artefacts as medium of connecting the cyber with the physical
2. **Origin** of the artefact and the data about the item
3. **Sustainability** with ESG factors (Environmental, Social and Governance) evaluating firms and regions
4. **Access** by actors, designers, developers, and users to develop the digital experience e.g., art, fashion, game
5. **Originality** of the non-fungible tokens (NFTs)
6. **Owning** a part of the internet beyond sharing and the physical twin connecting back to the original
7. **Experience** as a merged brand connection
8. **Circular** as in fashion by designing, sourcing, producing, and providing as a circulate societal responsibly

These dimensions go hand in hand with the evolution of marketing and in particularly the marketing P's that have defined marketing activities since decades. The essence of the 4 P's observed from the traditional marketing lens are known. However, these have changed in the age of AI as additional possibilities have emerged for marketing to evolve.

Table 1: The Evolution of the Marketing P's

Traditional Marketing	AI- driven Marketing	Marketing in the Metaverse
Product	Psychographics	Pieces (Twins)
Price	Predictive APIs	People (Actors)
Place	Proxy	Places (Cyber-Physical)
Promotion	Pervasive Environments	Play

Within the Metaverse the dimension of the "4 P's" represent more evolved features. In general, the term pieces defined as the embodiment of all products and service (twins) including the

part of the 3D immersive internet (Metaverse) such as land, skins, and experiences (events) a user could purchase. The notion of people represents all the stakeholders and users, which start with the developers to the gaming platforms. People are the communities, which are navigating the cyberspace of the Metaverse interoperable, while places are also the gaming pervasive environments but technically, they could be expanded to physical spaces, which are then integrated via AR or MR and XR features, and which are the intertwined spaces combining the digital with the physical spheres. Play as the word defines it means playfully engagement with the cyber-physical spaces, thus all the activities that enable individuals/users to build, share, own, and monetize their individual and virtual experiences. However, the essential foundation of what is represented by luxury in the Metaverse is the nature of valuable, worthy and at the same time monetizing experiences that could bear many fruits.

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When “my own” brand is attacked?

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Keywords: brand, psychological ownership, compensatory consumption, self-threat

Description: This study not only conducted an in-depth investigation into consumers’ reactions when their cherished brands are publicly criticized but also evaluated how consumers’ psychological ownership of a brand affected their reactions.

Research Question

When this brand is publicly assaulted, they have a bigger feeling of self-damage and suffer more self-threat than if a brand in which they have less psychological ownership was attacked (Pan et al., 2014; Park and Maner, 2009). Consumers engage in greater compensatory purchasing to restore self-worth in order to lessen self-threat (Kim and Rucker, 2012). They specifically buy more items from the brand under assault in order to maintain their self-image (Critcher and Dunning, 2015; Kim and Rucker, 2012; Su et al., 2017). On the basis of the these findings, the following hypotheses are advanced.

Consumers that are communion oriented are kind and rely on others. They recognize the interdependence of community members and respect the decisions of others (Frimer et al., 2011; Locke, 2015). Furthermore, they attempt to integrate into society and are more prone to accept and follow the ideas of others. If the brand in which they have a strong psychological attachment is attacked, they internalize the criticism and think that they are being endangered. External criticism, on the other hand, would not bother them if they had little psychological ownership in the brand. Agency-oriented consumers are typically self-centered and care little about others’ opinion. Therefore, external criticism from the outside world would have a negligible effect on them. Regardless of the degree of psychological ownership they have of a brand, they would not experience self-threat.

Method and Findings

Study 1

Participants and Stimuli

Data on 81 participants were acquired using an online portal of a marketing research organization in study 1, which was done in 2021. The first study used a one-factor between-participant experimental design, with the factor being psychological ownership (high or low). A pizza brand's psychological ownership was directly altered.

Results and Discussion

Perceived psychological ownership of the pizza brand significantly affected purchase intention toward the brand, $t_{(79)} = 2.75$, $p = 0.01$. The participants who perceived their psychological ownership of the pizza brand to be high had stronger purchase intentions toward the brand ($M_{High} = 3.16$) than did those who perceived their psychological ownership of the brand to be low ($M_{Low} = 2.74$). Thus, H1 was supported.

Bootstrapping was performed on the PROCESS macro (model 4) developed by Hayes (2013) in a mediator model to estimate the effects of perceived psychological ownership on purchase intention. Self-

threat mediated the effect of psychological ownership on purchase intention (indirect effect = 0.45, standard error [SE] = 0.12, 95% confidence interval [CI] = [0.21, 0.68]). Thus, H2 was supported.

Study 2

Participants and Stimuli

The participants comprised 163 adult consumers recruited from an online panel of a marketing research company. Each individual received US$1 as compensation for their participation. A 2 (high or low psychological ownership) × 2 (agency or communion orientation) between-participant experimental design was employed, and the participants were randomly assigned to four groups.

Results and Discussion

To test the moderated mediation hypothesis (H3) with the PROCESS macro (model 7) developed by Hayes (2013). Bootstrapping was performed to examine moderation effects and to obtain estimates of the conditional indirect effect of X on Y through Med at various values of Mod. Psychological ownership had a significant indirect effect on purchase intention under the condition of communion orientation (indirect effect = 0.45, SE = 0.13, 95% CI = [0.22, 0.71]; Table IV). Overall, the results supported the existence of moderated moderation effects in accordance with H3.

Statement of Key Contributions –

The following theoretical contributions are made by this work. To begin, relevant research on consumer-brand connections has focused on characteristics that strengthen such ties (Tukej et al., 2013). However, the growth of internet media has given customers additional options to voice their dissatisfaction with a business and spread negative word-of-mouth about it. These activities might lead to widespread brand criticism or even brand boycotts (Choi et al., 2014; Yuksel and Mryteza, 2009). There have been few research on this topic (Gong, 2018). We not only performed an extensive analysis on customers' reactions when their beloved brands are publicly attacked, but we also assessed how consumers' psychological ownership of a brand influenced their reactions.

Second, we included the idea of self-threat into the study framework and investigated its effects as a mediating mechanism. When consumers have a high level of psychological ownership in a brand, they evaluate it favorably and may regard it as an extension of themselves. When a brand is criticized, such customers are more likely to feel threatened by themselves—to feel personally attacked and undervalued. They may boost their use of that brand's items to alleviate this emotion and symbolically heal the self. This finding is consistent with previous research and broadens the applicability of our findings to the field of brand research.

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Branding and Marketing Communications

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF PARENTS' SKEPTICISM TOWARD COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN

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Keywords: skepticism, COVID-19, vaccination, children, intention, gender, knowledge, involvement, moderated mediation.

Description: The study aimed to examine which factors play a significant role in parents' decision of whether to let their children receive the COVID-19 vaccine, discovered that the gender role of the parents has a significantly moderate impact on the children's vaccination rate.

Acknowledgements: Mr. Haitao Huang from Henan university, China; Dr. Mark Sciuchetti from Jacksonville State University; AMA Reviewers

Research Question

Many parents are currently trying to decide whether to let their young children receive the COVID-19 vaccine after the U.S. and Indonesia have started administering COVID-19 vaccinations for children ages 6-11. Although scientists must conduct clinical trials before recommending COVID-19 vaccination for children, the FDA gave the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine emergency authorization to use in children ages between 5-15 without a full trial.

According to the New York Times, only 10% of young children from age 5-15 have received the first shot as of DATE (New York Times, 2021). Many parents are still seeking information and waiting for more research results.

This skepticism exists despite overwhelming evidence of the efficacy and safety of vaccines. The reasons are not quite clear. Thus, it is important to study the following research questions:

1. What are the antecedents and consequences of parents' skepticism toward COVID-19 vaccination for children?
2. Which factors play a significant role in parents' decision of whether to let their children receive the COVID-19 vaccine?
3. What communication strategies can help promote the Covid vaccine for children?

Method and Data

To investigate the antecedents and the consequences of parents' skepticism toward the COVID-19 vaccine, we designed a survey and distributed them to multiple kindergartens. Parents were fully informed of the purpose of the study and were invited to participate voluntarily after receiving consent to conduct the study from the IRB and the administration of the schools. 25 kindergartens with 500 parents were selected to participate in the study. Questionnaire completion was anonymous. Finally, we utilized the PROCESS tool in SPSS to analyze the data and test the hypotheses (Hayes, 2013).

Summary of Findings

In this study, we utilized the PROCESS tool in SPSS to analyze the data and test the hypotheses (Hayes, 2013). PROCESS is a flexible computational tool to estimate mediation or

moderation models. It is based on multiple linear regression and is considered appropriate for analyzing interactions between continuous independent variables (Hayes & Matthes, 2009; Hayes 2013). The finding suggested the mediation role of skepticism between knowledge and intention is supported.

The finding also revealed a significant interaction effect of knowledge and gender on skepticism in which indicated the relationship between knowledge and skepticism is softer for female; the relationship between involvement and intention is also softer for female.

Statement of Key Contributions

There are a few main contributions from this study. First, it advances the previous research by being the first marketing research to investigate the antecedents and consequences of parents' skepticism of the vaccine. Second, this study discovered that the gender role of the parents has a significant moderate impact on the children's vaccination rate.

The simultaneous inclusion of the physical environment and the social environment in the estimated models helps to explore the importance of gender's role played when government and organizations educate the public and push the vaccine. This study provides insight into the antecedents and consequences of parents' skepticism toward the vaccine. It helps marketers identify the antecedent factors that cause parents' skepticism. For example, marketers, governments, and organizations such as CDC should effectively communicate with the customers, avoid information overload, and keep the mothers' involvement balanced.

References are available upon request.

ARE MARKETERS USING HIP-HOP MUSIC LIKE STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY TO SUPPORT DEI INITIATIVES? A REVISED IMC FRAMEWORK TO ADDRESS CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

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Keywords

IMC, DEI, brand authenticity, hip-hop, cultural appropriation

Description

Our study uses Büyükokutan's (2011) Theory of Cultural Appropriation to propose a revised integrated marketing communications (IMC) framework to help marketing managers figure out how to best include DEI initiatives in their messaging while also considering the cultural appropriation of certain tactics, like using hip-hop music in commercials.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

How and when should brands incorporate hip-hop culture into their integrated marketing communications (IMC) campaigns?

Introduction

By infusing hip-hop culture into their marketing efforts, brands attempt to signal that they, too, are authentic, like *Kroger* did when they centered their 2019 brand relaunch around Flo Rida's song, "Low." *Kroger* stated the song promoted their supermarket's "low" prices in a creative way that also allowed the brand to "celebrate diversity." While the song's hook is catchy, the lyrics about appreciating a stripper's ability to “get low” run counter to the Ohio-based retailer's Midwest heritage. *Kroger* escaped a reputation-damaging firestorm over its use of a song that objectified women, but the "Get Low" commercial was poorly received.

The rise in hip-hop-infused campaigns is likely due to a new generation of marketers who understand how rappers are perceived as authentic and who believe that hip-hop's inherent diversity supports diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives for inclusive imagery, without taking into account either the brand's image or hip-hop's origins in the 1970s as an outlet for expressing anger at social inequalities that shaped many Black people's lives (Wang 2018). The *Kroger* example also illustrates the point that hip-hop music is at risk of being commoditized like interchangeable stock photography when cultural appropriation is not considered as part of the IMC planning process.

Conceptual Framework

Using Büyükokutan's (2011) Theory of Cultural Appropriation, we reconceptualize the integrated marketing communications (IMC) framework, indicating how DEI could be conceptually positioned within IMC planning. First, we selected Clow and Baack's (2017) IMC framework with six planning stages as the foundation. The first step is communication research, followed by determining the target audience, product position, goals, budget, and IMC tactics.

Next, the six stages of the IMC framework are reconceptualized using the lens of Büyükokutan's (2011) Theory of Cultural Appropriation. This theoretical perspective considers appropriation, like a brand's IMC program using hip-hop music, as a reciprocal, non-negotiable intergroup exchange. Before appropriating, Büyükokutan (2011) advises cultural appropriators to research the owners' different histories, resources, and materials. Our revised IMC framework incorporates consideration for cultural appropriation as a key part of the communications research and tactics stages. Marketers should only use hip-hop music in IMC campaigns after careful planning. This is to make sure that the music fits with the brand and to avoid cultural appropriation when using music, fashion, or design that the brand didn't create.

Summary of Findings

We tested our conceptual framework using the *Kroger* example and found that considering cultural appropriation during IMC planning ensures that messages and tactics align and support a standardized brand promotion. Using our reconceptualized IMC framework with its stages addressing DEI initiatives would have prevented *Kroger's* 2019

"Fresh for Everyone" brand relaunch from being built around Flo Rida's "Low," saving the company from a poorly received campaign.

Kroger's "Get Low" commercial debuted on the grocery store's *YouTube* channel on January 5, 2021, and received 900,000 views in its first month, but more negative feedback than positive (30,000 dislikes to 23,000 likes). After the commercial aired, customers began posting parody ads on social media with the caption "*Kroger* Ad But...", implying that the "Get Low" commercial was inconsistent with *Kroger's* brand image. DJones 5559's *YouTube* comment on *Kroger's* "Get Low" commercial, "As a *Kroger* employee, I'm sitting here wondering what our marketing team was smoking," received 11,000 likes (YouTube 2021).

Our revised IMC plan helps brands reach their campaign goals without worrying about being accused of cultural appropriation or causing unintentional confusion about their values, which could make consumers feel less positive about the company (Keller 2016) resulting in less than desirable business outcomes.

Statement of Key Contributions

When attempting to market themselves as diverse and gain access to niche markets, more brands are infusing hip-hop culture into their IMC campaigns. When brands attempt to be more daring with their creative execution, they fail to recognize how quickly brand trust can be eroded. Fortunately, *Kroger* avoided having to explain why it chose a catchy hip-hop song that openly objectifies women as a way to "celebrate diversity."

The *Kroger* example also highlights how hip-hop music risks becoming commoditized like an interchangeable stock photo when brands want to signal their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts through marketing communication programs without considering the cultural appropriation of music originally created to express anger at social inequalities and injustices.

Our updated IMC framework enables brands to achieve their campaign objectives without fear of being accused of cultural appropriation or causing unintentional confusion about their values, which could lead to negative feelings about the brand (Keller 2016) and result in poor business outcomes.

References are available upon request.

AUTHENTIC SOCIO-POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND THE CONSEQUENCE OF WOKE ACTIVISM

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Keywords: brand authenticity, message frame, perceived proximity, woke activism

Description: This paper investigates the positive effect of abstract vs. concrete socio-political activism and the negative effect of woke activism on brand authenticity.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – Brand's involvement in socio-political activism is defined as "public speech or actions focused on partisan issues made by or on behalf of a company using its corporate or individual brand name" (Moorman, 2020, p. 388). Nowadays, brands actively engage in socio-political issues considered highly partisan and socially controversial. There is a growing consensus among various stakeholders that brands need to be more active in socio-political campaigns. That kind of consensus is influencing brands to involve in socio-political issues. However, one of the biggest concerns for brands is to be seen as opportunistic, and consumers may perceive their involvement as inauthentic. We thus investigate:

1. What kind of socio-political activism message leads to higher brand authenticity?

2. Does the brand's proximity to the socio-political activism cause become higher when the message is about changes inside the organization.?

3. Does Congruent woke activism negatively affect authenticity more than incongruent woke activism?

Method and Data – To test the proposed hypotheses, we conducted four experimental studies with student samples and the general population. Studies 1A and 1B test the effect of abstract vs. concrete socio-political activism messages on perceived brand activism proximity and brand authenticity. We also studied the mediating role of brand activism proximity in the relationship between abstract vs. concrete messages and brand authenticity. We used racial equality context for study 1A and LGBTQ rights for study 1B. In study two, we again tested the relationship that we tested in studies 1a and 1B. In study 2, we also measured the comparative effect of woke activism on brand authenticity when people heard that the brand did not fulfill its initial promise. In study three, we tested all the hypotheses with the novel issue to test the negative effect of congruent woke activism vs. incongruent woke activism.

Summary of Findings - We ran four studies to examine the proposed hypotheses. In all four studies in both racial equality and LGBTQ contexts, we found a more positive effect of the concrete internal message on brand authenticity. Therefore, a message conveying the specific actions a brand will take to change the culture inside the organization will generate higher brand authenticity than a similar concrete message focusing on working with external organizations or an abstract message not accompanied by concrete action. We also tested why a concrete internal

message generates higher brand authenticity even though the concrete external message also has a specific action plan. In order to support our logic, we argued that a concrete internal message would bring the brand closer to socio-political activism and the fit is the underlying reason behind the increased authenticity. In all four studies, we find the statistically significant effect of message abstractness on brand activism fit, meaning that participants believe that the brand's support of a concrete internal message makes the brand closer to the cause and that ultimately lead participants to believe that the brand is more authentic.

Statement of Key Contributions - Our study contributes to the brand socio-political activism literature as we study the effective socio-political communication to the target audience. Borrowing from the message abstractness literature, we provide evidence of the concrete message's more substantial effect, focusing on the internal changes inside the organization as the catalyst to ensure authenticity in the brand's socio-political activism communication. Moreover, a concrete message helps the brand to generate more proximity to the brand activism. Therefore, we contribute to the perceived proximity literature and message abstractness literature by establishing the relationship between these two concepts and their effect on socio-political activism. Additionally, academic research has studied the effect of woke washing and our research has studied the effect of woke activism and has made two additional contributions in this area. One, we find that consumers are more likely to punish the brand if brands are caught for not fulfilling something they promised before (congruent woke activism) compared to the brand being caught for something else (incongruent woke activism) that also violates their position regarding their activism stance. Second, consumer punishment for congruent woke

activism is more severe when the brand makes an internal concrete commitment to the activism than a concrete external or abstract commitment.

BEFORE AND AFTER COVID: ADAPTING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGE INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

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KEYWORDS:

Organization communication, internal stakeholders, COVID, crisis communications

DESCRIPTION:

This paper explores how COVID's impact on organizations has forced decision makers to adapt communications strategies for internal stakeholders, and reviews examples of success.

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a solid understanding of stakeholder engagement and identification, while exploring the role communicators, leaders, and managers play in fostering this connection. Reviewing scholarly literature and recent articles sheds light on pre-COVID-19 communications best practices and how organizations have successfully adapted their strategies in an environment marked by significant change.

DEFINING ENGAGEMENT

Among the authors who have sought to define engagement, Tamara Erickson, author of *Plugged In: A Generation Y Guide to Thriving at Work*, describes it as exhibiting "some level of passion, commitment, and investment of discretionary effort" (Erickson, 2008). Minjeong Kang, an internationally recognized expert on employee communication and relations, conceptualizes engagement as "an affective motivational mediator that leads individuals' trust and satisfaction…to be displayed in supportive behavioral intentions for an organization." The scholar proposes that engagement can be measured in terms of three increasing levels: an emotional bond, interest and enthusiasm, and willingness to collaborate with an organization (Kang, 2014).

Organizational identification is a significant factor contributing to stakeholder engagement with an organization. When individuals identify with an organization, they perceive that they share interests with that organization and that they belong to the group. Identification is an individual's sense of "oneness" with an organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Social identity theory helps to explain identification in terms of an individual's "need for self-categorization," which may help to define "the individual's place in society" (Turner, 1987, as cited in Smidts, 2001, p. 1052) and an individual's "need for self-enhancement," which "requires that group membership be rewarding" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255).

Robert Boutilier, a renowned scholar on the topic of social license, describes stakeholder relations as a pyramid-like structure where the bottom is an organization's "economic legitimacy," or the feeling among stakeholders that a company offers an economic benefit. Through cultivating relationships and strategic engagement with the stakeholders, organizations can escalate the pyramid, through the levels of "interactional trust" and "sociopolitical

legitimacy," eventually reaching the pinnacle of "institutionalized trust," which is the sense that the company has an enduring regard for stakeholder interests (Henisz, 2017, p. 81).

Trust is a critical component in stakeholder relationships. Wilson (1994) found that both employee and public perceptions of commitment, trust, and mutual respect are important for understanding organization-public relationships (as cited in Mishra et al., 2014, p. 186). Research shows that trust has a significantly positive impact on customer satisfaction and employee engagement (Bruning and Ledingham, 2000, as cited in Mishra et al., 2014, p. 186).

As organizations have shifted from a perspective of "managing" stakeholders to "collaborating with" stakeholders, engagement, according to Cornelissen (2020), has come to imply "a two-way symmetrical model of dialogue and consultation through which communication practitioners build stakeholder relationships that are reciprocal, evolving, and mutually defined, and that are a source of opportunity and competitive advantage" (p. 77).

With this foundational understanding of stakeholder engagement, we can move to analyzing the benefit of engaging internal stakeholders, examine the role of communications in fostering relationships, and understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on effective strategies for promoting identification and engagement amongst stakeholder audiences.

ENGAGING INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS: PRE-COVID

How does engagement translate specifically to internal stakeholders? Chanana and Sangeeta (2020) suggest that it involves "a workplace attitude that is ensuring all adherents of an organization give of their excellence every day, committed toward their organization's goals and values" and that engaged individuals "employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally in their role performances." In summary, "employee engagement is usually understood as an inner state of mind, that is, physically, emotionally, and mentally, that binds

together the commitment, satisfaction, and work effort in an employee" (p. 1-2). Simply put, engaged employees are committed to their employer and are excited about their work.

Engaging internal stakeholders benefits both the organization and the stakeholder in numerous ways. For employees, engagement results in greater overall happiness, lower absenteeism and job stress, fewer safety accidents, and better overall well-being and health. "Employees who identify strongly with their organizations are more likely to show a supportive attitude toward them" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) and are more likely to "make decisions that are consistent with organizational objectives" (Simon, 1997, 84, as cited in Smidts, 2001, p. 1051). This dedication and commitment to the organization blossoms from the emotional attachment associated with engagement and the trust employees have in both leaders and the organization. Chanana and Sangeeta (2020) explain that "engaged employees lead to productivity in the workplace, and this generates higher customer satisfaction and positive rises in sales and also profit in the organizations … This unification between the enterprise and the employee is a necessity as both are able to best in performance" (p. 2). In fact, research shows that the "employee engagement link to financial performance comprising revenue growth, profit margins, share-holder return, and operating income is almost three times greater than organizations with disengaged personnel" (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020, p.3). Benefits surpass the internal walls of the organization, however, allowing them to leverage the "internal skillset, industry, and company knowledge to generate and distribute content" and "reinforce company culture and values" through these brand advocates (Polverino, 2019).

COMMUNICATION'S ROLE IN FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT

Organizations can shape their strategies around interacting with stakeholders to engender identification and to develop trusting, long-term, and engaged relationships. While efforts to

build the external prestige or brand value of the organization have been shown to impact identification amongst stakeholders, communication with stakeholders is of utmost importance. Henisz (2017) suggests that a partnership is key to establishing trust. “To achieve institutionalized trust, engagement professionals must remove the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ They must convince local stakeholders that they share an enduring interest in the same long-term objectives” (p. 94).

Strategic communication, in which an organization understands various stakeholder groups and plans content appropriately for each audience segment, can manage expectations, build trust, and foster commitment. LeManager (2014) argues that a communicator’s value is “in being able to understand fully the business’ vision, mission, strategy, challenges, markets, and customer demands, and translate that into meaningful communications strategies and messages to help keep employees engaged in the business” (p. 135).

The content of an organization’s communication contributes to identification by sharing the organization’s identity, goals, values, and achievements (Smidts, 2001, p. 1052). Authors (LeManager, 2014; Mercurio, 2019) have extensively linked engagement to understanding the organization’s vision and purpose, and how everyday actions contribute toward a broader mission. Communications with internal stakeholders that include information about their role in the organization helps them understand what is expected of them and enhances their “sense of belonging to and involvement with the organization” (Turner, 1987, as cited in Smidts, 2001, p. 1053).

Fostering a positive communication climate amongst all internal stakeholders strengthens identification. For an employee audience, this “includes communicative elements of a work environment, such as judgments on the receptivity of management to employee communication

or the trustworthiness of information being disseminated" (Smidts, 2001, p. 1053). Organizations can foster a positive communications environment, establish trust, and even increase profit and productivity when managers and leaders communicate openly, communicate in support of their stakeholders, and allow stakeholders to share their voice and participate in decision making (Smidts, 2001).

Dialogue is critical in fostering a positive communications climate and in creating interaction and engagement amongst parties. Taylor and Kent (2014) consider engagement to be a part of dialogue that "can be used to make decisions that create social capital" (as cited in Anderson et al., 2016, p. 4098). They explain that, while dialogue and engagement may have different intended outcomes, the two are intricately tied. "The ability to develop genuine trust is a key element of dialogic communication, as well as an antecedent to engagement" (Anderson et al., 2016, p. 4110).

Cowan (2014) agrees that spurring dialogue is critical to integrating people and to shaping an organization's culture. Cowan argues that "cultural integration takes place when there is an encounter between different people in the organization coming from their own context and point of view" (Cowan, 2014, p. 34). The author proposes that hierarchical information cascading down from senior leader to staff members "is a process that floods the organization," and fails to treat each person as an individual who brings his or her own perspective. Rather, he argues, "dialogue is about understanding the people in the organization as people" (p. 36). Communicating with individuals through dialogue and appreciating a diversity of perspectives will foster connections.

LEADERS' AND MANAGERS' ROLE

Leaders and managers must focus on consistently communicating the organization's purpose, values, and vision. Jack Mercurio (2019), author of *The Invisible Leader*, argues that "Closing the gap between the stimulating idea of purpose and its transformative practice to drive employee engagement, motivation, and fulfillment may be the most important task of modern organizational leaders." In fact, he notes, "when people believe that their work matters, they're four times more likely to be engaged, are more motivated, learn faster, and are more fulfilled" (Mercurio, 2019).

Leaders and managers play a key role in shaping the communications climate of the organization and in fostering trusting relationships with internal stakeholders. The Edelman Trust Barometer (2012) found that businesses are more trusted when they openly share information, and that "this honest and transparent internal communication is best received when it comes from a direct manager" (Mishra et al., 2014, p. 2). Business ethics scholar Carrol (2006) argued that "employees trust their managers to the extent that they demonstrate honesty, transparency, genuine caring, support, and a willingness to listen" (as cited in Mishra et al., 2014, p. 2).

Given the importance of managerial communication in internal stakeholder relationships, wise organizations have invested in listening and communications training. According to Cowan (2014), "Managers need support to communicate values effectively and work with employees to find ways how they may translate values into their work, with their specific context in mind. This means providing managers with adequate toolkits and training to live the values themselves and to become valued managers who can encourage these values to be lived within the department, unit or team" (p. 40).

COVID-19's IMPACT ON ENGAGING INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a massive disruption in the way organizations operate and how employees work. Pew Research Center (2020) statistics show that during the pandemic, the percentage of employees working remotely increased from 20% to 71%, and this dispersion affected internal stakeholders of all types globally. Such a massive shift necessitated an equal response in addressing communications and relationship strategies.

"COVID-19 has elevated the consideration [of internal stakeholders] as critical stakeholders" (Collings et al., 2021, p. 1380). "Once an afterthought of an organization's communications function, internal communications has become on par with, if not usurped, external communications in importance amid the pandemic, remote work, sustainability, Black Lives Matter, and purpose movements. In a recent survey of Fortune 500 chief communications officers conducted by Korn Ferry, CCOs ranked strategic employee communications as the most impactful part of their jobs in this tumultuous and challenging year" (Marshall, Korn Ferry). Organizations have been forced to address the threat that COVID-19 poses to the health and safety of internal stakeholders and the resulting threat to fulfilling commitments to customers. Given this importance and significant environmental changes, organizations must study how their strategies can be modified to continue engaging internal stakeholders.

Early on in COVID, consulting firms such as Deloitte counseled companies to use a crisis communications approach in maintaining relationships with stakeholders. Deloitte emphasized that speed and deliberate content were critical to successful communications, warning that "imprecise, inconsistent and delayed communications and engagement creates uncertainty and kills trust quickly" (Deloitte, 2020, p. 1). Beyond sharing informational updates, Deloitte called for communications with internal stakeholders to be "transparent and open about decisions being made and how these fit into the overall response and recovery plan" (Deloitte, 2020, p. 1).

Successful communications with internal stakeholders in a crisis or challenging situation should utilize best practices from non-emergency situations. Researchers stress the importance of strategically communicating consistent messaging through consistent channels and soliciting employee feedback (Jones & Kober, 2019; Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020, p. 7).

The key difference is that in tough times, the stakes are higher. Organizations need to increase their communications efforts in response, building trust by providing more information and increased transparency and by being more supportive towards internal stakeholders and more receptive to their feedback. “To enhance [internal stakeholder] engagement in difficult times, organizations should make more efforts toward [them] so that [they] feel that their organization is genuinely interested in them” (Robertson, 2012, as cited in Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020, p. 7). In this sense, COVID presented an excellent opportunity for organizations to show their support of internal stakeholders.

Yet, an increasingly dispersed workforce means that previously relied upon tactics like posting a flyer in a breakroom, sending a mass email, and hosting a town hall, is no longer sufficient. Companies must shift their focus from pushing out communications to “telling compelling stories across text, video, and social media that both inform and engage employees at a time when they can’t gather together” (Marshall, Korn Ferry). Ann Vogl, a principal in Korn Ferry’s Corporate Affairs and Marketing practices, says “creative and strategic internal communications will only grow more prominent as social issues and external forces like those experienced this year increase the need for connection between employees and leadership” (Marshall, Korn Ferry). In workplace that continues to change, employees need to be more informed, connected, and engaged than before.

The University of Virginia offers an excellent case study in successfully adapting communications in response to environmental demands. When Charlottesville, VA began to feel effects from COVID-19, the University shifted classes online and advised students, faculty, and staff to follow CDC guidelines, stay home, and refrain from gathering in groups. Distant parents were nervous for their college students. Donors and community members were concerned for the state of the school and the impact of the school's actions on the local community. Employees were anxious about job security. The University realized it had an enormous number of people who needed accurate, timely information. Within this complex organization operating from a decentralized communications network, the school immediately turned to its crisis communications plan. After fully evaluating internal stakeholders and each group's relative need for information, the crisis communications team launched a COVID information website divided into sections by audience group. For the ensuing year, a weekly email consolidating institution-wide information provided critical updates and pushed readers to the website for details and an archive of previous communications. Through these tactics, UVA was able to meet the needs of their internal stakeholders. And, perhaps more significantly, throughout the process, the University found a platform for its own voice and a way to share its identity and values.

THE MANAGER'S ROLE IN TURBULENT TIMES

Research shows that leadership involvement in engaging internal stakeholders is particularly critical in challenging times. With respect to managing people and stakeholders during COVID-19, PWC succinctly states that "Success will depend largely on leadership's ability to engage remote workers" (April 2020). Chanana and Sangeeta (2020) add, "If organizations want their employees to be engaged, then leaders should take responsibility and

motivate them to achieve future promise. An effective communication plan influences the employees to engage in their work and accomplish their objectives in difficult times" (p. 7).

Managers can play a critical role in supporting organizational communication. While senior leaders can provide more frequent communication about the organization, managers can reinforce these messages through regular check-ins with their teams, relating conversations on critical topics like productivity and delivery, learning and skill advancement, and support for work and home-life balance throughout the crisis. When managers focus on emotional and mental well-being, they foster engagement by portraying an invested organization concerned with the health and happiness of its internal stakeholders (PWC, 2020). Managers should also ensure to solicit employee feedback. "One key way to engage employees in difficult times is to provide a venue for employees to freely share information – both frustrations and ideas for improvements – in a constructive, internal way, rather than an external destructive way" (Jones & Kober, 2019).

Argenti (2006) claims that a decrease in facetime between managers and employees led to a decreased sense of belonging and an 'us versus them' attitude about management" (p. 361). However, even when remote, research shows that managers who establish regular communications with team members can help foster an environment driven by community.

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

While COVID forced a physical separation amongst workers, many companies compensated by finding virtual ways to keep internal stakeholders engaged. These agile and creative companies viewed COVID as an opportunity rather than as a challenge. Citrix, a business technology provider, won a 2021 Gartner Communications award for its production of a

fun and lighthearted weekly video series which sought to provide critical information to their organization in a more accessible and engaging medium than text throughout the pandemic.

Organizations who were successful in engaging internal stakeholders invested in online communication platforms and turned to digital forms of communications. Technology fostered engagement by allowing internal communications to shift from a one-way dissemination of information to a two-way dialogue, promoting feedback, expression of ideas, relation to others, and the opportunity to give and receive support (Oksa et al., 2021). Technology provided new ways for remote workers to connect with one another and enabled information dissemination, collaboration, and the added ability to target content to specific audiences and revise content on demand. As such, these social platforms contributed to building community, offering organization transparency, and boosting job performance.

Understanding the power of social interaction and casual conversation in relieving stress and building community, many organizations utilized technology in new ways to promote non-work-related social activity. Companies hosted virtual social hours and team-building activities. From its headquarters in Utah, MX Technologies shipped virtual reality headsets to staff members and invited them to join virtual reality meetups. Even remotely, positive social ties formed during these events boosted the sense of social support and identification.

THE UTILITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The use of social media as a digital communication platform exploded during COVID-19, benefiting organizations in many ways. While social media is widely linked to communicating with external stakeholders, its capacity for dialogue lends it to a variety of audiences. Strategy, however, is critical to its effective use. Organizations must establish goals for each platform, develop robust content plans according to audience groups, and create

opportunities for interaction, engaging the audience in a two-way flow of dialogue. In their social media interactions, organizations should foster engagement by "mak(ing) it possible to create shareable content, monitoring what stakeholders are trying to communicate, keeping track of their dialogue…and encouraging users to themselves contribute with active creation of content" (Men & Tsai, 2015, as cited in Carrillo-Duran & Garcia Garcia, 2019, p. 448).

Social media offers organizations an excellent ability to listen to their stakeholders as well as to communicate. "In the business world, brands which listen to what their consumers are saying and take in the meaning behind it are more likely to successfully foster engagement, adding content to their brand message and bringing up new topics which are of interest to their stakeholders" (Shao et al., 2015, as cited in Carrillo-Duran & Garcia Garcia, 2019, p. 448). The goal of encouraging stakeholder engagement in social media is not only to foster "passive" engagement (consumption without activity) or to secure a "like" for a post, but to develop content that prompts the stakeholder to create content in return – inciting a reaction and therefore a response to which the organization can listen. This highest form of engagement benefits the organization in more than one way, as it displays "a sense of belonging in adding positive content, not only participating but also fostering the participation of other different stakeholders" (Carrillo-Duran & Garcia Garcia, 2019, p. 452).

Research findings suggest that utilizing social media as a communication vehicle "supports work engagement via organizational identification and social support" (Oksa et al., 2021, p. 2304). Furthermore, "Social media provides possibilities to reveal social ties, in other words, associations between people and between people and content. This can support forming social connections, identification with other experts and accessing relevant information, which in turn can enhance the social capital in organizations" (Treem & Leonardi, 2012, as cited in Oksa

et al., 2021, p 2306). Evidence indicates that, when used by both colleagues and supervisors, social networking sites boost support amongst parties. As Oksa et al. (2021) report, "A study by Charoensukmongkol (2014) indicates that social media enables the formation and maintenance of social relationships and the ability to act supportive toward colleagues, which can intensify the use of social media, as advice and support is effortlessly available" (p. 2310).

The global increase in social media during COVID-19 has been widely reported in the news, and in so far as it translates to internal stakeholder engagement, the tool is powerful. "Feeling an emotional connection to the work community and knowing that help is available are in central role when social distancing is required. Thus, supporting social media communication plays a very crucial role in keeping work engagement high throughout the crisis" (Oksa et al., 2021, p. 2321).

With an abundance of headlines indicating that remote work is here to stay, understanding how organizations have successfully adapted their communications with internal stakeholders to keep them engaged is important in assisting organizations to shape their future communications strategies, incorporating new technologies, platforms, and tactics to ensure internal stakeholders remain supported and involved.

CONCLUSION

Beyond impacting the individuals themselves, research shows organizational effort to engage internal stakeholders is an exceptionally valuable investment for businesses, offering them a competitive edge in leveraging them as brand ambassadors advocating for the firm and positively impacting a wider network of external stakeholders. COVID-19 has highlighted how successful companies can modify their communication strategies to ensure this continuity in engagement.

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Branding Efforts, Marketing Legitimacy, and Venture Early-stage Financing Performance

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Keywords: venture financing, branding efforts, signaling theory, marketing legitimacy,

trademarks

Description: In this study, we investigate how a new venture's branding efforts reflect its underlying market potential and increase its marketing legitimacy perceived by capital investors, and examine a set of boundary conditions, including investor strategic orientation (i.e., forward-looking orientation and strategic emphasis) and venture environmental context (i.e., CEO marketing background and CEO managerial discretion) on the signaling effectiveness of venture branding efforts.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

While most ventures rely heavily on early-stage financial support from investors to navigate through early market competition, they face challenges when seeking such resources due to the low organizational legitimacy caused by information asymmetry between investors and ventures. To reduce information asymmetry and improve legitimacy, ventures need to signal their underlying qualities, such as innovation capability to investors. Among all information communicated to investors, however, marketing-related signals have received relatively little attention, and how investors perceive those signals remain unclear. Focusing on a critical marketing signal, branding efforts, this study askes two critical research questions: 1. How marketing signals can effectively reflect ventures' future market potential and thus reduce the information asymmetry between the investors and ventures? 2. How ventures' environmental context (i.e., CEO marketing experience and managerial discretion) and investors' strategic orientation (i.e., forward-looking orientation and strategic emphasis) impact the signal effectiveness of ventures' branding efforts?

Method And Data

. We collected the venture financing data from Crunchbase and Pitchbook. These databases offer first-round financing information of ventures across different industries and countries between 1993 and 2018. First, we identified a set of new ventures that belong to one industry and are registered in the U.S. We used the single industry filter to avoid any biases related to industry-level measures for ventures linked with multiple industries. We then selected ventures that had received at least one financing deal by the time of data collection because (1)

we had to match with deal announcements that provide investors' information and (2) many ventures may decide not to seek financing resources on purpose. Next, we manually matched each deal announcement scraped from the Lexis-Nexis database with the corresponding venture using the exact investment date and the names of the venture and investor. Industry-level variables were calculated using data collected from the COMPUSTAT database. We collected ventures' trademark data from a database provided by Crunchbase and the United States Patent and Trademark Office. We employ a two-level mixed model to capture the heterogeneity across different industries. We also perform two robustness checks.

Summary of Findings

Using a unique dataset collected from multiple sources, we find that branding efforts can lead to superior performance in venture early-stage financing activities. This evidence indicates that marketing plays a critical role in assuring venture success in investors' view by increasing a venture's marketing legitimacy. More importantly, our findings reveal that branding efforts signal different firm qualities when a firm faces different environmental contexts. For example, branding activities require the ventures to assess market trends accurately, and dynamic customer needs to develop proper marketing strategies to facilitate the branding process Furthermore, we find that investors may present different strategic orientations when evaluating venture investment potential, which will affect their perception of a venture's branding efforts. For example, forward-looking investors are more likely to perceive venture branding efforts positively as branding usually takes time to generate value and requires the investors to aim at long-term returns. In addition, branding involves significant resource commitment and uncertainty as many branding activities will not achieve success. Therefore, investors willing to

focus on innovative but risky venture investments will be more likely to appreciate a venture's branding efforts.

Statement of Key Contributions

We contribute to the marketing and entrepreneurship literature by showing that marketing-related activities such as branding can help ventures establish marketing legitimacy, ultimately leading to a better performance in early-stage financing. This study also contributes to the signaling theory by identifying branding as an effective signal to communicate a venture's quality to early-stage investors. We further extend this signaling mechanism by examining the interactive effects of venture signals and investor strategic orientation. We expand the understanding of marketing practices and early-stage financing before IPO and public financial markets. We show that branding has important implications for entrepreneurial firms in signaling firm quality and thus attracting financial resources. We add new insights by showing that besides the direct implications for performance returns, branding can indirectly contribute to a venture's success by helping it showcase its underlying potential to investors and thus attract more financial resources. Moreover, we highlight those ventures having executives who have marketing experiences may potentially benefit more from signaling their branding efforts to investors. This finding informs that, while entrepreneurial managers often overlook branding, it constitutes an integral part of a venture's core competitive advantage.

*References are available upon request

DETERMINING BRAND VALUE BASED ON THE TIME-VARYING EFFECTS OF CUSTOMER RECOMMENDATIONS AND INTERACTIONS WITH BRANDS

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Keywords: Social media interactions, relationship quality, customer recommendations, brand value

Description: The paper examines the effects of social media interactions on a brand's value.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The era of social media has increasingly made brands less significant rendering it difficult for brands to increase their value through customer engagement online. Despite that, brands develop social media marketing strategies valuable for investors and marketers alike by emphasizing on generating meaningful customer relationships. This study examines the impact of social media marketing strategies and actions in increasing brand value. This research focuses on one key research question: How do customer recommendations and brand interactions influence brand value? The findings provide significant contributions in advancing theoretical perspectives in the marketing field and offer practical guidance to professional marketers.

Method and Data

The data came from consumer survey (N = 341) pertinent to retail industry. All measures were adapted according to the context of the study. This study uses seemingly unrelated regression technique to examine the hypotheses. The findings support the role of customer recommendations and brand interactions in influencing brand value.

Summary of Findings

The objective of this study has been to provide new insights into the most challenging but most novel and innovative marketing strategy that incorporates social media marketing efforts and also to demonstrate the value of using social media in improving firm value. We accomplish our objective by quantifying the dynamic performance effects of social media interactions, relationship quality, customer recommendations, and social brand value in an Internet social media setting. An internet social media setting provides researchers and marketing executives to observe social media characteristics directly. We illustrate the significant role of social media interactions by firms in enhancing a firm's social brand value and the positive impact of a firm's relationship with its customers and customer recommendations.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study is combines theoretical perspectives from the relationship marketing literature and modern sociological perspective on social network theory to evaluate the conceptual framework on brand value. Recent research on social media focuses on understanding the outcomes of consumer generated content rather than on factors that can account for marketing effectiveness.

In this article, we augment and advance this stream of literature by evaluating the long-term effect of interactions, customer recommendations, relationship quality, and brand value on social media to provide more consequential insights for firms seeking to understand how best to influence customer mindset and behavior to enhance brand value. Our research makes a significant contribution to the field of social media marketing by specifically establishing the long term value of social media networks of consumers and their interactions with brands in impacting brand value. With practical guidance to brand managers, this study demonstrates the role of customer recommendations in accounting for a brand's success. In this research, we demonstrate that both social media interactions and social sentiments of customers positively influence the development of customer recommendations.

DETERMINING IDEAL TIMINGS AND LENGTHS OF ADVERTISEMENTS TO OPTIMIZE PROMOTIONAL EFFEECTIVNESS IN PODCASTS

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Keywords

Voice Marketing, Podcast, Advertising, Advertising Effectiveness

Description

A case study to determine the ideal timings and lengths of podcast advertisings to optimize promotional effectiveness.

ABSTRACT

The case study reveals that advertising integrations of about 60 seconds are more effective than shorter advertising integrations of about 30 seconds. In terms of the most effective timings of advertisements, a clear trend in favor of advertising integrations within the first 10 percent of a podcast are identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last years, podcasts in general and therefore advertising in podcasts has gained popularity (Hagedorn 2018). Research related to podcast advertising ranges from advertising effectiveness, advertising acceptance up to different types of integrations (OMR 2021). The results of an empirical study conducted by Domenichini (2018) on podcast usage in Germany show that advertising has a high level of acceptance among listeners, especially if it is host-recorded. However, research on how to effectively advertise in podcasts is still in its early stages. Edison Research, the world's largest research institute in the sector of podcasts, revealed that 90 percent of podcast listeners remembered the commercials, 80 percent could name at least one brand and 67 percent could even name a specific product feature that was advertised. For their study the commercials were placed in mid-roll (Riismandel 2016). So-called pre-roll advertising is placed within the first 10 percent of a podcast, mid-roll advertising within 10 percent and 90 percent of the length, and post-roll advertising in the last 10 percent of an episode (OMR 2021).

An assessment regarding time placement within a podcast was given in the OMR Podcast Report 2020. The report states that the pre-roll and mid-roll do not differ in promotional effectiveness. Regarding post-roll integrations, OMR revealed that listeners stop listening to the podcast shortly before the end of the podcast and therefore advertising at the end of podcasts reaches fewer people (OMR 2021).

Even though podcasts are a relatively young medium, there is a large amount of data that enables analysis opportunities. However, no scientific research has been conducted so far on the effectiveness of different advertising durations. Only recommendations about advertisings with a length of 30 seconds to two minutes have been made (Bump 2021; Magellan AI 2021).

The current state of research on podcast advertising therefore shows, first, inaccurate statements about the effective timing of advertising and, second, deficits in determining the optimal advertising's length (Brooks 2020).

It becomes apparent that previous studies cannot provide a clear recommendation as to when advertising within a podcast is most effective. Furthermore, there are no proven recommendations about how long an advertising integration should be. This paper intends to close these research gaps by addressing the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1. What are the effects of different timings of advertisings within a podcast on the memorability of the content to the listener and how do different timings influence the effectiveness of advertising integration?

RQ2. How does varying the length of podcast advertisements affect the memorability and interest in the advertised product?

To answer these research gaps, a single case study was carried out and investigated the German podcast *Spieltagssiegerbesieger*, in which advertising integrations with different lengths and timings were tested.

2. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 About the Podcast

The podcast *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* was selected for the single case study, as case-oriented research focuses on combining experiences from a case to draw general conclusions about a topic (Ragin 2020). The weekly podcast reaches about 10,000 to 16,000 people every week. An advertising of *Tomorrow*, a company that offers a modern banking account that prioritizes sustainability and climate protection, was embedded into the podcast. The first advertising integration into the podcast *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* took place on January 24th, 2022, in the episode called *Die Bayern S11*. The advertising of *Tomorrow* was placed in the pre-roll, within

the first 10 percent of the podcast. Moreover, the length of the advertising integration was set to 30 seconds serving as a minimum limit, which was slightly higher in the first integration. The content of the first of four bookings was about the announcement of the partnership with *Tomorrow*. In addition to the advertising bookings in the podcast, *Tomorrow* also booked an advertising placement within the *Kickbase* app presenting the daily bonus users can receive for logging in to the *Kickbase* app. This announcement was the main communication target within the initial advertising integration. All advertising integrations were similar in content and differed in length (30 seconds vs. 60 seconds) as well as regarding their placement within the podcast (pre-roll vs. mid-roll).

2.2 Mixed-Methods Approach

To achieve a high depth of data and to be able to give a reliable answer to the research questions, a mixed-methods approach was used. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected within the same time frame with equal weight, but they were analyzed separately (Creswell and Clark 2017).

The qualitative data was gained through interviews (n = 10). The quantitative data of the study was collected via a tracking link in the show notes of the individual podcast episodes. Via this link, the click numbers of the individual embeddings were analyzed.

In addition, the number of listeners of each episode within the first seven days since publication of each episode were tracked. Putting the number of individual listeners in relation with the click numbers of the different episodes ensured comparability. This comparison was then used to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the individual advertising integrations. The data was sourced from *Bitly* and *Buzzsprout* (Bitly 2020; Buzzsprout 2022).

3. DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative data was collected through guided, non-standardized interviews (Gläser and Laudel 2010). The interview guide has been developed to be flexible to the answers of the interviewee (Gläser and Laudel 2010). The interviewees were listeners of the podcast who were interviewed after listening to a specific podcast episode, including an advertising integration. After the interviews were conducted, they were evaluated using qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (2019). Categories were formed based on certain themes and statements, which became apparent when reading the interview texts several times. Category formation for this study was done inductively and resulted in three categories.

To collect quantitative data, advertising integrations of *Tomorrow* within the podcast *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* were embedded. The advertising integrations of *Tomorrow* within *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* had different timings (pre-roll vs. mid-roll) and lengths (30 vs. 60 seconds). Since there were no contractual requirements regarding the timing and length, two of the four advertisings were integrated in the pre-roll and two in the mid-roll. One spot each in the pre- and mid-roll had a length of about 30 seconds and the other two spots about 60 seconds. We collected for each episode the click numbers of the individual links within the show notes and the number of listeners of the episodes.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1. Results of the Qualitative Analysis

Regarding RQ1 the collected qualitative data can be summarized as followed: When comparing the pre- and mid-roll integrations, several relevant findings were drawn from the interviews. First, the content of the pre-roll integrations was more likely to be remembered by the interviewees than the content of the mid-roll integration. The reasons for this are, among other aspects, the passive listening of some listeners, which will negatively influence the attention

towards advertising integrations after some minutes of listening to the podcast episode. Second, the content of the pre-roll commercials was reproduced more accurately and in greater detail by the listeners. Consequently, this implicates a higher level of effectiveness during pre-roll advertising integrations.

The collected findings related to RQ2 can be summarized as follows: Despite some opinions of the listeners that the advertising integrations should not be too long, and that advertising should only be integrated to a certain extent within a podcast episode, there were no negative attitudes of the interviewees about the length of an advertising integration of *Tomorrow*. There was even the expressed request to take more time to inform the listeners about suitable products in a more detailed way. Moreover, the content of the longer commercials was even more present among the interviewees. 80 percent of the interviewees remembered hearing certain content in the longer integrations. The percentage was significantly lower for the shorter advertisings. Only 50 percent remembered hearing content read aloud in the episodes including the shorter advertisings. The content of the mid-roll advertisings was recognized and remembered by 55 percent of the listeners, while for pre-roll advertisings the proportion was significantly higher at 75 percent.

4.2 Results of the Quantitative Analysis

The episode of January 24th, 2022, which featured the first *Tomorrow*'s 30-seconds pre-roll integration, was listened to 8,761 times within the first seven days after its release, reaching 3,216 and 3,191 listeners in the first two days. The number of listeners decreased sharply after and continued to decrease from then on. Especially in case of the *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* podcast limited time relevance in the fast-moving world of *Kickbase* plays an important role in explaining the sharp drop in listeners after two days. 28 clicks on the link in the show notes were registered by *Bitly* in the first seven days after publication, with a similar decrease in the

first two days after the release. This data was retrieved for all four podcast episodes featuring an advertisement by *Tomorrow* and is displayed in Table 1.

For the analysis of the quantitative data, the number of clicks on the individual show note link and the number of listeners were combined, so that advertising performance can be compared and interpreted. The collected click numbers of the individual links within the show notes and the number of listeners of the episodes were combined into one key figure per episode. Supplemented by the ratio of click numbers to listener numbers, known as the click-through rate (CTR), the measured performance indicators are displayed in Table 1.

Episode	Length	Timing	Listeners	Clicks	CTR in percent
January 24th	30 seconds	Pre-roll	8,761	28	.32
January 31st	60 seconds	Mid-roll	8,718	51	.58
February 7th	30 seconds	Mid-roll	7,781	24	.31
February 14th	60 seconds	Pre-roll	7,367	61	.83

Table 1: Overview Quantitative Research (own figure)

With regard to research question RQ1, the results of the quantitative analysis show that the CTR for advertising integrations that took place in the mid-roll was lower than those that are anchored in the pre-roll. Thus, it was concluded that advertising integrations within the mid-roll were less effective than pre-roll integrations.

Comparing the CTRs of 30-seconds advertising integrations with those of a 60-seconds length, it was noticeable that the 60-seconds integrations achieved a higher rate. Regarding RQ2, it can be observed that 60-seconds integrations generated greater listener interest.

4.3 Combined Results and Interpretation

After collecting and analyzing data of the qualitative and quantitative research separately, both were combined in the following to answer the two research questions.

The content of the pre-roll integrations was more likely to be remembered by the interviewees than the content of the mid-roll integrations. The main reason was the fading attention of the listeners. Passive listening, especially in the beginning and middle part of a podcast, occurred due to other activities performed simultaneously to the listening of the podcast. Another reason for the preference of the pre-roll based on the statements of some listeners was that they still had their smartphone in their hands at the beginning of an episode and were therefore able to inform themselves via the show notes if they were interested in the advertised products. This was also shown by the evaluation of the CTR of the individual integrations.

The click numbers of the pre-roll advertising integrations achieved a better result than the click numbers of the mid-roll integrations. Mid-roll integrations were clicked at a rate of .31 percent and .58 percent of all listeners, while the pre-roll integrations achieved a CTR of .32 percent and .83 percent during the single case study. The qualitative research also indicated a higher memorability of pre-roll advertising integrations. The content of the mid-roll advertisings remained present in the memory of 55 percent of the listeners. In comparison, the rate referring to the pre-roll was significantly higher at 75 percent.

To sum up, qualitative as well as quantitative research of the single case study with *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* indicated that pre-roll advertising integration was more effective than mid-roll advertising integrations.

The click numbers of the shorter advertising integrations with a length of about 30 seconds were significantly lower than the click numbers of the advertising integrations with a length of about 60 seconds. The two shorter ones recorded clicking rates of .31 percent and .32 per-

cent. In contrast, .58 percent and .83 percent of listeners clicked on the link of the longer integrations. The listeners' impressions and opinions were also in favor of the longer advertising integrations.

The content of the longer integrations remained more strongly in the listeners' memory and in some cases, the short advertising integrations were not remembered at all. 80 percent of the content heard in the longer integrations could be remembered, while the ratio for the shorter integrations was only 50 percent. The combination of the analyzed data from the qualitative and quantitative research of the single case study with *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* shows a clear tendency to prefer longer advertising integrations.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this study were also viewed critically. One finding, for example, was that advertisements within the podcast work better if they are about 60 seconds long, as compared to the shorter 30-second advertisements. However, this was only examined on the example of the advertising insertions of *Tomorrow*. It is possible that the results are more dependent on the advertised content than on the actual length. An advertisement for the, e.g., sensitive topic of banking might need a longer explanation to convince the consumer. An insensitive topic, e.g. advertising for transportation, on the other hand, could convince with a shorter advertisement since all relevant information can be given in a short time. Therefore, it would be interesting to observe how the effectiveness of different advertisement lengths depends on the content advertised.

Furthermore, the content of advertising should be considered regarding its relation to the podcast´s topic. It is quite possible that the topic of the advertisement has an influence on the listeners' willingness to pay attention to the advertisement. An advertisement fitting thematically with the podcast could perform better due to the interest of the listeners, since the potential

consumers could want to receive detailed information. A topic that deviates thematically could be perceived as annoying by the audience, so that a longer advertising integration would not be recommended.

Some questions remain after the results of this study about the timing of an advertising insertion. Since the podcast *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* was considered within the study and this usually has a length of about 45 to 90 minutes, the question arises whether the results can also be applied to podcasts which differ in length. A commercial within a shorter podcast could be more efficient with a different timing as well as length.

6. IMPLICATIONS

For scientific researchers the results of the case study *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* show that the current state of research in the field of podcast advertising integrations is insufficient. In existing research studies, contradictions arise regarding the optimal length and timing of integrations. The case study *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* contributes to the clarification of these contradictions. Furthermore, it can be stated that the results of this work revealed that the strategies for advertising integrations within a podcast have not yet been sufficiently studied and developed. The case study *Spieltagssiegerbesieger* helps to develop improved strategies. By applying selective strategies, inefficiencies can be avoided what is beneficial for podcast creators and advertising companies.

This study provides great value to practitioners as well. Advertising integrations in the pre-roll of a podcast with a length of 60 seconds promised the best results according to the case study of *Spieltagssiegerbesieger*. The qualitative content analysis showed that listeners may demand detailed information about the advertised product in order to make purchasing decisions. Especially companies that want to utilize the newer communication channel podcast to address a highly concentrated target group should consider the results of this case study in the

creation of the advertising as well as the briefing. The timing and length of advertising integrations should be agreed upon in order to achieve the highest possible CTR.

7. LIMITATIONS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For quantitative studies it can be said that the larger the sample, the more accurate and therefore the more representative the results. Due to time and financial constraints, this study was only conducted with a comparatively small sample (n = 7,367 to 8,761). Moreover, the small number of analyzed podcast episodes (n = 4) should be noted. The small sample size could affect the meaning of the results of the single case study. The larger the sample, the more likely it is that even small differences are significant (Bergh 2015). Additionally, the sample profile can be considered as homogenous concerning the age distribution because in this study mainly young people were recruited. This is due to the target group of *Kickbase* and therefore the listeners of *Spieltagssiegerbesieger*.

Regarding opportunities for future research, a replication of the study with a larger and more diverse sample is recommended. Moreover, future research should investigate the effects of different timings and lengths of advertisings in podcast episodes in a more comparable setting. For future research, it would be useful to eliminate the different consumption styles of podcast episodes, such as walking, doing housework, or riding the bus while listening, for better comparability. Furthermore, the influence of the different consumption ways could be observed and analyzed to achieve more efficient advertising integrations. Another way to increase the comparability of the different advertising integrations in future research could be to play out the same content in similar podcasts with similar audiences at different timings and lengths. This way, it would be possible to display the results independently of the content of the individual spots.

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DID BRAND CSR RESPONSES TO THE PANDEMIC AFFECT BRAND PERFORMANCE?

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Keywords: donations, brand value, brand growth, brand performance, Covid-19 pandemic

During the pandemic, our research showed that donations of kind and services to customers significantly increased brand growth, while cash donations and employee support had no significant effect, at least in the short term.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Did the top 100 brands globally in 2020 responses to the coronavirus pandemic by donating cash, donating in kind, providing special services to their customers, and supporting their employees will significantly affect brand performance in terms of brand value, brand growth, and brand ranking?

Method and Data

We studied the top 100 brands that Interbrand selected in 2020. The independent variables were the responses of each brand, identified through the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation report (USCCF, 2021), online searches, and company pages on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. Each company had four scores indicating how many of its responses were classified under each of the four response orientations (RO), normalized using the max-min normalization formula (Liu, 2020). Three regression models showed two significant relationships between the donations in kind (b_2= .686, t = 2.169, p = .033), the customer services (b_3= .741, t = 2.314, p = .023), and the brand growth.

Summary of Findings

The results showed no significant relationship between the four responses to the pandemic and brand value. The four types of responses to a pandemic crisis are short-term acts demonstrating social responsibility and depicting an altruistic brand persona. On the other hand, brand value and brand equity are long-term cumulative endeavors.

The social solidarity actions companies took in 2020 may result in brand growth in the same year, particularly if the actions were designed to increase usage and market share. The results showed that customer services and in-kind donations were significantly related to brand growth. Customer services and in-kind donations were meant to keep the existing customers engaged and to develop the business habits in ways that are more profitable, long-term, to the company.

Moreover, donations in kind always remind the customer of the brand, and, therefore, they significantly impact the brand affection. Employee support may lift morale and reduce stress, but the

impact on the bottom line is soft and delayed. Cash donations, particularly to third-party charities or government agencies, will not be cherished by the customers long enough to reflect in the bottom line.

Key Contributions

The hypotheses were developed based on the recent evidence that brand performance is positively affected by CSR (Cowan and Guzman, 2020; Wang, Yu, and Hsiao, 2021) and corporate reputation (Lai et al., 2010, Salinas, 2020), and mediated by brand credibility (Hur et al., 2013, Shin et al., 2021) and brand differentiation (Bhattacharya et al., 2020). But this evidence is based on asking consumers about their actual behaviors or intentions toward the socially responsible actions of the brand. In reality, the cumulative effect of credibility, reputation, and differentiation through social action takes years to brew and becomes realized financially as brand value and, consequently, rank change.

When committing resources to social solidarity programs, the recommendation for brand managers and top management is to decide whether their intentions include brand performance. If building brand assets is one of the success indicators, then the priority should be to serve customers and secure publicity for the company's social investments. Organizations should plan for the long term, commit to a relevant cause they would be proud to associate with and allocate enough resources to make a difference and communicate it well.

References are available upon request.

EXPLORING DETERMINANTS AND OUTCOMES OF BRAND ROMANCE: A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

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ABSTRACT

Using semi-structured interviews, the present study showed that certain factors such as product characteristics, brand features, perceived quality, brand trust, brand durability, perceived cost, brand advertisement, effect of brand developer, updatedness of brand, and nostalgia are determinants of brand romance. Brand romance outcomes include brand commitment, brand support, and word of mouth.

Keywords: brand, brand romance, brand love, emotional attachment

INTRIDUCTION

In recent years, researchers have devoted increased attention to the emotional aspects of consumer behavior (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). Based on researches of Ascher (1999), human beings, including consumers accordingly, seek romantic relationships which are not limited solely to those between males and females; these relationships, but, exist between human beings and objects, images and ideas. The pioneering work on attachment was conducted by Bowlby (1979, 1980) in the realm of parent–infant relationships.

Similarly, research in marketing suggests that consumers can develop attachments to brands (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). The notion that such attachments reflect an emotional bond is also suggested by research in consumer behavior (e.g., Shimp and Madden 1988). According to Fournier (1998), consumers may establish emotional bonds with brands which could be very much strong in some cases. One of emotional attachment types to brand is brand romance that is presented by Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) possessing three dimensions of pleasure, arousal, and dominance. Although interests in brand romance is increasing, most of prior related researches have been carried out using quantitative methods, leaving the consequences uninvestigated qualitatively. In the wake of the research by Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011), it was felt essential to accomplish a qualitative research in this connection on the outcomes and determinants of brand romance in order to recognize more backgrounds. This study made attempts to recognize the gap and tried, via exploratory examination, to answer the question that what are determinants and outcomes of the aforesaid gap in viewpoints of consumers of fast moving consumer and durable goods.

Given the significance of brand romance, marketers are expected to have a deeper understanding of effective factors on this matter. A number of studies have been implemented aiming at tackling the issue including one by Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) which demonstrated that brand attitude and loyalty are considered as determinants and a outcome of brand romance, respectively. Other scholars also dealt with the determinants and outcomes such as Kruger et al. (2013), Patwardhan (2004) and Petzer et al. (2014). A research by Kruger et al. (2013) revealed that there is a significant relationship between brand romance and brand attitude, trust, passion and loyalty. Petzer et al. (2014) introduced brand loyalty as the outcome of brand romance. Also, Patwardhan (2004) indicated that subjective brand knowledge, perceived brand novelty, and brand satiety are deemed as determinants of brand romance.
Although the above mentioned researches investigated the determinants and outcomes of brand romance, they have been conducted based on the past literature using the quantitative models. Another point here is that these studies have examined only a single commodity category which is difficult to generalize. These two shortcomings need to be subject to more studies. The present study includes multiple innovations; first, this research provides an all-inclusive representation of establishing factors of brand romance. The results include 11 determinants including product

characteristics, brand features, perceived quality, brand trust, brand durability, perceived cost, brand advertisement, effect of brand developer, updatedness of brand, and nostalgia.
Second, this study explores a set of behavioral consequences in customers. Three behaviors are presented as the outcomes of brand romance including brand commitment, brand support, and word of mouth. As the third innovation, the current research investigates brand romance in two product category such as fast moving consumer and durable goods which is different from previous studies in the past, leading to achieving a deeper understanding of outcomes and determinants of brand romance. Scholars and marketers are expected to reach an understanding of the way consumers perceive brand romance and develop strategies for establishing a long term relationship between brand and customers.

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) define brand romance as emotional attachment; a tendency that is not developed toward brand love as of yet. Although brand love has been an area of interest to examine in researches of a number of scholars (Hwang and Kandampully 2012; Ismail and Spinelli 2012; Long-Tolbert and Gamoh 2012), however, the pre-existing condition in brand-consumer relationship, i.e. brand attachment recognized within brand romance, has been left unexplored with such details. Emotional attachment and brand-consumer relationship initiates with those consumers who experience pleasure (Li et al. 2012; Mugge et al. 2010; Parwardhan and Balasubramanian 2011).

The whole positive emotions toward a brand were labeled by Patwardhan and Balasubramanian (2011) as “pleasure”. While these positive emotions are enough strong to arouse consumers significantly and effectively, another dimension in brand romance, i.e. “arousal”, appears in the game (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian 2011). Pleasure and arousal affect the real behavior of consumers directly (Li et al. 2012). Finally, “dominance” associates with involvement of opinion and thoughts of consumers (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian 2011). Emotional attachment or emotional commitment (like brand romance as appeal) increases attitudinal loyalty (Aurier and De Lanauze 2011) and brand loyalty (Hwang and Kandampully 2012), consequently. Brand romance as an appeal is regarded as an advancement beyond positive attitude toward brand (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian 2011).

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF BRAND ROMANCE

Brand romance is an unrealized subjective state in response to brand as a stimulus which is identified through certain factors including a strong positive emotion to a brand, high arousal based on which the brand has been emerged, and brand tendency toward dominance over the

cognitive mind of the consumer (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian 2011). Brand romance emerges when a person enjoys knowledge on characteristics of those stimuli that have been positively evaluated, and perceives some novelty in them encouraging him/her to approach the aforesaid stimuli. The tendency toward approaching the stimulus may decrease when no novelty is perceived or the knowledge on the stimulus is very low or negatively evaluated. Once a person is satisfied with the stimulus, the perceived novelty decreases. Brand romance does exist within people and different persons may experience different romance levels with a specific brand (Patwardhan et al. 2004) since brand romance is subject- specific.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN BRAND ROMANCE AND BRAND LOVE

The first authors introducing the feeling of love in marketing are Shimp and Madden (1988). They adapt in a marketing context the interpersonal love theory of Stenberg (1986) named the Triangular theory of love. Ahuvia (1993, 2005a, 2005b) also thoroughly study the concept of love applied to various object categories (places, ideas, pets, consumption objects, etc.). Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) believed that brand love is the degree of emotional attachment of a satisfied consumer to a specific brand.

According to former studies of Ahuvia (2005a), brand love includes brand passion, brand attachment, brand positive evaluation, positive emotional response to brand, and love expression to brand. They put that brand love is achieved in a long term relationship while it enjoys different and stronger structures than those of satisfaction. Thomason et al. (2005) investigated love from emotional attachment perspective and maintained “although consumers deal with thousands of products and brands in their life, however, they feel emotional attachment only to a limited set of objects”. Brand romance has some similarities with brand love (Ahuvia et al. 2009; Carroll and Ahuvia 2006). Love is a feeling that a person may show in the wake of a strong attraction; this is whilst some attraction-based attachments may not develop to love. Therefore, brand love reveals the presence of attraction. Accordingly, romance determines attraction whereas love may or may not appear. Likewise, consumers may feel a strong attraction toward certain brands although they may not express overtly their love to these brands as of yet.

METHODOLOGY

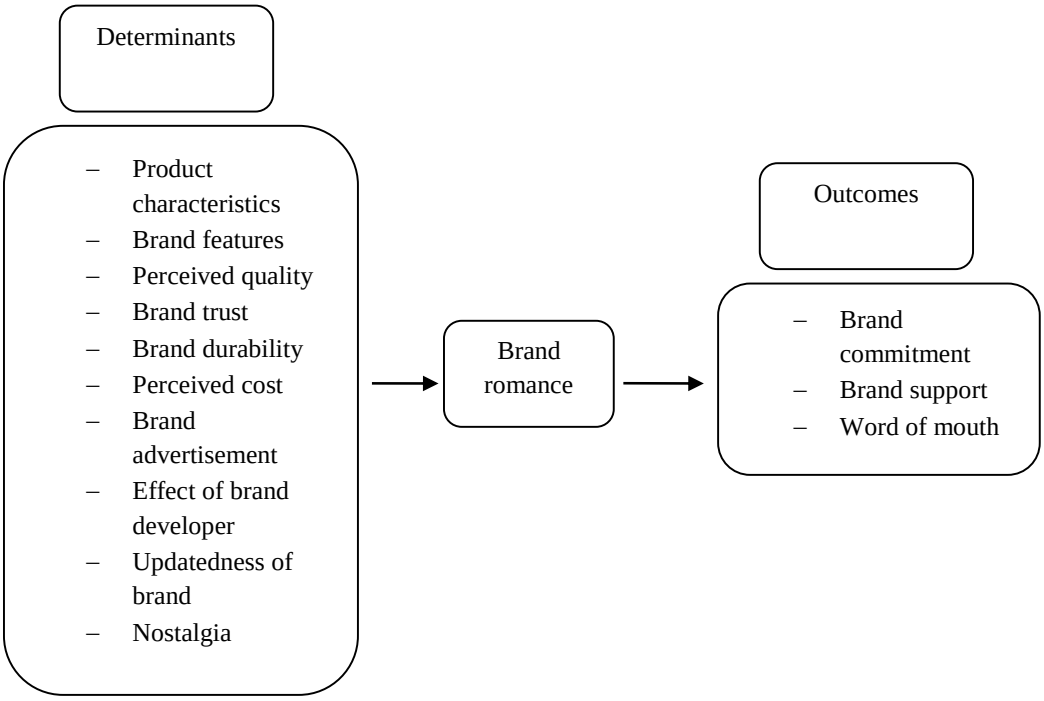
In order to collect the data, the present study used semi-structured interviews. First, a group of consumers were selected for interview whose all dialogues were kept as audio recordings and converted to text for more investigation. Then, the consumers were asked some questions such as “Are you fan of a specific brand? Why?” together with other ones about their feelings when they use their desired brands. A total of 48 consumers were interviewed (18 male (37.5%), 30 female (62.5%)). Also, most of the respondents were included in an age range of 18 to 50, i.e. 72.9% below 30 and 27.1% between 30-50 years old. All interviews (almost 367 minutes) were analyzed later using the content analysis. The analysis process was started by open coding where

the textual data were converted to concepts. In the next step, by axial coding, the codes obtained through open coding were organized into cognate codes and the codes in a single category were identified.

RESULTS

The findings of this study were grouped in two categories: determinants and outcomes of brand romance. Based on findings of this exploratory research, a conceptual model of determinants and outcomes of brand romance was developed which is shown in figure 1. The results of the current study identified 11 factors, i.e. product characteristics, brand features, perceived quality, brand trust, brand durability, perceived cost, brand advertisement, effect of brand developer, updatedness of brand, after-sales service, and nostalgia, as determinants of brand romance and three factors of brand commitment, brand support, and word of mouth as outcomes and consequences of brand romance. The findings of this study are discussed in the paragraphs to come using the aforesaid conceptual model.

Figure 1- Conceptual model of determinants and outcomes of brand romance



DETERMINANTS OF BRAND ROMANCE

According to findings of the research, the participant respondents set forth 11 factors as determinants of brand romance.

Product Characteristics

Satisfaction is the positive emotional response resulting from consequences of previous experiences. Customer Satisfaction is a result of experience coming from product or service provided by brand and is affected by performance and characteristics of the above mentioned product or service (Ha and Perks 2005). Post-consumption satisfaction for a product or service may turn into a strong attachment to a specific brand if it lasts long (Thomason et al. 2005). The respondents maintained that product characteristics, such as its appearance, appeal and performance, provided them with satisfaction and finally, an emotional attachment to the product.

"Durability and superior technology of this product (Sony) along with its visual appeal has been a fascination for me"(male, 38).

"Products of this brand are of low diversity making it unique; the convenience of the product, also, is a very important feature"(female, 23).

Brand Features

Former researchers show that logos have the potential, as an important tool, for establishing a bond between brand and people in order to help them see brands as a part of themselves. On the other hand, attractiveness and appeal of logos of a brand is considered an essential factor in making it popular among customers and setting an emotional connection with them and increasing their brand commitment. Through representation of performance advantages of a brand, logos are able to encourage customers to trade (Park et al. 2013). The respondents said that brand features, such as appeal, appearance, attractiveness, and eye-catching, have been effective factors on their fascination toward the product.

"What caused me to approach this brand (Apple) was itsstylish and attractive shape"(female, 25).

"It was the logo of this brand that was important for me which is more attractive and appealing compared to those of other brands"(female, 27).

Perceived Quality

Perceived quality refers to a degree that is obtained from subjective evaluation of customers on the product and is defined as the customer's perception of the overall quality of a commodity or service. In this variable, certain indices are evaluated such as good quality of products, good quality of composition of products, good quality of manufacture, product perfectness, durability, reliability of brand performance, behavior of personnel, and service quality (Erdogmus and

Budeyri-Turan 2012). The positive subjective evaluation of customers on the perceived high quality drives them toward a specific brand among other rival ones (Yoo et al. 2000).

"Possessing a product, like TV, of this brand (Sony) with a logo imprinted on it implies high quality, durability, appeal and whatever you expect a television"(male, 38).

"When I use this brand (Toyota) it gives me a good feeling; I feel I am driving a high quality car with less harm at the time of possible accidents"(male, 31).

Brand Trust

It is believed that trust realizes when a party to a transaction has full faith in validity and honesty of his/her trade partner (Morgan and Hunt 1994).It is actually believed that the partner takes steps that would bring about positive results for the customer and decrease his/her risk (Back 2005; Reast 2005). Brand trust decreases the customer's perceived risk at the time of purchase of goods and affects his/her information gathering cost for purchase and also his/her perceived quality. These three factors increase the customer's expected desirability of buying the commodity and encourage him/her for purchase and develop a brand romance (Erdem and Swait 1998). The respondents indicated in this connection as:

"When I see commercials of this brand (LG), I feel everything they claim come true"(female, 31).

"This brand (Nike) shows what it claims in ads in its products; I am satisfied to see that its commercials are true in reality"(male, 25).

Brand Durability

According to the results of this study, as long as a brand carries on with keeping its good performance and quality as before and shows its durability, it is positively evaluated by the consumers leading to a positive brand romance. This is pointed out in the words of the respondents:

"As long as this brand (Apple) protects its quality and my satisfaction and secures a superior position to its rivals, I am going to use it"(male, 27).

"As long as this brand (LG) provides these products with this quality and services, and I can afford to buy, I will use it"(male, 22).

Perceived Cost

Price is a feature which needs to be disregarded so that a safe and secure product or service is achieved. According to Varki and Colgate (2001), the role of price as a feature in performance may affect directly the customer's satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Price of a product is a key prediction factor of a customer's selection (Kim et al. 2012). According to the respondents, price of different brands and even their lower cost is a cause to develop a brand romance.

"This brand (Apple) is very expensive and many of people do not approach it on account of this"(male, 32).

"I adopted this brand (Samsung) because of its lower price compared to other ones"(female, 25).

Brand Advertisement

Advertisement and promoting activities are able to establish a strong and convenient relationship between a brand and a customer's memory and develop positive emotions and judgments toward a brand in the mind of the customer. When customers are subject to wide and continuous advertisements of a specific brand, an unconscious sense of trust is formed within them (Cobb-Walgren 1995). Also, the results of former studies indicate that influence of advertisement may affect the attitude and behavior of customers to sub-brands because commercial advertisements, instead of sales ads, encourage customers to try out sub-brands and even minor production lines which belong to the same product (Martinez and Chernatony 2004). In this regard, the respondents in this research expressed that:

"I approached this brand (Samsung) because of its more advertisements in the market than its rivals; I selected it also because I saw its ads many times by athletes and artists"(female, 25).

Effect of Brand Developer

Former studies show that consumers react to the products of a country based on their perception of its history. If consumers have hostile and negative viewpoints to a specific country, this would affect their behaviors (Klein et al., 1998).When a feeling to the history goes along with the aforesaid emotions, positive or negative effects may appear (Maheswaran 2006).
Based on the results of this research, the producing country is known a factor of developing a brand romance.

"The manufacturing country of this brand (BMW) gives me a sense of power and the name of this country has created a fascination in me toward this brand"(male, 35).

Also, according to the respondents, another effective factor on brand romance is the personality of the owner and founder of the brand.

"The personality of founder of this brand (Apple) has affected me deeply for he has a lovely and remembering personality and has been a model in my life. These created a brand passion within me and when I use it, it recollects the founder for me"(female, 23).

Updatedness of Brand

A new product is a set of advantages, performances and particulars in views of customers and the producer. In other words, a new product has both tangible and intangible dimensions. The tangible dimensions include physical particulars and advantages while the latter comprises psychological perspectives (Atkinson and Al-Ashaab 2008). Based on opinions of the respondents, the results of the current research demonstrated that updated and innovative products have been considered as effective factor of brand romance.

"I feel this brand (Samsung) has not been fallen far behind of technology world, and as long as it provides updated products, I will use it with a high loyalty"(female, 23).

"This brand keeps itself up-to-date and I use it as long as it is updated; if this brand falls behind of its rivals in terms of production cycle, I will approach other brands"(male, 29).

Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a psychological sentimentality which may be created by the past experiences of a person (Boym 2002). There are different elements that may inspire nostalgia such as an image (Barret et al. 2010), a place (Gustafson 2013), a scent (Reid et al. 2015), a picture (Knudsen and Greer 2011) and other ones. Given the ideas of the respondents, an encouraging factor of fascination within consumers toward specific products is inspiring nostalgia in them. For example, an interviewee said in this connection that:

"I'm fascinated by the chocolate Kit Kat because it recollects me for my childhood memories and its usage in that period. This nostalgia creates a beautiful emotion in me and finally encourages me to use it more. Actually, there is an emotional relationship between this brand and me which does not exist in my approach to other brands"(male, 38).

OUTCOMES OF BRAND ROMANCE

According to deep interviews conducted with consumers in this study, three consequences for brand romance were identified and the past literature have pointed out as well to some aftermaths for this concept, i.e. brand romance. Each one of these three outcomes are discussed in paragraphs below.

Commitment

Commitment is a key structure for a long term relationship. Commitment is the tendency of buyer to keep his/her relationship with the seller. Commitment also may be a psychological state leading a person to invest in different resources to protect the relationship. Accordingly, commitment is defined as the tendency of a customer to continue his/her relationship and an effort to keep connection with the organization (Morgan and Hunt 1994).

According to the respondents, following the brand romance, they show behavioral responses of which one is brand commitment.

"If the product quality of this brand (Samsung) continues to rise, I will be committed to it and in case of deciding to replace the brand, I am still going to use this brand but a newer model"(male, 26).

"This brand (Apple) has affected my life so much deeply that I am going to act as a representative to it in the future and stay loyal forever to the brand"(female, 22).

Brand Support

When consumers hear negative words of others about their desired brand, they defend it (Arnold et al. 2014). Even a number of respondents told that they would allocate resources to this matter including time and energy.

"If I hear people in a gathering talk about this brand (Toyota) badly I will defend it and express my ideas on its quality and confirm words of those who support it"(female, 25).

"If I hear someone talks badly about this brand (HTC), I strongly defend the brand and will investigate the expressed points to find out the truth. I will tell them to refer to representatives of the company to settle their problems"(male, 26).

Word of Mouth

Word of mouth is defined as passing of information from customer to customer about goods and services. Word of mouth is a powerful persuasive force, especially at the time of convey of information on the rolled out new products (Dean and Lang 2008). Word of mouth is normally

used for describing oral communication (positive or negative) between certain groups such as product providers, professionals, family, friends, individual clients, etc. Positive descriptions by satisfied customers and negative opinions by unsatisfied customers may cause purchase increase and decrease, respectively (Ennew et al. 2000). The respondents elaborated that due to their brand romance, they make efforts to introduce the brand to others and promote it.

"This (Samsung) has been always my desired brand and I feel emotional attachment to it. I usually encourage others to use this brand"(male, 23).

DISCUSSION

According to former studies (Hwang and Kandampully 2012), a strong and significant relationship between a consumer and a brand would increase brand loyalty, brand purchase and usage duration, and inclination of the consumer to pay more to acquire a specific brand. If a relationship between a consumer and a brand is pleasant, convenient, full of trust and emotional attachment, then the brand commitment will increase by carrying on the relationship between them (O'Callaghan 2009).

The present study takes the gap of the literature of this issue into consideration since little research in the past has been conducted to find determinants and outcomes of brand romance and all of past studies pointed out to the matter based on former literature and researches. In line with achieving a deeper understanding of brand-consumer relationship, this study made attempts to act as a value added in this connection.

First, this research has presented a comprehensive set of determinants and outcomes of brand romance. The results included 11 determinants for brand romance consisting of product characteristics, brand features, perceived quality, brand trust, brand durability, perceived cost, brand advertisement, effect of brand developer, brand updatedness, and nostalgia.

According to former studies (Velachos et al. 2010; Erdem and Swait 1998), brand trust is known as one of determinants of brand romance. Based on opinions of the consumers and findings of the current research, brand trust leads to develop a positive attitude to the brand, resulting finally in a brand romance.

Brand novelty has been recognized for a long time as a key factor in brand selection (e.g. Wasson 1960; Brown 1950). Brand novelty is expected to leave positive effects on brand attitude, preferences, and purchase and selection desires. Perceived brand novelty was defined in this study as being new perception of brand which may be represented as updated brand and products. This research supports the finding that brand updatedness is a causing factor of brand romance.

Batra et al. (2012) showed that quality is a background factor of brand love which comprises attachment as well. This study also confirms the role of perceived quality in developing brand romance.

Second, the present study demonstrated a set of behaviors as consequences of brand romance. Kruger et al. (2013) found out in their research that there is a positive and significant relationship between brand romance and combined loyalty, i.e. behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. Emotional attachment or emotional commitment (such as brand romance) increases the attitudinal loyalty (Aurier and De Lanauze 2011) leading up to the brand loyalty (Hwang and Kandampully 2012).

If a relationship between a consumer and a brand is pleasant, convenient, full of trust and emotional attachment, then the brand commitment will increase by carrying on the relationship between them (O'Callaghan 2009). The former studies indicate that a continued commitment, i.e. a faint feeling of consumer to a brand, decreases the sustainability of the consumer's behavior, whilst consumers could enjoy a sustainable behavior via emotional commitment and contribute the company to improve its weak points and reduce its disadvantages (Harrison-Walker 2001).

Moreover, this study showed that commitment, brand support and word of mouth are the outcomes of the brand romance. If marketers are able to develop a brand romance between brand and consumers, those behaviors would most likely occur. Although this research revealed a number of determinants and outcomes of brand romance, it, however, suffered from some limitations. The type of this study and number of its samples may make generalization of the results problematic. Also, the culture-affected samples may bring about similar problems. A further step to take in the wake of this research could be making quantitative measurements and having the identified determinants and outcomes of this study modelled and tested. Through quantitative researches, more dimensions may be revealed including effectiveness degree of the identified factors and exploring more effective factors on developing brand romance or, e.g., product characteristics possess different dimensions of which the most important ones could be identified as determinants elements.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THE ORIGINS OF CONSUMER PERCEIVED HUMANNESS OF BRANDS

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Keywords: Brand Anthropomorphism, Inferred Human Characteristics, Consumer Perceived Humanness, Perceived Anthropomorphism.

Abstract: By relying on 21 in-depth semi-structured interviews, the paper investigates the antecedents of perceived humanness of brands and provides a consumer perspective of brand humanization. The study proposes a six-factor model of consumer perceived humanness of brands which includes the following capabilities- emotionality, morality, contingency, sociability, human-centricity, and self-transcendence.

Research Question:

What are the origins of consumer perceived brand humanness, i.e., what are the inferred brand characteristics that evoke humanness perceptions for brand and make a brand truly 'human' for consumers?

Although anthropomorphic cues can bring a brand to life, for a brand to be truly perceived like a human, it is more important to understand what human attributes are inferred by consumers from the brand cues (both anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic cues). Thus, an

important concern for those involved in creation of humanized brands and human experiences, has to do with what characteristics brands should have to make them acceptable to consumers as truly 'human' brands. The present study focuses on inferred aspects of humanness rather than directly observed aspects and examines human resemblance using the concept of perceived humanness (Söderlund and Oikarinen 2021).

Method and Data:

As a part of exploratory investigation, 21 in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded with a sample pool of diverse range of ages, occupations, gender, marital status and education. The respondents were recruited using purposive sampling technique. Interviews lasted 45-120 minutes and were audio recorded with permission and transcribed in verbatim.

A set of initial interview questions were prepared to cover the following- consumers general understanding of humanness; features, qualities, actions and behaviours that may be inferred as humanness attributes and specific human experiences with brands. These questions were employed only as a guide to induce further discussion. The data collection phase came to an end when theoretical saturation was reached (Brunk 2010; McCraken 1988).

Data collected was then analysed following the principles of thematic analysis. Revisions were made to the coding labels, and the analysis was conducted iteratively with back-and-forth examination of theory and data (Spiggle, 1994). Validity was ensured through triangulation.

Summary of Findings:

Based on the analysis, six fundamental human capabilities that serve as the antecedent to consumer perceived humanness of brands were identified: Emotionality, Morality, Contingency, Sociability, Human-Centricity, and Self-Transcendence.

Emotionality: refers to the human capability to experience emotions. Brands' capability to display care, empathy, humour, and willingness to help people in a pleasant and approachable manner were inferred as emotionality by respondents. However, using emotions without considering existing brand image and external environment often lead to negative perceptions of brand acting manipulatively and taking advantage of consumers.

Morality: Morality refers to the capability to distinguish between good or bad. The way others (employees, customers, partners) are treated serves as an important criterion for respondents to infer morality of a brand. Further a company's stance on corporate values, CSR, internal and external transparency, brand's genuine and corrective behaviour after failure strongly influenced morality perceptions about the brand.

Contingency: refers to the capability of being fully interactive and responsive in a conversation. Inter-connected responses, context awareness, well placed auditory, chronemic and non-verbal cues helped in inferring contingency by respondents.

Sociability: Pro-social behaviours and traits that embody relationism such as emotional attachment and warmth are considered intrinsic to human nature (Park, Haslam and Kashima 2012). Reciprocal and relational brand engagements with others such as consumers, other brands, employees and so on lead to sociability perceptions for brands. Further, brands that encourage participation and involve in local community are perceived as sociable.

Human-Centricity focuses on brands capability to prioritize human values and attach prime importance to humans. Brands that act respectfully, positively and treat others as humans are inferred as human like. Further, this includes the capability to identify human uniqueness and recognize and understand the differences between individuals. Brands that display deeper level of understanding of needs of people and are conscious of their impact on people are considered as humans.

Self-transcendence: It refers to an all-encompassing level of human consciousness, where people act and relate to themselves, important people in their lives, and humans in general as ends rather than means. At the heart of brand humanness perception is the brand purpose which focuses on capability to display humility and act beyond 'self-interest'. In fact, purpose of brand need not take the form of social issue or cause (like CSR). Commitment to one's work is also reflective of meaningful existence.

Statement of Key Contributions:

Consumer research on brand humanization has identified a number of effects of anthropomorphism on consumer judgements. However, the antecedents of anthropomorphism have received relatively little attention (Mecit et al. 2022) This research contributes to the literature by providing a consumer perspective on brand humanization (Sharma and Rahman 2022) and by identifying the antecedents of consumer perceived humanness.

Present study contributes to the literature on humanization by showing that brands can be anthropomorphized in terms of fundamental human capabilities that are inferred rather than directly observed from brand appearance and behavior. Our study also extends the literature on perceived humanness by identifying additional human capabilities that may influence the perceived humanness of brands such as temporal variables (Contingency) and the role of others (Human-Centricity and Morality) (Soderlund and Oikerinen 2021) of brands

And finally, given that consumers are anticipated to spend more time interacting with AI supported, digitalized brands in near future (Schmitt 2019; Keller 2020), present study contributes to the literature on AI adoption in marketing by identifying factors that can enhance consumer-brand interactions in commercial settings in future.

(References are available on request).

A Universities Name Forms the First Impression of its Value.

Post Secondary Institutions have lost 1.3 million students since spring 2020.

(National student clearinghouse, 2022)

Madison Collins
Utah State University

Dr. Matthew D. Meng
Utah State University

Introduction

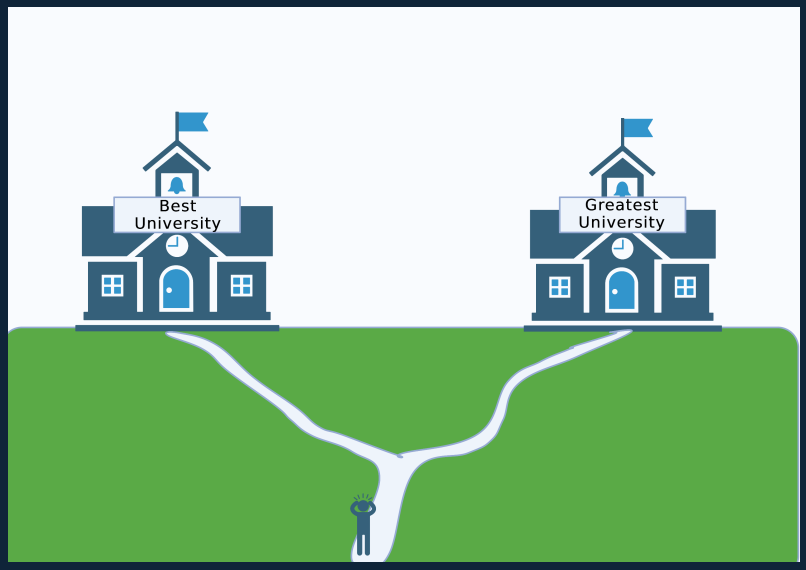
A Universities name is the most visible element of its brand. The naming format that a University chooses to use could impact perceived value, rank, student and or staff selection, as well as funding.

We compared two of the most popular university naming styles: 'University of [Location]' and '[Location] University'. To evaluate perceptions surrounding naming styles.

University of [Location]' Examples '
- University of Cambridge
- University of Chicago
- University of Michigan

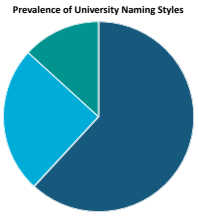
'[Location] University' Examples
- New York University
- Boston University
- Kyoto University

To determine how perceptions of universities vary based on naming format, we evaluated perception, as well as rank of relevant universities.



Most students form opinions about Universities based on perception rather than merit.

UtahStateUniversity



38% of ranked Universities use 'University of [Location]' or '[Location] of University' naming formats.

Findings

Through surveying perceptions based on 'University of [Location]' and '[Location] University' naming formats we found that 'University of [Location]' is perceived as more prestigious than '[Location] of University', despite not having a significant difference in rank.

Further studies may aim to uncover why placing 'University' before location is perceived as being more prestigious than placing 'University after location.

Understanding perception gives us insight into behavior.

Special Session Proposal
Influencer Marketing

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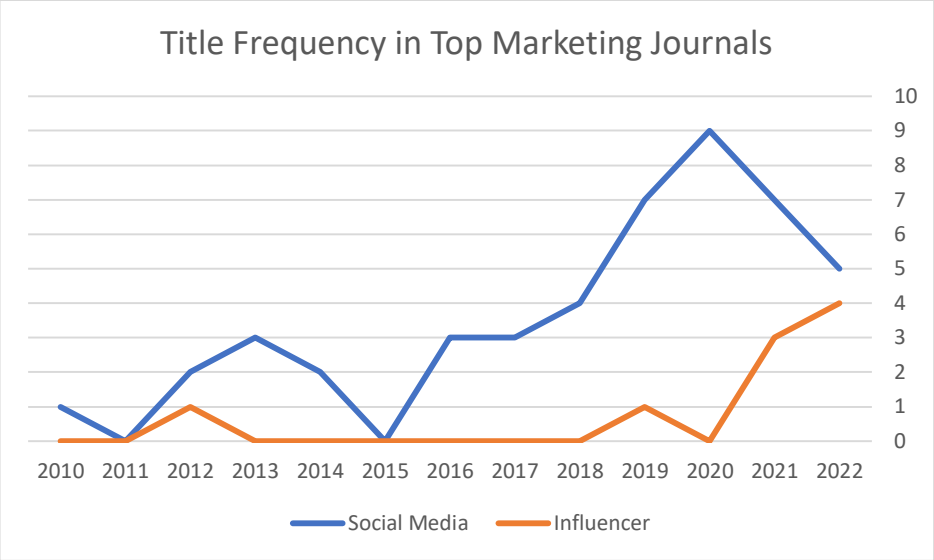
Description
How does influencer marketing influence consumers? How should brands select and manage influencers? How should influencers grow and deploy their influence? This special session assembles researchers examining influencer marketing from various angles. The research considers each actor's perspectives and various factors related to influencers, brands, content, platforms, context, and consumers while also touching on emerging challenges and opportunities from the ever-evolving technological, social, and political environment. The discussants ponder which fundamental truths about influencer marketing are stable and simply requiring rigorous examination to uncover and which truths are particular to certain social media formats and ephemeral.

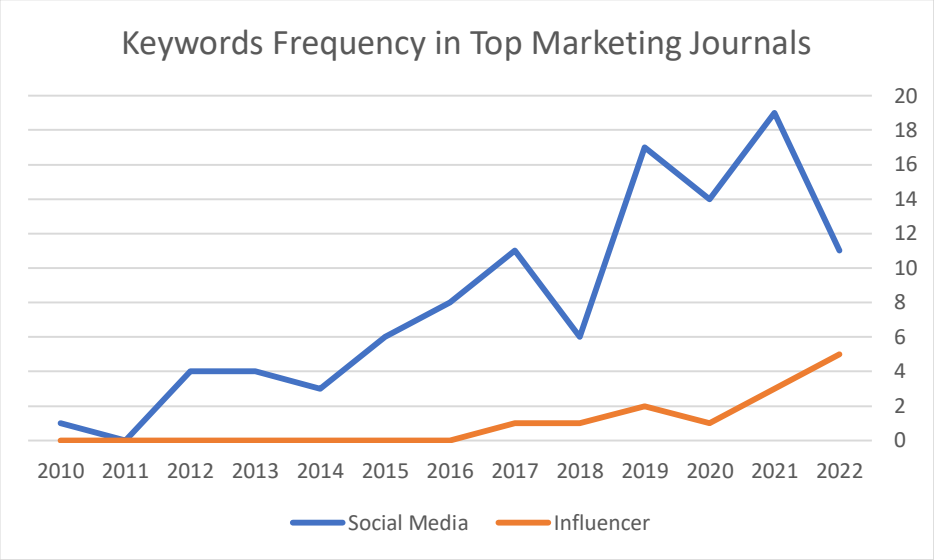
Proposal

Influencer marketing has risen with social media as a platform native promotion tactic for brands seeking to capture and capitalize on immense consumer attention directed towards social media (Leung, Gu, and Palmatier 2022; Zahoor and Qureshi 2017). Conventional marketing communication tools, designed for conventional media, do not fit as well with social media. In 2019, brands' endorsement deals with influencers became larger than US newspaper advertisement revenues, roughly $12.86 billion dollars, and has only increased as the pandemic accelerated the transition to digital media consumption and digital commerce US (New York Times 2020; Pew Research Center 2021). Do the lessons, empirical generalizations, and best practices discovered by analyzing conventional promotion tactics for conventional media hold for influencer marketing on social media? Or are new insights required for this new format?

Not everything is new. The advent of influencers dates back a very long time. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) defined influencers as people who place a vast amount of influence on others' attitudes and behaviors. It prompted marketing researchers to look into those individuals since influencers are thought to impact the way consumers develop their preferences and choices on brands (Rogers and Cartano 1962). However, the concept of influencer was not drawing much attention from researchers and thus not widely used in academia until social media comes to stand shoulder to shoulder with mainstream media in capturing attention. With social media and internet technology, influencer marketing and research on it could be conducted at scale with a level of quantitative information previously impossible. We looked at how many published articles in the top six marketing journals (Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Marketing Science) used the word 'influencer' in title and keywords from

2010 to 2022 (as of August 2022) and compared those to the number of articles that put 'social media' in the two sections. Research on influencer marketing appears to follow the rise of social media, and still emerging. Many questions have yet to be asked, let alone answered.





An apparent point of inflection corresponds to the onset of the Covid-19 which lead to upticks in social media consumption and influencer revenue. Perhaps this contributed to increased attention from researchers and greater receptivity from journals.

With Covid-19 restricting in person activities, the shift of transition online and burst of consumer attention on social media and explosive growth in online commerce created conditions

for manufacturers and creative individuals to collaborate with new brands centered around individuals. For instance, Proper No. Twelve, a liquor brand founded and promoted by mixed martial arts fighter Conor McGregor, is the fastest growing whiskey brand in the US, marking a 21% growth in 2021 (Miller 2022). This illustrates how profoundly consumers are being affected by influencers in their purchase decision. Another innovation in influencer marketing is the rise of virtual "artificial" influencers (e.g., Lil Miquela, Shudu, Rozy) that present as humans but are really an amalgamation of AI, models, and behind the scenes managers that create characters who have gained millions of followers and now capitalize on their followings through influencer marketing. These innovations leave researchers with plenty of questions to investigate.

In this special session, we share five projects that offer examinations of novel questions. While each research project examines a particular question, the projects broadly consider: (1) influencer performance and (2) influencer content performance. The first research project explores the effect of influencer endorsement frequency on customer engagement. The second examines nano-influencers who do not have the reach of mega-celebrities but offer other advantages. The empirical analysis estimates effects on engagement, actual sales, and return on investment. The third focuses on influencers with disabilities, a category of people often underrepresented and ignored in traditional advertising. The fourth studies role-based content creation strategies and the impact on return on investment of a campaign. The fifth project categorizes influencer post content based on post's influence purpose, broadly categorized as posts to exert influence for commercial purposes, social purposes, or personal purposes. Consumers receptivity to each post type varies and each post type has effects on how consumers receive the preceding and subsequent posts. We are hoping that this session deepens knowledge and understanding of influencer marketing and encourages more researchers on the topic.

Presentation 1

Online Influencers as Brand Endorsers

Angela Y. Gao, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University *

Fine F. Leung, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Flora F. Gu, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Marketers debate over the desirability of an influencer's *endorsement frequency*, or the proportion of sponsored posts to the total posts of an influencer (Mowen and Brown 1981; Tripp et al. 1994). Some practitioners prefer influencers with high endorsement frequency which signals their popularity and success (Canning 2019), while others hold that higher frequency of endorsed content leads to consumer immunization, triggering greater risk and lower credibility (Chan 2017; Influencer Marketing Hub 2019). The nascent literature of OIM has not empirically examined the role of endorsement frequency, leaving the critical question unanswered. To fill this gap, this research draws on the elaboration likelihood model (ELM; Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983; Petty and Cacioppo 1986) to address several research questions. First, what is the impact of an influencer's endorsement frequency on consumer engagement of the influencer's posts in terms of liking, commenting, or sharing a focal OIM post? Second, what are the underlying mechanisms that lead to such impact?

Based on ELM, we argue that endorsement frequency, as a visible and observable characteristic, serves as a peripheral cue used for making inferences about the influencer (Huber and McCann 1982), which can further affect post engagement. We propose that an influencer's endorsement frequency will be seen as a negative peripheral cue that infers *manipulative intent*, defined as consumers' perception that the influencer is "attempting to persuade by inappropriate,

unfair, or manipulative means" (Campbell 1995, p. 228). Meanwhile, endorsement frequency also operates as a positive peripheral cue that infers *perceived recognition*, defined as the extent to which consumers perceive an influencer to be acknowledged and validated by the market of brands (Rapp, Agnihotri, and Baker 2015). Taken together, we predict that as an influencer's endorsement frequency increases, consumers' engagement with the influencer's sponsored post will decrease due to higher manipulative intent. However, when endorsement frequency is very high, the recognition benefit can dominate to increase post engagement.

We conducted two online experiments to test the main effect of influencer's endorsement frequency on post engagement and the mediating roles of manipulative intent and perceived recognition. In Study 1, participants were randomly assigned to three conditions (high vs. medium vs. low endorsement frequency). They were first asked to read five posts of a fictitious cooking influencer on Twitter, through which endorsement frequency was manipulated by varying the number of endorsed posts to the total posts read by the participants. Then, the participants viewed a focal sponsored post in which a product was introduced and indicated their likelihood to like, comment, and share this post using their personal account. In Study 2, the procedure was similar, but participants were further asked to rate the manipulative intent and perceived recognition of the influencer.

To enhance the external validity of our findings, in Study 3 we conducted a field study based on 2,000 randomly selected Instagram influencers. We measured *endorsement frequency* as the proportion of sponsored posts to the total number of posts shared by the influencers in the past 180 days and *post engagement* as the percentage of the influencers' followers who liked or commented on their most recent 12 posts. We also included a host of influencer and follower characteristics as control variables.

The three studies demonstrate that the impact of endorsement frequency on post engagement displays a U-shaped pattern, which means that influencers with relatively higher or lower endorsement frequency are conducive to post engagement. Study 2 shows that the U-shaped effect is mediated by increasing manipulative intent and increasing perceived recognition of the influencer. This research contributes to both OIM and brand endorsement literature and offers valuable implications for marketers on influencer selection.

Presentation 2

How To Set Up Seeded Marketing Campaigns with Offline-Focused Nano-Influencers That Create Engagement, Sales, and Return-On-Investment

Ulrike Phieler, Vienna University of Economics and Business *

Florian Dost, Brandenburg University of Technology

Marketers know the majority of impactful product and brand recommendations happen in offline conversations. To become part of these conversations, marketers increasingly utilize thousands of nano-influencers---ordinary consumers who “buzz” about a brand---with specialized marketing formats: seeded marketing campaigns (SMCs). The idea is to equip a large number of nano-influencers with the product or brand to be marketed, then encourage them to share their brand experiences and excitement with their peers. Overall, the created seed activity from SMCs has been shown to increase sales (Dost et al. 2019, Chae et al. 2017, Godes and Mayzlin 2009) at comparably low cost, which makes SMCs an attractive marketing mix addition for managers.

The key challenge with SMCs, and a major difference to marketing campaigns with professional online influencers, is that nano-influencer activity is not contractually specified, and managers cannot economically engage with thousands of nano-influencers individually. Instead, managers have to rely on their initial campaign setup decisions to activate nano-influencers. SMC setup comprises SMC size and selection (how many nano-influencers, and who from where to select?), SMC content (which products and incentives to send the nano-influencers?), and SMC timing (how long should the campaign run?). Managers actively seek advice from literature to improve their setup decisions; however, extant research offers them only incomplete setup recommendations. This leaves managers at a loss and complicates result- and cost-conscious campaigns set-ups.

With a unique dataset of 148 SMCs comprising the activity of nearly 700,000 nano-influencers and covering about a twentieth of all SMCs in the EU during data collection, we comprehensively model how setup decisions affect all relevant campaign outcomes---seed activity, sales, cost, and return-on-investment---while considering marketing and brand context. Our cross-campaign data enables a comparison of various SMC setups to find out which of managers' available setup decisions aid in planning effective and/or efficient SMCs.

Results show that campaign success lies mostly in managers' hands, as setup decisions show the highest impact on campaign outcomes. Brand context plays only a minor role---contrasting organic word-of-mouth settings. Marketing context, such as parallel advertising or product price, matter differently, depending on the campaign goal. We identify trade-offs between effective brand building (maximum seed activity), effective promotion (maximum sales), and efficient (maximum return-on-investment) campaigns, reconciling conflicting

suggestions from extant research. Our model predicts that managers could increase seed activity by 97%, sales by 162%, or return-on-investment by 100% compared to current practice.

Presentation 3

Social Media Influencers with Disabilities and Perceptions of Product Luxury

Sona Klucarova, University of Nebraska at Omaha *

Many individuals with disabilities have an online presence on various social media platforms, and some of these social media users who identify as disabled have become influencers (Cassidy, 2021). Despite the growing number of disabled influencers, the existing research on this topic is scarce (Bonilla-del-Río et al., 2022; Södergren & Vallström, 2020). This research aims to bring influencers with disabilities to the attention of marketing scholars while examining consumer perceptions of products promoted by such influencers.

Identifying as disabled (vs. nondisabled) means being unique and special; in fact, disabled individuals are sometimes referred to as *people with special needs* (Gernsbacher et al., 2016). As such, consumers should perceive disabled social media influencers as more unique than nondisabled influencers. In consumers' minds, uniqueness is often associated with luxury (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005). Furthermore, many consumers believe in the notion of psychological contagion, that is, the transfer of an individual's "essence" to the product he or she has used (Klucarova, 2022; Marchak & Hall, 2017; Rozin et al., 1989). In the present context, this could mean that disabled influencers' perceived uniqueness could rub off on the products promoted by

these influencers, resulting in consumers' perception that these products are more luxurious as opposed to the products promoted by nondisabled influencers. Formally:

> **H1:** Consumers perceive products promoted by social media influencers who are disabled as more luxurious than products promoted by social media influencers who are not disabled.
>
> **H2:** Perceived influencer uniqueness mediates the positive effect of social media influencers who are (vs. are not) disabled on consumer perceptions of product luxury.

I tested my predictions in six experimental studies. Studies 1A (*N* = 100; Prolific), 1B (*N* = 96; MTurk), and 1C (*N* = 80; French business school students) provided support for H1 and H2 in the context of both physical and mental disabilities, as well as different products. These studies also ruled out confounding effects of individual differences in Instagram use and demographic factors, and alternative accounts of perceived brand inclusivity, brand evaluation, influencer evaluation, influencer attractiveness, and feelings of pity toward the influencer. Apart from further supporting H1, the next two studies explored the moderating roles of belief in psychological contagion (Study 2; *N* = 101; Prolific) and the type of a disabled individual (influencer vs. model) appearing in the promotional post (Study 3; *N* = 200; Prolific), respectively. Finally, Study 4 (*N* = 200; Prolific) provided further support for H1 and H2 while ruling out alternative accounts of perceived norm violation and sympathy. Importantly, this study also demonstrated that consumers are willing to pay a higher price for products promoted by disabled (vs. nondisabled) influencers and that this effect is serially driven by perceived influencer uniqueness and perceptions of product luxury.

This research demonstrates an important role that disabled social media influencers may play in marketing. The findings contribute to the academic literature on influencer marketing, disability in marketing, and luxury marketing, and have significant managerial implications.

Presentation 4

Beyond Follower Size--Investigating Influencer's Endorsing Content Creation Strategies

Jing Niu, HEC Paris *

Kristine De Valck, HEC Paris

Peter Ebbes, HEC Paris

Social media have enabled the rising power of online influencers in the marketplace, which attracted the attention of both practitioners and academics. Brands significantly invest in influencer marketing to connect with their customers. A recent industry report states that the global market value of the influencer marketing business is estimated to be 17.8 billion in 2022 (Influencer marketing hub, 2021). Previous literature has identified factors that affect influencer campaign performance, including factors related to selecting the right influencers and creating the right marketing message. Despite all the research that has been done on influencer selection and content creation, practitioners often observe variations of influencer campaign performance that are hard to explain with the current knowledge.

Our study contributes to the understanding of influencer campaigns' performance variation by investigating influencers' content creation strategy(ies) once they are selected. Unlike traditional advertisers and celebrity endorsers whose primary goal is endorsing the product, influencers are tasked with creating campaign content for a variety of objectives based on their multiple roles as relevant peers to their audiences, persuasive-based brand agents, and self-brand marketers while facing the constraint of followers' limited attention. In creating campaign content, influencers can use more than one strategy to achieve these goals. Their decision-making in constructing goal-directed communication forms their content creation

strategies (Kozinets et al., 2010). Understanding influencers' content creation strategy is crucial to achieving a high match between their personas and campaign objectives and therefore plays an important role in influencer campaign implementation.

Leveraging various approaches including crowdsourcing and modern machine learning tools, we quantified the content of more than 2500 sponsored Instagram posts made for over 500 campaigns over a two year period. Our empirical approach employs the quantified post-content data and fits the content characteristics in latent cluster analysis. We documented that influencers adopt four broad content creation strategies, that differ in terms of what subject (themselves or the product) they highlight, what roles they give themselves (an expert or a friendly peer), and what 'language' they adopt (share their life or being a professional promotor). A follow-up analysis shows that an influencer's strategy choices impact the return on investment of one campaign (amount of engagement per pounds paid) regardless of their follower sizes, experience level, and brand's instruction. These findings suggest that marketing managers should consider influencers' content creation strategies in influencer campaigns when developing assessment criteria.

Presentation 5

Influencer Post Purpose: Effects of Influencer Post Purpose Type on Engagement and Carryover Effects on Other Posts

Woocheol Kim, University of Oregon *

Conor Henderson, University of Oregon

Every social media post has its own purpose. Influencers use social media to 1) share about their lives and express themselves (personal), 2) promote products and brands they endorse (commercial), and 3) express support for a social cause, issue, or movement (social). The content they share exerts an influence on social media users, often users who choose to "follow" the influencers' content. Brands and social causes, issues, movements hope that the influencer's support will translate to support from the followers (Stewart 2003). In this essay, we investigate how posts of these three types of purposes affect consumer engagement within the focal post and the posts following and proceeding the focal post. The objective of the current research is to inform firms, social causes or non-profits, and influencers who seek to successfully engage with the influencers' audience while satisfying multiple objectives that sometimes conflict or are not complementary.

We focus on two factors that may determine whether such support transition works. The persuasion knowledge model implies that people exhibit weakened attitudes toward influencers when influencers reveal financial interests, diminishing engagement in commercial posts (Evans et al., 2018). Authenticity, acting based on one's true self, may offset those negative effects by making their posts seem driven by intrinsic motivations (Audrezet et al., 2020; Moulard et al., 2015). Given their different purposes, personal posts (P), perceived as intrinsically motivated, can complement commercial posts (C) made by extrinsic motivations. Social posts (S) driven by either or both can be more appealing with self-motivation integrated. As people scroll social media, a content type not only impacts a post but influences the engagement of neighboring posts. Drawing on two theories, we hypothesize that putting personal aspects in C or S results in greater consumer engagement than ones without these aspects. We also propose carryover effects, such that C or S lowers engagement in others around it, particularly ones right before and

after, as a viewer may stop scrolling up or down if they encounter a post that causes them to lose interest in the influencer, even temporarily.

To test our first hypothesis, we conducted a study, in which participants provided a rating of how much they liked singer Shawn Mendes' Twitter posts on a scale of 1 to 7 and then classified them as personal, commercial, social, or one of the combined categories. Findings supported our hypothesis, demonstrating that in terms of average likings, they more positively evaluated posts with personal and commercial content (PC) and posts with all three types of content (PCS) better than just commercial C content. Personal and social posts (PS) were more favorably evaluated compared to S as well.

To check if these findings converged with actual social media engagement, we scraped posts from fourteen celebrities (Demi Lovato, Drake, Ellen DeGeneres, Jennifer Lopez, Justin Bieber, Katy Perry, Kevin Hart, Kim Kardashian, Kylie Jenner, LeBron James, Miley Cyrus, Rihanna, Selena Gomez, Taylor Swift). In total, we obtained 16,493 Instagram and Twitter posts. We had three workers categorize each of the posts as containing Commercial, Social, or Personal content. Our analysis of the coders' classification on how many likes each post received was consistent with the finding from the Shawn Mendes study. First, PC and PCS gained 48.7% and 64.4% greater likings than C, respectively on Instagram, and PCS compared to C increased likings by 96.4% on Twitter.

We conducted a further analysis that was not available in the Shawn Mendes study. We explored if certain types of content performed better or worse depending on the platform and examined carry forward and backward effects on the preceding and subsequent posts of the focal post. In terms of platform effects on the evaluation of different content types, we observed that Twitter users exhibited a preference for S and PS content relative to C content, while Instagram

users did not exhibit such a preference. In terms of the effects of a focal post on neighboring posts, the results of our analysis were opposite to our predictions. We saw that C (vs. P) content in a focal post leads to 21.2% (Twitter), 7.9% (Instagram) increases in likings of a post right above, and 19.6% (Twitter), 8.5% (Instagram) ups in likings of one right below the focal post. On Instagram, S (vs. P) is also associated with a 23.0% increase in likings of a post right below. Perhaps there is a contrast effect. More research is required to understand if these findings are reliable and, if so, to explain why they are observed.

The data examined thus far support our hypothesis that personal aspects help enhance engagement in commercial posts. We propose, but have yet to test, that including personal content with commercial content will reduce skepticism and make followers believe the brand or product is genuinely supported by the influencer. We also show evidence of the between-posts effects of C and S. Adding to the emerging stream of influencer marketing research, our work suggests purpose-based tailoring strategies and carryover effects. More research is required to help inform how to mix different types of content within and across posts for influencers who want to exert their influence for several purposes.

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INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS (IMC) AS A DYNAMIC CAPABILITY FOR SMES PERFORMANCE: COMPARISON OF DEVELOPED AND EMERGING ECONOMY

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Keywords: market orientation, integrated marketing communications, performance, emerging economy

Description: The study reports novelty results on Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) mediation between market orientation (MO) and organizational performance (customer and market) under the company size moderating effect in developed and emerging economies.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions – The research focuses on the role of IMC in the relationships between market orientation (MO) and organizational performance (customer and market). Also, the study investigates the potential use of IMC as a distinctive competitive advantage for SMEs over larger rivals. In other words, it analyses the differences in IMC effectiveness in transferring the effect of a MO on organizational performance under the company size moderating influence. Additionally, this research applies an inter-country analysis to detect the potential differences in the IMC role between emerging (Belarus) and developed (Spain) economies.

Method and Data – A survey of managers collected the primary data. The authors sent 1.500 questionnaires and received 422 complete responses, with an average response rate of 28.1%. To identify any potentially induced variance, the data procedure was controlled to have respondents from proportionally various gender, ages, and education levels. The company profiles were also checked from different industries (i.e., manufacturing, retail, and services) and business types (i.e., B2B and B2C companies). Five-point Likert-type scales were used to measure the constructs in the theoretical model. The scales considered in this article have been tested in previous research. A variance-based structural equation modeling (SEM), specifically partial least squares (PLS), was applied to assess the measurement and structural model following various criteria. The global model fit was confirmed. The two-step PLS model analysis approach was used: first, the assessment of the reliability and validity of the measurement model, and second, the evaluation of the structural model. Before conducting a multi-group analysis (MGA) and checking the moderation effect, a three-step analysis of the measurement invariance of composite models (MICOM) was run.

Summary of Findings – The results support that IMC enhances MO's positive impact on firm performance (customer and market) and that the company size moderates the IMC mediation. In the developed economy, the IMC mediation is significant for smaller firms, not larger ones. In the emerging economy, the firm size does not affect the IMC mediation of MO and customer performance relationships; however, the IMC mediation of MO and market performance is significant in larger companies and not SMEs.

Statement of Key Contributions – This study contributes to theoretical knowledge of the IMC concept and its mediating role between MO and a firm's performance (customer and

market). The multi-group comparison of the company size moderating effect on IMC effectiveness adds to SMEs' entrepreneurship literature and study. The inter-country analysis generalizes the results and extends the international marketing theory. Also, the study confirms the previous suggestions that IMC is a firm's capability to gain a competitive advantage. Additionally, the study provides some novelty practical insights. The results show that IMC implementation can enhance the positive effect of collecting and disseminating market intelligence on customer satisfaction and market growth. This research underlines the possibility of using IMC as a distinctive capability to help SMEs compete with larger companies. Also, the study provides an understanding of the possible variations of IMC implementation in developed and emerging economies. The inter-country analysis guides the companies operating in environments with different marketing activeness and competitive intensity levels. The study points out that SMEs in emerging economies, compared to those working in developed economies, can be more vulnerable against larger rivals. It can be a point of interest to improve government entrepreneurship policies.

INTEGRATING AR FEATURES ON BRAND CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA CAN PUBLISH OR PERISH BRAND EXPERIENCES AND CONSUMER RESPONSES?

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Keywords: Augmented reality (AR) features, Brand experiences, Product benefits, Realistic perception, Innovativeness, Attitude toward technology.

Description: This study aims to understand immersive technologies that enable consumer perceptions of published brand content by integrating augmented reality (AR) features to affect desired brand experiences and consumer responses.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumer behavior has evolved with trends and social media contents in recent years. Social media is a markedly powerful platform in providing flawless virtual shopping experiences. However, consumers are skeptical of products sold on websites and merely rely on their imagination from presented photos. Accordingly, brands distinguishing themselves from competitors and creating unique experiences when consumers see their product contents can be challenging (Hilken et al., 2022). Augmented reality (AR) technology has become crucial in many

industries. However, AR features are not only limited to techniques overlaying over physical objects. Recent advancements in AR have resulted in features that provide overlay, move, rotate, and zoom functions (Apple Inc., 2022) to provide consumers with pleasant virtual shopping experiences. This study aims to fill in the related gap by integrating AR features and brand contents to help online shoppers experience brands' products in their physical environment (Tan et al., 2022). Moreover, this research contributes to the literature on AR features integrated by consumption values toward desired outcomes. AR in a marketing context also provides practical insights when consumers are particularly concerned with and worried about specialty products when purchasing online, even though these products will be actually delivered to them.

Method and Data

This study conducted a scenario-based experimental survey using the Qualtrics platform, and participants were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The experiment was designed as one factor (Brand content: with AR features vs. with a static photo) between-subjects factorial design. Participants were asked to imagine that they were about to buy some new products and randomly assigned to one of two conditions. The first condition presents the brand content by promoting the product on a Facebook page and integrating AR features (i.e., overlay, move, rotate, and zoom) to provide clear images of the products. In the second condition, the brand content shows a static photo as a usual post on a Facebook page. This study used the following measurement items from existing studies on brand experiences: willingness to purchase products, product benefits, realistic perception, innovativeness, and attitude toward technology. To measure all items, we use a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). After data cleaning, 293 participants (52.22% female) aged 25–34 years old represented 45.73%.

A total of 240 participants (81.91%) followed the brands' Facebook pages, and 68.94% of them spent an average of 1–3 hours daily on Facebook.

Summary of Findings

Our study examined reliability and validity, measured by Cronbach's alpha, composite reliabilities (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Results revealed satisfactory values for further analysis. To test the hypotheses, MANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of brand content with AR features (vs. a static photo) on the dependent variables ($F(4,288) = 2.832, \mathrm{p} < .05$). Results showed that brand content with AR features significantly affect utilitarian benefits ($M_{AR} = 6.03$ vs. $M_{Static} = 5.72, F(1,291) = 8.690, \mathrm{p} < .01$), hedonic benefits ($M_{AR} = 5.55$ vs. $M_{Static} = 5.21, F(1,291) = 7.852, \mathrm{p} < .01$), realistic perception ($M_{AR} = 5.32$ vs. $M_{Static} = 4.97, F(1,291) = 6.013, \mathrm{p} < .05$), and innovativeness ($M_{AR} = 5.66\ vs. M_{Static} = 5.41,\ F(1,291) = 4.577, \mathrm{p} < .05$). Thus, H1a–d are supported. Furthermore, structural equation modeling examined the effects of product benefits, and utilitarian benefits show a significantly positive influence on attitude toward technology (β=0.266, p<.001). However, hedonic benefits did not have a significant influence on attitude toward technology (β=-0.009, p>.05). Therefore, H2 is partially supported. Realistic perception (β=0.090, p<.05) and innovativeness (β=0.623, p<.001) also show a significantly positive impact on attitude toward technology. Thus, H3 and H4 are supported. In addition, the effects of consumers' attitudes toward technology show a significantly positive influence on brand experiences (β=0.493, p<.001) and consumers' willingness to purchase (β=0.407, p<.001). Therefore, H5 and H6 are supported.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study provides several theoretical and practical contributions. First, this research contributes

to the literature on the five dimensions of consumption values (Sheth et al., 1991), namely, functional (e.g., utilitarian benefits), emotional (e.g., hedonic benefits), social (e.g., brands integrating AR technology), epistemic (e.g., realistic perceptions), and conditional (e.g., consumers' attitude toward technology) values, to evaluate brand experiences and willingness to purchase. Second, this study presents new virtual aspects utilized for brands to improve brand experiences for consumers, thereby enabling them to experience the similar feeling of shopping in physical stores and reducing negative brand experiences when consumers are concerned and worried over online purchases. AR features enhance consumers' imagination and enable them to visualize new possibilities to evaluate and interact with brands' products (Mishra et al., 2021). Lastly, findings offer practical insights into brand content by highlighting the additional benefits of AR technology. Results suggest that brands can use AR features to succeed in publishing brand content on brand experiences and consumers' willingness to purchase products. Consumers' sensations, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings will be improved, while promoting specialty products. These products constantly struggle with low online sales and revenue and consumers need additional effort to decide when purchasing online.

References are available upon request.

IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH: EXPLORING THE AFTERLIFE OF DEAD BRAND COMMUNITIES

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Key words: Brand Community, Dead Brands, Brand Management, Brand Revival

Description: Using a netnography approach, the authors examine large scale longitudinal data following the death of the Pontiac brand showcasing the existence of brand communities' afterlife that progresses through stages.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Scant research has followed a brand community through its decline or eventual demise (Brodieet al.2013: Russell, Schau & Bliese 2019; Wirtz et al. 2013). This could be because it is thought that a brand community will die along with its brand—but this also begs the question of what members do with their now-defunct identity. Russell, Schau, and Bliese (2019) found consumers transfer their brand loyalty to a competitor's brand or substitute brand if the death of the brand was a "clean kill," meaning due to reaching the end of its product life cycle. Customers that are not transferred to another brand may stay with their brand community because they see the death

of the brand as a murder (ibid.). However, as Muñiz and Schau (2005, p.738) cautioned "the more time that passes since the (product) was discontinued, the more members will be lost due to the physical failure of the device." The conventional wisdom clearly supports the idea that the community dies with its brand. However, the question of what happens to these communities and their members is still unanswered. Addressing this question, and subsequently understanding the process by which the community persists comprises the focus of this work.

Method and Data

A netnograpahy is an ethnography used in internet contexts to explore member behavior. The use of a netnography is faster and less intrusive to the brand community members than other approaches and allows the researchers to see actual member behavior (Kozinets, 2002). Following Kozinets' (2002) guidelines the PY Online Forum was selected to evaluate GM's dead Pontiac brand community.

Founded in 1926, the Pontiac brand was eventually killed in 2010 (Bunkley 2010). Despite its demise, there is still an active online brand community of 54,796 users, discussing 370,910 threads across 3.7 million posts (PY Forums 2021). This site provides a rich context in which to study the death of a brand and its community.

Evidence of the three markers of shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001) are needed to demonstrate the presence of a community. Surprisingly this "dead" community demonstrates these markers. This includes the use of 'we' and 'us', practice of several rituals and traditions such as Pontiac stories, and frequent helping behavior.

Summary of Findings

Using large scale longitudinal data, this study found that there can be a vibrant afterlife for dead brand communities, in stark contrast to the predictions of prior literature (cf. Muñiz & Schau, 2005). The Pontiac community showcased an unusual pattern of an increase in brand community members years after the brand's death which we further explored to develop the three stages of a dead brand community's afterlife: Support, Detachment, and Phoenix. In stage 1 Support, members join the community for advice and to be part of a community that seems to be fading from everyday life. While new enrollment is decreasing it is still prevalent. Contrarily in stage 2, Detachment, there is a massive decrease in new member enrollment. The community members completely disengage from the company both emotionally and physically. While some communities remain in stage 2 until extinction, others progress to stage 3. In stage 3 Phoenix, a transition/conversion from dead brand communities to dead-brand communities takes place and manifests itself. We find when the company has entirely walked away, the community rose from the ashes like a phoenix indicating that dead brand communities can have an afterlife.

Key Contributions

This research fills an important gap in the brand community literature by evaluating "dead brand communities" that exist around brands that have been discontinued. Contrary to expectations, the study provides evidence that brand communities can enjoy an "afterlife" that extends far past the death of the brand itself. This study introduces the concept of brand community afterlife, examines why this afterlife exists, and provides insights that managers can use to predict whether a specific brand community will die with the brand or enjoy a prolonged afterlife. Furthermore, the results suggest that a brand community's afterlife can progress through multiple stages. Specifically, the results reveal three stages of a dead brand communities' afterlife which can be used by practitioners for monitoring and identifying promising dead brands that can be

successfully revived with the aid of active communities, as Ford recently did with the Ford Bronco. The research indicates the need for sustained brand management throughout a dead brand's afterlife including community. Researchers can use this study as a starting point for further dead brand community research.

References are available upon request.

Managing for Creativity in the Age of Data-Driven Marketing Communication: An Empirical Study on the Distribution and Valuation of Creativity in Agencies.

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Keywords: creativity research, integrated marketing communication, data-driven marketing, agency management, omni-channel creativity

Description: An empirical paper that investigates what defines, drives, and inspires creative collaboration in different types of marketing communication agencies in Europe.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Whereas the need for integrated marketing communication (IMC) has been given considerable attention by researchers in recent decades, the integration of creativity into IMC has not. A difference between how creativity is valued in advertising versus specialized digital marketing agencies within an IMC environment may lead to brand message diffusion. This empirical paper addresses this difference and investigates what defines, drives, and inspires creative collaboration in different types of agencies. Drawing on a social constructivist methodology, empirical data were generated from leaders of industry-acclaimed agencies from four European countries (Norway, Italy, France and the UK). A conceptual model is proposed as a practical operational tool, and the extended construct of creative IMC is explored.

Research Question

This study asks the following two questions. First, what, if any, are the motivational differences between marketing communication agencies that identify with creative accomplishments and those that identify with measurable data-driven performance? Second, are there different types of creativity that need to be motivated and managed in different ways?

Method and Data

Due to a lack of directly comparable research, this exploratory, qualitative, constructivist and hermeneutical study used theoretical sampling and primary data collection techniques. Constructivism, as it resides at the intersection between theory and practice, was at the core of this study. Because groups/individuals are changeable the paradigm displays a "relativist realism" or "relative ontology".

The ontological position of social constructivism considers multiple social realities and rejects ideas of value-free contexts, which has permitted this study to address the historical and real-world contexts in which practitioners construct their lived experience. For this reason, the study combines constructivism with hermeneutics. The aim was to identify practitioner-based constructs and explore how they affect motivation, performance and collaboration across teams in real-world work environments.

Summary of findings

Although the results of this exploratory research cannot be generalized to verify a definitive trend, they provide some clear findings that might be useful in developing operational creative integrated marketing communication (CIMC). The findings indicate that creativity is not valued or implemented equally throughout the elements of IMC programs, even within the same agency. There is likely to be creative development in various parts of creative advertising agencies, but without a unified system, the coherence of the results is questionable. There are few standards regarding IMC and even fewer for CIMC in the advertising industry in Europe. IMC and creative concept integration are practiced in a variety of ways using agency-specific methods in many types of agency configurations; therefore, making generalizations is difficult.

Although the advertising agencies of today value and perform data-driven marketing services, creative agency cultures and environments still seem built largely around the creative team performing radical creativity. The desire to inspire other forms of creativity is there, but there is a lack of awareness regarding why and how.

Key Contributions

To research: While a considerable amount of research has been conducted on the effectiveness of using IMC processes (Batra and Keller 2016; Calder and Malthouse, 2005; Ots and Nyilasy 2015), minimal attention has been paid to the effect of creativity on IMC work processes, despite the identification of a positive correlation over a decade ago. Recent literature on digital marketing communication has called for contemporary studies and new constructs on the impact of creativity on digital advertising (Bruce, Murthi and Rao 2017; West, Koslow and Kilgour 2019). This request for new constructs in creativity research is what motivates our study. This explorative research provides a starting point for operationalizing CIMC with a conceptual model.

To agency management: Although marketing communication services provided by advertising agencies have diversified in recent decades, applied creativity has not, and it probably has not been adapted, prioritized, or implemented equally across services. Because many agencies are still primarily geared toward radical creativity performed by traditional creative teams, the less understood data-optimized incremental creativity may suffer.

Creative agencies need to show that they value all creative contributions, not just the type of radical creativity that wins awards. Incremental forms of creativity needed for data-driven digital marketing communication over time need to be facilitated and incentivized so that both the creative team and the digital specialist prioritizes them. This research explores and reveals the untapped potential.

A useful first step is for managers to assess their overall creative resources, perhaps using the conceptual model presented. Then strategies and tactics that improve overall creative distribution and valuation can be used to strengthen an agency's creative profile. Based on this perspective, strategies and tactics designed to improve overall creative distribution and valuation can be used to strengthen an agency's creative profile.

References are available upon request.

RACE AGAINST THE MACHINE:

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF CONSUMER-DEVELOPED BOTS ON E-COMMERCE

Key Contributions

Our research makes three main contributions. We are the first to consider situations where the brand is not in charge of developing the AI algorithm or bot that consumers interact with during the purchasing process. We examine the existing research on bots and artificial intelligence to understand what makes consumer-developed bots unique. Whereas the computer science and security literature streams look at bots made by hackers or groups intending to disrupt systems, the marketing literature primarily looks at chatbots, which are made and implemented by the brand. We close the gap in the marketing literature regarding bots used in consumption contexts by developing a paradigm that focuses on issues related to consumer behavior.

Second, we present a model that demonstrates why consumers care about the prominence of bots in e-commerce environments. We explain how consumer-developed bots amplify customer reactions to brands in terms of blame and frustration.

Third, we show how understanding the implications of consumer-developed bots benefits managers both theoretically and practically. We aim to provide managerially executable approaches to dealing with consumer-developed bots.

As technology continues to develop, we foresee consumer-developed bots becoming a crucial component of consumer behavior research. This article establishes a strong framework to break

down how the consumer-developed bot phenomenon impacts consumer behavior. Our framework can be used to create arguments for future discussions on artificial intelligence, customer competition, brand responses, and customer feedback. Future studies should help to confirm our findings and continue to highlight the benefits of investigating consumer-developed bots.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The proliferation of technology in the marketplace is reshaping how consumers compete with one another for scarce products. One way some astute consumers are ensuring they are able to secure a scarce product amidst a multitude of competitors around the globe is by developing and using consumer-developed bots. We define consumer-developed bots as "algorithms made by the consumer designed to act on their behalf that require little to no human intervention during the process." In the context of e-commerce, these bots are being used to enable purchases at quicker rates and in larger quantities. The authors suggest that when consumer-developed bots succeed in purchase scenarios, customers who could not secure the product are more likely to hold the brand responsible for this failure to stop the bots from winning, which in turn amplifies unfavorable reactions to that brand. Building from artificial intelligence, attribution theory, brand response, and customer satisfaction literature streams, the authors provide a theory-backed justification for researching the consumer-developed bot phenomenon. The authors use a mixed-methods approach to explore why brands should care about these bots. First, the authors analyze 30,106 written app reviews to understand how and when bots are becoming more salient to consumers in online shopping contexts. The authors further investigate explanatory relationships using a set of

experimental studies. In addition to the findings indicating that the success of consumer-developed bots ultimately decreases consumer contentment with the brand, the authors also demonstrate how brands can minimize this negative response by implementing various response strategies. The research sheds light on how brands are impacted by consumers' usage of technology, especially when competing for scarce products.

Research Question

Our research answers the following: How do consumer-developed bots influence the customer competition landscape for scarce product releases in e-commerce, and how should brands address the phenomenon?

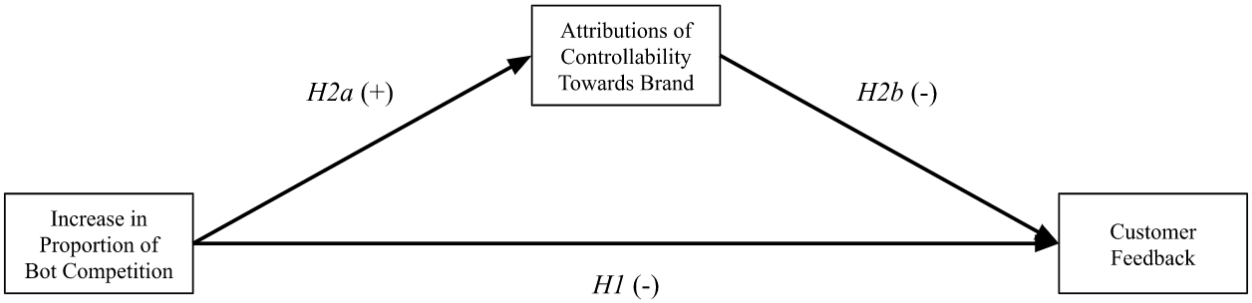
Since consumers are becoming more familiar with consumer-developed bots, we propose they respond negatively towards the brand when they believe bots are present. Although there are many possible responses, we believe two significant managerially relevant implications are unfavorable reviews and ratings and losing out on repeat customers. Our full conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1. Using the foundations developed through our conceptual review, we predict the following:

H1: As the proportion of bot winners in an e-commerce drawing for a scarce product increases, consumers respond increasingly negatively towards the brand involved.

We then unpack the mechanisms that underlie this relationship. One potential process that explains the relationship is attribution theory. We draw from attribution theory to understand how repatronage intentions are negatively impacted by the presence of bots.

Figure 1

A Conceptual Framework Illustrating the Influence of Bot Competition on Customer Feedback and the Mediating Role of Attributions of Controllability Towards a Brand



When consumers attribute their failure to a cause the firm can control, they become dissatisfied with something the firm is or is not doing. In our case, we believe this results in adverse customer feedback (online word-of-mouth reviews and repatronage intentions). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H2a: As the proportion of bot winners in an e-commerce drawing for a scarce product increases, consumers increasingly attribute their inability to secure the product to a cause controllable by the brand involved.

H2b: When consumers increasingly attribute their inability to secure the product to a cause controllable by the brand involved, the brand receives increasingly negative responses from customers.

Method and Data

To test our model, we conduct a set of studies. In Study 1, we analyze a collection of iOS App Store application reviews to validate our concept that consumers' perception of bots does

influence consumer behavior. We use Study 1 to test H1 by using entity extraction to highlight the impact of bots on app ratings. The data are customer reviews for Nike SNKRS, an app that allows consumers to enter drawings for newly released sneakers. We extracted all 30,106 records from the app's launch in 2015 until 2022.

Study 2 aims to detect an explanatory relationship between bot presence and repatronage intentions, as well as the mediating effect of attributions of controllability. The online experiment we conduct in Study 2 tests H1 and H2. We establish a paradigm by manipulating a consumer's belief that they are competing against bots and testing how it impacts repatronage intentions. Participants familiarized themselves with Nike SNKRS, imagined entering a drawing for sneakers, were told they lost and whether or not bots were present in the drawing, then responded to repatronage scales.

All experimental studies were preregistered on AsPredicted.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 has three main findings. First, on average bot mentions as a proportion of all reviews have increased by 1.4% each year ($p < 0.05$). Compared to 3% of all reviews mentioning bots in 2015, the proportion of reviews mentioning bots in 2022 was 9%. Next, when bots are mentioned, ratings tend to be lower. A within-year glance shows a greater divergence in ratings that do and do not mention bots over time. Lastly, we test the impact of bots on the ultimate customer app rating (out of five stars). As predicted, mentioning bots in a review negatively impacts the app's rating with an average decrease of 1.56, and there is a significant difference in rating between reviews that do and do not mention bots ($M_{no_bot_mention} = 4.12$, $M_{bot_mention} = 2.57$;

t(2632.9) = 41.00, $p < .001$). This descriptive study shows consumers' increasing dissatisfaction with bots using Nike SNKRS.

The second set of studies are experiments designed to test how consumers respond to the presence of bots in purchase scenarios. In Study 2a we show the impact of bot competition on customer feedback in a controlled environment. Study 2b replicates the findings from Study 2a and introduces an explanation for what drives the relationship between bot competition and customer feedback: attributions of controllability towards the brand. The presence of bots, as predicted, elicits lower repatronage intentions, compared to the absence of bots ($M_{no_bot} = 4.5$, $M_{high_bot} = 3.8$; t(378) = 4.19, $p < .001$). We test a simple mediation model in Study 2b (n = 381) to understand how perceptions that brands can control and prevent bot proliferation might help explain the demonstrated influence of the presence of bots on consumer intentions. We reduced the effect bots have on repatronage when we asked subjects how much they felt Nike could control and prevent the market's shortcomings. When bots are present, subjects attribute their failure to a cause controllable by the brand (Nike) to a greater extent ($M_{no_bot} = 5.5$, $M_{high_bot} = 4.3$; t(354) = -7.06, $p < .001$). This attribution to the brand in turn impacts repatronage intentions.

AMA Summer Academic Conference (10-12 February 2023 & Virtual 06 February 2023)

1. Title: Role of Brand Commitment in Internal Branding and Brand Citizenship Behaviours in Service Industry: A meta-analysis

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4. Keywords: Meta-analysis, Internal branding, Brand commitment, Brand citizenship Behaviours; Service Industry

5. Description: Based on Hunter and Schmidt's (2004) meta-analytical approach, this study establishes the true impact of Internal Branding (IB) practices on Brand Commitment (BC) and Brand Citizenship Behaviour (BCB) in the service industry, using 24 empirical studies published from 2009 to 2020 with total sample of 7746 employees.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This study tries to answer three research questions based on meta -analysis: (1) Does BC mediates, IB-BCB relationship? (2) Which IB practice is most effective for building BC and BCB? (3) Which potential moderators are most effective in influencing the IB-BC, BC-BCB and IB-BCB relationship?

The literature in context to internal branding is quite enormous and ever expanding Although the fundamental premise that IB positively affects brand commitment and behaviour among employees' is well supported in the literature, the magnitude of the relationship varies as per the studies reviewed. Besides, the range of correlation of tested relationships in the literature varies from low to high that too in different sectors (Banking, Airlines, B2B, Financial Services, Hospitals, Hospitality) and in different countries (Taiwan, Egypt, South Africa, Egypt, Turkey, UK, Finland). To add, results of many studies are contradictory that creates confusion and inconclusiveness to understand the impact of IB on BC and BCB. Thus, it is difficult for the practitioners and scholars to understand the true nature of the relationship. There is an imperative need for a systematic and thorough review of the existing research evidence in context to internal branding relationships.

Method and Data

The study has used Hunter and Schmidt's (2004) procedure to meta-analyse select relationships, i.e. IB→BC→BCB. The three-step procedure that includes data search, data collection, and data coding is followed to extract the relevant studies. Keywords namely 'internal branding', 'internal branding and brand commitment', 'internal branding and brand citizenship behaviours' are used for searching literature on Springer, Elsevier Science Direct, Emerald, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Sage, Research gate and Taylor and Francis databases. . This initial search step resulted in a total

number of 6583 research papers. The search strategy identifies 114 papers in context to IB. Duplicate papers among these databases are also found and are considered only once. The second stage, i.e. the data collection stage, considers criteria used for selecting papers for meta analysing the relationships. We developed the following criteriafor inclusion, i.e. study

- must be in english language.
- must be empirical.
- must be in context to the services sector only
- report at least one relationship of internal branding, either with BC or BCB.
- disclose the sample size, and
- provide the correlation coefficient r or convertible equivalents, e.g., beta, t, and p values.

Hypotheses

Internal Branding and Brand Commitment

Hypothesis 1: Internal branding as a unidimensional construct has a positive and significant impact on employee brand commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Internal branding practices a) brand centred HRM b) internal communications c) leadership have positive and significant impact on employee brand commitment.

Internal Branding and Brand Citizenship Behaviour

Hypothesis 3: Internal branding as a unidimensional construct has a positive and significant influence on employee brand citizenship behaviours.

Hypothesis 4: Internal branding practices a) brand centred HRM b) brand centred internal communications c) leadership have positive and significant impact on employee brand citizenship behaviours.

Brand Commitment as a Mediator

Hypothesis 5: Brand commitment mediates the relationship between internal branding as a unidimensional construct and BCB.

Hypothesis 6:Brand commitment mediates the relationship between internal branding practices a) brand centred HRM b) brand centred internal communications c) leadership and BCB.

Potential Moderators

Hypothesis 7: There is a significant difference in the effect size of select relationships namely, a) IB and BC; b) IB and BCB and c) IB, BC and BCB relationships in developed and developing countries.

Hypothesis 8: There is a significant difference in the effect size of select relationships namely a) IB and BC; b) IB and BCB and c) IB, BC and BCB relationships in the financial and non- financial services sectors.

Summary of Findings

Though the study supports the results of earlier studies, i.e., IB practices significantly impact BC and BCB among employees, the results of the meta-analysis indicate a stronger relationship in the select three relationships. The magnitude of corrected average effect size (.57) reflects the high impact of IB on BC against the original moderate effect size (.40). Besides, the results also indicate that IB affects BCB both directly and indirectly. Further, the effect size when corrected for direct relationship varies from low (uncorrected) to high (corrected), whereas, for an indirect relationship, it varies from low (uncorrected) to moderate (corrected).

The analysis also indicates that among three select IB dimensions, leadership is the most effective dimension in enhancing BC and BCB among employees. Further, brand centred internal communications is the second most important IB practice, followed by brand-centred HRM, which can enhance BC and BCB relationship among employees . Results also confirmed the moderate role of BC as a mediator between IB and BCB. Further, results also indicate that both country context and service type act as moderators between IB-BC, BC-BCB and IB-BCB relationship.

Key Contribution

The study provides a unique contribution to the internal branding literature by estimating the corrected true values of select relationships based on the findings of already existing empirical studies. Overall study findings support strong and moderate relationships for IB-BC and IB-BCB respectively. Thus, IB practices can result in strengthened BC and BCB among employees in the services sector. Also, BC partially mediates the IB-BCB relationship. Empirical evidence provided in this study suggests that the non-financial services sector benefits more from IB as the corrected effect size is stronger in all sub-groups including interaction groups than in the financial services sector. Similarly, the level of IB practised in the services sector of developed countries (as compared to developing countries) are more robust and hence impact more significantly BC and BCB. Further, the results also establish the significant impact of IB on BC and BCB in the interaction of developed and non-financial sub-groups.

References: (Available on request)

SHOW ME YOU CARE: EFFECT OF EMBEDDED SOCIAL DIMENSIONS IN ADVERTISING

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Keywords:

Social Dimension, Attitude towards Advertisements, Persuasiveness, Purchase Intention, Embedded Social Dimensions

Description:

Our study empirically studies the effect of advertisements with embedded social dimensions on consumer attitudes and advertisement persuasiveness, leading to purchase intention; the moderating role of brand self-congruence is also analyzed.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Firms find that projecting their brand to consumers as one that cares – cares for social good, for the betterment of society and its wellness, works. They leverage the reality that every consumer is not a standalone entity but one who engages in a society where there are equities and inequities. Prior research has examined only the impact of firms' Corporate Social Responsibility and Cause Related Marketing in advertisements. Our study goes beyond these philanthropic positions and builds on the recent trend of embedding deep-rooted social issues (like gender discrimination, gay rights, or portraying disabilities) as dimensions in brand advertisements. We observe these distinctive and compelling ways of embedding social issues in brand narratives as different from the direct philanthropic approach of CSR and CRM.

Further, extant literature has studies on how a brand's reputation is impacted by advertising its participation in social causes (Lloyd-Smith and An, 2019; Anker and Kappel, 2011). The question is, does a consumer response to a brand differ with a subtly woven social dimension embedded in its advertisements?

Brands aim to build strong connections with consumers. The Dual Mediation theory (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989; MacKenzie et al., 1986) proposes that Attitude towards advertisements (Aad) influences brand attitude, which in turn impacts Purchase Intention (PI). Research shows that meaningful brand stories lead to more positive attitudes toward the brand (Carnavale et al., 2018). According to narrative theory, relevance and empathy generated by indices like the elements of character, plot, and purpose aid comprehension and understanding (Schank, 1999; Woodside, 2010). Such indices can therefore impact Aad, which comprises both an emotional and a cognitive dimension involving consumers' conscious responses to executional

elements (Shimp, 1981). Embedding social dimensions (ESD) in brand stories could make them meaningful and generate empathy leading to a higher level of emotional involvement, thereby influencing Aad, persuasiveness of the ad (Pad), and PI.

Our first research question therefore is:

RQ1: How do embedded social dimensions (ESDs) in brand advertisements impact consumer responses towards Aad, Pad, and PI?

In addition, Self-congruence can play a role in enhancing affective, attitudinal, and behavioral consumer responses to the brand (e.g., Aaker, 1999; Grohmann, 2009), leading to our next research question:

RQ2: What role does brand self-congruence (BSC) play in moderating the relationship between ESD in advertising and Aad leading to PI?

Method and Data

A between-subjects factorial design was used for this experiment with two levels (with ESD or without). The study examines consumer responses towards a print advertisement type - with an ESD compared with a similar one without ESD.

A pre-test survey instrument was administered to a convenience sample to select the product category. The respondents were asked to classify 18 products/services (Girard and Dion, 2010) into 'Search' and 'Experience'/ 'Hedonic' and 'Utilitarian' categories based on the classification drawn from literature (Nelson, 1974; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000). The top three

products that were listed most frequently in each product/service definition were shortlisted for the experiment design.

Ad Selection and Manipulation Check – The 'Perfumes' category was selected from hedonic/experience products. Respondents were provided with a fictitious brand name to control for brand associations. 'Thought-listing method' (Cacioppo and Petty, 1981) was used for manipulation check wherein the respondents were asked to write the key thoughts and ideas that occurred to them while looking at this advertising campaign. Respondents were asked to identify key appeals embedded within the advertisements from a given list.

Summary of Findings

In line with our expectations, the study establishes that brand advertisements with ESDs lead to a significantly higher Aad and significantly greater advertisement persuasiveness than advertisements without this dimension. The study also supports the serial mediation hypothesis that the presence of ESD in the advertisement positively influences consumers' PI, and this relationship is mediated by consumers' Aad and Pad. This role of dual mediation is further affirmed as the mediation of Pad between ESD (or not) and PI, is not significant.

Our study also establishes that the indirect effect ESD on PI through Aad and Pad depends on levels of Brand-Self Congruence (BSC).

Key Contributions

Our study proposes that ESDs are an important development in the scholarship of impacting consumers' relationships with brands, thereby impacting purchase intention. Our study makes three key theoretical contributions. First, we build on the past body of literature on influencing consumers' social consciousness, which predominantly mostly focused on the role

played by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Cause-Related Marketing (CRM) by drawing attention to social issues embedded in brand advertisements.

Second, our study establishes that Aad with ESDs is significantly higher and positive than without, leading to significantly greater Pad and positively impacting PI. This significant long-way mediation of advertisement (with and without ESD) helps us establish the impact of dual mediation.

Finally, an important contribution of this study is the moderating role of brand-self congruence on ESD advertisements. We find that the higher the BSC, the higher the impact of ESDs on consumers' attitudes towards advertisements. This clearly establishes that the impact of social dimensions on attitudes and behavior of socially conscious consumers will be higher. Their buying decisions are more likely to be influenced by what a brand stands for.

For marketing practice, our findings establish that embedding social dimensions in advertising can be used to forge a deeper connection and build positive associations with brands. It can also go a long way in brands and firms being seen as positive social change makers.

"References are available upon request."

SONIC BRANDING WITH RAGAS FROM SOUTH INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

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Keywords: Sonic Branding, *Raga*, Melodic Scales, EMOTEN, SICM

Description: This paper demonstrates that Indian *ragas* (equivalently, Western melodic scales) differ systematically in evoking specific emotions in listeners, in turn, mediating willingness-to-consider a brand.

EXTENDED ABSTRCT

Research Question

It is well known that musical stimuli differing in major and minor mode respectively evoke joyful or melancholic moods even among musically uninitiated (Hevner 1935). For instance, structural constituents of music – tempo, tonality, and texture (Bruner 1990) may vary in the emotions they evoke. Other research (Alpert, Alpert, and Maltz 2005) showed that equally liked music could nevertheless evoke divergent mood responses depending on its constituent structural properties of tonality, the consequent evoked mood coloring purchase intentions for products differentially. A happy mood induction led to increase in purchase intention for a birthday card – a happy occasion – whereas a sad mood induction led to increase in purchase intention for a get-well-soon card.

Auditory interfaces have multiplied severalfold ubiquitously, including at check-in kiosks, gas pumps, charging stations, vending machines and phone apps providing several forms of sonic branding opportunities. Therefore, findings that link musical tonal structures to emotions and brand outcomes are potentially opportunities for marketers. Along these lines, two specific research questions are proposed.

RQ1: Do Indian *ragas* (equivalently, Western melodic scales) differ systematically in evoking specific emotional constellations in listeners?

RQ2: Does willingness-to-consider a brand vary in response to differing emotional constellations evoked by the different *ragas*?

Method and Data

SICM identifies seventy-two specific heptatonic reference scales, originally by Venkatamakhi in his work titled *Chaturdandi Prakashika* (Pesch, 1999). This work specifies and uses a set of rules to generate these seventy-two scales called *melakarta ragas* (Pesch, 1999, p101). Drawing on the taxonomy of these scales, the study identifies several ragas that systematically vary on the 4th degree (F vs F#) and/or on one or more of other degrees - being flat or natural (e.g., D♭ vs D). The research questions noted above are refined into specific hypotheses below and evaluated in two studies.

H_1: The natural (raised) fourth-degree in a scale will evoke more positive (negative) emotions.

H_2: Intensity of negative (positive) emotions should increase (decrease) with number of flat-tones.

To evaluate these hypotheses this article inter alia develops (study 1) and validates (study 2) an emotional scale EMOTEN.

Participants. The authors conducted a survey in Qualtrics with (n=539 study 1, n= 420 study 2). We chose Prolific academic because among the crowdsourcing platforms on behavioral research, data quality is better here (Peer et al 2017). All participants were declared residents of USA on Prolific.

Summary of Findings

A confirmatory factor analysis in AMOS 25 indicated a good fit for the measurement model for EMOTEN - $\chi^2_{(657)} = 3160.10$; RMSEA = .08 (<.1); CFI = .88 (~.9); normed $\chi^2_{(657)}$ Cmin/df = 4.81 (<5.0). The factor loadings varied from .56 to .98 and all but two (of 39) factor loadings were above .7. Further, all the ten constructs evidenced (Cronbach's alpha indicated in parenthesis) high reliability -*wonder* (.88), *sensuous* (.90), *kindness* (.85), *peaceful* (.86), *powerful* (.90) *happiness* (.94), *anger* (.93), *disgust* (.86), *fear* (.87), *sorrow* (.86). The second study validated the scale.

A MANOVA with the ten emotional constructs as the dependent variables and fourth-degree and number-of-flats as independent variables, revealed a significant main effect for fourth-degree, Wilk's $\lambda = .94$, $F(10, 524) = 3.48$, $p < .001$ and a significant main effect for number of flats, Wilk's $\lambda = .92$, $F(10, 524) = 2.26$, $p < .001$. Follow-up univariate ANOVAs revealed a significant main effect for fourth degree for eight emotions, significant main effect for number-of-flats degree for five emotions, and a fourth-degree X number-of-flats interaction effect for four emotions.

The second study replicated these findings on a different set of ragas and included a measure *willingness-to-consider* an offering. An ANOVA with *willingness-to-consider* a brand as the dependent variable and fourth-degree and number-of-flats as factors revealed a significant fourth-degree X number-of-flats interaction effect ($F(1, 398) = 3.93$, $p < .048$. Mediation analysis using process Model 80 (Hayes, 2018) with *willingness-to-consider* as the dependent variable (Y); *music* as the multi-categorical independent variable (X); *wonder*, *sensuous, peaceful, kindness, and happiness* as mediators.

Key Contribution

Brands rise and fall by the emotions they evoke and command premium profits primarily from strong emotional connections with consumers. Research activity on influences of visual brand elements is vibrant. However, a brand has both a name and a voice. Starting with the sound of a brand name, brands can be associated with sounds in many ways (e.g., sonic logos, jingles, and commercials).

Previous research on the connection among music-emotions and marketing is sparse and is based on the Western Classical Music idiom characterized by harmonic music, involving chords and other vertical musical structures. In contrast, researchers rarely explore other forms of classical music, which are based on horizontal melodic progression in marketing literature. The present article adds to the marketing discipline's existing knowledge by specifically drawing on the objective tonal taxonomy of *ragas* (melodic scales) from the South Indian Classical Music.

This article shows that *ragas* differ systematically in evoking different emotions. Brand marketers, advertisers and jingle-writers creating brand anthems are often interested in evoking specific emotions as a mediating construct to influence brand outcomes such as likeability and consideration who would find this research useful. Further, some stakeholders are interested in evoking even negative emotions (e.g., *disgust* toward environment pollution, *fear* towards infections) to elicit intended attitude modifications amongst target audience. These stakeholders would also find the present research valuable.

References are available upon request.

TELLING GREAT STORIES WITH ADS: DETERMINING THE DRIVERS OF NARRATIVE ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

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Keywords: Narrative advertising, Storytelling, Advertising effectiveness, Narrative processing

Description: The authors draw on structuralist narrative theory and its core dimensions of content and discourse to develop a theoretical framework of effective storytelling in narrative advertising and test this framework combining coding data on all 491 business-to-consumer narrative ads aired in Germany in 2019 with about 7,000 consumer responses to those ads.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Digitalization has equipped consumers with ample ways to avoid ads they dislike and to actively engage with those they like. In response, marketers have increasingly turned to narrative advertising, which integrates marketing messages into stories to engage consumers.

While some studies have examined whether the presence of individual elements of narrative ads impacts consumers (such as characters, Dessart 2018, and narration, Stern 1994), no research has yet systematically investigated which elements of a narrative ad, and their respective design, determine the ad's effectiveness in terms of its impact on consumers' attitude toward the ad and the brand as well as their intention to purchase the advertised product. We address this gap by developing, and empirically testing, a theoretical framework of effective storytelling in narrative advertising that identifies and structures key narrative elements and links them and their respective design to narrative ad effectiveness. By doing so,

this research helps brand managers to answer a core question, namely how central narrative elements of a narrative ad should be designed to make for an effective narrative ad.

Method and Data

We employ an interdisciplinary approach to develop a theoretical framework of effective storytelling in narrative advertising. We draw on structuralist narrative theory (Chatman 1980) and use its core dimensions of content (i.e., what is part of the narrative) and discourse (i.e., how the narrative is told) to identify and organize key narrative elements of effective storytelling. To create a comprehensive typology of narrative elements, we augment structuralist narrative theory with extant advertising and marketing research and entertainment research. Regarding the link of these elements to advertising effectiveness, we harvest research on narrative persuasion (e.g., Bilandzic and Busselle 2012).

We employ a multi-method approach to both data collection and analysis. We collect data following established procedures in codifying advertising content (cf. Becker, Wiegand, and Reinartz 2019; MacInnis, Rao, and Weiss 2002), utilizing trained expert coders who coded all relevant narrative elements of about 500 business-to-consumer narrative video ads aired in Germany in 2019 across all major industries. We then enrich this data with about 7,000 consumer responses to these narrative ads captured in an online survey, including relevant consumer processes and advertising effectiveness measures. We use structural equation modeling to analyze this data, accounting for systematic differences between advertisements and consumers.

Summary of Findings

The empirical results highlight the complex nature of effective storytelling in narrative advertising. We find that while the contributions of the various elements differ, elements from both narrative dimensions and also their main categories (content: design and events;

discourse: style and structural narrative arrangement) contribute to the effectiveness of the narrative by increasing transportation. While some results are intuitive (e.g., likable characters and an attractive setting facilitate narrative effectiveness), some are less so, stressing the foundational differences between narrative and non-narrative ads. For example, we find that a *non*-linear plot progression improves advertising effectiveness by facilitating narrative transportation and that emotionally *negative* events contribute to a narrative ad's effectiveness.

Key Contributions

Our first contribution is a conceptual one. We process interdisciplinary insights (see Van Laer et al. 2019) on effective storytelling to develop a theoretical framework of effective storytelling in narrative advertising that connects narrative elements with ad and brand performance metrics (i.e., attitude toward the ad and the brand, purchase intention) via central consumer processes (i.e., narrative transportation).

Our second contribution is an empirical one. We empirically examine the proposed relationships of the theoretical framework offering results that advance scholars' understanding of narrative advertising and also guide marketing managers in leveraging narrative elements to create effective narrative ads.

THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATION LEVEL ON THE ATTRIBUTION PROCESSES IN CO-BRANDED SERVICES

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Keywords: attribution, co-branding, integration level, services

Description: This paper empirically validates that the different integration levels of co-branded services can affect consumers' attribution of responsibility to both partners.

ABSTRACT

This paper bridges a critical research gap by investigating the impact of the integration levels of co-branded services on consumers' attribution processes. The empirical survey successfully

validates our theory-driven hypothesis: the degree of consumer attribution to both partners is larger in highly integrated scenarios than in lowly integrated scenarios.

INTRODUCTION

Co-branding is among the most valuable marketing strategies; thus, consumer evaluation of co-branded services is currently a crucial research issue (Dev and Steiner 2020).[1] Researchers have sought to develop criteria that will distinguish the various types of co-branding services, and an important criterion is the so-called integration level, which can be defined as how tightly two brands are linked in terms of their physical forms, functionality, and shared facilities (Newmeyer et al. 2018). In this respect, TKK Fried Chicken, co-located with Kung Fu Tea in the United States, can be considered a representative example of highly integrated co-branded services in which both brands are heavily involved in service preparation (e.g., a shared food preparation process or the same staff serving the offerings of the two brands). By contrast, lowly integrated alliances would include, among others, Barnes & Noble bookstores with Starbucks coffee shops. In such cases, there is no joint process or further interaction beyond co-location (i.e., customers can purchase each service from two different branded vendors at separate counters).

This classification is important because consumers' attribution of responsibility to a partner

[1] Throughout this paper, the term co-branded services will be defined as the joint services offered by two brands to consumers at the same location.

may differ in co-branded service alliances with different integration levels. Taking TKK Fried Chicken and Kung Fu Tea (or Barnes & Noble bookstores with Starbucks coffee shops) as an example of co-branded services, if Kung Fu Tea (or Starbucks) does not taste as expected, will the customer then attribute this to TKK Fried Chicken (or Barnes & Noble)? Consumers' attribution of responsibility is crucial in the co-branding context because both brand partners would eventually like to receive positive customer attitudinal and behavioral responses to their products and services (Simonin and Ruth 1998).

However, the extant literature mainly focuses on the consumer attribution process for physical co-branded products (e.g., Newmeyer and Ruth 2020). It could be difficult to simply transfer the current findings regarding consumer evaluations of co-branded products to co-branded services, because consumers tend to have different evaluation processes for purchasing services and products (Iacobucci 1998). Accordingly, this paper aims to bridge this important research gap by investigating consumers' attribution processes in co-branded services. Specifically, we examine whether the level of integration affects how consumers perceive each brand's responsibility.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Marketing scholars have identified the impact of the important factors in consumer attribution processes: locus and stability (e.g., Dong et al. 2016). Locus means that when consumers can tell the origin of the service performance, they tend to perceive the source of the performance

as external, not internal (i.e., attributing it to the brand). Stability is achieved when consumers realize the service performance of the brands after observing their services over time. In summary, the attribution theory provides a basis for studying how consumers attribute responsibility to each vendor in the co-branding context.

To the best of our knowledge, only a few studies have explored how consumers attribute the co-brand's performance to the partnering brands so far. For example, Newmeyer and Ruth (2020) investigated whether differential integrations affect consumers' similar or dissimilar levels of responsibility as attributed to each of the two brands. The authors used a combined offering of an iPod MP3 player and a Boss docking station as a fictitious co-branded product. They compared the results in a higher integration level scenario with those in a lower integration level scenario. The authors reported that a lower integration level can lead to a clear consumer attribution of responsibility, because consumers can easily identify the brand responsible for the joint offering.

Their study mainly focused on a co-branded physical product and ignored the specific context of intangible co-branded services. In the context of co-branded services, as employees provide services, consumer attribution is highly related to the employees' performance as observed over time (i.e., stability). Hence, we argue that, in the context of co-branded services, the process of consumer attribution becomes complicated, especially when the employees in the co-branded service are mixed with the employees of the two brands in a highly integrated case.

In this case, the customers of one brand partner may not have enough knowledge about the service performance of the employee of the other brand. By contrast, in a lowly integrated case, the process of attribution may be much simpler because, normally, the employees of the two brands are not mixed.

We argue that, in the context of co-branded services, the customers of one brand partner are much more likely to attribute co-brand performance to both partners if the alliance is highly integrated than if it is lowly integrated. The underlying reason could be that, owing to the shared facilities or other characteristics of highly integrated alliances, consumers tend to spend more cognitive effort in integrating the information of both partners into a unified concept (i.e., information integration) (Anderson and Shanteau 1970). Later, consumers tend to attribute credit or blame for the co-branded service according to their perceptions of each brand partner. However, when the integration level is lower, there is less information integration, and consumers tend to exert less cognitive effort when integrating the information of the two partners. Consequently, consumers tend not to attribute credit or blame for the co-branded service according to their perceptions of each brand partner. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

The magnitude of consumers' attributions to both partners is positively related to the integration level of co-branded services.

EMPIRICAL STUDY[2]

Pre-study

To achieve a reliable basis for the empirical verification of our hypothesis, we first performed a pre-study to identify suitable real-world examples with different integration levels of co-branded services, which could then be used in the main study. Our empirical study utilized a scenario-based experimental design (Turan 2022), which was used to measure the impact of perceived integration on consumers' attributions. We examined five co-branded scenarios: (1) TKK Fried Chicken and Kung Fu Tea (Scenario A), (2) Starbucks and Barnes & Noble (Scenario B), (3) Bank Citadele and Caffeine Coffee Shop (Scenario C), (4) JCPenney and Sephora Beauty Shop (Scenario D), and (5) Tim Hortons and Cold Stone Creamery (Scenario E). Scenarios A and C were our choice, and the other scenarios were taken from the 100 co-branding examples in Newmeyer et al. (2018). In each scenario, we showed four pictures that visualized the co-branded services, which had been downloaded from Facebook, Instagram, or webpages found by searching Google Pictures. We then combined the four pictures in each scenario to create the materials used in the survey.[3]

For each scenario, five questions were listed in the pre-study questionnaire. The first two questions were used to determine whether the respondents considered the image representative

[2] Due to the page limit, details of the statistical analysis discussed in this section are made available on request.
[3] The pictures and materials are available upon requests.

of a co-branded setting and whether they could identify the names of the two brands in the image. The following three questions were then used to measure the integration level. These questions related to how highly the respondents agreed that the brands were combined in function, worked together to provide each service offering in their co-location, and were highly integrated. All the three questions were answered on a 7-point Likert scale.

We used Google Forms to create the questionnaire and used Prolific (www.prolific.co) to recruit participants to join the pre-study.[4] A total number of 45 participants from the United States were recruited through Prolific. In the survey, we first provided a brief introduction to the survey and an explanation of the co-branded service. We adopted a within-subject design, and the respondents could see the pictures and answer the five questions in each scenario. We performed a mean test to check the answers to the questions regarding the integration level of each scenario (by comparing the means against the middle value of each 7-point scale). The results identified Scenario C as lowly integrated ($p < 0.01$), while the other four scenarios were perceived as highly integrated ($p < 0.01$).

Main Study

We chose two co-branded scenarios from the pre-study: one highly integrated scenario and one lowly integrated scenario. The lowly integrated scenario included Bank Citadele and Caffeine

[4] The link of questionnaire for the pre-study: https://forms.gle/Q4HbzjCxqkBg5fyW9.

coffee shop (Scenario C), whereas the highly integrated scenario involved TKK Fried Chicken and Kung Fu Tea (Scenario A).[5]

In both scenarios, we used the pictures shown in the pre-study. Each scenario came with eight questions listed in the questionnaire for the main study. The first two questions determined whether the respondents considered the image to be a co-branded setting and whether they could identify the names of the two brands. Furthermore, three questions that were used in the pre-study were used to measure the integration level, all answered using a 7-point scale. The remaining three questions were used to measure the attribution of responsibility to both partners (motivated by Newmeyer and Ruth 2020). At the end of the survey, we asked the respondents about their demographic characteristics (e.g., age and gender).

Again, we used Google Forms to create the questionnaire and Prolific (www.prolific.co) to recruit and invite participants to join this study.[6] We first presented a brief introduction to the purpose of the survey and then briefly explained the co-branded service. We again utilized a within-subject design, and the respondents viewed the pictures and answered the questions in each scenario. Through Prolific, we recruited a sample of 551 U.S. respondents.[7]

We performed a mean comparison test to determine whether the respondents perceived a

[5] We chose Scenario A from the four highly integrated scenarios in the pre-study, because our questionnaire was intended for distribution to US citizens, and fast-food restaurants (e.g., fried chicken) account for a large proportion of the total restaurants in the United States (i.e., 19.1%) (Powell et al. 2007).
[6] The link of questionnaire for the formal study: https://forms.gle/XMxGRB2oUSJJVcJFA.
[7] The respondents are 49.5% female, 48.8% male, and 1.7% others; 76.4% above 30 and 23.6% below 30.

difference in integration levels between the two scenarios. That is, we statistically compared the mean score for each of the three questions regarding the integration level in Scenario A with that in C. The results of the mean comparison test were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) for each of the three questions.

We also performed a mean comparison test of the answers to the final three questions about the degree of respondent attribution to both brands in each scenario. That is, we examined whether the respondents perceived differently their acceptance/agreement of attributing the outcome to both brands between Scenarios A and C. Again, we statistically compared the mean score in each of the three questions in A with that in C, which resulted in a statistically significant difference in the mean score ($p < 0.01$) for each of the three questions. From our results, we can conclude that the degree of respondents' attribution to both partners was larger in the highly integrated scenario (i.e., A) than in the lowly integrated scenario (i.e., C), which clearly supports our research hypothesis.

DISCUSSION

This research fills an important knowledge gap in co-branding research regarding the impact of integration levels on customers' attributions to each brand partner in an intangible service context. The empirical survey conducted successfully validates our hypothesis. We conclude that consumers are more likely to attribute responsibility to both brands in highly integrated scenarios than in lowly integrated scenarios.

This paper makes two major contributions to the existing literature of co-branding. First, by comparing numerous studies that examined the impact of brand fit (e.g., Simonin and Ruth 1998), this study expands the research on co-branded services by demonstrating the attribution process in such settings. Second, co-branding can be regarded as a useful strategy for brand value co-creation (e.g., Kohtamäki and Rajala 2016). However, how co-created value in a co-branding alliance and the associated responsibility are distributed between partners is a widely understudied topic. This study helps to resolve this conflicting research issue.

For the decision makers of each brand partner in a service alliance, we suggest that when the integration level of the proposed alliance is high, each brand partner must seriously consider the issue of attributing credit or receiving blame. A major limitation of this paper is that the considered effect might differ across different countries. Future studies could investigate country-specific differences and patterns.

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THE ROLE OF QUALITY AND CONSISTENT GOVERNMENT POLICY COMMUNICATION IN PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Keywords: government policy communication, integrated marketing communications, entrepreneurial intention

Description: The study reports novelty results on the role of government policy communications (GPC) quality and consistency (based on the Integrated Marketing Communications -IMC- concept) in improving the policy knowledge transfer into a higher entrepreneurial intention.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions – Entrepreneurship government policies aim to motivate entrepreneurial intention (EI)for start-up creation, mainly among young people. Therefore, government policy communications (GPC) are the instrument for this knowledge sharing and promotion. Thus, the research investigates if GPC quality and consistency (this last based on integrated marketing communication -IMC-) could improve the policy knowledge transfer into a higher entrepreneurial intention.

Method and Data – The research design is a non-experimental cross-sectional explanatory study. Instrument (survey) development is based on prior Likert scale constructs. Instrument calibration through experts and a pilot test. Data collection to obtain a preliminary sample of

132 observations. Procedures based on multivariate analyses. Instrument's validity: Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Hypotheses test: PLS-SEM of the research model. Analysis unit: Entrepreneurial young people from Spain since the last years of administration careers with strong entrepreneurial intention in Barcelona's glocal (global and local) market.

Summary of Findings – Following the results, the GPC quality has a negative mediation effect between entrepreneurship GPC knowledge and entrepreneurial intention relationship, while GPC consistency does not affect mentioned relationship. Despite these, entrepreneurship GPC knowledge positively affects entrepreneurial intention through GPC quality and consistency.

Statement of Key Contributions – Theoretical implications include applying the IMC concept in government policy communications. It empirically confirms the positive relationship between entrepreneurial GPC knowledge and entrepreneurial intention mediated by GPC quality. Moreover, the analysis demonstrates a higher mediation effect of GPC consistency on the positive impacts of entrepreneurial GPC knowledge and GPC quality on entrepreneurial intention. Policy implications suggest the marketing perspective on developing and promoting entrepreneurial policies. Integrating messages and channels toward GPC consistency may facilitate the perception of knowledge among receivers. It improves the character of government-receiver interactive dialogue and, as a result, improves the GPC quality perception and performance in high entrepreneurial intention. Thus, the GPC should be controlled for consistency in addition to quality.

THE UNIFIED THEORY OF AI IN BRANDING – A THEORETICAL REVIEW

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Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Branding, Unified Theory, Consumer-Brand Relationships

Description: Grounded in theoretical review, present study delineates unified theoretical framework (the UTAiB) and offers emergent implications of AI in branding.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the branding universe. AI uses new data streams to craft strategic scaffoldings to shelter the business from the rain of competition, master marketing innovations, and improve consumer-brand relationships. Branding boundaries are blurring and broadening with the emergence of new brand entities like smart brands (e.g., Google Nest), idea brands (e.g., #metoo), or platform brands (e.g., Airbnb). AI influences strategies like brand positioning, personalized consumer-brand engagement, personalized recommendations with the "word-of-machine" effect, and brand avatars with form and behavioral realism. With the prominence of AI in branding, literature on AI-Enabled branding is growing exponentially, but findings remained fragmented, limiting the holistic view of the research domain. In the absence of a comprehensive systematic theoretical review, the following research questions remained unanswered

RQ 1 – What is the theoretical foundation of AI in branding?

RQ 2 – What are the drivers, consequences, mediators, and moderators of AI in branding?

The present study bridges the research gap by discerning the research domain's theoretical structure (underlying theories, emerging themes, and conceptual definitions) and proposes a *Unified Theory of AI in Branding* (*UTAiB*). The unified framework deciphers the predictors, outcomes, moderators, and intervening variables playing the transformational role of AI in branding.

Method and Data

The present study maps the intellectual structure of AI-Enabled branding based on the Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews (SPAR-4-SLR)

Protocol (Paul et al. 2021). The SPAR-4-SLR protocol allows us to integrate and systematically synthesize the current state of knowledge in three stages: assembling, arranging and assessing. A thorough review of 419 documents spanning from 2000 to 2022 forms the basis of the bibliographic cluster analysis. Louvain algorithms-based bibliographic network analysis on Vosviewer discerns the thematic clusters, building the research domain's conceptual foundation (Zupic and Cater 2015). The network structure points at fifty-one underlying theories as building block of AI-enabled branding. These fifty-one theories are rooted in a diverse range of disciplines, from Psychology, Branding (Marketing), and Information Sciences to Strategy. After further screening and scrutiny, fifteen (15) theories are retrieved for further analysis. The thematic analysis of underlying theories in the extant literature explicates and forms the basis of the theoretical framework.

Summary of Findings

Thematic analysis of fifteen selected underlying theories is used to build the Unified Theory of AI in branding (UTAiB). The unified theory incorporates all significant elements under one framework and acts as building blocks stacked together to create a strong theoretical foundation. Based on the thematic and content analysis, these theories were classified into corresponding relevant buckets. There is a rich diversity in the theories originating from multiple disciplines, wherein the selected theories included seven from Psychology, five from Branding, and four from Information Sciences. The Psychology theories lend their behavioral explanation prowess. The information science theories assist in explaining the factors that influence the acceptance and use of modern technologies. The branding (marketing) theories bring forth brand dimensions that AI is influencing. The comprehensive analysis discerns the drivers, outcomes, mediators, and moderators of AI in branding. The drivers included variables like Attitude, Socio-cultural factors, and Perceived Ease of Use. Moderating variables included Strength of Ties, Time, and Source Expertise. The mediating variables feature in the model

include Innovations, Communication, and Parasocial Interactions. The interplay among drivers, mediators, and moderators of AI-enabled branding results in brand trust, acceptance of brand, brand intimacy, and social identification.

Key Contributions

The present study is an all-embracing and novel theoretical review manifesting the nuances of underlying theories to develop a Unified Theory of AI in Branding (UTAiB). The maze of AI infusion in branding remained hazy in the scarcity of comprehensive theoretical review. The present study is a pertinent and pressing priority for several relevant reasons. Firstly, extant literature is fragmented and adrift leading to duplication of efforts in future research. Secondly, the UTAiB amalgamates underlying theories contributing to a well-rounded view of AI-enabled branding research. The unified theory unfolds conceptual intricacies that delineate the influence of AI in transforming branding in contemporary times. Thirdly, an integrated framework incorporates a multidisciplinary theoretical view into a holistic macroscopic view of the research domain. Fourthly, the UTAiB model will be a torchbearer for branding managers in brand strategy development, assessing brand performance, and integrating brand marketing. Lastly, the UTAiB discerns drivers, outcomes, mediators, and moderators for a holistic view of AI in branding. The proposed model can help marketing practitioners get acquainted with the drivers of AI in branding and their aligned outcomes.

WHAT IS YOUR QUEST? TO SEEK THE HOLY GRAIL! A NETNOGRAPHY OF GRAIL PRODUCT SEARCH IN BRAND COMMUNITIES

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Keywords: Holy Grail, Brand Community, Brand Engagement, Brand Rituals, Netnography

Description: Using a netnography of online communities focused on watches, knives, and fountain pens, this study investigates how "Grail" products and their pursuit via "Grail quests" can orient and shape brand communities.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This paper explores a widespread but poorly understood ritual and tradition that appears in a range of brand communities: Grail products and the quests members embark on to acquire them. A pervasive theme in Western literature for well over a thousand years, the Holy Grail refers to one of the most arcane and sought-after objects (Barber, 2004), the chalice Jesus Christ used at the Last Supper. This concept has found its way into brand communities as well: community members have used this idea of building identity through not only owning these Grail products (Belk, 1988), but also identifying personal Grails. The references to "grails" within communities should be of particular interest to researchers and practitioners. Colloquially, a "grail" denotes something that is highly desired. Thus, the rituals and traditions that underlie the identification and pursuit of Grails have important implications for how communities influence product

selection and adoption. However, despite being noted by prior research, no study has explored this Grail phenomenon. This study seeks to address this gap by addressing three key research questions: 1) what are Grails in online communities? 2) what role(s) do Grails play in online communities? and 3) how do Grails influence online community members?

Method and Data

To explore the concept and role played by Grail-related rituals and traditions, this study employs a netnographic approach. Netnography enables qualitative researchers to analyze online communities and their cultures leveraged by technology-driven communications (Kozinets, 2002). Netnography can provide authentic observation and descriptive interpretation of online community cultures; provided that the identified online community is suitable to conduct netnography. Three online communities specific to luxury watches, blades/knives, and fountain pens were identified: *WatchUSeek Watch Forums*, *Blade Forums*, and *Fountain Pen Network*. A total of 8,725 posts mentioning "grail" were identified and collected across the three communities spanning a period from 2007 and 2021. A close examination revealed the presence of the three markers of community in all three online communities: shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Online community members strengthen shared fundamental beliefs between them by posting enthusiastic messages, often along with pictures, dedicated to watches, blades/knives, and fountain pens. They categorize themselves as distinct social groups (e.g., "watch idiot savant" or WIS). Rituals and traditions were found across these communities. Finally, prosocial community-oriented behaviors, such as peer-to-peer support and assistance providing members with product reviews, was seen across the forums.

Summary of Findings

The discussions across the three communities revealed that Grail products entail ineffable quality, rarity, and sentimental attachment. Interestingly, this investigation revealed six discrete stages communities engage in during Grail quests: (1) *identification,* (2) *search,* (3) *acquisition,* (4) *evaluation and appreciation,* (5) *recollection,* and (6) *new grail pursuit.* The *identification* stage enables members to discover the desirable properties of the Grails**.** The *search* and *acquisition* stages demand sacrifice of the members. For example, the disposal of loved possessions—frequently termed "Grail fund sale"—is often used to purchase an identified Grail product. Not only do members support the process of elimination of loved possessions emotionally and financially, but they also share tips on how to do it. This is in stark contrast to the prior studies on the acquisition of loved possessions (Ahuvia, 2005; Belk, 1988; Thompson & Sinha, 2008). During *acquisition*, members proudly announce their Grail is obtained, and fellow members celebrate the achievement. Specifically, the *evaluation and appreciation* includes sharing personal thoughts on their achieved Grails with other fellow members. Subsequently, online community members help build the traditions of the community through the *recollection* of their Grail quest. Upon shared recollection, *new grail pursuit* ensues, creating a perpetual loop.

Key Contributions

Little academic research has been devoted to understanding the meaning a Grail product produces within brand communities. This paper explores the process of Grail acquisition and presents some counterintuitive findings that reveal managerial opportunities for firms to enhance their brands. Across the communities examined, Grail products had a common set of characteristics (e.g., ineffable quality, rarity, and sentimental attachment), rendering Grails unattainable. These Grail quests involve six stages, namely *identification, search, acquisition, evaluation and appreciation, recollection,* and *new grail pursuit*. The last phase is interesting

because Grail pursuit is an ongoing process—making Grails more about the journeys or quests they inspire. Additionally, Grail quests often involve disposal of beloved possessions through "Grail fund sales." Considered a gain, rather than a loss, members voluntarily sell the very products. Paradoxically, this dispossession reinforces their social identification with fellow members, driving members to share their journey stories and to be more involved in the communities. After evaluation and appreciation, new Grail(s) are sometimes identified, engendering a new Grail quest. In short, Grail quests are not solitary, nor are they terminal; instead, they are integral to fostering the rituals, traditions, and pro-social behaviors that transform a group of brand admirers into a community.

References are available upon request.

TITLE

WHEN ANTHROPOMORPHIZING BACKFIRES: BEING "HUMAN" CAN BENEFIT THE MORALLY GOOD BUT HARM THE MORALLY BAD

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Keywords

anthropomorphizing, moral perceptions, identification, protectiveness

Description

Being anthropomorphized increasingly benefits (harms) corporations with existing positive (negative) moral perceptions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Current knowledge suggests that being anthropomorphized generally improves business outcomes. Anthropomorphism has been associated with reduced risk perceptions (Kim & McGill, 2011), increased brand trust (Golossenko et al., 2020), higher intention to use (Waytz et al., 2010), and improved product evaluations (Aggarwal & McGill, 2007). However, studies on the downstream consequences of anthropomorphism mostly investigated in the context of neutral or positively perceived firms. This begs the question, "can being anthropomorphized ever lead to negative outcomes for a firm?"

In that vein, a key study demonstrated that consumers evaluate a brand high on anthropomorphism more negatively when the brand faces negative publicity following product wrongdoings (Puzakova et al., 2013). This implies that firms may find it worthwhile to not anthropomorphize when they are alleged of wrongdoings. However, this does not inform us if and how the outcomes of being anthropomorphized are conditional on the existing properties of the firm. In the current research, we propose that outcomes of being anthropomorphized are conditional on the moral perceptions of the firm. Our primary hypothesis is that the outcomes of being anthropomorphized would be positive for firms considered more moral and negative for firms considered more immoral.

Method and Data

We recruited 600 Prolific USA-based participants (M_{age}= 38.7, Mdn_{age}= 36, SD = 14.1, 50% female). We generated a list of 48 entities, 23 of which were corporations, and the rest adapted from the Great Chain of Being. We first presented the participants with 48 entities and asked them to indicate the ones they were *not* familiar with. Then among the entities the participant

did not select, participants responded to the nine questions (below) about 10 randomly chosen entities presented in random order.

1. Personhood: To what extent is entity X like a person?
2. Personality: To what extent does entity X have a personality?
3. Moral Perpetrator: To what extent is entity X capable of wronging others?
4. Moral Victim: To what extent is entity X capable of being wronged by others?
5. Moral Valence: Overall, to what extent is entity X "morally bad" or "morally good"?
6. Identification: To what extent do you identify with entity X?
7. Feeling Valence: Overall, to what extent do you have negative or positive feelings towards entity X?
8. Liking: Overall, to what extent do you like entity X?
9. Protectiveness: To what extent is it appropriate to harm or protect entity X?

Summary of Findings

To assess how attributed Personhood and Personality of firms may lead to downstream consequences, we ran a series of linear mixed-effects models treating participants as random effects and predictors as fixed effects.

<u>Result 1:</u> Being anthropomorphized enhances Identification (β = .53, SE = .02, $p < .001$), Attitude (β = .30, SE = .02, $p < .001$), and Protectiveness (β = .29, SE = .02, $p < .001$) motives toward firms. Even with additions of moral predictors, Anthropomorphic retained its significant positive effects on Identification (β = .39, SE = .02, $p < .001$) and Attitude (β = .06, SE = .02, $p < .001$).

Result 2: The effects of being anthropomorphized were conditional on the moral perceptions of firms. For firms, the positive effect of Moral Valence (main: β = .27, SE = .02, p < .001) on Identification seem to be enhanced by Anthropomorphic (interaction: β = .10, SE = .02, p < .001). Moreover, the positive effect of Moral Valence (main: β = .59, SE = .02, p < .001) on Protectiveness seem to be enhanced by Anthropomorphic (interaction: β = .05, SE = .01).

Key Contributions

Extant research has primarily focused on *how* to best build a human brand (Portal, Abratt, and Bendixen 2018) and *positive* or *neutral* consequences of anthropomorphizing brands (Aaker, Vohs, and Mogilner 2010; Aggarwal and McGill 2007, 2012). Currently, when striving to come off as relatable and person-like has been the sin qua non of brand communications, it is important to advance our knowledge on when it may not be beneficial for the firms to portray themself as 'person-like'. We demonstrate that anthropomorphized perceptions can amplify both the positive and the negative effects of a company's moral perceptions. This finding initiates the debate and hopes to advance new research on the potential downsides of anthropomorphizing.

There are important implications for the firm's long-term strategy when it comes to how much anthropomorphism they should strive for when creating the firm's image. Take the tobacco companies and oil companies, for example. In their heyday, they probably would have done well to anthropomorphize the company, as demonstrated by Joe Camel, the anthropomorphic camel who smokes cigarettes. However, in the current climate where the general trend is to largely prohibit and discourage smoking having an anthropomorphic firm image might actually backfire.

WHY BRAND GROWTH DEPENDS ON BUILDING YOUR BRAND CONNECTOME®:

The Science of "Do-Good" Associations in the Subconscious

People don't buy brands based on how much you spend on advertising or how much good you do, they buy based on instinct. It is estimated that 95%[i] of brand decision-making is made on auto-pilot—with consumers reaching for the same brand over and over again without thinking. Yet business leaders in Fortune 500 marketing departments are still using a conscious model of marketing developed in the 1950s trying to persuade people to buy products, incentivizing them with discounts and coupons and making superlative claims designed to impress. All of these efforts confront the conscious mind, which is naturally skeptical, resistant to change and slow to react. Essentially, these marketing efforts are like pushing a rock up hill. It's no wonder that corporate CMOs have such a hard time driving growth. The classic rules that marketers have been following for six decades have not been updated for what we now know about how the brain makes purchase decisions.

One of the areas of marketing that is most misunderstood is "doing good." In one survey[ii] 65% of people said they want to buy purpose-driven brands that advocate sustainability. However, only about 26% do so. This is because what people say and what they do are governed by different parts of the brain. What people *say* they want is driven by the conscious mind. What they *do* is dictated by their subconscious, something they can neither explain nor control.

Does this mean that doing good isn't important? Of course not. Since the pandemic, consumers are more attuned than ever to social issues-- from how companies treat the environment to diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace. The percentage of people saying they want brands to reflect their values rose 6 points from 2019 to 2021 according to the World Economic Forum[iii]. But there is little understanding of how social impact works in the brain, whether it can drive brand growth, how much emphasis to put on it in communications and whether you can "overcorrect" and have too much of a "good" thing.

Answering these important questions starts with understanding how people make "go-to" brand decisions—the brands they buy instinctively. This knowledge helps explain why some brands are able to translate their "do good" efforts into sales while others are not.

Take AllBirds, the lifestyle brand that uses natural materials to create comfortable, stylish footwear that treads lightly on the planet. AllBirds is the number four ranked brand among the 100 most purpose-driven companies[iv] in the US today. The business is also on a high growth trajectory. Second quarter 2022 global net revenue increased 15% to $78.2 million, compared to 2021, and increased 55% compared to 2020. Net revenue in the United States grew 21% in second quarter 2022 to $59.3M, compared to 2021.[v] How do you become the #4 purpose brand and drive double digit growth at the same time? Contrary to popular belief, you don't create communications that are all about purpose.

From their website and e-commerce to their digital ads, AllBirds communicates multiple distinctive associations --- a clearly stated performance benefit, innovative shoe construction, a hilly brand world with sheep roaming freely, and close-ups of fluffy just-shorn wool ---the main ingredient in their manufacturing process. The brand's voice is distinctive too; all

communications are delivered with a decidedly Australian sense of humor referencing the founder's origins. Their humorous video of a just-shorn customer leaving the barber shop to "meet his shoes" (a sheep) got millions of views on YouTube[vi].

While some marketers might think that AllBirds' success is due to shouting about its good values, a closer look reveals that the company's sales growth comes from knowing just how much "good" to dole out and where purpose should sit in your communication hierarchy. The company's effective approach has been rewarded with a $4.1 billion[vii] valuation.

AllBirds has the formula for growth that we teach all our clients at Triggers®. This formula is based on two decades of learning about how people make decisions and how brand values can positively (or negatively) affect the instinctive decision-making process.

Ecosystem of Associations

The seminal book on how brands exist in the mind, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*, was written by Al Ries and Jack Trout. Their book taught people everywhere that brands are monolithic in the mind, with each standing for only one immovable concept. "It's difficult enough to link one concept with each product. It's almost impossible with two or three or more concepts," they write.[viii] Trout and Ries were correct that brands exist in consumers' memories. But they were wrong about the inability of the brain to process multiple concepts.

Every brand has a host of interconnected associations — an ecosystem of multi-dimensional, accumulated memories that dictates which brand you instinctively favor and purchase most often. In fact, the more positive associations your brand has the better; this creates a larger physical footprint which results in greater salience and instinctive brand preference. *This means that the dogmatic pursuit of a single brand concept such as sustainability can actually be detrimental to salience and business growth.*

The key to AllBirds' growth is not that it stands for a single idea in people's minds-- helping the planet-- but rather that, it stands for many: comfort; style; high quality; practicality; natural ingredients; aspirational friends wearing the brand (i.e., influencers), and yes, earth-friendly. This multiplicity of positive associations is what has enabled the brand to scale in the mind and marketplace quickly, becoming the "go-to" brand for so many. Like a game of Monopoly, whoever owns the most physical real estate in people's memories wins.

The Brand Connectome

Brands that grow rapidly in their categories are bursting with a myriad of positive associations. To envision what this constellation of brand associations looks like, it's helpful to learn about the human connectome, a "complete map of the neural connections in a brain," according to the Brain Preservation Foundation.[ix]

The Human Connectome Project, funded by the National Institutes of Health, is giving scientists a new way to "navigate" the brain and explore how decisions are made.[x] Researchers from U Penn's Perelman School of Medicine have introduced a new brain mapping model based on the project.[xi]

Within the human connectome, every brand has its own mini-network of associations that becomes "glued" to the brand over time. These cumulative memories, both positive and

negative, form a physical network of neural pathways that Wharton Professor Michael Platt and I call the Brand Connectome®[xii].

Think of a brand as planting a seed in customers' subconscious. As the brand grows, the seed germinates, adding more associations and more branches to hold them. As the branches take root in our memories, the tree spans more of the brain's terrain, becoming more salient in the mind. The moment that the physical footprint of your Brand Connectome® grows larger and more positive than that of other brands in the category, it becomes your "go-to" choice, the one you buy instinctively. It's simple really: to grow in the marketplace, you have to grow your brand's tree in the brain: large and positive.

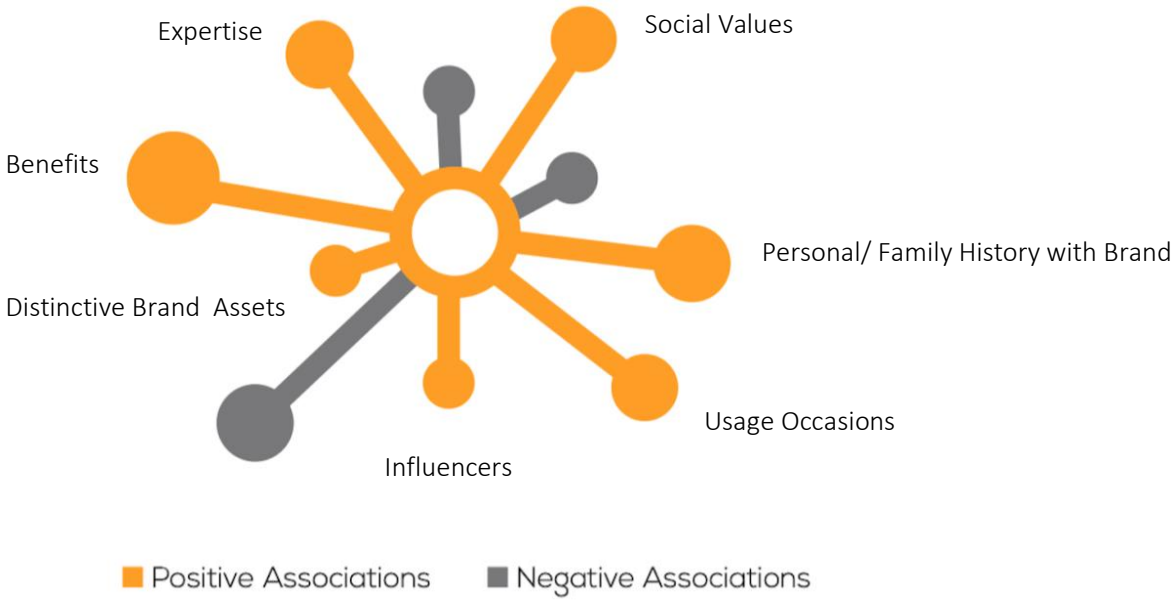
How Brand Values Manifest in the Brand Connectome

In analyzing hundreds of Brand Connectomes® for our clients (from large Fortune 100 legacy brands to digital disruptors and start-ups), we have discovered that a brand's positive impact on society must manifest in a particular way to produce the greatest growth.

Specifically, when "doing good" is reflected in just a section of the Brand Connectome (think of it as a branch or two), revenue and market share growth tends to be robust and sustainable. Associations such as eco-friendliness, happy employees, putting people ahead of profits, symbols of leaves and the color green may be represented in people's memories. In the Brand Connectome® of these fast-growing brands, values-based associations are accompanied by a myriad of other important associations—the benefits the brand provides, how the product is made, distinctive brand imagery and symbols, common occasions for use, and aspirational people who use the brand.

However, when "doing good" overwhelms the Brand Connectome® to the exclusion of other important brand drivers, revenue and share growth are stymied. Said another way, to get the most growth, associations such as values and purpose need to be a branch or two, not the whole tree. (See Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Symbolic Representation of Brand Connectome®



Balancing Personal and Purpose Drivers

People don't instinctively choose brands based on social responsibility; they choose brands that deliver against a broad range of choice drivers. We can think of the associations in a Brand Connectome® as falling into two different buckets. Associations such as benefits, expertise, reasons to believe, influencers, and distinctive imagery are what we would call "Personal Choice Drivers"—they deliver on consumers' personal needs and dreams. In contrast, associations such as sustainability, donating to charities, supporting societal causes, etc. are what we could call "Purpose Drivers." The combination of both Personal and Purpose Drivers can be ideal and result in healthy growing brands, but only if the brand has more Personal Drivers than Purpose Drivers.

Getting the balance right between Purpose Drivers and Personal Drivers takes precision. Many Purpose-Driven brands fall into the trap of overemphasizing the good they do. They think that overtly stating their brand purpose in communications will endear consumers to their brand. They think that it's no longer useful to tout consumer benefits or the unique way their product is made. So, they relegate such messaging points to the backseat and tell everyone how great their values are instead.

Unfortunately, such overt expressions often end up having the opposite effect. Consumers perceive them as virtue-signaling which can hurt a brand's credibility. The fact is, you can't *tell* consumers that you're doing good, you have to *do* good while bringing real benefits to consumers' lives. In other words, the good you do must be integrated into your value proposition.

But that's not what many business leaders do. Many brands that weren't conceived with a strong brand purpose from the outset, try to rectify this omission by tacking a goodness initiative onto their existing brand messaging. These efforts, Gillette's toxic masculinity campaign for example, often fail for several reasons[xiii]: the values they express are not integral to what the brand delivers (perceived as a "stretch"), they overtake their messaging leaving Personal Drivers unstated, and they express overtly what should be implicit.

Driving "Good" Growth

We have seen a direct correlation between having *the right amount of values* in your brand network and revenue and share growth. Too little emphasis on values and brands can be perceived as caring more about profits than people. These perceptions tend to manifest as negative associations in the Brand Connectome®, which make consumers vulnerable to being poached by competitors.

When there's too much emphasis on values, critical personal choice drivers such as differentiating brand drivers and distinctive brand imagery can be absent from the Brand Connectome®. These brands may get good initial growth from passionate early adopters, but they tend to lose market share over time and have trouble scaling with mainstream targets. The businesses that do best and scale successfully over the long term have a diversified Brand Connectome consisting of both types of drivers (Personal and Purpose) with Personal Drivers dominant in the mind.

Shaping the Brand Connectome®

While it would be nice if there were a one-to-one connection between what advertisers say and what appears in the Brand Connectome®, there isn't. Twenty years ago, we saw a tighter connection. When consumers across demographics and geographies all saw the same 30 second TV commercials and there was less brand content out in the world, the Brand Connectome® showed a more focused brand identity.

But two decades later, with each consumer often receiving a different message about a brand and digital content becoming increasingly fragmented, we have seen a loss of brand identity. We call this "Brand Atrophy." Healthy, fast-growing brands tend to have the same themes and positive associations in their Brand Connectome® across consumers. In other words, a strong brand is a convergent brand. When a brand starts to mean different things to different people, it stops being a brand.

That's why it's more important than ever to manage your brand messaging precisely and control the relative emphasis of Personal versus Purpose Drivers. In the wild west of the digital ecosphere, it's too easy to lose control of your messaging and for consumers to take away the wrong prioritization.

AllBirds' digital advertising is a great example of this careful management. The company recently tested four different creative campaigns on Instagram: Cell 1-"Brand Storytelling," Cell 2- "Product Features and Benefits," Cell 3-"Innovation" and Cell 4- "Multiple Benefits." Note: there was no cell designed to test a primary message of "Sustainability" or "Brand Values."[xiv] AllBirds knows better.

The winning ad campaigns in this test were Cell 1 and Cell 4, Storytelling with multiple benefits. The company concluded that it needed to use "distinct value proposition messaging that speaks to a range of benefits."[xv] This is consistent with our learning that Brand Connectomes comprised of a myriad of positive associations creates the strongest brand preference at the instinctive level.

Where does eco-consciousness manifest in All Birds' creative? They soft pedal their sustainability message —it's there but it's subtle, reflected in their natural outdoor brand world and emphasis on real wool. They don't hit you over the head with it. People don't instinctively choose brands based on purpose or values; they choose brands that deliver against their personal choice drivers and good values are but one dimension of that choice.

Using Goodness to Increase Share of Mind

No matter what the demographic, customers choose the brand with the more robust, well-developed large connectome in their minds. They are on autopilot reaching for their "go-to" brands —think of it as "sleep shopping."

A brand's values and the good it does can help a Brand Connectome expand its physical footprint expand in prospects' minds. But not if those good values are communicated separately. A brand's communications must emphasize Personal Drivers in concert with Purpose Drivers; the two must be intertwined.

Three Imperatives of Business Growth

One could say that one of the reasons that CMOs have such fleeting tenures at companies is that they are still using a conscious model of marketing to drive growth. This model is based on the premise that you can persuade people to do what you want. But the truth is, you cannot

persuade anyone of anything (you know this from the last conversation you had with a relative about politics). There's a less expensive, more effective way to drive sales. Grow the positive associations in your Brand Connectome® and consumers will instinctively prefer your brand over the competition.

Three principles can help any business leader in any company manage their brand's network of associations and their social responsibility efforts in a way that accelerates topline sales growth:

1. **Build as many positive associations as possible.** Positive associations make your Brand Connectome® grow. Negative associations hinder brand growth. Having good brand values can be a great way to remove negative associations and add positive ones. The more positive associations you have, the more salient your brand becomes in the mind which makes it consumers' "go-to" choice. Sure, an FSI or discount can drive a bump in sales, but those sales will be fleeting. Instinctive brand preference creates revenue that lasts.

2. **Combine Personal Drivers and Purpose Drivers in your brand communications but prioritize Personal Drivers.** The hardest working communications bring multiple drivers together under one umbrella message. If your advertising just pushes one theme, there are fewer connections for the brain to make which results in a smaller, less salient Brand Connectome®.

3. **Integrate social responsibility into your brand image and narrative; don't market it separately.** With the most successful brands, it's hard to see where the Personal Drivers and Purpose Drivers begin and end. And they rarely express their brand purpose overtly. When you do something nice thing for someone, you don't tell them you did it. You just do it. Integrating goodness initiatives into your brand image and personality subtly ensures that they stick in our memories and connect with people rather than pushing them away.

It's time for business leaders to leave the conscious model of marketing behind. Instinct is the next frontier in marketing and understanding how to harness it and build positive associations in people's memories is the key to driving growth faster and more easily.

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Consumer Behavior

A QUALITATIVE INSIGHT INTO DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORS WITHIN THE SOCIAL SERVICESCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Keywords: dysfunctional behavior, social servicescape, ethnography, interdisciplinary research, Orange Data Mining

Description: This research follows an ethnographic approach to identifying the forms and social dynamics underlying dysfunctional behavior within the social servicescape of Higher Education in a developing market throughout the pandemic

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

The main questions posed by this research are as follows:

- What are the forms of dysfunctional behavior perpetrated by students in a Higher Education setting?
- Did the pandemic have an influence on the forms of dysfunctional behaviors perpetrated by students?

- What are the forms of dysfunctional behaviors perpetrated by staff members in a Higher Education setting?
- Are the social servicescape elements relevant in explaining the social dynamics underlying dysfunctional behavior?

Method and Data

The researchers followed an ethnographic approach in designing the study. Data was collected using a combination of tools to triangulate conclusions, forty-nine informant *interviews* were conducted with students and twenty-eight with staff members, in addition to three student *focus groups*, and *participant observation* using a "Participant-as-observer" approach. The study was conducted over the course of seven academic semesters starting from Fall 2019 until Fall 2021. The Orange Data Mining software version 3.30.1 was used for the analysis of text data. The *bag of words* model was used to generate word counts for each data instance and the *word cloud* feature was used to generate word clouds reflecting the frequency of each word. These word counts helped the researchers identify the most prevalent forms of student and staff dysfunctional behavior. The research was conducted in a British-validated private university in Egypt which has nine different faculties. Data collection started before the COVID-19 crisis began and persevered throughout the crisis, it witnessed three different educational modes; *conventional education, online education*, and *hybrid education* which relied on a mix of both online and conventional on-campus education.

Summary of Findings

Student dysfunctional behaviors (DBs) are classified based on two elements; their academic/non-academic nature and at whom they are executed. Their academic DBs which are directed at staff

members include giving false excuses, and those directed at both students and staff members include cheating. Alternatively, students' non-academic DBs, include those directed at other students such as verbal and social bullying, and that directed at both staff and other students, which is injurious consumption. The most prominent novel form of student DBs due to COVID-19 is putting others at health risk.

On the other hand, Staff DBs are categorized into four categories; the first is staff-student interactions which include belittling student questions. The second is classroom mismanagement and teaching incompetence which include the lack of online teaching skills which was evident during the pandemic. The third is student overload which involves delivering large amounts of information in one class. Finally, is unfairness, which includes gender discrimination.

The social servicescape elements were relevant in explaining the social dynamics underlying DB, in that students "catch" the DBs of their fellow students. It was also indicated that staff members' DB is likely to result in student DB.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research identifies the forms and dynamics of dysfunctional behaviors (DBs) exhibited by students and staff members throughout the pandemic. It relies on an interdisciplinary understanding of different disciplines. It contributes to the field of marketing for Higher Education (HE) by uncovering the forms of DB perpetrated in HE settings, portraying those adopted throughout the pandemic. It also contributes to the service marketing field by focusing on dysfunctional service encounters, where it answers calls for research on the effective management of service personnel/staff members' behavior which have a role in explaining customer DBs.

Furthermore, it contributes to the field of criminology in that it suggests the viability of the 'Broken Windows Theory' in this context.

Even though a paucity of the studies conducted on customer DB partook a cross-cultural perspective, to the researchers' knowledge, none investigated the forms and dynamics of DBs among employees and customers of HE. The categories proposed by this research in classifying the forms of DBs can guide future researchers. Moreover, understanding the dynamics of customer DB helps the management of strategies that limit such behavior, which is pertinent given the threats posed by DBs to the brand image and profitability of HE institutions.

ALL TOGETHER NOW: A FUZZZY-SET QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER PERSONALITY PROFILES AND THEIR COPING STRATEGIES IN AN ONLINE STORE

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Keywords

Big Five Personality Profiles, Coping Strategies, Technostress, Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis, E-Commerce

Description

We provide a holistic view on consumer personality and their applied coping strategy when exposed to technostress, observing intriguing interactions of individual dimensions underpinning the fact that linear effects of distinct dimensions do not reflect coping-reality accurately.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Online shopping environments are sources for experiencing technology-induced stress (technostress). Consumers subsequently need to address how they cope with stress. For e-

commerce operators, the reaction and handling of consumers is crucial, since the purchase decision essentially depends on this (i.e., Peters et al. 2022).

The transactional model of stress provides a theoretical framework, considering personality as antecedent for stress perception and coping behavior (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Researchers predominantly take the approach of examining the effect of the distinct personality dimensions. Nevertheless, few approaches to personality research emphasize that personality profiles, i.e., the combined form of different personality dimensions, may have potential for deeper and more holistic explanations of resulting behavior (Pflügner et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). However, to the best of our knowledge, no research yet exists that identifies consumer personality profiles that are associated with a particular coping strategy.

Consequently, we aim to close this research gap by adopting a configurational approach using fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) to explore the interaction between all Big Five personality traits, thereby accounting for the complexity of consumer personalities in order to analyze differences in their coping style choice (proactive vs. reactive) when experiencing stress in an online buying situation.

Method and Data

We conducted an online between-participant experimental design to evaluate whether personality profiles are related to either proactive or reactive coping. 479 participants took part in the experiment, however for the analyses, we refer only to the experimental group (233 participants) to evaluate whether individuals employ different coping strategies.

We relied on scales developed and validated in previous studies and established the measurement model by using confirmatory factor analysis and by assessing global fit indices and criteria for the

internal structure of the model (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Schreiber et al., 2006). Results show that all thresholds are met.

We analyzed the postulated research model using a configurational approach applying a fsQCA, a set-theoretic and case-oriented approach, using Boolean algebra to explore several combinations of antecedents leading to an outcome of interest (i.e., Fiss, 2011; Pappas & Woodside, 2021; Ragin, 2008). According to the research model presented, we consider the Big Five dimensions as conditions and coping style as outcome. We followed Fiss (2011) to conduct the analysis: (1) calibration of the respective variables, (2) analysis of necessary conditions for the outcome, (3) analysis of sufficient conditions and combinations thereof for the outcome. None of the antecedents exceeds the threshold of 0.9, indicating that no antecedent condition is considered necessary. Sufficient analysis examines all antecedents and their combinations to determine whether they are sufficiently associated with the corresponding outcome.

Summary of Findings

The fuzzy set algorithm was applied using the fsQCA software program by Ragin et al. (2006). The results of the analysis of the sufficient conditions, reveal four configurations, which are sufficient for a proactive coping style and four configurations being sufficient for a reactive coping style. We see with respect to both outcomes that the identified configurations differ considerably from each other confirming that there is not one particular personality profile that leads to proactive or reactive coping.

In order to capture the core essence of all identified personality profiles, we have phrased a motto for each configuration that represents it. Configuration 1: “I just wanna make this purchase and nothing else.”; configuration 2: “I efficiently turn my wishful thinking into reality.”; configuration 3: “There are no problems – there are only solutions.”; configuration 4: “Balanced personality

meets clear vision."; configuration 5: "I feel uncomfortable in unexpected conflict situations, consequently, I leave them as soon as possible."; configuration 6: "I am mentally overloaded and decide for myself an orderly retreat."; configuration 7: "Thoughts running through my head make me lose sight of my goal."; configuration 8: "I hate dealing with conflicts and I don't have no energy for that.".

Statement of Key Contribution

Our findings provide important contributions to academic research. We contribute to a deeper understanding of coping strategies in the context of online shopping. Our study differentiates between two important mechanisms of technostress relief, i.e. proactive vs. reactive coping. We add to previous research by providing a holistic view including all Big Five dimensions and their interplay. The fsQCA analysis reveals four different personality profiles linked to each of the two different coping strategies. Furthermore, when looking at the configurations, it is noticeable that none of the five personality dimensions is necessarily associated with the choice of a coping strategy. This underpins the fact that linear effects of distinct dimensions do not reflect reality accurately. Instead, we observe intriguing interactions of individual dimensions. All Big Five dimensions appear to be relevant to explaining proactive and reactive coping, as they are both sometimes present and absent across configurations.

Identifying personality profiles associated with a particular type of coping provides important starting points for management practice. Professional online stores often conduct detailed consumer psychology research using various market research tools and therefore possess information about customer personality types. E-commerce operators could specifically address the personality types identified in this analysis, for instance through a prominently placed support offering for configurations 2, 3, and 4.

References are available upon request.

AN ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AFFECTING ARTIFICIALLY SWEETENED BEVERAGE PURCHASES: A FOCUS ON THE SOFT DRINK MARKET

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Keywords: Consumer behavior; Artificially sweetened beverage; Soft drink market; Vice-virtue

Description: This paper investigated the consumption behaviors regarding artificially sweetened beverage in the soft drink market.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The high consumption of added sugar plays a central role in the connection between health issues and dietary habits (Agulló, 2022). Among processed foods, the food group that contributes the most to sugar intake is beverages, with soft drinks accounting for a high proportion (Yoon, 2018). To address the health issues associated with dietary habits, the global market is focusing on the production of healthy beverages using alternative sweeteners (Sloan, 2018). The artificially sweetened soft drink market has grown steadily over the years, both globally and in Korea (Borges et al., 2017).

Most of the literature on artificially sweetened soft drinks has focused on medical research, industry and market trend analysis, and consumer preferences related to product properties. However, the consumption trends in this market sector remain unknown. The main reasons for the consumption of low-calorie sweeteners are weight loss and a healthy lifestyle (Daher et al., 2022). Weight loss and a healthy lifestyle are closely related to food consumption (Glanz et al., 1998), so what foods are being consumed together with artificially sweetened soft drinks? The purpose of this study was to examine consumption behaviors regarding artificially sweetened soft drinks.

Method and Data

We analyzed panel data on Korean consumers collected by the Rural Development Administration to investigate the relationship between the purchase amount of artificially sweetened soft drinks and a particular item. The consumer panel data include consumer demographic and food purchase information, which was used to understand consumers' food purchasing behaviors and characteristics. A total of 1,250 households that consistently submitted food purchase receipts for at least 10 months in each year from 2017 to 2020 were selected for analysis.

The dependent variable of our analysis is the purchase amount of artificially sweetened soft drinks. As our independent variable, we used the purchase amount of snacks, frozen-dessert, alcohol, fruit, vegetables, eggs, dairy products, and chicken breast. These were classified as vice (snacks, frozen-dessert and alcohol) and virtue (fruit, vegetables, eggs, dairy products, and

chicken breast) category foods (Hui et al.,2009). In general, consumers perceive virtue products to be inherently healthier than vice products (Ellison et al., 2016; Doorn & Verhoef, 2011). Additionally, we controlled consumers' age, number of family members, income, BMI, total food purchases, and total soft drink purchases. Since our dependent variable is numeric, we conducted a linear regression analysis.

Summary of Findings

The regression results show that the purchase amount of snacks ($p<0.000$) has a significant negative influence on the purchase amount of artificially sweetened soft drinks. In contrast, the purchase amount of fruit ($p<0.000$) and chicken breast ($p=0.085$) has a significant positive influence on the purchase amount of artificially sweetened soft drinks.

A negative and positive relationship indicate that consumers are more likely to purchase artificially sweetened soft drinks based on their purchase behavior of certain categories of foods, such as vice or virtue category foods. The negative correlation between the purchase amount of vice foods(snacks) and artificially sweetened soft drinks means that consumers who purchase less vice foods are more likely to buy artificially sweetened soft drinks. The positive relationship between the purchase amount of virtue foods (fruit and chicken breast) and artificially sweetened soft drinks means that consumers who purchase healthier foods are more likely to buy artificially sweetened soft drinks. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that a healthy lifestyle is a main reason for low-calorie sweeteners' consumption (Daher et al., 2022).

Key Contributions

Using panel data from 1,250 households across 4 years, we answered the question of which foods are being purchased often together with artificially sweetened soft drinks. This finding is meaningful because prior studies have not focused on consumption behaviors regarding artificially sweetened soft drinks. Our results indicate that artificially sweetened soft drinks exhibit different consumption properties than sugar-sweetened soft drinks, which have been shown to usually be consumed with vice foods (De Cock et al., 2016).

This study will help marketers interested in consumers' behavior; as products should be marketed according to consumers' behavior, the analysis of consumption trends is very important. Especially, considering that beverages are often consumed together with other foods, it is critical to learn the characteristics of the foods consumed together.

ANTI-CONSUMERS ARE NOT THE SAME: ENVISIONING ANTI-CONSUMERS BASED ON THE INTERACTION BETWEEN SELF-CONSTRRUAL AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

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Keywords: Anti-consumer, political ideology, self-construal, envision, typology

Description: The current study proposes a typology consisting of the 1) Aggressive, 2) Agitative, 3) Alone, and 4) Arcane anti-consumer by examining the interaction between self-construal and political ideology.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Anti-consumers harm companies in many ways. While the literature places an emphasis on examining the reasons why anti-consumers engage in such behaviors, there is a lack of a comprehensive understanding of how such different behaviors can be driven by this distinct personality.

Despite our growing understanding of anti-consumption, research in this area has focused primarily on examining why and how anti-consumption occurs at an individual level (Varman and Belk 2009). Research on anti-consumption, however, is needed to delineate among disparate types of anti-consumers, including such behaviors at the societal level (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013; Jung et al. 2017; Lee et al. 2011). Recent research has also attempted to provide insights into social movements engaged in and encouraged by anti-consumers (Dessart, Veloutsou, and Morgan-Thomas 2020; Husemann and Echhardt 2019; Schmitt, Brakus, and Braglia 2021).

In this sense, it is reasonable to ask the following questions: How might anti-consumers be envisioned, while explaining their individual and societal level behaviors? What are the underlying characteristics that explain differences among anti-consumer types? If there are differences across resulting anti-consumption movements, how might marketing managers derive value from a typology of anti-consumers?

Summary of Findings

Drawing on a systematic review of the literature, the current research identifies a gap and provides a 2 X 2 framework by examining the interaction between self-construal and political ideology. As such, the study could assist both researchers and marketing managers in gaining a more lucid understanding of the various types of anti-consumers and how to reduce the potentially negative consequences of their behaviors. Specifically, the current paper focuses on how individual tendencies (i.e., self-construal and political ideology) could mobilize groups to band together and react to safeguard their communities while punishing firms that violate social norms. This research mainly focuses on how interdependent and independent self-construal could interact with the tendencies of conservatism and liberalism and thereby result in four distinct anti-consumer types. In addition, the current study proposes a typology consisting of the 1) Aggressive, 2) Agitative, 3) Alone, and 4) Arcane anti-consumer.

Statement of Key Contributions

This conceptual essay fills an important research gap by integrating two factors, self-construal and political ideology, on understanding anti-consumers. As such, this study addresses the dearth of conceptual papers in anti-consumption research while expanding this research stream from the current focus on individual behavior to one that encapsulates behavior at the social level.

Second, drawing on self-construal and political ideology research, the manuscript envisions a typology of anti-consumers. Such conceptualization provides a clear understanding of anticonsumers, as well as a framework to be built upon by future researchers.

Practically, we provide recommendations for marketers to help them to identify anti-consumers, as well as on how to leverage communication strategies, such as using gain and loss framed messages, to minimize the risk of becoming a target of their retribution. To be more specific, the current paper suggests that marketers focus on delivering a gain (vs. loss) message to mitigate the Aggressive (vs. Agitative) anti-consumer behavior, which would be very useful for marketing managers to attenuate various anti-consumption behaviors.

References are available upon request.

ARE ONLINE REVIEWS GOING TO BE RELEVANT?

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Keywords: online reviews, fake reviews, trust, the relevance of online reviews

Description: We found eight themes that are causing the reduction in the relevance of online reviews.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Do you read online reviews before making a purchase decision? If yes, do you fully trust the reviews and make your decision based on them? While recent reports show that 77% of customers always read online reviews before making a purchase, the proportion of customers who trust online reviews as much as the personal recommendations from family and friends has reduced from 79% in 2020 to 49% in 2022 (Pitman 2022). In India, 56% of respondents do not trust product reviews[1], and 65% do not trust product ratings.[2] Approximately 62% of respondents revealed that they had seen at least one fake review during their shopping experience (Pitman, 2022). As a result, the reliability of reviews is the third top aspect of the online shopping experience that consumers want to change.[3] Many e-commerce platforms have decided not to provide online reviews (e.g. Ajio.com). Does this mean online reviews have started to lose their credibility among the customers? If yes, will they remain relevant in the future for customers as a basis for their purchase decisions?

Method and Data

To better understand the reasons for the problems pertaining to online reviews, we first gathered insights from open-ended questionnaires completed by 89 respondents, which offered invaluable guidance. The respondents were a broad range of top-level executives with an average

[1] Trustworthiness of online product reviews in India (Statista 2017)
[2] Trustworthiness of online product ratings in India (Statista 2017)
[3] Leading aspects global shoppers would change about online shopping (Statista 2021)

of 12 years of experience. We then matched and refined the emerging themes using literature on online reviews, and then identified the eight most important themes that could mould the continued relevance of online reviews and future research. This, in turn, enabled us to pose questions and recommendations with regard to opening new streams of research in the literature.

Summary of Findings

We found eight themes which are negativity/positivity bias involved in decision-making, customer biases involved in writing and using the review, manipulation of reviews by firms, less descriptive and filtered reviews, prioritizing reviews using different variables, online reviews as a source of negative electronic word of mouth (eWOM), mismatch in different elements of online reviews, and conflicts in findings related to different variables

Key Contribution

Online reviews have been used by reviewers to share their opinions and socially connect with others, and by customers to read the feedback of others. While the literature on online reviews has evolved in the last 15 years and is being published in top marketing journals like the Journal of Consumer Research, the Journal of Marketing Research, and the Journal of Marketing, the research needs to take the next leap in order to address the many practical issues affecting the relevance of reviews. The conflicts in the research results, consumer biases in writing and using reviews, and the malpractices of the firms with respect to the manipulation of online reviews have raised important questions regarding online reviews. In practice, we can observe that there

are many e-commerce platforms which have stopped adopting the practice of providing customer reviews despite having resources. Does this mean that online reviews are slowly losing their relevance for consumers and practitioners? In order to ensure the continued relevance of online reviews, we have analyzed eight themes which are of priority and have proposed future research questions that possibly will advance the literature as well as practice.

BEHAVIORAL COPING STRATEGY FOR ORGANIC CONSUMPTION CONSTRAINTS AND PRODUCT RECALLS

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Keywords: organic consumption, self-affirmation, variety-seeking, promotion usage, product recalls

Description: Based on self-affirmation theory, this study investigated it examined how organic consumers with different behavioral dispositions respond to product recalls as a way of keeping their identity as organic consumers.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

With the fast growth of organic consumption, organic consumers embrace it as part of their self-identity associated with moral and ethical consumption behaviors while facing various market constraints from a premium price range and the lack of assortment to occasional product recalls. Nevertheless, their broad spectrum of behavioral commitment from exploratory to loyal purchase patterns makes it uncertain how organic consumers with strong self-identity will respond to market constraints. Based on self-affirmation theory, this study investigated it examined how

organic consumers with different behavioral dispositions respond to product recalls as a way of keeping their identity as organic consumers.

Method and Data

To test the hypotheses, this study uses a fixed-effect panel regression with Dryscoll-Kraay standard errors in two stages for robust estimation (Brüderl and Ludwig 2015) to conciliate cross-section and time-series integration and enables to control of unobservable heterogeneity (Brüderl and Ludwig 2015). To address the unobserved confounders, this study takes a fixed-effect (FE) model that can estimate the effect of time-invariant intrinsic characteristics of individual consumers in a panel data set. The Hausman test confirms that the FE model is more robust than the random-effect (RE) model ($\chi^2_{(31)} = 90.20$, $p < .001$).

The study utilizes two data sources including Nielsen consumer panel data for 9 years from 2009 and 2017 and product recall data collected from FDA recall announcements. The observation was conducted across six categories including dry, frozen, dairy, deli, packaged meat, and fresh produce where organic products are actively sold. The panel household sample was framed from those who have provided the penal data for the observed period of 9 years and purchased at least one organic item during the period. The final sample obtained after the merging process includes 6,031 households from 49 states in the U.S. and 20,315 weekly observations over 9 years.

Summary of Findings

The results find that organic consumers present behavioral dispositions against market constraints through more promotion usage and less variety-seeking. The study suggests that, when organic consumers experience product recalls, they tend to reinforce their identity-

motivated organic purchase actions which increase the organic purchase share. The findings distinguish different reactions from organic consumers to product recalls depending on their behavioral dispositions. The results emphasize that the reinforcing behavior among organic consumers under product recalls is stronger especially among those who use fewer promotions and pursue a limited product variety.

Key Contributions

This study contributes to connecting identity-based motivation and behavioral dispositions among organic consumers through longitudinal observations by finding that organic consumers who buy more organic products tend to use more price promotions of either organic or conventional products and seek less variety of products as they have faced consistent market constraints on price and assortments of organic products. Second, the study shows that organic consumers show self-affirming actions by increasing the organic purchase share when they experience product recalls. The finding explains the coping behaviors of organic consumers under product recalls using the self-affirmation theory as the results suggest that product recalls that can threaten their motivation of organic consumption for product safety can reinforce their identity-based organic purchase actions. Finally, the study provides strategic implications for marketers who try to maintain organic consumer segments under market constraints and disturbances to consider the different levels of behavioral dispositions associated with organic consumption.

References

“References are available upon request.”

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“Researcher(s)' own analyses calculated (or derived) based in part on data from Nielsen Consumer LLC and marketing databases provided through the NielsenIQ Datasets at the Kilts Center for Marketing Data Center at The University of Chicago Booth School of Business.”

“The conclusions drawn from the NielsenIQ data are those of the researcher(s) and do not reflect the views of NielsenIQ. NielsenIQ is not responsible for, had no role in, and was not involved in analyzing and preparing the results reported herein.”

Extended Abstract

TITLE

Business Size Bias in Consumer Dishonesty

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Keywords

business size, dishonesty, vulnerability, moral perceptions

Description

Three experiments show that consumers exhibit greater dishonesty intentions and *actual* dishonest behavior against large than small businesses.

Research Question

Large businesses have increased consumer choices, improved job sectors, and enhanced economic efficiency. They have touched our lives both inside and outside our homes. Large businesses spark debate from the dinner table to the Oval Office. Despite society benefiting

much from large businesses, are we discriminately dishonest against them? On the one hand, people evaluate high-tech products of large businesses more positively than those of small businesses (Woolley et al., 2022). People even react more *negatively* when a small rather than a large business violates expectations (Yang & Aggarwal, 2019). On the other hand, consumers express greater intention to support and patronize small businesses than large businesses (Paharia et al., 2011; Thompson & Arsel, 2004). Although previous research on dishonesty has examined the properties of the perpetrator (Pascual-Ezama et al., 2020; Vincent et al., 2013) and the decision environment (Zhong et al., 2010), properties of the *victim* have been mostly overlooked (an exception: Gino & Pierce, 2009). Neglecting the properties of the victim is akin to ignoring half the story because most forms of dishonesty involve separate moral perpetrators and *victims* (Gray & Wegner, 2009). In that spirit, we investigate how the oft-salient marketplace signal *business size* affects customer dishonesty.

Method and Data

Three online experiments on US-based adults suggest a *business size bias* in consumer dishonesty. Study 1 (N = 972) tested if a business size signal affects the intention to return items one has bought under false premises. In a between-subjects design, participants were asked to imagine a scenario where they had to buy a pair of shoes for a one-off usage and then report the likelihood of returning the shoes under false premises. Study 2 tested if a business size signal affects actual dishonesty behavior against the business. In a between-subjects design, participants were asked to evaluate the website content of a fictitious large (Grand Hotels and Resorts) or small (Little Hotel Parkside) hotel. Then, they were given the opportunity to increase their earnings in an honesty-task supposedly sponsored by the target firm. Study 3 (N = 600) replicated the firm-size bias in dishonesty in a different context and examined what explains why people are more dishonest against a large than a small business. In a between-

participants design, participants were asked to imagine a scenario where they spot an underbilling error at a self-service checkout of a large or small store. We then measured vulnerability and moral perceptions.

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, an independent sample Welch's t-test showed people were more likely to return under false pretenses to a large business (M = 21, SD = 64.2) than a small business (M = -.94, SD = 66.0), Welch's t (968.8) = 5.4, p < .001, g = .34, 95% CI [.21, .46]. In Study 2, a Chi-square Goodness of Fit Contingency Tables test showed that in an incentivized task, more people were dishonest against a large than small business, χ^2 (1, 592) = 17.56, p < .001. To increase one's payoffs, 40.4% of participants were dishonest against the large business compared to the 24.3% of participants dishonest against the small business. In Study 3, a Chi-square Goodness of Fit Contingency Tables test showed that more participants they would leave Colossal than Lil Mart (78.6 % vs. 55.7 %) without reporting the error, χ^2(1, 584) = 34.9, p < .001. A serial mediation test confirmed that a small business signal increased vulnerability perceptions, which increased moral perceptions, which in turn lowered consumer dishonesty (indirect effect, Ind3 = .41 (.08) 95% CI [.29, .59]; Process model 6; Hayes, 2018).

Statement of Key Contribution

Overall, the findings enhance the understanding of consumer dishonesty in the marketplace. Across the board, people seem to be more dishonest against large businesses than small businesses. This disproportionate dishonesty against large businesses seems to be driven by low vulnerability and moral perceptions. Consumers seem to have double standards for their moral behavior against large and small businesses. It seems that people's current bias against large businesses may be severe enough to increase dishonest behavior. The results advance the

debate on how the properties of the *victim* can affect dishonesty in the marketplace and beyond. The business size bias in dishonesty may also explain how why many honesty interventions do not work (Hertwig & Mazar, 2022). People may have strong priors such that they find dishonesty more acceptable against large targets. So, rather than implementing one-size-fits-all interventions, debiasing may work better (Devine et al., 2017).

CALL TO ACTION OR INACTION? CALL-TO-ACTION BUTTONS HURT IN-FEED SOCIAL ADVERTISING

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Keywords: call-to-action buttons; ad nativeness; in-feed social advertising; in-feed advertising; social media

Description: This paper documents that in in-feed social advertising, call-to-action buttons have a negative effect on consumers' ad click-through intention, which is driven by ad nativeness.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Will call-to-action buttons result in negative consequences when seeing business advertisements has not become a norm on social media platforms, e.g., Instagram and WeChat, on which consumers' main objectives are to share their daily life and communicate with friends?

Method and Data 1

Study 1 adopted a one-factor, four-level (call-to-action button: shop-now button vs. learn-more button vs. learn-more button in a different format vs. absence) between-subjects design. Four hundred paid participants (62.30 % females; M_{age} = 29.55, SD = 7.88) from Credamo, a Chinese professional online survey platform, were randomly assigned to view one of four ads. Participants were told that they were participating in a survey launched by Walker, a famous Danish sunglass brand, and then were asked to imagine themselves browsing WeChat Moments and suddenly seeing a post. The call-to-action-button-absence condition presented a WeChat Moments ad featuring a picture of sunglasses posted by Walker, saying that "Walk with fashion; Wear Walker sunglasses in summer; Be the coolest guy on the street." A one-way ANOVA on ad attitude revealed a significant difference ($F(3, 396) = 7.02$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$). More specifically, participants in the call-to-action-button-absence condition ($M_{\text{absence}} = 5.49$) indicated more favorable ad attitude than the other three call-to-action-button conditions ($M_{\text{learn-more button}} = 5.19$, $F(1, 198) = 3.50$, $p = .063$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$; $M_{\text{learn-more button in a different format}} = 5.03$, $F(1, 198) = 7.22$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$; $M_{\text{shop-now button}} = 4.69$, $F(1, 198) = 18.19$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$). In terms of click-through intention, A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference ($F(3, 396) = 4.31$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .032$). More specifically, participants in the call-to-action-button-absence condition ($M_{\text{absence}} = 5.44$) indicated greater click-through intention than the other three call-to-action-button conditions ($M_{\text{learn-more button}} = 5.05$, $F(1, 198) = 3.57$, $p = .060$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$; $M_{\text{learn-more button in a different format}} = 4.97$, $F(1, 198) = 4.91$, $p = .028$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$; $M_{\text{shop-now button}} = 4.64$, $F(1, 198) = 12.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$).

Method and Data 2

In Study 2, 199 participants from Amazon's MTurk via CloudResearch were randomly assigned to one of two conditions that varied on the call-to-action button (absence vs. presence) in a between-subjects design. 6 participants were excluded for not passing the attention check and therefore 193 participants (105 females; M_{age} = 40.49 years, SD = 12.18) remained for further analysis. Participants were asked to view an Instagram advertisement. The call-to-action-button-absence condition presented an Instagram ad featuring a piece of chocolate cookie posted by Julia, saying that "You need to try this triple chocolate cookie!" The call-to-action-button-presence condition presented a similar Instagram ad that additionally showcased the "Shop Now" button. In terms of click-through intention, an independent-samples t-test revealed a significant difference; $t(1, 191) = 2.03$, $p = .044$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Participants in the call-to-action-button-presence condition ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 2.07$) indicated less click-through intention than those in the call-to-action-button-absence condition ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 2.03$). Adding participants' frequency of browsing Instagram did not materially change the results, i.e., significance, interpretation, etc. A mediation analysis (PROCESS Model 4; Hayes 2017; 0 = call-to-action-button absence, 1 = call-to-action-button presence; Figure 3) using 5,000 bootstrap samples found that ad nativeness mediated the effect of call-to-action buttons on click-through intention ($b = -.50$, $SE = .17$, 95% CI [-.84, -.19]). The same mediation analysis using persuasive intent as the mediator did not reveal a significant mediation ($b = -.02$, $SE = .06$, 95% CI [-.16, .08]), and including both ad nativeness and persuasive intent as the two parallel mediators in the same model only revealed a significant mediation through ad nativeness ($b = -.52$, $SE = .17$, 95% CI [-.87, -.19]) but not through persuasive intent ($b = .05$, $SE = .05$, 95% CI [-.03, .17]), suggesting that persuasive intent was not the critical underlying mechanism driving our effect.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 documents that the presence (vs. absence) of a call-to-action button (e.g., a learn-more button and a shop-now button) hurts consumers' attitude toward this ad and their click-through intention. Study 2 provided direct process evidence that the presence (vs. absence) of a call-to-action button in an Instagram ad decreases consumers' click-through intention because it damages ad nativeness. This study also rules out several possible alternative accounts: persuasive intent, self-serving motive, ulterior motive, and perceived risk to click a shop-now button.

Key Contributions

Our work contributes to the growing literature on call-to-action buttons as well as to the well-established literature on in-feed advertising. First and foremost, prior call-to-action buttons research suggests a positive effect of the call to action in the outdoor advertising and direct mailing context (Gázquez-Abad, Canniére, and Martínez-López 2011; Vafainia, Breugelmans, and Bijmolt 2019; Wei et al. 2021), thus reaching a consensus that call-to-action buttons bring about positive consequences. However, we challenge the key assumption in the foregoing research and then shift the consensus (Hollenbeck 2008) from a *positive* effect of call-to-action buttons in general to a *negativ*e effect of call-to-action buttons in in-feed social advertisements. Second, we identify ad nativeness, one of the main characteristics of in-feed advertising, as the underlying mechanism that the call-to-action button hurts in-feed social ads. Building upon prior research reporting that in-feed ads evoke a higher click-through rate (Aribarg and Schwartz 2020), we show that call-to-action buttons hurt ad nativeness, and consequently, decrease click-through rates.

Our research makes important managerial contributions as well. Our most immediate managerial implication is that marketers and advertisers should not add call-to-action buttons in their advertising campaigns on various social media platforms such as WeChat or Instagram. Our work suggests that the presence of call-to-actions buttons will backfire on social media platforms, on which consumers' objective is to share daily life and communicate with friends.

Title

Can Filtering Service Undermine the Intrinsic Enjoyment of Shopping?

(The Backfire Effects of Website Filtering Tools)

Statement of Key Contributions – 300 words

This research examines the possible negative impacts of e-commerce filtering tools. The current research proposes filtering services can undermine the intrinsic enjoyment of shopping, leading to a lower conversion rate. The research contributes to marketing literature and practice. Specifically, our findings have important implications for the e-commerce website design in terms of default filters. Currently, most online retailers offer fixed filtering services on the top or left side of their websites unquestioningly, believing the more precise and sophisticated filters are beneficial for both customers and the firm. However, the current research points out the possible backfiring effect of the filtering services, focusing on *experiential value* of shopping. Investigating the effect of filters on shopping experiences and subsequent reactions will generate actionable insights that can be immediately applied by online retailers and website developers. Specifically, this research can provide practical guidance to e-retailers on when to *emphasize* versus *de-emphasize* the use of filtering tools.

Theoretically, this research extends our understanding of the impact of decision aids. Previous research on decision aids has assumed that all consumers solely have instrumental or utilitarian shopping motives with specific goals in their minds (e.g., purchasing/obtaining items). To the best of our knowledge, no previous studies have investigated the impact of decision aids, such as filtering tools, on consumers with experiential motives who value *shopping experience* more than mere *acquisition* of products. Also, the research extends our understanding of how paying attention to activity goals can undermine intrinsic motivation

and enjoyment by examining online shopping context. We demonstrate that even if there is no explicit cue to direct people's attention to shopping goals, providing shopping environments (e.g., the presence of default filtering services) that facilitate a shopper's outcome of shopping can have a similar effect, leading to the adverse effects on the consumer's online-buying behavior.

Extended Abstract – 1,000 words

One of the most significant conveniences that distinguish online shopping from offline shopping is the filtering tool option. Unlike offline shopping contexts, where shoppers often face a wide array of items simultaneously, online shoppers can easily sort items by product attributes and shortlist items that match their preferences using the filtering system. Hence, not surprisingly, online retailers tend to believe that the filtering tool system forms an essential and important web element that can lead to optimal outcomes (Jiang & Zou, 2020).

Obviously, filtering services help consumers find the products they are looking for quicker and more accurately. The convenience of filters might further enhance customers' online shopping experiences. However, can these filtering services undermine consumers' enjoyment of online shopping? The current research proposes filtering services can undermine the intrinsic enjoyment of shopping, leading to a lower conversion rate.

This research examines the possible negative impacts of e-commerce filtering tools. While prior research has focused on the functional benefits of online filters as decision aids, this research points out that prior studies have been modeled under the assumption that consumers are primarily operating with instrumental shopping motives. Filtering tools can be beneficial for consumers who have specific goals in their minds to find their ideal products

easily. However, such tools can reduce the innate joy of shopping for consumers who engage in online shopping for its own sake without specific buying intention.

We make our prediction by building up on work in the domain of motivation and goal pursuit. Many empirical findings in the motivation literature show the hidden costs associated with highlighting the outcome of the activity (Etkin, 2016; Fishbach & Choi, 2012). Those works demonstrated that directing people's attention to the outcome makes the pursuing process more instrumental and less experiential, and makes the activity feel more like demanding work. They also showed that the negative/positive experiences transfer to the product evaluation, thereby decreasing/increasing its favorability (Fishbach, Shah, & Kruglanski, 2004).

We suggest that the provision of default filtering services in the online shopping environment can generate similar effects: filtering services can degenerate pleasant shopping activities into work (i.e., mere means to acquire ideal products). This is because by being constantly exposed to consumers while they browse product items, filtering services can make consumers *unwittingly* continue to think about ideal product features, which is the outcome of shopping. By highlighting the desired outcome of shopping, the mere presence of filtering services can reduce shoppers' inherent enjoyment from browsing items, leading to decreased product attitude (e.g., purchase intention) and revisit intention for the store. Across three studies, the present research examined the backfiring effect of website filtering tools.

In study 1, we examined the impact of default filters in the context of experiential shopping (i.e., hedonic product – perfume). We conducted this study using the existing shopping website. The online store allowed us to manipulate the display of the same perfume product lists to consumers with versus without filtering. Two hundred forty-seven undergraduate students (55% female, $M_{age} = 21.68$) from a major US university participated in this study in exchange for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the

two conditions (filter vs. no-filter). After browsing the website, participants were asked to select an item and put it in their shopping cart. Then, they rated their shopping experience and attitudes toward the selected product (i.e., purchase intention).

Supporting our prediction, the results showed that participants in no-filter (vs. filter) conditions were more willing to continue the shopping experience ($M_{\text{no-filter}}$ = 3.93 vs. M_{filter} = 2.87, $F(1, 245) = 20.07$, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .08$), and revealed higher willingness to buy the perfume ($M_{\text{no-filter}}$ = 4.20 vs. M_{filter} = 3.35, $F(1, 245) = 10.64$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$). Additionally, in the absence of filters, participants showed higher intention to revisit the website ($M_{\text{no-filter}}$ = 4.57 vs. M_{filter} = 3.68, $F(1, 245) = 12.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .05$).

Study 2 and 3 further provide evidence for the proposed mechanism by manipulating the importance of the shopping experience. If filtering services reduce shopping enjoyment and yield backfiring effects on subsequent online behaviors by making pleasurable shopping seem more like work, then framing the shopping as work to begin with should attenuate the negative effect (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Laran & Janiszewski, 2011).

Specifically, in Study 2, we used different stimuli, coffee mugs (i.e., neutral products). Then, we additionally manipulated the online shopping situation as fun (experiential) or work (task-oriented). In Study 3, we again used perfumes however, we additionally manipulated time constraints. We predicted that participants under time pressure (versus without time pressure) would be less concerned about their quality of experiences and more about achieving their outcomes as quickly as possible. Both Study 2 and 3 used existing shopping websites, and the participants were assigned to conditions with or without filtering tools, and all other procedures were the same as in Study 1.

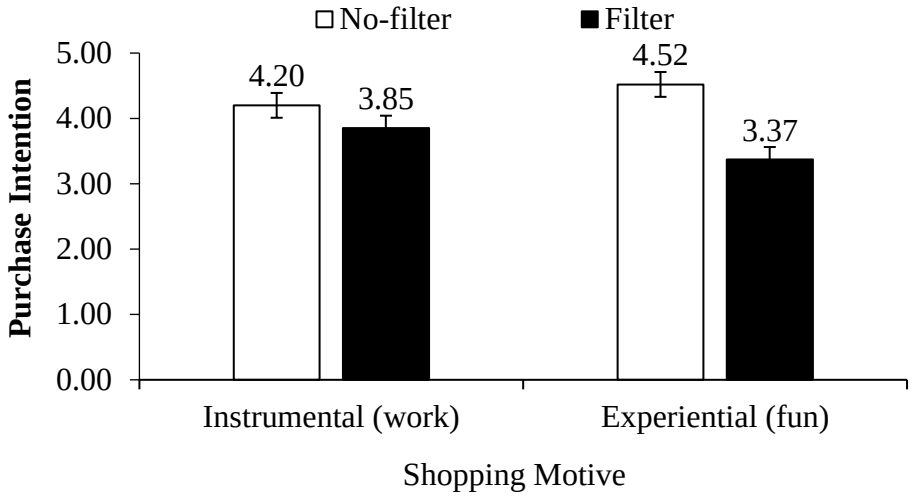
Supporting our prediction, participants in experiential shopping framing (Study 2) and no time-pressure conditions (Study 3) showed the same pattern of results as Study 1. That is, filtering services reduced participants' shopping enjoyment, leading to negative impacts

on subsequent online behavior. However, when the shopping was framed as work to begin with and presented under time pressures, the negative effect of filtering tools disappeared. The perceived distraction from default filters among the participants did not differ depending on the condition.

The current research points out the possible backfiring effect of the filtering services, focusing on the experiential value of shopping. Investigating the effect of filters on shopping experiences and subsequent reactions will generate actionable insights that can be immediately applied by online retailers and website developers. Furthermore, this research provides practical guidance to e-retailers on how to tailor their filtering services strategically to maximize both corporate profit and consumer experience. Theoretically, this research extends our understanding of the impact of decision aids by broadening our interests not only to consumers who solely have utilitarian shopping motives but also to shoppers with experiential motives.

Table or Figure

Study 2: Purchase intention (presence of filter x shopping motive)



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CHANGING VALUES AMONG GENERATIONS: INVESTIGATING THE AMERICAN DREAM

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Keywords: American Dream, Millennial Cohort, Baby Boomer Cohort, Schwartz's List of Values

Description: This study examines the differences in the American Dream between the Millennial and Baby Boomer cohorts.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The American Dream influences society, what they value, and what their life goals are. Even though the concept exists at the macro level of society, the impact of its concepts can impact individual consumer behavior such that a person's perceived inequality can lead to present-oriented, short-sighted hedonistic behaviors (Bak and Yi 2020). In addition, having a goal of financial success can lead to lower life satisfaction, particularly lower satisfaction with

family life (Nickerson et al 2003). Thus, understanding how the concept is defined and how people use it to set goals to engage in consumption behaviors is important for consumer behavior researchers.

However, minimal academic research has been conducted on the topic. In addition, little academic research has specifically asked people about the American Dream, instead examining it from an aggregate perspective or components of the American Dream. We seek to fill this gap by investigating what people think about the American Dream and what factors influence the adoption of the Dream among two generations – Baby Boomers and Millennials. Our research is designed to answer three questions: *How is the American Dream defined? Is the American Dream still relevant? What influences adoption of the American Dream?*

Method and Data

To investigate how the different generations view the American Dream, an online survey was conducted through Qualtrics. The survey contained questions about how participants viewed the American Dream and the values they associated with it. Two different samples were collected. The first was respondents 18-24 years old and the second sample was respondents who were 55 years old or older. Each survey was the same and contained a screening question on age to ensure participants fit the demographic criteria. For the younger sample, 315 completed responses were collected and for the older sample 315 completed responses were collected. This sample was further purified to match the demographic make-up of the two different generational cohorts: Baby Boomers (1946 - 1964) and Millennials (1980 - 1996) so that only those that fit these age ranges when the survey was collected were used. Anyone outside of these age ranges were removed so that the final sample consisted of 245 Millennials (aged 20 to 25) and 253 Baby Boomers (aged 55 to 70). The Qualtrics panel was a general demographic sample designed to

match the demographics of the US. Open-ended questions were analyzed using NVivo. Closed-ended questions were analyzed using SPSS and LISREL 8.72.

Summary of Findings

How is the American Dream defined?

Baby Boomers view the Dream as having a home, being free from debt and financial worries and having a family. For Millennials, having a family is the most important part of the Dream, followed by the ability to have opportunities to pursue goals and dreams and then own a house.

Is the American Dream still relevant?

Baby Boomers were more likely to agree that it was important for Americans to have the Dream, that Americans should strive towards the Dream, that it is important for guiding one's life, and that the Dream was still relevant to their life. Millennials were more likely to agree that the Dream was no longer needed for Americans.

What influences adoption of the American Dream?

For Baby Boomers, those low in traditional values thought the term was outdated while for Millennials it was those who were low in achievement. Those high in universalism for both groups believed that the term was outdated. For Baby Boomers, those high in security and low in self-direction believed that current issues should be added to the Dream. For Millennials, those high in benevolence thought that new values should be added. For both generations, those high in universalism thought that new values should be added.

Key Contributions

This research provides insight into how macro level beliefs influence people at the micro level and how businesses or public policy makers can use these concepts to influence attitudes or

behaviors. Understanding how various generational cohorts define the American Dream concept, a concept firmly established in American culture, adds to existing knowledge in several ways. Examining the differences between Millennials and Baby Boomers leads to a better understanding of the consumption behaviors of these two groups as their behaviors are influenced by their unique interpretations of the American Dream.

We believe that our research will be valuable for for-profit firms and policy makers who are interested in motivating consumers. For for-profit firms, understanding this concept helps firms who would like to tie into the American Dream image. For those that identify strongly with the concept, marketers could use this in their advertising or to position their products. For policy makers, the concept has been used in congressional bills and in presidential speeches to connect to people, set goals, and make changes in society. From home ownership to student debt, understanding how Americans view the Dream and what influences it helps make policies that are appropriate.

References available upon request

CLASSY WAY-OF-LIFE OR FLASHY SHOW-OFF? EXPLORING CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS LUXURY CONSUMPTION - AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

Sangeeta Devanathan

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Key Words: Luxury Marketing, Luxury consumption, Attributions towards Luxury Consumption, Level of possession

Description: This paper explores the causal attributions made towards luxury consumption (ranging from '*because it is his classy way-of-life*' to '*because he is a show-off*') of individual possessions vis-à-vis familial possessions and the role of the luxury consumer's vintage-of-wealth (traditionally rich versus nouveau-riche).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Social interactionism creates a framework to communicate characteristics of the individual possessing or consuming a product. Belk (1988) in his seminal work describes possessions at four levels – individual, family, community and group.

Causal explanations for luxury consumption ranges from attributions towards consumption as the user's "classy-way-of life" to that of the consumer being a "flashy show-off". In Eastern collectivist cultures like India, which are marked by strong social hierarchies and where social status is closely linked to the 'family name', conformity to the group is seen in a positive light. This research measures the causal attribution towards luxury consumption along the 'classy' versus 'flashy' spectrum in the Indian context for addressing the following research questions:

1) do causal attributions vary between the level of possession (familial possession versus an individual possession); 2) do causal attributions differ when information is available on the consumer's vintage of wealth (nouveau-riche versus traditionally rich); and 3) are causal attributions impacted by the interaction between level of possession and the vintage of wealth.

Method and Data

An initial qualitative study (conducted through seven in-depth interviews), supported the premise that there are perceived differences between familial possessions and individual possessions and that causal explanations for luxury consumption vary from the consumer's 'classy way-of-life' to being a 'flashy show-off'. The interviews also indicated that certain product categories, like cars, are viewed as familial possessions (used and shared by the family, and high involvement of various members of the family in the decision making), while accessories like watches were considered to be an individual possession (used by an individual, and low involvement levels in the decision making).

An experiment was conducted with hundred and thirteen post-graduate management students. The participants were exposed to four combinations of information along a 2X2 matrix – two levels of possession (cars as familial and watches as individual possessions) and vintage of wealth (traditionally-rich and nouveau rich). The responses to the likely causal explanation ("*because it is the user's classy way-of-life*" and "*because the user is a show-off*") were measured on a 7-point scale. The choices of the product categories for the level of possession and the descriptors for vintage of wealth were validated in the pre-experiment stage through 20 independent judges.

Summary of Findings

1) Luxury consumption is more likely to be attributed to the consumer's 'classy way-of-life' for a familial possession and to the consumer being a 'show-off' for an individual possession.

2) Luxury consumption by users hailing from traditionally rich families is attributed to their 'classy way-of-life' while nouveau-riches' to being a 'show-off'. 3) An interaction effect is observed where individual possessions of the traditionally-rich is attributed to a 'classy way-of-life' and even family possessions of the nouveau-riche to being a 'show-off'.

Key Contributions

The theoretical contribution of this study is threefold. 1) Distinguishing between familial and personal possession has earlier been explored in the context of culture, however, this theme has been conspicuously absent in luxury literature. By providing empirical support provided for this distinction, this paper opens a new dimension to research on luxury; 2) While literature indicates the importance of the non-targeted segment's attitudes towards luxury, the perspective of this segment has been largely ignored. This paper addresses the research gap by exploring the attributions made towards luxury consumers by the non-targeted segments, and finally, 3) Research on segmentation of luxury consumers is dominated by themes revolving around the motive for consumption. This paper, distinguishes consumers on their vintage of wealth – thus creating a plausible alternate basis of segmentation for the luxury market.

This study also offers actionable strategies for luxury marketers. The positive perceptions of luxury consumers from traditionally-rich families can be leveraged to create an image of the 'typical consumer' of the brand belonging to such a desired socio-demographic stratum.

(*References are available upon request*.)

CONSUMER COGNITIONS OF AI-SYNTHESIZED VOICES

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Keywords: Artificial intelligence (AI), machine-synthesized voices, consumers, cognitions, information processing.

Description: We investigate the impact of AI-based, machine-synthesized narrating voices on consumer cognitions and behavior in media-rich environment (e.g., videos).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Artificial intelligence technology seeks to emulate humans. One aspect is AI-synthesized voices. With the proliferation of text-to-speech AI technology, it is increasingly common to find AI-based, machine-synthesized voice narration in a variety of consumer contexts. These contexts range from artificially intelligent voice assistants (such as Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa, and Google Assistant), voice-based chatbots, to digital contents using assistive technologies (such as voiceover narration in product videos or news websites offering the option "listen to this article"). For example, there are more than 3.25 billion voice assistants in 2022; a number that is expected to touch about 8 billion by 2023 (Statista 2022). As such technology emerged recently, consumer research has just begun to examine the impact of AI-synthesized voices on consumer information processing and decision making. In this research, we examine how consumers respond to AI voice narration in media-rich environment, such as product videos, which have become prevalent and important in consumer decision making.

In this research, we posit that the use of more narrating AI voices should prompt consumers to process the overall spoken message in a more cognitively effortful manner compared to the use of a single AI voice in persuasive videos. Indirect support comes from neuroscience and memory studies, which found that hearing more voices activates more brain regions (e.g., von Kriegstein et al. 2003).

Method And Data

We examine the implications of this phenomenon on consumer purchase likelihood and delineate the consumer contexts and conditions in which it is likely to aid or hinder purchase. We test our predictions in three experiments, spanning different decision domains, product categories, and outcomes. Experiment 1 examines the effect of hearing the same or different narrating AI voices on persuasion, depending on whether consumers are in earlier or later stages of consumer purchase journey. Prior findings suggest that changes in narrator voices can help capture consumer attention (Cherry 1953; Chang, Mukherjee, and Chattopadhyay 2022); however, once attention is obtained, it should be more difficult to process varied more AI voices as this involves

mapping a wider range of acoustic properties onto higher-level language processes, for word recognition (Pisoni and Luce 1987). The next two experiments focused on the effect of narrating voices on processing after consumer attention is obtained. Experiment 2 assesses if processing difficulty increases with more AI voices. Experiment 3 examines if it is possible for consumers to exhibit more favorable responses after attending to product message narrated by different AI voices.

Summary of Findings

First, we find that hearing the same or different AI voices has a significant and important effect on consumer cognition. In situations where the consumers' attention is already directed to the message, marcomm with different AI voices led to a lower purchase likelihood, compared to marcomm with the same AI voice (Experiment 1). Experiment 2 finds that hearing different AI voices narrate a message is more cognitively effortful for listeners to process than hearing the same AI voice, providing support to our conceptualization. Experiment 3 shows that the effect is moderated by consumers' natural tendencies to engage in and enjoy cognitive endeavors. Hearing different AI voices is beneficial for consumers who enjoy expending cognitive effort but detrimental for consumers who do not enjoy expending cognitive effort, compared to hearing the same AI voice. Finally, results show that the effect is mediated by the favorability of cognitive responses (Experiments 1 and 3). We are currently conducting further studies, for example, exploring the moderating role of duration (duration in hearing a product message by the same AI voice or different AI voices). We expect that hearing different voices is more difficult under shorter durations than under longer durations.

Key Contributions

Our research aims to contribute to the literature on emerging technology (e.g., AI) and consumer behavior as well as on sensory marketing. Prior literature is relatively limited for two key reasons. First, despite widespread acclaim in popular media, AI voice technology is still relatively new. Second, more generally, the effect of sound and narrator's voice on consumer behavior remains under-researched, perhaps due to methodological challenges in the design of appropriate experimental stimuli (cf. Krishna and Schwarz 2014; Dahl 2010). We hope to add to these literatures by examining how consumers process information conveyed by AI-synthesized voices.

We investigate the cognitive implications of the use of different (vs. same) AI voices on consumer evaluation and decision making in rich-media environments such as video marketing. Across three experiments, we show that the design of AI voices can systematically and predictably affect consumer cognition and behavior and have differential effects in early versus later stages of the consumer purchase journey. We contribute to practice by identifying contexts and conditions in which the effect aids/hinders consumer purchase, thereby generating concrete recommendations for the design of persuasive marketing communications.

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References are available upon request.

FUELING AGAINST STRESS: CONSUMER PREFERENCES FOR FUEL SNACKS AT THE INTERSECTION OF CAREGIVING STRESS AND GENDER

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Individuals worldwide are experiencing more stress than ever, with recent reports highlighting 2020 as the "worst and most stressful year" in recent history (Gallup 2021). Most people cannot escape stress – it "is everywhere" and "impacts everyone and pervades all aspects of our lives" (O'Connor et al. 2021, p. 665). Stress is important to study because it is pervasive and systematically alters the way individuals consume. Often, stress and responses to stress lead to negative consequences that affect personal health and well-being. For example, individuals' food-related decisions under stress can lead to long-term health problems; for example, there is extensive literature on using food to cope with stress (Freeman and Gil 2004; Wardle et al. 2000). As such, stress contributes to obesity systematically through individuals' behaviors and choices, and obesity has reached a historic high (CDC 2021). Therefore, due to the relevance and pervasiveness of stress affecting food consumption, this research studies the effects of stress on eating behavior, and more specifically, snacking. We examine stress as *caregiving* stress and operationalize it as parental status and reminders of responsibility for others (Zhang, Feick, and Mittal 2014).

Against this background, we investigate how individuals use *fuel snacks*, a novel conceptualization of snacks in the marketing literature, to respond to stress. Fuel snacks contain complex carbs, healthy fats, and protein and provide sustained energy release, giving consumers a boost and energy throughout the day (Rosenbloom 2011). Fuel snacks (e.g., PowerBar and Gameday Energy) "take longer to digest, satisfy hunger, and provide a slow, steady stream of energy" (Cornil, Gomez, and Vasiljevic 2020; Harvard Medical School n.d.; WebMD 2019). This category of snacks is flourishing in the marketplace, with more and more companies branding their food products explicitly as 'fuel' (e.g., Buff Bake Fuel Bar, Foodie Fuel, etc.).

Prior marketing research has examined the impact of stress on several behaviors (e.g., job performance, spending), but is limited on eating behaviors, with snacking as an "eating pattern that has been understudied" (Keast et al. 2010, p. 432). As stress undermines a person's (perceived) capacity to perform, it affects how much and *what* people eat. Stress is associated

with a higher preference for energy- and nutrient-dense foods, especially foods high in sugar and/or fat (Moschis 2007). It causes consumers to choose vice snacks (e.g., sweets) and avoid virtue snacks (fruits and vegetables) (Oliver and Wardle 1999). Further, gender predisposes individuals to eat when they are stressed (Zellner et al. 2006) – women tend to choose unhealthy foods (sweet and fatty); in contrast, men tend to eat more hearty, meal-like foods for comfort (e.g., casserole, steak, and soup) (Wansink, Cheney, and Chan 2003). However, it remains unclear how stress and gender affect food consumption and choices (Okumus, Chaulagain, and Giritlioglu 2019; Torres and Nowson 2007), and especially fuel snacks.

We examine fuel snacking behavior through the lens of compensatory consumption and coping strategies. Compensatory consumption is "motivated by a desire to offset or reduce a self-discrepancy" (Mandel et al., 2017 p. 134), thereby reducing psychological discomfort. Individuals engage in compensatory consumption in response to "difficult or stressful situations" (Koles et al. 2018, p. 97). Importantly, eating can also be a compensatory behavior (Mandel and Smeesters 2008), as consumers turn to food when they experience stress (Freeman and Gil 2004; Oliver and Wardle 1999). Accordingly, we focus on snacks as compensatory eating and examine how distinct coping strategies are activated for men and women, impacting their fuel snacking behavior and fuel snack choice as a response to stress.

Method and Data

Five studies (a field study, a pilot study, and three experiments) examine the choice and consumption of fuel snacks at the intersection of stress (e.g., as a function of parental status) and gender. The results show that consumers perceive fuel snacks as neither healthy nor unhealthy, highlighting the need to expand the vice-virtue dichotomy of snacks. The results also show that parents consume more snacks than non-parents; more importantly, fathers (vs. male non-parents) snack differently regarding their (i) snack amount and (ii) snack choices. Finally, fathers (vs. male non-parents) choose fuel snacks more often. Interestingly, after being primed with experiencing an additional stressor (responsibility of caring for others), male non-parents mimic fathers' behavior and choose a greater proportion of fuel snacks. These results provide meaningful theoretical, managerial, and policy implications.

Key Contributions

This research makes the following contributions: First, the analysis of fuel snacks answers calls for a multidimensional view of research beyond the traditional dichotomy of vice-virtue foods (Chandon, Haws, and Liu 2021). This new understanding impacts academic research and the snacking industry, where snacks are now deliberately branded as fuel. Second, we show how a systematic interaction between stress and gender influences snacking overall and *fuel snacking* in particular. Third, we contribute to theory by exploring stress and fuel snacking through the lens of compensatory consumption and coping strategies (Mandel et al. 2017).

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CONSUMER RESPONSE TO PUFFERY: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM A CELLULAR NETWORK UPGRADE ADVERTISING

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Keywords: Consumer Response, Advertising Puffery, Product Attribute, Advertising Intensity, IT Upgrade

Description: We study consumer response to puffery leveraging real-world data of cellular network upgrade advertisements and consumer service calls about the cellular network.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Debates about the impact of advertising puffery on consumer response have been long-lasting among researchers. Studies find that puffery is easily believed and can enhance consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intent (Petty 2013). In contrast, some research suggests puffery can mislead consumers (Snyder 1989) and create unrealistically high expectations, resulting in more post-purchase consumer dissatisfaction than ads without puffery (Oliver 1979). Empirical analysis using real-world data on the impact of puffery is lacking. We study consumer response to puffery leveraging a cellular network upgrade advertising with location-varying intensities and a large real-world dataset of consumer complaints about the cellular network. Specifically, we address the following three research questions:
Research Question 1: *How and to what extent does advertising puffery affect consumer response?*
Research Question 2: *How do consumer responses to advertising puffery vary across product attributes?*
Research Question 3: *How do consumer responses to advertising puffery vary across consumers' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics?*

Method And Data

We investigate how consumers exposed to differential advertising intensities react to puffery using data from two sources. The first is a thirteen-month dataset of approximately 700 thousand consumer complaints about the cellular network across five districts in an Asian metropolitan city.

The second is an outdoor advertisement dataset of a cellular network upgrade in the same city during the same period. The main attributes of the cellular network are advertised using puffery. We use complaint sentiment to measure consumer response. The fact that we have data before and after the focal upgrade allows us to observe the sentiment trend across the pre- and post-upgrade periods. Our identification strategy exploits two main factors. The first is the cross-sectional differences in the intensities of outdoor advertising across different districts. The second is the time of the focal upgrade, which presents a natural exogenous shock in our study period and is identical across all districts in our study. Our strategy relies on the estimation of the interaction between the two factors, which compares the relative change in consumer sentiment in the post-upgrade period compared to the pre-upgrade period between locations with higher ad intensity and those with lower ad intensity.

Summary of Findings

We show a causal negative effect of puffery on consumer sentiment. Specifically, we find that consumer sentiment in higher ad intensity locations became more negative after the cellular network upgrade than those in lower ad intensity locations. Our estimates are robust to different model specifications that control for location- and time-varying factors that can potentially affect consumer sentiment. The parallel trend assumption is fulfilled as we see in a relative time model. Placebo tests show that the results do not arise spuriously. We conduct further analysis to understand the mechanisms of consumers' sentiment variations. We find that consumers' negative sentiment is mainly driven by the advertised attributes relating to the upgraded cellular network's biggest strength and varies with location-based socioeconomic characteristics and demographics.

Statement of Key Contributions

We contribute to several literature streams. First, we add to the debate about consumer response to puffery. While previous findings are inconsistent and mainly based on lab experiments and analytical modeling, we show a causal negative effect of puffery on consumer response by analyzing real-world data. Second, we contribute to the understanding of consumer response to different product attributes in ads, with existing studies focusing on focal attributes' two-sided appeal and relevancy to the advertised product. We analyze how consumer responses vary with the extent to which focal attributes are related to the products' biggest strengths, which are important but understudied in existing work. Our analysis results have several implications for regulators and marketers. First, we conclude a negative effect of puffery on consumer response. This conclusion underscores the necessity for regulators to reconsider the legitimacy of puffery, as puffery may infringe on consumers' rights to true product information and physically or financially harm consumers. Further, we uncover that certain critical attributes related to the biggest strength of the advertised product trigger consumers' negative sentiment after adoption. This finding highlights the importance of wisely balancing the use of puffery for different product attributes to receive better consumer response.

References are available upon request.

CONSUMERS' MORALITY INFERENCE FROM CAMPAIGNS OFFERING UNCERTAIN REWARDS

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Keywords: uncertain rewards, morality, inference making, suspicion

Description: This paper documents that consumers infer that marketers launching campaigns offering uncertain rewards could be more immoral than those launching campaigns offering certain rewards.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Marketers launching campaigns offering uncertain rewards versus marketers launching campaigns offering certain rewards, who will be inferred by consumers as more moral?

Method and Data 1

In Study 1, 211 MTurkers (112 women; M_{age} = 41.48) were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (reward type: certain vs. uncertain with probabilities vs. uncertain without probabilities). In the certain-reward condition, participants were informed that, "A retailer is initiating a promotion campaign. Every time a consumer spends $100, he/she will receive a

cashback worth $9." In the uncertain-rewards-with-probabilities condition, participants were informed that, "… receive one type of cashback out of three based on chance: $50 with a 10% chance, $10 with a 40% chance, $0 with a 50% chance." In the uncertain-rewards-without-probabilities condition, we did not present the chances. Then, four items were used to measure participants' inferred morality of the marketer (Khan and Kalra, 2022; e.g., "To which extent do you infer that this retailer could be moral?" $\alpha = .97$). A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference ($F(2, 208) = 13.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$). Participants in the certain-reward condition ($M = 5.33$) inferred that the marketer could be more moral than those in the other two conditions ($M_{\text{with probabilities}} = 4.27$; $M_{\text{without probabilities}} = 4.26$; both $ps < .001$). We did not find significant differences between two uncertain-rewards conditions.

Method and Data 2

In Study 2, 138 MTurkers (79 women; $M_{age} = 42.37$) were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (reward type: certain vs. uncertain). Study 2 was similar to Study 1 with two main exceptions: first, we did not include the uncertain-rewards-with-probabilities condition. Second, two items adapted from Van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead (2006) were used to measure participants' suspicion of the promotion (e.g., "I was suspicious of this promotion." $\alpha = .96$). A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference; $F(1, 136) = 9.06$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. As expected, we replicated our effect in Study 1 ($M_{\text{uncertain}} = 4.84$ vs $M_{\text{certain}} = 5.47$). In addition, we conducted a mediation test. Results showed that the indirect effect of reward type on consumers' inferred morality of the marketer was significant ($b = -.40$, $SE = .14$, 95% CI [-.71, -.14]).

Method and Data 3

In Study 3, 194 MTurkers (96 women; M_{age} = 43.44 years) were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in 2 (reward type: certain vs. uncertain) * 2 (external notary institution presence: absent vs. present). The manipulation of reward type was similar to Study 2. The manipulation of the presence of an external notary institution was as follows. In the "external-notary-institution-present" condition, participants were informed that, "In addition, this retailer invites an external notary institution to act as the supervisor of this promotion." In the external-notary-institution-absent condition, we did not mention anything. A 2 (reward type: certain vs. uncertain) * 2 (external notary institution presence: absent vs. present) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction effect ($F(1, 190) = 9.50$; $p = .002$; $\eta_p^2 = .05$). As expected, the effect existed when the external notary institution was absent ($M_{uncertain} = 4.33$ vs. $M_{certain} = 5.41$; $F(1, 190) = 19.60$; $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$), but disappeared when the external notary institution was present ($M_{uncertain} = 5.25$ vs. $M_{certain} = 5.25$; $F(1, 190) = 0$; $p = 1.00$, $\eta_p^2 = .0$).

Summary of Findings

Study 1 supports the effect that consumers infer that a marketer initiating an uncertain-reward promotion could be less moral than a marketer initiating a certain-reward promotion. Study 2 identifies consumers' suspicion of the promotion as the underlying mechanism. To be more specific, consumers are more suspicious of an uncertain-reward promotion than a certain-reward promotion, which leads them to infer that a marketer launching an uncertain-reward promotion could be less moral than a marketer launching a certain-reward promotion. Study 3 pinpoints whether an external notary institution supervising the promotion is present or not as one boundary condition of the effect.

Key Contributions

First and foremost, our research contributes to literature on morality. We empirically examine a novel predictor of morality: reward certainty versus uncertainty. Our research documents that uncertainty (operationalized as promotions offering uncertain rewards) is relatively inferred as immorality while certainty is relatively inferred as morality. Second, our research contributes to literature on suspicion. We document that consumers hold greater suspicion of uncertainty than certainty. Also, we document that consumers' suspicion of an entity negatively affects their inference about the morality of the entity. Lastly, our research contributes to marketing activities offering uncertain rewards in the real world. Although some research finds that campaigns with uncertain rewards outperform campaigns with certain rewards in terms of consumers' direct responses such as preferences and spending, practitioners should also take consumers' indirect responses into account as well, such as consumers' morality inference from the campaigns.

COOLNESS OF MOBILE SHOPPING APPS AND ITS IMPACT ON VALUES FOR AND FROM CUSTOMERS: THE ROLE OF IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

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Keywords: coolness; values for customer; values from customer; immersion; mobile shopping apps

Description: This study aims to investigate the role of immersive experience in the relationships between the perceived coolness of mobile shopping apps and both types of values: values for the customers and values from the customers.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Smartphones and tablets have brought e-commerce to mobile devices (Zhang et al., 2012). 'Coolness', which includes originality, attractiveness, utility, and subculture, has been key to app success (Sundar et al., 2014). Limited research has been done on perceived coolness and its outcomes, such as value for customer. Extant literature mainly focuses on value for customer, which refers to the customer's assessment of what is gained and what is sacrificed, as the critical

factor in appealing to customers. Besides, Kumar et al. (2010) proposed the concept of value from customer that comprises customer lifetime value, customer influencer value, customer referral value, and customer knowledge value. Scant research has explored the relationship between coolness and those values. A cool mobile shopping app will enable users to become more deeply involved in the immersive experience without distractions and stimulate more exploratory behaviours (Lee et al., 2017). This study aims to: (1) examine the effects of mobile shopping app coolness on value for customer and value from customer; (2) explore the mediating role of immersive experience on the relationship between mobile shopping app coolness and those values; and (3) assess how value for customer determines value from customer in mobile shopping apps.

Method and Data

The quantitative approach was used in this study to test the theoretical research model and hypotheses. A survey was conducted among respondents who are mobile shopping application users and from 18 years old in Vietnam, an emerging market. In the mobile shopping app context, customers must use a smartphone with a shopping app installed. The instrument included scales of research constructs adopted from previous well-established studies with some adaptations to fit this study context. Specifically, coolness was a multi-dimensional construct, including subculture, originality, attractiveness, and utility, adopted from Sundar et al. (2014). The multi-dimensional construct, value for customer, consisting of perceived utilitarian value and perceived hedonic value, was adapted from Kim et al. (2019). Value from customer was also measured as multi-dimensional, in line with prior research (Hamilton et al. 2016; Wu et al. 2018) and included customer lifetime value, customer knowledge value and customer influencer value., respectively. Immersive experience was unidimensional and adopted from Hamilton et al. (2016) with four

items. Scale items were measured by a seven-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 7= totally agree).

Summary of Findings

After screening data, 351 valid responses were used for the analysis step. This study used SmartPLS to test the structural model. Assessment of scales showed satisfactory results for reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. R^2 values of immersive experience (0.136), value for customer (0.424) and value from customer (0.575) all reached a substantial level. Hypothesis testing found that all three direct hypotheses (mobile shopping apps coolness → values for customer; mobile shopping apps coolness → value from customer; value for customer → value from customer) were supported at $p<0.001$, with β values being 0.482, 0.357 and 0.398, respectively. The finding concerning the positive relationship between mobile shopping app coolness and value for customer confirms the idea of Warren et al. (2019). This research extended prior research by providing empirical evidence that the coolness of mobile shopping apps leads to positive value from customer. The findings also found that both indirect effects (from mobile shopping apps coolness to value for customer and value from customer via immersive experience) were positive ($\beta=0.107$ and $\beta=0.052$, respectively) and significant (all $p<0.01$). Furthermore, the study result confirms the positive relationship between value for customer and value from customer, in line with Itani et al. (2019).

Key Contributions

The current study contributes to the existing literature on perceived coolness in two aspects. Firstly, given scant research on the role of perceived coolness in the context of innovative

applications such as mobile shopping apps, it should be recognised that coolness's dimensions and outcomes are one of the purposes of app designers, omnichannel retailers and businesses. This study empirically demonstrates the important role of perceived coolness in mobile shopping apps. Additionally, while prior studies on perceived coolness in technological products are generally qualitative and exploratory, this study contributes significantly to the extant literature by quantitatively examining the dynamic mechanisms of forming customer value of mobile shopping app coolness.

From a practical perspective, the current study points out that perceived coolness acts as a critical determinant of the success of a mobile shopping app in the competitive marketplace. Thus, businesses need to optimise their customer value by developing and designing mobile shopping apps to enhance customer perceived coolness. In addition, marketers should focus on building several communication strategies to increase consumer awareness of cool images of their shopping apps. Lastly, managers should also pay attention to features helping users efficiently immerse themselves in their shopping experience.

References are available upon request.

CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION IN THE VALUE CO-CREATION PROCESS: THE SELF-CONCORDANCE APPROACH

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Keywords: Anticipatory self-enhancement; Customer co-creation; Customer satisfaction; Enjoyment; Goal self-concordance; Goal specificity; Trying to participate

Description: The objective of this research is to examine the dual role of goal self-concordance on customer co-creation behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question:

1. How does goal self-concordance drive customer co-creation behavior?

2. How does goal self-concordance moderate the relationship between customers' co-creation goal achievement and perceived benefits?

Method and Data: Using 4 experiments in study 1 and another 3 experiments in study 2, this research aims to examine the dual role of goal self-concordance on customer co-creation behavior.

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Summary of Findings: Using 4 experiments in study 1, we focus on the motivational power of goal self-concordance. Specifically, we expect to find the positive effect of goal self-concordance on customers' trying to participate in the co-creation process. Moreover, we expect to test the relationship between goal self-concordance and trying is mediated by customers' anticipatory self-enhancement. In addition, we also expect to investigate the moderating effects of goal specificity on the relationship between goal self-concordance and their anticipatory self-enhancement. In study 2, another 3 experiments are conducted to test the moderating effect of goal self-concordance on the relationship between co-creation goal achievement and customers' perceived self-enhancement. Furthermore, we expect that customers' perceived self-enhancement after co-creation goal achievement is positively related to customer satisfaction with the product or service and their future co-creation behaviors.

Key Contributions: This study contributes to marketing research and practice in several ways. First, employing goal self-concordance model (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999; Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001), we examine the important role played by goal self-concordance in customer co-creation, which has been largely neglected in the co-creation literature. Moreover, we extend the original goal self-concordance model by testing the mediating effects of customers' anticipatory self-enhancement on the relationship between goal self-concordance and trying. Thirdly, by proposing that customers' self-enhancement mediates the relationship between customer co-creation goal achievement and customer satisfaction, this study suggests an alternative theoretical explanation regarding the relationship between customer participation and customer satisfaction.

DIGITAL INFORMATION NUDGING AS A BRIDGE TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE PURCHASE DECISION

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Keywords

Digital Nudging, E-Commerce Sustainability, Technostress, Decision-making

Description

Our findings, based on an experimental study with 201 participants, show that information nudging in e-commerce is a useful tool to close the intention-behavior gap, but that the effect is significantly weakened with increasing levels of technostress, especially in combination with an already existing high green purchase intention, suggesting cognitive strain due to information overload.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The phenomenon of intention-behavior gaps expresses consumers despite having good intentions, behaving in a non-sustainable way (Ajzen, 2001; Carrington, Neville & Whitwell, 2012). E-commerce offers opportunities to shape customer-shopping experiences by providing information for adopting a sustainable consumption behavior. The strategy of digital nudging, referring to positive reinforcement strategies designed to influence human behavior without restricting freedom of choice, seems promising (Sunstein, 2014; Trudel, 2019).

Even small modifications to the surroundings in which choices are presented can affect peoples' decision-making. Cohen (1973), and Arbuthnot & Lingg (1975) suggest that information on ecological knowledge influences ecological attitudes and behavior. Therefore, digital information nudging could be a suitable instrument to translate green purchase intentions into sustainable behaviors in an e-commerce environment. In digital environments, i.e. e-commerce, the phenomenon of technostress occurs in the context of human interaction with information and communication technologies (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Schumacher, Peters & Feste, 2022). Technostress affects physical, psychological, and cognitive parameters (Moody & Galletta, 2015; Riedl et al., 2012), e.g. low purchase intention, switch to other providers.

Accordingly, we aim to investigate the following research questions: Is nudging an effective tool to close the intention-behavior gap in a sustainable shopping environment? Does technostress have an influence on this relation?

Method and Data

We conducted a 2x2 between subjects experimental study design to determine the effect of digital information nudging combined with perceived technostress in online stores on the ecologically sustainable purchasing behavior of consumers. A total of 201 people participated in the online survey. The mean age of the participants is 28.6 years (SD = 8.8) and approximately 52% identified themselves as female. Participants were randomly exposed to one of the website designs (technostress manipulation vs. no technostress manipulation and nudging manipulation vs. no nudging manipulation) in a fictitious German online store. To measure the underlying constructs, we referred to scales developed and validated in several previous studies. Six items were used to capture the respondents' green consciousness (Haws, Winterich & Naylor, 2014), the perception of technostress was measured by the use of three items (Peters, Feste & Schumacher, 2022), and

three items were applied to assess sustainable purchase decision (Chan, 2001). We established the measurement model by using a confirmatory factor analysis and by assessing global fit indices and criteria for the internal structure of the model (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Schreiber et al., 2006). For examining the conditional process model, we used the macro PROCESS v3.5.3 (Hayes, 2018, model 18). The research model represents a moderated moderated mediation.

Summary of Findings

Our findings indicate that information nudging in the digital space is a functional tool to close the gap between green purchase intention and actual sustainable purchase decision, especially in case of low to medium existing green purchase intention. However, the nudging instrument loses its effect with increasing levels of perceived technostress. Additionally, our research contributes to a deeper understanding of the limitations of nudging by showing that as soon as consumers already have a high level of green consciousness, nudging no longer seems to have an effect. Especially in the case of high perceived technostress, it becomes visible that subjects buy less sustainable products in the nudging condition. With the results of our analysis, e-commerce operators can more accurately assess the effects of nudging in online shops and be aware of the need to avoid cognitive overload. To do so, the target groups of the respective online store as well as the type of product(s) to be sold could be considered. In the case of products of higher complexity or consumers with a high level of online shopping experience, information nudging can take place to a higher degree, since additional information has a less stressful effect and is probably even desired.

Key Contributions

Nudging can represent a way to convince individuals to consume sustainably but refrain from tools like prohibitions or economic incentives. Especially in the rapidly growing digital sales

environments, nudging could prove to be very effective, as information can be presented easily and inexpensively. However, digital environments are closely associated with the perception of technostress. Our study contributes to the e-commerce and consumer psychology literature and extends the research by showing how digital information nudging in combination with perceived technostress in online shopping situations influence consumers' purchase decisions with respect to sustainable products.

Our findings, based on an experimental study with 201 participants, show that information nudging in e-commerce is a useful tool to close this gap, but that the effect is weakened significantly with increasing levels of technostress, especially in combination with an already existing high green purchase intention, suggesting cognitive strain due to information overload. To minimize the exposure to technostress, the characteristics of the target groups as well as the type of products could be considered. Our study enables e-commerce store operators to assess the effects of digital nudging in combination with existing technostress on a desired sustainable purchase decision and thus to use the tool more purposefully due to an increasing awareness of its limitations.

References are available upon request.

Do Morphed Product Forms Enhance Consumer Response to Cause Marketing Campaigns?

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Firms find it challenging to design effective cause marketing campaigns, which are often viewed with skepticism since donations are tied to product sales. This paper examines the impact of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic products on campaign credibility and product purchase intention in the context of cause-related marketing (CrM). Results from two experimental studies involving mediation analysis (Study 1) and moderated mediation analysis (Study 2) indicate that morphed product forms can make a CrM campaign more successful as their purchase intention is higher than non-morphed product forms due to the enhanced credibility of the campaign. Morphed product forms, further, are effective in enhancing purchase intention when there exists a congruence between the morphed product form (anthropomorphic or zoomorphic) and the CrM beneficiary (human vs. animal) as the credibility of congruent product forms is higher. Lastly, when emotions and CrM types (welfare-related or relief-related) are introduced, the anthropomorphic product form enhances credibility and purchase intention more than a zoomorphic product form (moderated mediation) when congruence exists between the emotional expression of an anthropomorphic product and CrM type.

Keywords: anthropomorphism, zoomorphism, cause marketing, schema congruency

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS TO ACADEMICS AND PRACTITIONERS

Contribution to Academics

There is a growing body of literature on the negative effects of brand anthropomorphism (Kim and McGill 2011; Puzakova et al. 2013). Our findings assert that in a CrM context, anthropomorphism has a positive effect. Although marketing scholars have explored the impact of anthropomorphic animals in advertising (Spears et al. 1996), the use of product forms morphed into animals has received less attention, and our paper addresses this gap.

Furthermore, by examining the role of emotions in anthropomorphic product forms, this research extends the work of Puzakova et al. (2013) and Kwak et al. (2015) to the field of CrM. In a pricing context, for instance, when prices are low, consumers prefer smiling products. In the context of CrM, we find that when a campaign is associated with welfare, a smiling anthropomorphic product raises the credibility of the CrM claim. However, due to schema incongruency, it backfires when CrM is pain-relief related.

Contribution to Practitioners

As for-profit firms use CrM campaigns, consumer skepticism about such campaigns increases since consumers may question the true objectives of a firm intending to raise profits through sales tied to a charitable cause (Ellen et al. 1998; Mohr and Webb 2006). Our study suggests that this can be done by raising the credibility of a campaign through anthropomorphic or zoomorphic product forms.

By examining the moderating impact of congruence between emotional appeal and CrM type, the present study's results indicate that managers should focus on facial expressions of morphed product forms. For a pain-relief-related CrM campaign, a product form’s neutral expression is best positioned to enhance credibility and consumer purchase intention. For welfare-enhancing CrM campaigns, an increase in credibility and purchase intention can happen if managers use a smiling anthropomorphic product.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, firms have invested heavily in cause-related marketing (CrM) campaigns to support a charitable cause from product sales (Robinson et al. 2012). The major challenge for firms is that consumers view CrM with skepticism, as it is often tied to the purchase of a product (Chernev and Blair 2015; Lii and Lee 2012). As a result, their purchase intention is also adversely affected (Schlosser et al. 2006). Thus, it becomes imperative to investigate the factors that enhance the credibility of CrM campaigns and hence consumer purchase intention. In this context, we explore if brand anthropomorphism (human-resembling products) and zoomorphism (animal-resembling products) can make CrM campaigns more effective. Although brand anthropomorphism has been explored in different marketing contexts, such as pricing (Kwak et al. 2015) and brand recall (Puzakova et al. 2013), zoomorphism has received relatively scant attention in the marketing literature. However, some investigation into anthropomorphic animals has been conducted (Butterfield et al. 2012).

Employing schema congruency theory, we assert that emotions should be congruent with the type of CrM to enhance the credibility of the campaign leading to enhanced purchase intention of consumers. We focus on two types of CrM: *welfare-enhancing* and *pain-reducing*. A CrM campaign that enhances welfare and happiness for the beneficiary (such as a nutrition program) is likely to be perceived as more credible if it is accompanied by a smiling product facial cue rather than a sad or neutral facial cue. Similarly, a pain-reducing CrM campaign (such as a flood relief campaign) might be more effective with a neutral rather than sad or happy facial cue. Here, we specifically explore if the impact of emotional congruence with the type of CrM is greater for an anthropomorphic or zoomorphic product.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Product Form: Anthropomorphism and Zoomorphism

Anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism implies attributing effortful thinking, emotional states, or human behavioral features to non-human objects (Aggarwal and McGill 2007; Epley et al. 2007). Individuals have a tendency to search for human traits in non-human objects (Epley et al. 2007; Waytz et al. 2010). To create persuasive appeals, marketing managers portray products and brands with human features, such as faces, arms, or legs (Aggarwal and McGill 2007; Fournier 1998). Anthropomorphic products are perceived to have the same behavior, attitude, emotions, and motivations as human beings (Trampe et al. 2007; Chandler and Schwarz 2010; Waytz et al. 2010).

Zoomorphism

VandenBos (2007, p. 1011) define Zoomorphism as "the attribution of animal traits to human beings, or inanimate objects." Zoomorphic products or images have been popular with different cultures and consumer segments. For instance, the Natick Praying Indians of Massachusetts, USA, for centuries used zoomorphic products to perform rituals during prayers and strengthened their relationship with animal spirits (Brown 2010; Bryant and Forsyth 2012; Van Lonkhuyzen 1990). Again, several iconic fictional characters such as Spiderman, Batman, or Wolverine are zoomorphic protagonists possessing special powers as they have a deeper connection with primal force.

Amiot and Bastian (2017) asserted that humans show positive attitudes and behavior toward animals because of solidarity, which implies a sense of belonging, closeness, and psychological attachment felt for other animals (Leach et al. 2008). This solidarity arises as humans consider animals as a part of their own social group (Tajfel 1981).

Similar to anthropomorphic products, for zoomorphic products as well when people see animal-resembling products, the same neural systems involved in making judgments about animals are activated (Epley et al. 2007; Waytz et al. 2010). This attribution of animal qualities to inanimate products makes the products mindful entities with goals, a heart, a brain, and their desires (Epley et al. 2007). The attribution of these traits to non-human objects, thus, inspires consumers to view such objects as having their intents and wishes (Waytz et al. 2010), which increases the consumers' desire to protect them (Chandler and Schwarz 2010) and helps these products accomplish their goals.

Overall, our discussion about anthropomorphic and zoomorphic products implies that if CrM campaigns use morphed product forms compared to non-morphed products, due to the attribution of human or animal-like traits to anthropomorphic and zoomorphic products, consumers would be more willing to help a firm's campaign by purchasing such products. Hence, we hypothesize:

H1 (a) For CrM campaigns, consumers have a stronger purchase intention for anthropomorphic and zoomorphic product forms in comparison to a non-morphed product form.

CrM Credibility

Extant literature in consumer psychology explains the persuasive power of messenger sources and how the credibility of these sources influences consumers' attitudes (McCroskey 1969). Message source credibility implies a receiver's belief in the message sender. The attitude towards the message source (Gunther 1992) influences the trust that a receiver feels towards the claims made by the source.

However, Hovland and Weiss (1951) found that when a persuader was perceived to make a profit from the message, they were not considered trustworthy. The American Psychological Association also theorized that government interventions fail to combat

environmental issues, such as climate change, because of the mistrust consumers associate with messages sent by the government (Foddy and Dawes 2008). These findings have important implications for CrM campaigns conducted by profited-oriented firms through anthropomorphic and zoomorphic products. When a CrM campaign involves a non-morphed product, the messenger is perceived to be a profit-making company, thus reducing the campaign's credibility.

On the contrary, when an anthropomorphic or zoomorphic product is used in a CrM campaign, the messenger source shifts from the company to the morphed product. Extant literature indicates that anthropomorphic products are considered more trustworthy than other products (Nowak and Rauh 2005; Waytz et al. 2014), and the same can be the case for zoomorphic products. Thus, CrM campaigns with congruent morphed product forms could raise the credibility of the CrM appeal, resulting in enhanced purchase intention. Hence, we hypothesize:

> H1 (b) Credibility mediates the relationship between morphed product form (anthropomorphic and zoomorphic vs. non-morphed product form) and purchase intention.

Congruence Between Morphed Product Form and CrM Beneficiary

Although morphed product forms, due to better association with humans and animals, could enhance credibility and purchase intention, they are likely to do so if congruence exists between the CrM target and the morphed product form. For instance, if a zoomorphic product is used for a CrM campaign targeted toward humans, the mismatch would reduce credibility and purchase intention. We explain our assertion with the schema congruency theory.

CrM and Emotional Congruence

Role of emotions

Although we assert that congruent morphed products could enhance the credibility and purchase intention of products associated with a CrM campaign, extant studies in charity have highlighted the importance of the target's facial expressions in charitable giving (Small and Verrochi 2009). The literature on charitable appeals gives mixed results on how happy and sad images can influence an individual's propensity to donate (Faseur and Geuens 2010). Similar to positive emotional imagery appeal, even negative emotional appeal may backfire, as consumers may find such appeal a pressure tactic to force potential donors to charity (Chang and Lee 2009; Goenka and Van Osselaer, 2019).

Differences in campaigns' credibility in CrM and charity (Bae, 2018) warrant an understanding of contingency factors in enhancing the effectiveness of emotional expression appeal in the CrM context. To elaborate on our arguments in this context, we first discuss the literature on the type of CrM.

Types of CrM

CrM campaigns have been categorized in several ways. One categorization distinguishes CrM as ongoing causes versus disasters (Skitka 1999), where ongoing refers to continuous societal welfare activities, such as a child education or animal welfare program. Disaster-related CrM is sudden and urgent, arising from natural calamities such as tsunamis and earthquakes. Similarly, Kotler and Lee (2005) categorized CrM as primary vs. secondary needs, where primary needs refer to basic human needs required for survival, such as clothing, shelter, and food, and secondary needs focus on the quality of life, such as employment, or community services (Vanhamme et al. 2012). In this study, we refer to CrM campaigns that are likely to enhance the quality of life and happiness for beneficiaries

as *welfare-related CrM* and those CrM campaigns that predominantly ameliorate the pain of beneficiaries due to tragedies of natural calamities or primary needs, etc., as pain relief *CrM*.

Congruency Between Emotional Appeal and CrM Type

When consumers purchase a product associated with charity appeal, they would first judge the credibility of the appeal, which is likely to be influenced by the congruence between CrM type and emotional appeal. For instance, if the campaign is intended to enhance happiness through welfare programs such as quality of life programs, etc., sorrowful images will be incongruent with the appeal, thus reducing the campaign's credibility. Similarly, a positive emotional appeal may raise suspicion if the CrM campaign is intended to reduce the pain of grief-struck beneficiaries seeking help to ameliorate their pain. It is thus vital that emotional appeal is in congruence with the type of CrM.

When the emotional appeal of the morphed product form is in congruence with the type of CrM, it creates congruent mental images, which are easily retrieved and facilitate information processing, thus enhancing the credibility of the appeal in the campaign (Schneider et al. 2001). Furthermore, for a pain relief CrM campaign, a sad image of a morphed product is less effective than a neutral morphed product form. This is for two reasons. *First*, consumers might feel pressured when a sad facial expression is used in a CrM campaign. As per Brehm’s theory of psychological reactance, negative emotions force consumers to sympathize, and as a restoration of their sense of freedom of choice, consumers might dislike negative emotions (Chang and Lee 2009).

Second, society generally provides limited channels of social expression of grief, partly because sadness is indicative of a person being weak and submissive (Tiedens 2001). To express grief or sorrow, social norms encourage individuals to appear neutral and speechless rather than openly sad. Thus, if CrM beneficiaries are in pain due to natural

disasters or life-threatening hunger (Kotler and Lee 2005), according to cognitive schemas developed through social norms, these beneficiaries would be expected to appear emotionally neutral rather than crying or sad to make CrM appear more credible. Overall, consumer response to the emotional appeal in CrM campaigns for morphed product forms depends on their congruency with CrM type, i.e., welfare-related CrM or pain relief CrM.

Furthermore, analyzing the emotions of animals has always remained a challenge. Only recently, scientists have been able to develop procedures to accurately read the facial expression of animals and understand what they are trying to communicate. Scientists are also trying to develop such technologies which are able to diagnose the actual emotion of animals instead of simply guessing the meanings of facial expressions (Guesgen and Bench 2017).

On the contrary, reading faces and expressions of human beings is far simpler and comes naturally to human beings. Overall, human's inability to decode animals' emotions from their facial expression implies that facial expression as a stimulus in CrM appeals is more important and relatable for anthropomorphic objects than zoomorphic objects. This implies that congruence of emotions with CrM type is more important for anthropomorphic than for zoomorphic products. Hence, we hypothesize the following:

H2 (a) Compared to a zoomorphic product, an anthropomorphic product would enhance the credibility of a CrM campaign when i) a smiling facial expression is used for a welfare-related cause or ii) a neutral facial expression is used for a pain-reducing cause (congruent condition).

H2 (b) Compared to a zoomorphic product, an anthropomorphic product would decrease the credibility of a CrM campaign when i) a neutral or ii) a sad facial expression is used for a welfare-related cause and iii) a sad or iv) a smiling facial expression is used for a pain reducing cause (incongruent condition).

H2 (c) Compared to a zoomorphic product, an anthropomorphic product would enhance (decrease) the credibility of a CrM campaign and hence purchase intention when a congruency (incongruency) exists between facial expression and the type of CrM.

METHODOLOGY

We conducted a series of pretests and exploratory research in the UK with consumers, floor managers of retail stores, graphic designers, and academics to a) select the product categories for the studies, b) select the animal for the zoomorphic condition, c) examine the resemblance of the morphed products with animal or human face and to examine the facial expressions of happy, sad, and neutral to be used across studies, d) determine the average retail price of the products and the CrM contribution amounts and e) select a welfare-related and a pain-reducing program. Based on the results of the first pretest, "chair" was selected as the product to morph in Study 1 and Study 2. Through exploratory research and a pretest, we selected "cow" as the animal whose body features and facial expression will be used to develop the zoomorphic products across the two studies.

STUDY 1

Study Design and Sample

We conducted a between-subject experiment with three conditions: anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, and non-morphed. To create the anthropomorphic product, we used human legs; for the zoomorphic product, we used an animal's legs. A professional graphic designer from the UK developed the three ads, one ad for each product form. The specific information on selling price and CrM contribution amount were consistent across all the adverts. The CrM beneficiary information across all the ads was constant and mentioned, "Buy this chair and we will donate £2.19 towards a program for a good cause." Data for study 1 was collected through a web-based survey involving students from a university located in the North-East of

the UK. A total of 125 (Female = 69) completely filled-in questionnaires were obtained.

Procedures and Measures

Each student who accepted to participate in the study received a web link with a fictional advertisement of a chair (anthropomorphic or zoomorphic or non-morphed). The students first responded to a 10-item credibility scale (Andrew et al. 2001; Dahlen 2005; Goldsmith et al. 2001; Putrevu 2004) followed by a 3-item purchase intention (PI) scale (Dodds et al. 1991). Consumers also responded to a 3-item warm glow of giving (WG) scale (Taute and McQuitty 2004), a 4-item attitude towards helping other (ATHO) scale (Webb et al. 2000), a 3-item interpersonal trust (IT) scale adapted from (Das et al. 2003) and a 5-item cause involvement (CI) scale (Grau and Folse 2007). Each of the scale items was measured on an 11-point Likert scale. The variables WG, ATHO, IT, and CI were controlled since they were found to influence the relationship between morphed products, credibility and purchase intention (Andrews et al. 2014, Touré-Tillery and McGill 2015).

Manipulation Checks

Following Landwehr et al. (2011), Sonderegger and Sauer (2010), and Stafford (1998), a series of manipulation checks were performed.

Results

Mediation Analysis. We examined the speculations made through H1a and H1b by conducting a mediation analysis using Model 4 of the Process macro (Version 3.0) (Hayes 2018) with a bootstrapping re-sample value of 20,000 and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (CIs). The relative direct effect of the present study revealed that adjusting for group differences in PI, respondents in the anthropomorphic condition and zoomorphic condition were 0.35 units (β=0.35, $p<0.01$) and 0.24 units (β=0.24, $p< 0.05$) more favorable to purchase, than respondents in the non-morphed condition (reference category). This provides

evidence in support of H1a.

Through H1b, we speculated that an anthropomorphic ad and a zoomorphic ad, in comparison to a non-morphed product ad, will have a higher purchase intention through the credibility of the CrM campaign. The relative indirect effect of the anthropomorphic ad in comparison to the non-morphed product ad on purchase intention through credibility was significant (β = 1.23, S.E.= 0.27, [CI= 0.70 to 1.77]). Also, the indirect effect of the zoomorphic ad in comparison to the non-morphed product ad was significant (β = 0.73, S.E.= 0.31, [CI= 0.12 to 1.34]). Thus, we receive evidence in support of H1b. To further provide support to H1a and H1b, we also compared the differences among the product forms (independent factor) with respect to purchase intention and credibility of the CrM campaign (i.e., the dependent variables) through a MANCOVA procedure with WG, ATHO, IT and CI as covariates.

STUDY 2

Study Design and Sample

To test the moderated-mediation mechanism, we employed a 2 (Product Form [Anthropomorphic vs. Zoomorphic]) * 2(CrM Type [Welfare vs. Pain Relief]) *3 (Emotion Type [Happy vs. Neutral vs. Sad] between-subject experimental design. Similar to Study 1, in this study, also a Chair was used as the product category. To create the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic products, along with using body parts like the legs of a human or cow, which were also used in Study 1, the facial expression of human (animal) was also used. Additionally, the information used in the adverts were manipulated to represent a welfare-related CrM campaign (nutrition program) or a pain-reducing CrM campaign (flood relief). Data for study 2 was collected through Qualtrics and involved UK consumers. For this study, a total of 534 consumers were invited to participate in a web-based survey. A total of 496 (Female= 256, Median Income = £27,095) completely filled-in questionnaires were obtained.

Procedures and Measures

Similar to Study 1, each respondent received a web link with an advertisement for a chair. Consumers first responded to a 10-item credibility scale followed by a 3-item purchase intention scale. Next, consumers responded to the WG, ATHO, CI, and IT scales.

Manipulation Checks

Similar to Study 1, we performed a series of manipulation checks in study 2.

Results

As expected through H2a, when the CrM type was welfare and the facial expression was happy, consumers perceived a CrM campaign with an anthropomorphic product to be more credible in comparison to a zoomorphic product (MAnthro, welfare, happy= 9.42 vs. MZoo, welfare, happy= 8.41, $t[81] = 4.10$, $p < .001$). Also, when the CrM type was pain relief and the facial expression was neutral, consumers perceived a CrM campaign with an anthropomorphic product to be more credible in comparison to a zoomorphic product (MAnthro, pain relief, neutral= 9.13 vs. M Zoo, pain relief, neutral = 8.15, $t[79] = 3.92$, $p < .001$). Thus, H3a was supported.

Furthermore, as expected, a test of H2b revealed that an advert with an anthropomorphic chair in comparison to a zoomorphic chair decreased the credibility of a welfare-related CrM campaign when a neutral or a sad facial expression was used and the credibility of a pain relief related CrM campaign when a sad or smiling facial expression was used (MAnthro, welfare, neutral= 5.74 vs. MZoo, welfare, neutral= 6.37, $t[81] = 2.33$, $p < .05$; MAnthro, welfare, sad= 5.12 vs. MZoo, welfare, sad= 5.77, $t[80] = 2.69$, $p < .01$; MAnthro, pain, sad= 5.09 vs. MZoo, pain, sad= 5.93 $t[82] =2.88$, $p < .01$; MAnthro, pain, happy=5.06 vs. MZoo, pain, happy= 5.86 $t[81] = 2.77$, $p < .01$).

Moderated-Mediation Analysis. To test H3c, we conducted a moderated-mediation analysis. An examination of the conditional indirect effect of product form on purchase intention through the credibility of the CrM campaign revealed that respondents in the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic conditions differ in their intention to purchase a chair, particularly under the emotion type-CrM type congruence or incongruence condition. Under a congruent condition, respondents in the anthropomorphic condition have a higher intention to purchase through credibility in comparison to respondents in the zoomorphic condition ($\beta_{Anthro, Congruent}$= 1.04, SE= 0.18, [CI = 0.69 to 1.40]). Nevertheless, when there is an incongruence, in comparison to respondents in the zoomorphic condition, anthropomorphic conditioned respondents have a lower intention to purchase through credibility ($\beta_{Anthro, Incongruence}$ =-0.77, SE = 0.14 [CI = -1.04 to -0.48]). Thus, H2c is supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Until now, researchers have addressed factors that make CrM more effective such as donation size, price discounts, or premiums associated with the product (Dubé et al. 2017; Koschate- Fischer et al. 2016). Nevertheless, to the best of our knowledge, they have not explored how particular product forms can increase the effectiveness of CrM. Our research explores this significant gap and offers a framework to understand how anthropomorphism and zoomorphism could influence the effectiveness of CrM. Our results suggest that purchase intention increased for morphed product forms as campaign credibility (mediator) increased with morphed product forms. Results based on moderated mediation analysis suggest that congruency of emotions of morphed product form with CrM type was vital in increasing purchase intention for anthropomorphic product form than zoomorphic product form. Future studies could explore how different types of CrM campaigns influence the effectiveness of morphed product forms.

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Do socio-psychological factors contribute to the use of green energy and climate change mitigation in the residential sector?

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Abstract

Global warming and climate change due to increasing energy demand are becoming a serious challenge that impedes the sustainable development of the natural and human systems. This study stands in the perspective of using green energy as a mitigation strategy to combat climate change in Australian setting. Based on the Environmental Theory of Planned Behaviour model (ETPB, Mancha & Yoder, 2015) modified from TPB (Ajzen, 1991), the study aims to explain people's behavioural intent to use green energy. In this context, the study investigates how socio-psychological dimensions —such attitude, social pressure, personal norm, environmental concern, environmental sustainability awareness—affect people's intention to use green energy to fight against the climate change. Data collected (n=386) from the Australian households by a postal survey were analysed using partial least squares–structural equation modelling- PLS-SEM technique to examine the strength of the relationships among the constructs. Overall, the study findings indicated people's intentions to use green energy (IG) to mitigate the mitigate change could be better explained by the socio-psychological factors. The findings add to the previous body of work and extends our knowledge on theoretical perspective to guide the green energy policy against the climate change. Researchers and practitioners would find the study findings and insights encouraging.

Keywords: Climate change, Intention to use green energy (IG), Environmental Theory of Planned Behavior (ETPB).

Introduction and Context

Climate change is a major environmental concern for society and is greatly influenced by greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Energy consumption in the residential sector currently accounts for 17% of global CO2 emissions and is one of the primary and fastest-growing anthropogenic sources of CO2emission (IEA, 2019; Jakučionytė-Skodienė, 2020). Since combustion of fossil fuels for energy generation is the prime source of GHG, many scholars assert that a shift towards green energy is imperative to achieving environmental sustainability (Sangroya & Nayak, 2017; Palandino & pandit, 2019; Ahmed et al. 2021). Green energy defined as "electricity generated using renewable energy sources, and including technologies such as photovoltaic solar panels, biomass projects, geothermal projects and wind farms" (Zarnikau, 2003, p.1661). The usage of green energy sources for electricity generation involves zero greenhouse gas emission, thereby offering a lasting solution to climate change (Chen, 2016; Yu et al. 2017)). Therefore, use of green energy appears to be one of the important strategies suggested by environmental educators to combat climate change, and it endeavors major benefits of climate change adaptation and practical mitigation (Hasan & Kumar, 2019; Tiew et al. 2019).Recognizing the need for energy consumption, many countries, including many developed and developing economies, settled ambitious political agenda, and targets to develop alternative energy options (i.e., green energy) to reduce the CO2 emissions. For example, Australia one of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters (Howard et al. 2018; Palandino & pandit, 2019), aims to reduce GHG of 50% by 2030.To meet this 2030 emissions reduction target, several initiatives have been introduced by the Australian government to increase the adoption level of green energy in the residential sector. For example, a household package worth AU$14.9 billion over four years was introduced to consumers through tax cuts, family payments and increases to pensions and allowances (Paladino & Pandit 2019). However, these are short-term and ad-hoc initiatives designed. For complete acceptance of green energy, only government support, regulations are not enough; the willingness to use green energy and contribute to the wellbeing of the environment should spring from within consumers (Sangroya & Nayak, 2017).
Therefore, it is important and necessary to investigate consumer values, their psychology, the motivational factors to understand what people think and where attention should be focused to increase education and awareness raising of green energy to fight against the global environmental issues— global warming, climate change. Withing this context, in recent years, a number of authors have analysed the psychological determinants of people's pro-environmental behavioural intention to reduce climate change relating to energy saving behaviour (Chen, 2016; Jakučionytė-Skodienė, 2020), green product consumption (Yu. 2017). However, in this paper, referring to the behavioural intent we focused on a specific green product – 'green energy' that received little attention from academic researchers (Chen, 2016; Palandino & pandit, 2019; Ahmed et al. 20121). The aim of the study is to increase our understanding of the formation of people's intention to use green energy (IG) to mitigate the climate issue by considering the effects of socio psychological dimensions related to green energy using the data from Australia.

Research framework and Hypotheses

Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB, Ajzen, 1991) is one of the most widely cited and applied theories that explains human behaviours through a cognitive approach, which center on their attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control. TPB claims that intention to act is the best predictor of behaviour as intentions capture motivational factors that influence Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).The study takes into consideration essential components of the Environmental Theory of Planned behaviour (ETPB, Mancha & Yoder, 2015) modified from TPB (Ajzen, 1991), namely, green attitude, green subjective norm, green perceived behavioral control (GPBC), intention and tests these in the context of intention to use green energy (IG) to combat the climate change. The relative influence of these factors depends on the particular issue under study and the sample (Mancha & Yoder, 2015) but the TPB model is robust and effective (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Sultan et al. 2020). Therefore, the study takes into consideration this model provides a reasonable perspective on the present research question. In TPB, attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a given behavior and its expected outcomes. SN refers to a person's "perceptions of the extent to which significant others would endorse a given behavior and personal motivations to comply with this social pressure" (Sultan et al. 2020). PBC, is used for measuring the ability of an individual to affect environmental issues (Hanss & Doran 2020). Our ETPB model incorporates additional three constructs viz. personal norm, environmental sustainability awareness and environmental concern into an adaptation of TPB to effectively predict people's intention to use green energy (IG) in the context of mitigating climate change. Personal norms are defined as feelings of strong moral obligation to engage in altruistic or green behavior (Schwartz, 1977). Environmental sustainability focuses on upholding or improving the integrity of earth's life supporting systems (Kasayanond et al. 2019). Environmental concern relates to the level of concern an individual has about environmental issues (Yu et al. 2019). The concepts of and relationships between attitude, subjective norm, personal norm, PBC, environmental concern, environmental sustainability awareness with intention in the context of environmental issues are much studied and debated topics. There is a wealth of research available in this social– psychological arena from the past five decades and new concepts are evolving. The present study expands the knowledge and briefly explains these concepts linking them to explain people's intention to use green energy as a mitigation strategy against the climate change. Drawing from the original formulation of TPB (Ajzen, 1991) and multiple evaluations of theory and findings (e.g., Armitage & Conner, 2001; Halder et al. 2013; Ahmed et al. 2019; 2021; Yu et al. 2019; Panda et al. 2020) supporting the precedence of aforementioned factors over behavioural intention, we postulate that the six antecedents of intention will positively relate to intention to use green energy to combat climate change.

The following six directional hypotheses (H1~H6) capture these relationships:

H1: Green attitude is positively related to intention to use green energy to combat climate change.
H2: Green subjective norm is positively related to intention to use green energy to combat climate change.
H3: Green perceived behavioural control is positively related to intention to use green energy to combat climate change.
H4: Personal norm is positively related to intention to use green energy to combat climate change.
H5: Environmental concern is positively related to intention to use green energy to combat climate change.
H6: Environmental sustainability awareness is positively related to the intention to use green energy to combat climate change.

Research Methodology

The partial least squares (PLS) method, which is a variance-based technique for the analysis of structural equation modeling, was used to analyze the data, with the assistance of the Smart-PLS 3 (Hair et al. 2019; Sultan et al. 2020). A questionnaire was designed using data from a postal survey finding. The sample used to validate the environmental ETPB model (H1~H6) consists of 386 usable respondents living in NSW, Australia was captured using random sample of consumers drawn from the white pages telephone directory. The measured items were adapted and modified from previous green marketing literatures. The items were designed on a seven-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree.

Analysis and Findings

In the proposed model one of the dimensions, *pro-environmental intention*, denoting people's intentions to use green energy (IG) was treated as a criterion variable in the PLS-SEM analysis. The other three dimensions— green attitude, green subjective norm, GPBC, personal norm, environmental sustainability awareness, and environmental concern—were treated as determinants of IG. To assess the significance of coefficient for every path proposed in the model, a bootstrapping technique was performed with 2000 re-samples (Sultan et al.2020). Assessment of the path coefficient showed that all hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6) were supported. Table 1 confirms the causal hypotheses of the ETPB model in the context of IG in Australia. Based on the analysis, the support found from the hypothesized model indicates that people's IG positively associated with their evaluation of the consequences of consumer green consumer attitude (GCA, $\beta = 0.155$, t-value=2.225, $p < 0.05$) , green subjective norm from important referents (GSN, $\beta = 0.252$, t-value=2.238, $p < 0.05$), GPBC ($\beta = 0.468$, t-value=9.325, $p < 0.01$) over the barriers for a green energy buying, environmental sustainability awareness (ESA, $\beta = 0.349$, t-value=6.565, $p < 0.01$), environmental concern (EC, β=0. 0.311, t-value=4.225, $p < 0.01$) and personal norm (PN, β=0.739, t-value=12.624, $p < 0.01$) over green energy consumption indicating people's intentions to engage in green energy consumption and carbon reduction behaviors to mitigate climate change problems in Australia. The results obtained from the extended ETPB model, which includes GCA, GSN, GPBC, CSR, ESA and PN reveal that the all the six antecedents included in this model can explain about 78% of the variance (R^2) on people's intention to engage in green energy consumption action to reduce the GHG mitigating climate change problems. When examined the variables affecting the IG, it is seen that personal norm has the highest effect (β=0.539, $p < 0.01$) followed by GPBC (β=0.468, $p < 0.01$), environmental sustainability awareness (β=0. 0.349, $p < 0.01$), environmental concern, (β=0. 0.311, $p < 0.01$), green subjective norm (β=0.252, $p < 0.05$) and green attitude (β=0. 0.155, $p < 0.05$). Based on these findings it is possible to say that the personal norm variable added to the model is an important variable that improved and strengthens the measurement model. Personal norm added to the model are compatible with Ajzen's original TPB model. Contribution of the personal norm in the proposed model indicates that if an individual possesses strong personal norm, then he/she would like to overcome the perceived difficulties - PBC (e.g., lack of resources such as time, money, skills, and the cooperation of others as well as opportunities) to engage in green energy consumption and carbon reduction behaviours to mitigate the climate change.

Causal hypothesis	β-values	t-values	p-values	Result
H1: GCA - GPI	0.155	2.225	0.034*	Accepted
H2: GSN - GPI	0.252	2.238	0.027*	Accepted
H3: GPBC-GPI	0.468	9.325	0.000**	Accepted
H4: EC-GPI	0.311	4.225	0.001**	Accepted
H5: ESA-GPI	0.349	6.565	0.000**	Accepted
H6: PN-GPI	0.739	12.624	0.000**	Accepted

Notes: If *t*-value is greater than 1.96 (*$p < 0.05$); if the *t*-value is greater than 2.58 (**$p < 0.01$)

Table 1: Hypotheses testing and structural results

Contributions and Implications

The current study is an extension in the existing green consumption theoretical body of knowledge and evaluates the effect on intention to use green energy (IG) as an outcome of green attitude, green subjective norm, GPBC, environmental sustainability awareness, environmental concern and personal norm. Knowledge of these results indicate similar findings from previous studies (Chen, 2016; Schlaile et al.2018; Panda et al.2020; Sultan et al.2020). The study contributes to the restricted literature in the perspective of Australian standpoint, regards the IG in response to the climate change as pro-environmental behaviours, and validates the pro-environmental behavioural intent model, where to the author's best understanding, only modest research effort has been given to explore this topic. The study contributes not only by empirically testing the ETPB in a new context but also by demonstrating the major factors effecting the IG to mitigate the climate change and their respective relevance for marketing practice. Overall, the study findings indicated people's intentions to use green energy to mitigate the mitigate change could be better explained by considering their personal norm, PBC and environmental sustainability awareness aspects related to green energy. Taken together, these results suggest that policy makers and professionals working in the field of green energy should try to increase the positive image of green energy and facilitate consumers to become aware of green energy in order to influence their intentions to use green energy to combat climate change. Internationally more efforts are desirable to enhance public perceptions of green energy and create more opportunities to disseminate that information among the residential consumer market.

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EATING UP AS A GOAL: THE EFFECT OF PARTITIONS ON FOOD PURCHASE QUANTITY

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Keywords: partitions, package format, unconscious goal pursuit, goal attainability, sub-goals

Description: This research examines the impact of package format (partitioned vs. non-partitioned) on purchase quantity.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In food industry, it's prevalent to offer products in partitions (i.e., multipacks with individually wrapped singe-served portions). In literature, however, as most research is interested in the relationship between partitions (or small package) and consumption, little has been known about the effect of mere partitioning on purchase quantity. As existing research has shown consumers tend to consume more if purchase more and their quantity decisions are vulnerable to external factors because of a poor estimation of needs, it may be necessary to know the impact of partitioning on purchase quantity to protect consumer health and avoid unnecessary cost. Thus, in current research, we try to find out whether and why partitioning influences food purchase quantity in a single shopping occasion.

We propose partitioned (vs. non-partitioned) packages will increase purchase quantity. When buying food, consumers will regard eating up a package of food as a goal unconsciously and partitions will serve as sub-goals. Because sub-goals can increase goal attainability and goal motivation, partitions will reduce anticipated completion time and thus increase purchase quantity.

Method and Data

Study 1 was a one-factor (package format: non-partitioned vs. partitioned) between-subjects design. To manipulate package format, same raisins were packed either in a single package or four small packages within a single package. Results showed a partitioned package led to significantly lower anticipated completion time and more purchase quantity and anticipated completion time mediated the effect.

Study 2 adopted a 2 (goal activation: control vs. avoiding) × 2 (package format: non-partitioned vs. partitioned) between-subjects design. To manipulate goal activation, participants either recalled a recent shopping experience or read an essay about avoiding unconscious goal activation and wrote down an example. Same biscuits were wrapped either directly in a box or additionally with four small packages. Results indicated a moderating role of goal activation. In goal avoiding condition, the effect of partitions on anticipated completion and purchase quantity disappeared.

Study 3 was a goal disengagement (measure) × 2 (package format: non-partitioned vs. partitioned) between-subject design. Same raisins were packed either in a single package or four

small packages within a single package. Results showed a moderating role of goal disengagement. For participants with low goal disengagement, the effect of partitions was weakened.

Summary of Findings

Three studies provide evidence for our assumptions. Study 1 find consumers will purchase more when food is wrapped in a partitioned (vs. non-partitioned) package in a single buying occasion because of lower anticipated completion time. Study 2 further demonstrate the underlying mechanism of the above effect by indicating the moderating role of goal activation. That is, it is because consumers unconsciously regard eating up a package of food as a goal and partitions can serve as sub-goals increasing attainability and motivation that a partitioned package can increase the purchase quantity. When consumers are cued to avoid such goals, the effect of partitions disappears. Study 3 additionally find the mediating effect of anticipated completion time is weakened for consumers tend to persist a goal even it is unattainable, supporting the assumption that food purchasing should be considered as a goal completion process.

Key Contributions

This work provides contributions to the literature about consumers' goal setting, the influence of food packaging, and dark side of partitions regarding food consumption control. First, this research provides support that consumers would consider eating up as a goal when encounter a packaged food, which identify a new situation that consumers' goals are activated

unconsciously and contribute to the comprehensive understanding about consumers' goal setting. It also indicates that factors influencing consumers' motivation to achieve a goal are likely to affect anticipated and actual food consumption.

Second, by showing partitions as sub-goals reduce anticipated completion time and thus increase the purchase quantity, the current research finds a way to increase sales and adds to previous research on packaging which mainly focus on the effect of packing on actual food consumption, consumer choices, product favorability, less has been known about how it affects purchase quantity.

Third, the current findings also indicate partitions might increase actual food consumption as consumers tend to consume more when the inventory is high, which is not only important for consumers' food consumption control, but also distinct from previous findings that partitions reduce actual consumption.

EFFECT OF SAMPLING HEALTHY VERSUS UNHEALTHY FOODS ON SUBSEQUENT CHOICES OF OTHER FOODS

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Keywords: retail sampling; healthy and unhealthy foods; product choice; field experiments.

Description: This paper examines how sampling healthy versus unhealthy foods might influence subsequent food choices and total calorie purchases.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Food sampling at retail stores and restaurants (e.g., amuse bouche) is a widespread practice. For instance, the food and beverage industry has been spending over a billion dollars annually on complimentary food samples for several years now (Biswas et al. 2014). The food samples handed out vary considerably regarding their healthfulness level. Prior research has primarily focused on the effects of sampling on evaluations and sales of the sampled item.

However, can there be unintended consequences of sampling a healthy versus an

unhealthy item on subsequent purchases of *other* food items? In other words, would initial sampling of a healthy versus an unhealthy food item influence the type and quantity of food subsequently purchased? Furthermore, would the pattern of effect be moderated by the mode of sampling (i.e., actual physical sampling vs. imagined sampling)? In this research, we attempt to provide answers to these questions.

Method And Data

We test our hypotheses with the help of four experiments, with two of them conducted in the field. First, Study 1a, a field experiment at a restaurant, tests the main effects of sampling healthy versus unhealthy foods on subsequent food ordering. The experiment had two between-subjects manipulated conditions (sampling a healthy vs. sampling an unhealthy food). Restaurant customers were randomly given either a healthy sample (coin-cut carrot with tomato salsa) or an unhealthy sample (brownie piece). After sampling the item, customers received a survey that asked them two questions about the sampled item (i.e., taste, and healthfulness). After this, the customers received a paper menu and indicated their order on the paper menu.

Study 1b demonstrates these findings in a different type of field setting (food store). Study 2 examines the effects of sampling on the process variables related to feeling virtuous. While Studies 1a – 2 examined the effects of physical food sampling, we also wanted to examine how imagined sampling (of healthy vs. unhealthy foods) might influence subsequent choices. Accordingly, Study 3 examined the moderating effects of the sampling mode (actual vs. imagined consumption).

Summary of Findings

Four experiments, with two conducted in the field, demonstrate interesting results for the effects of sampling a healthy versus unhealthy food item on subsequent choices and total calorie purchases. Study 1a showed that sampling a healthy (vs. unhealthy) food item just before a foo purchase leads to more unhealthy food ordering and a larger total number of items purchased. There were no such effects for the unhealthy food sampling. Study 1b extends these findings by showing the effects of healthy (vs. unhealthy) sampling on calorie content. With actual sampling, we found effects consistent with a moral licensing account whereby sampling a healthy (vs. an unhealthy) item led to a greater subsequent choice of unhealthy items. The effects seem to be driven by feelings of virtuousness induced by sampling the healthy item. Study 2 provides empirical evidence that sampling a healthy (vs. unhealthy) food enhances feelings of virtuousness.

Interestingly, the pattern of effects reverses when the sampling is imagined. That is, imagining sampling an unhealthy (vs. a healthy) food led to a higher subsequent preference for unhealthy options (Study 3). These studies demonstrate the paradoxical effects of physical sampling on subsequent choices and calories purchased.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research findings have implications for retailers and restaurants and overall consumer health and wellbeing. Theoretically, while prior research on sampling has examined effects of sampling on evaluation/choices related to the sampled product, the present research examines the effects of sampling on subsequent choices of *other* products. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first research to examine how sampling healthy versus unhealthy items can

influence subsequent choices. Hence, our research findings have strong implications for consumer health and wellbeing, especially given worldwide concerns related to unhealthy eating.

Companies spend over a billion dollars on free food samples in the U.S. alone. Examining how sampled foods influence overall sales is important with such a high amount of money spent on food samples. While research reported in academic journals and the popular press highlight how such free samples influence sales of the sampled items, little is known about how such sampling might affect subsequent purchases of *other* items in the store or restaurant. The findings of our research suggest that a retailer or a restaurant trying to sell relatively unhealthy items (possibly due to higher price margins) might benefit from initially offering bite-sized samples of something relatively healthy.

References

References are available upon request.

Special Session Proposal

EXISTENTIAL BRANDING: HOW BRAND RELATIONSHIPS SHAPE CONSUMER MAINTENANCE AND TRANSCENDENCE OF THE SELF

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Description

Many consumers expect brands to facilitate existential security through products and services geared toward self-actualization, as well as through actions that align with and strengthen a consumers' sense of purpose and self. While prior research has examined many forms of relationships and engagement between consumers and brands, questions remain regarding how to address existential relationships between consumers and their brands. This session explores how existential concerns affect the nature of brand relationships.

Proposal

As participation and identification with traditional community and religious institutions declines in many societies, consumers increasingly turn to market and political entities to find and maintain a sense of identity and meaning in life (Cutright et al. 2014; Feldmann 2021; Green 2018; Kozinets and Handelman 2004; McAlexander et al. 2014). Many consumers expect brands to facilitate existential security through products and services geared toward self-actualization (Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Wong 2009; Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel 2006), as well as through actions that align with and strengthen a consumers' sense of purpose and self (Alemany 2020). While prior research has examined many forms of relationships and engagement between consumers and brands, questions remain regarding how to address existential relationships between consumers and their brands. This session explores how existential concerns affect the nature of brand relationships. Four papers develop theory and practical strategies to understand existential brand relationships and guide effective existential brand strategies.

Brand relationships provide a means for consumers to fill identity voids left from leaving relationships with traditional religious and community institutions (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989; Mathras et al. 2016; Muniz and Schau 2005; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Wang, Sarkar, and Sarkar 2019). A search for enhanced existential meaning promotes diverse positive outcomes such as self-connection (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989), self-brand connection (Escalas and Bettman 2005), consumer-brand relationship (Fournier 1998; Fournier, Miller, and Allen 2008), and brand love (Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi 2012). However, there has been a lack of research examining the types of beliefs that motivate consumers' search for existential meaning from brands. Amid the decline of traditional communities and religious institutions, how do consumers enhance existential meaning by tying their identity with brands? What beliefs make consumers find or enhance existential meaning from brands?

Paper 1 examines how consumers develop faith in the brands they engage with at an individual level in their daily lives. The research shows that a process of faith development enables spiritually motivated action and reasoning by consumers who deepen relationships with brands while experiencing and overcoming doubts and challenges to their faith. Paper 2 examines the impact of prolonged stress on brand relationships. Using historical documents, interviews, and online military forums, this paper shows that individuals engaged in risk-filled separations demonstrate intense and idiosyncratic relationships with brands. Further, brand relationship trajectories change due to prolonged stress. Paper 3 studies how consumers respond to news that a self-connected brand acted badly. Surprisingly, consumers are more likely to choose to read, instead of avoid reading, negative information about self-connected brands, compared to self-neutral brands, in order to assess social self-threat and determine an adaptive response. Paper 4 examines how consumers' political identities influence their choice and valuation of product

bundles that contain a brand with a perceived political-leaning or identity. Consumer preference for bundles with politically laden brands might prefer to consume bundles that are congruent with their self-identity, especially in situations where impression management is important or salient.

Taken together, these papers draw attention to an increasingly important phenomenon of existential relationships with brands, which has theoretical implications for consumer researchers and practical impacts on brand managers. We introduce novel measures and conceptualizations of consumer identification and experience that incorporate an existential dimension that has been missing from predominant orientations toward brand relationships as primarily social or economic. The diverse theoretical and methodological approaches taken by the papers represent a broad spectrum of consumer and marketing research, making it relevant to a broad cross section of Winter AMA attendees. In building bridges between psychological, economic, and sociocultural analyses of brand actions and consumer experiences, we answer calls for interdisciplinary collaborations that spur productive research exchange and theoretical developments (Cotte 2021).

Presentation 1

Brand Faith Development: How Consumers Allow Brands to Enhance Existential Meaning

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Consumers often seek to find existential meaning and answers to questions about, “What is worth living for?”, “What is the purpose of my life?”, “Is there meaning in my life?” (Tillich 2001). Existential meaning refers to attempts to understand how events in life fit into a larger context as facilitated by a sense of purpose (mission in life, direction) and a sense of coherence (order, reason for existence) (Reker 2000). Searching for existential meaning is a core process in faith development (Fowler 1981). Many researchers highlight that people can have faith in a non-religious entity, even in brands (Dyess 2011; Fowler 1981; Leak, Loucks and Bowlin 1999; Newman 2004). This paper focuses on faith in non-religious brands and examines how this phenomenon we call “brand faith” shapes consumer meaning-making and responses to uncertainties about the future.

We focus specifically on Apple and Tesla to investigate the definition and the development of brand faith. Research and popular articles identify Apple and Tesla as brands that inspire faith among consumers (Moorman 2018). Differences between the two brands allow us to analyze multiple dimensions of faith across brands with different histories and product categories. We conducted 22 in-depth interviews with individuals who have faith in Apple or Tesla and collected 254,449 postings from MacRumors and Tesla Motors Club. We conducted an iterative qualitative analysis by comparing the in-depth interviews, netnography data, and relevant theories.

Based on the iterative analysis, we find that consumers consider a brand as an object of faith because the brand reinforces and actualizes the consumer’s life mission. Therefore, we define brand faith as an evolving pattern of believing, valuing, and committing that enhances existential meaning which goes beyond prior branding theory on the enhancement of existential meaning.

Also, we find that brand faith shows five key stages of developing their believing, valuing, and committing to the brand. We label these stages as Stages of Brand Faith, providing generalizable, formal descriptions of the development: intuitive brand faith, associative brand faith, reflective brand faith, conjunctive brand faith, and holistic brand faith.

In the intuitive brand faith stage, consumers intuitively imagine faith in brands by observing visible faith from other consumers or finding symbolic meaning from brand offerings. In the associative brand faith stage, they have faith in more functional aspects of the brand and associate the functional faith and the symbolic faith. In the reflective brand faith stage, consumers consciously or unconsciously doubt about the brand as they start to find negative information that confronts with their assumptions about the brand. This is a dangerous stage because they often lose faith if they are unable to resolve the doubts. In the conjunctive brand faith stage, they settle in the brand by giving benefits of the doubt and returning to an experience of faith in brand-mediated futures for their lives. In the holistic brand faith stage, they solidify their faith in the brand and consider it a guiding principle for living a meaningful life. The brand is strongly embedded into their lives as these consumers view the brand more holistically, as a belief system or lifestyle.

This research expands studies on consumer experiences of spiritual devotion towards brands (e.g., Kozinets 2001; Muñiz and Schau 2005). We provide new insights into how such devotion develops at an individual level by identifying key characteristics of brand faith and a multi-dimensional structure of brand faith development. Our research suggests that by understanding consumer practices and beliefs patterns, brands can support consumers' secular experiences of faith by offering symbolic and material resources that consumers can draw on to find existential meaning for an uncertain future. Brands offer empowerment to consumers seeking spiritual

fulfillment, as they provide a means to improve consumer wellbeing while at the same time delimiting the meanings, resources, and actions available for consumers to achieve that end. Marketing research and practice must understand the power of brand-mediated faith and the possibilities it holds for consumers and marketers to shape meaningful futures.

Presentation 2

It's the Little Things: Brand Relationships During and After Risk-filled Separations

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As of August 22, 2022, 1,352,386 US military personnel are deployed across branches: Army, Navy, USMC, USAF, USCG. Each deployed serviceperson is under prolonged stress as are their families and friends who are separated from them. Our research focuses on brand relationships during risk-filled separations. Our context (military deployment) showcases the importance of the little things, specifically brand relationships, on daily life, morale and even survival within close social networks.

Consumers' relationships with objects, like brands are most often social. Belk (1988) argues that relationships between consumers and objects are never truly dyadic (consumer-object), but rather are multi-pronged (consumer-object-consumer). Research on direct transitional objects show

people actively use mementoes to transition from one identity to another as in physical displacement and death (c.f., Hill 1991; Hill and Stamey 1990; Parkin 1999). The object sometimes stands in for a loved one or a special place. Research also examines how people create home away from home (Clapham 2012; Gorman-Murray 2007; Malone and Dooley 2006; McCracken 1989). In our study, we show that brands, as opposed to singular objects (Epp and Price 2010) can represent home and communicate complex meanings to distant loved ones.

Fournier (1998) establishes that consumers create and maintain bonds with brands that resemble interpersonal relationships. Interestingly, Fournier's (1998) informants reveal that their consumer-brand bonds often originate in strong interpersonal relationships (a daughter engages in a relationship with a cleaning product her mother used). Abundant literature considers the manner in which these consumer-brand and consumer-company relationships are formed (c.f., Aggarwal 2004; Bhattacharya and Sen 2003), are enacted within specific consumer collectives (c.f., Kates 2000; Luedicke, Thompson and Giesler 2009), become intensified as in brand love (c.f., Carroll and Ahuvia 2006; Batra Ahuvia and Bagozzi 2012), and even eventually end (c.f., Fiona, Hall and Meamber 2012; Russell and Schau 2014). While these studies elucidate many complexities surrounding consumers' relationships with objects and brands, they do not yet reveal how consumers, individually and in close social networks, under prolonged stress relate to and use brands.

Using historical documents (archived personal correspondence), interviews with 26 families who have experienced a military deployment, and online forums for deployed military and their families, we uncover patterns of idiosyncratic brand meanings and strategic uses of brands during risk-filled separations.

We find two main categories of brands that dominant discourse among military personnel and their close social networks under conditions of prolonged risk-filled separation: comfort brands and professionally endorsed brands. Each category has idiosyncratic meanings for and strategic uses within these networks experiencing long-term stress.

Comfort Brands are associated with "home" and are consumed to enhance wellbeing, e.g., Downy (fabric softener), Black Crowes (musical act), Grey's Anatomy (television series), or Crofter's Organic Jam (regional producer). We identify four sets of comfort brands: proxies (brands that communicate proximity as singing the same song or watching the same narrative series), cozies (brands that communicate normalcy such as eating Dunkin Donuts or drinking Starbucks), homies (brands that represent locales specifically home [US or regional] like Coca-Cola, or Alejandro tortillas), and techies (brands that literally bring family and friends together technologically like Skype, iPhone/iPad). Within comfort brand relationships we reveal two distinct types: legacy brand relationships, a form of continuing bonds (those that continue pre-military or extra-military consumer-brand bonds) and contextual brand relationships, those that emerge as comfort brands through professional exposure on base.

Professionally Endorsed Brands are brands military personnel first encounter in their military careers through defense-based contracts (e.g., Oakley eyewear) that come to be favored. Insiders who know the professional standards come to mark these brands as guaranteed high-quality brands (safe and durable). Within the professionally endorsed brands are two types: treasures and tools. Treasures are a form of continuing bonds where brands that are initially used within the confines of the job are exported or used outside of active military-related uses (e.g., used within families and friend sets). Tools are a form of contextual bonds where brands are used only within the confines of the job with no residual brand relationship.

By examining brand meaning and strategic use within close social networks experiencing prolonged stress, we reveal the power of brands to reduce anxiety and sadness, to enhance morale, and to promote survival within the social network.

Presentation 3

Seeking Negative News: Social Self-threat Increases Choice of Negative Information about Self-Connected Brands

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Consumers are constantly confronted with negative news that may challenge their relationship with self-connected brands. Some research suggests consumers resist believing negative information about brands they care about (e.g., Ahluwalia 2000), but it remains unclear whether consumers will choose to read such information in the first place. The current research finds that, contrary to well-documented theories of information avoidance (e.g., the Ostrich Effect: Karlsson et al., 2009) and selective exposure (e.g., Congeniality Bias: Hart et al., 2009), consumers are more likely to choose to read negative information about self-connected brands compared to self-neutral brands (well-liked, but not self-connected), in order to assess social self-threat and determine an adaptive response.

We investigate this surprising effect in five studies. In each study, participants are asked to rank six brands – pretested to be well-known and well-liked (e.g., Nike) – according to self-brand connection (SBC, Escalas & Bettman 2003). Participants then choose whether to read, or avoid reading, an article headline suggesting a self-connected (i.e., highest-ranked) vs. self-neutral (i.e., lowest-ranked) brand has done something wrong. In study 1a, the negative headline is displayed alongside a positive headline about the target brand and a negative and positive headline about a self-neutral control brand; choice is dichotomous. In studies 1b-4, choice is continuous and anchored by a deferral option (1-Continue searching for a new article, 9-Read article).

In study 1a, participants (N = 195; 56.4% female) were more likely to choose to read a negative article about a self-connected brand (54.6%) compared to a well-liked but self-neutral brand (27.6%; $X^2(3) = 24.85$, $p < .001$). Multinomial regression analysis demonstrates that SBC predicts choice of negative information about the target brand compared to all other available choices (target/positive = 35.1%, $p = .06$; control/negative = 5.2%, $p < .001$; control/positive = 5.2%, $p < .001$).

In study 1b, to rule out the possibility that SBC salience drove the effect, participants (N = 114; 47.5% female; M_{age} = 21.28 years, SD = 2.79) were randomly assigned to make their article choice immediately after, vs. separated in time from, the SBC ranking task. Participants were more likely to choose to read a negative article about a self-connected (M = 4.47, SD = 2.98) compared to a self-neutral brand (M = 2.97, SD = 2.60; $F(1, 112) = 8.97$, $p = .003$, $d = .54$, , figure 1). There was no main effect of self-connection and choice task proximity ($F(1, 112) = 1.44$, $p = .23$) and no interaction of self-connection and proximity ($F(1, 112) = .17$, $p = .68$).

In study 2, we manipulate SBC by adding a third condition that asks participants to list positive values they have in common with a self-neutral brand (i.e., Self-Boosted condition). Replicating the prior studies (figure 2), participants (N =199; 52.3% female; M_{age} = 38.00) were more likely to choose to read a negative article about a self-connected (M = 5.63, SD = 2.73) compared to a self-neutral brand (M = 4.14, SD = 3.12; $t(196) = 3.06$, $p = .002$, $d = .51$), but became more likely to choose to read a negative article about a self-boosted (M = 5.94, SD = 2.99) compared to a self-neutral brand (M = 4.14, SD = 3.12; $t(196) = 3.35$, $p < .001$, $d = .60$).

In study 3, we manipulate social self-threat by telling participants (N = 169; 52.7% female; M_{age} = 20.90) they will be asked to endorse the brand on social media either before (threat condition) or after (control) making their article choice. Negative information about a publicly endorsed brand poses a social self-threat (e.g., White et al. 2018), regardless of self-connection. Participants were more likely to choose to read a negative article about a self-neutral brand when they experience social self-threat (M = 5.63; SD = 2.71) compared to control (M = 3.60, SD = 2.47; $F(1, 165) = 12.16$, $p < .001$, $d = .79$, figure 3).

In study 4, participants' (N=203; 36.9% female; M_{age} = 33.74) perception that the article will be useful in assessing the social self-threat and determining an adaptive response ($M_{Self\text{-}connected\ brand}$ = 5.11, SD = 1.02; $M_{Self\text{-}neutral\ brand}$ = 3.89, SD = 1.72; $F(1, 201) = 38.10$, $p < .001$, d = .86) mediated choice to read the negative article (IE = 1.67 (.29), 95%CI[1.12, 2.25]).

This research demonstrates a surprising effect: consumers choose to read, instead of avoid reading, negative news about self-connected brands. The findings have important practical implications. Namely, self-brand connection is a beacon, and not always a buffer, for bad news.

Presentation 4

How Political Ideology Influences Consumption of Product Bundles

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In this study we examine how consumers' political identities influence their choice and valuation of product bundles that contain a brand with a perceived political-leaning or identity. A common marketing strategy is to offer two or more separate products in a package or bundle (Stremersch and Tellis 2002). Examples of product bundles include ticket packages to various events (e.g., concerts, speaker series, sporting events), tourist packages with attractions and transportation, streaming service programing selection, etc. The value of the strategy lies in its ability to enhance the products' value to consumers by offering them as part of a package (Stremersch and Tellis 2002). Although product bundling has received significant academic and managerial attention because of its importance as a marketing strategy (Kolay and Tyagi 2022; Stremersch and Tellis 2002), researchers have ignored the role of consumer's political identity when evaluating product bundles that include politically involved brands. We propose that political identity influences how consumers react to and value a product bundle that includes a politically involved brand, especially in situations where managing their self-image is important. For example, situations where the brand is consumed in public or posted on social media.

Traditionally firms and brands have remained neutral and apolitical to avoid the risk of harmful controversy that could alienate dissenting consumers (Moorman 2018). Although the risk of taking a stance has not disappeared, more firms and brands are taking sides and voicing their

opinion on sociopolitical issues such as gun laws, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, racial equality, or abortion rights (Bhagwat et al. 2020; Kotler and Sarkar 2017; Moorman 2020). In turn, consumers respond to a firm's or brand's sociopolitical activism through marketplace behaviors such as purchase, word-of-mouth, and loyalty (Hydock, Paharia, and Blair 2020). Ultimately, because of the role that brands play in consumers' lives as vehicles for self-expression (Belk 1988), consumers are highly motivated to support and associate with brands that align with their political ideologies and dissociate with brands that do not (Bhagwat et al. 2020).

Many consumers are turning to firms, celebrities, and brands as alternatives to traditional institutions, such as organized religion and government, as means to inform their identity construction, identity expression, and even to find meaning in life (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; McAlexander et al. 2014). Consumers' political ideology has become more central to their self-identities because they live in an increasingly politically polarized environment (Pew Research Center 2014). In consequence, consumers' political identities are more likely to influence their consumption decisions. Some consumers expect brands to take stances on current sociopolitical issues and adjust their consumption according to how well these brands match their own identities and interests (Hydock, Paharia, and Blair 2020). While previous research on consumer political ideology has looked at various marketplace behaviors and outcomes such as the willingness to engage in sustainable disposal behaviors (Kidwell, Farmer, and Hardesty 2013), brand attachment (Chan and Ilicic 2019), preference for utilitarian vs. hedonic options (Farmer, Kidwell, and Hardesty 2021), and even satisfaction with products and services (Fernandes et al. 2022), the role that political ideology plays in shaping consumer responses to product bundles has remained unexplored until now.

We address two questions in this research: (1) does consumer political identity affect the valuation and choice of product bundles that contain a brand with a perceived political-leaning or identity, and (2) does consuming the bundle in private or public moderate this effect. In study 1, we empirically test these relationships through an experiment with a 2 (Consumers' Political Ideology: Conservative vs. Liberal) x 2 (Product Bundle Consumption: Private vs. Public) between-subjects design. Study participants were required to evaluate and choose between two product bundles that contain a brand with a perceived political-leaning or identity. We measured participants political ideology and manipulated the choice of product bundle to contain a brand with a perceived liberal-leaning, while varying whether or not co-workers would be aware of their choices. We measured participant product bundle choice, the perceived value of each product bundle, and willingness to pay for each product bundle.

Our work contributes to the literature on product bundles and sociopolitical activism by addressing how political identity influences consumer choice and perceived value of product bundles with politically leaning brands. This work also provides managers with practical guidance on how to manage and market brands and product bundles in an increasingly politically charged society. Altogether, and in complement with the other research in this special session, this research will increase our understanding of how consumers' reliance brands as a source of self-identity influences their behavior in the marketplace.

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EXPLORING CUSTOMER'S ONLINE GAMING ADDICTION: A THREE-STAGE MODELLING APPROACH

Abstract

This paper aims to understand the underlying factors of flow that determine the young generation's online gaming addiction. The study emphasizes the flow theory from a psychological aspect that engages in online gaming addiction behavior. The study collected data from 973 responses, and the hypothesized relationships were tested via PLS-SEM 3.3 (partial least squares-structural equation modeling), Artificial Neural Network (ANN), and Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (*fsQCA*). The findings of the research show escapism, isolation, co-player, social influence, entertainment, and attitudes are significantly related to the flow and flow that significantly leads to online gaming addiction. However, based on the ANN findings, isolation followed by escapism are the most significant predictors to influence flow, followed by other constructs. The results from *fSQCA* findings explore that causal conditions influence high gaming addiction. The findings indicate that in developing countries, people are interested in online gaming addiction.

Key Contributions

Flow is a foremost issue in understanding human psychology about getting involved in any activity where a balanced approach is necessary (Lavoie & Main, 2022). The present study investigates the factors that relate to the flow and ultimately lead to online gaming addiction, a form of electronic entertainment for people around the globe. The study's outcome provides strategic marketing orientation for online gaming producers. As online games require strategy and problem-solving skills to conquer specific levels. Regular playing of these games can benefit children's diminutive and long-term memory and assist the brain in processing information more quickly (Mahon, 2021). Online games allow people to immerse themselves in virtual worlds and sometimes connect with people from all over the world, which can be a fantastic way to master communication skills (Hewett, 2022). The acquisition of 21st-century skills can be significantly facilitated through game-based learning (Qian & Clark, 2016; Silva *et al.,* 2021). Understanding flow theory could contribute to a solid understanding of why customers engage in learning and how they feel involved in it.

Moreover, the gaming industry could benefit from this study by making the necessary effort to enhance its market by nurturing the factors. The state of flow signifies what happens when someone is playing online games that involve enjoyment, influence from others, social bonding, social isolation, social influence, and behavior (Jaskari & Syrjälä, 2022). The investigation into the underlying reason behind flow is still in its infancy in gaming literature (Du *et al.,* 2021; Wang *et al.,* 2021; Nguyen *et al.,* 2022). Understanding flow theory could contribute to a solid understanding of why customers engage in learning and how they feel involved in it. Moreover, the gaming industry could benefit from this study by making the necessary effort to enhance its market by nurturing the factors.

1. Introduction

Online gaming addiction can be categorized as a behavioral addiction (Sung *et al.*, 2020) which causes excessive engagement with games using the internet (Sung *et al.*, 2020; Columb *et al.*, 2022). Online gaming addiction among adolescents has thrived as a rapidly increasing form of addiction worldwide (Young, 2009). Gaming addiction grows while some on involved in gaming for a long time (Rodda *et al.*, 2018). The state of engagement in any activities for a long time is mentioned as the flow (Rheinberg & Engeser, 2018). The form of engagement can be grown due to many factors. After the development of flow theory by Csikszentmihaly*i* in 1975, the area of literature has been developed in many areas like learning (Csikszentmihaly*i*, 2000; Ro *et al.*, 2018), motivation (Swiatczak, 2021), practice (Tuten & Mintu-Wimsatt, 2018), music (Ding & Hung, 2021), creativity (Schutte & Malouff, 2020), happiness (Schiffer & Roberts, 2018), social media (Hyun *et al.*, 2022), art (Bölen *et al.*, 2022). Surprisingly, the flow in mobile gaming addiction is not significantly developed yet (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2018), and thus there is enormous room for contributions to this body of research (Cheah *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, the investigation of drivers, determinants, and impacts of flow experience for addictive online gaming behavior is a topic that is comparatively new to the literature on online games (Liu & Chang, 2016). To minimize the literature gap, this study not only empirically demonstrated a significant correlation between flow and online gaming addiction but also contributed to the literature by presenting a comprehensive online gaming addiction conceptual framework that includes three additional variables (i.e., escapism, isolation, attitudes) to determine the factors influencing online gaming addiction. There is a clear need for these research gaps to be filled, so this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ_1: What are the key determinants affecting flow in online gaming?
RQ_2: What is the influence of flow on online gaming addiction?

Attempting to answer these questions, the study examines the factors influencing the flow and the flow of online gaming addiction. The study offers theoretical and managerial contributions. In terms of theory, this study contributes to the flow theory by adding two variables – escapism and isolation to fill the existing literature gap. The model was also contributing to an understanding of the impact of flow on online gaming addiction. Apart from these theoretical and managerial contributions, this research is also justified by its social relevance: gaming technology could make people more involved and concentrated, thus providing a better customer experience in the online gaming industry (Malhi *et al.*, 2022).

2. Theoretical underpinning and hypotheses development

The first notion of flow theory was originated by Csikszentmihalyi (2000), who described flow as the psychological condition of an optimal experience. Additionally, Hamari *et al.* (2016) empirically revealed that intense concentration and engagement occur when players with high skill levels perform perplexing tasks. Gamified modules and the gamification of learning will become more common in game-based education to elicit student involvement and flow (Crisp, 2014; Hamari *et al.*, 2016). In this study, we have utilized escapism, isolation, co-players, social influence, and entertainment in determining the effects on the flow of playing online games.

Many people indulge themselves in online gaming to escape everyday realities and real-world difficulties such as stress, monotony, depression, feelings of inferiority, etc. (Liu & Chang, 2016; Charlton & Danforth, 2010). The desire to escape from day-to-day realities is one of the primary aspects that can lead to customer flow experiences in online gaming (Koo, 2009; Liu & Chang, 2016). There is a rising indication that prefixes of depression and anxiety have enlarged significantly through the COVID-19 pandemic. Flow experience is related to the isolation period created by self-awareness

from self-isolation processes (Giardina *et al.,* 2021). This isolation period has a more extended time positive relation to flow (Linares *et al.,* 2021). Playing with a partner is more pleasurable than playing alone (Souders *et al.,* 2015; Lee *et al.,* 2021). While playing the video game online, co-playing requires the player to be conscious that he or she is playing with another game partner and to develop a relationship with them (Lee *et al.,* 2021). The study by Yang (2020) revealed that social support was a significant predictor of engaging in internet games and that internet addiction was significantly influenced by social influence. Players' contributions in online games are based on social interaction, which manipulates the player's loyalty and creates positive relations to flow (Zhang *et al.,* 2017; Kang et al., 2020). Entertainment is an intrinsic motivation correlated with flow (Liu & Chang, 2016). Entertainment in online games results in a flow experience (Hamari *et al.,* 2016; Matute-Vallejo & Melero-Polo, 2019). Above all, previous research also explores the relationship between flow and online gaming addiction is also positive (Bressler & Bodzin, 2013; Perttula *et al.,* 2017). Based on the above literature, the study has formulated the following hypotheses for further empirical examination:

H_1: Flow has a positive relationship with online gaming addiction
H_2: Escapism positively influences the flow.
H_3: Isolation positively influences the flow.
H_4: Co-player positively influences the flow toward online gaming addiction.
H_5: Social influence positively influences the flow of online gaming addiction.
H_6: Entertainment positively influences the flow toward online gaming addiction.

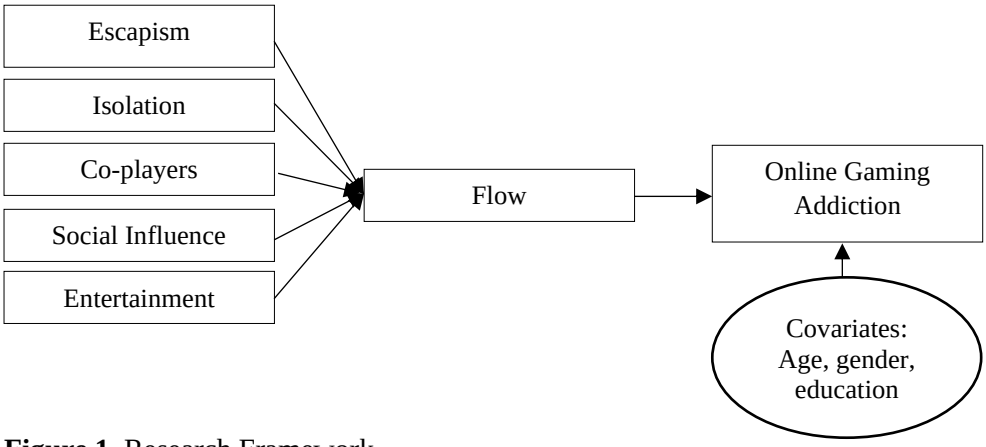

Figure 1. Research Framework

3. Research design and method

The target population was young online gamers aged 18 to 35+. An online survey was conducted via a simple random sampling procedure to 1500 respondents. The survey was distributed by the following channels: Facebook, WhatsApp, and e-mail. Items were extracted from valid sources. We have adopted escapism from Haridakis & Hanson (2009), isolation from Giardina et al. (2021), co-players from Li *et al.* (2013), social influence from Giardina *et al.* (2021), entertainment and attitude from Wu & Liu (2007), the flow was from Hamari *et al.* (2016), Online gaming Addiction was from Yu (2016). The questionnaire was tested with 30 respondents as a pilot test before initiating the primary survey. Initially, we distributed 1500 questionnaires. After removing the incomplete 527 responses, finally, 973 respondents were chosen for data analysis. The study applied multiple methods to test the proposed conceptual model.

The study applied a non-response bias test for data purification examination by comparing early and late responses through operationalizing a t-test. The results show non-significant mean differences between the groups justify the sample data did ***not suffer non-response bias***. For ***the common method bias test***, the researchers applied non-statistical measures (during the data collection phase) and statistical tools. The Harman one-factor test assesses the potential for

common method bias in the collected data; the first factor accounted for only 23.42% of the variance, suggesting common method bias is not an issue in the data set.

We used PLS-SEM to examine our proposed model relationship by following a two-stage approach: testing the measurement and structural models. Moreover, bootstrapping (resampling = 5,000) was used to test the path coefficient's significance and factor loading's significance. To complement and validate the findings of PLS-SEM and understand how independent constructs affect the endogenous variable, the study applied multilayer perceptron (MLP) ANN (Liébana-Cabanillas *et al.*, 2017). As the results of PLS-SEM only explain the relationships between the constructs. Thus, ANN allows us to explore both linear and non-linear relationships with high predictive accuracy (Liébana-Cabanillas *et al.*, 2017). Finally, the researchers performed fsQCA to understand the sufficient combinations or causal recipes of the factors for high online gaming addiction behavior (Woodside, 2013).

4. Data analysis and result

Demographics

Out of 973 respondents, 59.05% were male, whereas only 41.95% were female. Most of the respondents in this study were young, and middle-aged people aged 26 to 35+. Regarding the academic level, 30.97% of respondents were graduates, and 39.95% had post-graduate degrees. In terms of occupation, private employees' responses were slightly higher than those of students (37.12% and 34.04%, respectively). Concerning online game preference, "Chess" was preferred by most respondents, followed by "PUBG" at 46.10% and 34.99%, respectively, whereas "Dead by Daylight" and "Phasmophobia" were less preferred at 12.76% and 6.15%, respectively.

Measurement Model

The data analysis included a two-step approach using a measurement model and a structural model. All the constructs used in the research model have composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) values higher than the threshold value of 0.7. The measurement models show that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ranged from 0.713 to 0.650. The values of the average variance extracted (AVE) of the variables are above the threshold of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Convergent validity was assured by the fact that all elements loaded significantly on their respective constructions than on other constructs. Moreover, VIF values are between 1.004 and 2.002, meeting the criteria of ≤3 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The result also confirms discriminant validity. The study also calculated the square root of the AVE to ensure discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) was also used to cross-check the discriminant validity. The HTMT ratio must be less than 1.00 (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). As such, the findings of the measurement model provided adequate evidence of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Assessing the structural Model

We assessed the model's predictive quality (R^2), effect size (f^2), and blindfolding-based predictive relevance (Q^2). The R^2 of Flow was 0.502, explaining 50.2% of the variance in online gaming addiction as a predictor. Similarly, the R^2 of online gaming addiction is 0.647, which means that all the predictors explained 35% of the variance in the model. And f^2 shows a substantial explanatory power in defining variance. This metric is the f^2 effect size and is somewhat redundant to the size of the path coefficients. Values of 0.15 and 0.35 indicate moderate and strong effects of the hypothesized relationships. Using the blindfolding process, we performed predictive

relevance (Q^2). Blindfolding procedures should only be applied to endogenous constructs that have reflective measurements. All Q^2 values are above zero, indicating the model's satisfactory predictive relevance. In our case, we found Flow = 0.377 ($Q^2 > .50$) indicating a larger predictive relevance) and Online gaming addiction = 0.426 ($Q^2 > .50$), indicating a medium predictive relevance).

Test of Hypotheses

The findings show that there is a positive and significant relationship between flow and online gaming addiction ($t = 3.908, \beta= 0.357, p<.05$), escapism and flow ($t = 7.720, \beta= 0.412, p< .05$), isolation and flow ($t = 9.779, \beta= 0.560, p< .05$), co-player and flow ($t = 3.449, \beta= 0.212, p<.05$), social influence and flow ($t = 3.740, \beta = 0.262, p< .05$), entertainment and flow ($t = 3.675, \beta = 0.2242, p<.05$), flow and online gaming addiction ($t = 8.532, \beta = 0.555, p< .05$). The results from ANN model predicts that escapism followed by isolation are higher impact on flow than other constructs (See Table 1). This means that out of the six flow antecedents, escapism and isolation can contribute more. Finally, the results from *fSQCA* produce three causal configurations (overall solutions are above 0.78, coverage range 0.279 and 0.697) that lead to high online gaming addiction (Woodside, 2013). As the findings show that escapism, isolation, and flow appear in most of the solutions and are considered core conditions for influencing gaming addiction behavior. Finally, we performed the Durbin-Wu-Hausman test suggested by Davidson and MacKinnon (1993), was performed to examine the endogeneity concern in our empirical findings. The results from the test revealed that the regression coefficients for all the residuals were not harmonious with the data, suggesting to accept the theoretical argument that endogeneity is not a major issue in our proposed statistical inferences.

Table 1. Comparison between PLS-SEM and ANN results.

PLS-SEM path	Path Coefficient (β)	Normalised relative Importance (%)	PLS-SEM: based Ranking	ANN based Ranking	Observation
Flow→ online gaming addiction	0.555	47.26%	2	2	**MATCH**
Escapism → flow	0.412	38.45%	3	3	**MATCH**
Isolation → Flow	0.560	56.63%	1	1	**MATCH**
Co-player →Flow	0.212	21.33%	6	6	**MATCH**
Social influence → Flow	0.262	28.58%	4	4	**MATCH**
Entertainment→ Flow	0.2242	26.76%	5	5	**MATCH**

5. Discussions and contribution

The research findings maintain the relationship of the proposed model's underlying variables, indicating factors affecting online gaming addiction. From the perspective of the proposed research objective, the current study empirically established a relationship between flow and online gaming addiction which is congruent with the findings of Hamari *et al.* (2016). It implies that flow creates a long-term effect on the players, and it increases the motivation to play the games continuously. This study used an extended model of flow by adding three additional variables (escapism, isolation, and attitude) to determine what makes people engage in some activities. Among these three, we have observed that escapism has become one of the major

concerns of young people. This type of behavior shows as a mental diversion from everyday problems, which has a positive impact on psychological behavior that leads to flow (McLean *et al.*, 2022). We have found due to COVID-19, self-isolation could mitigate emotional distress or could increase emotional distress both consequences may lead to engagement in any psychological activities (Türkay *et al.*, 2022). Previous studies have discovered that when someone uses online mobile apps or any other computer-mediated platform for online gaming, this propensity becomes stronger (Arghashi & Yuksel, 2022). Our study revealed that co-players make online gaming competitive, and while playing with co-player, gamers usually feel a deep concentration and feel a social opportunity to prove themselves (Nguyen *et al.*, 2022). We have noticed that peer pressure both directly and indirectly encourages people to play online games, which ultimately results in addiction, which shapes people's attitudes and behaviors (Krassen & Aupers, 2022). Finally, people engage in something when it's fun. Online gaming is fun, and when people enjoy the fun, they like to be deeply involved in online gaming.

6. Conclusion

This study provides essential findings on online gaming addiction by understanding flow theory. Even though escapism and self-isolation lead to flow, the study would like to give some message that escapism, and self-isolation both are negative attitudes toward human behavior which may lead to some alarming consequences for the players (WHO, 2020). With a holistic theoretical model, this research empirically demonstrated an essential relationship between the flow and online gaming addiction.

7. Limitations and future directions

This research has a few confines. First, the key limitations have been the time constraints, only online surveys, a smaller number of variables, and finally, the unwillingness of the respondents to respond precisely. As a cross-sectional design, the results were interpreted as correlative rather than causal. Future researchers could conduct longitudinal studies to identify causal effects. Second, as the data were mainly collected from young and mid-aged people, thus the generalizability of the findings is limited. In addition, the analytical work underlying the online gaming addiction model and the inquiry into the acceptance and use of online games is comparatively small among same-aged users. The model's applicability and validity, particularly in the case of online gaming addiction, are particularly noteworthy. Moreover, future research should explore whether these outcomes are generalizable when realistic to escapism, isolation, co-player, attitudes, entertainment, social influence, flow, and online gaming addiction, or whether they need to be moderated according to the variation and purpose of the services. Finally, additional research can be shown on other cultures with different socioeconomic groups and groups with dissimilar religious acceptance.

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Factors contributing towards to the intention to purchase green energy

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Abstract

This study seeks to examine the role of an important and debatable antecedent of green purchase intention using consumer data from Australia. In this context, the present research has used the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB, Ajzen, 1991) as its theoretical framework and further attempts to include two additional constructs (i.e., moral reflectiveness and social responsibility) in TPB as antecedents of green energy purchase intention (GPI). A quantitative approach was employed by conducting a survey of 386 valid data from NSW, Australia. Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM to evaluate the strength of relationship between the constructs and formulated hypothesis. The findings reveal that attitude (ATT), subjective norm (SN), perceived behavioural control (PBC), moral reflectiveness (MR), and social responsibility (SR) exert significant positive effect on green energy purchase intention (GPI). The results show that the moral reflectiveness -intention (β=0.575) and PBC-intention (β=0.422) paths are both stronger than other path coefficients in the model. The study contributes to and extend the growing body of research in the field of green energy consumption with special reference to a developed nation Australia by incorporating additional constructs such as moral reflectiveness and social responsibility in the TPB model. The paper concludes with policy implications of the findings for green energy marketers and policymakers.

Key words: Green energy, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Purchase intention

Introduction

Climate change is a major environmental concern for society and is greatly influenced by greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Energy consumption in the residential sector currently accounts for 17% of global CO2 emissions and is one of the primary and fastest-growing anthropogenic sources of CO2emission (Jakučionytė-Skodienė, 2020). Since combustion of fossil fuels for energy generation is the prime source of GHG, many scholars assert that a shift towards green energy is imperative to achieving environmental sustainability (Sangroya & Nayak, 2017; Palandino & pandit, 2019; Ahmed et al. 2021a). Recognizing the need for energy consumption, many countries, including developed and developing economies, settled ambitious political agenda, and targets to develop alternative energy options (i.e., green energy) to reduce the CO2 emissions. For example, Australia one of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters (Howard et al. 2018; Palandino & Pandit, 2019), aims to reduce GHG of 50% by 2030. In this context, it is important and necessary that consumers adopt and increase the use of green energy. Consequently, understanding of what drives consumer demand for green energy is essential to design appropriate sustainable marketing strategies. Sustainable marketing has an important role in creating and promoting sustainable patterns and levels of consumption of end users by helping marketers to develop specific actions and green energy offers for the target markets that will create sustainable value. Therefore, consumption of green energy movement has expanded rapidly in many countries include USA (Bang et al. 2000), German (Gerpot & Mahmudova, 2010), Ireland (Claudy et al. 2013), China (liu et al. 2013), India (Halder et al. 2016) but with the time an increased receptiveness is seen among consumers about such movement in a developed nations such as Australia (Hobman & Fredrick, 2014). Still the research on energy consumer issues and green energy purchasing is at nascent stage in the Australian context in comparison to other countries (Hobman & Fredrick, 2014; Palandino & pandit, 2019; Ahmed et al. 2019, 2021ab).

Therefore, understanding the consumer intention toward green energy is crucial for the marketers. In marketing, academicians and researchers are mainly interested about identifying the antecedents of green purchase intention (Yadev et al. 2016, 2017) as it helps in developing suitable strategies for green products. In the past, several studies on consumer purchase intention and behaviour towards a wide range of tangible green products have been done in the context of developed nation (e.g., Organic food, Sultan et al. 2020). However, there is scarce research in the domain of an intangible product - green energy marketing in the Australian context; a developed nation. Moreover, in our knowledge, limited studies have measured consumer's intention towards purchasing green energy in Australian context using any social psychological model.

This research aims to increase knowledge in this area by employing a socio psychological model - the theory of planned behaviour (TBP, Ajzen, 1991) to predict consumers' intention to purchase green energy in Australian setting. In line with that, we addressed one specific research question (RQ) as follows:

RQ: What is the most influential factor that drives consumer' intention to purchase green energy in Australia?

Developing a Theoretical Model

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 1991, TPB) served as a framework for identifying major determinant of green energy buying behaviour and for determining their relative importance. Taking the volitional and non-volitional elements into account, the explanatory power of the TPB has been proven in a wide range of individual behaviors (Ajzen, 1991, 2001; Taufique & Vaithianathan 2018; Sultan et al. 2020), suggesting its appropriateness in our research context. The TPB indicate three salient elements of behavioral intention, including attitude (ATT) toward the behaviour, subjective norms (SN) and the perceived behavioral control (PBC) (Ajzen, 1991). On the basis of TPB, in this study, ATT refers to the consumer's positive or negative evaluation of buying green products; SN can be defined as the perceived social pressure that encourages one to engage in purchase of green products; and, finally, PBC refers to the difficulty or ease perceived by an individual to perform the purchase of green products. Researchers have further suggested that extending the TPB by including critical variables in particular contexts increases the TPB's predictive ability (Ajzen, 1991; Conner & Abraham, 2001). Numerous studies in the previous literature have emphasized the significance of environmental concerns and moral norm in explaining consumers' eco-friendly purchasing behaviors (e.g., Yadev & Pathak, 2017; Taufique & Vaithianathan 2018; Liu et al. 2020). Findings in these studies indicated that such variables have a critical role in forming consumers' eco-friendly decision-making processes. Accordingly, the current study modified the TPB by considering the effects of these constructs on the formation of consumers' intention to purchase green energy. The concept of and relationships among attitudes, subjective norms, PBC, moral reflectiveness, social responsibility, behavioural intentions, and behaviours in the context of social and environmental issues are much studied and debated topics. There is a wealth of research available in this social– psychological arena from the past five decades and new concepts are evolving. The present study briefly explains these concepts and links them with green energy in Australian standpoint hypothesized in the subsequent section.

Green energy purchase intention (GPI) – the antecedents from the TPB model

The TPB (Ajzen, 1991) is a well-researched model that has been proved successful in predicting and explaining behaviors across a variety of domains. In the environmental field, the TPB has been well employed in the literature (e.g., Halder et al. 2013; Nguyen et al., 2019). Under the TPB, behavioral intention construct is at the core of the model that plays the role as a powerful predictor of the behavior (Ajzen, 2011). In this study, we focus on explaining the consumers' GPI, rather than the behaviour. On the basis of TPB, in this study, ATT refers to the consumer's positive or negative evaluation of buying green products; SN can be defined as the perceived social pressure that encourages one to engage in purchase of green products; and, finally, PBC refers to the difficulty or ease perceived by an individual to perform the purchase of green products. Most importantly, the TPB proved successful in predicting green purchase intention across different cultures (e.g., Halder et al 2016; Taufique & Vaithianathan 2018; Palandino & Pandit, 2019; Sultan et al. 2020). Based on previous literature background and guides by the TBP, this study assumes that consumers who hold positive attitudes towards green energy, who believe that significant others will support them if they engage in green energy consumerism and believe that they can easily engage in green energy consumerism, are more likely to develop good intention to purchase green energy.

Based on this assumption, the following hypotheses are developed:

H1: Attitude has positive and significant effect on GPI
H2: Subjective norm has a positive and significant effect on GPI
H3: PBC has a positive and significant effect on GPI

Incorporating new constructs in the TPB

The present research has used the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) as its theoretical framework and further attempts to include two additional constructs - moral reflectiveness (MR) and social responsibility (SR) in TPB as antecedents of GPI. Earlier studies which have used the TPB model for green/eco-friendly purchase intention, have neglected the impact of moral reflectiveness and social responsibility on GPI. Moral reflectiveness and social responsibility are considered equally important while making decisions for eco-friendly/green products (Verma & Chandra, 2018; Schlaile et al. 2018). Palandino & Pandit (2019) pointed out that green energy consumption is relatively a new area in the research and as such definitive results and conclusion are lacking regarding the role of moral reflectiveness and social responsibility on GPI. Therefore, these constructs are integrated into our research model. Moral reflectiveness is one of the most widely and observed as a proximal motivational factor of green behaviour that triggers individual's concern and commitment to environmental problems (Verma & Chandra, 2018). Schlaile et al.'s (2018) compilations of social responsibility definitions have shown the term to be closely related to consumers' consumption choice in shifting towards socially and environmentally friendly products. Previous studies have provided empirical evidence for supporting the impact of the aforementioned factors on intention and behaviour with regard to environmentally friendly products (e.g., Verma & Chandra, 2018; Liu et al. 2020).

Therefore, the following set of hypotheses is presented:

H4: Moral reflectiveness has positive and significant effect GPI
H5: Social responsibility has positive and significant effect GPI

Methods and Results

This study employed a survey questionnaire to assess the relationships between independent variables (i.e., ATT, SN, PBC, MR and SR) and dependent variable (GEB).The survey were conducted in NSW, Australia by a postal survey, 1200 copies of the questionnaire were issued and 400 were recovered. Ultimately, 386 copies of valid questionnaires were collected, with a sample validity of 33 %. The 7-point Likert-style questionnaire was based on an extensive literature review (ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). The results from the data analysis revealed that all five hypotheses constructed through the conceptual framework (i.e., GPI) based on our literature review were supported by PLS-SEM analysis. The current study only concentrates on the measure of GPI while dealing with Australian consumers' attitude, norm, PBC, moral reflectiveness and social responsibility related to green energy as the behavioural measures are beyond the scope of the study. The hypotheses developed for this study were tested using a bootstrapping procedure with a resample of 2000 as suggested by Sultan et al (2020). Table 1 confirms the causal the causal hypotheses of the extended TPB model in the context of green energy in Australia. The results show that the moral reflectiveness -intention (β=0.575) and PBC-intention (β=0.422) paths are both stronger than other path coefficients viz social responsibility-intention (β=0.345), subjective norm -intention (β=0.288), attitude-intention (β=0.178) in the model, and that all path coefficients are statistically significant using 2000 bootstrap samples in the 95% confidence interval. Thus, H1–H5 are supported. Overall, the hypotheses tests' results are found statistically significant with positive path coefficients. Thus, the results

confirm all the hypotheses. The goodness-of-fit value for the model is the square root of the product of average AVE and average R^2, which is 0.504, where a value>0.36 is considered adequate (Hair et al., 2014; Sultan et al. 2020). Overall, the predictive validity and model fit indices were satisfactory.

Table 1
Hypothesis test results

Causal Hypothesis	*β-values*	*t-values*	*p-values*	*Result*
H1: Attitude has positive and significant effect on GPI	0.178	2.057	<0.05	Accepted
H2: Subjective norm has a positive and significant effect on GPI	0.288	2.073	<0.05	Accepted
H3: PBC has a positive and significant effect on GPI	0.422	5.683	<0.01	Accepted
H4: Moral reflectiveness has positive and significant effect GPI	0.575	6.580	<0.01	Accepted
H5: Social responsibility has positive and significant effect GPI	0.345	4.419	<0.01	Accepted

Implications of Theory and Practice

This research is expected to contribute to the extant literature by enriching the knowledge of the interesting and important relationship between moral reflectiveness, social responsibility with behavioral intention among consumers in Australia. To the author's best understanding, this is an initial attempt to understand the consumers' GPI using the TPB model including moral reflectiveness and social responsibility in the Australian context. Overall, the extended TPB model and its findings will be useful to the marketers aiming to use optimum and appropriate levels of marketing communication channels and sustainable energy values to influence attitude, norm, moral reflectiveness, social responsibility and positive behavioural intentions of the green energy consumers. Therefore, green energy marketers and policy makers aiming for sustained, positive changes in consumer behaviour are encouraged to consider the findings of this study.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING VIETNAMESE CONSUMERS' WILLINGNESS TO PURCHASE FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS

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Keywords: Fair-trade product, Self-efficacy, Fair-trade certification.

Description: This research investigates the impact of fair trade-certification, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived price and ethical identity on Fair trade purchase intention of consumers in Vietnam through self-efficacy. After reviewing previous empirical studies, the authors performed a research survey with a sample size of 200 respondents. The research results indicated that factors in this study have a positive effect on self-efficacy and also indirect effects on fair trade products purchase intention. The subjective norms appear to be the strongest factor that drive consumers' intention to purchase fair trade products. The findings of this study is beneficial for marketers and firms to develop their businesses with CSR inclination.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Statement of Key Contributions

Nowadays, consumers are increasingly concerned about social and moral aspects of goods (Andorfer and Liebe, 2015). In this sense, ethical commerce such as fair trade have emerged in the context of the global economy and have gained significant popularity in recent years (Bezencon and Blili, 2010). Fair trade is a market approach that aims to improve the lives of small producers in developing countries (Randall, 2005). From the late 1990s, Vietnam became the world's second largest producer of coffee (Arnot and Cash, 2006). However, the Vietnamese coffee farmers continue to be highly vulnerable to global market demands to sell their products at lower prices. In the domestic, Vietnamese fair trade products (i.e., coffee) still remains highly vulnerable due to lack of interest in domestic consumers. There is a lack of understanding about the factors influencing customer responses to fair trade items, especially Vietnamese consumers. It is important to motivate domestic consumers to purchase fair trade products because fair trade helps to develop direct connections between buyers and manufacturers. These collaborations allow consumers to acquire a sustainable option for farmers, craftspeople, and their families to enhance their own livelihoods.

In this study, the findings show that self-efficacy is a crucial factor that mediates the relationship between fair trade-certification, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived price, ethical identity and fair trade purchase intention. Besides, this study indicates that subjective norms is the strongest predictor in relation to consumers' purchase intention for fair trade products through self-efficacy. Subjective norms positively influence fair trade purchase intention ($\beta = 0.397$, $p<0.001$), and this relationship is mediated by self-efficacy (Indirect effect = 0.108, LLCI = 0.021, ULCI = 0.193). The pressure and influence of others, particularly relatives such as family, friends, and highly valued individuals, has a significant impact on the intention to purchase a fairtrade certified product. In contrast, the relationship between fair trade certification, perceived behavioral control, perceived price, ethical identity and purchase intention are insignificant ($p= 0.5202$, 0.8336, 0.2190, 0.1518, respectively). However, these factors had an indirect effect on fair trade purchase through self-efficacy. These factors are all crucial aspects that

can attract more customers who are concerned about ethical problems and promote fair trade consumption

Research Questions

According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is viewed as a belief that one has power over one's own motivation, attitude, and social context. Self-efficacy is a driving element of learning and action to complete a task (Bandura, 1982). Self-efficacy is linked to ethical decision-making behaviors, attitudes, and decisions. For example, past study showed that there is an association between self-efficacy and prosocial action (Alessandri et al., 2009). In another study, Song and Kim (2018) show that self-efficacy predicted customers' socially responsible purchase and disposal behaviors. Consumers who have high levels of perceived efficiency prefer fair trade products over those with low levels of perceived efficiency (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006). At the manufacturing level, certification may provide information to consumers about environmental and economic advantages that the products may bring (Milder et al., 2015). Consumers frequently assess details about the certifier and information on certifications to understand more about the company's motivation. Thus, fair trade certifications may motivate consumers' perceived efficiency to purchase fair-trade products. According to Van Birgelen, Semeijn, and Keicher (2009), the decision to purchase for the fair trade products is mostly influenced by the customers' sentiments toward ethical purchasing, as well as the influence of friends or family members. Self-efficacy is a personal comforting factor that leads one to behave or avoid a specific behavior. Therefore, the suggestions from friends and family members may motivate consumers' perceived efficiency to purchase fair-trade products, especially in the context of high collectivism countries like Vietnam. Past study has revealed that the most primary factors for not purchasing eco and fair trade products is because of the significantly higher price in comparison with traditional products (Fotopoulos and Krystallis, 2002). Thus, Vietnam is still a developing country, but fair trade products are generally more costly than traditional items because of the expenses of fair pay, working conditions, and protection of the environment. However, past study has been shown that price may not dissuade buyers from buying goods if they have strong beliefs about product attributes including fair trade products (Ma, Littrell, and Niehm, 2012). They purchase the fair trade products because they believe their act of buying may help others. They view themselves as ethical buyers. Ethical self-identity also related inclinations to buy fair trade products (Ozcaglar-

Toulouse, Shiu, and Shaw, 2006). Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to participate in a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991). When consumers believe in their self-efficacy while participating in ethical consumption, they feel more optimistic in their capacity to purchase fair trade products (Ma, et al., 2012).

H1*: Fair trade-certification (FC) has a positive impact on self-efficacy (SE).*

H2: *Subjective Norms (SN) has a positive impact on SE.*

H3: *Perceived Behavioral Control (PC) has a positive impact on SE.*

H4: *Perceived price (PP) has positive impact on SE.*

H5: *Ethical identity (EI) has a positive impact on SE.*

H6: *SE has a positive impact on fair trade purchase intention (PI)*

H7: *The relationship between FC and PI is mediated by SE*

H8: *The relationship between SN and PI is mediated by SE*

H9: *The relationship between PC and PI is mediated by SE*

H10: *The relationship between PP and PI is mediated by SE*

H11: *The relationship between EI and PI is mediated by SE*

Methods and Data

An online survey of 200 respondents to test the above hypotheses is conducted. 62.5% were female and males accounted for 37%. While the proportion of others is 0.5%. The measurement of FC (α= 0.837) is adapted from Konuk (2019). The measurements of PC (α= 0.708), EI (α=0.777), SN (α= 0.806), PI (α=0.810) are adapted from Beldad and Hegner (2018). Lastly, PP (α=0.837) is adapted from Castaldo et al. (2009), and SE (α=0.710) is adapted from Ashraf, Joarder, and Ratan

(2018). The results indicated that all the measurements qualified the reliability and discriminant validity for further analysis.

Summary of findings

The results indicated that the coefficient of SN on PI (β = 0.397, $p<0.001$), while the relationship between FC, PC, PP, EI on PI is insignificant. However, the relationship between FC, SN, PC, PP, EI on SE is significant (β_{FC}= 0.264, $p<0.001$;β_{SN}= 0.397, $p<0.001$; β_{PC}= 0.234, $p<0.001$;β_{PP} = 0.257, $p<0.001$; β_{EI}= 0.274, $p<0.001$). The indirect effect of FC; SN; PC; PP; EI on PI through SE is significant. Thus all hypotheses are supported. The results are shown in table 1

	Effect	LLCI	ULCI
FC->SE->PI	0.104	.0368	.1918
SN->SE->PI	0.108	.0218	.1939
PC->SE->PI	0.082	.0198	.1821
PP->SE->PI	0.087	.0290	.1615
EI->SE->PI	0.091	.0295	.1715

Table 1. The indirect effect of fair trade-certification, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived price, ethical identity on purchase intention through self-efficacy

The results indicated that self-efficacy is a crucial mediator factor on fair trade purchase intention. The finding indicates that subjective norms have the strongest direct impacts on fair trade purchase intention. Subjective norms encourage consumers to choose ethical items on the dosmestic market while also assisting farmers in poor conditions. Conclusion of this research might be utilized by advertisers and sustainable manufacturers in order to build strategies and promote purchasing behavior.

References are available upon request.

GAMIFICATION AND CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT IN HEALTHCARE

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Keywords: Gamification, Consumer Engagement, Healthcare, Laddering, Means-end chain

Description: To develop a comprehensive framework for attributes, consequences and values of gamification in mHealth apps for continued engagement using means-end chain theory

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The extant literature highlights the mHealth apps' potential to positively influence users' health behaviour and ensure treatment adherence. In order to ensure better outcomes, continued engagement with mHealth apps is necessary and, in this context, gamification presents itself as a promising approach to raise users' engagement and motivates them for continued usage of mHealth apps. This qualitative research will give a further understanding of the consumers' preferences towards gamified attributes in mHealth apps. In the context of user engagement with regard to the weight management of obese or overweight individuals, the following research questions will be catered to:

RQ1: Which attributes of gamification in mHealth apps can ensure continued engagement?
RQ2: What are the consequences and values associated with gamification in mHealth apps?
RQ3: What are the concerns in the field of gamification in mHealth apps?

Method And Data

In order to understand the three levels of abstractions-- Attributes, Consequences and Personal Values (ACV)- we used laddering technique to collect data for mean end-chain analysis (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988). The qualitative interview of individuals with body mass index (BMI) more than 25 (overweight) and BMI more than 30 (obese) who were using mHealth apps like Myfitness pal, Noom, HealthifyMe and Able for more than 3 months, was conducted between Jan 2022 to Jul 2022. Each interview lasted for an average duration of 35 minutes. We conducted 37 interviews (14 male and 23 female) till we reached theoretical saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 2017). LadderUX tool was used for the data analysis. We developed 166 ladders from the 37 interviews. To ensure the validity of the results, we reached out to 6 participants with the transcripts and the ACV chains. The participants confirmed that the analysis fairly reflects their own perspective. Furthermore, all the codes that we developed were discussed among the researchers before we finalized the 22 codes table, including attributes, consequences, and values.

Summary of Findings

We outline nine attributes of gamification in mHealth apps from user's perspective. The attributes of micro-interactions along with contextualization, unpredictability, achievement, rewards, story, time counter, personalization and shareability. The participants shared that because of micro-interactions they could continue to engage more with mHealth apps. Micro-interactions comprise special effects (SFX) and toggles. The second most important attribute was contextualization which provides several benefits to the users, i.e., aesthetic proofs, perceived value, improved decision-making with respect to diet and exercise and continued engagement in their treatment. Interestingly, positive and negative reinforcements without any associated rewards were also popular among the participants. The continued engagement of with gamified attributed of mhealth apps resulted in several benefits for them such as treatment adherence, fun-filled, improved choice-making, motivation to adhere and sense of control. The study uncovers the underlying core values that drive consumers to achieve the benefit in the gamified mHealth app context. We provide eight values ranging from self (quality of life, confidence, satisfaction, empowerment, management) to social (sense of community, social influence) and behavioral (target behaviour change). This study also highlights the concerns like trust deficit, non-seriousness, the privacy of data and confidentiality of identity.

Key contributions

The current study showed that gamification in mHealth apps has a favourable influence on healthcare consumers, especially obese patients, to adhere to weight reduction and management programs. Reward, recognition, personalization, and socializing through games can drive patients to attain health objectives and change their lifestyles. This is among the first few literatures on obese patients in the context of gamified mHealth apps. The insights derived from attributes, consequences and values chains will help the Healthcare practitioners (HCPs), healthcare service providers and healthcare technology companies during the development of mHealth interventions which are contextualized and which can ensure continued engagement of healthcare consumers thereby resulting in better outcomes. This study also brings forth various triggers and barriers in the adoption of gamification by healthcare consumers.

GREEN INTENTION – PURCHASE BEHAVIOR GAP: WHAT MAKES CONSUMERS WALK THE TALK?

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Keywords: Green Gap, Implementation Intentions, Self-efficacy, Product Involvement, Green Skepticism.

Description: We empirically study the combined effects of implementation intentions, plan enactment, and different action and coping self-efficacy levels on green consumers' purchase intentions - behavior gap, and examine the product-specific differential effects across different types of green products.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Why do consumers inclined to buy green products often show ineffective buying actions? Within the 'green attitude-intention-behavior' discord (ElHaffar et al., 2020), the intention-behavior link (referred to as the 'green gap' in this study) remains under-researched. Using the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability theory, we contribute to the burgeoning literature on the green gap and seek to identify what can lower consumers' green gap and support their actions.

The extant investigations on the green gap suggest that consumers' perception of green buying as 'complex' and 'difficult' (Johnstone and Tan, 2015a) leads to unsuccessful attempts to realize the purchase. Therefore, with a need for a simple solution to strengthen green purchase intentions, we investigate the combined impact of implementation intentions, plan enactment, action (ASE), and coping self-efficacy (CSE) can be effective in lowering the green gap. Additionally, we test our propositions further for specific types of green products, thereby extending the academic discussion to green gap investigations for diverse product categories.

We aim to address the following research questions:

(1) How do implementation intentions, plan enactment, action self-efficacy, and coping self-efficacy influence consumers' green intention-purchase behavior?

(2) What differential effects do these self-efficacy beliefs reveal in supporting the green gap closures for different types of green products?

Hypotheses:

H1a: Green Purchase Intentions (GPI) will have a positive effect on Implementation Intentions (Planning)

H1b: Implementation Intentions (Planning) will have a positive effect on Plan enactment (Enactment).

H1c: Plan enactment (Enactment) will have a positive effect on Green Purchase Behaviour (GPB).

H1d: Implementation Intentions (Planning) and Plan Enactment (Enactment) will sequentially mediate the effect of Green Purchase Intentions (GPI) on Green Purchase Behaviour (GPB).

H2a: Individual's Action Self-efficacy (ASE) will moderate the positive relationship between Green Purchase Intentions (Intentions) and Implementation Intentions (Planning): The association will be stronger (vs. weaker) when an individual's Action Self-Efficacy is high (vs. low).

H2b: Individual's Action Self-efficacy (ASE) will moderate the positive relationship between Implementation Intentions (Planning) and Plan Enactment (Enactment): The association will be stronger (vs. weaker) when an individual's Action Self-Efficacy is high (vs. low).

H3a: Individual's Coping Self-efficacy (CSE) will moderate the positive relationship between Implementation Intentions (Planning) and Plan Enactment (Enactment): The association will be stronger (vs. weaker) when an individual's Coping Self-Efficacy is high (vs. low).

H3b: Individual's Coping Self-efficacy (CSE) will moderate the positive relationship between Plan Enactment (Enactment) and Green Purchase Behaviour (Behaviour): The association will be stronger (vs. weaker) when an individual's Coping Self-Efficacy is high (vs. low).

Method and Data

The data was collected via a structured questionnaire survey following a purposive convenient sampling method (Jaiswal and Kant, 2018) for 605 survey responses. The questionnaire comprised two broad parts: (1) Existing measurement scale items and (2) Pre-tested anchoring

vignettes representing each construct on a scale of high, medium, and low levels (Weiss and Roberts, 2018).

To deal with the social desirability biases in survey studies (Carrington et al., 2010), the anchoring vignettes mechanism is a promising approach to correct the responses and make them free from socially-desirable adjusted ratings. The process involves comparing respondents' self-rated survey responses with the pre-tested benchmarks (anchored vignettes) of the same constructs being measured and then adjusting the scores to lower biased scores (Weiss and Roberts, 2018).

We operationalize green products by focusing on two dimensions influencing green consumers' decision-making: (a) green skepticism and (b) the consumers' product involvement (Park and Yoo, 2020). These factors share a 2X2 format involving four groups across high and low levels of green skepticism and product involvement in which we test two products categories: (a) High Involvement – High Skepticism (HIHS) and (b) Low Involvement – low skepticism (LILS). A further pre-test resulted in finalizing Organic Shampoo (for the HIHS category) and Bamboo Table Runners (for the LILS category) for the final study.

Summary of Findings

Findings reveal the sequential mediation of implementation intentions and plan enactment in the relationship between green purchase intentions and green purchase behavior for both product categories. Implementation intentions and plan enactment had a significant direct positive relationship for organic shampoos and bamboo table runners, thus validating its importance in supporting the green gap.

For Bamboo table runners (depicting the LILS category), the study suggests that ASE and CSE moderate the green intention-behavior link, as proposed. However, it is surprising that ASE has been insignificant in the planning-enactment link. We suspect one possible reason could

be consumers' misleading perceptions of green goods (Rahman 2018) within the low involvement category.

Next, the results for Organic Shampoo (depicting the HIHS category) interestingly find no support for CSE moderating the intention-behavior link. Such high involvement - high skepticism products demand consumers to invest tremendous efforts and higher cognition. They would be willing to sacrifice less in such a case (Rahman 2018) and may thus not reveal higher coping self-efficacy. Thus, for the HIHS category, only coping self-efficacy may be ineffective, revealing insignificant results.

Key Contributions

The present study shares two significant contributions to the marketing literature. First, the study responds to the call for research urging scholars to address the green intention-behavior gap (ElHaffar et al., 2020). This is possibly the earliest attempt to validate the sequential mediation of implementation intentions and plan enactments and the conditional moderating effects of action and coping self-efficacies within the green intention-purchase behavior gap through a conceptual framework. Additionally, we expand our propositions from the generic to the product-specific green gap. The outcomes reveal the product-specific effects of our propositions by classifying green products basis high and low levels of consumers' green skepticism and green product involvement. Such product-specific differential effects suggest critical information for green marketing strategies.

Second, we use the methodological technique of anchoring vignettes mechanism (King and Wand, 2007) to address the concern of social-desirability biases in surveys in green behavioral studies. The method adjusts the biases in the self-reported responses and makes the data meaningful for further interpretation via a systematic process.

References are available upon request.

HELL OR HIGH WATER: EFFECTS OF PANDEMIC AND WEATHER EXTREMES ON ONLINE-OFFLINE RESTAURANT SALES

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Keywords: Pandemic, COVID 19, Weather Extremes, Online Sales, Offline Sales, Restaurant

Description: This paper analyses the impact of epidemics and extreme weather on both takeout orders and restaurant meals served in-house restaurant sales.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Pandemics such as COVID 19 and climate change triggered events, unlike disruptions led by technological developments, pose completely unexpected, short-term threats to businesses and demand swift responses. There are mixed evidences of heightened online transactions for retail businesses in such situations that force individuals to remain indoors. Hence, examining of impact of such events on offline and online sales in retail service context become important. This paper explores how external situations, such as the pandemic and the weather extremes, make an impact on online and offline sales. By combining qualitative methods involving a detailed case study and quantitative time series analyses, it examines the link between weather extremes and COVID 19 pandemic and consumer response in the form of online and offline transactions in the context of restaurants. The findings establish link between online and

offline sales and there is a big boost in online sales during an increase in offline sales. Surprisingly, Pandemic did have modest impact on offline sales but no impact on online sales. The extreme weather marked by high summer temperatures has a detrimental effect on offline sales in the short term. This study may pave the way for more research and use by Food Industry for their planning during uncertainty and external crisis situations.

Research question

App-based restaurant aggregators and delivery services have entered the food business in a big way. Customers often utilize web apps to order food and eat it at home. The pandemic has made a significant impact across industries and especially the restaurant industry. The studies showed variations in seated dinners at restaurants during the pandemic. Human behavior and mood have been demonstrated to be influenced by weather conditions as well. Mood, on the other hand, has a significant impact on overall demand as well as demand for specific products. The weather can have a direct impact on what goods people buy, when, where, and in what amounts. *This paper empirically examines the relationship between online and offline and how they influence each other in the context of restaurant. It examines the effects of pandemic on online, offline sales and their relationships. Does the severity of the pandemic affect any of them, both of them, or neither of them? Empirical investigation also explores effects of extreme temperature on online and offline sales. Does the extreme summer weather affect any of the offline or online sales or both of them, or neither of them?*

Method and data

For this study, primary data on sales revenue are collected from a chain of restaurants in Ahmedabad, India, and secondary data on weather and corona incidences are sourced from public sources. The daily sales of the restaurant's branches were collected for the year 2021. The data included dine-in orders and online orders from different delivery service partner apps.

Since their internal marketing strategy changed to switch between preferred online app aggregators, online sales across all apps were aggregated. The pandemic intensity data as reflected in number of cases reported at the city level for Ahmedabad (one of the tier-2 cities of India) from the incovid19 support team (https://www.incovid19.org/). The weather (temperature) data were sourced from weather.com from their monthly weather info pages. (https://www.wunderground.com/history/monthly/in/ahmedabad/VAAH/date/2021-12).

Time series analysis on the sales data available in a daily format using STATA software was used for analysis. Multivariate time series to analyse the interactions between multiple time series; the two series came out to be mixed in terms of stationarity and cointegrated one. Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) cointegration technique was used with vector correction for effects on offline sales and without vector correction for effects on online sales.

Summary of findings

Results support that offline significantly impact online sales in the short run while online sales impacts offline sales in the long run. The customers might be open to testing new dishes and consider placing online orders instead of dining in. Eventually, growth in online sales makes clients dine in, giving a long-term boost. Surprisingly The study also revealed that COVID 19 doesn’t have any effect on offline but demonstrates a detrimental effect on online sales. As the pandemic spreads, purchasers realize they shouldn't order online because the carrier may be affected and has more touch points. Dine-in sales and the pandemic may not be related as during the epidemic, the government's position on restaurant owners changed regularly. Second, the insights from the restaurant owner revealed that customers used takeout means while coming for dine-in during the pandemic, which might have muddled the results. The third study related to weather showed that the temperature hurts online sales while it has a positive impact in the long run. The customers might want to go out and enjoy

the facilities of the restaurant and avoid any hosting at their own homes during the extreme temperatures of the city, going as high as 110 Fahrenheit. In the long run, this trend switches.

Key contributions

The research has many effects and can help practitioners (restaurant owners) and researchers extend their studies. The study examines online-offline commerce interactions. The research disproves the assumption that online sales substitute offline ones. Offline sales improve online sales significantly. This helps practitioners plan online and offline resources. Economic changes may explain this habit. For an economic relationship, researchers can analyze why offline sales lead to online sales.

A current study revealed a fresh finding regarding the influence of corona on online and offline sales. The study demonstrates that when the impact of a pandemic increases, there is a negative impact on online sales but no discernible influence on dine-in sales. The practitioners can use this study to plan for takeaway, which can help boost sales in such scenarios. Researchers can uncover features of people with this tendency to help practitioners with proper targeting.

The study demonstrates a positive impact of temperature on offline sales as people are going out to enjoy the dine-in environment. Practitioners can plan their resource planning based on forecasts from the meteorological department and even market their dine-in dishes accordingly.

References are available upon request.

HIGHER LEVELS OF COMPENSATION INDUCE CONSUMER GUILT WHEN FIRMS ARE CLOSE BUT FUTURE TRANSACTIONS ARE DISTANT

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Keywords: Service Recovery. Compensation, Inequity, Guilt

Compensation for service failures can backfire by inducing consumer guilt and feelings of indebtedness, especially for local firms and when future opportunities for interaction (and thus reciprocity) are limited.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Services are intangible, perishable, produced in real time, and subjectively experienced. Thus, it is difficult to ensure that service processes and outcomes are free of error. Additionally, consumers often perceive failure even when there is none (Fisk et al. 1993). Prior research finds that such service failures, whether real or imagined, are a significant driver of negative customer outcomes such as diminished attitudes toward the firm, anger, dissatisfaction, switching, and

negative word-of-mouth (e.g., Khamitov et al. 2020; Smith and Bolton 1998). Marketers often seek to mitigate negative responses to service failures by compensating consumers with a tangible benefit (e.g., reimbursements, refunds, replacements, repairs, credit). Prior research finds that the effectiveness of compensation depends on factors such as the severity, responsibility, and frequency of the failure (Arsenovic et al. 2021; Hogreve et al., 2017). While traditional wisdom holds that it is better for firms to err on the side of overcompensation, empirical research finds that it often performs no better (or worse) than lower levels of compensation (Crisafulli and Singh 2016; Gelbrich and Roschk 2011; Wirtz and Mattila 2004).

Research Question. The present research proposes that mixed findings in the overcompensation literature may exist, in part, because overcompensation can make consumers feel guilty, and the consequences of this guilt depend on certain features of the service failure context. The notion that overcompensation can induce feelings of guilt in consumers has been hinted at by prior research. For example, Wirtz and McColl-Kennedy (2009) speculated that consumer guilt may have made study participants less likely to overclaim losses from a service failure when the recovering firm was smaller (versus larger). Similarly, Palmatier et al. (2009) studied the impact of relationship investments on customer gratitude and purchase intentions and found that the only significant control variable for intentions was a measure of customer guilt.

Drawing on equity theory (e.g., Hassebrauck 1986), we predict that overcompensation may engender consumer-felt guilt due to perceived inequities in the distribution of resources between the customer and the firm. Left unresolved, these negative feelings of guilt can diminish the customer's attitude toward the firm. Since individuals care more about equity in more intimate relationships, we predict that feelings of guilt from overcompensation are stronger when customers have a closer relationship with the firm prior to the service failure. Additionally, since

individuals are motivated to reduce guilt by restoring equity, we predict that the negative effect of guilt on attitude toward the firm is mitigated when customers expect to have future opportunities to patronize the firm.

Method and Data. To test our predictions, we conducted a 2×2×2 between-subjects experiment with 152 student participants. The three design factors were compensation level (equity, positive inequity), firm closeness (distant, close), and future opportunity for patronizing (limited, unlimited). To establish the service context, participants were asked to imagine they were excited to attend a movie starring their favorite actor at a theater. Firm closeness was manipulated by telling participants the theater was either a single, independently owned theater with the owners living in same city or that it was part of a large chain of theaters that was owned by an out-of-state firm. Participants were told that the theater's advertising claimed that it had recently upgraded its facilities to include the latest sound system technology.

The service failure scenario involved asking participants to imagine viewing the movie and noticing that the audio was occasionally cracked and muffled. This provided a foundation for the compensation manipulation in which participants were either fairly (equitably) compensated with a free bucket of popcorn or overcompensated with a free bucket of popcorn plus five free movie passes. The levels of compensation were determined based on a pretest (and confirmed with a manipulation check).

In the last section of the study, participants were asked to imagine that either they were graduating soon and moving out of town (limited future opportunity for patronage) or that they were graduating soon staying in town (unlimited future opportunity for patronage). Participants then completed scale items measuring of guilt and attitude toward the firm.

Summary of Findings. The conceptual model was tested by submitting the manipulations and measures to the Hayes PROCESS macro (version 4.0, Model 21, 5,000 bootstrap samples). The mediator model featured guilt as the dependent variable and compensation level and firm closeness as the independent variables. Consistent with our predictions, there was a significant interaction between compensation level and firm closeness (B = .52, $p < .05$) such that when participants were equitably compensated, there was no difference in felt guilt across the close and distant firm conditions (B = .23, p = .27); in contrast, when participants were overcompensated, guilt was greater for a close (versus distant) firm (B = .74, $p < .001$).

The outcome model featured attitude toward the firm as the dependent variable and compensation level, guilt, and future opportunity for patronage as the independent variables. As expected, the interaction between guilt and future opportunity for patronage was significant (B = .53, $p < .001$) such that when future opportunity for patronage was limited, guilt had a negative effect on attitude toward the firm (-.25, $p < .05$) but when future opportunity for patronage was unlimited, guilt had a less negative effect (in fact, a positive effect) on attitude toward the firm (B = .28, $p <.05$). Additionally, model testing confirmed the mediating role of guilt. Specifically, the index-of-moderated-moderated-mediation value was -.32, with a bootstrapped confidence interval of -.69 to -.01.

Key Contributions. The present research contributes to the literature by reconciling mixed findings in the service recovery and compensation literature. We advance the notion that overcompensation can make consumers feel guilty due to perceptions of unsolicited positive inequity (indebtedness) and that the consequences of this guilt depend on other features of the service failure context. First, feelings of guilt are intensified when customers perceive a closer

relationship with the firm prior to the service failure. This can lead to diminished attitudes towards the firm as customers seek to balance the negative feelings of guilt. Second, guilt's consequences are mitigated when customers perceive that they will have future opportunities to interact with the firm (thereby providing a means of coping and restoring equity).

Our research has direct value for service provider practitioners. We raise awareness of customer guilt difficult-to-anticipate risk of overcompensating for service failure. Whereas firms may think it is safer or perhaps smarter to overcompensate their closest customers, we find that the opposite is true since closeness intensifies customers' feelings of guilt. Second, for service providers in categories where overcompensation is a competitive norm, we offer a managerial lever by showing that the negative consequences of overcompensation can be mitigated by engineering the compensation format so that customers are guided towards restoring equity (e.g., facilitating future interactions or re-patronage).

Limitations of the research include the hypothetical nature of the service failure and the lack of additional "downstream" consumer outcomes (e.g., word-of-mouth, loyalty). Considering future research opportunities, it is plausible that the unexpected nature of overcompensation may cause consumers to reinterpret a service failure or reconsider the relationship motivations of the firm (e.g., Korschun et al. 2016; Swain et al. 2014). Similarly, there is a need to consider the impact of alternative presentations of a compensation quantity (Weathers et al. 2012). Future research may also wish to consider cultural contingencies. For example, Ringberg et al. (2007) argue that consumers who subscribe to a relational cultural model are more likely to experience guilt than those subscribing to an oppositional or utilitarian cultural model. Similarly, Chebat et al. (2020) find that compensation reduced consumer anger more for individualistic than

collectivistic consumers, suggesting that collectivistic consumers are less likely to experience guilt from overcompensation.

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HOW POLITICAL IDENTITY AFFECTS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICE RECOVERY STRATEGIES

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Keywords: Service recovery strategy, Recovery satisfaction, Political identity, Experimental design

Drawing on justice theory and the motivated social cognition approach, the present research argues that political identity influences the effectiveness of service recovery initiatives such as apology, effort, and customer participation.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Firms have spent billions on service recovery; yet many customers remain unsatisfied with the recovery process (CCMC 2020). One of the causes of poor recoveries might reside in the narrow approach to customers' response to recovery initiatives. With the exception of Jung et al. (2017), research in this tradition has primarily focused on the severity of the failure or/and customer emotions to probe the effectiveness of service recovery initiatives (Roggeveen et al. 2012). Although an increasing number of scholars have called for a broader approach to customer behaviors and attitudes that include political identity (Fernandes et al. 2022), there remains a dearth of research on the implications of the customer's political identity—i.e., a set of beliefs about the desired and espoused order and goals of society, and how they can be achieved (Jung and Mittal 2020)—for the effectiveness of recovery initiatives. This stands in sharp contrast to today's politically polarized era, wherein it becomes crucial to examine the "political context when studying consumers, and the impact of marketing activities on consumer outcomes" (Jung and Mittal 2020, p. 69). Therefore, we investigate the following research question:

What are the implications of political identity for the effectiveness of recovery initiatives?

Method and Data

We recruited 474 consumers (average age: 29.7; female 70.67%, college degree 45%). We used a scenario-based experiment to eliminate ethical issues associated with simulating service failures while mitigating risks for common-method biases (Roggeveen et al. 2012). The study was conducted as a 2 × 3 between-subjects experiment (apology, effort,

customer participation). To measure recovery satisfaction, we adapted the scale from Maxham and Netemeyer (2002). We used two items from the Pew Research Center (2017) that reflect social and the economic aspects of political identity. For the social aspect, participants were asked to choose the statement which best fits their personal attitude: *(1) Today, the government cannot afford to do much more to help the needy. – (2) The government should do more to help needy citizens, even if it means going into more debt.* Participants who chose the first statement were assigned -1 (i.e., conservative) while those having chosen the second one received 1 (i.e., liberals). Participants also had the option to remain neutral (i.e., 0). We used the same procedures for the economic aspect of political identity. Participants chose between the two following statements: *(1) Most businesses make a fair and reasonable profit. – (2) Business enterprises make too much profit*.

Summary of Findings

The manipulation check was successful. Controlling for age, and gender, the results showed positive effects of apology (b=.37, S.E.=.11, p<.01) and effort (b=1.53, S.E.=.11, p<.001) on recovery satisfaction. Customer participation had no significant effect on recovery satisfaction. We therefore did not investigate the effectiveness of customer participation.

Apology There was a significant interaction between apology and the social aspect of political identity (b=1.08, S.E.=.52, p<.05). A significant impact of the economic aspect (b=1.07, S.E.=.48, p<.05) was also found. In relation to the social aspect, apology had a stronger effect on recovery satisfaction among customers identified as liberal. Similarly, apology had a stronger effect on recovery satisfaction among this group when considering the economic aspect of political identity.

Effort The economic aspect of political identity moderated the effect of effort (b=.92, S.E.=.47, p<.05). The results showed a non-significant interaction between effort and the social aspect. For the economic aspect of political identity, effort has a stronger effect on recovery satisfaction among liberals.

Key Contributions

The present research contributes to the service recovery literature in two ways. First, we introduce the idea that the effectiveness of service recovery initiatives is contingent on two important aspects of political identity: the social (i.e., beliefs that the government should do more to help needy citizens, even if it means going into more debt) and the economic aspect (i.e., beliefs that business enterprises make too much profit) (Pew 2019). More specifically, this research draws on justice theory and complements it with the motivated social cognition approach to develop a conceptual framework that examines whether consumers with liberal beliefs (liberals) tend to be more satisfied with service recovery initiatives than those with conservative beliefs (conservatives).

Second, we test our hypotheses in the German context to provide new insights into the implications of political identity for the effectiveness of service recovery initiatives. Prior service research on political identity was conducted in the United States of America (e.g., Jung et al. 2017). Our expansion to the German context is consistent with (Jung and Mittal 2020, p. 56) suggesting that "scholars should be open to situations requiring a more complex structure of political identity."

References are available upon request.

HOW TO ALLOCATE WHITE SPACE IN AD DESIGN? THE IMPACT OF PRODUCT LAYOUTS ON PERCEIVED ENTITATIVITY AND ADVERTISING PERFORMANCE

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Keywords: product layout, white space, interspace, circumspace, entitativity

Description: The current research provides evidence that white space allocation plays an important role in advertising and takes the less controllable decision of where to add "more or less white space" and turns it into a more controllable action of how do we "allocate white space."

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Imagine you are a manager tasked with creating an online advertisement for a group of products in a fixed space. Would you recommend grouping these products close together or spacing them apart? Prior research on product layouts would not provide managers with a clear solution. In a fixed ad space, while grouping the products close together allocates more space surrounding the group, which can increase brand prestige and evaluations (Pracejus, Olsen, and O'Guinn 2006), spacing the products apart allocates more space in between the group, which can also increase promotion effectiveness (Kwak et al. 2020). In this research, we systematically review white space literature, identify two types of white space, interspace (space in between a product layout) and circumspace (space surrounding a product layout), and investigate their effect on product layout perceptions. We propose that holding the total white space constant, a lower interspace/circumspace ratio (more compressed product layout), compared with a higher interspace/circumspace ratio (less compressed product layout) can increase the perceived entitativity (i.e., perception of a unit as a "group") of a collection of products in an advertisement and, ultimately, ad evaluation, purchase intentions, and click-through-rates.

Method And Data

Study 1 tested Facebook ads of a fictitious face wash brand in a 3-cell (product layout: less compressed vs. more compressed vs. no space) between-subjects design. Study 2 tested the impact of product layouts on ad evaluations and purchase likelihood in a lab setting and ruled out several alternative explanations. It tested ads of a fictitious reusable water bottle brand in a 2-cell

(product layout: less compressed vs. more compressed) between-subjects design. Study 3 replicated the prior findings by using displays that contain multiple types of products that belong to the same collection (travel sets comprised of five different products) in a 2-cell (product layout: less compressed vs. more compressed) between-subjects design. It also tested the mediation process through perceived display entitativity. Study 4 tested whether framing the products as less (vs. more) conceptually similar can weaken the positive effect of the compressed layout by reducing the salience of entitativity in a 2 (product layout: less compressed vs. more compressed) × 2 (conceptual similarity: lower vs. higher) between-subjects design. The participants viewed the same stimuli as in Study 3, but we manipulated conceptual similarity by describing the task differently and changing the title of the ads.

Summary of Findings

We show that holding the total white space constant, a more compressed product layout, compared with a less compressed product layout can increase the perceived entitativity (i.e., perception of a unit as a "group") of a collection of products in an advertisement and, ultimately, ad evaluation, purchase intentions, and click-through-rates. However, if the products are framed as conceptually dissimilar, the perception of entitativity becomes less salient, which reduces advertisement performance.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our work adds to the emerging research on spatial arrangement of products (Castro, Morales, and Nowlis 2013; Deng et al. 2016; Sarantopoulos et al. 2019) and is the first to investigate the arrangement of white space. It also expands research on white space.

Traditionally, this topic has been studied without holding the total space the same, which can be relevant for a retailing environment (e.g., shelf product layout; Kwak et al. 2020; Sevilla and Townsend 2016) but might not be relevant in an advertising context where ad space is often fixed. Our work offers a new perspective for white space research by studying white space within a fixed total space. Finally, our work adds to the emerging research on entitativity. Researchers have explored the impact of entitativity in a marketing context and found that product replicates (multiple instances of the same product vs. a single unit) can promote entitativity (Vanbergen, Irmak, and Sevilla 2020). We add to this research stream by investigating the impact of product layout while holding constant the number of grouped products.

References are available upon request.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO RESPOND: THE INTERACTION BETWEEN IDENTITY SALIENCE AND PERSUASION KNOWLEDGE ON WOM INTENTION

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Key Words: e-WOM, online community, social influencer, persuasion knowledge

Description: Consumers' salient community or follower identity impacts their e-WOM intention toward influencers who post in online consumer communities, and this relationship is further impacted by persuasion knowledge and influencers' tenure in the online community.

Research Question

Marketers are increasingly synthesizing social media and online shopping, whereby social influencers materialize their social influences into commercial benefits (Dwivedi et al. 2021). Social influencers usually post in online communities – the virtual communal spaces where consumers discover new things and connect with similar minds (He and Bond 2015; Troiano 2022). However, consumers' negative e-WOM can greatly discount influencers' persuasion attempts. This is less of a concern when social influencers post reviews in their own follower communities, because consumers as influencers' followers identify with influencers and tend to react positively to their e-WOM (Farivar and Wang 2022). However, consumers' self-categorization as community members differ from their identification with the influencer when influencers post in online communities other than their own follower communities. Since limited

research has investigated consumers' e-WOM intention in the latter case, the current research addresses this gap by investigating consumers' e-WOM intention when influencers post in online consumer communities other than their own follower communities. In particular, positing a pivotal role of identity salience, we aim to delineate how consumers' salient community or follower identity impact their e-WOM toward influencers and how consumers' persuasion knowledge and influencers' tenure further moderate this relationship.

Method and Data

In study 1, we surveyed 379 undergraduates to examine the main effect of identity salience and the interactive effect of identity salience and persuasion knowledge on e-WOM intention. Confirmatory factor analysis results in a good fit of the model (CFI = .98, RMSEA = 0.052, and SRMR = 0.038). Structural equation modeling test results indicate a significant and positive impact of follower identity salience on WOM intentions (β =.228, $p < .05$) and a marginally negative interactive effect of persuasion knowledge and follower identity salience (β = -0.235, $.05 < p < .1$).

We conducted study 2 in a home entertainment technology community and used SPSS binary logit regression to test the community's influence on consumers' e-WOM valence. Community social status and influencer duration years significantly impact the WOM valence (Nagelkerke R Square value = .241, $p < .05$), especially for well-known members (likelihood increases by 4.018 times, $p < .05$) and for influencers with longer tenures (likelihood increases by 9.5%, $p < .05$). Further, longer posting history of influencers can swing active members to positive e-WOM (Nagelkerke R Square value = .245, $p < .5$; likelihood increases by 13.1%, $05 < p < .1$).

Summary of findings

First, we found the significant positive impact of salient follower identity on e-WOM intention, which is negatively moderated by persuasion knowledge. Though we were not able to find a significant relationship between community identity salience and e-WOM intention, we suspect it is possibly due to the fictional nature of the community setting in study 1. Secondly, our findings provide evidence that online community members with different community social statuses react differently to influencers' posts. Furthermore, influencers who have engaged with this online community for a long time elicit more positive reactions from online community members, especially from well-known and active members. We did not get a significant finding on the senior members' negative reactions to expert influencers' reviews. This result is likely due to the decade-spanning relationships between the expert influencers and senior members. The current research indicates the possible co-existence of follower and online community identity and the saliency among the two that impacts members' e-WOM intention toward influencers.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research extends e-WOM literature by delineating the pivotal role of identity salience in consumers' WOM intention with social influences from influencers and the online community. We also enriched influencer marketing and community marketing literature by investigating the differential effect of community and influencer identity on consumers' e-WOM intention, by revealing an interesting dynamism between community, influencers' activity, and WOM intention.

This research further extends Persuasion Knowledge Model by providing novel insights into persuasion knowledge. The findings reveal that the interaction of persuasion knowledge and follower identity salience negatively impacts e-WOM intention. Further, though not hypothesized, persuasion knowledge alone positively influences consumers' e-WOM intention.

These two significant relations reveal an intriguing possibility that consumers' persuasion knowledge of influencers as being informative positively impacts WOM intention. However, the same persuasion knowledge may discount influencers’ persuasion effort when it contradicts consumers' identification with the influencers.

This research helps marketing policy makers be more cognizant of various social influences at work for consumers' e-WOM intention. Our study results indicate that rather than being additive, a more salient social influence can hedge the influence from other sources. Therefore, social influence congruency is an important factor to consider when marketers select community venues and influencers.

IMPACTS OF CO-BRANDING AND PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS: A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

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Keywords: Co-Branding, Public Service Announcements, Brand Likability, Gender Roles, Corporate Social Responsibility

Description: We investigate factors that influence the success of co-branding relationships between brands and non-profit organizations with the use of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) ads.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Business activism is one of today's society's most prominent and fastest-growing processes. Almost every modern organization is, in one way or another, involved in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities (Jong and Meer, 2017). Brands and non-profit organizations are collaborating and volunteering for socially responsible business practices (Kotler and Lee, 2005; Kim et al., 2012) for societal issues such as smoking, domestic violence (DV), and childhood hunger.

Gender roles play an aspect in the influence of social support and empathy in ads. However, previous studies have shown that gender differences in social support are not definitive (Matud et al., 2002). Prior research has also reported that women receive social support from multiple sources, whereas men rely on their spouses exclusively (Antonucci and Akiyama, 1987; Wymer,

2012). This study explores the effectiveness of social messaging through co-branding, impacting consumers' empathy and support for social issues by considering gender and brand credibility. We explore the following research questions:

RQ1: How do brands and non-profits effectively utilize message appeals to support the social issue in their co-branded ads? And what effect does this have on reaching their CSR goals?

RQ 2: How does brand reputation and gender roles play in the effectiveness of brand messaging on social issues?

Methods and Data

Using a digital survey tool, data were respectively collected from 52 undergraduate students. Students from a public university located on the U.S. West Coast received course credit for participation. A 2x2 experiment was conducted on the effects of ad appeal (positive vs. negative) and gender within two PSA ads (anti-child hunger and anti-smoking) and two co-branded advertisements (IKEA and Uber in support of anti-domestic violence issues) using the PANAS affective scale (5 positive/5 negative affect). Dependent Variables included the level of empathy, brand likability, and the likelihood of support (LTS). All measures used a 7-point Likert-type scale.

Summary of Findings

Results indicate that by comparing emotional appeals used in PSA ads vs. co-branded messages, we found that empathy is effective in female viewers in PSAs, which predominantly use negative affect, especially when a victim is present. In comparing PSA ads with co-branded ads, more negative (vs. positive) affect was reported in PSA ads (anti-smoking and child hunger ads). Whereas positive (vs. negative) affect was reported in co-branded ads for both Uber and IKEA

ads (anti-domestic violence ads). There were also no gender differences in emotional affect for both ad appeals.

Examining the role of brand likeability, IKEA was rated significantly more likable than the Uber brand. The more likable brand IKEA was, viewers rated with higher likeability of the ad and higher LTS in the branded message compared to the non-branded version of the ad. On the contrary, in the less likable brand Uber, viewers rated the ad less positively and had a lower LTS in the branded message in comparison to the non-branded ad. Therefore, co-branded ads were more effective in the likable brand across both genders, pointing to the importance of brand reputation in these alliances.

Statement of Key Contributions

Based on our findings, companies should consider the importance of brand reputation when creating branding alliances with non-profit organizations. In this working paper, we show that co-branded ads use more of a positive appeal than PSA ads that utilize a negative appeal, suggesting how organizations can be more effective in advocating for societal issues. In an experimental design comparing two brands and their (high vs. low) reputations, we also reveal that brands with higher reputations were more effective in their messaging advocating for anti-domestic violence.

For marketers, these findings suggest the consideration of gender, gender roles, and empathy in the effectiveness of creating awareness of societal issues in these co-branded CSR ads. Future research can further examine the consumer's perceived purpose of CSR and how brands can potentially mitigate such perceptions, as well as the underlying role of gender differences in co-brand messaging.

References are available upon request

INFLUENCES OF PRODUCT AND SITUATIONAL INVOLVEMENT ON CYBER CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING STYLES

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Keywords: Consumer decision-making styles, consumer style inventory, product involvement, situational involvement, online flash sale events

Description: This paper examines the relationship between the cyber CDMS and situational involvement over three levels of product involvement.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Central to consumer studies are consumer decision-making styles (CDMS) due to their inextricable relationship with purchase decision-making. CDMS refers to a mental orientation characterising a consumer's approach to making choices, which is measured by consumer style inventory (CSI). It is noted that the progress in involvement within the CDMS literature remains limited. Research findings will be more accurate if product and situational involvement can be analysed with CDMS simultaneously rather than investigated individually as captured in the CDMS literature. CDMS studies also neglect the online shopping context as a crucial mechanism for online transactions. This paper aims to examine the relationship between the cyber CDMS and the situational involvement of online flash sale events (OFSE) over the high, medium and low levels of product involvement. The objectives are threefold: (1) explore the dimensionality of cyber CDMS over the high, medium and low levels of product involvement, (2) assess the psychometric properties of the cyber CSI and the situational involvement scale, and (3) analyse the relationship between the cyber CDMS and the situational involvement of OFSEs over the high, medium and low levels of product involvement. Through this research, we offer accurate and realistic findings to enhance theoretical and practical development.

Method And Data

A preliminary study was first conducted to identify three products that represent three levels of product categories. The results revealed that high-, medium- and low-involvement products are represented by 'package holidays' (M=31.42), 'high street clothes' (M=23.08) and 'takeaway food' (M=14.93), respectively.

A mixed-method sequential exploratory design was adopted with two phases. For phase 1, we adopted the street-intercept approach to recruit 28 participants, where the data showed signs of saturation, with the first three participants as a pilot study. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. Intercoder reliability (*Percent Agreement* and *Gwet's AC1*) reported good reliability values for each dimension over the three product categories.

For phase 2, non-probabilistic quota sampling was used to recruit participants aged between 18 and 54 years. A pilot study was conducted with marketing experts (n=2) and general consumers (n=30). We used questionnaire surveys to collect data with scales adapted from the existing studies. Face-to-face and online surveys were used to increase the response rates. Participants were selected systematically on the shopping high streets. Those who were pushed for time were invited to take part in the online surveys. The data analysis for Study 2 involves exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modelling.

Summary of Findings

The findings for phase 1 revealed that *price-consciousness* appeared to be consistent across the product categories. *Fulfilment* was a significant dimension in the 'high street clothes' category, while *perfectionism* was an important dimension in the 'package holidays' and 'takeaway food' categories. Four cyber CDMS (i.e., *brand consciousness*, *perfectionism, price consciousness* and *web security*) were found stable across the three product categories. Three cyber CDMS (i.e., *impulsiveness, fulfilment* and *inertia*) were identified as common dimensions in the 'high street clothes' and 'takeaway food' categories. Three cyber CDMS (i.e., *fashion consciousness, health consciousness* and *safety*) were identified specific to the 'high street clothes', 'takeaway food' and 'package holidays' categories.

The findings for phase 2 revealed that the situational involvement of OFSEs was (1) positively correlated with seven cyber CDMS (i.e., brand consciousness, perfectionism, price consciousness, web security, fulfilment, fashion consciousness and health consciousness). (2) negatively correlated with *inertia* over the 'package holidays', 'high street clothes' and 'takeaway food' categories. The relationship between the situational involvement of OFSEs and two cyber CMDS (i.e., *health consciousness* and *safety*) were not supported in Study 2.

Key Contributions

This paper contributes to the CDMS literature in several ways. First, the findings suggest a relationship exists between CDMS and situational influences. CDMS is further governed by situational involvement that co-vary with product involvement. Second, we offer theoretical models that represent three levels of product categories in the online shopping context, which lays the groundwork for future CDMS studies to reveal further behavioural patterns in other contexts. Third, we offer psychometrically valid and parsimonious scales of consumer style inventory (CSI) and situational involvement with dimensions that are mutually exclusive through a rigorous statistical analysis process.

From a practical perspective, this research suggests that retailers should focus on the following CDMS when promoting high-, medium- and low-involvement products during OFSEs.

- Package holidays – *brand consciousness*, *perfectionism*, *price consciousness* and *web security*.
- High street clothes – *brand consciousness*, *perfectionism*, *price consciousness*, *web security*, *fulfilment*, *impulsiveness*, *inertia* and *fashion consciousness*.

- Takeaway food – *brand consciousness*, *perfectionism*, *price consciousness*, *web security*, *fulfilment*, *impulsiveness* and *inertia*.

Our study also offers valuable insights for consumer affairs specialists or consumer consultants to educate and guide consumers. Consumers are better informed concerning their online purchase characteristics to become savvier and more rational in spending.

Intend to use Green Energy?

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Abstract

The interest to use of green energy has been rising globally. However, there is scarce research in the domain of sustainable marketing and green energy (GE), despite the importance of this area. In this study, considering the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB, Ajzen, 1991), environmental attitude about GE, social influence toward GE and willingness to pay (WTP) for green energy were analysed as determinants of the intention to use green energy (IG). WTP is added to TPB to identify whether its effect on the intention to use green energy. The statistical tools in the SmartPLS3 software package were then employed to analyse the reliability of variables and hypothesised relationships in the research model. The findings indicate d that WTP was the strongest predictor of IG (β=0.583), followed by social influence (β=0.356) and environmental attitudes (β=0.287). The present study contributes to research by furthering understanding of the respective relevance of factors include environmental attitudes, social influence and WTP determining the IG. To author's best knowledge, this paper is one of the initial attempts to understand the consumers' intention to use green energy using WTP in the Australian context. The research contributes not only by empirically testing the TPB in green energy context but also by demonstrating the major factors determining everyday green energy purchase intention and their respective relevance for marketing practice. Implications for theory and marketing implications are provided.

Key words: Intention to use green energy (IG), Willingness to pay (WTP).

Introduction and Research aim

The threat of climate change has been in the focus of energy related discussions for long time (IEA-ETP 2019). Climate change and future energy needs are two intertwined and urgent policy challenges for which solutions need to be developed and implemented urgently in countries throughout the world (Bauen et al. 2018; Ahmed et al. 2021a). However, uncertainties loom large over the energy future of our societies (Halder et al. 2013. Depending on the scenario, world's energy consumption is projected to increase by 36% by 2035 (IEA-WEO 2019). If fuel based energy sources are used to meet the increased demand this will further exacerbate the problem of global warming, climate change; thus, new sources of environmentally friendly energy are sought. In this context, green energies are expected to play a central role in moving the world to a more secure, reliable, and sustainable energy future (IEA-WEO 2019). Despite understanding the role of consumers in sustainable development including energy related issues, current research initiatives are not adequate to investigate consumers behavioral intentions to the future green energy consumption. Green purchase intention is the likelihood and willingness to consume the product that has biodegradable features ((Nik Ramli, Yusof et al., 2013; Munerah et al. 2020). Intention will lead to actual green behaviour (Munerah et al. 2020). The present study from this perspective aims to focuses on predicting consumers' intention to use green energy (IG). The current study only concentrates on the measure of behavioral intention (i.e., IG) while dealing with environmental attitude, social influence, and willingness to pay (WTP) for green energy. By utilising TPB, this research attempts to predict the intention of using green energy in Australia. WTP is added to TPB to identify whether its effect on the IG.

The aim of this study:

Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the aim of this study is to identify the factors contributing towards the use of green energy consumption intention in Australia; to review the possibility of extending TPB by introducing WTP as an independent variable to predict intentions to use green energy.

This research is directed towards green energy consumerism in the Australian standpoint. The research topic related to green energy consumption in Australia has attracted an increasing research interest from scholars (e.g., Tang & Medhekar, 2011; Hobman & Fredrick, 2014; Palandino & Pandit, 2019). However, there has not been a comparable academic research emphasis placed on Australia despite the importance of this area (Palandino & Pandit, 2019; Ahmed et al. 2019; 2021b), lays down the background of this study.

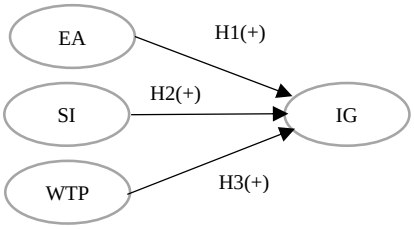
Research model

Applying the theory of planned behaviour (TPB, Ajzen 1991) a social psychology theory in the context of green energy, the study contributes to the overall body of theoretical knowledge surrounding the TPB. According to this theory individual's attitude and social norms contribute towards the individual's behavioral intention (Behavioural intention = Attitude + Subjective norm+ Perceived behavioural control). The TPB model proposes that a person's behavioral intention is determined by his/her overall evaluation of a behavior (attitude toward it), perceived social pressure surrounding it (subjective norm). A person's perceived control over factors that may facilitate or inhibit performance (perceived behavioral control, PBC) is the third factor that makes up the TPB model. Many other examples of TPB studies include the purchase of organic food (Sultan et al. 2020), ecological packaging (Taufique & Vaithianathan, 2018), green hotel (Nimri et al. 2020), Green house (Judge et al. 2019) and green product purchasing (Wong et al. 2018). Accordingly, this study aims to understand consumers' purchase intention of green energy using the TPB which provides a reasonable perspective on the present research question. Out of three antecedents, two antecedents as environmental attitude (EA) and social influence (SI) were conceptualized with the aid of two dimensions in the TPB as attitude and subjective norm respectively. In contrast to common interpretations of the constructs in the TPB model, PBC is not operationalized in a general fashion, but explicitly as the willingness to pay (WTP) for green energy into the model. Higher price can limit the intention to purchase green and so prevent actual purchase (Hartmann et al. 2016; Paladino & Pandit, 2019). Thus, willingness to pay (WTP) for green energy was found suitable for the present study. Research studies have established the consequent relationships among attitude, social norm, WTP and post-purchase behavioural intensions. More specifically in the context of green consumption, the importance of the relationships between all these variables has been examined by previous studies. Based on the review of past related studies, the propositions to be tested empirically presented in Table 1.

Causal Hypothesis	***Supporting literature***
H1: Environmental attitude has positive and strong effect on intention to use green energy.	*Taufique & Vaithianathan, 2018; Wong et al. 2018; Judge et al. 2019; Nimri et al. 2020*
H2: Social influence has positive and strong effect on intention to use green energy.	*Taufique & Vaithianathan, 2018; Wong et al. 2018; Judge et al. 2019; Nimri et al. 2020*
H3: Willingness to pay has positive and strong effect on intention to use green energy.	*Barber et al. 2012; Prakash & Pathak 2017; Zhao et al. 2018*

This research is devoted to exploring the above propositions. The following hypothesized model (Fig: 1) depicts the paths and directions of relationships between the propositions.

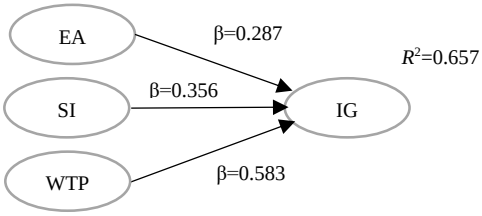
Figure 1: Hypothesized model based on TPB



Methodology

The current study employed a quantitative research design by means of a survey questionnaire method. The data for this study were collected from November 2018 to June 2019 using self-reported questionnaires administered. Questionnaire survey forms were distributed to respondents via postal survey in NSW, Australia. Of a total of 1200 questionnaires sent out, 400 were returned and 386 were found useful for this empirical analysis after excluding incomplete responses, with a successful response rate of 33%. Respondents completed the measure using a 7-point Likert's Scale (1-strongly disagree, 7-strongly agree). The partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique was chosen for analysing the data and proposed hypotheses using SPSS 25 and SmartPLS 3 software (Ringle et al. 2015). PLS-SEM has several advantages, including its suitability in explorative research and targets' prediction, and its flexibility in handling non-normal data and small sample sizes. Thus, PLS-SEM was used in this study to test the proposed propositions. β=0.583

Figure 2: Results for structural model



Results and/or Discussion

To assess the significance of coefficient for every path proposed in the research model, a bootstrapping technique was performed with 2000 re-samples (Sultan et al. 2021). The results from the data analysis revealed that all hypotheses constructed through the TPB model based on our literature review were supported by PLS-SEM analysis. Table 1 below presents the corresponding results. WTP was the strongest predictor of IG (β=0.583, $p < 0.01$), followed by social influence (β=0.356, $p < 0.01$) and environmental attitudes (β=0.287, $p < 0.01$). Thus, (H1~H3) were supported. Figure 2 summarizes the results. For model fit testing, the Goodness of Fit (GoF) index for PLS-SEM was not used in this study. According to Hair et al. (2019), since PLS is not a co-variance SEM having limited applicability in certain model setups, the GoF is not advisable. Rather, they suggest Standardised Root Mean Square (SRMR) which is introduced by Henseler et al. (2014) as an alternative means for model fit testing in PLS-SEM. Based on the outcomes of PLS model estimation, the SRMR for the structural model is 0.06 which is less than the threshold level of 0.08. The R^2 values of were also obtained using the PLS algorithm procedure. The values of R^2 as a criterion of predictive accuracy for the GPI is 0.657. The TPB served as a framework for identifying relevant factors influencing the GPI. The independent factors explained approximately two-thirds of the variance in GPI (R^2 = 65.7 per cent). Therefore, the TPB framework can effectively be applied to predict Australian consumers' intention to use green energy.

Table 1
Hypothesis test results

Causal Hypothesis	*β-values*	*t-values*	*p-values*	*Result*
H1: Environmental attitude has positive and strong effect on intention to use green energy.	*0.287*	*4.183*	*0.000*	*Supported*
H2: Social influence has positive and strong effect on intention to use green energy.	*0.356*	*3.373*	*0.000*	*Supported*
H3: Willingness to pay has positive and strong effect on intention to use green energy.	*0.583*	*5.683*	*0.000*	*Supported*

Implications for Theory and Practice

This study contributes to theory by (1) testifying to the effective application of TPB in predicting the intention to use green energy; (2) The study gives a new insight towards green energy purchasing with special reference to a developed nation Australia by incorporating additional constructs such as social influence and willingness to pay. Thus, the present study contributes to research by furthering understanding of the respective relevance of factors determining green purchasing. Finally, this paper is one of the initial attempts to understand the consumers' intention to use green energy using the TPB framework (including WTP) in the Australian context.

The research contributes not only by empirically testing the TPB in green energy context but also by demonstrating the major factors determining everyday green energy purchase intention and their respective relevance for marketing practice.The findings of this study have managerial implications which contribute to practice: (1) it is important for marketers to understand factors which influence consumer decisions to use green energy and, thus, predicting potential intentions in future consumption; (2) marketing practitioners can benefit from these insights by designing more effective green energy marketing programs. In light of the of the above findings, marketers are advised to pay special attention to the most important factors influencing green energy purchase decision; (3) Since WTP and social influence are promising levers for boosting the IG, energy marketers and retailers should create some interesting promotion schemes that highlight the benefits of eco-friendly green energy towards environment and which finally lead to green energy consumption patterns.

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LET'S MAKE IT REAL: ADVANCING CONSUMER RESEARCH BY INTRODUCING AN ONLINE SHOP SIMULATION TOOL

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Keywords

Consumer behavior; online shopping; willingness to pay; realism.

Description

In this paper, we propose and test a new experimental research tool, which enhances realism in the experimental research setting and the measurement of consumer behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Almost ironically, consumer behavior research often does not measure real behavior. Instead, as field studies are costly and have limitations, many scholars keep on relying on intentional measures and/or run laboratory studies in artificial settings. These settings may cause biased results as consumers behave differently when they feel they are in a controlled environment in which they make an isolated decision. Being aware of this issue, scholars have repeatedly emphasized the need to develop more realistic measurement methods that better capture consumers' actual behavior. To respond to this call, we propose and test a novel tool for measuring consumer behavior, the Consumer Behavior Retail Lab (CBRL): we observe consumers' behavior in a self-programmed, realistically designed online shop mock-up. The CBRL allows researchers to embed between-subjects experimental designs manipulating marketing

variables either outside (e.g., through separate communications) or inside (e.g., prices) the tool and to subsequently observe consumers' behaviors and purchases (i.e., their shopping carts). In the present paper, we test the validity and reliability of the CBRL to establish it as an experimental research tool and to highlight its advantages over extant approaches.

Method and Data

We test the CBRL in two experimental studies. We run these studies in the context of sustainability because sustainable consumer behavior is a vibrant research field requiring a more detailed understanding to yield societally relevant implications. In Study 1, we explore whether the CBRL is an externally valid measure of consumers' online shopping behavior. More precisely, we test whether effects of a communications manipulation observed in the CBRL replicate in a real online shop with customers making actual purchase decisions. We conduct a 2 (setting: real online shop of our partner company versus CBRL) × 2 (communication: sustainability vs. generic) between-subjects experiment among the company's real customers and Prolific users. In Study 2, we apply the CBRL to investigate a topic which has repeatedly confronted researchers with difficulties concerning realism in research. Specifically, we investigate consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) for sustainable products by experimentally manipulating the price level of products labelled as sustainable versus not and observing consumers' purchases. Moreover, in this Study 2, we systematically assess the tool's psychometric properties in terms of its face validity and reliability.

Summary of Findings

Jointly, our two studies provide compelling support for the applicability of the CBRL. Most importantly, our results show that the CBRL is an appropriate tool to study consumer behavior, as observations from the CBRL can, at least to some extent, be transferred to real-world settings. This confirms the tool's external validity. Additionally, we demonstrate that a participant's shopping basket is a

face valid and reliable measure of consumer behavior. Overall, these findings suggest the appropriateness of the CBRL as an experimental research tool.

Moreover, employing the CBRL to study consumers' WTP in Study 2 exemplifies that the CBRL widens the range of research questions that can be studied in laboratory settings. For one of the investigated product categories, the demand curve is, against the wide hold assumption of falling demand curves, upward sloping. Such effects remain undetected when using a conventional approach that is deriving demand from assumptions (e.g., open-ended responses). Instead, in the CBRL, researchers observe demand and thereby, take an unbiased view on consumer behavior. Insights from such observations provide opportunities for novel theorizing. Moreover, we show that given the CBRL includes the product assortment, it is well equipped to study more complex consumer choices such as substitution.

Key Contributions

With this paper, we make two main contributions. First, we contribute to the methodology toolbox of marketing research by introducing a new method to observe consumers' online shopping behavior and by demonstrating its validity. Most importantly, our results show that consumers' purchasing behavior in the online shop simulation is similar to actual purchasing behavior of customers in a real company's online shop. We thereby equip scholars with an externally valid and more realistic alternative to the traditional scale-based measures while avoiding the high costs and limitations of field studies. Moreover, the online shop simulation allows researchers to examine a broad set of variables (e.g., shopping cart composition) and thus to study consumer choices more holistically. Second, we contribute to research on WTP by manipulating prices and observing demand. Extant WTP measurement methods focus on single product settings. Our tool, however, moves away from these settings by deriving demand curves from consumer choices made from a full assortment of products, allowing researchers to investigate substitution effects within and across categories.

Title: Looking Left vs. Right: Effect of Eye Gaze Direction on Consumers' Attitudes Toward Advertisements

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Keywords: Horizontal Gaze, Processing Fluency, Directional Bias, Ad attitude.

Description: When an ad model's gaze is consistent with the direction in which the consumer reads and writes, the consumer experiences more ad processing fluency and thus has a more positive attitude toward the ad.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Recent research on print advertising suggests that advertisements featuring models are more effective when the model has an averted gaze (i.e., when they are not looking directly at the camera) than when the model is looking directly at viewers (To and Patrick 2021). A model's averted (vs. direct) gaze can increase viewer product attention (Hutton and Nolte 2011), deepen information processing (Wang et al. 2018), and enhance ad recall (Adil, Lacoste-Badie, and Droulers 2018; Sajjacholapunt and Ball 2014).

While the evidence suggests that averting a model's eyes can enhance ad effectiveness, the research is silent on whether the direction of the model's averted eyes matters. The current study addresses this significant research gap. We posit that a consumer's attitude toward an ad is enhanced when the model's eye direction is congruent with the consumer's directional bias based on their foundation language. When the model's gaze direction matches the direction in which consumers read and write in their native language (e.g., rightward for English), the consumer will experience more processing fluency upon viewing the advertisement and will respond more favorably to the ad. Two studies support these predictions: a content analysis comparing US advertisements with Arabic and Hebrew language advertisements, and an experiment in a sample of US consumers.

Method and Data

We begin to explore our research question by content analyzing ads from the US (left-to-right reading directionality) and Arabic and North African countries (right-to-left reading directionality), to examine whether systematic differences exist in the eye gaze direction of ad models between the two reading systems in Study 1. The ads are published between January 2019 and July 2022 on AdForum.com and AdsoftheWorld.com, which are digital archives

where advertising agencies can display their work. To be included, the ads had to feature a human model and the eye gaze direction could be coded as left, right, or direct.

Study 2 explores the causal relationship between gaze direction, processing fluency, and ad attitude through an experiment. We used Photoshop software to create mirror images of jewelry ads so that in one condition, the model looked leftward and in the other condition, the model looked rightward. Participants, recruited from Prolific, were assigned to a gender-consistent ad and randomly assigned to either the leftward or rightward condition. We measured ad attitude (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008) and processing fluency (Lee and Aaker 2004). We eliminated participants who straight-lined their responses, did not pay attention, and did not identify with male or female genders, leaving 136 participants in the analysis.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 revealed that in the US, 88 ads (51.46%) featured a model with a direct gaze, 45 ads (26.32%) featured a model with a rightward gaze, and 36 ads (21.05%) featured a model with a leftward gaze. In contrast, for the Arabic advertisements, 31 ads (35.22%) featured a model with a direct gaze, 15 ads (17.05%) featured a model with a rightward gaze, and 36 ads (40.91%) featured a model with a leftward gaze. A chi-square test of independence indicates that the difference between countries is significant (X^2 (1, N = 251) = 13.81, p = .001), and the direction supports our hypothesized prediction.

In study 2, PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes 2017) revealed that there is a positive relationship between eye gaze direction (rightward = 1; leftward = 0) and processing fluency (b = .45, t = 1.97, p = .05). Further, processing fluency is positively related to ad attitude (b = .43, t = 5.06, p < .001). In support of our prediction, the indirect effect of gaze direction on ad attitude through processing fluency is significant (b = .19, LLCI = .0006, ULCI = .52). Thus, US participants who viewed an ad featuring a rightward-gazing model, which is directionally

consistent with an English reading system, experienced more fluency which increased ad attitude.

Key Contribution

Emerging evidence from research on print advertising suggests that advertisements featuring models are more effective when the model has an averted gaze (i.e., when they are not looking directly at the camera) than when the model is looking directly at viewers (To and Patrick 2021). However, the research is silent on whether the direction of the averted eyes matters. This is a significant research gap, and the objective of this study is to explore this question. Based on processing fluency theory, we posit that a consumer's attitude toward an ad is enhanced when the model's eye direction is congruent with the consumer's directional bias based on their foundation language. When the model's gaze direction matches the direction in which consumers read and write in their native language (e.g., rightward for native English speakers), the consumer will experience more fluency upon viewing the advertisement and will respond more favorably to the ad. We offer support for our hypotheses in two studies: a content analysis comparing US advertisements with Arabic-language advertisements, and an experiment in a sample of US consumers. This research extends our field's understanding of the effect of directional biases and processing fluency on consumers by establishing the novel role of horizontal gaze direction on ad attitudes. Marketers can use the insights generated by this research to reach consumers more effectively through their advertising.

THE EFFECT OF MATERIALISTIC CUES ON CHARITY DONATION INTENTION

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Keywords*:* Materialistic cues, Donation intention, Charity

Description: This research suggests materialistic cues can activate negative affect, which leads to self-enhancement, resulting in money donation.

ABSTRACT

This research investigates how priming materialism can increase consumer intention to donate money to a charity. This research indicates that the effect of state materialism on donation intention is sequentially mediated by negative affect and self-enhancement. The research contributes by showing how priming materialistic cues can motivate consumer donation intention.

INTRODUCTION

Charity organizations receive more than 70 percent of their annual money donations from individuals rather than corporations (Winterich, Mittal, and Aquino 2013). This research proposes that exposing consumers to materialist cues can make people want to donate money to charity. Materialism is defined as a "set of centrally held beliefs about the importance of possessions in one's life" (Richins and Dawson 1992, p. 308). Materialists tend to use products as a means to enhance their selves (Kilbourne and LaForge 2010), gain social acceptance (Rose and DeJesus 2007) and impress others (Fitzmaurice and Comegys 2006). Mathur (2013) suggests that the relationship between materialism and prosocial behaviour is complex. Materialism links with self-interest values, negatively associated with collective-oriented values such as benevolence and community values (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2002). Research indicates that materialism is negatively related to pro-environmental behaviors (Alzubaidi, Slade, and Dwivedi 2020; Hurst, Dittmar, Bond, and Kasser 2013; Polonsky, Kilbourne, and Vocino 2014) and negatively associated pro-social behaviour (Alzubaidi and Dwivedi 2020; Polonsky, Kilbourne, and Vocino 2014). However, materialists buy ethical products due to enhancement and protective enhancement motivations (Ryoo, Sung and Chechelnytska 2020). Likewise, Strizhakova and Coulter (2013) find that materialistic consumers can be oriented toward environmentally friendly behaviour (e.g., willingness to pay a premium price for environmentally products, likelihood to involve in environmentally friendly behaviour and interest in environmentally friendly products).

In terms of the psychological mechanism that motivates materialistic individuals to engage in pro-social behaviour, research indicates that self-enhancement is an important mediator for the effect of materialism on pro-social intention (Clary et al., 1998; Wallace, Buil, and De

Chernatony 2020). Materialists have low self-esteem (Chang and Arkin 2002; Noguti and Bokeyar 2014; Reeves et al., 2012; Solberg et al., 2004) and constantly seek external self-validation (Micken and Roberts 1999; Richins 2017). For example, materialists tend to use material possessions to enhance their self-worth (Richins 2017; Van Boven, Campbell, and Gilovich 2010) such as gaining popularity and status (Van Boven et al. 2010). Therefore, engaging prosocial behavior can help them to increase their self-esteem. However, research on the relationship between materialism and pro-social behaviour through self-enhancement has yielded mixed findings. Wallace et al. (2017) find that materialists engage in conspicuous donation to gain public recognition. Similarly, materialists involve in ethical consumption to enhance self-esteem (Ryoo et al. 2020). However, Bock et al. (2018) find that enhancement motivation does not mediate the relationship between materialism and prosocial behavior. As such, the empirical evidence regarding the association of materialism and prosocial behavior through enhancement motivation is equivocal. One reason why Bock et al. (2018) could not find the effect of enhancement motivation is because survey might not enough to activate materialistic state (Bauer, Wilkie, Kim and Bodenhausen 2012). Bauer, Wilkie, Kim and Bodenhausen (2012) assert that materialism can be situationally activated. In addition, materialism priming can be powerful to trigger materialistic aspiration (Zhang and Zhang 2016). For example, Kim, Park, and Shrum (2022) find that priming materialism can make consumers behave pro-socially due to their motivation for status-seeking. However, experimental evidence is lacking regarding whether state materialism predicts money donation. As such, the research builds on prior research (Bock, Eastman, and Eastman 2018; Mathur 2013; Kim, Park, and Shrum, 2022; Wallace et al. 2017) by suggesting that priming materialism can trigger negative affect, which activates a self-enhancement motivation leading to money donation intention.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Materialistic cues, negative affect, self-enhancement and money donation

There might be reasons to expect that materialistic cues can reduce money donation. Research indicates that materialistic cues can enhance personal relative deprivation **(**Zhang, Liu, and Tian 2016; Zhang and Zhang 2016), which can reduce individuals' prosocial tendencies (Xiong, Xiao, and Ye 2021). However, this research was conducted in Asian contexts such as China. In the context of Chinese culture, materialistic cues can boost the belief that individuals are unfairly poor than others in the countries or culture where the wealth are unjustly distributed (Zhang and Zhang 2016). This can make people less likely to donate money. In the context of Western culture, there are reasons to expect that materialistic cues can motivate people to donate money. Materialistic cues may not activate relative deprivation in Western society where wealth is more fairly distributed (Zhang and Zhang 2016). Research shows that priming materialism can activate negative affect (Bauer et al., 2012). Negative affect involves individuals feeling dissatisfied and anxious (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988). When consumers experience a negative self-view, they are motivated to buy a product that can enhance their self-view (Gao, Wheeler and Shiv 2009). Self-enhancement motives refer to individuals participating in prosocial activities to develop their personal growth and build self-esteem (Clary et al., 1998). Indeed, research indicates self-enhancement is positively associated with prosocial behaviour (Griskevicius, Tybur, and Van den Bergh, 2010; Seo and Scammon, 2014; Schaerer et al. 2018).

Therefore, it is predicted that priming materialism activates negative affect, which motivates self-enhancement, resulting in money donation (see Figure 1).

H: Materialistic cues will trigger negative affect which activates self-enhancement motivation leading to money donation.

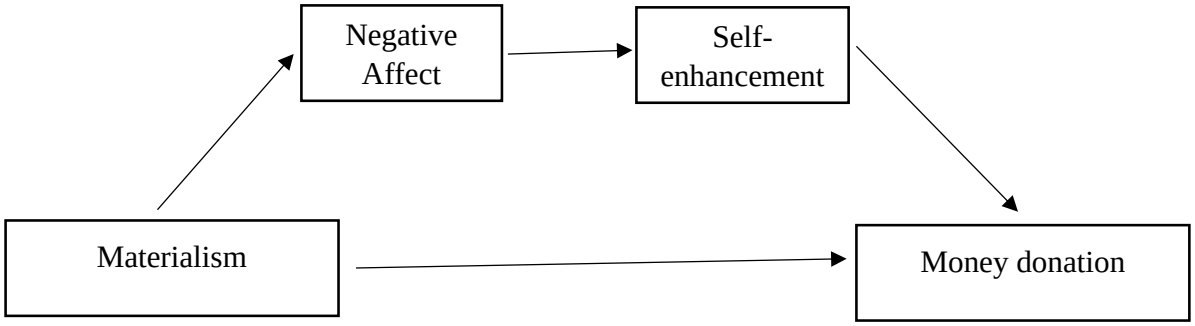

Figure 1. Conceptual model.

METHOD

Participants

Seventy - two US participants were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (44 % females) aged 25 to 68 years (*M* = 35.99 years, *SD* = 11.41 years). Participants were randomly assigned to the materialism condition or the control condition.

Procedures

This research adopted the materialism manipulation scenario suggested by Teng et al. (2016). In the materialism condition, participants rated the clarity and structure of 20 pictures of luxury products. In control group, participants rated the clarity and structure of 20 pictures of landscapes and animals. Next, participants rated two items that served as the materialism manipulation check ("I like a lot of luxury in my life" and "Owning material things can make me happy", α = .76, Teng et al. 2016). Following the recommendation from prior research (Nguyen, Martin, and

Kerr 2021; Teng et al. 2016), manipulation check items were put right after the scenarios to ensure that participants were affected by materialistic cues, not by other variables. Participants then rated negative affect on 10 items (e.g., distressed, scared, afraid, α = .96, Watson et al. 1988). Self-enhancement motivation was assessed with four items asking participants to indicate the extent to which donating: (e.g., makes them feel important; increases their self-esteem; makes them feel needed; makes them feel better about themselves, α = .89). Next, participants were given a scenario: “Imagine you were asked to donate money to Save Fast one day. Save Fast is a charity organization that aims to fund the technology, equipment and infrastructure for supporting cancer research”. A fictitious charity name was used to avoid the effects of participants’ prior attitude and familiarity with a charity organization (Zhu, Hawk, and Chang 2019). A cancer charity was selected because it is familiar, urgent and beneficial for society (Winterich et al. 2013). Then participants reported their donation intention (“How likely would you be to make a donation of money to Save Fast?" " How inclined are you to make a donation of money to Save Fast?" and "How willing are you to make a donation of money to Save Fast ", α = .90). Finally, participants completed demographic information. All scales were 7-point scales.

RESULTS

Manipulation check

Participants were more materialistic in the materialism priming condition (M = 5.49, SD = 1.03) than in the control condition (M = 4.36, SD = 1.49), F (1, 71) = 14.56, p <.001). Therefore, the materialism manipulation was successful.

Mediation analysis

A mediation analysis using the SPSS Macro Process (Model 6, 5,000 resamples) was conducted. The results show that materialism positively predicted negative affect (β = 1.29, 95% BCBCI [.51, 2.06]), which in turn positively predicted self-enhancement motivation (β = .29, 95% BCBCI [.12, .47]). In addition, self-enhancement positively affected money donation (β = .75, 95% BCBCI [.58, .91]). The analysis revealed a significant indirect effect (β = .28, 95% BCBCI [.07, .60]). The direct effect of materialism on money donation intention was not significant (β = -.12, 95% BCBCI [-.55, .30]), suggesting that negative affect and self-enhancement sequentially accounted for the effect of materialism on money donation intention. The indirect effect of materialism on money donation was significant (β = .30, 95% BCBCI [.07, .64])

DISCUSSION

The present research extends prior research on the effect of materialism on prosocial behaviour through self-enhancement (e.g., Bock, Eastman, and Eastman 2018; Mathur 2013; Kim, Park, and Shrum, 2022; Wallace et al. 2017). While past research indicates inconsistent effect of materialism on donation intention (e.g., Bock, Eastman, and Eastman 2018; Mathur 2013; Kim, Park, and Shrum 2022; Wallace et al. 2017), this research shows that situational reminders of materialism can trigger negative affect, which motivates self-enhancement, leading to increase money donation intention. The use of experimental methodologies to prime materialism when studying money donation behaviour is rare. The present research is the first research that establishes the causal effect of materialism on the likelihood to donate money. As such, this research provides a practical implication for non-profit organizations or marketers seeking to motivate people to donate money. Specifically, this research suggests that to encourage individuals to donate money, marketers or non-profit organizations should deliver an

advertisement that emphasizes materialistic appeals such as featuring the money donation as part of the activities of a consumer who lives with luxury products, brands or in a luxurious atmosphere.

Regarding limitations and future research, this study focused on money donation. Another relevant form of donation is time donation which is critical to many charities (Winterich et al. 2013). Indeed, compared with money donation, people can consider donating their time as more ethical (Gino and Mogilner, 2014) and more expressive of moral self-identity (Reed et al. 2016). Thus, further research could examine whether our findings can be generalized to time donation.

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MEASURING SUBJECTIVE WEALTH: ASSESSING PRIOR CONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND REFINING A UNIDIMENSIONAL SCALE

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Keywords: Subjective Wealth; Construct Conceptualization; Construct Measurement; Scale Refinement.

Description: This study aims reviews the current existing conceptualizations and operationalizations of subjective wealth, with the aim of proposing a refined and psychometrically-sound scale to measure this individual difference relevant for marketing practitioners and public policy makers.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Individuals can feel rich or poor, and this feeling is only weakly associated with their objective wealth (Friedman, 1957; Johnson and Krueger, 2006). Yet, this subjective assessment of one's wealth affects people's life in several important ways, such that the subjectively wealthy experience higher well-being (Johnson and Krueger, 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2018) and spend more (Bellezza and Gladstone, 2022; De La Rosa and Tully 2021).

Definitions for subjective wealth have existed for some time (e.g., Wilhelm et al., 1993), but only recently has its systematic conceptual clarification started to develop. Specifically, Tully and Sharma (2021) examined research on the disparate concepts often conflated as equivalent to subjective wealth and determined that it is a higher-order construct, encompassing the various sub-dimensions that have previously been treated as equivalent measures of subjective wealth. Yet, to the best of our knowledge, no consistent and validated scale exists for the measurement of this construct. Therefore, this study sets out to examine how subjective wealth has been previously measured and if this measurement is consistent with the sub-dimensions identified by Tully and Sharma (2021). Furthermore, it aims to evaluate the different scales used in prior literature to refine its measurement.

Method and Data

To examine how the higher-order construct of subjective wealth has been measured in practice, we gathered research articles that specifically included the search term "subjective wealth." A search using APA PsycInfo yielded an initial nine published articles (as of January 2022). We supplemented this with a further search using Google Scholar, which produced a further two. Finally, we removed three articles which did not provide sufficient detail regarding their

measurement approach, leaving a final set of eight articles measuring subjective wealth. From these articles, 48 items measuring subjective wealth were drawn, covering 6 sub-dimensions of the higher-order construct of subjective wealth including subjective assessments of financial constraints, deprivation, satisfaction, scarcity, slack, well-being, and socio-economic status.

We performed two online studies with the aim to evaluate these 48 items used in the measurement of subjective wealth to develop a holistic measure thereof. In the first study, we recruited *N*=520 participants from an online Prolific panel. We excluded 11 participants who failed two attention checks, leaving a final sample of 509 for analysis (49.1% Female, M_{age} = 36.8 SD = 13.5). Finally, we used a subsample from the first study (*N*=262) to assess the psychometric properties of the refined scale.

Summary and Findings

In study 1, we tested the psychometric properties of the existing subjective wealth scales and found that they show a good degree of convergent validity and internal reliability (α=0.72-0.94; AVEs=0.57-0.87; CRs=0.65-0.95). We then conducted an EFA to identify the structure and dimensionality of the existing items for subjective wealth. Although principal components analysis indicated four components with eigenvalues higher than 1, the scree plot revealed that a one-dimension solution was optimal.

Therefore, we selected those items showing the highest factor loading in each theoretical dimension of subjective wealth, one from each dimension for 6 items in total to generate a refined subjective wealth scale.

To facilitate the administration of this scale, we reworded the items slightly and tested its psychometric properties in study 2. Alongside confirming good reliability and convergent validity (α=0.94, AVE=0.74, CR=0.94), study 2 demonstrated that the refined subjective wealth scale has better nomological validity than the existing scales, i.e., its relationships with

antecedents and consequences are consistent with how subjective wealth should behave theoretically (Financial Self-Efficacy: r=0.72; Propensity to Plan for Money: r=0.15; Materialism, r=-0.21; Well-being: r=0.54; Financial Avoidance: r=-0.46; Saving Intentions: r=-0.41).

Statement of Key Contributions

The contributions of this research are manifold, and both marketing academics and practitioners can benefit from them. On the one hand, the current research cast some empirical doubt on the theoretical distinctions between the "sub-dimensions" of subjective wealth as conceptualized by prior literature. Moreover, we offer a consistent and easy-to-administer measurement of subjective wealth to an emerging and promising stream of literature in psychology and marketing to encourage future research in the area. On the other hand, our subjective wealth scale could be helpful for marketers and public policymakers in several ways. For example, marketers can utilize this tool to identify and target market segments for whom a different positioning strategy and tactics may be required (e.g., financial service providers). Instead, for policymakers, the refined scale represents the first holistic, valid, and reliable way to measure subjective wealth, assisting them to better serve the public by identifying those most in need of help. Since governments are often concerned with their citizens' financial, emotional, and physical well-being, and subjective wealth assessments are crucial in determining these factors, administering the refined subjective wealth scale will help identify those who feel subjectively poorer and who would benefit from targeted support.

*References are available upon request.

NEUTRALIZING THE CONSUMPTION OF LUXURY FASHION COUNTERFEITS: NOVEL INSIGHTS FROM A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Keywords: Counterfeit consumption, Luxury fashion counterfeits, Neutralization theory, Qualitative research, Deviant consumer behavior.

Description: This qualitative study explains consumers' counterfeit consumption behavior by using the extended theory of neutralization.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The recent proliferation of the counterfeiting phenomenon, coupled with its severe economic and social ramifications, has triggered a growing research interest to investigate consumers' counterfeit consumption. However, it is interesting to note that despite being a quintessence of deviant consumer behavior, consumers' volitional purchase of luxury fashion counterfeits has not been explained using one of the most important theories of deviance, i.e., the theory of neutralization. Furthermore, the dominance of quantitative research in the counterfeiting literature has engendered our understanding of willing counterfeit consumption to be rudimentary. To allay these concerns, this qualitative study explores the extent to which

consumers justify their participation in the purportedly deviant behavior of consumption of luxury fashion counterfeits by employing various techniques of the extended theory of neutralization.

Method and Data

The phenomenological research design was used to gain insights into the justifications used by consumers to excuse their consumption of luxury fashion counterfeits. I used the purposive sampling technique to recruit only those participants who had purchased luxury fashion counterfeits in the past, as such participants are believed to constitute an information-rich sample. To induce participants to respond honestly, I assured them that their participation shall be kept anonymous and that the data provided by them will be used only for academic research. Guided by the saturation criterion, I conducted 16 in-depth semi-structured interviews to collect research relevant data. The interviews were conducted in Punjabi, Hindi, and English, and were later transcribed verbatim in English. The data were subsequently analyzed using iterative thematic analysis to identify emergent themes. I also adopted a series of measures including the peer-debriefing technique and the member-checking strategy to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the study's findings.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that consumers utilized all the techniques of the extended theory of neutralization to absolve themselves of the blame for consuming counterfeits. To begin with, consumers denied personal culpability for consuming counterfeits and rather deflected blame to their accusers for participating in equally repulsive acts. They also believed that luxury brands do not incur any loss due to counterfeiting. Some participants defended counterfeiting by claiming that it is beneficial for some people. They further held that brands deserve

counterfeiting due to their unscrupulous pricing practices. Further, evidence was obtained for the application of additional techniques of the extended theory of neutralization as well. Consumers pointed to the necessity of consuming counterfeits, along with the commonality of such consumption to tolerate their deviance. Overall, they saw themselves as good human beings as they had committed more good deeds than bad, and lacked the intent to deliberately cause harm to brands. They also presented the thesis that purchasing counterfeits is not as bad as other heinous crimes. Some participants chose to defer dealing with the guilt, to ease the consumption of counterfeits. Lastly, they also vowed to purchase original products in the future to atone for their counterfeit consumption.

Key Contributions

By invoking a hitherto neglected theory, i.e., the theory of neutralization to explain the justifications that consumers advance to excuse their consumption of counterfeits, the study extends the scope of the theory and makes a valuable contribution. It also adds to the repertoire of existing techniques of neutralization by proposing a new technique wherein consumers promise to purchase original luxury fashion products in the future to atone for their alleged deviance. The qualitative approach used in the study also helps in gaining an in-depth understanding of consumer counterfeit purchase behavior. Lastly, the findings provide novel insights to the managers of luxury fashion brands to help them inform their anticounterfeiting campaigns.

References are available upon request.

NOT ALL DIFFERENCES ARE MADE THE SAME: THE EFFECT OF DISTRIBUTION ON THE PERCEIVED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NUMERICAL SCORES.

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Keywords: *Score Distribution, Product Comparison, Ranking, Perceived Quality, Numerical Cognition.*

Description: We show that the perceived difference between two scores is larger in the fat part of the distribution (i.e., where most scores are concentrated) compared to the thin part of the distribution.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Comparison of valuation scores is a ubiquitous part of most decisions. The numerical distance between two scores, undeniably, affects our answer to *how much* one score is better than the other (i.e., perceived difference). But does this mean that the same numerical difference always implies the same perceived difference?

Prior research has identified several factors that could affect the perceived difference between the two scores. We contribute to this research by considering the fact that people usually compare scores knowing about the distribution of scores in that context. For instance, in the context of product search, people browse through different options and hence have a grasp of the distribution of ratings in that product category. We argue and show that the underlying

score distribution in a given context impacts the perceived difference between two scores within that context. We test the following hypothesis:

If the score distribution is left-skewed (right-skewed), the perceived difference between two scores on the right side (left side) of the context will be larger than between two scores with the same numerical difference on the left side (right side) of the context.

Method And Data

In Study-1, (N=150) participants indicated their perceived quality difference between twelve pairs of restaurants. The range of ratings in each restaurant pair was either low, average, or high. At the end of the study, we elicited participants' impressions about the distribution of restaurant ratings using a distribution builder.

87% of the participants reported left-skewed distributions of restaurant ratings. Accordingly, the $Range$ of the rating-pairs had a positive impact on the perceived difference (β_r= 0.03; 95%CI [0.02, 0.04]).

In Study-1 the “good” values were concentrated on the “fat”" part of the distribution. Is it possible that the observed change in the perceived difference is driven by participants' sensitivity to the “good” side of the spectrum? We examined this possibility in a context where good scores are difficult to achieve.

Participants (N=47) were students from a program with a low average grade. They saw two pairs of bachelor's degree grades and indicated their perceived difference between each pair. The range of grade-pairs was either indicative of low performance or high performance. At the end of the study, we elicited students’ impressions about the distribution of grades in their program using a distribution builder.

98% of the reported grade distributions were right-skewed. The grade-pair $Range$ had a negative impact on the perceived difference (β_r = -0.66; 95%CI [-1.10, -0.22]).

Summary of Findings

In Study-1, the restaurant rating distribution was left-skewed. Therefore, we predicted that the perceived quality difference between restaurant pairs with high average ratings (i.e., on the right side of the rating scale) will be higher than restaurant pairs with low average ratings. The result of the regression was aligned with our prediction.

In Study-2, the reported grade distributions were right-skewed. Accordingly, we predicted that the perceived performance difference between low-performance grade pairs (i.e., on the left side of the grading scale) will be higher than high-performance grade pairs (i.e., on the right side of the rating scale) but with an equal numerical difference. The result of the regression confirmed our prediction.

Statement of Key Contributions

Most financial decisions involve numerical cognition and comparisons between numerical information. As such, identifying factors that affect the perceived difference between scores has attracted a lot of attention in the field. Adding to this stream of research we uncovered the effect of the distribution of scores on the perceived difference between two scores. This is particularly relevant in settings where the perceived value of a score depends on its rank among other scores. Examples of these settings include but are not limited to product ratings, prices, and performance appraisals.

To give an empirical example, our findings inform managerial decisions on customer rating improvement tactics. For example, according to our findings, increasing an average rating of 4.2 to 4.4 (on a 5-point scale) will improve the perceived attractiveness of the product more so in a product category with a negatively skewed rating distribution than in a product category with a positively skewed rating distribution. Theoretically, our findings highlight the importance of including distribution characteristics in the sale success prediction models as an explanatory factor.

ONLINE TRAVEL INSPIRATION UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF COVID-19 CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF RISK: INVESTIGATING ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES.

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Keywords: Online Travel Inspiration, Travel Risk Perception, Tourism, Covid-19

Description: This research focuses on the effects of important antecedents and outcomes of online travel inspiration on intention and desire to travel, after the COVID-19 pandemic.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism among many sectors, has been negatively affected. Can tourism be encouraged and sustained through digital solutions? This research focuses on some important antecedents of online travel inspiration, as well as some key outcomes and their effect on intention and desire to travel. More specifically we aim to respond to the following research questions:

1. Is online travel inspiration affected by antecedents such as an individual's travel risk perception, their openness to experience, their previous visit intention, desire to visit and actual previous visit to that destination?
2. Does online travel inspiration impact outcomes, such as individuals' emotions about the destination, their willingness to co-create and intentions to (re)visit the destination?

The above research questions are formulated in a conceptual framework consisting of six (6) research hypotheses.

Method and Data

To test the above six (6) hypotheses a survey was employed, with a sample of 249 participants (157 female, 89 male, 1 binary and 2 did not reveal their gender), that were recruited through social media networking platforms and were asked to complete a questionnaire relating to the use of an online inspiration platform for a tourist destination.

The online travel inspiration ten-item scale used in this study, is the one by Böttger et.al (2017) (α=0,949). Travel risk perception was measured with a 11-item scale by Nazneen et.al (2020) (α=0,887). Openness to experience Lee and Ashton (2018) (α= 0.840). Respondents' previous visits, intent or/and desire to visit Greece were binary scales, following the example of Hsu and Crotts (2006). The emotional outcomes a 12-item semantic-differential scale was used (Ruiz-Mafe et.al, 2018) (α=910). For willingness to participate in online co-creation experiences , a 3-item scale (α=0,901) was used (Jiménez-Barreto & Campo-Martínez, 2018). Intentions to visit/revisit the destination was measured by Gu et.al's (2009) 3-item scale (α=0.922).

The questionnaire ended with the questions regarding demographics. The response anchors for the Likert-type scales ranged from 1 (= Strongly disagree) to 7 (=Strongly agree).

Summary of Findings

Data analysis of the 249 responses reveals that while openness to experience and desire and/or intent to visit a destination do not affect online travel inspiration associated with a specific destination, travel risk perception and previous visit to that destination are key determinant factors. In addition, this study shows that people's online travel inspiration affects their emotions, willingness to participate in online co-creation experiences and behavioral intentions to interact with an online platform that offers an alternative to physical travelling. The main contribution of this study is the examination of the construct "online travel inspiration" during a time of crisis, such as the COVID 19 outbreak, while it also offers suggestions to practitioners in the tourism field regarding the creation of inspirational activities online.

Statement of Key Contributions

The key contribution of this research is to gain deeper understanding of online travel inspiration, particularly due to the fear and uncertainty of consumers and the overall dire impact this pandemic on the tourism industry. More specifically, the revelation that travel risk perception significantly predicts online travel inspiration and that there is a positive relationship between these two constructs, indicates that individuals more fearful of the risks associated with traveling can be inspired through the use of online platforms, extending current knowledge that restricted tourism marketing communication recommendations to people with higher tolerance for risk, such as novelty seekers (Lepp & Gibson, 2003) to how to target consumer groups that are not

prone to take risks. Furthermore, new visitors of tourist destinations are more likely to show higher online travel inspiration levels, leading to more positive behavioral, attitudinal and affective outcomes, which further guides decision-making. Finally, the outcomes of positive feelings towards destinations, intention to (re)visit and willingness to co-create, solidify the positive effect of online travel inspiration as a tool to overcome the negative effects of COVID-19 and potentially the effects risk-related situations, particularly among non-risk-taking individuals, such as families, elderly, vulnerable groups.

References are available upon request.

PATIENT JOURNEY MAP AND INTERVENTION POINTS FOR CHRONIC DISEASE

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Keywords: Patient engagement, Patient journey, Grounded theory, Thematic analysis

Description: To explore the chronic disease patient journey to identify the potential avenues of intervention for better outcomes

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Healthcare increasingly necessitates shifting of focus from a disease-centric approach towards experiences and quality of life of patients as well as their involvement in care and treatment (e.g., Sumsion 1993; Ekman et al. 2011), in nutshell towards a patient-centric care. In the context of chronic diseases, the patient-centric aspect of engagement is not well studied in the literature and does not reveal much about patients' experiences and associated behaviour throughout their disease journey. The patient experience can be visualized by developing journey maps which encompass the core idea of the care pathway with a greater focus on the individual and their perspective (needs and preferences), as well as including mechanisms of engagement and empowerment, according to Richter et al. (2021). Furthermore, studying the patient journey can facilitate the understanding of different actors at different levels of the healthcare ecosystem. We attempt to address the above-mentioned research gap through the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the various touchpoints across the patient journey?

RQ2: How can pharma/ healthcare service providers and health technology companies influence patient experience?

RQ3: What are the factors that can improve patient engagement?

Method And Data

The context of cardiovascular diseases (CVD), the leading cause of death globally, has been considered for this qualitative study. A comprehensive interviewing guide for CVD patients and doctors was created. The interview covered the patient's sociodemographic information, family and other supports, coping strategies, and overall perception at each stage of the illness. All interviews were conducted from Feb 2022 and Jun 2022, only with the participant's consent. Up till no new characteristics of the patterns were revealed, semi-structured interviews were undertaken. The average duration of the interviews was 32 mins. We employed a constructivist grounded theory influenced by Charmaz and symbolic interactionism (Charmaz, 1990, Charmaz 2014). An inductive thematic analysis was performed on the data.

Inclusion criteria were being any patient over 18 years of age, having a diagnosis of CVDs and having good mental status or a doctor treating or managing cardiovascular diseases for more than 10 years of practice. To improve the perspective, the patients were taken from different age groups and urban and rural parts of India. A total of 38 participants (29 patients and 9 doctors) agreed to participate voluntarily in this research.

Summary of Findings

The patients diagnosed with CVD described their journey across the various stages of CVD- pre-presentation, presentation, diagnosis, treatment initiation and follow-up along with their informational, behavioural, emotional and social need gaps. The themes which emerged from the analysis of the interviews- were disease-related information, behaviour modification, patient-doctor interaction, financial assistance, trust and community support. The patient journey map highlighted three main avenues of intervention- patient/caregiver activation (under the pre-presentation stage), raising the urgency for screening and diagnostic testing (diagnosis & referral stage)and treatment options based on the patient's needs and preferences. Many patients were unaware of their risk of developing any heart ailments before their diagnosis as most of them misunderstood the symptoms to be those due to old age and other comorbidities. A sense of distrust was also echoed by some patients initially when they were diagnosed. HCPs had recommended

the use of portals, call centres, manual symptom trackers, wearable devices and the mHealth app among other tools to track the medication, food and exercise for patients. Due to remote care, access to caregivers and improved management due to real-time health insights, mHealth apps have been more popularly used by patients leading to continued engagement in their treatment.

Key Contributions

This qualitative study employed grounded theory using thematic analysis to develop a patient journey map for chronic disease. This is the first of its kind research that employs process mapping to describe the need gaps experienced by CVD patients under various phases of the disease. This CVD patient journey map may assist pharmaceutical, healthcare service providers, health technology companies and HCPs to visualize the process from the patient's perspective. The process map indicates where changes can be made to enhance patients' engagement and potentially their satisfaction with their healthcare and treatment. Furthermore, this paper presents the potential points of intervention for healthcare companies to enhance patient health outcomes and ensure patient engagement.

References are available upon request.

PERCEIVED PRICE (UN)FAIRNESS: A BIBLIOMETRIC AND NETWORK ANALYSIS

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Keywords: Price (un)fairness, Perceived price (un)fairness, Bibliometric analysis, Google OpenRefine

Description: This article uses bibliometric and network analysis to map the knowledge structure of perceived price (un)fairness (PPU/F) field.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

RQ1. Which articles, authors and journals have most influenced the advancement of PPU/F field?

RQ2. What are the emerging clusters in PPU/F field?

Method and Data

A well established methodology was followed for sample selection and analysis to ensure objectivity. Scopus database was selected for data collection and a certain keyset was searched with some inclusion/exclusion criteria, thus offering over 240 articles, spanning over two decades, which were processed in Google Openrefine for data de-duplication and in VOSviewer and for analysis. Bibliometric analysis methods including citation analysis and bibliographic coupling were used.

Summary of findings

Results from citation analysis are presented in the following section: A study of articles revealed 185 articles with at least three citations. Xia, Monroe, and Cox's (2004) article "The price is unfair! A conceptual framework of price fairness perceptions" received the highest citations (743). A study of the authors identified 74 authors who had at least two articles and two citations. Xia L. is the most influential author with four documents and 1000 citations. A journal-wise examination yielded 41 journals with at least three articles and three citations. The Journal of Marketing ranked as the field's leading journal, with 3 articles and 898 citations.

A cluster analysis through bibliographic coupling revealed that cluster one deals mostly with conceptual papers as well as various pricing strategies and associated PPU/F. Consumers' (un)fairness perceptions related to various price increases in the context of tourism and hospitality sectors with special emphasis on consumer's intentions to spread word-of-mouth (WoM) are dealt in cluster two. Whereas the interplay between consumer satisfaction and price (un)fairness is studied in cluster three. Consumers perceptions to CSR induced price increase are covered under cluster four. And finally, cluster five deals with various brands and consumers' buying behaviour, influenced by their PPU/F concerns.

Key contributions

It is the first quantitative systematic review and provides a comprehensive and updated scenario for PPU/F field, thereby contributing to the field methodologically. The most recent (meta)review was published in 2016, and no additional reviews have been produced to systematise the rising academic interest in the area since then.

This study corresponds to the calls of Marketing Science Institute (MSI 2020) to investigate "pricing" and "consumers' reactions to various pricing methods" as research priorities.

PPU/F is a psychological aspect as well as a 'must-be-requirement' for consumers. This review offers cluster-wise actionable recommendations for marketing practitioners to help them develop effective pricing strategies as well future research directions for academicians.

PREFER LINEAR OR CROOKED? A VISUAL REPRESENTATION PERSPECTIVE

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Keywords: visual representation, spatial perception, visual asymmetry, visit likelihood

The research investigates whether the visual representation of a path impact an individual's expectation about the destination and if it can impact the nature of consumption at the destination.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumers use maps frequently, especially when navigating to a new place. Likewise, firms use schematic representations to depict the steps to be taken by the consumer in their purchase decision journey. However, there is little research on how such maps and schematic maps impact consumers' expectations and evaluation of the destination. This research investigates whether these maps and schematic diagrams impact consumers' expectations, evaluations, and subsequent choices.

Method and Data

We report six experiments conducted online on Prolific among US subjects. Studies 1A and 1B constitute Implicit Association Tests (IAT) that demonstrate the strength of the association between linearity (vs. crookedness) and serenity (vs. adventurousness) using words (Study 1A) and images (Study 1B). Study 2 shows that destinations reached by traversing crooked (vs. linear) paths are perceived to be more adventurous (vs. peaceful). Study 3 shows that the association between crookedness (vs. linearity) is stronger for visualizers (vs. verbalizers). Study 4 establishes that crooked (vs. linear) paths form a fit with adventurous (vs. peaceful) destinations. A moderated mediation analysis reveals that the fit leads to an increased visit likelihood of the destination. It also demonstrates that individuals prefer a healthy (vs. tasty) snack when there is a fit (vs. non-fit) between the path and the destination. Study 5 provides evidence that the fit between crookedness (vs. linearity) and adventurousness (vs. serenity) also holds for schematic diagrams.

Summary of Findings

The research contributes to the scant literature on visual perception and representation bydemonstrating that crookedness is associated with adventurousness while linearity is associated with peace. It provides evidence that linear (vs. crooked) paths form a fit with peaceful (vs. adventurous) destinations. The fit leads to increased visit likelihood to these destinations. The study demonstrates that this effect can be extended to schematic diagrams and pseudo maps. Further, this research identifies that the association between crooked (vs. linear) paths andadventurous (vs. serene) destinations is stronger for visualizers (vs. verbalizers).

Key Contributions

Visual perception of products, places, promotions, and related objects is central to marketplace interactions (Krishna 2012). Understanding it has become all the more critical with isthe growing utilization of imagery in online marketing (Kane and Pear 2016), consumers' increasing penchant for visual versus verbal information to comprehend and evaluate marketplace offerings (DelVecchio et al. 2018; Sample *et al.* 2020), the inevitable information overload and our attention span getting shorter (McSpadden, TIME 2015).

This research suggests that managers can manage expectations about the end outcomes by showing the paths to the destinations or end outcomes judiciously. Similarly, firms may increase the adventurousness or serenity of the place by showing path diagrams. Marketers may use different schematic diagrams to increase engagement and purchase likelihood by consumers.Marketers may provide appropriately scaled geographic route maps to increase or decrease the crookedness of maps and use suitable schematic maps to manage consumers' expectations of the outcomes.

References are available upon request.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

1 Research Question

The purpose of this paper is to explore the impact of the donation information display timing (pre- or post-purchase) on consumers' post-purchase evaluation (e.g., online rating). The authors also examine whether perceived warmth mediates the effect of donation information display timing on post-purchase evaluation. In addition, the authors also try to investigate the boundary conditions of the main effect.

2 Method and Data

Study 1 adopted a 2 (donation information display timing: pre- vs. post-purchase) designed. In this study, we created a scenario of cause-related marketing in an online shopping context. Study 2 tests whether donation information presented at a low related level between firm's donation and current product purchase can increase the post-purchase evaluation in case of donation information displays pre-purchase. It utilizes a 2(donation information display timing: pre- vs. post-purchase) ×2 (related level between firm's donation and current product purchase: low vs. high) between-subjects design. Study 3 aims to test the moderating role of regulatory focus. The study adopted a 2(donation information display timing: pre- vs. post-purchase) ×2 (regulatory focus: prevention vs. promotion) design. All participants were employed from Credamo.com.

3 Summary of Findings

The result of study 1 shown that participants had more positive post-purchase evaluation when they saw the firm's donation information at the payment completion webpage (i.e., post-purchase) compared to those at the product detail interface (i.e., pre-

purchase). Mediation analysis confirmed the role of the perceived warmth in the relationship between donation information display timing and post-purchase evaluation. The results of study 2 revealed an interactive effect on post-purchase evaluation (e.g., online rating). when donation information is expressed in low related level between firm's donation and current product purchase, the donation information displayed at pre- or post-purchase produced the same positive online rating, and conversely, when donation information is expressed in high related level between firm's donation and current product purchase. The results of study 3 found that individuals with a promotion focus had equally positive online ratings when donation information displays pre- or post-purchase, and conversely, individuals with a prevention focus had more positive online rating when donation information display post-purchase, compared to pre-purchase.

4 Key Contributions

From a theoretical perspective, above all, the results of this research contribute to the literature on cause-related marketing. On the one hand, current research fills a research gap about donation information display timing. We compare the influence of donation information display timing (pre-purchase vs. post-purchase) on consumers for the first time. On the other hand, current research enriches the consequences of cause-related marketing. We suggest that firms' cause-related marketing activity can affect post-purchase evaluation. Specifically, displaying firms' donation information post-purchase can induce more positive post-purchase evaluation (e.g., online rating) by increasing consumers' perceived warmth of the firm.

PRICE FAIRNESS PERCEPTIONS IN VIDEO GAMES

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Keywords: price fairness perception, reference price, creative products, video games, experiential value

Description: While the mechanism of reference price is dominant in forming price fairness perceptions in the traditional industries, we found that the mechanism of experiential value acts as the dominant mechanism in creative industries.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Creative industries are defined as 'those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (Department for Culture, Media and Sports 2001). The core of the creative industries is the creativity shown by creators as well as consumers. Creative industries often include processes that are mysterious and inexplicable to outsiders and have unclear product boundaries (Lampel and Germain 2016). In traditional industries, the dominant perspective is that customers evaluate prices on the basis of a reference point (Xia et al. 2004), but this is often difficult in creative industries as customers are unware of the costs involved in the production of the offering, or other cues to the reference points (Kukla-Gryz et al. 2021; Purnomo and Kristiansen 2018). This makes the measurement of the worth that consumers attribute to creative products subjective and difficult (Purnomo and Kristiansen 2018).

Using the netnographic methodology, the current study provides insights into how consumer perceive prices as fair or unfair in creative industries and its consequences.

Method and Data

The current study employs a qualitative research methodology called 'Netnography' or 'Ethnography on the internet' (Kozinets 2002). Netnography is a suitable method for this study as it allows us to observe the complex lived experiences of customers and to analyze the available online data in order to uncover interesting consumer insights. We explored the extant literature and found that there is little knowledge on how customers perceive the price offered as fair or unfair in creative industries. We conducted research in the video games

industry. We chose six games (Artifact, Madden, Rage2, Swordart, Mafia and Fallout) from different genres and with mixed ratings to get a good mix of reviews. We got 21,810 reviews in total from the six games. We identified 3175 relevant reviews using keywords "Price", "Cost", "$", "Dollar" and "Money" and exported these to ATLAS.ti. We the manually coded the data and ended up with 19 codes pertaining to 3056 reviews. These codes were then grouped to form four types of price fairness mechanisms that customers were using.

Summary of Findings

In the context of video games, we found that consumers associate their product experiences with a perception of fairness, and this mechanism emerged as strongest contributor to the perception formed with 54% of coded items. This might be due to the nature of creative industries, which involve highly experiential products (Thorsby 2001). Even though the extant literature uses the reference price mechanism as the dominant way to understand price fairness, our study found that in the case of video games, this mechanism trails behind the mechanism based on experiential value. Only 27% of coded items fall under this mechanism, which suggests that there is a deviant mechanism that contributes to the fairness perception of consumers who consume video games. Consumers' evaluation of pricing strategies emerges as a critical mechanism in our study (17% Codes), but appears to be absent in the extant literature on price fairness. The mechanism of product complexity is not strong in our study, as only 2% of coded items fall under this category and lead to negative price perception.

Key Contribution

Understanding price fairness perceptions is important as unfair price perceptions may lead to the failure of a product (Bougie et al. 2003). Further, in the context of creative industries, understanding this perception will not only will help formulate price strategies, but will also reduce the ambiguity associated with creative industries. The current study contributes to the literature on price fairness and pricing strategies. Marketing managers will be able to better understand what their customer wants and what pricing strategies can be formulated to satisfy them. This information will enable them to predict the success or failure of their product because they will know beforehand whether the customers perceive the prices as fair.

REPEATING DIGITS IN PRICE BUNDLING

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Keywords: Repeating Digits, Pricing, Price Bundling

Description: In this research, we investigate a novel promotion strategy that hasn't been investigated in price bundling-repeating digits, on consumers' liking of the price and purchase intentions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Consumers are faced with different types of bundle products in their daily life. For example, nearly every fast-food restaurant provides consumers with bundled meals (i.e., McDonald's promotes a 4-item meal for $2.99). Research on product bundling and price bundling is exuberant (Girju et al., 2013; Koukova et al., 2008; Soman & Gourville, 2001; Stremersch & Tellis, 2002). However, to our knowledge, scant research has focused on the influence of repeating the digits in bundled quantity and price information. To bridge the gap between price bundling and numerical processing literature, our research intends to investigate how repeating the digits in bundled quantity and price information would shape consumers' perceptions and consequential shopping behaviors. We propose that consumers would have higher intentions to purchase bundle products when the digits in bundled quantity and price information are repeated that are not, as a result of the perceived ease of unit price calculation and positive attitudes. Further, such an effect should only appear when the digits are both even digits, rather than odd digits, because the indivisibility of odd digits induced negative emotions would weaken consumers' positive attitudes toward repeating digits bundle promotions.

Method and Data

Five studies were conducted to examine our two key hypotheses. To examine our main effect, we conducted study 1. Participants (N = 93, 50.5% female, M_{age} = 39.75) were randomly assigned to one of 2 (number: repeated vs. unrepeated) conditions and saw the advertisement as "For our customer! 2 for ($2.22 vs. $2.12)!" Next, participants reported their purchase intentions. Study 2 was designed to explore the mediator by randomly assigning participants into (N = 198, 51.5% female, M_{age} = 42.96) one of 2 conditions and measuring their perceived ease of unit price calculation. Study 3 was conducted to test the mediating role of ease of unit price calculation on consumers' liking of the price. Participants (N = 85, 42.4% female, M_{age} = 20.05) were randomly assigned to one of 2 conditions and reported their perceived ease of unit price calculation and

liking of the price. Study 4 was intended to test the complete theoretical framework by measuring the perceived ease of unit price calculation, liking of the price, and purchase intentions at the same time. Final study 5 was designed to test the boundary condition of odd number digits. Participants (N = 219, 50.2% female, Mage = 42.49) were again randomly assigned to one of 2 odd digits conditions and reported their perceived ease of unit price calculation and purchase intentions.

Summary of Findings

In study 1, participants in the repeated condition indicated higher purchase intentions than those in the unrepeated condition ($M_{repeated}$ = 5.19, SD = 1.55, $M_{unrepeated}$ = 4.40, SD = 2.00, t (91) = 2.10, p = .04). In study 2, participants in the repeated condition indicated higher perceived ease of unit price calculation than those in the unrepeated condition ($M_{repeated}$ = 6.43, SD = 1.02, $M_{unrepeated}$ = 5.54, SD = 1.65, t(196) = 4.61, p < .001). In study 3, participants in the repeated condition indicated higher ease of unit price calculation ($M_{repeated}$ = 6.34, SD = 1.01, $M_{unrepeated}$ = 4.89, SD = 2.05, t(83) = 4.10, p < .001) and liking of the price ($M_{repeated}$ = 5.80, SD = 1.00, $M_{unrepeated}$ = 5.50, SD = 1.49, t(83) = 1.10, p = .27) than those in the unrepeated condition. In study 4, participants in the repeated condition indicated higher ease of unit price calculation $M_{repeated}$ = 6.37, SD = 1.07, $M_{unrepeated}$ = 5.36, SD = 1.37, t(200) = 5.03, p < .001), liking of the price ($M_{repeated}$ = 5.61, SD = 1.23, $M_{unrepeated}$ = 5.23, SD = 1.47, t(200) = 2.03, p = .04), and purchase intentions ($M_{repeated}$ = 5.87, SD = 1.12, $M_{unrepeated}$ = 5.36, SD = 1.59, t(200) = 2.67, p = .008) than those in the unrepeated condition. In study 5, participants in the repeated condition indicated higher ease of unit price calculation ($M_{repeated}$ = 5.94, SD = 1.48, $M_{unrepeated}$ = 4.99, SD = 1.67, t(217) = 4.47, p < .001) but lower purchase intentions ($M_{repeated}$ = 4.94, SD = 1.51, $M_{unrepeated}$ = 5.40, SD = 1.41, t(217) = -2.35, p = .020) than those in the unrepeated condition.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research examined how bundles can be made easier for consumers to process using repetitive digits in the bundled quantity and price information. Across five experiments, we find support for our conceptualization. Using different product categories, we find that a fluency effect arising out of using repetitive digits in bundles leads to higher purchase intention for such bundles compared to economically superior bundle promotions that do not contain many repetitions of digits, pertaining to even number digits. The current research contributes to the literature by demonstrating, for the first time, the impact of repetition-induced fluency in the domain of pricing. While repetition is an antecedent of fluency (Schwarz et al., 2021), to our knowledge, this research is the first to show such an effect with numbers. Further, our studies delve into the mechanism of this effect. In addition to the theoretical contributions, the findings also provide actionable insights for retailers. A large number of products across retail settings lend themselves to the strategy demonstrated in this research. Retailers may have to slightly lower their prices (e.g., a be of “2 for $24.49” restructured as “2 for “$22.22”). While lowering prices, retailers benefit from incremental sales due to the fluency-induced increase in demand. On the other hand, instead of promoting it as “2 for $21.49”, a retailer could execute the bundle as “2 for $22.22”. Such a situation may be particularly advantageous for retailers because of a higher demand for the fluent bundle coupled with a greater margin from a higher price.

References are available upon request

Stigma and Gift-giving: How A Gift Recipient's Body Type Impacts Gift Choice

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Keywords: gift-giving, weight stigma, fair trade products, socially conscious consumer

In this research, we find gift recipient's body type can affect giver's decision-making when presented with products that emphasize social benefits—consumers are more likely to buy fair trade products as a gift when receivers are slim than when they are overweight; the effect occurs because givers do not want to offend overweight recipients.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

This research investigates how bias toward a gift recipient's body type can alter givers decision-making. Research suggests that people who are overweight face social stigma related to their weight (Hebl and Mannix 2003). When engaging with overweight individuals, people are more prone to regulate their actions and words to avoid offending them (Liu et al. 2013). Gift givers should be more careful in choosing a gift that may convey a health-related message for overweight recipients, and consequently make weight-stigma more salient. However—can this concern carry over to products that are socially conscious?

Socially responsible gifts are increasingly popular, for example, Fair trade products. Research shows that they are positively associated with health, such as lower calorie inferences (Schuldt et al. 2012). Therefore, consumers may be less likely to select fair trade products as a gift for overweight recipients in an attempt to avoid offending them.

We predict consumers are less likely to purchase fair trade products as a gift for receivers who are overweight (vs. slim). This difference occurs because givers perceive fair trade gifts as more offensive for overweight recipients. We do not anticipate the pattern for otherwise identical gifts that are not identified as fair trade.

Method and Data

405 Prolific participants completed a 2 (body type of gift receiver: overweight, slim) × 2 (gift type: fair trade, control) between-subjects experiment. Participants were asked to imagine selecting a chocolate bar gift for their friend Jessica, whose photo were edited to appear either slim or overweight. In the fair trade condition, the chocolate was identified as fair trade; the control condition did not. Participants then indicated purchase likelihood (0 -100%) and how offensive gifting the chocolate bar might be (1-7).

Planned contrasts on purchase likelihood showed in the fair trade condition, participants in the overweight condition were less likely to buy the chocolate bar than those in the slim condition (p=.066). Purchase likelihood did not vary based on body type for the control chocolate bar (p=.314). Planned contrasts on offensiveness demonstrated that in the fair trade condition, participants in the overweight condition found it more offensive gifting the chocolate bar than those in the slim condition (p<.001); in the control condition, body type did not affect offensiveness (p=.20).

The conditional indirect effect of body type on purchase likelihood through offensiveness was significant for the fair trade chocolate bar (*b* =5.53, 95% CI: [2.31, 9.17]) but not the control chocolate bar.

Summary of Findings

Gift giving serves as an important opportunity to create and strengthen social bonds (Baskin et al. 2014; Homans 1958). Little research has investigated whether givers' gift choices can vary by receivers' body type. Past research has explored how weight stigma can shift observers' perceptions and behaviors (e.g., Hebl and Mannix 2003; McFerran et al. 2010). In this research, we find others' body type can affect consumers' gift choices of products that emphasize social benefits. Consumers are more likely to buy fair trade products as a gift when receivers are slim than when they are overweight. This effect occurs because givers do not want to offend overweight recipients.

Key Contributions

Theoretically, this research adds to the body of both gift giving and stigma literature. Previous research of gift giving focuses on how gift choices impact social relationship between givers and recipients. However, no research to date focuses on the impact of a recipient's physical appearance on gifting choices. Our research highlights body type can impact gifting behaviors, even when the gift is not appearance related. Further, past stigma research has explored how weight stigma shifts consumers' perceptions and behaviors. In this research, we find others' weight can affect consumers' gift choices of products that highlight social benefits.

Practically, gift giving is huge business. As the number of socially conscious consumers continues to expand, so does the popularity of socially responsible gifts. We find that givers are less likely to purchase products that are socially conscious for recipients who are overweight.

From a practical perspective, it is important to understand how to better market these products to ensure that they can be valuable gift options for all consumers—regardless of the consumers' body type. Moreover, this research helps marketers understand how fair trade products are being perceived more broadly.

STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES DURING TIME OF CHANGE: THE CASE OF COVID-19

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Key words: Consumer well-being, psychological distress, Coping Strategies, Pandemics, COVID-19

Description: Understanding the stressors consumers experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the coping strategies they have adopted during this period.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The aim of this study was to understand the stressors consumers experienced during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic as well as the coping strategies they have adopted during this period. The study also investigates the role of perceived threat and self-efficacy in endorsing specific coping strategies.

Methods And Data

To provide preliminary evidence on stressors and coping strategies during the first wave of COVID-19, a sample of 50 Egyptian adults were interviewed in September 2020.

Summary of Findings

The majority of the participants mentioned the fear of losing loved one as a main stressor during the COVID-19 pandemic. Emotion-focused coping was adopted more often than problem-focused

coping. Pursing hobbies and home tasks and seeking support from family and friends were among the most used coping strategies. High self-efficacy was found to be associated with problem-focused coping strategies.

Statement of Key Contributions

Findings add to the growing literature demonstrating the unique impacts of COVID-19 on consumers' wellbeing and their corresponding coping strategies. The specific types of coping strategies people endorse in managing stress and building resilience in handling the pandemic offers important implications. The current study can be used as a building block for future research to quantitatively test the stressors and coping strategies.

TECHNOSTRESS IN E-COMMERCE – SHEDDING LIGHT ON PERSONALITY, COPING STRATEGIES, AND PURCHASE INTENTION APPLYING THE TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF STRESS

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Keywords

Technostress, E-Commerce, Big Five Personality, Decision-making, Online Shopping

Description

Our findings, based on an online survey with 479 participants, show that three personality dimensions (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion) of the Big Five have an effect on purchase intention mediated by coping strategy (proactive vs. reactive) and moderated by technostress in an e-commerce environment.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Shopping in e-commerce stores shifts the personal customer approach into the digital environment. Sales potential in e-commerce is particularly driven by constant availability. The convenient nature of the click-and-buy system in an online shop potentially creates technology-induced stress, activating avoidant behavior patterns. Technostress is "experienced by individuals due to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT)" (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008) and refers not

only to the use of ICT, but to the learning and adaptation process in consequence of technologies (Peters et al., 2022).

The transactional stress model of Lazarus and Folkman (1987) describes individuals' evaluation of a certain stimulus (i.e. the experience of stress), their applied coping strategy in order to handle the situation and the respective behavioral response (i.e. purchase intention). Thus, our study extends this model by the personality dimensions of the Big Five (Peters et al., 2022) which have not been completely included in previous studies.

Subsequently, the underlying assumption of the transactional stress model also contributes to individuals' use of coping strategies, an attempt to regulate the environment or to influence the reaction to the environment, especially under stressful conditions (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007, Lee-Baggley, 2005). Existing studies have examined personality dimensions in relation to the effect of coping, but the analyses of effects differ.

Although e-commerce has taken over consumers' lives, the effects of technostress on the purchasing intention still lacks coverage in the scientific field. We aim to extend the current state of research by analyzing the effects of Big Five dimensions on purchase intention, mediated by coping strategies and moderated by technostress.

Method and Data

We applied a between-participants experimental design by creating two fictitious German online stores differing in the technostress manipulation vs. no technostress manipulation. 479 people took part in the online experiment. 52% of the sample is male, 47% female and 0.6% identified as diverse. The mean age is 27 years (SD=14.2). We used the following scales to measure the constructs of interest: Big Five scale (Ali et al., 2021), coping strategy (Weinert et al., 2020), technostress (Peters et al., 2022) and purchasing intention (Everard & Galletta, 2005). We

established the measurement model by using a confirmatory factor analysis and by assessing global fit indices and criteria for the internal structure of the model (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988, Schreiber et al., 2006). Being interested in the effects of technostress on purchase intention in the e-commerce field, considering the Big Five personality dimensions and the two different coping strategies, we conducted a moderated mediation analysis using the SPSS macro PROCESS v3.5.3 (Hayes, 2018, model 7). Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Extraversion lead to the choice of a proactive coping style being negatively moderated by technostress while Neuroticism and Openness show no significant effect. A proactive coping strategy has a strong and significant effect on purchase intention.

Summary of Findings

Our findings indicate that three of the five personality dimensions have an impact on coping strategy choice being moderated by perceived technostress. The results of our experimental study make an important contribution to the body of academic research. First, our results contribute to a deeper understanding of the effects of coping strategy on purchase intention in an online store. Further, our research contributes to a deeper understanding of negative consequences of technostress by showing that reactive coping in particular leads to a reduced purchase intention in an online shopping context. Second, we gain insights into the relationship between technostress and different personality types and related coping strategies in the context of online shopping. With the results of our analysis, e-commerce operators can more accurately target different personality types using consumer data. In particular, consumers who are high on the personality dimensions Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion tend to cope proactively. E-commerce operators should cater to this by offering additional services, advising chat bots, or complaint management.

Key Contributions

Although e-commerce has taken over consumers' lives, the effects of technostress (technology-induced stress) on the purchasing intention still lacks coverage in the scientific field. With this study, we build on previous literature by focusing on the effect of the Big Five under consideration of technostress and proactive or reactive coping on the purchasing intention. The transactional stress model is widely and interdisciplinary accepted. However, it is vastly under-researched, particularly in the area of e-commerce. Little is known about the experience of technology-induced stress in online shopping, how people cope with it, and whether this depends on different personality types in particular. Our study addresses these research gaps by applying the transactional stress model and consequently contributes in particular to e-commerce as well as technostress and personality research.

Our findings, based on an online survey with 479 participants, prove that three personality dimensions (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion) of the Big Five have an effect on the chosen coping strategy and that this choice is being moderated by technostress. Furthermore, a proactive coping strategy has a positive effect on the purchasing intention of consumers while a reactive coping strategy affects purchase intention negatively. With the results of our analysis, e-commerce operators can more accurately target different personality types using consumer personality data. In particular, consumers who are high on the personality dimensions Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion tend to cope proactively. E-commerce operators should cater to this by offering additional services, advising chat bots, or complaint management.

THE 99-ENDING EFFECT ON HEDONIC AND UTILITARIAN CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING OFFERS

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Keywords: Cause-related marketing, pricing, left digit pricing, 99-ending pricing, right digit effects

Description: The results from this multi-study paper show that combining 99-ending pricing with CRM offer increases purchase intentions and mitigates consumer guilts, regardless of guilt domain. The effects of this combination are even stronger in the hedonic consumption condition than utilitarian one.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Cause-related Marketing (CRM) campaigns have continued to grow in popularity as a common marketing strategy for many companies. CRM is a marketing activity that involves a for-profit business agreeing to contribute a specified amount to a cause/ charity when the business's customers engage in revenue-generating exchanges (Adkins, 1999; Varadarajan and Menon, 1988). Consumers are likely to switch brands and retailers to those who demonstrate social responsibility (Smith and Alcorn 1991; Landreth 2002). CRM research suggests a great

impact of donation amount and frame on an individual's decision and intentions (Chang, 2008; Grau and Folse, 2007). One set of factors that researchers have been studying relates to how the campaign is presented or framed. For instance, Jaber and Jaber (2017, 2020) examined how 99-ending prices affected consumer purchase intentions in a CRM context. Additionally, Product type has also been shown to moderate the effectiveness of right digit pricing on purchase intentions as well (Choi et al., 2014). This paper aims to explore the effect of rightmost digits manipulation in prices on participation intentions for CRM campaigns in a hedonic vs utilitarian consumption situation.

Method and Data

The first study compares the impact of 99-ending prices, in a hedonic motive context, on CRM vs. discount offers, to highlight the impact of guilt mitigation on purchase intentions. The results show that in the hedonic motive condition, the 99-ending offer triggered a higher means of participation intention in the CRM transaction than in the discount transaction. Presumably, this is because while 99-ending prices alone reduce the guilt consumers experience with hedonic consumption, the dual effect of CRM and 99-ending prices alleviates guilt even better.

In the second study, we explore further the dual effect of CRM and 99-endings in a hedonic condition. The results show that 99-ending CRM offer significantly reduced consumer guilt, regardless of the guilt domain, in a hedonic purchase situation. These results extend earlier research on odd-ending prices, like Choi et. al. (2014), to show how CRM paired with 99-endings can have a great impact on consumer guilt triggered by hedonic purchases. The study also explores this dual effect and its impact on purchase intentions, and as hypothesized, the

results show a significant impact on purchase intentions in the hedonic but not the utilitarian context.

In the final study, the results show that the 99-ending effect on hedonic purchases is strengthened when combined with a CRM offer. Consumers are more likely to purchase hedonic consumption products when they are exposed to a CRM offer. Additionally, consumer guilt triggered by the hedonic motive was much more strongly mitigated by the CRM offer. The same effects show in the utilitarian products as well. However, the purchase intention from 99-ending CRM offer is significantly lower in utilitarian than hedonic consumption condition.

This study was conducted to gain more insights on how odd-ending effect and CRM could play a part in consumer decision making and whether they could mitigate consumer guilts when they are considering hedonic and utilitarian consumptions. The results provide evidence that both odd-ending pricing effect and CRM indeed influence consumer decision, especially in the hedonic consumptions. Additionally, they both could reduce the guilt consumers may have from such consumptions.

Summary of Findings

The results from these studies extend the work by Choi et al., (2014) and Jaber and Jaber (2017, 2020) by empirically showing that the use of odd-ending pricing could enhance the attractiveness of CRM hedonic offers. Consumer guilts could also be reduced by this price manipulation regardless of guilt domain and result in higher purchase intentions. The results from this study can be added to an odd/even pricing and growing CRM literature. The results also provide some insights on the use CRM as a marketing strategy. Businesses or Marketers who want to implement CRM strategy could use this knowledge in improving their offers to attract more customers, especially in the case of hedonic products.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study aims to understand the effect of rightmost digit pricing on purchase intention when it is combined with the CRM offer. To the authors' knowledge, there is no prior research has look at this combination before. As CRM is a growing practice in marketing, it is important to provide more empirical supports on its benefits to businesses. The results from this multi-study paper extend the work of prior researchers on the topic by empirically showing that the use of odd-ending pricing could enhance the attractiveness of CRM hedonic offers and reduce consumer guilts. This evidence could be added to a growing CRM literature. Additionally, the results provide some insights for businesses and marketers who deal with hedonic products especially to effectively improve their offers to attract more customers and increase purchase likelihood.

THE CONSUMERIZATION OF CARE: HOW CAPITALISM IS CO-OPTING SOLIDARITY

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Keywords: solidarity, morals and markets, governmentality, neoliberalism

Description: This research theorizes solidarity as Foucauldian governmentality, identifies the contradictions of solidarity and market logic, and carves out how markets co-opt solidarity, resulting in market-based solidarity.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Whenever crises hit, calls for solidarity flood in. During the coronavirus pandemic, governments imposed week-long lockdowns to protect the elderly and ill (e.g., Libal and Kashwan 2020); during the war in Ukraine, German politicians have appealed to the public to reduce energy consumption as an act of solidarity (Tagesspiegel 2022). While these acts of solidarity support vulnerable groups in society, they also overrule the otherwise dominant market logic. Relying on classic sociology (e.g., Durkheim 1893; Tönnies 1887), extant consumer research has employed the concept of solidarity to explain consumer movements (Chatzidakis, Maclaran, and Varman

2021), intra-community gift giving (Weinberger and Wallendorf 2012), brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001), and consumer gift systems (Giesler 2006). Yet, it has paid little attention to the contradictions that evolve from solidarity being reinvigorated in a market-dominated era. To overcome these shortcomings, our research examines the market-level effects of solidarity as a response to threats and shows how capitalism co-opts solidarity.

Method and Data

Our approach includes a theoretical and an empirical analysis. For the theoretical part, we draw upon Foucault's (1991) sociology of governmentality to conceptualize market-based solidarity. As context of our qualitative study, we selected the coronavirus pandemic as it elicited many calls for solidarity as well as solidarity measures of the welfare state (e.g., lockdowns). We focus on Germany as it comprises both a dominant market logic and a rich tradition of social structures (e.g., Bonefeld 2012). To account for different sources, our collected data includes 17,413 articles from four national newspapers, 11 in-depth and 37 standardized consumer interviews, 111 corporate email newsletters, 42 social media posts, and 15 TV commercials, as well as 898 official statements, press releases, and policy resolutions from a variety of Covid-19 expert committees, ethic councils, industry associations, research institutes, think tanks, and government organizations. For our analysis, we applied Thompson's (1997) hermeneutic approach.

Summary of Findings

Based on our analyses, we distinguish between market-based (i.e., care through consumption) and civic-based (i.e., care through redistribution and sacrifice) solidarity. The constant back and forth between theory and data, as suggested by the hermeneutic approach, led to the identification of four contradictions between civic and market goals. Our study uncovers four

corresponding types of market-based solidarity that helped to resolve the contradictions: local hero, iron man, wellness advocate, and conscious traveler. While these types are distinct from each other, they often occur together. Additionally, we identify dispositives (i.e., "a thoroughly heterogenous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid", Foucault 1980, pp. 194–95) of law, discipline, security, emotion, and temporality that help to create and reinforce market-based solidarity.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our contributions are threefold. First, we put forth the notion of solidarity as a Foucauldian governmentality and thus introduce market-based solidarity as a solidarity that is suited to market logic. While extant consumer research adopted the concept of solidarity (Chatzidakis, Maclaran, and Varman 2021; Giesler 2006; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Weinberger and Wallendorf 2012), it did not focus on how the market reshaped the concept itself. Second, we contribute to the literature of consumer responsibilization. Previous research (Giesler and Veresiu 2014) showed that, in a market-dominated society, the responsibility of solving societal challenges shifts from states to individual consumers. Our research uncovers that, in order to perform this shift, capitalism co-opts traditional concepts such as solidarity and carves out the dispositives that support the creation of market-based solidarity. Third, as a practical contribution, we enable policymakers to distinguish between civic-based and market-based solidarity as potential cure to crises. While many agree that solidarity is required to solve global crises (Prainsack and Buyx 2017), it is important to understand how markets intersect with solidarity.

References are available upon request.

THE DIFFERENTIAL ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP IN CONSUMER REACTIONS TO AUTOMATED PRODUCTS: TEST OF A FORMATIVE MEASUREMENT SCALE

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Keywords: Psychological Ownership, Automated Products, Involvement, Consumers

Description: This paper presents three studies examining the differential role of psychological ownership in consumer reactions to automated products while using a novel formative measurement scale.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Companies introduce more and more products that automate certain consumers' tasks to enhance consumers' comfort, save costs and create new business models. Yet, consumers are oftentimes reluctant to adopt such products. Against this backdrop, how will the managerial decision to shift from non-automated to automated products alter consumers' psychological ownership, and how will it differ for consumers depending on how involved they are with the task that is automated?

Method and Data

Across three studies we analyze data from 606 individuals in total who were recruited via online consumer panels. Throughout, we utilize a new formative scale to measure psychological ownership specifically in a consumption context. Study 1 (N=123) uses a survey design to assess the effect of psychological ownership on product evaluation, and the incremental validity of using a novel formative measurement scale for psychological ownership. Studies 2 (N=205) and 3 (N=278) are experiments assessing the effect that a high (vs. low) degree of product automation has on psychological ownership conditional on task involvement in different categories (vacuum cleaner, car). We used PLS-SEM to test our hypotheses.

Summary of Findings

Our research provides evidence for a mediating role of psychological ownership such that automating a task that consumers used to carry out themselves curbs the extent to which consumers perceive psychological ownership towards the product. We also demonstrate that accounting for consumer heterogeneity in terms of task involvement is crucial in understanding the effect of product automation. In general, it appears that a high (vs. low) task involvement strengthens (weakens) the negative effect that product automation has on psychological ownership, and this effect occurs for rather utilitarian (vacuum cleaner) and rather hedonic (automated car) product categories. The novel measurement scale of psychological ownership seems to add incremental validity over established scales.

Key Contributions

Our research contributes to extant literature seeking to illuminate consumer reactions to automated products by demonstrating a novel mechanism through psychological ownership and by identifying an important boundary condition (task involvement). Our research contributes to literature on psychological ownership by testing an alternative formative measurement scale specifically that is useful for the focal context, explaining a higher proportion of variance in the dependent variable than does an established psychological ownership scale.

References are available upon request.

DETRIMENTAL EFFECT OF ANTHROPOMORPHISM ON PERCEIVED PHYSICAL SAFETY OF ARTIFICIAL AGENTS IN DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

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Keywords: anthropomorphism, embodied artificial agents, safety perceptions, dangerous situations, physical safety

Description: The current research reveals a detrimental effect of anthropomorphizing embodied artificial agents, because they appear physically less safe in dangerous situations, which leads to consumers' less favorable downstream consequences, but the effect was mitigated if the situations are not dangerous or if the artificial agents usually do not operate in dangerous situations, and when consumers receive marketing messages that direct their attention to artificial agents' humanlike minds (e.g., cognitive capabilities) rather than humanlike bodies.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

While ample evidence indicates that humanlike artificial agents are perceived as mentally more capable (Lauretti et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2015; Waytz et al., 2014), yet we know of no prior research that examines if or how more humanlike artificial agents might seem physically fragile (i.e., less sturdy and durable) in certain situations. Given that many embodied artificial agents (e.g., rescue robots, medical robots, self-diving cars) could operate in very dangerous situations, we propose that concerns about physical, rather than mental, qualities get processed more impulsively in these situations. There is a salient schema linking physical danger to the weakness of human bodies (e.g., when people see a fire, they immediately imagine their skin being burned or not being able to breathe; Karemaker et al., 2021), so the humanlike features of robots may prompt impulsive, automatic thoughts about physical vulnerability in dangerous situations. As a result, robots with humanlike (vs. non-humanlike) features might be perceived as less sturdy and less capable of keeping consumers safe.

Method and Data

We conducted four studies with data from various consumers using different types of artificial agents (self-driving vehicles, home security robots, and rescue robots) in various situations (mud-rock flows, car accidents, fire and other domestic accidents, and earthquakes). With the first three studies, we investigated whether physical safety perceptions are the mechanism for the proposed detrimental effect of anthropomorphizing artificial agents. In particular, Study 1 tested whether consumers evaluate humanlike artificial agents as physically less safe than those without humanlike features. Then, we examine whether that such detrimental effect may be attenuated when dangerous situations are of less concern in consumers' minds, such as when non-dangerous situations are salient (Study 2) or the artificial agents are not typically used in dangerous situations (Study 3).

To establish the managerial relevance of these effects, we also tested whether an emphasis on safety aspects, in terms of the robots' humanlike body versus humanlike mind, might depend on situation-specific demands that can be induced by marketing message framing. Study 4 thus tests whether the detrimental effect of anthropomorphizing artificial agents in dangerous situations would be attenuated or even be reversed when marketers' messages shift consumers' attention to the human minds (e.g., the cognitive capabilities of artificial agents).

Summary of Findings

The results of the first three studies consistently show that in dangerous situations, artificial agents' humanlike (vs. non-humanlike) features undermine consumers' perceptions of physical safety, which has detrimental consequences for their evaluations of the agents. However, it does not arise in situations that are not generally perceived as dangerous (e.g., driving in a sunny day) or for artificial agents that typically are not used in dangerous situations (e.g., home cleaning robots). The results of the last study indicate that when a marketing message emphasizes the need to evaluate artificial agents' humanlike minds (e.g., cognitive aspects) in dangerous situations, the negative effect of humanlike features on evaluations was reversed.

Key Contributions

Previous studies mainly address the consequences of encountering what seems like human minds in nonhuman entities on consumer decision-making and consumption experiences (Damiano & Dumouchel, 2018; Epley et al., 2007; Kwak et al., 2015; Puzakova et al., 2013; Waytz et al., 2014). We show that humanlike features can prompt a schema regarding vulnerable human bodies and remind people of their limitations in dangerous situations. Therefore, our findings offer new evidence that anthropomorphism can backfire when a dangerous situation requires agents' physical strength to keep people safe.

Also, when prior work refers to safety perceptions of artificial agents, they mainly

focus on safety issues related to artificial agents' "minds" (e.g., whether artificial agents are smart enough to keep me safe; Canning et al., 2014; Waytz et al., 2014), without considering safety perceptions related to an artificial agent's "body" (e.g., whether artificial agents are sturdy enough to function properly in dangerous situations). However, we propose and show that, in dangerous situations, people would be more likely to evaluate physical strength by default than mental qualities. Thus, the current research examines a different aspect of safety perceptions of embodied artificial agents (i.e., physical safety) and reveals how users apply their own beliefs about the vulnerability of human bodies when a situation calls for physical strength.

References are available upon request.

The Effect of Data Storage Location on Brand Evaluation

Key Contributions to Academe and Practitioners

Drawing on the literature stream on data privacy concerns and brand trust, we theorize that for a multinational company, storing consumers' data in the local country will increase consumers' brand trust and brand evaluation. We further proposed that the focal effect is likely to be impaired for those with low local identity, low risk avoidance tendency, and when companies provided a clear privacy policy statements. Thus, our research provided a new antecedent which could influence consumers data privacy concerns. This new antecedent, i.e., data storage location, is not about the content of the data, but about physical storage location of the data, which indicated a new perspective to explore the variables to influence consumers' data privacy concerns. Second, our research contributes to the location effect. Previous research demonstrated that brand origin, manufactory location even R&D location would influence consumers' brand evaluation. Different with previous research, our paper test a different location effect that data storage location will influence consumers brand evaluation through the impact on brand trust. Expect theoretical contribution, our research also provided implications for marketing managers. First, our research demonstrated that the proposed effect still holds for consumers with a stronger local identity and higher risk avoidance tendencies. Thus, our research indicated the target

consumers who are more effective for the marketing communications of data storage location. Also, our research demonstrated the proposed data storage location effect was attenuated when companies provided a clear and transparent data privacy policy which provided a manageable means for marketing managers when they cannot change the data storage location.

Consumer data has been increasingly served as a foundation for firms to build their business models to compete with their competitors in different areas such as health, advertising, and banking (Bleier et al., 2020). With the popularity and broad use of data-driven business strategies, more and more consumers become skeptical and concerned about data privacy. Thus, how to decrease these concerns and increase trust becomes an important question for managers which could lead to tremendous benefits for firms, or disastrous outcomes if the data protection is failing. Previous research found information sensitivity, transparency (Bleier et al., 2020); firm and platform's data strategy and information falsification (Aiello et al., 2020) could influence consumers' data privacy concerns. In the current paper, we explore a new variable, i.e., data storage location, and examine how data storage location influence consumers' data security concerns and brand trust, as well as brand evaluation as consequences.

We proposed that consumers trust a multinational company more when it stores its consumer data in the local country rather than in its parent country for three reasons. First, storing customer data locally rather than in its parent country signals good intentions to the local consumers, leading to an increased brand trust. Second, when storing consumer data locally instead of in the parent country, consumers feel psychologically close to the company which will increase their brand trust (Massey & Dawes, 2007). Third, according to the social identity theory (Hogg, 2016), individuals cognitively recognize others with shared salient characteristics as 'in-group' members. When a company stores consumer data locally, consumers will generate

stronger brand trust because they are more likely to treat the company as an in-group member. We further proposed that the effect of data storage location on brand evaluation is likely to be impaired or boosted in different contexts. We proposed three boundary conditions for the proposed effect: local identity, risk avoidance tendency, and privacy policy statements.

We present four studies to test the proposed data storage location effect. Study 1 aimed to test the effect of data storage location effect on brand evaluation through a real piece of news about Tesla. Study 1 consists of two stages with a one-week interval. In the first stage, we collected the data on consumer evaluation of Tesla which provided consumers' baseline attitude. One week later, we provided participants with a news article about Testa in which Tesla stored its consumer data either in China or the U.S., and then asked participants to report their attitude again. A 2 × 2 repeated measure ANOVA on brand trust indicated a significant interaction ($F(1,77) = 17.33$, $p < .001$). Specifically, after knowing Tesla stored Chinese consumers' data locally, participants reported higher brand trust toward Tesla. In contrast, when telling participants that Tesla stored Chinese consumers' data in the U.S., participants reported lower brand trust toward Tesla. The mediation analysis indicated that the mediating role of brand trust was positive and had a 95% confidence interval that excluded zero (indirect effect = 0.52, 95%CI = 0.141 ~1.002).

In study 2 we used a fictitious brand. Also, we planned to test the moderating role of consumers' local identity. The experiment was presented as a brand attitude survey about a fictitious app "Emico", which was originating from Paris, France.

Participants were shown a news article about Emico, in which Emico stores its consumer data in the U.S. or in France, followed by the measurements of brand trust, brand evaluation, and consumers' local identity. Same as study 1, the results indicated a significant mediating role of brand trust. In addition, we used a bootstrapping approach (Process Model 7, Hayes, 2017) to test the conditional indirect effect. Results indicated a significant interaction effect of local identity and data storage location on brand trust and brand evaluation. The floodlight analysis indicated that the effect is nonsignificant for those who had low local identity (when $M < 5.02$, 47.96% of the full sample).

In study 3, we aimed to rule out the impact of the country image by using a fictitious country. In addition, we plan to test the boundary condition of consumers' risk avoidance tendencies. The experiment was presented as a brand attitude survey about a fictitious online food ordering app "Bmico", which was originating from a fictitious country, Natagem, Bergeholm. Participants were shown a news article about Bmico, in which Bmico stores its consumer data in the U.S. or in Bergeholm. Then we measured brand evaluation and consumers' risk avoidance tendencies. Same as study 2, the results indicated a significant mediating role of brand trust. In addition, data storage localization increased brand trust only for participants who prefer to avoid risks more in daily life (when $M > 4.72$, 69.59% of the full sample, $\beta = 0.39$, SE $= 0.20$, $p < .05$).

In this study 4, we test whether a clear and transparent data security statement would help increase brand evaluation if managers cannot store the data collected from

the host country locally. Study 4 adopted a 2 (data storage location: local vs. not local) × 2 (data security statement: with vs. without) between-subjects design. Study 4 was similar to study 3 except we provided participants a data security and privacy statement which describes the data collection purpose, data storage location, and whether it will share the data with third parties in one condition, but not in another condition. Results indicated a significant interaction effect of data security statement and data storage location on brand trust and brand evaluation. More importantly, brand trust mediated the effect of data storage location on brand evaluation when a data security statement was not provided (B = -1.39, 95%CI = -1.87~-0.90).

In sum, the current research explained whether, why, and when data storage location influences consumers' brand evaluation. Our findings advance the knowledge of identifying the consequences of data storage location and providing a new antecedent of brand trust. Our research can better guide marketing managers to store consumers’ data wisely in this fast-changing digital age.

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THE EFFECT OF DIET FOOD PURCHASES ON NON-SOY BASED PLANT MILK PURCHASES

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Keywords: Plant-based milk, Soymilk, Almond milk, Oat milk, Diet food

Description: This paper investigated the effect of diet food purchases on the number of non-soy based plant milk purchases.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumption of plant-based milk is increasing due to health reasons and increased interest in the sustainable environment(Vanga and Raghavan 2018). Soybean has the advantage of obtaining high-quality protein at low cost(Mazumder and Begum 2016). However, the rise of genetically modified varieties threatens species diversity, and consumer preferences are negative(Jeske et al. 2018). In addition, preference was low due to sensual characteristics such as off-flavor of beans(Vanga and Raghavan 2018). Due to negative concerns about the isoflavone content in soybeans and sensual factors such as plant particles getting stuck in the mouth, the desire for other plant-based materials is increasing in Korea.(Seo and Kim 2013; Kim et al. 2021; Lee and

Yang 2016). Although non-soy based plant milk is gaining popularity, research on non-soy based plant milk has been conducted mainly in the sensual aspect, and research on the consumer side is insufficient. Consumers recognize that plant-based milk instead of milk has relatively low calories, and the average calories of non-soy based plant milk are lower than soy milk(Préjet 2018; Kim et al., 2021). Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the effect of diet food purchase on the purchase of non-soy based plant milk instead of soy milk.

Method and Data

This study was conducted based on the consumer panel data collected and managed by the Rural Development Administration. Consumer panel data can identify consumers' food purchasing behavior and characteristics, including demographic information and food purchase information. 1282 households that submitted food purchase receipts from 2017 to 2021 were selected for analysis. Panel data were analyzed using a two-part model. The two-part model is a method of analyzing the change in the purchase of non-soy based plant milk by dividing it into the possibility of purchasing non-soy based plant milk and the purchase change after purchasing. The two-part model is used to increase the fit of the model by explicitly considering the large number of zeros in the dependent variable. The analysis was conducted by selecting the logit model in the first part and the regression model in the second part. The food and soymilk purchases, the number of families, age, income were controlled. The number of purchases of non-soy based plant milk was set as the dependent variable, and the number of purchases of white rice, brown rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, red meat, chicken breast, and salad was set as the independent variable.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the first part analysis using the logit model, the likelihood of purchasing non-soy based plant milk increased as the number of food, soy milk, sweet potato, chicken breast, and salad purchases increased. On the other hand, the younger the age, the less the number of potato and red meat purchases, the higher the likelihood of purchasing non-soy based plant milk. As a result of the second part analysis using the regression model, the number of purchases of non-soy based plant milk increased as the number of sweet potatoes and chicken breasts purchases increased.

Key Contributions

Using consumer panel data, this study revealed the effect of diet food purchase on the number of purchases of non-soy based plant milk, and there are several important contributions. First, it is meaningful in that it is the first study on the purchase behavior of non-soy based plant milk other than soy milk in Korea, where the plant-based milk market is growing. Second, it presents marketing direction and targeting to non-soy based plant milk manufacturers by revealing demographic characteristics and the effect of the number of purchases of sweet potatoes, chicken breasts, and salads, which are consumed a lot as weight loss foods, on the likelihood and number of purchases. Third, the effect on the possibility and number of purchases of non-soy based plant milk was different depending on the item group according to potatoes and sweet potatoes, and red and white meat, suggesting that non-soy based plant milk consumers perceive the same item group differently.

THE EFFECT OF HOSTAGE POSTING ON CONSUMER GREEN BEHAVIOR THROUGH THE REDUCTION OF ADVERSE SELECTION RISK

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Keywords: Hostage posting, adverse selection, consumer green behavior, decision-making, experiment.

Description: This paper provides a conceptual framework demonstrating how voluntary hostage posting influences consumer green behavior via the perception of adverse selection risk.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This study aims to investigate the role of hostage posting on consumer green behavior through the mediation of adverse selection. Consumer green behavior is encouraged globally due to the increase in environmental deterioration. However, the uncertain situation when buying green products and consumer distrust on online shopping platforms may discourage purchasing green products. Therefore, it is essential to find ways to convince the potential buyers about the product quality or performance, and induce their intention to buy, particularly green products.

Hostage posting can play an essential role in convincing the consumers on product quality due to the "self-punishment" commitment if the product quality or performance is not up to expectation. However, little research has been done relating to hostage posting and consumer green behavior. It is possible that voluntary hostage posting may reduce the perception of adverse selection, indicating a lower risk of buyers getting a "lemon" (or bad quality products). The lower perception of adverse selection will then increase consumers' trust in such products and their intention to buy them. Therefore, this study aims to address the following research questions: (1) does voluntary hostage posting influence consumer green behavior? (2) does adverse selection mediate the influence of voluntary hostage posting on consumer green behavior?

Summary of Findings

This paper intends to discuss three propositions for further research. The first proposition is about the effect of voluntary hostage posting on the adverse selection risk. This study proposes that posting warranties as hostages could reduce consumers' perception of adverse selection. As the marketplace has limitless disclosure costs, sellers have the incentive to conceal information, resulting in information asymmetry and a high potential for adverse selection. Hence, companies could offer hostage posting, such as a product warranty, to signal customers that they will be compensated if the products do not meet their expectations. Customers might perceive there will be a lower risk on adverse selection as the signaling impact of hostage posting has reduced the probability of receiving substandard goods. The second proposition is about the effect of adverse selection on trust. This study proposes that a reduced adverse selection would increase the trust of consumers and substantially increase their buying intention. The third proposition is about the potential mediator role of adverse selection. This paper proposes that hostage posting could increase consumers' intention to buy, with adverse

selection acting as a mediating role. There is a negative relationship between hostage posting and adverse selection, and a negative relationship between adverse selection and consumers' buying intentions.

Key Contributions

This paper provides insightful propositions regarding how to increase consumer green purchases after the tremendous changes in consumer buying habits due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project aims to provide empirical evidence about the relationship between hostage posting, adverse selection and consumer green behavior, starting with this paper that presents a few propositions to be discussed during the conference. Constructive feedback is sought to improve the study designs. Since there is still little research on the effect of hostage posting on consumer green behavior, more investigation is needed in this research area to contribute to the existing knowledge. The empirical investigation following these propositions may contribute to Marketing literature in the area of consumer behavior and information asymmetry. Non-academic stakeholders such as the sellers of green products and policymakers may benefit from this research's outcomes. Sellers of green products can use this information in guiding their marketing strategy development to thrive through the challenges during the current pandemic. The policymakers may be cognizant of the influence of hostage posting, which helps them draft policies to protect consumers and encourage green purchases.

THE EFFECT OF PRODUCT REVIEW TIME ON REVIEWER AND CONSUMER

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Keywords: online reviews, consumer recommendation behaviour, review reliance, eWOM, product review time, automated text analysis

Description: With the current paper, we contribute to the existing literature on online reviews and offer an unexplored variable of product review time.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumers have been found to share their experiences and opinions about products/ services online, which becomes a source of information for other consumers, resulting in reduced decision-making times and better buying decisions (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2003). As per a recent report by Murphy (2020), 79% of consumers trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation from friends or family. However, the huge volume of reviews to be perused makes it difficult for consumers to identify genuine and relevant information (Park and Lee 2009). This necessitates the need to better understand the cues that could be used for online reviews to aid consumers in their decision-making processes.

This article examines the influence of product review time − which we define as "*the time for which a consumer uses a product before writing the review about it*" − on consumer behavior related to the generation and consumption of online reviews. Specifically, the study examines the effect of product review time on review recommendations, expressed emotions in the review and consumer reliance on reviews. We explain some of the important effects of product review time, and triangulate the results using multiple datasets.

Method and Data

To test our hypotheses, we used customer reviews posted on Amazon.com. In Amazon, consumer reviews have hidden temporal cues within the review text. For example, a consumer might write "I have been using this product for last 1 month….." in the review text in Study 1. In order to get the effect of product review time on product recommendation and consumer reliance, we automatically extracted the reviews and performed text analytics to get hidden temporal cues. We used 1182 reviews (videogames) and 2676 reviews (cell phones and accessories) that contained product review time. Study 2 examined the effect of product

review time on both the generation and consumption of reviews using the Steam dataset that record game hours played by customers at the time of posting review.

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, for videogames, we found a positive effect of product review time on product recommendation ($\beta = .062$, $p < .01$) and expressed emotions ($\beta = .037$, $p = .395$) in the review. Similarly, for cell phones and accessories, we found a positive effect of product review time on product recommendation ($\beta = .127$, $p < .001$) and expressed emotions in the review ($\beta = .177$, $p < .001$). The interaction effect of product type on relationship between product review time and product recommendation ($\beta = .065$, $p < .01$), and product review time and expressed emotions in the review ($\beta = .139$, $p < .05$) were also found to be significant. As expected, the results confirmed our hypothesis of a negative effect of product review time on consumer review reliance (videogames: $\beta = -2.036$, $p < .1$, cell phones and accessories: $\beta = -3.65$, $p < .1$).

In Study 2, we ran a full model including review length and review age as control variables. The positive effects of product review time on product recommendation ($F(4465) = 336.94$, $p < .001$) and expressed emotions in the review ($\beta = .022$, $p < .001$) continued to be significant. Supporting our prediction, we found that product review time is negatively correlated with consumer review reliance ($r = -.26$, $p = .03$, $N = 4469$).

Key Contributions

Online reviews and specifically online recommendations act as mechanisms that help consumers to form opinions about products/services and make purchase decisions (Bigne,

Chatzipanagiotou, and Ruiz 2020; Gershoff, Mukherjee, and Mukhopadhyay 2003; Häubl and Murray 2003; Siering, Deokar, and Janze 2018). Although many studies look at how reviews influence consumer perceptions, there is very little research looking into consumer motivations to post positive reviews and even fewer studies that examine both reviewers' and consumers' reactions simultaneously. Our current study addresses this gap in the literature by examining the influence of product review time as a novel variable. Product review time was found to influence the recommendations made by reviewers, the expressed emotions in the reviews and consumer reactions to these reviews.

The current research makes multiple theoretical and practical contributions. First, our findings contribute to the scarce literature on the generation of online reviews. Second, this paper contributes to the scarce literature exploring the temporal aspects of product usage (Huang et al. 2016; Chen and Lurie 2013). For practice, our main contribution is to suggest an important variable that is mostly ignored in practice, product review time.

THE EFFECTS OF CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL ON REPURCHASE INTENTIONS AND POSITIVE WORD-OF-MOUTH

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Keywords: CVSCALE, cultural dimensions, PWOM, repurchase intentions, customer engagement

Description: This paper measures the “cultural dimensions index” at the individual level to examine how they moderate the mediated relationship of perceived brand equity on the association between customer engagement and (1) positive word-of-mouth, and (2) repurchase intentions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research examines the mediating effect of perceived brand equity on the association between customer engagement and PWOM and repurchase intentions. Furthermore, we also examine the moderating effects of cultural dimensions at the individual level on this mediating relationship. As individual cultural orientation need not be the same as the country’s cultural orientation, we argue that Hofstede’s country-based cultural index does little to explain customers’ interaction with brands. Since an individual’s perception of brands is shaped by cultural dimensions (Foscht et al., 2008), we want to examine which cultural dimensions play a significant role when there is customer engagement with the brand.

Method and Data

We assessed the measurement model by executing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using IBM SPSS AMOS 28 Graphics. We used regression, and PROCESS Macro to test the hypotheses. PROCESS Macro Model 4 was used to analyze the mediating effect and Model 7 was used to analyze the moderating effect of cultural dimensions. The data was collected from Amazon Mturk. Participants were from USA, and the final sample had a pool of 307 respondents. The items for the cultural dimensions at the individual level, customer engagement, perceived brand equity, PWOM, and repurchase intentions were used/adapted from previous studies.

Summary of Findings

Consistent with social-identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986), we showed that the customer engagement with the brand increases perceived brand equity. We explain how customers' self-identity relates brand equity and how that explains their PWOM and repurchase intentions. Perceived brand equity fully mediated the relationship between customer engagement with the brand and their repurchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth. Moreover, the moderated mediating effect shows that power distance and uncertainty avoidance determined the mediating relationship of perceived brand equity on customer engagement and positive word-of-mouth and repurchase intentions. The other cultural dimensions such as individualism, long-term orientation, and masculinity does not explain this moderated mediated relationship.

Key Contributions

This study adds to the theoretical understanding of Hofstede's cultural dimensions at the individual level to understand customers' engagement with brands. Managers have to be cautious of what cultural dimension plays a significant role in customers' engagement. Particularly in USA, for persuading customers to increase engagement with brands, managers should direct their activities keeping uncertainty avoidance and power distance in mind. We recommend that brand managers provide clear, concise, and accurate information to customers as it helps reduce uncertainty and alleviate anxiety. Furthermore, brands should focus on engaging with customers in meaningful ways that build relationships and create value for both the customer and the brand. This can include providing personalized experiences, offering personalized products and services, and using customer feedback to inform product or service development.

THE EFFECTS OF VIDEO STORYTELLING GREEN ADVERTISING ON EXPERIENCES, ENGAGEMENT, AND BEHAVIORS OF CONSERVATION CAUSES

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Keywords: Environmental communication, Experimental design, Green advertising, Narrative transportation, Storytelling advertising

Description: Our structural equation model confirms that a high level of narrative transportation in a video storytelling green contributes to better induced sensory experiences, pleasure, and green behaviors, while positive ad-induced experience and pleasure lead to better engagement with green causes and subsequent conservation behaviors.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Hypotheses

Plastic waste greatly affects wildlife and biodiversity (Hughes, 2019). By 2050, it is estimated that there will be more plastic than fish in the polluted ocean (Hughes, 2019). As a global crisis (Hughes, 2019) that deserves a collaborative effort among businesses and consumers, we reason that environmental communication practitioners can make the best use of insights from existing research that has generally confirmed that a storytelling advertising campaign can generate better persuasion results (Lien & Chen, 2013). Our study extends these conclusive findings about storytelling impacts on advertising effects to the field of environmental communication theories and practices. We proposed the following research hypotheses to guide our study:

RH1: The level of narrative transportation (in a storytelling green ad) positively predicts ad-induced sensory experience.

RH2: The level of narrative transportation positively predicts ad-induced pleasure.

RH3: The level of narrative transportation positively predicts green behaviors to reduce plastic waste.

RH4: Ad-induced sensory experience positively predicts consumer engagement with a green cause to reduce plastic waste.

RH5: Ad-induced pleasure positively predicts consumer engagement with a green cause.

RH6: Consumer engagement with a green cause positively predicts their green behaviors to reduce plastic waste.

Method and Data

We used a between-subject, post-test-only true experimental design when participants were randomly assigned. The between-group statistics support a successful manipulation: $\text{Mean}_{\text{high narrative transportation}} = 4.47 > \text{Mean}_{\text{medium narrative transportation}} = 4.16 > \text{Mean}_{\text{no narrative transportation}} = 4.11$ ($p<.05$).

We used EFA, Varimax rotation, and Principal Component Analysis to extract factors: A 6-item narrative transportation scale ($\alpha = .837$) [Chiu et al. (2012) and Green and Brock (2000)], 3-item ad-evoked sensory experience ($\alpha = .793$), 3-item ad-evoked pleasure ($\alpha = .759$), 7-item cause engagement ($\alpha = .906$), 4-item green behavior ($\alpha = .764$). All study constructs measured in five-point Likert statements have acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients of .70 (Nunnally, 1978). We used composite scores in the confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis using Amos 26.

Composite reliability (C.R.) and average variance extracted (AVE) of these variables were computed to assess their reliability and convergent validity. Most C.R. statistics range from .825

to .975 and generally exceed the cut-off criteria of .70 to ensure acceptable reliability (Fornell & Lacker 1981; Nunnally 1978). Overall, the AVE statistics of our study variables (from .523 to .820) are generally higher than the recommended cut-off of .50 (Fornell and Lacker 1981), indicating a good convergent validity for these variables in the model.

Summary of Findings

Our model has a good fit (RMR=.023, GFI=.956, AGFI=.834, TLI=.918, CFI=.967, RMSEA=.144) and was statistically significant in the path model. Overall, narrative transportation explains 65% of the variance in consumer sensory experiences (RH1), 54% of the variance in ad-induced pleasure (RH2), and 49% of the variance in green behaviors (RH3). Both ad-evoked responses were found to predict consumer engagement with a conservation cause to reduce plastic waste, such as consumer sensory experiences explaining 27% variance (RH4), while pleasure accounts for 52% of the variance (RH5) in the engagement score. Consumer engagement with a green cause accounts for 44% of green behaviors to reduce plastic waste (RH6). We confirmed that a high level of narrative-evoked transportation could positively predict consumer sensory experiences (β=.65) and ad-induced pleasure (β=.54). Additionally, sensory experiential effects evoked by the green video storytelling ad also positively predicted consumer engagement with the cause to reduce plastic waste (β=.52 for pleasure, β=.27 for sensory experiences). In contrast, engagement with a conservation cause positively predicts green behaviors (β=.44).

Statement of Key Contributions

Long-format or –duration video storytelling advertising enables advertisers to tell an emotionally charged story using a drama ad, a slice of life ad, and a transformational ad, similar to traditional narrative advertising (Escalas, 2004). However, many extant video storytelling-advertising studies have focused on persuasive outcomes when storytelling ads are used for business and profit-

making purposes. Our study bridges advertising and green marketing literature by linking narrative transportation theory with variables that measure consumers' ad-induced sensory experience and pleasure, cause engagement, and green behaviors in a non-profit and conservation context.

Additionally, our study aims to empirically examine whether the growing popular video storytelling technique is also useful for employing an authentic and engaging story to promote conservation causes. The employment of three realistic minute-long storytelling advertising campaigns (not lab-created advertising messages) in our study further contributes to the ecological validity of our findings to allow conservation practitioners to assess their green campaigns in the future.

In conclusion, marketing communication researchers and practitioners will benefit from learning the integration of video storytelling techniques that can evoke narrative transportation during ad exposure into a green campaign in generating intended conservation objectives.

References are available upon request.

THE IMPACT OF IDENTITY BASED CONGRUENCE EFFECTS IN REWARD BASED CROWDFUNDING

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Keywords: reward-based crowdfunding, naïve theories, social identity, pre-purchase decisions

Description: This research investigates how naïve theories that are based on campaign founders perceived social identity influence pre-purchase decisions in reward-based crowdfunding.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Reward-based crowdfunding constitutes a unique consumption scenario in which prospective consumers are transformed into investors who pre-purchase nascent products to finance the subsequent realization of these very products. (Belleflamme et al. 2013; Ordanini et al. 2011). In such a scenario, supporters have no guarantee that the entrepreneur will be able to finalize these products in a way that they will actually offer the proposed products benefits and features as announced in the pitch. Arguably, under these circumstances, information asymmetry concerns and uncertainties are prevalent amongst potential funders and diminish their willingness to support a reward-based crowdfunding campaign (Hopp, Rose, and Kaminski 2022; Rose et al. 2021). To alleviate these information gaps, potential funders are likely to search for signals that help them to judge the quality of the campaign and to estimate the chance of receiving the proposed product in case of a pre-purchase (Ahlers et al. 2015; Courtney, Dutta and Li 2017). In this research, we argue that potential supporters aim to compensate these uncertainties by applying naïve theories about the entrepreneur. More

precisely, we investigate whether inferences that are based on the perceived social identity that entrepreneurs convey in their campaigns, influence pre-purchase decisions in reward-based crowdfunding.

Method and Data

We conducted a randomized one-factorial (founder identity: congruent vs. incongruent vs. no founder) between-subjects experiment. In total, 175 participants (Mage = 25.4, 59% female) participated in the study. Participants were presented with explanations about the general principles of reward-based crowdfunding and were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions. After that, they were introduced to a survey on their opinion regarding a reward based crowdfunding campaign. For our experiment, we utilized an actual campaign that was presented to potential funders on Kickstarter.com. The product featured in this campaign was a barbeque that was designed for the requirements of barbeque enthusiasts in urban environments. In the *identity-congruent* condition, the campaign founder was presented as a barbeque enthusiastic who loves to barbeque with friends in the local parks and lakes. In the *identity-incongruent* condition, the campaign founder was introduced as a market analyst who consults companies with respect to the market potential of new products. In the *control condition* an introduction of the campaign founder was omitted. Our dependent measures were respondents' willingness to financially support the campaign and the extent to which respondents believed that the project founder will be able to realize the product as proposed in the campaign.

Summary of Findings

An ANOVA with willingness to support as dependent variable revealed a significant effect for the presentation of the campaign founder ($F(2,173) = 4.52$, $p = .016$). Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that the mean willingness to support in the identity

congruent condition was significantly higher than in the identity incongruent condition (Mcongruent = 3.60, Mincongruent = 2.90, p = .016) and in the control condition (Mcontrol = 2.83, p = .010), while there was no significant difference between the incongruent condition and the control condition (p = .819). Next, we conducted an additional ANOVA with trust as dependent variable. In this analysis, perceived identity congruence exerted a significant effect on participants' trust that the proposed product will in fact be realized as announced in the campaign (F(2,173) = 3.37, p = .036). Subsequently, we conducted a mediation analysis using the Process script (Hayes 2013, model 4) to test whether the difference in willingness to support between the identity congruent and identity incongruent condition can be explained by perceived trust. The analysis indicated a significant indirect effect of identity congruence on willingness to support, mediated by perceived trust (b = -.152, 90% confidence interval [CI] = [-.348, -.008].

Statement of Key Contributions

Prior research on social identity has found that identity congruence effects between supporting individuals (e.g. target individual and previous donor) affect contribution behavior in a non-profit fundraising context (Shang, Reed, and Croson 2008). Our research extends these findings by demonstrating that identity congruence effects also occur between campaign founders and the proposed outcomes of their campaigns. Second, our research also contributes to the literature on marketing and social identity. While prior studies indicate that individuals are influenced by their own social identities, our findings demonstrate that the social identities of relevant others as well influence decision making and attitude formation in consumption related contexts. Third, we extend our understanding of consumer behavior in the crowdfunding context by providing insights into the individual-level decision processes of potential supporters of crowdfunding campaigns. That is, our findings demonstrate that funding decisions for crowdfunding campaigns are borne along on naïve theories about

campaign founders that are based on their portrayed social identity. Our research also has important practical implications. As such, our findings demonstrate that potential supporters of crowdfunding campaigns tend to rely on naïve theories when making assessments about the entrepreneurs' capability to materialize the proposed outcome as announced in their pitch.

THE MAGIC OF SIGNATURES:

HOW SIGNATURES PROMOTE CONSUMER TOLERANCE FOR SERVICE FAILURES

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Keywords: Handwritten signature, Service failures, Service satisfaction, Consumer tolerance, Perceived sincerity

Description: The current research proposes that handwritten signatures can increase consumers' perceptions of the service provider's sincerity, then mitigates the negative impact of the subsequent service failure on consumers' satisfaction and tolerance.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Today's consumers have increasingly higher expectations for customer service, and call for even higher quality (Morris, 2016). When companies cannot meet customers' expectations, a service failure might occur (McCollough et al., 2000), leading to adverse outcomes such as loss of current, potential, and future customers; loss of reputation (Banerjee, 2014); and bad word of mouth (Bhatia, 2019). Previous research has investigated different post-failure recovery strategies used by service providers to suppress the harmful effects of service failures, such as the relationship type (Mattila, 2001), relationship norms (Wan et al., 2011), and symbolic recovery strategy (i.e., expressing an apology or appreciation) (You et al., 2020). However,

limited research has investigated preemptive strategies—specifically, how to use common marketing communication preemptively to mitigate the negative effects of service failures.

In practice, signatures are pervasive elements used by marketers when delivering services or products. These signatures are presented as handwritten or printed. However, few research has focused on service provider signatures, particularly regarding their use as a countermeasure to service failures. Therefore, this research examines whether and how service providers' handwritten signatures affect consumers' service satisfaction and tolerance, specifically after a subsequent service failure.

Method And Data

Four studies systematically tested our proposed handwritten signature effect. Study 1 used an experiment to offer preliminary evidence for the proposed positive handwritten signature effect. Study 1 employed a one-factor signature (handwritten vs. printed vs. control) between-subjects design with participants recruited from Prolific. Study 2 replicated the positive handwritten signature effect in another scenario and examined the underlying mechanism, perceived sincerity. Study 2 followed a one-factor signature (handwritten vs. printed) between-subjects design with participants from Credamo. Study 3 used a moderation-of-process approach (Spencer et al., 2005) to further explore the boundary condition for the handwritten signature effect. Study 3 employed a 2 (signature: handwritten vs. printed) × 2 (service failure: warmth-related vs. competence-related) between-subjects design with participants from Credamo. Study 4 used a secondary dataset to provide evidence from the field of service marketing for the proposed handwritten signature effect.

Summary of Findings

The results of the four studies confirmed our hypotheses. Study 1 showed that compared to a printed signature, a handwritten signature from the service provider can lead to greater consumer satisfaction to subsequent service failure. Study 2 demonstrated that handwritten signature incurred customer's sincerity perception of service provider, and then, increases consumer's tolerance of subsequent service failure. Study 3 found that the positive handwritten signature effect is present in competence-related service failure. However, there is no differences between different forms of signature under the context of warmth-related service failure. Study 4 confirmed that handwritten (vs. printed) typeface is associated with greater customer satisfaction, and this effect is driven by the sincerity perception.

Statement of Key Contributions

For academia, this research contributes insights into several aspects of the literature. First, going beyond the perspective of signing behavior, this research extends prior research on signatures by introducing another unique perspective, i.e., consumers' exposure to handwritten signatures, providing a more comprehensive understanding of handwritten signatures. Second, this research applies handwritten signatures to the valuable but unexplored context of service failures, suggesting that different signature formats have influential impacts on customer satisfaction and consumers' tolerance of service failures. Third, this research contributes to the study of service failures and recovery, suggesting that the effectiveness of the handwritten signature is limited to competence-related service failures, and disappears in a warmth-related service failure context.

For practitioners, this research provides actionable guidelines to manage service failures. This research provides companies with a novel strategy for preemptively mitigating the adverse impact of a service failure by providing handwritten signatures in early communications with customers. The results suggest that a given service provider's handwritten signature can be a valuable tool to enhance consumers' perceptions of the sincerity of the company and, in turn, increase both their satisfaction with the service and their tolerance of subsequently encountered service failures.

Note: References are available upon request.

THE PROCESS OF SEVERE BRAND HATE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Keywords: Consumer-brand Relationship, Rumination; Desire for Revenge, Brand hate, Brand transgression

Description: This paper presents a conceptual framework delineating the components and the process of severe brand hate.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: Researchers have looked into the variety of hate feelings experienced by people with different brand hate levels, from mild to severe kinds. The strongest form of brand hate is termed as severe brand hate, which leads to extreme negative consumer outcomes such as public complaining brand revenge, and brand sabotage. Such extreme consumer responses are substantially more harmful to the firms and demand the most scholarly consideration. However, despite such damaging consequences, severe brand hate doesn't appear to have attracted a significant amount of attention. Moreover, there are no distinctions between mild, moderate, and severe degrees of brand hate in the scholarly research on consumer brand hate because it only measures brand hate as a one-time phenomenon. While the literature suggests that hate can exist in both acute and chronic forms, researchers in brand hate seem to ignore

the existence of enduring hate in consumer culture while focussing solely on the immediate or acute brand hate emotion. The relevance of recurrent failures when the negative event is self-referent to an individual is an important theoretical question that has not been addressed in earlier investigations.

Summary of Findings: This article is aimed to deepen our understanding of severe brand hate and encourage further investigation into this little-studied marketing phenomenon. In accordance with this, we develop a conceptual framework of consumers' intense negative mental state against brands and make the following advancements in this field of study:

First, the scholarly research on consumer brand hate is limited to measuring brand hate as a one-time phenomenon not accounting for the varying levels of brand hate severity. We thus introduce severe brand hate as the highest form of brand hate and define it as an enduring sentiment, which evolves over a period due to repeated brand failures, unlike immediate hate, and leads to consumer brand sabotage, a hostile form of aggressive behavior with a dominant objective of harming a brand. Such hate is believed to further escalate in the presence of the self-reference effect.

Second, in line with the above discussion, we identify two additional components of severe brand hate as rumination and desire for revenge, besides brand hate emotions, as discussed by early scholars. Rumination reflects the period between the escalation of immediate emotions of brand hate to a severe sentiment of brand hate due to repeated transgressions. On the other hand, the desire for revenge explains the aggressive behavior of consumer brand sabotage.

Key contributions: By aiming to address the following unanswered concerns in the existing literature, this study contributes to the body of work on the interaction between consumers and brands:

1. How do individuals react to the brands after multiple failed attempts to seek redressal for a brand transgression?

2. Would such a consumer reaction be more intense if the brand transgression is self-referent to the individual?

3. Do the former conditions lead to an immediate negative emotion of hate or a long-term negative sentiment (severe brand hate in this study) toward the brand?

4. How would such an enduring sentiment (severe brand hate) be different from the emotion of hate (brand hate)?

5. What would be the consequences of such a negative sentiment (severe brand hate) toward the transgressing brand?

Researchers will be able to determine the association between SEVERE BRAND HATE and other key marketing constructs by defining SEVERE BRAND HATE. Furthermore, the literature identifies SEVERE BRAND HATE with deliberate and well-planned adverse consumer reactions aimed at exacting revenge on the brand, causing long-term damages. Therefore, identifying the causes and components of SEVERE BRAND HATE will aid marketing practitioners in avoiding and mitigating the ill effects of severe consumer reactions such as the decrease in brand value and financial drainage.

TIME IS MONEY? HOW TIME (MONEY) ACTIVATION AND SELF-REGULATORY FOCUS IMPACT CONSUMERS' DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

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Keywords: *time, money, disaster preparedness, self-regulatory focus, awe*

Description: *This research examines how the activation of time (vs. money) can affect consumers' disaster preparedness differently, depending on their self-regulatory focus.*

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Time is money, isn't it? Time and money both signal valuable resources that consumers desire and often have been discussed in an interchangeable manner. However, consumers focus on time and money to varying degrees in their processing of and judgments relating to consumer proximate outcomes (Mogiler & Aaker 2009; Mogilner, Aaker, & Pennington 2008; Reed, Aquino, & Levy 2007; Okada & Hoch 2004). However, little is known about the role of time versus money activation in decisions involving disaster preparedness. We examine how time/money focus interacts with consumers' regulatory focus in disaster preparedness

situations, and propose that activating time (vs. money) for promotion- (vs. prevention-) focused individuals can lead to increased disaster preparedness.

Method and Data

We derive two hypotheses:

H_1: The impact of activating time (vs. money) on disaster preparedness depends on consumer self-regulatory focus. Specifically, activating money (time) leads prevention- (promotion-) focused consumers to indicate higher disaster preparedness.

H2: The conditional effect of time (money) activation occurs because prevention- (promotion-) focused consumers experience greater awe towards the disaster, which elicits higher disaster preparedness.

Two experiments were conducted, involving both, common but localized natural disasters (e.g., cyclones) and epidemics causing mass trauma (COVID-19). Study 1 activated time or money via a guided writing task whereas Study 2 utilised pictorial stimuli. Disaster preparedness was measured using general disaster preparedness intent (Study 1) and a more context-specific measure (Study 2).

In Study 1, 303 MTurk respondents were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions (resource activation: time vs. money) in a full-factorial between-subjects design. Participants first reported and described their preferred recreational activities focusing on either time-related or money-related aspects. Next, participants were exposed to a scenario involving a developing cyclone in their locality and reported their disaster preparedness using a six-item, seven-point scale. To test H_1, we assessed their self-regulatory focus. Study 2 featured a similar design, and examined awe as the underlying mechanism by operationalizing disaster as COVID-19 (n = 263).

Summary of Findings

This research shows that activating money (time) for prevention-focused (promotion-focused) individuals will make them more willing to be prepared for a disaster. Further, we show that the effect of money (time) occurs because prevention-focused (promotion-focused) consumers experience greater awe towards the disaster, which elicits higher disaster preparedness.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research contributes to a more fine-grained understanding of how concept activation influences consumer behaviour. We join the emerging research stream investigating the differential impacts of time versus money (Mogiler & Aaker 2009; Mogilner, Aaker, & Pennington 2008; Reed, Aquino, & Levy 2007; Okada & Hoch, 2004). Challenging the conventional assertion viewing time and money interchangeably, this research differentiates time from money by introducing a critical moderating candidate (i.e., self-regulatory focus), and the effect of the interplay on consumers' experienced owe. Marketers ought to benefit from the findings herein and design their communication differently. For promotion- (prevention-) focused consumers, activating the salience of time (money) seems to be more effective in eliciting greater disaster preparedness, thereby stimulating greater patronage intent for disaster mitigation plans such as insurance and/or extended warranty.

Practically, marketers ought to benefit from the findings by deploying the optimal communication strategies when marketing products associated with disaster preparedness. The cross-over effect documented in this research for prevention- and promotion-focused

participants compels businesses and marketers that the activation of money (time) works more effectively for prevention-focused (promotion-focused) consumers.

References are available upon request.

TO BE STABLE OR NOT? BELIEFS ABOUT BODY SHAPE MALLEABILITY INFLUENCE CONSUMER PRODUCT EVALUATION AND CHOICE

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Keywords: implicit theories, product evaluation, product choice, compensatory consumer behavior

This paper demonstrates in a correlational study and two experiments that beliefs about the malleability of body shape affect the product type consumers prefer.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In the current paper, the authors examined whether and why *implicit theories* impact product liking. These theories refer to the degree to which people believe that human attributes, such as body shape, are malleable. The adjective *implicit* indicates that most people cannot articulate their lay theories about malleability. Based on these theories, two types of people are distinguished. The first type is the so-called *entity theorists*. They perceive an attribute as stable and attempt to demonstrate that it is appealing. Therefore, these theorists would favor *symbolic self-completion products* (SC-products) that convey superiority in the attribute (H_{1a}). By contrast, the second type of people, *incremental*

theorists, perceives an attribute as malleable and strives to cultivate it by practicing and devoting effort to it. Because of these characteristics, the authors hypothesized that incremental theorists prefer *direct resolution products* (DR-products) that help develop the attribute (H_{1b}).

Method and Data

In Study 1, 748 participants completed a measure about implicit theories of body shape. Participants indicated from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 100 (*strongly agree*) the degree to which they tend to convey the desired body shape through brands, a behavior that served as a surrogate of a SC-product. As a surrogate of a DR-product, participants decided whether to win a gift card from a sports retailer (1) versus a fashion retailer (0).

In Study 2, half of the participants read a text that primed an entity theory of body weight, whereas the other half read a text that primed an incremental theory of body weight. All 117 female participants rated from 1 (*very unfavorable*) to 5 (*very favorable*) two SC-products: a figure-shaping top that contributes to a more propitious upper body and a single-color maxi dress that hides broad hips.

Study 3 manipulated implicit theories of body shape. The 367 male and female participants evaluated a gym membership from 1 (*very unfavorable*) to 5 (*very favorable*). Finally, they chose three times between a DR-product and a less supporting option in changing the figure, each from 1 (*definitively the other product*) to 5 (*definitively the DR-product*).

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, the authors found that incremental theory participants (M = 18.49, SD = 20.68) reported communicating the desired body shape less strongly through brands than did entity theory participants (M = 21.59, SD = 21.02) ($t(724) = -2.00$, $p = .046$), supporting H_{1a}. As predicted in H_{1b}, incremental theory participants (M = 0.78, SD = 0.41) were more likely than

entity theory participants (M = 0.69, SD = 0.46) to select the gift card from the sports retailer ($Wald(1)$ = 4.23, p = .040).

Study 2 provided further evidence for H_{1a} by demonstrating that incremental theory participants evaluated the top and dress more negatively than did entity theory participants ($M_{Inc,Top}$ = 3.01, $SD_{Inc,Top}$ = 0.96, $M_{Ent,Top}$ = 3.30, $SD_{Ent,Top}$ = 0.48, $t_{Top}(93.12)$ = -2.07, p_{Top} = .041; $M_{Inc,Dress}$ = 2.99, $SD_{Inc,Dress}$ = 0.73, $M_{Ent,Dress}$ = 3.25, $SD_{Ent,Dress}$ = 0.63, $t_{Dress}(112)$ = -2.04, p_{Dress} = .043).

Consistent with H_{1b}, Study 3 revealed that incremental theory participants (M = 2.96, SD = 0.83) evaluated the gym membership more favorably and were more likely to select the DR-product options than did entity theory participants (M = 2.80, SD = 0.80) (β = .20, $t(358)$ = 2.15, p = .032).

Key Contributions

The findings of this paper contribute to academe in two ways. First, the results add to the literature on implicit theories and consumer behavior by introducing body shape as a human attribute of interest. Until recently, studies have examined only implicit theories of body weight, and no study has yet explored the causality between implicit theories of body weight and consumer behavior. The authors sought to close these gaps by manipulating implicit theories of body weight and implicit theories of body shape. Second, the findings extend the Compensatory Consumer Behavior Model, which suggests that five product types can decrease the difference between the current and desired level of an attribute. However, the model does not predict whether groups of consumers vary in their preferences for these product types. The current research provides evidence that implicit theories explain why some consumers are more likely to employ DR-products, whereas others are inclined to use SC-products.

The research further suggests how practitioners can align their marketing instruments with the preferences of incremental and entity theorists. Practitioners can either target one of these types of people or trigger the implicit theory that increases the evaluation and choice of the products they sell.

"References are available upon request."

TO FORGIVE OR NOT? CONSUMERS' RESPONSE TO BRAND TRANSGRESSION

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Keywords: brand transgression, consumer forgiveness, consumer unforgiveness, sustainability consciousness, unsustainability

Description: This study explores consumers' forgiveness and unforgiveness in response to environmental and social brand transgressions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

According to earlier research, consumers throughout the world are developing a high interest in social and environmental sustainability (Harris, 2007; Tey et al., 2018; Vitell, 2015; Boccia et al., 2019). The rising sustainability awareness among consumers is studied in different marketing contexts, mostly aiming to promote sustainable consumption or to explore the motivations and mechanisms underlying it (e.g., Hosta & Zabkar, 2021; Balderjahn et al., 2013). However, there has been scant research on how consumers' sustainability awareness affects their response to a brand's unsustainable behavior. Another gap addressed is the variations in consumers' response (i.e., forgiveness and unforgiveness) to social and environmental unsustainability, which are two important pillars of the sustainability concept. Tsarenko and Tojib (2015) presume that the specific type of misconduct can have a major impact on consumers' reactions to negative brand practices i.e., the impact on human health versus the environment. Therefore, we attempt to respond to their call for reaching a full picture of consumer responses by comparing consumer reactions to environmental vs. social brand transgression. Thereupon, we aim to find out 1) how forgiving and unforgiving are consumers of social vs. environmental brand transgression and 2) how consumers' sustainability consciousness affects their response to brand transgression.

Method and Data

Brand transgressions were manipulated by creating experimental and control conditions. Two between-subject manipulations and one corresponding between-subject control condition were created for environmental and social misconduct to produce three questionnaire versions. To test our hypotheses, we followed the conditional indirect effect procedures suggested by Hayes

(2013). The moderating and dependent variables were measured variables. The variables in our design can be summarized as follows:

(1) A manipulated variable (X), representing exposure to one of the two experimental conditions or the control condition, where the environmental violation is coded 1 and the social violation is coded -1, and the control condition is coded 0.

(2) Three continuous moderating variables (W) which include sustainability consciousness and its two sub-dimensions of environmental and social consciousness.

(3) Two continuous outcome variables (Y) reflecting the consumers' unforgiving and forgiving answers to transgressions. The forgiving response comprises two dimensions of emotional and decisional forgiveness.

The experimental and control conditions' narratives were developed, pretested, and revised following the pretesting. Using a fictitious brand name, the narratives began with a description of the company and then proceeded with explanations of the company's environmental and social irresponsibilities. The control condition's narrative contained a neutral account of the same brand.

Summary of Findings

The results indicated that consumers are more vulnerable to the environmental violation of a brand than its social wrongdoing. We treated forgiveness and unforgiveness as two distinct constructs rather than two opposite ends of the same spectrum as suggested by e.g., Worthington, (2006, 2003) and Kira et al. (2009). Our results show the variation of these constructs and their different interactions with the type of brand irresponsibility and consumer consciousness. Overall, the positive emotions (forgiveness) outweigh the negative emotions (unforgiveness) when comparing the size of the effects. We found that sustainability consciousness is a

moderator of consumer forgiveness and unforgiveness but the effect is different depending on the type of transgression (environmental vs. social). More specifically, sustainability consciousness reduces consumers' forgiveness toward environmental irresponsibility while increasing forgiveness toward social irresponsibility. The effect is weaker but has the same direction for unforgiveness, endorsing our assumption about the disjunction of forgiveness and unforgiveness in the consumer-brand context.

Key Contributions

This study contributes to the knowledge about consumer-brand relationships by investigating the important role of consumer forgiveness and unforgiveness in responding to brand transgressions. The consumer behavior literature has so far equated low forgiveness with unforgiveness. However, according to our study and several interpersonal relationship studies, unforgiveness and forgiveness are two different constructs entailing different emotions and predictors. Next, we contribute to the growing research stream on consumers' social and environmental consciousness and its major role in consumer decision-making.

The findings demonstrate that consumers are more strongly against environmental irresponsibility than the social one. As a result, in case of an environmentally related crisis, companies will most likely experience higher tension in their relationship with consumers. However, this finding does not imply that consumers are not responsive to social malpractices. In fact, sustainability consciousness was found to increase unforgiveness in case of a social transgression. This, therefore, gives rise to our recommendation that managers should attempt to prevent transgressions from happening at both levels. Our results show that consumers in both types of brand transgressions are willing to allow the company to compensate for its

wrongdoing. This highlights the important role of ameliorative strategies for restoring the broken consumer-brand relationship.

TO GIVE OR GIVE UP: THE ROLE OF LEARNED HELPLESSNESS IN PRIVACY PROTECTION BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: Privacy, Learned helplessness, Protection behavior, Effort

Description: This research investigates how efforts to protect privacy lead consumers to feel a sense of helplessness that then influences their subsequent privacy protection behaviors.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In this paper, we investigate whether individuals' repeated efforts to protect privacy lead them to feel helpless over time, which then negatively impacts their privacy protection behaviors. Four hypotheses are offered related to this question:

H1: Greater privacy concern leads to greater effort to protect privacy initially.

H2: Greater perceived effort leads to greater feelings of helplessness.

H3: Greater feelings of helplessness lead to less protection behavior.

H4: Effort and learned helplessness serially mediate the relationship between privacy concern and protection behavior.

Method and Data

Two studies were conducted to test the hypotheses. In Study 1, a panel of 315 British individuals responded to an online survey about mobile app usage. Participants were asked to identify their current privacy protection behavior, mobile privacy concerns, feelings of learned helplessness, and effort needed to protect privacy. Covariates of expectation of control, importance of privacy protection, trust, privacy invasion experience, risk and expertise were measured, along with demographics.

In Study 2, an online panel of 163 U.S. individuals participated in a 2 Privacy Concern (high, low) x 2 Effort (high, low) between-subjects experiment. As a cover story, respondents were asked to serve as beta testers for two new mobile apps in order to provide feedback on the app registration process. Participants were asked to preview the features of the two apps and then test the registration process for the apps. The first app was used to manipulate privacy concern and effort, and the second app was used to measure protection behavior after elevating perceptions of learned helplessness.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 findings support the hypothesized relationships among the variables (H1-H3), in addition to the serial path showing that, as privacy concerned individuals perceive greater effort, they are more likely to experience greater feelings of helplessness that then reduces protection behavior (H4). Unexpectedly, we also found the direct path between privacy concern and protection behavior to remain significant.

Study 2 results showed that the serial mediation proposed in H4 was supported, with higher privacy concern increasing initial effort, greater effort increasing learned helplessness, and greater learned helplessness reducing subsequent protection behavior. In addition to the hypothesized paths, learned helplessness directly mediated the privacy concern – protection behavior relationship in a consistent manner as hypothesized, and effort also directly mediated the privacy concern-protection behavior path in a theoretically consistent way.

Key Contributions

Examining learned helplessness is new to the privacy literature, as is the examination of the overall causal chain we propose in this research: privacy concern => effort (to protect privacy) => learned helplessness => subsequent protection behavior. While the contribution to scholarship stems from a theoretically strong rationale for and demonstration of the role of learned helplessness, both marketers and policy makers can also benefit from this research.

Based on the findings, we argue that there is a need to ease the amount of effort consumers must expend in protecting their privacy on a constant basis; otherwise consumers may “give up” protecting themselves. This can lead to greater vulnerabilities and misuse of data in the marketplace. Marketers could develop processes that ease the effort involved in privacy protection and/or communicate to consumers more concretely about how their protection behaviors have resulted in direct benefits to them.

To Treat or Prevent the Charitable Cause?

How the Efficacy of Different Donation Appeals Varies Based on Negative Emotion

Extended Abstract

Charities support many important causes, spanning across environmental, political, societal, cultural, and public welfare domains. In tending to a given cause (e.g., cancer), charities can either focus their efforts on its treatment (e.g., what is being done to assist victims with the consequences of cancer) or prevention (e.g., what is being done to stop cancer from claiming new victims). Although the treatment versus prevention distinction has been delineated for some time, it is still not well understood when a charity would benefit most from emphasizing one or the other in their donation appeals to prospective donors. This research sheds light on this issue, finding that the efficacy of each orientation depends on the negative emotion experienced by prospective donors. Five studies show that sadness (anger) encourages donations when the charitable appeal emphasizes the treatment (prevention) of the charity's cause. These effects occur because each appeal tends to an emotion-specific motive. Sadness (anger) instantiates a need for social belonging (correcting injustice) and a treatment-(prevention-)orientation best highlights how donating to a cause can fulfill that need.

Statement of Key Contributions to Academe and Practitioners

Our research makes two key contributions to the academic literature. First, our research contributes more broadly to the consumer behavior literature by examining the treatment versus

prevention distinction within a marketing context. Although this distinction originated in the medical literature and has been examined in the fields of criminology and sociology, research in marketing has been lacking to date, despite being highly relevant to the study of donation behavior. Second, we contribute to the prosociality literature by providing further insight into the complex relationship between negative emotion and giving. Although the use of negative emotion has been a long-held strategy of charities, knowing whether and when specific negative emotions are effective at driving donations remains unclear. Our research brings clarity to this important issue in examining two of the negative emotions most commonly experienced in response to various charitable causes—sadness and anger—and finding that each can motivate donations when the charity is in alignment with the unique motives each emotion evokes.

In demonstrating that the efficacy of a charity's donation appeal varies depending on its orientation and how consumers are feeling, our work also has two major substantive implications for managers of charitable organizations in the marketing communications and social media spaces. First, in terms of marketing communications, managers should try to craft donation appeals that "match" on their emotional appeal and orientation of their cause wherever possible (e.g., highlighting the sadness that homelessness evokes and what the charity is doing to treat victims of this cause). Second, with regards to social media, managers should actively keep an "emotional pulse" on consumers based on current events and tailor their messages accordingly (but tactfully) when appropriate (e.g., societal anger following news of school gun violence and highlighting what your charity is doing to prevent future tragedies).

In 2021, Americans donated $484.8 billion to more than 1.54 million charitable organizations in the United States (Giving USA 2022). The causes that these charities advocate for are important yet wide-ranging, including animal rights, child protection, civil rights/social justice, environmental advocacy/climate change, gun violence, food availability, housing equity, and physical/mental health, to name a few (National Philanthropic Trust 2016). Across these different domains, charities can either orient themselves towards focusing on the treatment or prevention of their cause. What factors determine when a treatment versus prevention orientation is advantageous for charities in soliciting support from prospective donors? To date, the answer to this research question remains unclear.

The current research sought to shed light on this issue by looking at negative emotion as one such factor that could determine when treatment versus prevention is favored. Specifically, we chose to look at sadness and anger, two negative emotions that are commonly experienced in response to the issues that charities advocate for. We hypothesize that sadness will be effective at garnering donations when an appeal emphasizes the *treatment* of their charitable cause. This effect is expected to occur because sadness instantiates a need for social belonging and to foster social bonds with others, which can be fulfilled by donating to a treatment-oriented charity. Conversely, we hypothesize that anger will be effective at encouraging donations when an appeal emphasizes the *prevention* of their charitable cause. This effect is expected to occur because anger instantiates a need for correcting injustice and righting what has been made wrong, which can be fulfilled by donating to a prevention-oriented charity. Thus, our conceptualization is based on the notion that charities are most likely to optimize donation behavior depending on (1) the orientation emphasized by a charity in their donation appeal and (2) the specific negative emotion experienced by donors.

Theoretical Development

The distinction between treatment and prevention is not new. Having originated within the medical literature, the focus on treatment versus prevention has been a longtime focal point in public policy discussions, with prior research pointing out the relationship between the astronomical costs in U.S. healthcare spending and the disproportionate emphasis on treatment over prevention (Faust and Menzel 2011; National Center for Health Statistics 2016). More recently, criminology research has examined how the treatment versus prevention distinction affects societal outcomes in our criminal justice system (Cohan et al. 2006).

However, the treatment versus prevention distinction is also highly relevant within the context of charitable organizations and the manner in which they frame their organizational efforts towards their charitable cause. To illustrate, consider the American Cancer Society (ACS). On the one hand, many ACS programs are geared towards providing support groups and financial assistance to individuals diagnosed with cancer. Based on the goals of these programs, the ACS could be interpreted as a treatment-oriented organization, as these actions are geared towards helping people already impacted by the disease cope with the consequences of cancer. On the other hand, the ACS also has programs geared towards providing educational outreach and supporting cancer prevention research. A focus on these programs would lead to a perception that the ACS is a prevention-oriented organization, because these actions are oriented towards identifying and addressing the underlying antecedents of cancer. While there are merits to charities being treatment-oriented and prevention-oriented, it remains unknown under what

conditions it may be in their best interests for emphasizing one over the other for the purposes of soliciting donations from consumers.

Here, we contend that negative emotion is one relevant factor to consider in determining when a donation appeal emphasizing treatment versus prevention will be favored. An extensive body of research has documented the prominent role of emotion in guiding a consumer's decision of whether or not to donate to a charitable organization (Bagozzi and Moore 1994; Batson 1990; Camber Collective 2015). Nevertheless, the literature lacks a complete picture as to when specific negative emotions are most effective at garnering donations (Andrade and Cohen 2007; Fisher et al. 2008). In the present research, we look at sadness and anger as highly relevant emotions for examining the efficacy of treatment- and prevention-oriented appeals, as both emotions have been shown to be evoked in response to many of the charitable causes in our society. For instance, a wave of sadness following the Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade* led to a rise in donations for charities focused on abortion rights (NPR 2022). Conversely, anger following the police killing of George Floyd fueled an outpouring of support for charities focused on police reform (ACLU 2021). Our theorizing as to when sadness versus anger will be most effective at encouraging donations is based on functionalism and the notion that emotions activate emotion-specific needs which guide subsequent consumer behavior (Lazarus 1991).

In the case of sadness, we predict that charities using a treatment-oriented donation appeal will be more effective at soliciting donations. The reason being that sadness is a negative emotion defined by a sense of loss, such as the death of a loved one or a breakup with a significant other (Garg and Lerner 2013; Smith and Ellsworth 1985). Subsequently, sadness elicits a need for social belonging and has been shown to facilitate sympathy towards others (Barraza and Zak 2009). When a charity is oriented towards treatment, the negative

consequences of the cause it supports have already been realized, and the objective is to minimize the harm to those who have been affected. As such, a treatment orientation highlights behavior geared towards connection, because the focus is on tending to those who have been harmed (i.e., aiding victims). Thus, a treatment orientation is ideally suited for fulfilling the social belonging need brought on by sadness.

In the case of anger, we predict that charities using a prevention-oriented donation appeal will be more effective at soliciting donations. Our reasoning is based on anger being defined by the failure to obtain a desired outcome due to the actions of others or external forces (Polman and Ruttan 2012; Smith and Ellsworth 1985). Consequently, anger elicits a need for correcting injustice and empowers consumers to take corrective action in order to resolve problematic situations (Frijda 2005). When a charity is oriented towards prevention, it highlights the risk of a future wrongdoing to susceptible parties, and the objective is to stop the issue from coming to fruition. As such, a prevention orientation stresses corrective behavior, because the focus is on addressing and eliminating problems before they can manifest (i.e., its emphasis is on stopping victimization before it occurs). Thus, a prevention orientation is ideally suited for fulfilling the need to correct injustice brought on by anger.

Five studies test our theorizing. The Table provides an overview of our empirical package, where we examine the joint effect of donation appeal and emotion on donations across a variety of charitable causes and through the use of actual and hypothetical donation behavior. Additionally, our findings shed light on the psychological mechanisms driving these effects, using both measurement-of-mediation and moderation-of-process approaches.

Study 1

Study 1 tested our hypotheses in a field study context. Contributions for the Climate Fund—a charitable organization focused on issues related to climate change—were collected using donation boxes. Different versions of solicitation signs displayed next to the donation boxes were used to manipulate participants' emotional state and the organization's emphasis on treatment versus prevention.

Design and procedure. Study 1 used a 2 (donors' emotional state: sadness vs. anger) x 2 (donation orientation: treatment vs. prevention) between-subjects design, resulting in four conditions. Participants were those who anonymously put money in any of four donation boxes located throughout a university campus. Each donation box had an opening that bills and/or coins could be inserted. Donation boxes were also opaque so that participants would not be influenced by the presence (or absence) of prior contributions. Solicitation signs featured an appeal from the Climate Fund, warning of the repercussions of global warming. Depending on condition, the solicitation sign positioned the Climate Fund as either treatment-oriented or prevention-oriented, and either used a sadness or anger emotional appeal (see Figure for stimuli). Each donation box was put out during normal business hours and donations were collected at the end of each day and recorded. A total of 160 observations were recorded (five observational periods per week*eight weeks*four locations), resulting in 40 per condition.

Results. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the amount donated revealed a significant interaction between the donors' emotional state and donation orientation factors ($F(1, 156) = 9.82$, $p = .002$). When donors were encouraged to be sad, the treatment orientation resulted in higher daily contributions ($M = 22.03$ cents) than the prevention orientation ($M = 2.73$ cents; $F(1, 156) = 3.98$, $p = .047$). Conversely, when donors were encouraged to be angry, the

prevention orientation resulted in higher daily contributions (M = 30.08 cents) than the treatment orientation (M = 6.50 cents; $F(1, 156) = 5.94$, $p = .015$).

Study 2

In Study 2, we sought to enhance the generalizability of our findings by soliciting donations for a different charitable organization in the medical domain. Specifically, we chose to use the Histiocytosis Association, a real organization focused on a serious and potentially life-threatening health condition related to a group of diseases caused by the over-production of white blood cells. As in Study 1, participants were solicited for real donations, and donation appeals were purposefully designed to manipulate participants' emotional state (sadness vs. anger) and the charitable organization's orientation (treatment vs. prevention).

Participants, design, and procedure. One hundred and thirty-five undergraduate students (39% female, M_{Age} = 19.71) participated in exchange for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions in a 3 (donors' emotional state: neutral, sadness, anger) x 2 (donation orientation: treatment vs. prevention) between-subjects design.

At the beginning of the session, each participant was given four $1 bills and told that the money was a token of appreciation for his or her time. Approximately 30 minutes later, each participant was instructed to read a description of the Histiocytosis Association. Participants were then shown information about a victim suffering from malignant histiocytosis. Following prior research on emotional contagion (Scherer and Ceschi 2000), the victim's facial expression and account of the disease were used to manipulate donors' emotional state.

After receiving information about the victim, participants were provided with a donation solicitation from the Histiocytosis Association. In the treatment (prevention) condition, the Histiocytosis Association was presented as providing life-saving treatment and care to improve the well-being of victims who have contracted malignant histiocytosis (sponsoring medical research that would ultimately prevent malignant histiocytosis from claiming new victims). Participants wishing to donate to the Histiocytosis Association were instructed to place their donation in a white envelope marked "Donation" and hand it to a lab administrator. The amount donated (which ranged from $0 to $4) served as our dependent measure of donation behavior.

Results. An ANOVA on the amount donated revealed a significant interaction between the donors' emotional state and donation orientation factors ($F(2, 129) = 5.12$, $p = .007$). Participants in the sadness condition donated more money when the solicitation emphasized a treatment orientation (M = $2.50, $SD = 1.68$) than when the solicitation emphasized a prevention orientation (M = $1.18, $SD = 1.51$; $F(1, 129) = 4.02$, $p = .047$). By contrast, participants in the anger condition donated more money when the solicitation emphasized a prevention orientation (M = $1.71, $SD = 1.99$) than when the solicitation emphasized a treatment orientation (M = $0.76, $SD = 1.36$; $F(1, 129) = 6.13$, $p = .014$). In the neutral condition, the amount donated by participants was similar regardless of whether the solicitation featured a prevention (M = $0.96, $SD = 1.55$) or a treatment orientation (M = $1.21, $SD = 1.78$; $F < 1$).

Study 3

Study 3 was designed to examine the proposed psychological mechanisms driving the interactive effect of a donor's emotional state and donation orientation on donations.

Specifically, when donors are sad (angry), the beneficial effect of a treatment (prevention) orientation on donation behavior is hypothesized to be driven by the donor's need for social belonging (correcting injustice).

Participants, design, and procedure. One hundred and forty-one undergraduate students (36% female, $M_{\text{Age}} = 20.62$) participated in exchange for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2 (donors' emotional state: sadness vs. anger) x 2 (donation orientation: treatment vs. prevention) between-subjects design.

The procedure was nearly identical to that of Study 2 but with two exceptions. First, at the point in which participants were given the opportunity to donate, they were told they would have a one-in-ten chance of winning $4 and asked to report what they would like to do with the money if selected as a winner. They could decide to keep the entire $4 or to donate a portion of their winnings to the Histiocytosis Association. Amount donated ($0 to $4) served as our partially consequential dependent measure of donation behavior. Second, after indicating their donation amount, participants responded to potential mediating questions using 7-point scales (1 = Not at all, 7 = A great deal). To assess whether donation behavior was driven by the need for social belonging, participants were asked to think back to their donation decision and indicate, "To what extent does your donation to this charity allow you feel closer to others?" To assess the need for correcting injustice, participants were asked to think back and answer the following question, "How much was your donation decision driven by a desire to make a difference and right a wrong?"

Results. An ANOVA on the amount donated revealed a significant interaction between the donors' emotional state and donation orientation factors ($F(1, 137) = 11.44$, $p < .001$). As predicted, participants in the sadness condition donated more money when the solicitation

emphasized a treatment orientation (*M* = $3.13, *SD* = 1.32) than when the solicitation emphasized a prevention orientation (*M* = $2.41, *SD* = 1.64; $F(1, 137) = 4.49$, $p = .035$). By contrast, participants in the anger condition donated more money when the solicitation emphasized a prevention orientation (*M* = $3.13, *SD* = 1.33) than when the solicitation emphasized a treatment orientation (*M* = $2.13, *SD* = 1.66; $F(1, 137) = 6.97$, $p = .009$).

When sadness was experienced, we predicted that the need for social belonging would mediate the effect of a treatment (vs. prevention) orientation on donation amount but not the need for correcting injustice. When anger was experienced, we predicted the need for correcting injustice would mediate the effect of a prevention (vs. treatment) orientation on donation amount but not the need for social belonging. We tested these predictions using PROCESS model 8 (Hayes 2022), whereby the 95% confidence intervals (CIs) used to generate each indirect effect were performed at 5,000 bootstrap samples. When sadness was experienced, the path from donation orientation to donation amount through the need for social belonging (indirect effect) was significant (95% CI, -.38 to -.01), while the path through the need for correcting injustice was not (95% CI, -.32 to .16). When anger was experienced, the path from donation orientation to donation amount through the need for correcting injustice (indirect effect) was significant (95% CI, .01 to .71), while the path through the need for social belonging was not (95% CI, -.07 to .27).

Study 4

Study 4 altered whether the need for social belonging was addressed or not prior to soliciting a donation in order to show that this need drives the effect of sadness on donation

behavior in response to a treatment-oriented appeal. To do this, we drew from research showing that reminders of people's valued social relationships (i.e., friends, family, and community) help people feel fulfilled in belonging with others (Cavanaugh 2014). Thus, we reasoned that if people who were sad were reminded of their currently-held social relationships, their need for belonging with others would be addressed and their motivation to donate to treatment-oriented organizations would cease.

Participants, design, and procedure. Three hundred and one undergraduate students (61% female, $M_{\text{Age}} = 20.32$) participated in exchange for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of twelve conditions in a 2 (need for social belonging: control vs. addressed) x 3 (donors' emotional state: neutral, sadness, anger) x 2 (donation orientation: treatment vs. prevention) between-subjects design.

Participants first completed a video task in which they watched a video that either evoked sadness, anger, or no emotion. Next, participants in the need for social belonging addressed condition were asked to write about an important relationship they have as a result of their continued commitment to it. Participants in the control condition did not complete this task. Afterwards, participants were presented with a charity called Project No Isiolo, a fictional organization purported to assist those who have contracted the mosquito-derived Isiolo fever. The organization was either depicted as providing medical treatment to victims who have contracted this disease (treatment-orientation) or helping to prevent the spread of Isiolo fever (prevention-orientation). Participants were then asked to estimate their willingness to donate using an 11-point scale (0 = $0, 10 = $10).

Results. An ANOVA on the willingness to donate measure revealed a significant three-way interaction of the need for social belonging, donors' emotional state, and solicitation

orientation factors ($F(2, 289) = 3.26$, $p = .039$). In the control condition, the analysis revealed an interaction between the donors' emotional state and donation orientation factors ($F(2, 289) = 5.55$, $p = .004$). The pattern of results mirrored that of prior studies. In the need for social belonging addressed condition, a nonsignificant interaction emerged, as participants in the sadness condition no longer indicated a greater willingness to donate when the solicitation emphasized a treatment (vs. prevention) orientation.

Study 5

Study 5 altered whether the need for correcting injustice was addressed or not prior to soliciting a donation in order to show that this need drives the effect of anger on donation behavior in response to a prevention-oriented appeal. If this is so, then the positive effect of anger on donation behavior should be attenuated when the need for correcting injustice is met. We tested this possibility in study 5.

Participants, design, and procedure. Three hundred and two undergraduate students (34% female, $M_{\text{Age}} = 20.61$) participated in exchange for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of twelve conditions in a 2 (need for correcting injustice: control vs. addressed) x 3 (donors' emotional state: neutral, sadness, anger) x 2 (donation orientation: treatment vs. prevention) between-subjects design.

The procedure, stimuli, and measures mirrored that of Study 4, but with one exception to the writing task portion. In the need for correcting injustice addressed condition, participants were told that the university was looking to get student feedback on current problems faced by the university. Participants were instructed to identify a major problem at their university. Next,

participants were given an opportunity to write an open-letter to the President of their university containing possible solutions to the problem they identified. Our expectation was that this task would fulfill the underlying need made active when anger is experienced. Participants in the control condition did not complete this writing task.

Results. An ANOVA on the willingness to donate measure revealed a significant three-way interaction of the need for correcting injustice, donors' emotional state, and donation orientation factors ($F(2, 290) = 3.15$, $p = .044$). In the control condition, the analysis revealed an interaction between the donors' emotional state and solicitation orientation factors ($F(2, 290) = 6.38$, $p = .001$). The pattern of results mirrored that of prior studies. In the need for correcting injustice addressed condition, a nonsignificant interaction emerged, as participants in the anger condition no longer indicated a greater willingness to donate when the solicitation emphasized a prevention (vs. treatment) orientation.

Discussion

Across five studies, we show that sadness encourages donations when a charity uses a treatment-oriented appeal (i.e., what is being done to assist with the consequences of victimization), whereas anger encourages donations when a charity uses a prevention-oriented appeal (i.e., what is being done to stop victimization from occurring). Our work contributes to the prosociality literature by highlighting the importance of the treatment versus prevention distinction in understanding donation behavior. Furthermore, our findings provide a more complete understanding into the relationship between negative emotion and giving. Finally, our

findings offer important substantive implications for practitioners involved in the marketing communication efforts of charitable organizations.

Table. Overview of Studies

Study	Participants	Design	Charitable cause domain	Dependnent variable	Findings
1	Undergraduate students and local community	2 (donors' emotional state: sadness vs. anger) x 2 (donation orientation: treatment vs. prevention) between-subjects design	Climate change	The amount of actual money participants left in donation boxes	•Donation amount was greater when the donation box featured a (1) sadness emotional appeal and treatment orientation and (2) anger emotional appeal and prevention orientation
2	Undergraduate students	3 (donors' emotional state: neutral, sadness, anger) x 2 (donation orientation: treatment vs. prevention) between-subjects design	Medical disease (Histiocytosis)	Actual dollar amount participants left in an envelope at the lab	•Donation amount was greater when participants were sad (angry) and a treatment (prevention) orientation was used
3	Undergraduate students	2 (donors' emotional state: sadness vs. anger) x 2 (donation orientation: treatment vs. prevention) between-subjects design	Medical disease (Histiocytosis)	Potential dollar amount participants would be willing to donate (partially consequential)	•Donation amount was greater when participants were sad (angry) and a treatment (prevention) orientation was used •Moderated mediation analyses revealed that the effect of donation orientation on donations was moderated by emotional state (i.e., sadness vs. anger) and mediated by need state (i.e., need for belonging vs. correcting injustice)
4	Undergraduate students	2 (need for social belonging: control vs. addressed) x 3 (donors' emotional state: neutral, anger, sadness) x 2 (donation orientation: prevention vs. treatment) between-subjects design	Medical disease (mosquito-derived, life-threatening fever)	Hypothetical willingness to donate to the charitable cause	•When no need for social belonging was addressed (control), the main findings in Study 2 were replicated •When the need for social belonging was addressed, the beneficial effect of a treatment orientation with sadness on donations was attenuated
5	Undergraduate students	2 (need for correcting injustice: control vs. addressed) x 3 (donors' emotional state: neutral, anger, sadness) x 2 (donation orientation: prevention vs. treatment) between-subjects design	Medical disease (mosquito-derived, life-threatening fever)	Hypothetical willingness to donate to the charitable cause	•When no need for correcting injustice was addressed (control), the main findings in Study 2 were replicated •When the need for correcting injustice was addressed, the beneficial effect of a prevention orientation with anger on donations was attenuated

Figure. Study 1 Stimuli.

Treatment Condition. **Bold text** refers to content specific to the anger condition, *italicized text* refers to content specific to the sadness condition:

Climate Fund

TACKLING THE CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The worst repercussions of global warming, including sea-level rise, widespread droughts, and mass extinction of vulnerable species, could soon become reality for much of the world's population. The increasing visibility of climate change is taking a toll on mental health, especially among young people increasingly **aggravated** *depressed* by the situation.

> "All this terrible stuff can happen by 2030, and I won't even be 30 years old. It makes me so **mad** *sad*." – Cindy Morrison, 17, Student

> "It's really **frustrating** *disappointing*. We were born into a doomed world." – Matt Canavan, 23, Student

According to experts, this **anger** *sadness* is entirely appropriate.

> "People should be **furious** *distressed*. Stuff we were warning people about 20 years ago is now coming to fruition, and the consequences will grow year by year." – Dr. Flannery, 63, Mammalogist

We must adapt to climate change. Adaptation strategies include:

- using scarce water resources more efficiently
- adapting building codes to future climate conditions and extreme weather events
- building flood defenses and raising the levels of dikes
- developing drought-tolerant crops
- choosing tree species and forestry practices less vulnerable to storms and fires
- setting aside land corridors to help species migrate

The Climate Fund is a North American based charity that works in partnership with other NGOs and Academia to advocate for climate change adaptation around the world. Help us keep the negative effects of climate change on our world to a minimum.

Donate today!

Prevention Condition. **Bold text** refers to content specific to the anger condition, *italicized text* refers to content specific to the sadness condition:

Climate Fund

TACKLING THE CAUSES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The worst repercussions of global warming, including sea-level rise, widespread droughts, and mass extinction of vulnerable species, could soon become reality for much of the world's population. The increasing visibility of climate change is taking a toll on mental health, especially among young people increasingly **aggravated** *depressed* by the situation.

> "All this terrible stuff can happen by 2030, and I won't even be 30 years old. It makes me so **mad** *sad*." – Cindy Morrison, 17, Student

> "It's really **frustrating** *disappointing*. We were born into a doomed world." – Matt Canavan, 23, Student

According to experts, this **anger** *sadness* is entirely appropriate.

> "People should be **furious** *distressed*. Stuff we were warning people about 20 years ago is now coming to fruition, and the consequences will grow year by year." – Dr. Flannery, 63, Mammalogist

We must prevent additional climate change. Mitigation strategies include:

- switching to low-carbon energy sources such as wind, solar, and geothermal
- retrofitting buildings to reduce emissions from heating, cooling, and lighting
- helping cities develop more sustainable transit systems and investing in electric vehicles and biofuels
- planting forests to remove excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere
- supporting local agriculture producers who employ sustainable farming practices
- reducing food waste

The Climate Fund is a North American based charity that works in partnership with other NGOs and academia to advocate for climate change prevention around the world. Help us stop climate change and its negative effects on our world.

Donate today!

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WHAT MAKES PRODUCT DEFECTS TOXIC?

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Keywords: Product Defect, Complaining, Boycotting, Attribution Theory

Description: This study aims to generate insights into how characteristics of product defects (i.e., severity of the defect, hard vs. soft defect and product age when the defect occurs) trigger constructive customer reactions such as complaining and destructive customer reactions such as boycotting mediated through customer attributions of responsibility and stability.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Complaints contain concrete descriptions of product quality problems, unfulfilled customer expectations and furnish valuable information for rectifying product defects and improving production processes. Customers who encounter product defects may or may not complain about them; worse, they may also engage in destructive behavior, such as boycotting. If defect characteristics are related to complaining, this would imply that certain defect types might be overreported, while others might be underreported. A biased picture of the field quality of products would result for the product manufacturer. Furthermore, if defect characteristics increasing boycotting are different from those increasing complaining then product defects, which are highly damaging to customer relationship might be underreported. In both cases would complaint data be a seriously biased sensor for the customer's experienced quality of products (Das Guru and Paulssen, 2020). Consequently, the manufacturer's ability to learn from customer complaints and improve its production processes and reap the associated financial benefits would be hampered (Johnston, 2001; Johnston and Mehra, 2002; Uusitalo et al., 2008). This study investigates how different defect characteristics (severity, hard versus soft defects, and when in the ownership cycle

the defect occurs) trigger destructive (i.e. boycotting) or constructive (i.e. complaining) customer reactions, through their impact on customer attributions.

Method and Data

The data for conducting this study was collected in four waves over a one-year time period in collaboration with an international panel provider, Dynata (formerly ResearchNow). Respondents selected to participate in this research were U.S. customers of five heterogeneous durable product categories, namely: cars (24%), smartphones (25%), lawnmowers (17%), laptops (17%), and televisions (17%). The survey was identical across product categories. Respondents qualified for the survey only if they have used the respective product on a regular basis for at least six months in order to ensure sufficient usage experience (Guru and Paulssen, 2020).

In the first wave (T1) respondents were asked how many defects they had encountered with their product prior to the study. In T2, T3 and T4, respondents were asked whether they had experienced any defects since the last survey. If more than one defect has been experienced, since the previous wave, respondents were asked in each wave (i.e., T2, T3 and T4) to answer defect-related questions based on the most severe defect they have experienced. The measures for the constructs in the study were taken from established scales in the literature and in some cases adapted to the context of durable goods.

Summary of Findings

First, severe defects trigger both constructive and destructive responses (complaining and boycotting respectively) through stability and responsibility attributions. Most importantly, the presence of severe defects is more likely to drive destructive reactions (boycotting) than constructive reactions (complaining). Second, the most prevalent defects reported by respondents are soft defects[1] but the proportion of filed complaints for soft defects (21%) is lower than that for hard defects (32%). Therefore the most prevalent defect type is more likely to go under the radar of the manufacturer. Third, defects occurring late in the ownership cycle are attributed to a lesser degree of manufacturer responsibility. The lower likelihood of responsibility attributions decreases

[1] Almost one in two (46%) defects reported during the study were soft defects (392 out of 857), whereas only 36% were classified as hard defects.

the likelihood of taking active actions such as complaining or boycotting. Fourth, prior experience with product defects increases the likelihood of attributing stable causes to a more recent defect and of attributing higher responsibility to the manufacturer. In addition, we found prior experiences with defect(s) prompt customers to respond actively by complaining and/or boycotting. Interestingly, the cumulative effect of prior defect experience is associated with more destructive than constructive reactions.

Statement of Key Contributions

The first contribution of the present study is to show that defect characteristics that determine destructive reactions such as boycotting differ or have different impacts from those that determine complaining. Among others our model explains why customers complain less about soft defects than hard defects, why complaining decreases as products age, and why prior defect experience has negative consequences for product manufacturers. To the best of our knowledge, the effect of defect characteristics on causal attributions and subsequent constructive and destructive customer reactions has not been investigated in prior literature. Thereby, our research adds to an important, yet under-investigated research field.

The second contribution of this study is to investigate customer actual complaining behavior in a longitudinal field study and not as in the majority of studies as a complaining intention in vignette-based studies (e.g. Voorhees et al., 2006). This study design allows us to reliably quantify the extent of non-complaining for defects of durable products. About 75% of defects across all five product categories are not reported. Certain defect types are systematically underreported, while others are comparatively overreported. Therefore, product managers must be aware of the pitfalls of relying on customer complaints as a sensor for the field quality of products.

References are available upon request.

WHEN DOES PAST PERFORMANCE CONTINUE? DEVIATIONS FROM SCHEDULE REGULARITY AND MOMENTUM

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Keywords: Prediction, judgment, momentum, skill

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Many decisions are based on the prediction whether success will continue. When people predict an area will continue to be stable and safe, they relocate to that area. When people predict the stock or real estate market will continue to be blooming, they invest in said markets. How do people predict whether success will continue?

There are multiple possibilities within marketing for when and why people believe a prior action or pattern will continue. In some circumstances, merely bringing up the idea of continuing the behavior. For example, Chandon et al. (2011) report how peoples' behavior is more likely to continue following making a prediction. Alternatively, people may use typical versus atypical information or events depending on how far away the event is (Henderson et al. 2006).

One prior literature that might speak to the question concerns people's belief in momentum, or "hot hand" in sports, sheds lights on this question (Gilovich et al. 1985). Based on Bayesian principles, people's prediction can be reasonably affected by their knowledge of the performance history (streak length: Altmann and Burns 2005; Rabin and Vayanos 2010; initial success: Iso-Ahola and Dotson 2014) and the nature of the performance (task's dependence on skill: Ayton and Fischer 2004; Gilden and Wilson 1995; performer's intentionality: Caruso et al. 2010; Oskarsson et al. 2009).

Nevertheless, there remains future possibilities to study when and why people expect a streak to continue. One possibility is that their prediction reflects the mere reality (Miller and Sanjurjo 2018). That is, people are well-calibrated to what is happening and make guesses rooted in an actual underlying statistical distribution. However, we suspect people do perceive momentum in some way.

To study this question, we control normative factors and compare the scenario in which the performer proceeds as usual and the alternative scenario in which he takes time off. (Notably, we compare these two conditions as it is not possible to compare a condition in which an actor takes no further actions.) Specifically, we propose: Observers believe that proceeding as usual fosters skill improvement and extends the streak; by contrast, deviating from a schedule (e.g., taking time off) undermines skill improvement necessary to sustain the streak. We further propose that this belief mechanism is based on the behavioral learning literature. In operant conditioning, positive outcomes (i.e., hits) are positive reinforcements, and regular, fixed-ratio schedules reinforce skills more effectively than irregular, varied-ratio ones (Ferster and Skinner 1957; Skinner 1969). Six preregistered experiments examined our propositions.

Study 1 (aspredicted #84450, N = 430, average age = 36.14, 49.53% female, sample = Prolific) demonstrated the basic phenomenon and provided suggestive evidence of the process. Participants read about a character named George who was shooting a basketball, and at shots 3, 4, and 5, they predicted whether George continued the streak or not. After each shot, they found out George made the shot and thus had a streak (Carlson and Shu 2007). Then, on shot 6, participants were randomly assigned: Proceed-as-Usual ("George continues shooting with his usual procedure and, at last, he shoots"), a Proceed-as-Usual condition without this text, and a Deviation condition ("Before taking his sixth throw, George takes a few minutes off for a

break.”) and made a prediction about whether George would continue his streak or not (“What do you think will happen on his sixth throw”). That is, we had two “Control” conditions in which George did not deviate compared against a condition in which he deviated. They further indicated whether they thought George’s skill was increasing, unchanged, or decreasing relative to before (“You’d estimate on Throw #6, George’s skill to be…” Much worse than before = 1, About the same as before = 4, Much better than before = 7). Relative to participants’ estimates of whether George would continue the streak on the sixth shot in the two proceed-as-usual conditions (53.85%, 56.34%), participants in the deviation condition thought George was less likely to continue his streak (32.41%; zs > 3.6, ps < .001). Further, in the two control conditions, George’s estimated skill was thought to be increasing in the two proceed-as-usual conditions but not in the deviation condition; the two control conditions also had heightened skill perceptions relative to the deviation condition (ts > 6, ps < .001). Finally, we observed mediation of the prediction through beliefs about George’s skill. This study provides evidence consistent with the predictions with a binary outcome. We replicated this result in several other preregistered replications comparing the deviation condition against the control condition, and in pilot studies in which the skill question was worded differently.

In Study 2 (aspredicted #90166, N = 502, average age = 40.82, 59.76% female, sample = Amazon Mechanical Turk), we replicated the basic effect in a context in which a character, David, sells rainbow cotton candy. Further, in this context, participants used a continuous prediction outcome regarding David’s performance (in $) in two between-subjects conditions. Participants saw David’s performance (as a set of random numbers intended to be normal between 52 and 70) on Days 1, 3, 5, and 7; David was stated to take Days 2, 4, 6, and 8 off. Then, on the critical day, participants either saw David Proceed-as-Usual (i.e., return on Day #9)

or Deviate (i.e., return on Day #10) and predicted how well David would do ("How much money, in $, do you predict David's business will make on Day #9/10?") in addition to making a similar skill rating as in Study 1 ("You'd estimate, on Day #9/10, David's skill to be…"). To assess whether the deviation also had an impact on factors unrelated to skill, we also had participants indicate the extent to which they had thought factors unrelated to skill (e.g., weather) had changed, and the extent to which they believed the David's performance relied on skill. Further, we also incentivized predictions for those with predictions in the 10% closest to the mean of the distribution from which random numbers were drawn. We saw participants predict better performance for David in terms of the critical day's outcome ($t = 3.77$, $p < .001$) and his estimated skill ($t = 3.27$, $p = .0011$), and did not observe any differences between the two conditions on beliefs about whether the deviation influenced beliefs about changes in non-skill factors (e.g., weather; $t = 1.39$, $p = .164$) or the task's dependence on skill ($t = -1.17$, $p = .242$). Only skill change mediated the outcome in a simultaneous mediation with non-skill factors and dependence on skill. The results were also robust to controlling for the random numbers participants saw on Days 1, 3, 5, and 7, and for controlling participants' estimates on previous days. Thus, the result from Study 1 replicated with a continuous measure and when predictions were incentivized.

In Study 3 (aspredicted #87843, N = 700, average age = 20.98, 42.86% female; sample = behavioral laboratory), we tested the David context again to see whether, instead of "slowing down" with a break, whether "speeding up" would bolster predictive performance with a more continuous performance measure. This alternative condition enabled a test of whether a metaphor of momentum from physics, in which momentum depends on mass and velocity, aptly describes the results, as in other conditions the deviation involved slowing down, which would

reduce velocity and therefore momentum. We also examined another counterfactual condition in which David returns to work on his usual schedule on Day #11 instead of Day #9 to test whether resuming his schedule would increase David's perceived chances of doing well. In this study, following David's most recent day (Day #7), participants were randomly assigned to read that David returned to run his shop on Day #8 (Speed Up), returned on his usual Day #9 (Proceed-as-Usual), returned a day later than usual on Day #10 (Deviation), or returned two days later than usual on Day #11. We again found that people predicted David to do worse when returning at a different time relative to usual on Days #8 ($t = 1.68$, $p = .093$), 10 ($t = 3.50$, $p < .001$) or 11 ($t = 2.41$, $p = .016$) relative to performance on Day #9; the results were robust to nonparametric tests. This prediction pattern operated through expected skill improvement. We also found that when asked about how regular David's schedule was ("David's business schedule appears…" 1 = Not regular at all, 7 = Very Regular), participants thought David's schedule was most regular on Day #9 but lower on other days. In sum, "speeding up" did not improve David's performance as a physics metaphor for momentum would suggest, and returning to an original schedule following a deviation also did not ameliorate the predicted dip in performance.

Study 4 (aspredicted #83230, N = 472, average age = 42.08, 53.60% female, sample = Amazon Mechanical Turk) tested whether the prior results rely on any fixed-ratio schedule or vary as a function of how frequently the performer operates. That is, will performers who behave on a daily or weekly schedule be more likely to have a streak continue than those who operate on a monthly schedule? Or, is a deviation from any regular schedule sufficient to disrupt beliefs about the likelihood of streak continuity? Participants learned about a part-time bartender named Gal who had a shift once per week (High Frequency [Control]), once per month (Low Frequency [Control]), or a shift once per week but had to take a few weeks off such that her shift was a

month later on the critical shift (Varied Ratio). Participants made predictions about whether Gal would receive a performance bonus. Participants then rated Gal's skill and also indicated how regular her schedule was; participants in the high frequency and low frequency conditions did not differ in perceived regularity ($t = 0.35$, $p = .723$) but rated Gal's schedule as significantly more regular relative to the Varied Ratio condition (ts > 14.80, ps < .001). Consistent with independence from pace/ratio, 71.88% in the low frequency and 68.55% of the high frequency condition thought Gal would continue her streak (vs. 42.48% in the Varied Ratio condition; zs > 4.5, ps < .001), and the two control conditions did not differ from each other ($z = 0.65$, $p = .517$). Further, participants thought Gal's skill was improving in the two control conditions but not in the varied ratio condition; skill again mediated the results. These results suggest that people believe the performer has momentum while proceeding as usual, regardless of pace. Further, these results were replicated in other pilot studies in which instead of the text explaining the break or deviation, people see Gal's schedule merely saying Gal was off in a given week, suggesting that this may not merely be a demand effect.

Study 5 (aspredicted #92246, N = 747, average age = 38.07, 50.27% female, sample = Prolific), we examined whether this pattern was relative to the actions of others. That is, is a deviation harmful if others around an actor also take a break? In this study, participants read about a character named Reid who played Shanghai Mahjong. There were three conditions: Proceed as Usual ("Reid is dealt the next hand"), Deviation (where only Reid takes a break and others continued; "Before his next hand, Reid gets up from his chair and steps away from the table. His friends decide to keep playing a hand while he was away. After a few minutes, Reid returns to the table and is dealt the next hand"), and Everyone Break (where others take a break while Reid breaks; "Before his next hand, Reid gets up from his chair and steps away from the

table. His friends decide to stop playing and wait for him; they step away from the table as well. After a few minutes, everyone returns to the table, and Reid is dealt the next hand"). All participants predicted whether Reid would win his sixth hand ("What do you think will happen on Reid's next hand?") and skill beliefs ("You'd estimate, on Reid's most recent hand, Reid's skill to be…" Much worse than before = 1, About the same as before = 4, Much better than before = 7) in addition to regularity ("To what extent did Reid deviate from his regular pace?"). Participants thought Reid would do best with no deviation when he proceeded as usual (69.80%), then when everyone took a break (61.29%0, and worst when only he had a deviation (51.42%); the proceed-as-usual and deviation conditions differed on streak continuity predictions ($z = 4.14$, $p < .001$) and skill beliefs ($t = 7.74$, $p < .001$). Notably, Reid's game schedule was perceived to be most regular when he proceeded as usual relative to the break conditions (ts > 15, ps < .001). Therefore, the nature of the deviation matters.

Study 6 (aspredicted #70702, N = 646, average age = 41.81, 58.98% female, sample = Amazon Mechanical Turk) tested a boundary condition: a performer needs to be able to learn and improve. That is, participants should not predict a performer to be more likely to continue their streak relative to a deviation when the performer is fatigued and therefore unable to improve; we therefore employed a 2 (Proceed-as-Usual vs. Deviation) x 2 (Not Fatigued vs. Fatigued) between-subjects design. Participants read about a character named Kristen who had a streak of axe bullseyes and either did or did not take a break before the critical round ("Before her next throw, Kristen walks away from her axe lane and takes about ten minutes off to walk around. Then, she returns to the axe lane, steps forward to the line, and continues with her next throw."). To manipulate the perceptions of Kristen being fatigued, in some conditions, Kristen was stated to be getting tired ("Kristen is becoming tired after 17 throws."); in others, this text

was absent (a manipulation check on Kristen's energy level, "How energetic do you think Kristen is by Throw #18?" confirmed the manipulation was effective). When Kristen was not stated to be tired, relative to a deviation condition in which Kristen took some time off before the critical throw (43.48%), participants in the proceed-as-usual condition were more likely to predict Kristen would continue her streak (69.28%; $z = 4.55$, $p < .001$). However, we did not observe this difference when Kristen was fatigued (37.35% vs. 36.14%; $z = 0.23$, $p = .820$). Similarly, there was an interaction on skill perceptions: participants believed Kristen exhibited skill improvement when not fatigued and proceeding-as-usual, but not so in the fatigue conditions. Skill again mediated these results in a moderated mediation model. Study 6 thus found evidence consistent with the process when manipulating the mediator.

Several follow-up studies picked up further issues on the nature of the meaning of skill to participants and other boundary conditions. For example, a natural consideration might be whether the results would apply in contexts in which the actor is a professional and would have only slight possible skill change. In one preregistered replication (aspredicted #99103, N = 280, average age 25.31, 55.71% female, sample = behavioral laboratory), relative to participants who read about a deviation (50.70%), participants predicted a pro basketball player named George would be more likely to continue his streak if he proceeded as usual (62.32%; $z = 1.95$, $p = .051$), and that those two conditions differed on skill ($t = 3.17$, $p = .0017$), which was thought to be improving in the proceed-as-usual condition. We similarly also assessed, in another pilot study, what factors participants were considering during their skill ratings.

We also ruled out that the results may be due to a break serving as a "bracket." That is, people may treat the actions after a break or deviation as occurring in a separate series of events in which the probability of success "resets." In a pilot study, participants read about a character

named Anuj practicing hockey shots. In the "one set" condition, Anuj took a break or continued (between-subjects) after shooting five shots of a ten-shot set. In the "two set" condition, Anuj took a break or continued after shooting five shots of two five-shot sets. If bracketing explains the results, then the two-set condition should exhibit a muted result. However, inconsistent with the bracketing account, we observed the aforementioned results in both the one-set and two-set conditions.

In another pilot, we also indirectly address the extent to which the presence of a streak (or being amidst a streak) is critical to the present results. In another pilot study, participants read about Allie, who was competing in a chess tournament in which she could choose her schedule of play. Participants were asked whether they would recommend Allie play three preliminary games sequentially or with a break between one of the games. Most participants indicated Allie should take a break in prospect before any streak; another replication found similar results with more games. Future follow-up studies may examine how the nature of a task involving skill versus chance may moderate the results. In one such pilot study, the impact of a break was less for a task stated to be entirely based on chance.

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Extended Abstract

WHICH MOMENTS MATTER MOST? INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF TEMPORAL SEQUENCES ON GLOBAL EVALUATIONS OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

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Keywords: Customer experience, Global evaluations, Temporal sequences, Recency effects, Perceived control

Description: Five scenario experiments show that negative stimuli happening at the end of a customer experience (CE) have a disproportionate influence on global CE evaluations across different service contexts (recency effects); however, these effects disappear when stimuli are positive and hold only for individuals with a heightened sense of perceived control.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Customer experience (CE) often consists of a sequence of events that unfold over time, defined as a temporal sequence of CE (Bhargave and Montgomery 2013). Little is known about the effect of individual moments in the temporal sequence of CE, such as the beginning or the end of a CE, and the associated boundary conditions of such an effect on customers' global evaluations of the entire CE. Thus, this research investigates the circumstances under

which individual moments in the temporal sequence of CE have—and cease to have—a disproportionate effect on customers' global evaluations of these experiences.

Two literature streams from social psychology provide insights into the influence of individual moments on global evaluations: research on primacy effects and recency effects. Primacy effects occur when an initial stimulus or information shapes global evaluations, whereas recency effects imply a disproportionate influence of the last stimulus or information on subsequent evaluations (Biswas et al. 2010). Strong evidence exists for both effects (Hastie and Park 1986; Schreiber and Kahneman 2000), but which effects and under which circumstances matter more for customers' global CE evaluations remain unclear. This research explores two boundary conditions of the effect of individual moments on customers' global CE evaluations: stimulus valence and perceived control.

Method and Data

We conducted five scenario experiments in different service contexts: dining out and a first aid course. We used a between-subjects design across all studies. We hypothesized that a negative stimulus happening at the end of a CE has a more pronounced negative effect on customer-related outcomes than a negative stimulus happening at the beginning of a CE (recency effect). Further, we hypothesized that a recency effect is less likely to occur for a positive stimulus than a negative stimulus, and that global CE mediates the interactive effect of stimulus timing and stimulus valence on customer-related outcomes.

The results of Studies 1-3 support our conceptual model, while Study 4 manipulated individuals' situational control to directly investigate its role as a boundary condition for recency effects for the negative stimuli. Two-way ANOVA showed that stimulus timing and situational control had a marginally significant impact on product evaluation ($F(1, 387) = 3.479$, $p = .063$) and a significant impact on word of mouth (WOM) ($F(1, 387) = 4.879$, $p =$

.028). Simple effects showed that customer-related outcomes depended on the negative stimulus timing (recency effects) only in the high-control condition.

Summary of Findings

Across five studies conducted in different service contexts, we identify two important boundary conditions of the effect of individual moments on global CE evaluations: stimulus valence and perceived control. In Studies 1a and 1b, we find recency effects for the negative stimulus but not for the positive stimulus. In Study 2, we explicitly test the moderating role of stimulus valence on the effect of individual moments on global CE evaluations and observe a significant interaction between stimulus timing and stimulus valence. Specifically, while recency effects hold for the negative stimulus, these effects disappear for the positive stimulus. In line with our expectations, we find a significant moderated mediation—global CE mediates the impact of stimulus timing only for the negative stimulus.

Study 3 validates our findings from a dining-out context in the more utilitarian setting of a first aid course. In Study 4, we focus only on the negative stimulus and examine the role of perceived control more systematically by manipulating situational control. In line with the findings from Studies 2 and 3, the results of Study 4 support the idea that recency effects for the negative stimuli hold only for individuals with high perceived control.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research provides important contributions to marketing literature. First, we complement the scarce research on temporal sequences in a CE management context by identifying stimulus valence as a vital boundary condition of the recency effects in global CE evaluations. Our findings address calls to explore further the role of timing and valence in CE evaluations (De Keyser et al. 2020). Second, we show that heightened perceived control, both

as a stable characteristic and as a temporarily induced state, acts as an important boundary condition for the recency effects. This research is the first to explore the role of perceived control in the context of temporal sequences of CE.

Our findings can aid managerial decision-making regarding resource allocation. We show that while the timing of the negative incidents affects customer-related outcomes, timing of the positive incidents is not as important. Thus, managers should prioritize their resources to avoid or prevent failures, especially at the end of service encounters. If a failure does occur at the end of a CE sequence, managers should try to extend the encounter, thus changing the perceived end of a CE. Finally, managers can use linguistic interventions (Costello and Malkoc 2022) to temporarily reduce perceived control of their customers.

References are available upon request.

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME? DISSATISFIED CONSUMERS' REACTION TO SERVICE FAILURES INVOLVING THEIR FAVORITE BRAND

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Keywords: Consumer-brand identification; Brand shame; Service failure; Favorite brand

Description: This empirical research investigates the role of brand shame as a moderator between failure-induced customer dissatisfaction and brand anger as well as the influence of consumer-brand identification.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: How can one explain consumers' intensified negative brand reactions of consumers after self-relevant failures of their favorite brand and what is the role of brand shame and relational bonds as a boundary condition?

Method And Data: A scenario-based, online survey (n = 660) among consumers who have recently experienced a self-relevant service failure with their favorite brand was conducted. Confirmatory factor analysis ensured the reliability and validity of the measurement model. For testing the theorized moderated-mediation model, data was analyzed by means of regression analysis. The proposed model was tested against, among others, common method bias and alternative models. The findings were cross-validated with a scenario-based, online experiment (n = 1,616).

Summary of Findings: Results show that brand shame is a key mediator between customer dissatisfaction and brand anger when self-relevant, symbolic service failures happen. Moreover, consumer-brand identification intensifies these brand-detrimental effects. It is shown to influence the connection between consumers' inward- (i.e., brand shame) and the resulting outward-directed negative emotion about the favorite brand (i.e., brand anger), which is involved in the service failure.

Statement of Key Contribution: This research is the first to introduce the concept of brand shame to the literature on favorite brands. Furthermore, it shows that consumer-brand identification moderates the direct and indirect (via brand shame) unfavorable effects of failure-induced dissatisfaction on brand anger. This research adds insights to the investigation of the 'love-becomes-hate' effect arising after self-relevant failures involving consumers' most preferred brand.

References are available upon request.

WHY DO CONSUMERS COMPLAIN? AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF BRAND WARMTH IN THE AFTERMATH OF A PRODUCT-HARM INCIDENT

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Keywords: product-harm crisis, consumer complaining, brand warmth

Description: Following a product-harm incident, consumers are more likely to complain against a high (vs. low) warmth brand to solve the problem as opposed to retaliate against the brand.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Following a product-harm incident, how does a consumer's perception of the involved brand's warmth determine their complaining likelihood?

Method and Data

Study 1 uses observational data about consumer complaints of car safety incidents, submitted to the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Study 2—a psychological, vignette-based experiment—delves deeper into the association. Study 3—also a vignette-based experiment—replicates the findings from Study 2 and documents evidence consistent with our theorized mechanisms.

Summary of Findings

Using regression analysis on observational data, Study 1 suggests a positive association between a car brand's perceived warmth and the number of safety complaints it receives in a year. Study 2 (an experiment) shows that the complaining about a high (vs. low) warmth brand is motivated by problem-solving rather than retaliation. In short, the evidence suggests that brand warmth elicits greater complaining; however, this complaining is for a "good" reason. Study 3 (another experiment) reports that brand warmth boosts an aggrieved consumer's desire to help

the brand. This greater desire, in turn, amplifies their likelihood of complaining to solve the problem. In parallel, brand warmth suppresses the consumer's desire to protect other consumers, attenuating consumers' retaliatory complaining. A parallel mediation model documents that the first mechanism—desire to help the brand—explains 17% of the total effect, whereas the second mechanism—desire to protect other consumers—explains 15.5% of the total effect. Study 4 (a yet another experiment) reports that managers who solicit consumer feedback following a failure incident may acknowledge consumers' problem-solving motive and elevate consumer satisfaction.

Key Contributions

Our primary finding is that in the wake of product-harm incidents involving a brand's products, the brand's high (vs. low) warmth elicits consumer complaints, which are "good" for the involved brand because they are motivated by solving the problem as opposed to retaliating against the brand. This finding contributes to the literature streams on brand warmth. Given that literature has noted that consumers reward well-intentioned brands in the wake of product-harm crises by attributing the failure to external and unstable causes (Klein and Dawar 2004), traditional wisdom would dictate that consumers are less likely to complain against warm brands. Our research shows the opposite: that consumers complain more when a high warmth brand fails. However, differentiating between the underlying motives—problem-solving versus retaliation—we show that complaining against a warm brand is for positive reasons.

Second, our findings contribute to the literature on consumer complaining (Grégoire et al. 2019; Jung et al. 2017; Knox and van Oest 2014). Contributing to recent literature that shows that consumers do complain for positive reasons (Umashankar, Ward, and Dahl 2017), we uncover a complex phenomenon that leads to positive (vs. negative/retaliatory) complaining

against a warm brand: *that a warm brand elicits a desire to help the brand, while diminishing consumers' desire to protect other consumers.* By demonstrating these two contrasting mechanisms, our findings contribute to a better understanding of consumer complaining.

Our findings offer managers an actionable takeaway that can help boost consumer satisfaction after product-harm incidents. Specifically, Study 4 suggests that when managers solicit consumer feedback following a failure incident, they should acknowledge that consumers complain to solve the problem. This mere acknowledgment can arrest the drop in customer satisfaction following the failure incident.

References are available upon request.

Digital and Social Media Marketing

#THESTRUGGLEISREAL: MOMS, MEMES, AND COPING DURING COVID-19

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Keywords: Coping, COVID-19, Memes, Motherhood, Social Media, Maladaptive Consumption

Description: Through a memetic analysis, this study examines how mothers utilized memes during times of change (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic), and contributes a framework that proffers four coping strategies: Resolve, Recoup, Regress, and Resist.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Memes are an important digitally-mediated tool for communication, connection and expression. This study investigates the coping strategies exhibited by mothers during times of change (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic). The findings of this study, which emerged from a meme analysis, culminate in four coping categories: Resolve, Recoup, Regress, and Resist. This proposed framework extends the prior literature on coping mechanisms by identifying hybridized variations of emotion-focused, problem-focused, adaptive, and maladaptive coping strategies not accounted for in past research. The findings also provide evidence of an ambient form of communal coping that stands in contrast to higher involvement forms previously identified in the literature. These results provide meaningful contributions to the growing area of coping and consumer research.

Research Question

Through a memetic analysis of Instagram posts, where mothers create and share memes with specific hashtags (*e.g.* #mommemes, #motherhoodmemes, #momlife #parentingmemes), this study investigates: 1) What coping strategies were expressed by mothers through memes during the pandemic? 2) What are the different variations and relationships between problem-focused/emotion-focused and adaptive/maladaptive coping strategies? 3) How are social media memes different from previously identified communal coping strategies?

Method and Data

To examine the coping strategies mothers utilized during the pandemic, researchers analyzed “COVID-mom” social media memes. Data analysis derived from a random stratified

sample of 200 Instagram memes. Researchers found memes on Instagram using specific hashtags (*e.g.* #COVIDmom, #mommemes) chosen for their ability to communicate the motherhood experience and reveal coping mechanisms in an articulate manner. Researchers focused on memes posted between March 2020 to September 2020– a period when social distancing was mandated.

Coding categories followed prior models of meme analysis (Gal, Shifman, & Zohar 2016; Shifman, 2013), where researchers arranged memes according to their similarities and differences found in the memetic dimensions of form, stance, and content. First, the authors categorized memes by their form and message composition *(e.g.* photograph, media, illustration, text). Next, memes were separated into distinct categories, while examining their relation to the coping mechanisms depicted (*e.g.* adaptive or maladaptive), and by the message framing (*e.g.* problem or emotion focus). The three researchers independently coded all 200 memes using the coding categories described above.

Summary of Findings

The analysis indicated that there are adaptive and maladaptive expressions of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping responses, resulting in four coping strategies: Resolve, Recoup, Regress, and Resist.

Resolve (*e.g.*, adaptive, problem-focused coping) involves strategies that address the stressor, focusing on changing the environment so that the stressor was removed. Resolve memes documented solutions that directly addressed moms' pandemic stressors, and how moms overcame these (*e.g.*, seeking homeschooling services).

Recoup (*e.g.,* adaptive, emotion-focused coping) are strategies that reduce stress, but do not actively address the stressor. Recoup memes document a diverse set of therapeutic activities that mothers implemented to reduce stress during the pandemic, without directly solving the source of the stress (*e.g.*, connecting with friends in similar situations).

Regress (*e.g.,* maladaptive, problem-focused coping) strategies seek to permanently remove stress, but ends up exacerbating anxiety (*e.g.*, seeking homeschooling, which created more stress). These memes often depicted a mother overwhelmed by stresses incurred in her life.

Resist (*e.g.* maladaptive, emotion-focused coping) include strategies that seek to alleviate stress, but end up creating more stress (*e.g.*, alcohol dependence). Resist memes often depicted revenge consumption meant to help mothers momentarily escape everyday life, but creating other problems.

Key Contributions

This study highlights the benefits of using memes to further understand consumer behavior, specifically in terms of coping strategies (Myrick et al., 2021; Shifman, 2013b). The four hybridized variants of coping– Resolve, Recoup, Regress, and Resist diversifies Lazarus & Folkman's (1984) problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies into adaptive and maladaptive variants (Rippetoe & Rogers, 1987). The bifurcation into adaptive and maladaptive states recognizes that both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies can "succeed" or "fail."

This study's analysis also provides an understanding of "ambient communal coping" previously unaccounted for by the literature. Commiserating through memes represents a low involvement form of coping, where mothers would use social media to "like," share, or thumb a short response to a post. This coping strategy stands in contrast to higher involvement forms of communal coping, which have been the focus of previous studies, including support groups, where mothers have to regularly and physically attend, or online communities, where moms actively post content.

Overall, this research demonstrates that memes may help support efforts to cope with the stressor. In line with prior research, the findings demonstrate how memes can be used as a coping mechanism to reduce stress and change situational meaning (Wagner et al., 2002).

References are available upon request.

#WOWITSME – REVISITING MEANING TRANSFER MODEL WITH OWN-FACE DIGITAL ADVERTISING

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Keywords: own-face advertising, digital technologies, meaning transfer model

Description: This study provides first valuable insights into a more profound form of personalized advertising: own-face advertising.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Recent technological advancements have led to disruptive changes in advertising, especially in digital settings such as for online and social media ads. One prominent change has been the introduction of technologies that can capture observable preferences, trackable data, and posted pictures/videos to facilitate the design of each user's digital persona. This in turn can be used to target consumers with precise personalized advertisements. As a result, consumer expectations and requirements for endorsers have been changing in the recent past. While in the past, endorsers often have been “unapproachable” celebrities, more recent endorsers featured in ads

(including influencers) are related as being approachable. The highest form of approachability related to the self. Therefore, based on the classic meaning transfer model of McCracken (1989), we introduce a new type of endorsement: own-face-advertising (OFA).

Method and Data

Study 1 shows that OFA positively impacts advertising effectiveness, conceptualized as engagement with the advertising, remembering of the product, purchase likelihood, and affect. Affect was measured via face-reading technology, allowing us to measure the effect of OFA on advertising effectiveness consciously via established ex post measures and unconsciously via FaceReader exactly in the moment of the experience. It enables us to overcome a potential common method bias. We show that the main effect of OFA on advertising effectiveness is mediated by source credibility and source attractiveness and can be amplified for known brands (versus unknown brands) in terms of purchase likelihood. Study 2 verifies these results by expanding non-OFA by influencers and celebrities. Study 3 confirms the main effect across different product categories, including variations of price [low and high] or product type [hedonic and utilitarian].

Summary of Findings and Key Contributions

A growing body of research shows that endorser types have changed and, with evolving technologies, will change even further in future. While in the past, endorsers were mainly celebrities representing idealized and unreachable role models (Winterich, Gangwar, and Grewal 2018), there is currently a major shift to social media influencers, which are perceived as being relatively similar and approachable (Schouten, Janssen, and Verspaget 2020). Inspired by technological advancements and the announcement of Meta´s highly individualized and

personalized Metaverse, this research introduces a new type of endorsement for the future: own-face advertising (OFA). In three experimental studies, we investigate how consumers react to ads showing themselves as endorsers in an online marketing setting. Study 1 uses innovative face-reading technology in a lab setting to test advertising effectiveness of OFA. Study 2 compares the effectiveness across different endorsers (OFA vs. non-OFA). Study 3 verifies the results across different product categories.

We build on the meaning transfer model by McCracken (1989) which is shown to be one of lead articles in this area. Our research contributes to this research stream by linking the past with the future. First, we extend prior literature that mainly examines the meaning transfer process of celebrities (Winterich et al. 2018). By showing one's own face to consumers, we identify a new opportunity for marketers to reach out to their consumers in a highly fragmented advertising area. Second, we show that source credibility (Hovland and Weiss 1951) and source attractiveness (McGuire 1985) mediate OFA. Third, we show that both known and unknown brands benefit from the usage of OFA. Last, we provide strategies helping managers to make decisions concerning OFA. Expanding the existing research scope, our study moves beyond the current research and investigates the effects and essential boundary conditions for using OFA.

A New Way of Winning Customers on Social Media:

An Examination of Storytelling Factors of Brands' Instagram and Tiktok Short Videos

Abstract

Brands globally seek ways to engage consumers on social media platforms. Drawing from the narrative transportation theory, we argue how short videos tell stories and affect consumers' likelihood to engage. Using the context of Instagram and Tiktok, we collected 9,414 short videos by Top 100 brands based on the WPP ranking from Dec 2020 to Nov 2021. We identified four storytelling factors and developed a conceptual framework to link the storytelling factors with consumer engagement to examine the link upon several moderating conditions, which include informational execution approach, emotional execution approach and brand category between the number of likes. Our research findings show that the four storytelling factors positively affect consumer engagement, and the effects are stronger when the brand is a premium (vs value) brand. Moreover, we find that the informational approach strengthens the effects of authenticity, reversal and humour, whereas the emotional approach strengthens the effects of conciseness and reversal.

Statement of Key Contribution

This research supports the hypothesis that all four storytelling factors help to boost the number of likes of short video marketing campaigns. It concluded that storytelling factors are essential for formulating a good story for a short video that drives likes and that brands should focus on developing a good story. The research supports the hypothesis that the premium brand category moderates all 4 storytelling factors. It concludes that premium brands, compared to value brands, should craft a good story for their short videos more carefully because it is believed that premium brand customers and audiences expect more profound brand stories, and brand value are geared towards premium brand compared with value brand. An additional analysis was performed in this study which showed which storytelling factors contribute to certain marketing KPIs while that no single storytelling factor is able to drive all forms of KPIs (comments, shares, and views) of short videos.

1. Introduction

Brands are actively increasing their online presence, and among the different media types (i.e. traditional to new media), videos are the most accepted by brands. Recently, short videos incorporating storytelling have become hugely popular. TikTok, a short video platform launched in September 2016, has 689 million monthly active users globally (Social media users, 2021), making it the sixth largest social media site (Kemp, 2021). Instagram, a photo-based social media platform launched in 2010, and acquired by Facebook in 2012, used the trending up of short videos as an opportunity to develop its short video function reels to compete in the short videos arena (Alexander, 2020). Short videos and storytelling can aid brands in relating effectively with their consumer base, given the current social media usage levels. Stories constitute an essential part of a company's brand strategy for achieving a competitive advantage over its rivals. In a sense, storytelling through short videos on social media provides the perfect avenue for communication with the market base. It can elicit desired reactions from consumers who tend to relate more to short videos with a clear storyline that morphs into emotional connections and an improved understanding of the goods or services promoted through social media campaigns.

Stories are considered essential aspects of social media short videos partly because short videos have been popularized and widely embraced in various business realms today. Scholars agree that the emotional connection created by stories embedded in short videos on social media channels makes them relatable to consumers. For instance, most buyers look for videos on their desired products before purchasing them. Business goals can be achieved effectively if the correct storytelling factors are considered for short videos in social media marketing campaigns. Given the significance of social media in marketing, the introduction of storytelling in short videos is also an integral aspect of marketing. Studying the aspects of storytelling is, therefore, essential for optimizing the creation of short videos. Storytelling and social media integration rely on individuals on the receiving end of such marketing initiatives—that is, customers—and short videos must consider what is best for the consumers in every possible aspect.

The principal motivation for studying factors of compelling storytelling is to create a benchmark for future reference for social media marketers and managers alike. Many companies and whole industries are looking to establish and maintain their place in the digital space and main, where most digital interactions in previous marketing initiatives have been in pictorial and textual forms. However, the introduction of the video format has opened up an avenue for research and an opportunity to embed storytelling aspects in comprehensive social media campaigns.

2. Literature Review

A short video, in the literal sense of the term, refers to videos that last less than 10 minutes on average; nonetheless, videos with a duration beyond 10 minutes can be considered as long videos (Wochit, 2016); Video marketing drives sales, raises awareness and fosters engagement (Bitable, n.d.), especially with the added advantages of the current low cost of adoption and its popularity on social media platforms. The content of short videos is more concise and refined; they can effectively convey information related to the brand, goods, and services. A study conducted by Tellis et al. (2019) revealed that short videos with information-focused content are less likely to be shared. However, if the content of short videos is such that it evokes emotions, such as intense drama, joy, surprise, and excitement, then it is more likely to be shared.

Various scholars have discussed the implementation of factors influencing storytelling in short videos. Weick (1995) propounded that people communicate and interact better through storytelling than through an argumentative standpoint. Hamby and colleagues (2015) found that story-based reviews positively influence consumer behaviour. This shows that people react better to story-based marketing initiatives and that there are higher chances for brands to boost their number of likes and engagement by incorporating good storytelling elements that yield high sales.

2.1 Narrative Transportation Theory

As described by Green and Fitzgerald (2017), the narrative transportation theory focuses on the causes and consequences of an individual being immersed in a story or being transported into the narrative world. The feeling of being absorbed in a narrative with a heightened sense of cognitive engagement, mental imagery, and emotional experience is paramount to the transportive concept. The entire concept of transportation borders on storytelling, as stories have been a significant part of communication for centuries, and its communicative power has been acknowledged at various societal levels. There are various measures adopted in the measurement of transportation, such as the transportation scale described by Green & Brock (2000), which was created to capture the emotional involvement in stories, lack of awareness of surroundings, mental imagery, feeling of suspense and cognitive attention of stories. The instrument developed by Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) to measure the specific dimensions of a narrative experience is based on the idea that narrative experiences have four experiential engagement dimensions: narrative presence, attentional focus, narrative understanding, and narrative engagement.

According to Barrena and Sánchez (2009), individuals resonate strongly from the heart with the call of a soul story, and this deep feeling can result in customer motivation to accept a brand, thereby resulting in sales. The length of a video used as a marketing tool for storytelling is also critical, as observed by Tsai (2020), who found that the longer a video’s duration, the more positive the consumer’s perception of the brand image and identity and the more likely it is to promote consumers’ purchase intention for the brand.

2.2 The Four Storytelling Factors

Existing literature has identified four factors that constitute a good brand story: authenticity, conciseness, reversal, and humour (Ballester-Delgado & Sabiote-Fernandes, 2016; Chiu et al., 2012). they argued that story-based marketing significantly influences brand loyalty and emotional attachments to the product. Conversely, Chiu et al. (2012) used an experimental approach to evaluate theories regarding the best stories to narrate about search and experience products. Authenticity refers to factors that make a story believable through either visualization or concrete language use (Chiu et al., 2012). It implies genuineness, truth, and reality (Grayson & Martinec, 2004) as it is a core value of humans and society. According to Tsai (2020), the length of a story, through whatever medium of communication is adopted, is critical to the listener/viewer's perception and acceptance. Thus, conciseness relates to how straight-to-the-point a story is if it encourages or discourages embellishments in the narrative. Reversal is a crucial facet of any story that helps the listener or viewer recognize its problem-solving capabilities (Hsieh et al., 2018). It is crucial for end users to sense this in a story as it helps establish trust in their judgment because they are bound to attach such passion to the story's subject that prompts such sentiments in the brand narrative. Humour is vital in everyday life as it helps put one at ease and make them more receptive to immersion and transportation; it is applied to all walks of life, including business advertising, education and leadership (Alwitt, 2002). Humour can be highly effective in measuring the effectiveness of a marketing campaign, where the customers' feelings are evaluated from the information they receive, thereby enhancing their cognitive response.

2.3 Consumer Engagement

Green and Brock (2000) demonstrate that the transportation theory posits that story receivers are transported through empathy and media imagery. Van Laer et al. (2014) created a transportation model to provide systematization on narrative transportation relevance for storytelling narrative persuasion. Advertising is a fundamental way of engaging a client, and in the context of social media, media engagement is critical. Chiu et al. (2012) posited that stories could enhance brand awareness, positioning and promotion. Thus, businesses need to possess unique brand stories to strengthen the customer-brand relationship. Social media or social networking sites (SNS) provide a ready platform for disseminating stories in textual, audio or video form and have thus emerged as the dominant digital communication channel through which consumers learn about, share information with and engage with brands they consider, evaluate or purchase to/from (Qualman, 2013). The brand category in this research is confined to the customer-based perspective (Keller, 1993; Shocker et al., 1994) of brand equity; in other words, how premium the customer perceives the brand. In simple terms, brand equity is the difference between the value of a product with a known name and its generic alternative. According to Vries et al. (2012), brands can engage their customers through such brand pages using posts in videos, audio, textual information, graphics, etc. Conversely, customers can react to these posts by commenting, liking, sharing or viewing them. The number of comments, views, likes and shares are positively related to the popularity of the brand's post. According to Vries et al. (2012),

posting the brand post on top of the brand fan page increases the number of likes for the brand. Conversely, other drivers such as vivid and interactive brand post characteristics could positively influence the number of likes and comments.

3. Method

3.1 Research Framework

This study examines the storytelling factors of short videos on social media. Further, because social media is a strong emerging factor in the marketing frontier, this paper will be an important information piece. Considering the concepts of storytelling and short video usage in social media, this study formulated four research questions:

RQ1: Do aspects of storytelling in short videos have any effect on the number of likes received by brand content on social media platforms?

RQ2: How do premium brands moderate storytelling factors within short videos posted on social media platforms for the number of likes?

RQ3: How does the informational execution approach moderate storytelling factors within short videos posted on social media platforms for the number of likes?

RQ4: How does the emotional execution approach moderate storytelling factors within short videos posted on social media platforms for the number of likes?

The hypothesis generated from the research questions are:

$H1_{a,b,c,d}$: Authenticity, Conciseness, Reversal and Humour as storytelling factors of the short video, which boosts the brand content's number of likes on social media platforms.

$H2_a$: Authenticity as a storytelling factor influencing short videos has a stronger positive effect on the number of likes received by brand content on social media platforms for premium rather than value brands

$H2_b$: Conciseness as a storytelling factor influencing short videos has a stronger positive effect on brand content's number of likes on social media platforms for the premium than value brands.

$H2_c$: Reversal as a storytelling factor influencing short videos has a stronger positive effect on brand content's number of likes on social media platforms for value than premium brands.

$H2_d$: Humour as a storytelling factor influencing short videos has a stronger positive effect on brand content's number of likes on social media platforms for the premium than value brands.

$H3_a$: Authenticity as a storytelling factor has a strong positive effect on the number of likes on a short video for brand content executed in an informational approach.

$H4_a$: Authenticity as a storytelling factor has a strong positive effect on the number of likes on a short video for brand content executed in an emotional approach.

$H3_b$: Conciseness as a storytelling factor has a strong positive effect on the number of likes on a short video for brand content executed in an informational approach.

$H4_b$: Conciseness as a storytelling factor has a strong positive effect on the number of likes on a short video for brand content executed in an emotional approach.

H3c: Reversal as a storytelling factor has a strong positive effect on the number of likes on a short video for brand content executed in an informational approach.

H4c: Reversal as a storytelling factor has a strong positive effect on the number of likes on a short video for brand content executed in an emotional approach.

H3d: Humor as a storytelling factor has a strong positive effect on the number of likes on a short video for brand content executed in an informational approach.

H4d: Humor as a storytelling factor has a strong positive effect on the number of likes on a short video for brand content executed in an emotional approach.

Figure 1 shows a representation of the research model with the interactions between the dependent (DV) and independent variables (IV) in this study.

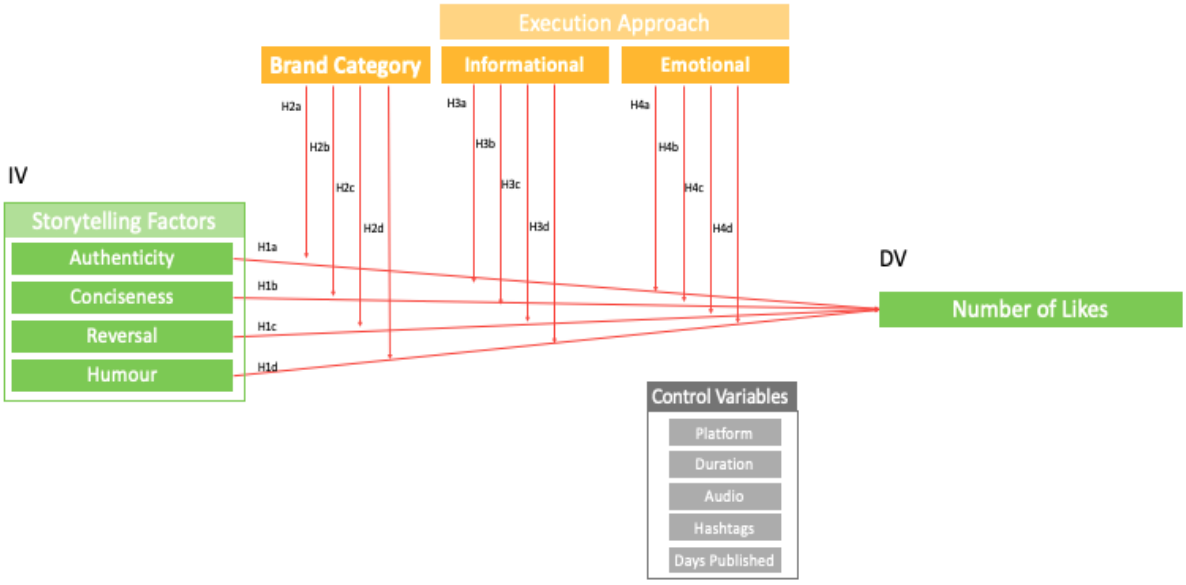

Figure 1: Research Model

3.2 Research Design and Sample Selection

This research used a mixed method of qualitative expert interview and quantitative SEM analysis. The qualitative expert interviews aimed at better understanding participants' thoughts and ideas (Clow & James, 2014). The result of the qualitative research used for the study contributes to the constructs collected from literature in the context of social media short videos. The interviews were conducted for 20 professionals in the digital advertising industry with various backgrounds covering brand, agency media, and academic, and different expertise in branding, marketing, and video production. 100 brands are selected from the report by WPP, 'BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands in 2019', one of the largest global advertising groups, with the research method and analysis by Kantar, a global research company. We study

and investigate the brand's official account on Instagram and Tiktok, and for the brands identified with multiple accounts, we select the official, group corporate or Origin County's account for this study. The 100 brands selected cut across different sectors, including food and beverage, fashion and habitat, communication and sports, professional and business services, technology and infrastructure, and other sectors.

90 brands were found to be associated with Instagram accounts, while 41 were associated with TikTok accounts. All 9414 short videos posted on the associated Instagram and Tiktok accounts of the top 100 brands between December 2020 and November 2021 were scraped for analysis. The duration of the video, number of hashtags, number of likes, presence of audio, and date of publication were recorded. The date of publication is then calculated with the date of data scrapping to obtain the number of days published. All short video data are published for more than 20 days, which is at least 25 half-life cycles of the platform.

A stratified sampling approach was used to distribute the videos from Instagram and Tiktok. A random sample of 600 short videos representing 100 different brands was drawn and used as the final sample for this research. The (five-point) Likert scale coding and Cohen Kappa Coefficient scale were also reviewed to ensure precise analysis of the independent and dependent variables. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the survey responses; exploratory factor analysis was done to discover the factor structure and internal reliability of the measures of principal component analysis and varimax rotation. Convergent validity using average variance extraction and discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion were used to examine and test the initial constructs and their relationship with user engagement.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Summary results of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Proposed Relationship	Beta	P Value	Result
$H1_a$	AUT-Likes	Positive	30236.003	<.001	Supported
$H1_b$	CONS-Likes	Positive	32655.323	<.001	Supported
$H1_c$	REV-Likes	Positive	13418.855	.027	Supported
$H1_d$	HUM-Likes	Positive	29916.298	<.001	Supported
$H2_a$	AUTxBrandCat	Moderated by BrandCat	24769.028	.004	Supported
$H2_b$	CONSxBrandCat	Moderated by BrandCat	26154.480	.002	Supported
$H2_c$	REVxBrandCat	Not Moderated by BrandCat	22250.638	.011	Not Supported
$H2_d$	HUMxBrandCat	Moderated by BrandCat	33358.468	<.001	Supported
$H3_a$	AUTxINF	Moderated by INF	8797.030	.042	Supported
$H3_b$	CONSxINF	Moderated by INF	-7199.069	.095	Not Supported
$H3_c$	REVxINF	Not Moderated by INF	13801.352	<.001	Not Supported
$H3_d$	HUMxINF	Moderated by INF	13684.361	.002	Supported
$H4_a$	AUTxEMO	Moderated by EMO	3744.969	.155	Supported
$H4_b$	CONSxEMO	Not Moderated by CONS	8083.091	.034	Not Supported
$H4_c$	REVxEMO	Moderated by EMO	8957.636	.022	Supported
$H4_d$	HUMxEMO	Not Moderated by EMO	6666.610	.092	Supported

From table 1, the established constructs of Authenticity, Conciseness, Reversal and Humour are hypothesized to boost the number of likes on short video content through the extensive literature review. Based on the study, the four hypotheses are all supported. For the short video to receive a good number of likes, the four storytelling factors are the essential elements to be considered. The research results show that the premium brand category moderates all four storytelling factors. From the literature review and observations, Authenticity, Conciseness and Humour are

hypothesized to have moderation effects on premium brands, while reversal is hypothesized to have moderation effects on value brands. It is believed that compared with value brands, customers and audiences focus more on the brand background and brand elements for premium brands, and storytelling helps premium brands to deliver better. From the literature review and observations, the study hypothesized that both the informational and emotional execution approaches moderate Authenticity. Simultaneously, the informational execution approach moderates Conciseness and Humour and the emotional execution approach also moderates reversal. The study result also shows that the Informational execution approach moderates Authenticity, Reversal and Humor, while the emotional execution approach moderates conciseness and Reversal.

The study hypothesized that the conciseness factor should be moderated by informational but not emotional; if the final result is reversed. It could be the reason a concise video is supposed to carry knowledge and information efficiently enough, even though the informational approach does not enhance it. In contrast, the emotional execution approach helps deliver the information better. The reversal factor is moderated in both informational and emotional, for which it was hypothesized to only be moderated in the emotional execution approach. It concluded that reversal is essential to both informational and emotional execution approach that the audience expected something unexpected. Informational and emotional execution approaches are both moderated by Authenticity, while the result supports only the informational execution approach. Informational execution helps build more potent Authenticity. The Humour factor is moderated in informational but not emotional as in the hypotheses. Adding an informational execution approach enhances the Humor storytelling, while adding a severe emotional execution approach may contradict the value of Humor for bringing laughter to the audience.

Additionally, the number of views (Views) is also being studied as a dependent variable. The results report that AUT ($b = 406454.583$, $t = 2.855$, $p = .004$) and CONS ($b = 331046.170$, $t = 2.374$, $p = .018$) are significant. It implies that authenticity and conciseness as storytelling factors drive Views.

5. Conclusion

Short video marketing is a relatively new field, and prior research has focused on various traditional kinds of material throughout storytelling factors. This study adds to the existing literature about the well-known short video format. The current study explored how storytelling factors may impact the number of likes to short video marketing content, and given the popularity of short videos and the fact that they are often shared on social media, this is crucial. The existing literature on storytelling covers a wide range of subject matters, including movies, blogs, and TV commercials. This study adds to the knowledge on popular short video social media platforms (Instagram and TikTok), where short video content was prevalent. This study confirmed the support of the hypothesis that the four storytelling factors (including Authenticity, Conciseness, Reversal, and Humour) positively influence the number of likes of short videos. The study confirmed the positive moderating effect of the premium brand on the storytelling

factors and likes. Moreover, reversal is moderated by the informational and emotional execution approach; the informational execution approach moderates authenticity and Humour, and the emotional execution approach moderates the conciseness of a story.

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF FOLLOWING INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMERS' PERCEIVED WELL-BEING

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Keywords: social media influencers, influencer marketing, consumer wellness, digital wellness

Description: This research utilizes an exploratory, survey approach to investigate the impact following social media influencers (SMIs) has on consumers' perceived well-being.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question - The digital transformation has significantly changed how brands communicate with consumers. Marketers and consumers deal with new information technologies in a hyperconnected world (Swaminathan et al. 2020). Consumers are increasingly connected to technology. The role of information technology in the consumer journey continues to evolve as consumers interact with technology and other consumers such as social media influencers (SMIs).

Therefore, we investigate an important part of the journey: interacting with SMIs and the impact this interaction has on consumers' perceived well-being. Academic research to date has not addressed the role of SMIs in the consumer journey when the influences of an SMI can affect the consumers' well-being. This research aims to fill the gap at the intersection of digital wellness and SMIs by answering the research question: how does following SMIs impact consumers' perceived well-being?

Method & Data - To explore the research question and hypothesized model, a survey was administered to participants on the panel Prolific. All participants were screened to be active users on Instagram within the last 30 days and located in the United States. In total, 400 usable responses were collected. The measures used to test the hypothesized model were adapted from established scales.

Smart PLS was used to generate the structural model evaluation yielding moderate R^2 for predictive accuracy (Hair et al. 2019). A bootstrap analysis was conducted with 5,000 samples (see Figure 1; Ramayah et al. 2018; Preacher & Hayes 2004). First, the effect of the social comparison had a positive, significant impact on consumers' feelings of joy ($H_1\beta = 0.18$, $p<0.01$) and envy ($H_2\beta = 0.54$, $p<0.001$; see Figure 1). The emotions of joy then positively and significantly impacted consumers' self-esteem ($H_3\beta = 0.29$, $p<0.001$) As hypothesized, emotions of envy negatively and significantly impacted consumers' self-esteem ($H_4\beta = -0.48$, $p<0.001$). Self-esteem was found to also have positive significant effects on consumers' perceived well-being ($H_5\beta = 0.78$, $p<0.001$). Finally, following the guidelines by Becker et al. (2018) using the

product indicator approach, sense of positive agency moderated the relationship between consumers' social comparison and emotions of joy and envy ($H_6\beta = -0.12$, $p<0.01$; $H_7\beta = -0.15$, $p<0.01$).

Summary of Findings - While previous research has found both positive and negative impacts of consumers using and interacting with others on social media (Bennett et al. 2020; Orben 2020), we explored the influence of SMIs on consumers' well-being, while the theoretical base of social comparison theory guided our research. This research uncovered initial empirical insights into some of the factors that influence consumers' well-being when consumers are following SMIs. Specifically, the results provided evidence that following SMIs can impact the relationship between social comparison, the emotions joy and envy, self-esteem, and consumers' perceived well-being. Further, results showed that consumers' sense of agency moderated the relationship between social comparison and the emotions of joy and envy. These results should be taken into account when marketers utilize influencer marketing as part of their digital strategies. Considering how information technology is changing the consumer journey and consumption patterns, more research in this vein is needed. Specifically, this research contributes to the literature on consumer wellness by examining this phenomenon in a new context, social media influencers. As calls from scholars require marketers to continue to investigate the nuances of influencer marketing (Appel et al. 2020; Rosengren & Campbell 2021) this study contributes to the marketing literature by examining the impacts of using such a tool on consumers' perceived well-being.

Statement of Key Contributions - This research contributes to the marketing and social media influencer (SMI) literature by uncovering initial evidence of how following SMIs can impact consumers' perceived well-being. Findings reveal that when consumers participate in social comparison, this can influence feelings such as joy and envy, which in turn impacts perceived well-being. The relationship between social orientation and consumers' emotions is also moderated by the sense of agency, or amount of control, consumers have over their own behavior when participating on social media. Results provide additional support for how influencers impact consumers' perceived well-being. Findings uncover critical insights for both marketing managers and public policymakers.

Specifically, using social media platforms to connect with consumers should be done in a responsible way (e.g., not exploiting influencer marketing to manipulate consumers' self-esteem). Next, marketers should be aware that as the use of influencer marketing increases, influencers can create negative experiences for consumers' perceived well-being. Depending on the nature of the product, marketers should choose their influencer partnerships wisely. Public policymakers should also be aware of the negative impacts social media has on society and should create policies and laws aimed at improving consumers' lives similar to the recent legislation passed in Norway.

References are available upon request.

CALLOUTS AND SHOUTOUTS: IS CONSUMER ONLINE ACTIVISM LOUD ENOUGH TO DRIVE BRAND PERFORMANCE?

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Keywords: Brand Activism, Consumer Activism, Firm-Generated Content, Social Media Activism.

Description: This paper examines whether consumer social media activism in response to a brand's handling of a sociopolitical issue affects both the downstream social media interactions with the brand as well as its stock market performance on a given day.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: This study aims to determine whether consumer activism is associated with a brand's sociopolitical activism on an issue and its impact on the activist brand's same-day social media engagement and stock market performance.

Method and Data: We studied social media conversations between brands and consumers on the recent topic of the "Russian invasion and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine" to examine online sociopolitical activism by brands and consumers. First, we examined daily tweets from 159 publicly traded leading global brands between February and March 2022, including thousands of their user replies. We then narrowed our focus on the activist brands that specifically engaged in conversation on our chosen topic during the timeline. We gathered all of their 1,322 daily tweets as well as 39,578 user replies. Additionally, we accumulated 41,358 activist tweets on the issue from consumers directed at our selected brands during the same timeline. We labeled users' online activism or engagement with the activist

brands on the given issue as “shoutouts” and “callouts”. “Shoutouts” are public compliments or acknowledgments of the brand on the subject, whereas “callouts” are public criticisms that draw attention to the brand on the subject. We also used Topic Modeling and Semantic Textual Similarity to evaluate the similarity between the given topic and our listed brands’ publicly stated corporate social values. Finally, we gathered daily stock returns data of the 159 brands to study any impact of online consumer activism on a brand’s same-day stock market performance.

Summary of Findings: A brand’s social media activism on a given day and online users’ callouts and shoutouts to the brand on the same day are positively associated. Although previous research suggests that big brands face greater market risks of losing customers when they take a stand, our study in the context of the social media environment shows that activist brands with higher brand valuations may receive more accolades or shoutouts from users for engaging in activism. This introduces new perspectives on the impact of activism on brands. Additionally, our data provide evidence that the negativity bias resulting from callouts to the brand on a sociopolitical issue may affect online users’ other same-day interactions with the brand, lowering the likelihood of the brand receiving more positive than negative responses on its tweets on other topics. Furthermore, while the volume of callouts is inversely related to a brand’s daily stock returns, the volume of shoutouts is positively related. Overall, the results suggest that online activism by consumers may be loud enough to drive users’ same-day engagement with the brand on other topics and their stock market performance.

Key Contributions: This study brings together three traditionally separate fields that have looked at brand-consumer interactions independently: social media, sociopolitical activism, and social movements. To understand how brand and consumer activism are related, we use both firm-generated and user-generated social media content in our analysis. Furthermore, this article draws concepts from social movement literature and applies them to the context of social media to discuss activist online users’ collective efforts to influence the strategies of “more powerful” entities (in our case, the leading global

brands) on sociopolitical issues. Overall, the findings may help brands understand the full range of risks associated with activism on their social media engagement and stock market performance.

CAN EMOJIS AID IN SERVICE RECOVERY EFFORTS?

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Keywords

Emoji, Service Recovery, Perceived Fairness, Forgiveness

Description

Emojis are effective in influencing customer's attitude ultimately impacting their behaviors as a reaction to recovery measures of firm's post-service failure.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Dissonant customers avoid transgressor firm and refrain from future purchases. Further, they avoid communications with the firm making it difficult for the firms to reconnect (Wan 2013; Grégoire, Tripp, and Legoux 2009). Firms try to reconnect by offering compensation but it costs to the firms and is not feasible every time (Roschk and Gelbrich 2014). Recovery strategies combining monetary and non-monetary compensation results in higher customer satisfaction (Fu et al. 2015). Transgressor firms make sincere apology as non-monetary

compensation (Roschk and Gelbrich 2017). Apology in digital communications through textual messages is not effective up to the expectations. Additionally, high clutter in digital medium makes it difficult for the messages to get noticed (Pieters, Warlop, and Wedel 2002). Catching customer's attention causes information processing through cognitive efforts impacting their attitude and behavior (Jung and Heo 2021). In recent time, emoji usage has been growing worldwide in communication. Previous studies have not explored if emojis could be impactful in aiding to recovery process of the firms. Accordingly, the study explores if apology messages with emojis embedded into it will be more effective. Further, we explore if multiple emojis (facial) embedded in apology messages would be effective in firm's recovery efforts.

Method and Data

Participants were randomly assigned to three groups (viz. emoji, non-emoji, and control). All the three groups were exposed to fictitious service failure message and asked to imagine if the situation occurs to them. Service failure message was about overlooking of food customization request from food delivery apps (FDA). Further, the participants were exposed to real life examples of order cancellation and delay in food delivery along with customer's reactions. The purpose of this was to arouse dissonance in the participants.

In the next stage, the motive of treatment was to mitigate dissonance aroused in the 1st stage of the treatment (Fig 1). Accordingly, the participants were exposed to a customized message offering financial compensation along with apology message. Apology message was embedded with multiple emojis for the emoji group, which was missing in the non-emoji group. Finally, no apology message was sent to the control group, although financial compensation was offered. Further, similar apology messages with emojis retrieved from

twitter was shown to the emoji group and apology messages without emojis was shown to the non-emoji group. Data were collected online from different parts of India. Emoji and control group contained 51 participants each and non-emoji group contained 48 participants.

Treatment – Step 1 (Dissonance Arousal)	**Treatment – Step 2 (Service Recovery)**		
	Emoji	**Non-Emoji**	**Control**
Service failure	Apology message + Emoji	Apology message	No Apology Message

Fig1: Manipulation

Summary of Findings

Emoji effectiveness on attitudinal variables (forgiveness, perceived fairness) and behavioral variables (eWOM and repurchase intention) have significant effect. One-way ANOVA result output for perceived fairness are ($M_{Emoji} = 5.39$, $M_{Non\text{-}emoji} = 4.85$, $M_{Control} = 4.69$), $F(2,147) = 4.14$, $p=0.018$) and that for forgiveness are ($M_{Emoji} = 5.48$, $M_{Non\text{-}emoji} = 5.03$, $M_{Control} = 4.72$), $F(2,147) = 5.74$, $p=0.004$). Similarly, for eWOM and repurchase intention, result output are ($M_{Emoji} = 5.86$, $M_{Non\text{-}emoji} = 5.17$, $M_{Control} = 5.03$), $F(2,147) = 8.97$, $p<0.000$) and ($M_{Emoji} = 5.97$, $M_{Non\text{-}emoji} = 5.51$, $M_{Control} = 5.22$), $F(2,147) = 7.39$, $p=0.001$ respectively.

A serial mediation analysis (PROCESS Macro Model 6, Hayes 2017) to explore emoji presence effect on repurchase intention and eWOM was conducted. Emoji presence was used as independent variable and repurchase intention as dependent variable, with perceived fairness and forgiveness as sequential mediators. “No-Emoji” condition was coded as “0” and “Emoji” condition as “1”. A serial mediation indirect effect through both the mediators was found ($\beta = -.089$; CI_{95}: [-.252,-.008]). The total effect of independent variable was found on the dependent variable ($\beta= -.460$; CI_{95}:[-.850,-.069]), $p<0.05$.

Serial mediation was repeated with eWOM as dependent variable. Total effect of independent variable on the dependent variable (β=-.683; CI_{95}:[-1.065,-.300]), $p<0.05$ was found, however indirect effect through the mediators was not found.

Statement of Key Contributions

Retaining existing customers after service failure is vital as attracting new customers is tedious and costly affair. Although firms compensate through offers in the form of coupons and discounts post service failure, additionally persuading dissonant customers through apology messages makes differences. The study highlights the differential effect obtained by embedding emojis in apology message in impacting perceived fairness, forgiveness, eWOM and repurchase intention. Further, the study highlights that perceived fairness and forgiveness could be leveraged by firms to drive repurchase. Higher repurchase intention would ensure higher level of top line and bottom line for a firm in addition to retaining dissonant customers. The study confirms that in addition to monetary compensation, emotional persuasion through apology messages is more effective. Emoji presence in apology messages makes it even more effective and persuasive, triggering forgiveness in the dissonant customers. From the academic perspective, the study reiterates emoji attractiveness and effectiveness in transmitting emotions from sender to receiver positively impacting attitude and behaviour of the customers. The study once again confirms that emojis act as an additional stimulus capable of bringing attitudinal and behavioural changes in their receivers and confirms the S-O-R theory.

Contemporary Issues and Insights in Digital & Social Media Marketing

Proposal for a Special Topic Session in 2023 Winter AMA Conference

Session Chairs
Divya Anand (University of Kentucky)
Vamsi Kanuri (University of Notre Dame)

List of Participants

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Description

This special session underscores the critical challenges that brands face in their digital marketing efforts. The four studies investigate: 1) how to position paid ads to reduce users' perceptions of a brand's privacy invasion, 2) whether brands should polarize their engagement content, 3) the impact of a celebrity endorser's negative publicity on brands' user engagement level and how brands can take conscious efforts to mitigate the effect, and 4) whether receiving a prestigious award can improve brand's online reputation and prevent trolling activities. The list of participants includes eminent marketing scholars representing eight universities from the US, France, and Singapore.

Proposal

The digital landscape is in an exponential growth phase. It has become an indispensable part of people's lives and their critical source of network, entertainment, and engagement.

According to the Pew Research Center[1], 85% of Americans go online daily, of which 31% are always active and 48% go online several times a day. While this increasing trend has created a unique opportunity for marketers to further tap into the digital channels, it has also amplified a variety of challenges for brands, that includes addressing users' privacy concerns, managing trolls, mitigating online firestorms, and engaging in political activism, just to name a few. The key purpose of this special session is to understand some of these concerns from a brand's perspective, and provide managerial response strategies.

We believe that the studies in this proposed session will allow us to "bring to light an array of substantive and ethical issues confronting marketing managers" and also help brands "increase customer engagement on social media," which is consistent with the expectations of the "Digital & Social Media Marketing" track. This session also addresses the objectives of the conference by focusing on the social and political front of brands' digital marketing strategies during times of change and crises. Through this session, we aim to cast a wide net on the challenges brands face in their digital and social media marketing strategies. More specifically, we target four critical challenges that brands are facing in today's world of digital and social media: *Privacy concerns, Political Polarization, Endorser's transgression,* and *Trollers.*

Recent research shows that 79% of Americans feel concerned about brands' invasion of their privacy and how their data is being used[2]. The first study of our special session, presented by Anindita Chakravarty (University of Georgia) and Elham Yazdani* (University of Georgia), empirically investigates the effects of tie-strength between a user and his friends on digital ad creepiness. They find that stronger ties between a user and his friends posting before the ad

[1] https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/03/26/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-say-they-are-almost-constantly-online/
[2] https://roirevolution.com/blog/consumer-privacy-ecommerce-stats-trends-updates-your-brand-needs-to-know/

results in heightened perceptions of privacy intrusion. Their results underscore the importance of positioning paid ads on social media feed for users.

In the recent Amazon's AdWeek summit, brand managers indicated that political activism is an extremely tricky business, as it can result in both a positive (e.g., LifeWTR) or a negative (e.g., Shell) firestorm. Therefore, the most fundamental question becomes: Should brands engage in political activism on digital media? The second study of our special session, presented by Shunyao Yan* (Santa Clara University) and Klaus M. Miller (HEC Paris), examines consumer demand for political polarizing news content within a major European news website. Their results highlight the differential impact of political content on the tension between news media's subscription and advertising revenue.

Almost 25% of the US brands use celebrity endorsers for greater engagement with their current and potential customers. However, most of the research in this domain has been conducted in the context of sales or stock returns. The key objective of the third study of this special session, presented by Divya Anand* (University of Kentucky), Vamsi Kanuri (University of Notre Dame), and Lisa Scheer (University of Missouri), is to examine the impact of such secondary transgressions on brands' social media user engagement levels. Here, the authors find significant differences in engagement levels across the various categories of transgressions. Moreover, even in categories where the impact on user engagement levels is similar, brand response strategies might differ substantially.

Finally, despite the boons, social media has also facilitated the proliferation of Internet Trolls, who misuse platforms in an abusive way, causing problems for the brands and their users through the toxic content of their posts. The last and final study of this special session, presented by Xinlong Li (Nanyang Technological University) and Xinying Hao* (University of Arizona),

examines if a prestigious award can improve a brand's online reputation. Their results show that awards not only increase positive word-of-mouth but also reduce negative word-of-mouth. They find the effect to be particularly strong for the Internet Trolls, suggesting awards as a promising tactic to reduce hostility and manage reputation in their online space.

The proposed session includes four presentations involving nine participants from the US, France, and Singapore. We plan to have each of the four research teams present their work for 15 mins, followed by 5 mins of Q&A and general discussion with the attendees. Digital and social media marketing has attracted significant interest from scholars across the tracks of consumer behavior, strategy, and modeling alike. Given the eclectic mix of research topics, we believe that this special session would attract scholars interested in social media engagement behavior, brand communication and response strategies, crisis mitigation on social media, political activism, text analysis, and causal models. More detailed information regarding the title, the participants and the presenter, and an abstract for each of the presentations can be found below:

Research Presentation 1

Title: Don't Invade my Personal Space! Strength of Ties in Social Media & Paid Ad Intrusiveness

Authors: Anindita Chakravarty (University of Georgia), Elham Yazdani* (University of Georgia)

Extended Abstract

Research Question

With the surge of paid ads on social media such as Facebook, the perception of customers towards this kind of advertising is often more negative than positive. For instance, while exposure to customized ads can increase the efficiency of customer purchase, many users report that they find

paid ads to be intrusive and even creepy. Such perceptions most likely dampen the effectiveness of paid search advertising. In this research, we apply the strength of ties theory to understand if a user's perceptions of ad intrusiveness and creepiness might depend on the user's strength of ties with 'friends' whose posts are visible before the ad.

In this research, we try to answer three research questions of 1) Does the user's perceptions of ad intrusiveness/creepiness depend on the user's strength of ties with 'friends' whose posts are visible before the ad? 2) Does the dilution in intimacy (variance in the user's strength of ties with 'friends') impact the user's perceptions of ad intrusiveness/creepiness?, and 3) Does such relationship change based on the type of advertised product or the relevance of the ad to the user's needs?

Method and Data

To answer the above research questions, we follow a multi-step methodology. First, we collect primary data about the activity of 120 real users on Facebook for 15 weeks. We obtain perceptions of posts, ads, and tie strength of friends during users' real time Facebook activity. With this data, we are able to understand if empirical patterns exist between strength of 'friends' tie and ad perceptions after controlling for both the emotional and cognitive elements of the ad and its popularity. We also follow up with MTurk experiments with participants from both US and few Asian countries to understand causal effects. As the next step to have a more controlled experiment to test causality in a real-world platform and test moderators, we are in the process of running some quasi-natural experiments on Facebook

Summary of Findings

We propose that stronger the tie, the higher the perceived ad intrusiveness and creepiness. Strong interpersonal ties with friends involve more intimacy and higher emotional involvement with the content posted by those friends, while users might be non-involved with information posted by

weak friendship ties. As a result, an ad that appears after a flow of posts from stronger ties might invade the user's personal space and be considered intrusive or creepy to a greater extent than if it appears after posts from weaker ties. Our results show that stronger the ties between a user and the friends posting one or two posts before the ad, larger the ad creepiness perceptions. Also, we see that the dilution in intimacy (variance in the user's strength of ties with 'friends') decreases the user's perceptions of ad intrusiveness/creepiness.

Statement of Key Contributions

The findings of this research can provide useful insights for the position of paid ads on social media feed of users. Further, unlike existing strength of ties research, which mainly considers the usefulness of the information obtained from ties of different strength, we relate strength of ties to notions of personal space, intimacy and intrusiveness that have implications for advertisers and social media platforms. In this manner, we make a theoretical contribution as well. And this research is important to be covered because 1) social ties is important when it comes to personal space and intimacy, 2) understanding these underlying factors can help advertisers manage the users' perceptions of ad creepiness, 3) social media platforms will have more number of users and more revenues if users have less perceived ad intrusiveness, and 4) less ad creepiness can increase the likelihood of clicking on the ad, both helping the advertiser with the conversion rate and the social media platform to make money from the ad clicks.

Also, our research findings can have managerial implications, for example social media platforms can consider Adding the strength of tie to one of the factors in ad placement or our findings can provide useful insights for the position of paid ads on social media feed of users.

Research Presentation 2

Title: Does Polarizing Content Pay off?

Authors: Shunyao Yan* (Santa Clara University), Klaus M. Miller (HEC Paris)

Abstract: This paper examines consumer demand for political polarizing news content within a major European news website. We develop textual measures of political polarization from political party's media releases and election programs. We then characterize how consumers click on these polarizing news articles from individual-level clickstream data. Using a federal election as an instrument for polarizing news content, we assess how polarizing articles impact consumer new consumption as measured by the total number of page impressions and subsequent subscription behavior. We find robust pieces of evidence that polarizing news articles negatively affect user subscriptions. However, articles polarizing the political left positively impact the page impressions of users who are more likely to hold right-leaning political beliefs. Overall, our results highlight the different impacts of polarizing content on the tension between news media's subscription and advertising revenue.

Research Presentation 3

Title: Social Media Engagement following Celebrity Endorser's Negative Publicity Events: Evidence and Mitigation Strategies

Authors: Divya Anand* (University of Kentucky), Vamsi Kanuri (University of Notre Dame), Lisa Scheer (University of Missouri)

Abstract: Celebrity endorsers' negative publicity often spills over to the brands. While research on the economic effects of such events is widespread, we remain largely uninformed of their impact on the key reason why brands hire celebrities, i.e., to enhance customer engagement. This

research aims to examine the effect of a celebrity's negative publicity on a brand's social media user engagement behavior, and determine the ideal response strategies for brands to implement in such crises. Using the Multi-Valued Treatment matching using the Generalized Boosted Model on a unique dataset of 238 negative publicity events between 2016-19 from various archival sources including Twitter, Owler, and Factiva, among others, we find that there exist significant differences in user engagement levels (chatter volume, chatter valence, and sentiment ratio) across the various categories of negative publicity events. Moreover, even in categories where the impact on user engagement levels is similar, a brand's social media response strategy might differ substantially.

Research Presentation 4

Title: Awardee's Dilemma: Can a Trophy Tame Internet Trolls?

Authors: Xinlong Li (Nanyang Technological University), Xinying Hao* (University of Arizona)

Abstract: Can a prestigious award improve a brand's online reputation? On the one hand, a prestigious recognition can signal a brand's robust quality to consumers, who now perceive its services and/or products in a more positive light. On the other hand, award-winning can also raise consumers' expectations and standards for an award-winning brand, making their judgment of it more critical, if not damaging. Using a unique data set consisting of the game performance, popularity, and online fan comments of National Basketball Association (NBA) players, our study provides an answer to the awardee's dilemma. We show that being selected as an All-Star player (i.e., award-winning) has positive causal effects on that player's online brand image. The award-winning effect not only helps All-Star players receive positive word-of-mouth (WOM) but also reduces the volume of negative WOM. This positive effect is particularly salient for

Internet trolls—users who repeatedly post destructive and deceptive comments, suggesting the promise of proactively managing trolling behaviors that create hostile online spaces. After ruling out several confounding mechanisms, we argue that observational learning is the driving force behind our findings. Our results provide implications on online reputation management and firms' entry decisions into award competitions.

A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN MOBILE APPLICATIONS

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Keywords: Customer Engagement, Mobile Applications

Description: The purpose of this research study is to understand the key factors that affect customer engagement in mobile applications through a systematic literature review methodology using PRISMA

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the major conceptualizations of Customer Engagement in Mobile Applications?

What are theories being referred to while discussing Customer Engagement in Mobile Applications?

What are the Factors which affect Customer Engagement in mobile applications?

METHOD

A structured approach was followed while doing the literature review where key words customer engagement and mobile applications were the primary key words. The following keywords were used to extract relevant research papers from Scopus between the period 2000 to December 2021.The initial search with the keywords shortlisted 212 papers which were further filtered with certain criteria such as subject area which were limited to social sciences, decision sciences, multidisciplinary and psychology ,document type selected for this review were limited to article,review,editorial which were published in the English Language .Articles in Press and languages other than English were not considered for the review .The initial screening and filtration resulted in 92 articles .The articles were further screened after reading the abstract and only relevant articles were then read in full text .The final elimination resulted in selection of 31 articles. The research papers were then critically analysed to fill the research gaps and flaws in existing research

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From an academic research perspective even though studies have been conducted on factors affecting customer engagement in mobile fitness applications lot of these studies have been fragmented and inconclusive (Bellman et al., 2011).

On the basis of literature review a framework has been proposed for factors affecting customer engagement. The three main factors are Hedonic factors, Utilitarian Factors and Social Factors which have been further categorized as sub factors as follows:

1. Hedonic Factors

a) UI Attractiveness

b) Intrinsic Enjoyment

C) Temporal Experience

2. Utilitarian

a) Perceived Usefulness

b) Price Advantage

c) Personalization

3. Sociability

a) Tele presence

b) Social Presence

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

This research has both managerial as well as theoretical implications. On the theoretical front this study adds to the literature available on factors affecting customer engagement in mobile applications by summarizing the factors after an exhaustive literature review. It highlights how all the three categories utilitarian benefits, hedonic benefits and social benefits are equally important for customer engagement. The conceptual framework proposed in this study can further be tested empirically to consolidate the research. This theoretical framework can further be extended to managers who are looking at increasing customer engagement of their mobile applications and brands. They would be in a better position to control the customer's engagement by emphasizing on these aspects. This would further enhance the retention rate of customers which has posed a challenge for managers affecting brand growth and profit margins. Most of the mobile applications are free of cost and have zero charges for initial subscription. This study would help in understanding underlying motivations of customers encouraging stickiness to the mobile applications.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR SOUNDLESS VIDEO ADVERTISEMENTS: HOW SUBTITLE COLOR AND BACKGROUND AFFECT CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS

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Keywords: Video advertisements, soundless, subtitles, color, background

Description: This research revealed subtitles using color and background on soundless video advertisements hurt advertising effectiveness.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Soundless video advertisements on social media are becoming popular. Subtitling, a low-cost and easily manipulated technique, is widely used by digital marketers. Most of the subtitles have traditionally been displayed in White or Black at the bottom space (WB); however, now, marketers have added color or background to subtitles to draw consumers' visual attention and enhance the readability of text. According to the limited capacity model of mediated message processing (LCMP) (Lang 2000) and bottom-up attention

model (Rosbergen et al. 1997), color and background do have a strong positive impact on drawing viewer attention when consumers are not actively seeking for them (Broeder and Wildeman 2020). In the meantime, such visual factors as are elements of visual complexity labeled as feature complexity (Pieters and Wedel 2004) which can also negatively affect ad effectiveness (Pieters et al. 2010). According to prior research, subtitles using colors and background may positively or negatively affect advertising effectiveness. Most of the previous research focused on text effects in printed ads, or on websites, but very little on video ads. Therefore, this research aims to find out how subtitles using color and background will affect the effectiveness of soundless video advertisements.

Method and Data

This study was designed as an online experiment using a 2 (Color: Color vs. WB) × 2 (Background: with vs. without) factorial experiment between-subjects design.

Participants: A total of 972 valid participants were recruited through a Japanese online research company (M_{age} = 32.7, SD = 9.44; 60.6% were female). Participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions to view one advertisement and then answer the questionnaire on smartphones.

Stimulus: This study used four versions of a soundless advertisement featuring a laptop.

For text color, the WB version was designed in white; the color version was used in yellow and green. The with-background version was used a half-transparent black beneath the text. These techniques are commonly used in many TV programs and online video advertisements in Japan.

Measurement: Attitude toward the ad was evaluated using MacKenzie and Lutz's (1989) scale (α = .92). Attitude toward the brand was assessed using MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch's (1986) scale (α = .93). Message recall was measured as cued recall and comprehension, as used by Appiah (2002). The three control variables were age, gender, and brand familiarity. Brand familiarity was evaluated using a 3-item scale (Machleit et al. 1993) (α = .95).

Summary of Findings

The collected data were analyzed using a two-way multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) controlling for gender, age, and brand familiarity.

For attitude toward the ad, significant main effects of color (F (1, 965) = 3.92, $p < .05$) and background (F (1, 965) = 4.86, $p < .05$) were found. The results showed that using color was worse than WB; furthermore with-background version was worse than without-background version. Moreover, a small interactive effect of color and background was also found (F (1, 965) = 3.06, $p < .10$) only when subtitles were designed in color did the

background group show less favorable attitudes than the without-background group.

For message recall, there were no main effects of color and background; however, a small interaction effect was found (F (1, 965) = 3.01, $p < .10$). Only among the color group, with-background version had a worse message recall than without-background version (F (1, 965) = 3.91, $p < .05$).

For attitude toward the brand, neither main effects nor interaction effects of color and background were found. The result suggested subtitles using color or background does not affect brand attitude.

Key Contributions

This research contributes to the new trend of delivering soundless video advertisements and its theory. It extends the knowledge of the limited capacity model of mediated message processing (LCMP) (Lang 2000) by discussing visual complexity in the context of soundless video advertising. In addition, the results confirm that feature complexity can indeed hinder advertising effectiveness, which aligns with those of Pieters et al. (2010).

This research also has important practical managerial implications for marketers who are wishing to present subtitles in soundless video advertisements. Subtitles using colors and adding background can increase readability and easily capture viewers' attention.

However, our findings suggest that the tactic is not a good way to enhance those advertising outcomes when subtitles are a full transcription of audio. When the purpose of subtitles is to enhance the content comprehension, a simple visual design will work better. Managers also need to know that designing subtitles for soundless video advertisements is different for TV programs and movies. When the purpose of using subtitles is to grab attention, strategists and creative directors should be cautious of high visual complexity generated by the subtitles visual design.

Empowering Consumers through Blockchain: NFTs as a Means to Institutionalize Consumer Roles in the Metaverse

Abstract

Defined as blockchain-enabled cryptographic ownership certificates, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) provide customers with product transparency regarding origin and verification possibilities that other offerings cannot afford, thus enhancing perceptions of product sustainability. NFTs also promote a new type of socialization in the phygital environment, through the creation of crypto communities. Despite the increasing relevance of blockchain technology, research on how NFTs can affect the customer experience is scant. Yet, this topic is particularly relevant in contexts, such as luxury fashion, where NFTs are tracing a new route to sustainable consumption. This research consists of a qualitative study and three experiments that test a number of hypotheses in relation to the NFT experience in influencing product sustainability and likelihood of purchase in luxury fashion environments. We also investigate the role of perceived brand ethicality as a moderator of the relationship between product type (NFT vs. non-NFT) and perceived sustainability. Our results show that NFT products and NFT-based communities have a significant main effect on product sustainability and likelihood of purchase. Findings are relevant to luxury fashion brands that could benefit from using NFTs as a sustainable consumption alternative.

Keywords: Blockchain, Brand Legitimacy, Brand Ethicality, Luxury Fashion Brands, Metaverse, NFTs, Sustainability.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research bridges the literature on blockchain, institutional theory and sustainability by showing the effects of NFT products and NFT-based communities on consumer behavioral intentions in a luxury fashion context. Our studies answer Tan & Salo's (2022) call for research on how NFTs influence consumers and how they can affect consumer behavior positively.

In addition to contributing to advance theory on blockchain technology, results from this study also have substantive managerial relevance. This research sheds light on how fashion brands could use NFTs to create a new route to sustainable consumption. The dematerialization allowed by NFTs has the potential to generate a more sustainable value, introducing a different type of consumption that is access-based as opposed to possession-based. In general, NFTs allow for a more ethical approach, as verification costs are lowered, fair competition is enhanced, and micropayments are facilitated (Tan & Salo, 2021). Our research shows how brands can benefit from perceived sustainability of NFT products that eventually leads to increased likelihood of purchase. Especially marketers of fast fashion - often criticized for its unsustainable business model - could benefit from using NFTs as a sustainable consumption alternative. But also, luxury brands, often criticized for their greenwashing, could benefit from the opportunity of creating a more sustainable social value through NFTs. Our research shows how brands could benefit from being associated to NFTs in that they are perceived as more ethical or legitimate by consumers. Under this perspective, NFT have the potential to become cues that are independent from brands and that could signal different characteristics of the company or the product, thus becoming interesting for further target audiences.

Further, NFTs offer consumers a different type of socialization. Customers can indeed join crypto communities of likeminded individuals who co-create their own consumption experience,

independently deciding when and how to interact with the company. Through NFT-based communities, consumers become actual prosumers, thus shifting from being merely controlled by brands to taking on an active institutional role and making a concrete contribution to the governance of the blockchain. Through NFTs, consumers are transformed into prosumers, being providers and beneficiaries at the same time. Traditionally, consumers hold ineffective institutional roles since they are completely controlled by brands, in the NFT-based economy, consumers could take on an active institutional role and be traders, miners, validators, or developers (Kiviat, 2015; Tan & Salo, 2021, p. 14).

As prosumers, community members hold impactful institutional roles inside the blockchain in which NFTs are traded: they can share crypto-related posts online, contribute to blockchain governance and the consensus mechanism, and embrace existing values and expectations of the crypto community. In addition, marketers could leverage customers' desire to join a community that has a sustainable approach to consumption. NFTs may help marketers build a highly engaged brand community that can support the brand and possibly forge an even stronger connection with customers (Colicev, 2022).

In order to provide customers with experiences that enhance this sense of community, companies should enact a change that is not only process-based but also institutional, in order to earn legitimacy and ethicality in the eyes of consumers. Future studies could expand the understanding of brand legitimacy in the context of NFTs by manipulating (instead of measuring) perceptions of sustainability. Future research could also investigate the effects of the NFT experience on willingness to pay and word-of-mouth.

Introduction

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) are blockchain-enabled cryptographic ownership certificates that are distinguishable from one another through a unique number called the token ID (Sestino et al., 2022). Initially created as simple pieces of art, today, NFTs can represent all kinds of tradable items, such as clothes, images, avatars, videos, songs, and even event tickets (Chalmers et al., 2022). NFTs have emerged as a new class of digital assets in the fashion sector, particularly in luxury fashion, where companies have been early adopters. In fact, one of the first fashion companies to incorporate NFTs in their business model was Dolce & Gabbana, which set an astounding record of $6 million in sales for fashion NFTs (Hausse, 2021).

NFTs have gained popularity, especially with the rise of the metaverse—a post-reality universe born by merging physical reality and digital virtuality (Mystakidis, 2022). NFTs are hybrid by nature, which means they are neither products nor services. They do not confer ownership of a physical product but, rather, an enforceable and non-perishable property right on a virtual object. The dematerialization allowed by NFTs provides users the opportunity to share the value of unique objects, thus generating a more democratic distribution of value (Sestino et al., 2022). Although luxury fashion mainly relies on materialism and aims at the possession of the good itself (Amatulli & Guido, 2012; Belk, 1985; Richins & Dawson, 1992), dematerialization allows NFTs to survive over time and generate a more sustainable value, leveraging on the concept of consumption as access to a unique set of values, rights, and experiences related to the brand. Under this perspective, NFTs can create a new route to sustainability.

By providing enhanced transparency and traceability, NFTs offer opportunities for sustainable social value creation, especially for fashion brands. While the physical product features become secondary in importance, fashion brands can now compete in a new digital environment

made up of phygital experiences, thereby reducing their impact on the physical environment (Sestino et al., 2022).

Although NFTs have been around since 2014, these tokens only started attracting serious attention during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic lockdowns when their trading volume reached $10.7 billion, with an eightfold upsurge from the previous quarter (Truby et al., 2022). During this time, NFTs have proven to be a valid means for representing individuals in the virtual environment, even allowing users to exhibit their idealized selves. Therefore, NFTs have transitioned from being simple collectibles to becoming tools for self-enhancement and access keys to communities of NFT owners (Sestino et al., 2022). NFT-based crypto communities provide customers with the opportunity to have unique phygital experiences that are integral, immersive, and penetrating through the hybridization of physical and digital components of brands (Ballina et al., 2019). Such experiences include access to exclusive online/offline merchandise, premium services, parties, and events (Colicev, 2022).

Digital fashion facilitated by NFTs offers an opportunity for novelty and individuality through the continuous showcasing of individual personality through clothing (Roberts-Islam, 2020). In addition, NFTs provide customers access to exclusive events, such as virtual fashion weeks, that, unlike physical fashion weeks in London, Milan, Paris, and New York, have the potential to reduce carbon footprint per visitor from 137 kg to 0.66 kg (Hausse, 2021).

NFTs have proven to be particularly suitable to consumers, especially Gen Z, who are increasingly demanding digital fashion “consumption,” in which physical ownership is at least partially redundant (Roberts-Islam, 2020). NFTs not only have the potential to reduce environmental impacts related to production but also to the design and sampling process, which, when done digitally, offers significant reductions in resource use and textile waste (Roberts-

Islam, 2020). Especially fast fashion, traditionally regarded as an instance of non-sustainability in fashion (Niinimäki et al., 2020) that relies on cheap manufacturing, frequent consumption, and short-lived garments, can benefit from adopting NFTs. In light of the foregoing, NFT-driven digital fashion has the potential to become the new fast fashion (Roberts-Islam, 2020). This would offer fashion brands the opportunity to make up for their ongoing greenwashing, unsubstantiated green claims, and lack of transparency and accountability for their self-certification schemes (Changing Markets Foundation, 2021).

In addition to being more sustainable, NFTs have the potential to be perceived as more legitimate by consumers. NFTs can enable and enhance a new type of socialization in the phygital environment that benefits the perceived legitimacy of brands. Customers can join crypto communities of likeminded consumers that have a sustainable approach to consumption. In addition, customers are no longer passive users but become actual co-creators of value who can control “their right of ownership of online properties” (Tan & Salo, 2021, p. 22).

Despite the increasing interest in NFTs, to date, only a few studies have analyzed how and why consumers use NFTs, and in general, the research on blockchain and marketing is still in its infancy (Peres et al., 2022). In addition, research on the ethical implications of blockchain is scarce and lacks consensus (Dwivedyet al., 2022; Truby et al., 2022). Furthermore, no study has examined how NFTs can help fashion brands create sustainable value by adopting a more ethical approach and encouraging greater consumer involvement. This is surprising because NFTs are emerging as an evolution of the sharing economy—a truly co-creative economy—where consumers become actual prosumers (Tan & Salo, 2021) by making business models greener, ensuring the authenticity of an asset (Kietzmann et al., 2020), and building a crypto community where consumers can feel 100% part of a sustainable brand.

This paper is structured as follows. First, we review the main contributions to the NFT literature. Second, we present the results of a qualitative study and two experimental studies. The primary purpose of the interviews (Study 1) is to identify the critical dimensions of customer experience that drive consumer behavior in the NFT context. Third, we present the results of two experimental studies assessing how NFT products (Study 2) and NFT communities (Study 3) affect consumer behavior. Finally, we illustrate the managerial implications and suggest future research directions.

Conceptual background

Defined as blockchain-enabled cryptographic tokens representing ownership of physical and digital objects (Chalmers et al., 2022), NFTs are the latest technological trend. NFTs became popular the first half of 2021, when their value reached $2.66. Since then, the business of NFTs has expanded rapidly, generating a sales volume of 10.78 billion dollars in 2021 (Truby et al., 2022).

Despite their recent rise to fame, NFTs have been around in the art world since 2014 (Gabanelli, 2022). The turning point for the NFT industry came in 2017, when Ethereum was upgraded, becoming the queen of NFT platforms (Moleti, 2022).

NFTs' potential has captured the attention of many different industries, firstly that of luxury fashion. In fact, these digital assets create scarcity, and guarantee ownership and uniqueness of a virtual item that is able to unlock phygital customized experiences, which is exactly what luxury consumers look for (Nadini et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021; Sestino et al., 2022). Due to their unique features, NFTs can now represent everything, from a song to a branded bag, and can be presented, sold, or transferred through a great variety of digital platforms (Colicev, 2022).

NFTs are authenticated by and traceable in the blockchain (Chalmers at al., 2022), a distributed, attached-only database where data are linked and protected through cryptographic protocols (Wang et al., 2021). The characteristics of the blockchain technology have led business scholars to link the underlying technology to the concept of the sharing economy, highlighting that blockchains, as sharing economy platforms, extend the role of consumers, transforming them into actual prosumers (Tan & Salo, 2021). Taking into consideration the role that consumers take on by purchasing NFTs, the economy resulting from blockchains could be called co-creative. Furthermore, some researchers (Di Vaio & Varriale, 2020) have found that blockchain technology has a positive impact on sustainable business performance. Others (Casey & Wong, 2017; Queiroz et al. 2019; Seberi et al., 2019) discovered that current applications of blockchain technology are more sustainable from an economic (improvement of responsiveness, reduction of lead time, and transaction costs), environmental (greenhouse gas emission, water usage, and energy consumption reduction), and social (improvements in labor practices, equity, and human rights) perspective.

Furthermore, the rapid growth in NFT transactions has directed more attention toward the carbon footprint of blockchains (Truby et al., 2022), giving rise to two schools of thought on the impact that the metaverse has on the environment. On the one hand, scholars suggest that with the growth in the use of the metaverse, blockchains will need greater computing power and broadband speed, resulting in increased energy consumption (Dwivedi et al., 2022). On the other hand, the switch from proof-of-work (a consensus mechanism in which the parties must solve a complicated computational problem to ensure authentication (Akbar et al., 2021)) to the more efficient proof-of-stake blockchain protocols is expected to significantly reduce the energy consumption of these platforms (Truby et al., 2022). Although a one-to-one relationship between the number of NFT transactions and the platform's energy use does not exist, Ethereum's

transition to the proof-of-stake system is expected to reduce the blockchain's energy use by 99 percent, thus making NFTs more sustainable than other offerings. In addition, the merger could incentivize brands to create NFT projects on proof-of-stake infrastructures, claiming they are using energy-efficient and sustainable blockchains (Bain, 2022).

NFTs and luxury fashion brands

Fashion companies, and especially luxury brands, have been investing a lot in recent years on NFTs, and, more generally, on the various technologies that animate Web 3.0: namely Artificial Intelligence, Virtual and Augmented Reality and Blockchain based initiatives (BoF & McKinsey, 2022). Digitalization is, indeed, believed to be, alongside sustainability one of the biggest opportunities for growth in the luxury industry where it is crucial to respond to the evolving needs of future customers, i.e., Gen Z and Gen Alpha, generations of digitally savvy, experience seekers, who value most uniqueness, personal expression and brands' sustainability (D'arpizio et al., 2021). With an average of 3 hours per day spent on social media (Statista, 2021) and just as much gaming, it is expected that for Gen Z the digital presence will be eventually more important than the physical one.

The aforementioned innovations can reshape luxury fashion brands business models by empowering peer-to-peer transactions and direct execution of contracts (Treiblmaier, 2021). More specifically, NFTs and blockchain technology can empower digital transition in a secure and transparent way, inspiring also innovative more sustainable business models driven by a new conceptualisation of consumption seen as the access to the brand's world that is given to the customers that buy a digital product.

Especially for fashion companies that have long been often criticized for not being sustainable, digitalization offers concrete opportunities to become greener. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, digital fashion powered by AI and 3D prototyping already allowed for value chain optimization, waste reduction, time production and costs decrease, thus enhancing sustainability (Gonzalez, 2022). Now, with blockchain technologies and NFTs, supply chains can be simplified further, also enhancing traceability (Gonzalez, 2022).

NFTs can enhance scarcity, originality and uniqueness (Kaczynski & Kominers, 2021; Chohan, 2021), which are all crucial factors also in the luxury fashion industry. At the same time, NFTs offer both exclusivity and accessibility (Gurzki, 2022; Ellwood, 2021). By certifying unequivocally, a fashion object, NFTs are able to create rarity in the digital world, where virtual objects are, by definition, infinitely reproducible; and this is probably one of the reasons why luxury companies where among the firsts to jump on the NFT bandwagon.

From the consumer perspective, customers enjoy being part of the luxury brand world with a recognized self-expression (D'Arpizio & Levato, 2021) and joining a brand community that has a sustainable approach to consumption. In this context, the introduction of NFTs offers opportunities for sustainable value creation by enhancing transparency and traceability on top of the benefit of dematerializing consumption, thus reducing environmental impact. NFTs represent, therefore, a customer-centric, brand legitimizing tool that disrupts traditional processes of value creation, enhancing consumer perceptions of brand legitimacy and ethicality, and institutionalizing consumer roles.

Overview of the studies

This research consists of a qualitative study (Study 1) and two experiments (Study 2 and Study 3). Study 1 includes 10 semi-structured interviews with luxury brand managers and 20 semi-

structured interviews with consumers. The primary purpose of the interviews is to identify factors that are relevant to the NFT consumption experience. Based on the results, we developed three experiments aimed at examining the role of two variables—*product type (NFT vs. non-NFT)* (Study 2) and *consumer community type (NFT community vs. non-NFT community)* (Study 3)–in influencing product sustainability and likelihood of purchase respectively. We also investigate the role of *perceived product sustainability* as mediator of the relationship between product type and likelihood of purchase (Study 2); the role of *brand ethicality* as a moderator of the relationship between product type and perceived product sustainability (Study 2) and the role of *perceived product sustainability* and *brand legitimacy* as mediators of the relationship between consumer community type and likelihood of purchase (Appendices A and B).

Study 1

In Study 1, we employed a qualitative approach to explore the NFT experience through 10 semi-structured interviews with luxury brand managers (including Gucci, Fendi, Bottega Veneta and Prada) and 20 NFT consumers. The purpose of Study 1 was to investigate managers' and consumers' thoughts and opinions to identify the critical dimensions of the NFT experience. Data was analyzed through an open coding approach (Creswell, 2007), to develop meaning categories and themes (Kvale, 1995). Interviews were transcribed and examined recursively and separately by two researchers, who identified recurrent themes. After coding the data, the researchers compared their coding and assessed inter-coder reliability (k=.90). The analysis of the interviews identified two critical dimensions of the NFT experience based on customer insights, namely NFT consumption experience and NFT-based community. Also, legitimacy and

sustainability emerged as interesting dimensions to explore in the NFT context. Based on these findings, we developed three experimental studies.

Study 2

Study 2 examines the role of product type (NFT vs. non-NFT) in influencing product sustainability; and tests the moderated mediation of product sustainability in the relationship between product type and likelihood of purchase (Appendix A).

NFT vs. non-NFT product

By dematerializing consumption, NFTs offer opportunities for sustainable value creation, especially for fashion brands. While the physical product features become secondary in importance, fashion brands can now compete in a new digital environment made up of phygital experiences, thereby reducing their impact on the physical environment (Sestino et al., 2022). Dematerialization allows NFTs to generate a more sustainable value, leveraging on the concept of consumption as access to a unique set of values, rights, and experiences related to the brand.

In addition, since NFTs can assign items a digital identity and authenticate their content (Kietzmann et al., 2020), these tokens are likely to acquire value over time, and to discourage the sale of looted products, benefitting both the owner and the creator. Under this perspective, NFTs can create a new route to sustainability.

We hypothesize that:

H1a: The product perceived sustainability will be higher when the product is an NFT.

H1b: Perceived product sustainability mediates the relationship between product type and likelihood of purchase.

The moderating role of brand ethicality

The popularity of NFTs is due to the fact that they can be traded and re-traded over the public blockchain without the risk of fraud (Vardhan Singh Rawat et al., 2022). In fact, even if the digital asset changes ownership multiple times, buyers can always check the provenance, the creator, which guarantees the originality and immutability of the information recorded (Malik et al., 2022). In this way, NFTs also protect creators from illegal licensing and expropriation (O'Dwyer, 2020).

Brand ethicality has been defined as the "perception of the brand as being honest, responsible, and accountable toward various stakeholders" (Singh, Iglesias, & Batista-Foguet, 2012, p. 543). Since NFTs are authenticated by and traceable in the blockchain (Chalmers at al., 2022), we assume that a relationship exists between NFT and the consumer perception that the brand is ethical. In this research, we hypothesize the following:

H1c: Perceived brand ethicality moderates the relationship between NFT product and perceived sustainability.

Study 2 tests H1a, H1b and H1c and employs an in-between subject experimental design involving experimental manipulation of product type (NFT vs. non-NFT).

Pretest: The scenarios manipulating product type were pretested (N = 130; M_{age} = 21.5; 85 males) using a 7-point Likert scale. One-hundred and thirty students from an Italian university participated in an online pretest in exchange for course credits. The pretest established that the product type described in Scenario 1a (Appendix D) was defined as an NFT. Indeed, the

scenarios yielded significantly different results (M_{NFT} = 6.51; SD = 2.21; $M_{non\text{-}NFT}$ = 3.84; SD = 1.44).

Design and participants. One hundred and twenty business students recruited on campus of a university in Italy (65 female; M_{age} = 21.3 years) participated in Study 2 and received partial course credit for taking part in the research study. The experiment was administered through online software (Qualtrics). Participants were randomly assigned to one of two product type conditions (NFT vs. non-NFT).

Procedure and stimuli. Students were sent a recruitment notice asking if they would participate in this specific study in exchange for partial course credit. They were told that the experimenter was interested in learning about consumer's opinion of digital offerings. Participants first read about either the NFT vs. non-NFT scenario (see Appendix D, Scenario 1a and 1b) and then were presented with a survey on the outcome measure, the mediator and the moderator. Likelihood of purchase was measured through a three-item, seven-point scale measuring the self-reported likelihood that a consumer would purchase a product (Kozup, Creyer & Burton, 2003). Perceived product sustainability was measured through a three-item seven-point (Kianpour, Jusoh & Asghari, 2014). Perceived brand ethicality was assessed through a six-item, seven-point scale developed by Brunk (2012). Appendix E illustrates the scales and the items used in Study 2.

Results. To test H1a, a one-way ANOVA was conducted using perceived product sustainability as the dependent variable and product type as the independent variable. Results showed that NFT had a significant main effect on perceived product sustainability ($F=10.95$; $p < .01$). Participants

reported greater perceived product sustainability in the NFT (M=6.11; SD=.79) than in the non-NFT condition (M=5.35; SD=1.54), thus confirming H1a.

Mediation analysis. To examine the hypothesized mediation mechanism in H1b [i.e., IV (product type) → Mediator (perceived product sustainability) → DV (likelihood of purchase)], mediation analysis using Model 4 in PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2017) was conducted to examine the effect of product sustainability as the mediator of the relationship between product type and likelihood of purchase. The results indicated that the indirect effect via perceived product sustainability was significant [effect = .4426, 95% CI (.1876, .7049)], whereas the direct effect became insignificant [effect = .2115, 95% CI (− .2128, .6358)], thus confirming full mediation and providing support to H1b.

Moderated mediation analysis. Results from the moderated mediation analysis showed that brand ethicality moderates the relationship between product type and product sustainability, thus confirming H1c. Moderated mediation was assessed through Model 7 of the Hayes' PROCESS macro and showed that brand ethicality significantly moderates that relationship [effect = .2756, $p = 0.03$, 95% CI: (-.5532, -.0193)] between product type and likelihood of purchase. The interaction was probed by testing the conditional effects of product involvement at two levels of confidence.

Study 3

Study 3 investigates the role of consumer community type (NFT vs. non-NFT) in influencing likelihood of purchase; and tests the mediation of product sustainability and brand legitimacy in the relationship between consumer community type and likelihood of purchase (Appendix B).

Consumer community type

NFTs can allow brands to develop highly engaging brand communities "that can support the brand, blend online and offline product ownership, and potentially create a bond between the brand and consumers" (Colicev, 2022, p. 1). NFTs usually develop a community of likeminded consumers that have access to a series of phygital experiences in which physical and digital components of the customer's relation with a brand are blended. Such experiences include access to exclusive, limited-edition merchandise, unique services, parties, and events (Colicev, 2022). NFTs allow not only a shift from the ownership-based consumption paradigm to an access-based one, but also a transformation of the consumed object from material to experiential, thus enhancing perception of sustainable consumption (Morewedge et al, 2021). Therefore, NFT consumers might be motivated by the need to belonging to an elite group or a culture, possessing something original, or reaching a status of self-gratification or self-enhancement (Amatulli and Guido, 2011). NFTs lend themselves well to achieving symbolic benefits, including love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization, being an access route to crypto communities of NFT holders (Sestino et al., 2022). We hypothesize the following:

H2a: Likelihood of purchase will be higher when consumers join an NFT-based community.

The mediating role of perceived sustainability and brand legitimacy

Perceived sustainability has been defined as "the point of view of a customer who cares more about whether products and services are based on environment-friendly materials" (Chen et al., 2020, p. 3). In this research, we conceptualize product sustainability as the consumer perception of the environment-related characters and performances of a product and/or service (Chen et al., 2020).

In addition, the concept of legitimacy, central to the institutional theory of organizations, is defined as "a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). We argue that the socialization generated by NFTs communities favors perceptions of product sustainability. By belonging to a group of likeminded individuals that value access-based (vs. ownership-based) and experiential (vs. material) consumption, NFTs communities enhance perception of product sustainability, which in turn enhances the brand legitimacy. We hypothesize that:

H2b: Perceived product sustainability mediates the relationship between consumer community type and brand legitimacy.

H2c: Perceived legitimacy mediates the relationship between perceived product sustainability and likelihood of purchase.

Study 3 test hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c.

Pretest. The scenarios manipulating consumer community type were pretested (N = 130; M_{age} = 21.5; 85 males) using a 7-point Likert scale. One-hundred and thirty students from an Italian university participated in an online pretest in exchange for course credits. The pretest established that the community described in Scenario 2a was perceived as NFT-based as opposed to the one

described in Scenario 2b. Indeed, the scenarios yielded significantly different results ($M_{NFT\ community}$ = 5.51; SD = 1.19; $M_{non\text{-}NFT\ community}$ = 3.63; SD=1.27).

Design and participants. One hundred and ten international business students recruited on the campus of a university in Italy (93 female; M_{age}= 21.5 years) participated in Study 3 and received partial course credit for taking part in the research study. Participants were randomly assigned one of two conditions (NFT-based community vs non-NFT based community).

Procedure and stimuli. The recruiting process and the questionnaire administration procedures were the same as Study 2. Participants first read about the NFT-based vs non-NFT-based consumer community scenario (see Appendix D). They were then asked to provide responses on variables including likelihood of purchase, perceived sustainability and perceived brand legitimacy. Likelihood of purchase was measured with the same scale used in Study 2. Perceived product sustainability was measured through a three-item seven-point (Kianpour et al., 2014). Perceived brand legitimacy was assessed with a three-item seven-point scale used by Fritz et al. (2017).

Results. To test H2a, a one-way ANOVAs was conducted using likelihood of purchase as the dependent variable and consumer community type as the independent variable. Results reveal that likelihood of purchase is greater when consumer community is NFT-based. Indeed, consumer community type has a significant main effect on likelihood of purchase ($F=45.91$; $p < .001$). Participants reported greater likelihood of purchase in the NFT based consumer

community condition (M=4.80; SD=.94) than in the non-NFT consumer community condition (M=3.63; SD=.84), which supports H2a.

Mediation analysis. A mediation analysis using Model 6 in PROCESS (Hayes 2013) was conducted to examine the mediation of perceived sustainability and brand legitimacy.
The results indicated that the indirect effect via perceived sustainability and brand legitimacy was significant [effect = .0772, 95% CI (.0227, .1591)], whereas the direct effect became insignificant [effect = .0843 , 95% CI (− 0741 .2428)], thus confirming full mediation and providing support to H2b and H2c.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 indicate the main effects of the experimental variable, revealing an important role of NFT products to influence perceived sustainability. Results provide support to H1a. In addition, the moderated mediation analysis shows that brand ethicality moderates the relationship between product type and perceived sustainability. Thus, H1b is also confirmed. Study 2 also indicates a mediation effect of perceived sustainability such that participants perceived the product to be more sustainable when the NFT was presented.

In the next study, we sought evidence regarding the relationship between consumer community type and likelihood of purchase. Study 3 findings indicate a significant main effect of consumer community type on the dependent variable, i.e., likelihood of purchase. This effect suggests that an NFT-based consumer community may lead to higher levels of reported likelihood of purchase. Study 3 confirms, therefore, that consumer community type is an

important factor in the NFT context and shows full mediation of perceived sustainability and brand legitimacy.

This research is subject to some limitations. First, our experiments employ convenience samples which may limit the generalizability of our findings. By the same token, students have often been used in experimental research because they are homogeneous on many dimensions, including age and education, which are variables that are likely to affect attitudes.

Second, results are product-specific since the experiment focuses on items with a high level of familiarity and high involvement (luxury fashion products). The study could be replicated considering other product categories with different levels of familiarity, consumer involvement, price, and perceived risk.

Finally, this research is country-specific, as it was conducted in Italy. Replications might consider other markets and countries with different cultural characteristics.

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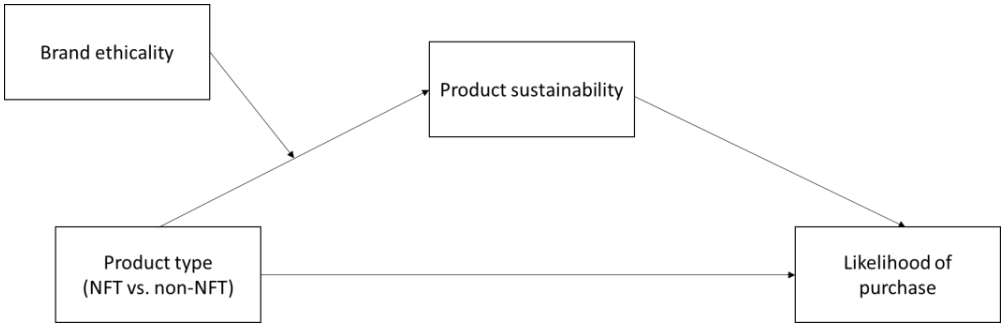
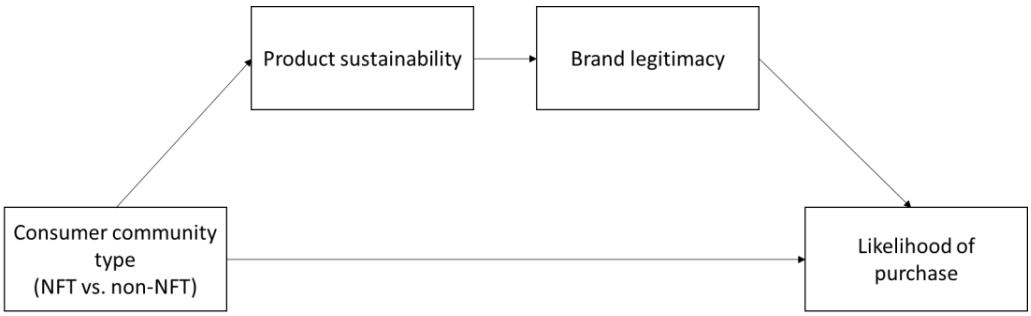
Appendix

Study 2 research framework



Study 3 research framework



Study 2 and Study 3 scenarios

Scenario 1 a – NFT product	Almaverse is an NFTs luxury fashion project based on a proprietary digital scheme that develops digital content by creating original nonfungible tokens (NFTs). Through NFTs, Almaverse promotes immaterial consumption by marketing digital fashion creations, designed by world-renowned designers, with virtual iterations in the metaverse. Almaverse NFTs employ crypto anchors, unique physical features that are applied to products in such a way that they can't be tampered with or replaced with another product. In this way, consumers are provided with a unique identifier for transactions that are recorded permanently in a blockchain. Once a transaction is recorded on a blockchain, the NFT fashion creation lasts forever.
Scenario 1 b – non-NFT product	Almaverse is a luxury fashion project that promotes consumption of physical fashion creations designed by world-renowned designers. Almaverse releases new purely physical pieces every month; however, Almaverse cannot provide traceability that protects buyers and sellers in the secondary marketplace. Alma Collectibles has not yet employed crypto anchors, unique physical features that are applied to products in a way so they can't be tampered with or replaced with another product.
Scenario 2a – NFT Community	Almaverse is an NFT community that gives customers the chance to unlock unique digital experiences and obtain an exclusive collection of digital luxury fashion collectibles. Almaverse provides its community members with access to exclusive events in the Metaverse, such as virtual fashion weeks. Community members can also publish and share NFT-related posts online, generating trackable and reliable user content through a peer-to-peer network. Community members can be compensated through tokens for their interactions and contribution. Belonging to the NFT community allows customers to join a group of likeminded people that embrace the values of the brand and that are interested in an alternative type of consumption based on experiences.
Scenario 2b – non-NFT Community	Almaverse is a luxury fashion project that aims to create value through physical luxury fashion creations and in-store experiences that allow customers to engage with the showcased products. Almaverse aims to create a community of people interested in exclusive tangible fashion goods. Almaverse releases new fashion creations every month and community members can become brand evangelists and wear the different new fashion creations at events and social occasions.

Constructs and items

Constructs	**Sources of items**	**Items**
Brand Legitimacy	Fritz et al. (2017)	The brand is congruent with the moral principles of the culture I feel close to
		The brand its well with my cultural views
		The brand is compatible with the values and norms of the community I belong to
Perceived sustainability	Adapted from Kianpour, Jusoh & Asghari (2014)	The product is friendly to environment and harmless for nature.
		The product allows for saving energy.
		The product is green and harmless for human.
Brand ethicality	Brunk (2012)	This brand respects moral laws.
		This brand always adheres to the law
		This brand is socially responsible
		This brand avoids damaging behaviour at all cost
		This brand is a good brand
		This brand will make a decision only after careful consideration of the potential positive or negative consequences for all those involved
Likelihood of purchase	Kozup et al. (2003)	Would you be more likely or less likely to purchase the product, given the information shown?
		Given the information shown, how probable is it that you would consider the purchase of the product?
		How likely would you be to purchase the product, given the information shown?

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL HEALTH PLATFORMS ON HOSPITAL BRAND FAVORABILITY RELATIONSHIPS

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Keywords: Digital health platforms, Hospital brand favorability, Protection motivation theory, Social exchange theory

Description: We investigate the impact of a digital health platform and patient contact on hospital brand favorability.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

With the Coronavirus outbreak and the consequent adoption of digital health platforms (DHPs) are transforming the way patients interact with a brand of the hospital. Given the incredible ability to contactless services and interact with patients, brand marketers have seized the opportunity to use digital health platforms as an additional communication channel to build brand favorability relationships. In fact, since the 1970s, with the development of sensor technology, information and communication technology, the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, and VR/AR related technologies, remote technology has advanced considerably and has been widely used

in medical. The global telemedicine market size was USD 41.63 billion in 2019, and the market is projected to grow from USD 79.79 billion in 2020 to USD 396.76 billion in 2027 at a compound annual growth rate of 25.8% in the 2020–2027 period (Market Research Report, 2021). Despite its importance, the current study mainly focuses on medical process services, with limited research drawing attention to digital health platforms as brand-promoting platforms. This research makes important contributions by filling this void. The relationship between the DHPs and the patients may vary in its interactivity, where trust, risk, and intention are likely to impose an impact. Hence to address the aforementioned questions, the present research draws from protection motivation theory (Rogers, 1975) and social exchange theory (Molm, 1997) from cognitive process and behavior to propose a conceptual framework to examine the impact of DHPs on hospital brand favorability relationship building.

Method and Data

This study adopted a survey research method and recruited 400 respondents from WenJuanXing (WJX, http://www.wjx.cn), China's largest online survey website. Measurements adopted: severity of the COVID-19 threat (Chen, 2016), vulnerability of the COVID-19 threat (Chen, 2016), protection motivation (Rogers, 1983), trust (Cheung & To, 2017), intention to use (Jia et al., 2013), and brand favorability (Cox & Cox, 1988). A Partial Least Square (PLS) model was conducted. All constructs were

significantly converged ($p<0.05$). The scales achieved discriminant validity, convergent validity and reliability. The effect of severity ($\beta=0.25$), and vulnerability ($\beta=0.33$) on protection motivation are significant ($p<0.001$). The effect of protection motivation ($\beta=0.27$), and trust ($\beta=0.53$) on intention to use are significant ($p<0.001$). The effect of intention to use ($\beta=0.36$), and trust ($\beta=0.47$) on brand favorability are significant ($p<0.001$). All hypotheses were supported.

Summary of Findings

Drawing from the PMT and SET from cognitive process and behavior present research examines the effects of brand favorability relationships through digital health platforms of hospitals. Results show that protection motivation (severity and vulnerability) and trust positively influence the intention to use DHPs. Trust and usage intention in DHPs drive hospital brand favorability, respectively. The findings of this research provide a rich academic and managerial implications.

Statement of Key Contributions

There are multiple unexplored relationships between hospitals and patients made possible by remote technology. With the emergence of the Coronavirus-19, the connection between contactless services and patients has created several marketing possibilities within the medical industry. However, the majority of the study has been on patient acceptance of digital health platforms and the quality of treatment procedures.

Rarely has study been conducted on the use of digital health platforms as a branding platform channel to improve patients' perceptions of hospitals. This study proposed a conceptual framework by adopting protection motivation theory (PMT) and social exchange theory (SET). The aim is to investigate the impact of a digital health platform and patient contact on hospital brand favorability. The implications have significant ramifications for brand marketing in telemedicine.

FACE SIZE AND USER ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA VIDEOS: A MACHINE LEARNING APPROACH

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Abstract

Social media has emerged at the forefront of marketing strategy, with social media videos becoming a key component of brand engagement with consumers. Despite its growth and popularity, academic research on social media videos is limited, partly due to the need for technology to capture details of social media video content. We address this need by using machine learning and convolutional neural networks to capture frame-by-frame level details of video content. In particular, this study examines the role of the face, and how face size and face duration during the video impact social media engagement. Using a unique data set of the top 50 brands on the fastest growing video platform, TikTok, we find that face size has a positive effect on social media engagement, but face duration in a video has a negative impact. The findings suggest that the use of faces in video can help brands increase engagement on social media, but relying too much on faces mitigates the positive attention gained by their use.

Statement of Key Contributions

Social media has become an important tool for marketers in their efforts to reach consumers, particularly through videos, where 84% of consumers report purchasing products due to a branded video (Iskiev 2022). With social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts increasingly turning their focus to short-form videos, social media marketers are challenged with creating shorter video experiences to gain consumer attention. Moreover, the use of short-form video is now a focal social media video strategy, as short-form videos are the fastest-growing area in marketing with the highest rates of online engagement and return-on-investment (Bodnar 2022).

However, despite the growth and popularity of social media videos, academic research in this domain is limited. One reason for its limitations to date is the high costs and computational power needed to analyze video content using automated methods. We seek to add to the literature by a) examining the relationship between faces and social media videos using artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques, b) building on existing literature to further our understanding of the attentional bias of faces within the social media context, c) investigating online engagement metrics for social media video by utilizing a unique data set of leading brands on TikTok. This study offers novel insights for academics and marketers in two main areas. First, it demonstrates how advanced machine learning techniques can be used to better understand video such as those on TikTok. Second, it shows that for social media video, the size of the face relative to the screen has a positive effect on consumer engagement, but face duration in a video has a negative impact. As such, faces in social media videos can help brands increase engagement; however, relying too much on faces mitigates the positive attention gained by their use.

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As more than half of the world's population is active on social media, marketers are focused on harnessing its consumer reach to grow their brands (Kemp 2022). Social media helps foster brand communities, leading to beneficial brand outcomes like greater purchase intent and loyalty (Algesheimer et al. 2010). A particular aspect of social media growth has been short-form videos, facilitated by the affordability and availability of smart phones. Short-form videos have become entertainment for consumers, and entertainment has become a key motivator for creating and sharing social media content (Phelps et al. 2004).

As consumers and social media platforms turn their focus to shorter video experiences, social media marketers are further investigating this medium. With its emphasis on short-form video, TikTok has become the fastest growing social media platform, with more than one billion monthly active users and twice the average daily active users of any other online video platform (TikTok 2021). By emphasizing people – and faces – in its platform format, TikTok has become a leader in social media, concentrated on relatable storylines and people as their "real self", where faces are a form of social currency (Zhang 2021).

Previous marketing research has shown the importance of featuring faces across several contexts. In retail marketing, previous work has shown that mannequins with a face and head lead to higher purchase intent for the merchandise compared to headless mannequins (Lindström et al. 2016). In social media research, static images on Instagram had 40% more "likes" when they had faces versus without faces (Bakhsi et al. 2014). Similarly, other research showed that advertising with faces had higher recall and content processing (Droulers and Adil 2015).

However, despite the fast growth and popularity of social media video, academic research on this medium is limited, with only a few marketing articles using video data (Schellewald 2021). Although previous research has focused on face as a binary question in static media (such as whether to use faces in print advertising), there is a dearth of knowledge on the nuances of faces in videos other than binary coding (i.e., if and how faces are useful for engagement). Complicating this question is that analyzing videos is considered time consuming and expensive, and thus, has mostly been limited with small-scale analysis (Li et al. 2019).

Insights from previous research on faces and human attention come from a wide range of disciplines. Psychologists and biologists have studied the preferential attention people give towards faces for decades (Tomalski et al. 2009). Faces have a biological and social significance

for their role in conveying primal information about social interaction (Bruce and Young 1998), the face has a high capacity to rapidly transmit information (Small and Verrochi 2009), and the human brain has remarkable accuracy to quickly convey messages through facial movements (Lang et al. 2007). As such, further understanding the "attentional bias" for faces is particularly crucial in the competitive area of social media video. As more consumers and brands connect on social media platforms like TikTok, it is important to understand how faces generate engagement.

The purpose of this research is to use machine learning techniques to investigate how faces engage consumers on social media. The use of faces on short-form video has anecdotally been said to improve engagement, but there is little empirical data in this area. With people – and more specifically faces – being an important part of the video experience, our work takes a more robust look at the use of faces (i.e., face size relative to screen and face duration of time) and its impact on social media engagement. Our use of advanced computerized learning allows us to measure video insights at a larger scale to provide meaningful insights for academic and practitioners.

Dataset

Our dataset consists of all TikTok videos posted by the top 50 brands (Interbrand 2021) from their account inception until February 2022. Selection of the top 50 brands was to maintain a cross-section of brand categories. The data was collected using an application programming interface (API) that allowed direct access to publicly available TikTok posts. For each TikTok video, we separated the videos frame-by-frame to obtain individual images where each image corresponds to one second of a given video, resulting in 50,000 images. For this research, we

focused on three main sources of data: (1) metadata from each post consisting of 24 individual variables (i.e., engagement metrics, video details, author information), (2) object identification data using convolutional neural networks (CNN), and (3) text analysis for Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) of the video descriptions. Our resulting dataset encompassed 3,271 posts with 2,755 videos.

To perform our scalable image analysis, we used a machine learning approach called object detection. This method enables us to identify objects (i.e., faces) and return the spatial location of the detected object in a bounding box format, thus allowing us to localize each face per image along with its corresponding pixel dimension. In particular, we applied a cascade convolutional neural network to detect faces in the individual video frames (Li et al. 2015). The output of this algorithm is the number of faces and the pixel area of each face relative to the image size. To aggregate this data to the video level, we then created variables to describe the average number of faces per frame and the average face size (Figure 1 presents a screen image of the face detection algorithm).

Model

We estimate the effect of video face size and face duration on three key social media metrics (comments, likes, and shares, which are log-transformed due to skewness) using a seemingly unrelated regression (SUR) model. The SUR model allows the error terms to correlate across equations for other exogenous factors that could “shock” user engagement (e.g., trending topics or internet memes).

The model contains several key controls, related to either the video[1] or the brand. Day of week binary variables and time since first video are included to account for timing effects, either for a particular day of week or over time (i.e., brands are likely to gain more followers and more engagement as more videos are posted). Video duration (and a squared term) in seconds is included to address whether longer videos yield more engagement. The number of "@" and "#" from the video description is also included, as potential signals to draw attention for influencers, challenges, or trending topics. Additionally, number of followers is included and log-transformed due to skewness. Since the number of followers may be endogenous to the three engagement measures, a Gaussian copula is included to address this (Park and Gupta 2012). The copula method[2] requires the potentially endogenous variable to be non-normally distributed, which is indeed the case for followers (Shapiro-Wilks $W = 0.069$, $p < 0.01$). The binary variables for Saturday and brand excitement are part of the intercept term.

Results

Estimation results appear in Table 1. As the key variables of face size and face duration are in percentages, the log-transformed engagement measures of comments, likes, and shares can be interpreted in elasticities. Face size produces a significantly positive impact on comments (Est. = 1.624, $p < 0.04$) and on shares (Est. = 1.806, $p < 0.04$), but marginal significance on likes (Est. = 0.265, $p = 0.72$). Unlike face size, face duration in the video exhibited negative effects on comments (Est. = -0.224, $p < 0.05$) and shares (Est. = -0.494, $p < 0.01$), but no significant effect on likes (Est. = -0.158, $p > 0.23$). To summarize, the use of faces in video can help brands

[1] Video measures such as resolution (e.g., 720P), format (mp4), or height/width were nearly identical across videos, and do not provide enough variation to suggest meaningful estimation here.
[2] Park & Gupta (2012) note the copula approach should use bootstrapped samples. We report the empirical estimations, which are similar to the bootstrapped results.

increase engagement metrics on social media by having faces take up larger areas of the screen, but presenting faces for too long mitigates the positive attention gained by their use.

*** Insert Table 1 about here ***

Several of the control variables also warrant attention. As expected, number of followers, number of days since video was posted, and day of the week, were significantly tied to engagement metrics. The number of followers had significantly positive effects on comments (Est. = 0.305, $p < 0.01$), likes (Est. = 0.335, $p < 0.01$), and shares (Est. = 0.112, $p < 0.01$). Conversely, the number of days since first video posting had a small but negative effect on engagement (each $p < 0.01$); this indicates that the longer a brand had been posting TikTok videos, its engagement decreased slightly over time. Finally, video duration had a negative main effect on comments (Est. = -0.011, $p < 0.01$) and likes (Est. = -0.015, $p < 0.01$), but no effect on shares (Est. = -0.006, $p > 0.14$). No significant curvilinear effect for video duration was found at the $p < 0.05$ level, indicating shorter videos are better for audience engagement. Estimating each engagement metric separately through ordinary least-squares regression yielded similar results, and the variance inflation factors for all variables were less than 10 (suggesting no multi-collinearity concerns).

Conclusion and Next Steps

This study offers novel insights for academics and marketers in two main areas. First, it demonstrates how advanced machine learning techniques can be utilized to better understand social media videos. Second, it shows that for short-form videos, higher face-to-screen ratios are

beneficial for brands, but brands should not rely on showcasing faces for the entire duration of the video. Findings from this article provide practical advice for marketers and brand managers on creative aspects to short-form videos, as well as, provide methodological tools for automated intelligence techniques.

In addition to our reported main effects, future directions remain. One avenue is examining moderating effects. The authors of this research are currently finishing data collection for moderators in two main areas: a) the impact of brand personality and facial metrics on engagement, using Aaker's classification system (Aaker 1997), and b) the effect of sentiment and facial metrics on engagement, using automatic speech recognition technology to create video transcripts and using LIWC, a well-known text analysis tool for measuring sentiment analysis.

Table 1: Estimation Results for Social Media Video Engagement

	DV: ln(Comments)			DV: ln(Likes)			DV: ln(Shares)		
	Est	SE	p-value	Est	SE	p-value	Est	SE	p-value
Intercept	-0.975	0.463	0.036	3.489	0.449	0.000	1.546	0.500	0.002
Face_Size	1.624	0.777	0.037	0.265	0.753	0.724	1.806	0.837	0.031
Face_Duration	-0.224	0.110	0.042	0.126	0.107	0.239	-0.494	0.119	0.000
Sunday	-0.050	0.162	0.756	-0.158	0.157	0.313	0.026	0.175	0.879
Monday	0.123	0.133	0.352	-0.045	0.129	0.727	0.175	0.143	0.221
Tuesday	0.066	0.133	0.620	0.040	0.128	0.754	0.338	0.143	0.018
Wednesday	0.209	0.130	0.108	0.085	0.126	0.501	0.362	0.140	0.010
Thursday	0.069	0.130	0.597	-0.024	0.126	0.850	0.255	0.140	0.069
Friday	0.157	0.129	0.224	-0.041	0.125	0.743	0.264	0.139	0.059
ln(Followers)	0.305	0.037	0.000	0.335	0.035	0.000	0.112	0.039	0.004
copula_ln(Followers)	0.043	0.016	0.006	-0.003	0.015	0.833	0.061	0.017	0.000
Days_Since_First	-0.001	0.000	0.000	-0.002	0.000	0.000	-0.002	0.000	0.000
Video_@	0.012	0.052	0.820	0.175	0.050	0.001	-0.028	0.056	0.616
Video_#	-0.090	0.016	0.000	-0.038	0.016	0.018	-0.047	0.018	0.008
Sincere	1.922	0.141	0.000	1.889	0.137	0.000	2.387	0.152	0.000
Sophistication	0.995	0.117	0.000	0.835	0.113	0.000	1.240	0.126	0.000
Competence	1.472	0.158	0.000	0.205	0.153	0.179	0.573	0.170	0.001
Brand_Image	1.380	0.170	0.000	1.291	0.164	0.000	1.610	0.183	0.000
Video_Duration	-0.011	0.004	0.005	-0.015	0.004	0.000	-0.006	0.004	0.145
Video_Duration^2	0.000	0.000	0.504	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.812
System Weighted R^2	0.323								

Figure 1: Illustration of face detection algorithm

**References are available upon request.*

FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE: TECHNOLOGICAL-INDUCED STRESS AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORK SITES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMICS

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Keywords

Social Network Sites, Social Media, Information and Communication Technology, Technostress, Loneliness

Description

Our findings, based on a quantitative survey with 327 participants, emphasize that the contextual setting has an impact on technostress perception as it influences the weighing of the pros and cons of social network sites use to compensate perceived loneliness.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, many countries temporarily introduced extensive contact restrictions. While this helped to slow the spread of the virus, the measures also had an impact on mental health by leading to significantly more loneliness (Killgore et al., 2020). In order to compensate, individuals try to establish social interactions through the usage of Social Network

Sites (SNS) (Dong et al., 2020). SNS focus on the relational exchange between users, allowing them to connect virtually with both its regular network and even extend it, making them feel part of a community (Aichner et al., 2021). Besides the positive effects of SNS, they come with a dark side: SNS can amplify technostress, a "phenomenon of stress experienced by end users in organizations as a result of their use of ICTs". (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008)

In academic research, benefits and risks of SNS are often discussed contradictory. On the one hand, researchers describe SNS as a low threshold substitute, which can reduce loneliness and furthermore creates a positive sense of belonging. On the other hand, SNS intensifies the perception of technostress. With our research, we analyze the effects of loneliness on technostress perception and the influence of SNS.

Method and Data

We set up an online-questionnaire in which 327 university education students took part, who were exposed to an unfamiliar online learning technology during the Covid-19 pandemics. All respondents used at least one SNS. At about 85%, Instagram was the social network site that used the most, followed by Facebook (about 60%). In order to measure respondents' intensity regarding their use of SNS, we used a semantic differential variable with lower values representing spending much less time on SNS in the pandemics and higher values representing spending much more time on SNS during the pandemics. Furthermore, we used the following scales to measure the constructs of interest: SNS usage reasons (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016), respondents' loneliness (Hughes et al., 2004) and technostress perception (Peters, Feste & Schumacher, 2022). To establish a consistent baseline for measuring technostress perception, the sample includes only German university students who were confronted with online learning technology during Covid-19 for the first time. We established the measurement model by using CFA and by assessing global fit indices and

criteria for the internal structure of the model (Schreiber et al., 2006). All thresholds are met. Local fit parameters show evidence of validity and reliability of the construct.

Summary of Findings

We found that females' loneliness perception is significantly higher than for males (H_1). Furthermore, our analysis reveals a highly significant effect (H_2) between perceived loneliness and technostress perception. A highly significant interaction effect confirms that a higher degree of SNS use dampens the negative relationship of loneliness on technostress perception even more (H_3). Furthermore, the conditional indirect effect drawing on a bootstrapping approach demonstrated that the indirect effect of gender on technostress perception through loneliness perception is contingent on the degree of SNS use during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our research highlights the importance of the contextual setting. A new organizational environment emerged because of Covid-19 and corresponding social changes. Although research conducted prior to the pandemic shows a negative relationship between technology usage and perception of technostress (e.g. Maier et al., 2015), our findings emphasize that the contextual setting has an impact on technostress perception as it influences the weighing of the pros and cons of ICT use. Since SNS allows establishing contact with friends and colleagues (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Maier et al., 2012; Maier et al., 2015), individuals evaluated this ICT as more beneficial, logically decreasing technostress perception.

Key Contributions

With our research, we analyze the effects of loneliness on technostress perception and the influence of SNS. Therefore, we combine academic literature on loneliness and technostress and evaluate this relationship in consideration of the SNS usage intensity. By measuring technostress perception

in online learning, this study encompasses a professional perspective. In addition, through analyzing the moderating effect of SNS use on perceived technostress regarding loneliness, this research also includes a private perspective, which creates a holistic picture of technostress adding a new perspective to the academic literature.

Our quantitative survey demonstrates that perceived loneliness negatively influences technostress perceptions. Furthermore, we prove that SNS use diminishes technostress perception even more, in particular in the case of a strong sense of loneliness. With our research results, we were able to show that even in a technology-driven environment; a higher intensity of SNS usage can reduce the perception of technostress. In other words, it can be quite effective to fight fire with fire. These results offer important implications for decision-makers in particular. First, stakeholders need to be aware of the divergent effects and interactions of different technologies. Second, decision makers should pay more attention to the situational context of the SNS users.

References are available upon request.

GREEN TAG: THE CATALYST IN LIVE STRAMING E-COMMERCE

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Keywords: green tags, live streaming, sales, interactivity of influencers, social media marketing

Description: Can the use of green tags during live streaming social E-commerce contribute to the increase in sales? Our study investigates the role of green labels in promoting products in Chinese live streaming platforms with the moderating effects of influencer-viewer interactivity.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Social media is not only a platform for people to communicate and discuss news but also a popular carrier for marketing purposes. According to Accenture's (2020) recent report, social E-commerce across the world is expected to grow from $492 billion in 2021 to $1.2 trillion by 2025, and it will remain as a popular marketing approach because it provides great opportunities for small businesses to flourish (Williams, 2021). Echoing this, a recent survey indicates that more than 50% of consumers have had purchased a product at least once directly from a social media channel, and within those who haven't, 9% said they plan to do so

eventually (Bump, 2021). Covid-19 is another factor that contributes to the prevalence of social commerce. During Covid-19, physical channels are crashed or significantly slowed, leading consumers to seek for digital alternatives to fulfill their needs. As a result, live streaming ecommerce has emerged as a new trend and digital approach (Arora et al., 2021). In China, live stream ecommerce has developed over 280% between 2017 and 2020 (Greenwald, 2020). In the USA, Amazon invested and launched Amazon Live to keep up with the recent trend, while Walmart tested influencer driven live shopping on TikTok, which allowed them to quickly grow follower base by 25% (Utsi, 2022). Likewise, major tech companies such as Apple, Facebook, Microsoft have all acted fast to be ahead of the curve.

Sustainable and eco-friendly products are one of the most trending topics across various industries during live streaming. This is driven by consumers' increasing demand for the adoption of sustainable lifestyles (Archer, Cromwell, &Fenech, 2022). Thereby, during live streaming, companies have been gradually choosing to sell products with or without a green tag. A green tag is known as tradable renewable certificate, and products that are labeled as "green" which means it is environmentally friendly and sustainable (Helming, 2005). While most of the existing research in live streaming ecommerce has highlighted the importance of social influencers (Park et al, 2021; Brooks, Drenten, &Piskorski, 2021; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020) and consumers' motivation of sharing and gifting (Whoh, Freeman, & McLaughlin, 2018; Tu et al., 2018; Hu, Zhang, & Wang, 2017), there is a dearth of research in investigating if green labels play a significant role in affecting actual sales. Addressing this research gap, this study examines the use of green labels in live streaming ecommerce and how it interacts with social influencers to affect actual sales.

Method and Data

Data were collected from Kuaishou, a Chinese social media platform focuses on short video and live streaming. Eight weeks' live streaming data on Kuaishou were selected to maximize

the variety of the data. A total of 79,013 raw data were selected from between November 2019, March 2020, and April 2020 due to availability of live streaming activities across the platform. Raw data were processed before data analysis. For instance, only live-streaming data from e-commerce activities were kept. Live-streaming activities that did not involve product consumption and purchase behaviors (such as sports, game shows, etc.) were removed. Moreover, we also removed invalid data, e.g., data with product quality, attitude of service, and logistic information missing. A final of 10,234 valid data were retrieved from the database. Among 2160 cross-sectional data, 805 data contained "green tag", whereas 1,355 data did not include "green tags". The final data can be categorized across 10 industries including food, necessities, home appliance, green food, green packaging, beverages, tea, clothing and accessories, condiment, and home textiles. All measurement items were adjusted to match the product ID with time period we selected.

The dependent variable is *lnSales*, which is measured by the natural logarithm of the actual sales during the live-streaming process. The independent variable is green tags (*GT*), which is defined as a dummy variable (1=with green tag, 0=without green tags). The interactivity of influencers was measured by three indicators: 1) interaction, which was measured by the natural logarithm of the ratio of the number of actively-engaging views to the average number of viewers, 2) commenting, which was measured by the natural logarithm of the ratio of the number of comments to the average number of viewers, and 3) likes, which was measured by the natural logarithm of the ratio of the number of likes received to the average number of viewers. We also controlled for the characteristics of influencers, such as the number of followers (*lnFollowers*) and virtual gifts received (*lnVG*), the characteristics of products, such as price (*lnPrice*), industry dummies (*Industry*), and product quality (*lnPQ*), and other factors, i.e., duration (*lnDuration*) and covid influence (0=before Covid, 1=after Covid).

Summary of Findings

Our preliminary regression analysis results show that green tags have a positive impact on live stream social ecommerce sales (ß=9.609, p<. 05). The interaction of influencers are measured by interaction, comments and likes. However, statistically only interaction and comments have positively moderating effects of green tags on product real sales (ß=1.096, p<. 05; ß=0.887, p<. 10), whereas an insignificant moderating effect of likes on the relationship between green tags and sales (ß=0.647, p>. 10) are identified. In addition, there are statistically significant heterogeneous effects among the high-low level of the number of influencer followers, and the high-low level of the amount of gifting revenue. However, no significant different effects have been identified before and after the COVID break.

Key Contributions

This article makes several key contributions to the live streaming literature. First, it expands the existing literature on live streaming and consumer decision making by examining the positive effect of "green labels" on consumer purchase in the live streaming social commerce. Our study confirms that green tags can influence consumer purchase even in virtual live streaming channel. In addition, our study is also among the very first to explore how social influencers can moderate the impact of green tags on sales. Building on the cognitive theory and social exchange theory, this study confirms the positive moderation effects between the interactivity of social influencers and green tags on sales.

Funding

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References

References are available upon request.

HOW GAMIFICATION IN VIRTUAL REALITY AFFECTS BRAND COOLNESS AND MARKETING OUTCOMES

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Keywords: Brand Coolness; Gamification; Virtual Reality; Customer Loyalty

Description: The current study shows that hedonic and social values enhance perception of brand coolness and that utilitarian value was found not to affect brand coolness in a VR environment with a gamification experience, however, brand coolness affects brand preference and customer loyalty in such environment.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

So far, the experiments have shown that the combination of gamification and VR can create enjoyable and energetic customer experiences that maintain participants' engagement and interest, and provide them with more interactive, fast and reliable information (Jang and Hsieh, 2021). Further research is needed to investigate how exactly

gamification enhances VR experiences in terms of value creation, as the creation of value is the primary goal of gamification in marketing (Huotari and Hamari, 2012; Noorbehbahani et al., 2019).

Cool brands are ahead of their competition – they benefit, among other factors, from favorable customer attitudes and increased word-of-mouth (Warren et al., 2019). Brand coolness has become an indicator of brand success (Loureiro et al., 2020; Warren et al., 2019), making it a very relevant topic to explore further. Therefore, the current paper explores the above gap by using the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) and explores the following research questions: Can a VR environment with a gamification experience lead brands to be cooler? How can such coolness affect marketing outcomes such as brand preference and loyalty?

Method and Data

A VR experience was developed for the study created with Unity. When participants entered the VR environment, they stood in front of four buttons, each with a different color. To start the game, the participants pointed at the quiz item that they saw straight in front of them with the controller. A large picture of one of the shared destinations of the airline brands is shown and four locations are suggested, one being the correct destination. The task of the players was to guess the correct destination and log in their answer by choosing the button that has the same color as the symbol that was next to the suggested location which they believed was the correct one.

A total sample size of 120 participants was collected. From those, 70% of the sample identified as female, 29.2% as male and 0.8% as other. A total of 85.8% of the participants had 18 to 24 years old, which was followed by 10.8% who fall into the age category 25 to 34 years old. The sample consists primarily of students (75.8%) or working students

(17.5%). Most participants (50.8%) completed their high school degree, followed by 38.3% who finished their bachelor studies.

Summary of Findings

To validate the first-order measurement model the metrics item reliability, convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity were assessed and fulfilled the minimum thresholds (Hair et al., 2010; Urbach and Ahlemann, 2010). Common method bias was tested using Harmans' one factor test and revealed values of total variance extracted by one factor of 46.5% thus confirming the absence of CMB in the study.

Results show that hedonic and social value positively influence brand coolness and that brand coolness enhances brand preference and customer loyalty in a VR environment with a gamification experience. The result shows that hedonic and social values have a significant impact on brand coolness which complements the previous findings of the pioneer studies on the concept of brand coolness (Warren and Campbell, 2014; Warren et al., 2019). However, utilitarian value does not significantly influence brand coolness. Affective benefits are more personal and generally more emphasized by customers (Hsu et al., 2021), and since the nature of brand coolness is rather complex and goes beyond functional utility, it seems sensible that more emotional values like hedonic and social value shows a greater impact on brand coolness than functional benefits.

Statement of Key Contributions

While a wide range of benefits of virtual reality and gamification have already been explored in literature, to the best of the author's knowledge, no studies have explored how VR environments coupled with a gamification experience can affect the perception that customers have about the companies. More particularly, the current study grounds on the theory of reasoned action (TRA) to investigate how the experiential values provided in a

VR environment with a gamification experience affect the brand coolness perception of customers after such an engaging experience and consequently, marketing outcomes such as brand preference and loyalty.

The current study is relevant for managers in for-profit and non-profit companies that which to increase the level of brand coolness via a VR environment with a gamification experience. Managers should design their gamification elements to highlight the emotional attributes of the experience and make sure consumers perceive that they are involved in a social game – one where they are competing against other players. As hedonic and social values increase companies are seen as cooler by consumers. According to our study, such coolness effect is fundamental to allow companies to increase their long-term relationship with consumers (loyalty) and increase the preference for their brands.

References are available upon request

HOW REAL IS REAL? THE IMPACT OF VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS SITUATION AUTHENTICITY ON CONSUMER ATTITUDES

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Keywords: virtual influencer, social media, mental imagery, situation authenticity

Description: This paper attempts to interact the virtual space with the physical world, exploring the impact of the situation authenticity of virtual influencers on consumer attitudes in social media advertising.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The present research addresses the following specific research goals: 1) to investigate whether the level of situation authenticity (high vs. low) of virtual influencer has a direct impact on consumer attitudes towards virtual influencer; 2) to understand the psychological mechanism of the relationship between virtual influencer situation authenticity and consumer attitudes considering the mediating role of mental imagery; and 3) to further explore whether the social interaction (with vs. without) moderates these impacts.

Method and Data

We invited 127, 125 and 316 participants sequentially to participate in 3 experiments through an online website (www.credamo.com). In study 1, we include two versions of

ads separately (situation authenticity: high vs. low) to demonstrate the effect of situation authenticity of virtual influencer on consumer attitudes in social media advertising for a real brand. We then test whether high situation authenticity produces a more positive attitude through mental imagery compared to low situation authenticity in study 2. In study 3, we conducted four versions of asd-2 (situation authenticity: high vs. low) × 2 (social interaction: with vs. without) to test the moderated mediation effect of social interaction on the effect of situation authenticity on mental imagery (a: elaboration, b: quality). Before each formal experiment, we also conducted a manipulation test of the experimental material. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of two/four conditions and viewed different versions of the ad. Participants were asked to watch an advertising video, which was posted on social media platforms by the virtual influencer for advertising purposes. Finally, all participants will be asked to fill out a questionnaire at the end of the screening and receive remuneration at the end of the survey.

Summary of Findings

Through three online studies, we demonstrated that the level of situation authenticity of virtual influencers affects consumers' mental imagery and attitudes towards a virtual influencer. First, we identified two different levels of situation authenticity, of which high level was more likely to generate positive consumer attitudes. In addition, high situation authenticity will also promote consumers to have more positive mental imagery than low situation authenticity, and further positively influencing consumer attitudes towards virtual influencers. On the other hand, we proved that low situation authenticity advertising effect can be improved by introducing social interaction, but the moderating effect of social interaction is not established under the condition of high situation authenticity, and even inhibits consumers from producing mental imagery.

Therefore, we have identified the mediation mechanism of social interaction in situation authenticity to mental imagery: (1) social interaction should not be introduced when advertising has a high situation authenticity level, and (2) when advertising is designed to be low situation authenticity, social interaction needs to be added to enhance consumer attitudes.

Key Contributions

First, our research shifted the focus from appearance authenticity to situation authenticity. With the rapid development of virtual influencers, the research on virtual influencers has gradually deepened. While a lot of research has focused on the characteristics of virtual objects appearance (De Visser et al., 2016; Arsenyan and Mirowska, 2021), our research is the first to combine digital objects with physical spaces. We expanded our research to focus on the situation authenticity that is relevant to virtual influencer advertising.

Second, we contribute to previous research about mental imagery by reconciling the practice of virtual influencer situation authenticity with research findings on mental imagery to demonstrate that high situation authenticity contributes to mental imagery and promotes advertising attitudes. We are expanding the boundaries of existing research by harmonizing the findings of virtual influencer situational authenticity, combining the authenticity of virtual influencers with the mental imagery of consumers.

Third, our research explores the moderating role of social interaction between virtual influencers and real people. Based on ELM, we explain in detail the role mechanism of virtual influencers' social interaction in social media advertising. Through two

interpretive routes of ELM, it is revealed how social interaction works better in ads where virtual influencers carry different level of situation authenticity.

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References are available at request

LINKING INFLUENCER CAMPAIGN TO ENGAGEMENT AND BRAND REVENUE, EVIDENCE FROM A FIELD STUDY.

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Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Micro Influencer, Beauty brand, Influencer marketing ROI

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This study was conducted during the major social, economic, and healthcare mid-pandemic shift and focused on drawing on the literature on social media influencers to build a bridge to a practitioner's world to compare influencers' post engagement with a brand's organic post. It was done to determine these posts' contributions to the brand's website traffic and revenue. It was accomplished by conducting a field study during which a new beauty brand with a relatively small following was creating its own content and simultaneously engaged in an influencer campaign. Key metrics were gathered for the brand and influencers. Those metrics included engagement statistics broken into likes and comments. They were later linked to website traffic and brand revenue. No other marketing paid campaigns were run at the time offering a degree of control. The results suggest that posts by influencers have contributed to the business' growth in terms of followers, increased traffic to the website as well as increased revenue suggesting a relatively immediate return on investment from the influencer campaign.

Research Questions.

The research question for the study revolved around the effectiveness of influencer marketing as compared to brand efforts. Specifically, this study compared the brand's organic posts to influencer posts with respect to social media engagement and its effects on website traffic and average purchase price.

Method and Data

Data was collected from an Instagram account and an associated website of an up-and-coming beauty brand with a focus on Instagram posts made by the brand and an influencer post about the brand. The data from Instagram was then merged with the website traffic and sales data in order to determine the effectiveness of influencer posts and organic branded posts.

Summary of Findings

This study offers unique insights into the contributions of micro-influencers within the beauty industry and links it directly to brand website traffic and revue. Findings suggest that influencers outperformed brand organic posts in terms of engagement metrics such as likes and comments as well as behavioral variables such as unique website visits and purchases. Further analysis suggested, however, that not likes but comments and unique visits are better contributors to brand revenue. This study offers support and external validity to prior experimental research which tends to have higher internal validity giving academics a better understanding of the impact of influencer campaigns on brand performance. Additionally, influencer posts resulted in doubling the average selling price as compared to the brand's organic posts.

Key Contributions

Practitioners have reported success in their influencer marketing campaign but due to the simultaneous nature of another campaign, the exact contribution was hard to determine. On the other, academics mostly focused on consumer intentions relying on surveys, and experimental or scenario studies. This study bridges academic and practitioner research on influencer marketing to determine its effect on the growth and revenue of a new beauty brand.

References are available upon request.

LIVESTREAMING INFLUENCER MARKETING, PLATFORM CHARACTERISTICS, AND VOTERS' POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN TAIWAN'S 2022 NINE-IN-ONE ELECTION

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Keywords: Influencer marketing, Livestreaming platforms, Political Communication, Source factors, Taiwan

Description: Our study focuses on the emergence of livestreaming influencers and influencer marketing practices in political communication in Taiwan.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The livestreaming platforms are inherently multi-platforms because real-time audio and video can be broadcast via mobile (Garcia-Pineda et al., 2018), social media (Burroughs, 2015), and videogame (Johnson & Woodcock, 2019; Ruberg et al., 2019) technologies (Yang & Kang, 2021). With its many advantages over traditional media, livestreaming platforms have been increasingly used in political campaigns both locally (such as President Tsai's successful 2020 campaign) (Tan, 2020; Yang & Kang, 2021) and internationally (such as former U.S. President Trump) (Thompson, 2019).

We proposed the following research questions and hypotheses to guide our study.

RQ1: What characteristics of livestreaming influencers are deemed most important by voters in Taiwan's 2022 Nine-in-One Election?

RH1: Characteristics of livestreaming influencers will predict voters' political participation behaviors in Taiwan's 2022 Nine-in-One Election.

RQ2: To what extent could confounding variables (such as media framing and social media sentiment) affect the relationships between livestreaming influencers' characteristics and voters' political participation in Taiwan's 2022 Nine-in-One Election?

Method

Political communication research has increasingly adopted a mixed method (Parmelee & Perkins, 2012). With the rise of social media and sentiment data readily available to researchers, Karlsen and Enjolras (2016) combined candidates' survey data with their tweets from the Twitter Application Programming Interface (API). In recent years, this mixed-method research has become very popular in political communication by combining voter survey data and social media/Twitter content (Ohme, 2021). We modelled our study with these emerging and innovative methods by including a combination of online voter surveys (Karlsen & Enjolras, 2016; Ohme, 2021) and a computational text mining method to identify keywords, key phrases, topics, and themes to analyze mainstream media framing and social sentiment. We reason that media framing practices represent political expressions from the media institutions to assign salience to a news issue and an event (Carnahan et al., 2019; Tour & Koteyko, 2015; Wang & Guo, 2018). On the other hand, social sentiment demonstrates individuals' political opinions shaping the public's perceptions.

Summary of Findings

We followed Boulianne's (2011, 2015) procedures and Gil de Zúñiga et al.'s (2014) to use a two-wave national panel design. Actual election results were analyzed in the model.

We followed the sampling plan of unstructured texts in a similar study that studied social media sentiment and anti-party attitudes in Taiwan's 2018 Nine-in-One Election (Liu, 2022). The sampling plan of the textual data began 100 days before the election when the Central Election Committee announced the official launch in August 2022 and concluded two weeks after the late November election when the final election results were validated to become official.

The analyses of social sentiment will follow Matalon et al.'s procedures (2014) to label neutral sentiment toward livestreaming influencers as (0), positive sentiment as (+1), and negative sentiment as (-1). These 13 emotions include agreeableness, anger, analytical, confidence, disgust, emotional range, extraversion, fear, joy, openness, sadness, and tentative (Matalon et al., 2014).

Statement of Key Contributions

Our study focuses on the emergence of livestreaming influencers and influencer marketing practices in political advertising campaigns. This study is based on an integrated framework of influencer marketing and voters' political participation behavior literature to address these crucial phenomena by empirically testing the relationships of study variables. Our study attempts to provide an overview and assessment of livestreaming influence marketing practices for various political campaign activities and to empirically evaluate the roles of the livestreaming influencers on voters' political participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Verba & Nie, 1972) in Taiwan's 2022 Nine-in-One Election.

Our study's theoretical and methodological contributions are the employment of a mixed research method that will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the roles of livestreaming influencers in political marketing research. Based on an actual and ongoing election in 2022, this study further considers the ecological and macro-level factors (such as media framing and the society's overall social sentiments) and other moderating factors affecting the proposed

relationships in the theoretical model.

References are available upon request

MARKETING THROUGH NON-FUNGIBLE TOKENS (NFTS): HOW LUXURY BRANDS ENGAGE CONSUMERS THROUGH NFTS IN THE METAVERSE

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Keywords: Non-fungible tokens (NFTs), Metaverse, Luxury, Brands, Social currency

Description: We examine how luxury brands employ branded non-fungible tokens (BNFTs) to develop brand relationships.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The emergence of the Metaverse provides brands with the new potential to cultivate relationships with consumers. The global Metaverse market is forecast to reach 678.8 billion USD by 2030, up from an estimated 38.85 billion USD in 2021 and 47.48 billion USD in 2022. (Statista, 2022). Games and digital fashion are at the forefront of the Metaverse market. Many luxury brands participate in the Metaverse through non-fungible tokens (NFTs). NFTs are blockchain-based digital assets that are authenticated using digital ledgers, or blockchains, and stored in digital wallets in the same manner as cryptocurrencies (Chohan & Paschen, 2021). NFTs permit marketers to communicate and work with customers in digital domains, and marketers have begun to investigate the vast potential of NFTs in Metaverse commerce.Despite the promise of this new industry and the practical challenges that come with it, no academic studies explore the effects of BNFTs in particular. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the factors associated with the establishment of consumer – brand relationships using BNFTs. Thus, one arisen question is how to implement BNFTs to facilitate consumer–brand relationship.

Method And Data

We used a professional marketing research firm to gather survey respondents. This firm provides access to a number of demographic sources, allowing for broad representation. Incentives were offered for participation in the study and we adopted purposive sampling.

Summary of Findings

With the evolution of NFTs and blockchain technology, NFTs have steadily drawn greater

attention from companies, and an increasing number of luxury brands have begun to release their own NFT artworks or NFT collectibles. However, there is a lack of BNFT research. Using the social currency approach, we investigate how luxury brands benefit from favorable brand outcomes by utilizing BNFTs. Our research provides greater comprehension of digital brand communication in the Metaverse. Our findings hold implications for how luxury brands may employ the described social currency characteristics to make BNFTs more desirable and foster brand loyalty.

Statement of Key Contributions

The emergence of the Metaverse affords untapped opportunities for luxury businesses to establish consumer connections. Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) are blockchain-based digital assets that are similar to cryptocurrencies, and many brands participate in the Metaverse by creating branded NFTs (BNFTs). Louis Vuitton, Burberry, Dolce & Gabbana, and Givenchy are capitalizing on the burgeoning NFT market. Given the promise of this new market, the practical challenges associated with it, and the paucity of relevant research, this study evaluates the attributes associated with the establishment of consumer–brand relationships through BNFTs. Specifically, we investigate how BNFTs as social currency can achieve favorable brand outcomes. We show that the dimensions of social currency (i.e., identity, conversation, advocacy, utility, information, and affiliation) promote prestige of ownership, hence fostering brand passion and status consumption toward luxury brands. By understanding the BNFT market, a brand may engage the quickly developing Metaverse economy and use BNFTs to foster brand relationships.

OPTIMALITY OF DISTANCE TO DIGITAL DEVICES AFFECTS PERSUASION

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Keywords: fit, distance, phones, persuasion

Description: Across three experiments we show that sub-optimal distance between a consumer and device can alter persuasiveness.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Digital devices such as cell phones are an integral part of modern life. They allow us to stay connected with friends and loved ones no matter the distance between us (Roberts and David 2016). The recent pandemic caused people to spend more time alone and consequently more time with their devices. However, all interactions with devices are not the same. Consumers may be in a situation where they are uncomfortable, such as a crowded public bus. They may be holding a sleeping child and therefore unable to hold their devices as close as they normally would, they may place their devices on the desk in front of them as they scroll to give their neck a break. Existing research on the relationships with devices, finding either a benefit to consumers (Melumad and Pham 2020) or a detriment to mental health (Twenge et al. 2018), focused on the psychological relationships consumers have with their devices. In this research, we examine physical relationship between consumers and their devices. Looking beyond the positive or negative effects of increased usage of digital devices, this research investigates the effects of distance between a consumer and her devices on persuasion from the content sent through the devices.

Method and Data

In study 1, 250 undergraduate students participated in the study on their own cell phones. Half of the participants were asked to put their phones onto an adjustable phone stand placed 6inches from the edge of the desk at which they were seated. The rest of the participants held their phones in their hands as they normally would, with no direction for holding position. Participants viewed an ad for Chapstick and answered attitude measures including persuasion and likelihood of choice (1 = extremely not; 5 = extremely; r =.478). Comfort was measured on a two-item 5-point scale (1 = Incredibly at ease/Extremely uncomfortable; 5 = Incredibly awkward/Extremely comfortable; r = -.417).

Study 2 replicated the results of study 1 with 180 MTurk participants rather than students in a physical lab setting. Instead of manipulating the distance between the participants and their phones, we used a subjective measure of distance (1=too close, 7=too far).

In study 3 we sought to examine if the optimal experience depends on the ownership of the phone. The study had a 2 (owner) x 2 (distance) design, where participants imagined reading a persuasive message either using their own phone or someone else's phone, either up close or at arm length. We then measured attitudes toward the advertisement.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 found a significant effect of the stand condition on persuasion ($F(1, 223) = 7.079$, $p < .05$), such that those in the stand condition had lower attitudes towards the advertisement than those in the phone in hand condition. We also found a significant effect of phone distance on perceived comfort. Participants in the stand condition felt less comfortable towards the advertisement than those in the phone in hand condition. As predicted, the effect of physical phone distance on persuasion was mediated by the level of comfort the subject was feeling when they viewed the advertisement (*95% CI*: -.0487, -.0013). This finding provides evidence supporting our hypothesis that the physical distance between a consumer and their device can affect the reactions to and attitudes towards advertisements, through the perceived comfort.

Study 2 replicated findings from Study 1. In Study 3 we found a significant owner X distance interaction ($F(1,398) = 4.700$, $p < .05$). As predicted, participants found the message more persuasive when they hold their own phone at arm length (optimal) than up close. We did not find such difference when the phone belonged to someone else.

Across three studies, we find that sub-optimal physical distance between a consumer and their device leads to reduced persuasiveness of an advertisement. We also find that this effect is mediated by decreased comfort in each situation.

Statement of Key Contributions

Digital devices such as cell phones have become a central part of everyday life. Consumers connect, learn, explore, and share with their devices. We examine how consumers are influenced by the way in which they interact with their devices. Specifically, we hypothesize and show that sub-optimal physical distance between a consumer and their device (whether it is too close or too far) leads to reduced persuasiveness of an advertisement sent through the device, and that this effect is mediated by decreased comfort. Our research contributes to the marketing literature by showing that optimality of distance between a consumer and an advertising medium can affect the persuasiveness of the advertisement. Across three experiments we show that sub-optimal distance between a consumer and device can alter persuasiveness. We also show that comfort mediates this relationship, as the less comfortable a person is, the less likely they are to be persuaded by an advertisement. As we come to understand more about the implications of consumer comfort while viewing advertisements, marketers may be able to use other data sources to improve their marketing efforts.

PARODY AND HUMOR IN COLLABORATIVE BRAND ATTACK: CONSUMERS' INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY IN SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE

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Keywords: social media, collaborative brand attack, consumers' interpretive strategy, playful brand interpreters

Description

This interpretive analysis of Collaborative Brand Attacks (CBA) on Twitter reveals that in addition to *brand critics* and *supporters*, *playful brand interpreters* who provide creative parodies and humor play an essential role in the development of CBAs on social media.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Consumer Culture Theory conceptualizes consumers not as passive recipients of marketing messages but as active agents who interpret such messages critically. For them, marketing messages such as advertisements are a topic of conversation and an essential resource for finding humor and for social bonding through interaction. The recent development of social media has made it much easier for consumers in a brand community to exercise their critical interpretive strategies by reworking the brand's meaning. Such creative acts are observable to other social media users, and such visibility often leads to Collaborative Brand Attacks (CBAs). By the nature of CBAs, most of the extant research tends to focus on negative outrage toward the brand, but little is known about the question of how consumers' critical interpretive strategies toward brand communications are exercised and the impact of such strategies in the development of CBAs. We argue that parody and humor are the products of consumers' interpretive strategy toward brand communication in the social media CBA context.

Method And Data

We conducted an interpretive analysis of consumers' brand discourse on Twitter. The context of our research is the CBA toward the online advertisement of the black tea brand *Gogo no kocha* (Afternoon Tea) by Kirin Beverage (KB), shared on Twitter on April 26, 2018, in Japan. The brand implemented a social media campaign featuring four cartoon-like characters, *Gogo ti joshi* (Afternoon Tea Girls; hereafter ATGs) such as "A model wannabe girl with inflated self-worth" and "A narcissistic girl in Lolita fashion." The illustrations depicted those females with a cynical touch, including malice. For example, the "narcissistic girl" is mumbling something juvenile and meaningless such as "I'd love to float myself in milk tea," and the illustrator explains that "no one reacts to her monologues." KB encouraged people to LIKE and RETWEET their posts, but seeing the massive surge of outrage, KB apologized and withdrew the advertisement five days after its release.

We systematically collected 8,836 consumers' tweets that reacted toward the ATG tweet posted by KB's official account from April 26 to December 31 in 2018 via Twitter's API v2 for Academic Research. These data were coded and interpreted by the first two authors, and

all the authors, including heavy users of Twitter, discussed them. The authors also utilized relevant information such as tweets, images, and videos, online articles.

Summary of Findings

The development of the CBA of ATGs had three phases. The actors prominent in Phase 1 (April 26 through May 1) are *brand critics* who express critical opinions about a brand, such as "Afternoon Tea Girls, I don't understand the motive for running an ad that makes fun of the target audience." The actors often observed in Phase 2 (May 1 through May 2) are *brand supporters* who approve or tolerate the brand's behavior and oppose the brand critics with the posts such as "I don't know why the Afternoon Tea Girls have caused such an uproar."

The actors highly representative in Phase 3 (After May 3) are *playful brand interpreters* who find fun in the framing by taking a neutral position. Examples include "Who is the most popular Afternoon Tea Girl?" and "I cosplayed as #AfternoonTeaGirls with my personal clothes." They engage with the CBA but consume it as entertainment. Unlike the *brand critic*s and *supporters* who deal with the core issues of the CBA (gender issues, appropriateness of advertising messages, corporate ethics, etc.), such issues are often not their primary concern. Graphical consumer-generated content, which parodied the four illustrations of ATGs, also contributed to the escalation of the CBA by *playful brand interpreters*, demonstrating how advertisements of this type can offer a social resource for bonding among critical consumers.

Statement of Key Contributions

The interpretive analysis provides two theoretical contributions. The first contribution is that the analysis uncovers the unique parodies and humor developed through consumers' creative interpretive strategies, which further fueled the CBA. Such third actors, the *playful brand interpreters*, distinct from *critics* and *supporters* of the brand, have been overlooked in existing research on CBAs. The second theoretical contribution of this study, which should be discussed carefully, is that it offers another angle of explanation for contradictions existing studies have identified: actors that participate in CBAs but not in the purchasing boycott. If these "playful" contributions are essential motivations for participating in CBAs, we could hypothesize that such participation is not necessarily consistent with consumers' purchasing behavior.

These two contributions offer significant managerial implications. Brand managers need to be aware of the role of *playful brand interpreters* in their marketing communications. They compete for their senses of parody, humor, and ironies around the brand, and their discourse affects the brand images. Existing research has examined assertive strategies toward the brand's critics, but this study suggests that brand management inevitably includes communication with *playful interpreters*. Moreover, if brand managers can properly address their discourse, which does not necessarily lead to boycotts, they can restore their brand image damaged by CBA.

PREFERENCE FOR PERFECTION: CRACKED SCREENS INCREASE PERSUASION

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Keywords: cell-phones, gestalt, device quality,

Description: This paper finds that individuals with a higher preference for completion are more persuaded by information presented through a cracked phone screen than those with a lower preference for completion.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Cell phones are an integral part of modern life, and yet many consumers use a phone that is superficially broken. Twenty-nine percent of U.S. consumers responded that their phone currently had a cracked screen (Newswire 2018). Relationships with personal electronic devices have been researched heavily, but the effects of the physical characteristics of the devices have been understudied. This research investigates how physical conditions of devices can affect persuasion of marketing messages.

Consumer preference for completeness can be reflected in their attitudes toward their possessions. Wu et al. (2017) found that participants were less willing to eat food that they deemed 'too perfect', showing that high preference for perfection, or gestalt, can have unintended effects on consumer behaviors. Gestalt research is traditionally grounded in the completion of perceptions and the term itself has been defined by the concept that a whole thing is worth more than the sum of its parts (Wagemans et al. 2012, Humphrey 1924). Merging these streams of research, we hypothesized that consumers would be less persuaded when viewing ads through a cracked screen. Our research investigates the effect of screen qualities and preference for completeness on persuasion from an advertisement.

Method and Data

We conducted two studies to test our hypothesis.

Study 1 (N= 220) had a 2-factor design. We measured participants' gestalt preferences on a five-item gestalt scale we created ($\alpha = .766$) and manipulated screen condition (cracked vs. unblemished). Participants viewed an Instagram advertisement for Chapstick either through a cracked phone screen or an unblemished phone screen. We then measured participants' attitude toward the product. Three items were averaged to create an advertisement attitude index ($\alpha = .773$).

Study 2 employed the same procedure, but with a different advertisement for Burt's Bees Lip Balm. We calculated the same gestalt ($\alpha = .686$) and attitudes ($\alpha = .773$) indices.

Summary of Findings

Analysis of the data from Study 1 revealed a significant interaction between the cracked screen condition and gestalt ($F(1,199) = 4.1479$, $p < .05$). Those with a low preference for gestalt had lower attitudes when viewing the ad through a cracked screen ($\beta = .0684$, $t = .9872$, $p = .3247$) than those with a higher preference for gestalt when viewing the ad through a cracked screen ($\beta = -.1194$, $t = -1.7309$, $p = .0850$).

ANOVA testing and further analysis of Study 2 confirmed our hypothesis that viewing an ad through a cracked screen would decrease attitudes ($F(1, 386) = 4.753$, $p < .05$), such that those in the cracked condition had lower attitudes towards the advertisement than those in the unblemished condition. In this study, regression analysis revealed that gestalt and cracked screen once again predicted attitudes with a significant interaction effect (($\beta = -.1565$, $F(3, 400) = 7.43$ $p <.001$). For consumers with a strong preference for gestalt, such effect of screen condition on attitude disappeared ($\beta = -.0014$, $t = -.0252$, $p = .9799$). As gestalt preferences increase, persuasion from the advertisement increases for the cracked condition.

Through two studies, we show that high preference for completeness leads to a better overall attitude toward and more persuasion from information shown through a cracked screen. This creates a paradox where those who prefer perfection are being more persuaded by information through an imperfect medium. We are currently hypothesizing future research directions and planning studies to address this paradox.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Most people carry cell phones with them everywhere they go, and these cell phones often get damaged (e.g., a cracked screen). Preference for completeness or perfection is a common psychological trait known as gestalt. We investigate how consumer preference for perfection and device conditions jointly affect attitudes towards advertisements sent through such devices. In two studies using different products, we show that consumers who have a higher preference for completion are more persuaded by an advertisement sent through a cracked screen than those with a lower preference for gestalt.

Our research adds to the marketing discipline by combining different streams of research and applying it in a common consumer setting. By operationalizing gestalt research as a preference for completeness, we show that damage to devices can change the way that consumers react to the information on their phones. Previous research has primarily focused on the relationships that consumers have with their phones; showing that having phones present can reduce situational anxiety but also can deplete the brain power we have to devote to problems. We build upon this research by asking the question: how does the physical condition of our devices affect us?

PRESS PLAY! HOW DIGITAL SOCIAL VIEWING STRATEGIES IMPACT CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: Digital Social Viewing Strategy, Authentic Viewing Experience, Subscribe Intention, Purchase Intention

Description: Authentic video content is a vital success metric in today's digital environment. This paper empirically investigates the impact of digital social viewing strategies (livestream vs. pre-recorded video content) on customers' purchase intentions and explores whether an authentic viewing experience and customers' subscribe intention serve as process variables in this relationship.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Digital social viewing strategies (DSVS) are acknowledged as powerful strategic marketing tools. Still, it is unclear how customers evaluate their DSVS experience, how they form later social media engagement and develop behavioral intentions. In DSVS, customers participate in shared electronic viewing settings and content-driven interactions (Shim et al., 2001) using livestream or pre-recorded videos (Ang et al., 2018). Livestreams comprise synchronous and cross-mode interactivity provided by streaming services on online platforms (Chen and Lin, 2018), which are perceived as more authentic (Todd and Melancon, 2017). Pre-recorded videos, by contrast, are available on demand at any time (Robert and Dennis, 2005) and drive brand conversion (Coker et al., 2017). This paper makes three core contributions. First, it expands the nomological net of DSVS by studying the downstream effects of its two content types on customers' purchase intention in a field study. Second, since customers are exposed to a multitude of video content these days, this paper examines the mediating role of an authentic viewing experience. Third, because customers who engage in digital social networks often seek out and subscribe to business-related content (Pagani and Malacarne, 2017), this paper investigates whether DSVS can also drive subscribe intention and lead to positive response behavior.

Method and Data

To empirically test the proposed relationships, a scenario-based field experiment (N= 123, M_{age} = 32 years, 52.8 % female) was conducted as a one-factorial between-subjects design in the sports industry. A consistent online training program for both conditions with a sports product was chosen as the study context. Study participants were randomly assigned to either a livestream or a pre-recorded DSVS condition (N_{live} = 60, $N_{pre\text{-}recorded}$ = 63). Participants

allocated to the livestream condition received a Zoom link and a scheduled appointment for the online training. For the pre-recorded condition, a private YouTube video was uploaded on the same day when the first livestream online training took place. 30 minutes after completing the online training, participants were requested to fill out an online questionnaire measuring their DSVS perception as a manipulation check. All constructs were measured with established scales from the marketing literature adapted to fit the study context. Seven-point Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7) were used. The authentic viewing experience was measured using a three-item scale by Dahling and Perez (2010). Subscribe intention was captured by two items adapted from Kwong and Park (2008). Purchase intention was measured as a single item by Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996).

Summary of Findings

The results reveal an insignificant direct effect of DSVS (livestream vs. pre-recorded) on purchase intention (B = -.534, SE = .316, t = -1.687, CI [95%] = -1.160; .093). The indirect effect of DSVS via authentic viewing experience on purchase intention, however, was significant and positive (INT 1; B = .319; SE = .173; [CI 95%]: .018; .705). The findings also show an indirect-only mediation of subscribe intention on the effect of DSVS (livestream vs. pre-recorded) on purchase intention (INT 2; B = -.326, SE = .123, CI [95%] = -.597; -.114). Lastly, the results also confirm an indirect-only serial mediation of authentic viewing experience and subscribe intention on the effect of DSVS (livestream vs. pre-recorded) and purchase intention was proposed. (INT 3; B=.196, SE = .077, CI [95%] = .070; .375; direct effect; B= -.534, p > .05, CI [95%] = -1.160, .093; Zhao, Lynch, and Chen, 2010).

Key Contributions

The present study shows that digital social viewing strategies (DSVS) are an essential concept for marketing managers when planning their social media campaigns. Contrary to the results by Ang et al. (2018), this study does not show any significant direct effects of DSVS (livestream vs. pre-recorded) on customers' purchase intention. The findings demonstrate that pre-recorded DSVS can positively affect customers' subscribe intention to a brand-owned social media channel and, in return, their purchase intention for the respective product. Livestream DSVS, however, will only exert a significant effect on purchase intention if perceived as authentic. Authenticity also enables livestream DSVS to affect subscribe intention to a brand-owned social media channel and subsequently purchase intention. These results clearly emphasize the importance of an authentic viewing experience for video marketing (Fritz et al., 2017; Gannon and Prothero, 2016; Robert and Dennis, 2005), as otherwise, customers will not continue to watch the video (Chen and Lin, 2018), subscribe to a social media channel (Pagani and Malacarne, 2017), or purchase the promoted product.

Selected References are available upon request.

RECIPROCAL STEWARDSHIP IN VIRTUAL BRAND COMMUNITIES: DO CONSUMERS STILL HELP AFTER A TRANGSRESSION WHEN THE BRAND OWNS THE COMMUNITY?

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Keywords: psychological ownership, stewardship, helping behavior, brand communities, brand transgressions

Description: Consumers who perceive the brand to own their brand community are more likely to help the brand recover after transgression, suggesting that the stewardship expectations associated with perceived brand ownership of the community may be reciprocal.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

If the brand is responsible for starting and maintaining its brand community, and/or takes an active role in engaging with consumers in the community, might consumers perceive that the community is owned by the brand? If so, how do these community members respond to a brand transgression?

Method and Data

Two online, survey-based field studies were conducted with members of three real online brand communities recruited from Amazon's MTurk. The studies use two brand transgression scenarios modeled on recent events: Xbox and PlayStation failing to update their network security and Peloton failing to recall dangerous machines in a timely manner. Study 1, conducted in the Xbox and PlayStation brand communities, revealed that perceptions of brand ownership of the community had a positive direct effect on consumers' likelihood the help the brand ($\beta = .26$, $t = 2.89$, $p < .001$) and a positive indirect effect through perceptions of brand membership in the community ($\beta = 0.09$, $CI_{95\%}$: [0.01, 0.19]). Study 2, conducted in the Peloton brand community, again found that perceptions of brand ownership of the community had a positive direct effect on consumers' likelihood to help the brand ($\beta = .33$, $t = 3.15$, $p < .001$) and a positive indirect effect through perceptions of brand membership in the community ($\beta = 0.27$, $CI_{95\%}$: [0.12, 0.41]). PROCESS Model 14 (Hayes, 2013) showed that the indirect effect was only significant at moderate to high levels of brand interaction quantity (Index of Moderated Mediation $\beta = 0.12$, $CI_{95\%}$: [0.05, 0.21]).

Summary of Findings

Across three online brand communities, we find perceptions that the brand owns the community increase likelihood to help after a transgression, suggesting that the stewardship expectations associated with perceived brand ownership of the community may be reciprocal. Helping behavior also occurs, at least in part, because of increased perceptions that the brand is a member of the community, and therefore subject to ingroup favouritism. This relationship is strengthened when the brand is perceived as an active community member through the quantity, but not necessarily the quality, of its interactions with the community.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research contributes to the brand transgressions and psychological ownership literatures by demonstrating that brand community members help the brand recover not only when they perceive ownership of the community, but also when they perceive the brand to own the community, suggesting that ownership and stewardship can be reciprocal. This is enhanced when the brand is an active member in the community, which has managerial implications for brands that start and maintain their own brand communities.

RECOMMENDING PRODUCTS TO DORMANT CUSTOMERS IN EMAIL MARKETING

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Keywords: Email Marketing, Product Recommendations, Lab & Field experiments, Clicks, Purchase

Description: Through two studies, we show that including product recommendations, even if inaccurate, in marketing emails can trigger dormant customers' interest in exploring firms' products and improve campaigns' click rate and purchase.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Dormant customers are a key customer segment for firms. While the definition of "dormant customer" varies across contexts, an essential aspect is that these existing customers are inactive from the firm's perspective (e.g., those who have not recently bought from a firm, visited its store or website, and/or searched for its products). Engaging dormant customers is critical (as it helps firms reduce churn rate and increase

revenue, profit, or market value) but challenging (as they do not proactively reach out to firms). A common practice among marketers is to use provide attractive discounts in emails to engage dormant customers. However, this can be costly and create potential issues (e.g., brand dilution). To address this, we propose the use of product recommendations in non-discount-based marketing emails to engage dormant customers. Through two studies, we examine how presenting products as recommendations (even if accurate) in emails can increase dormant customers' interest in a focal brand's products. We also explore how the recommendations can affect dormant customers' actual behaviors (e.g., click and purchase).

Method and Data

We conducted two experimental studies. In Study One, we conducted a between-subject online experiment. We manipulated the label for the products that were shown to subjects in a hypothetical marketing email: one label was *Newest Products* (nonrecommendations) and the other *Recommended for You* (recommendations). We recruited MTurk workers for the experiment, and there were 136 subjects in the main sample. 91 (66.9%) reported they had not searched or shopped for the focal brand's products during the two weeks before the study and were thus classified as dormant customers.

In Study Two, we collaborated with a Fortune Global 500 company to conduct a randomized between-subject field experiment. The experiment involved a marketing email campaign in which the company informed its dormant customers of two newly launched products. The company identified 27,302 dormant customers, whom we

randomly assigned to the experimental groups. Subjects in the control groups were shown only these new products, whereas those in the treatment groups were also show three product recommendations (selected based on collaborative filtering).

Summary of Findings

The results in the online experiment (Study One) indicate that showing products as recommendations (rather than as new products) in a marketing email increased dormant customers' interest in exploring products in the email and products not therein. (By contrast, presenting products as recommendations lowered active customers' interest in these regards.) The results of the field experiment (Study Two) suggest that, compared to not including product recommendations in the campaign, doing so increased the likelihood of clicks by 40%. Improving dormant customers' propensity to click in the campaign also had other impacts. Compared to dormant customers who did not click, those who did were at least (1) 66% and 192% more likely to open and click in the subsequent marketing emails, respectively, and (2) 98% and 72% more likely to purchase within six and 30 days of the campaign, respectively. Interestingly, the positive impacts of including product recommendations occurred even though the specific recommendations might not have been highly accurate in addressing the dormant customers' needs (proxied by a low proportion of recommended products among their purchases). Overall, both studies demonstrate that showing products as recommendations in email marketing can effectively engage and active dormant customers.

Key Contributions

This research makes the following key contributions. Existing studies of product recommendations in a sales context typically focus on active customers (e.g., those who are or have recently been searching for products). This study thus adds new insights by focusing on the use of product recommendations for dormant customers to help firms reduce churn and improve retention of an important customer segment. In addition, while research often attends to the recommended products, we examine (dormant) customers' interest in and purchase of nonrecommended products as well. One implication of the results is the need to rethink and expand the role of recommendations. Our findings suggest that, rather than directly matching dormant customers' current needs, recommendations (even if not highly accurate) arouse these customers to consider their existing needs. In addition, with its focus on email marketing, this research can kindle new studies and applications of product recommendations, which is a strategic channel that offers relatively high ROI. Emails allow firms to proactively push recommendations to specific audiences at specific times. Thus, a greater understanding of effectively using recommendations in email marketing can help firms develop a holistic strategy to target various customer segments through appropriate pull and push channels and tactics.

*References are available upon request.

RISK PERCEPTION AND ADAPTATION TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF STOCK TRADING

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Keywords: Digital adoption, Risk perception, Perceived financial cost, Mobile stock trading

Description: The present study integrates a novel presentation of risk perception with TAM to study adaptation to mobile based digital stock trading.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Digital technological advancement coupled with rapid adoption of smartphone based internet has increased the accessibility to investment-management business, having greatest impact on financial sector. Within the financial sector, online stock trading remains at the. Most securities firms have hence invested heavily in digitalization of stock trading, aiming at enhancing their competitive advantage. Akin with the industry, academia embraced the subject of digital adoption. Digital stock trading may simultaneously involve ‘fear’, ‘greed’ and ‘rationalism’ which may dynamically get influenced by sentiments and quick flow of critical information. This uniqueness gives rise to peculiar psychological functions of perceptions and decision making, remarkably different from other digital transformations including e-commerce

and digital banking. Researchers have not yet sufficiently dealt with the said uniqueness and a gap in the study of consumer adaptation and risk perception in the domain of mobile stock trading exists.

We therefore aim to fill the said gap by exploring the following research questions:

Q1: Which are the cognition-based, perceived risk-mitigating factors that influence risk perception in the context of mobile based online stock trading?

Q2: Which are the factors that determine user adaptation to mobile based digital transformation of stock trading?

Method and Data

This multiple study involved qualitative analysis to identify factors relevant to the aim, followed by quantitative evaluation of the proposed model. A group discussion was held with 10 individuals primarily using mobile stock trading app for their own investment purpose. They were asked to share their concerns regarding adoption and selection of the mobile app for the purpose. Top repeating concerns were transcripted through in-vivo coding. As risk perception had several influencers, a separate round of discussion on risk perception was held. The identified common concerns were expressed in terms of constructs established in prior studies. On validation by the group, these factors were expressed as a model.

For quantitative analysis, a questionnaire having 38 items, using 7 point Likert-scale was prepared. Scales were taken from prior works. A random valid sample of 378 participants (age: 21-65 years) having exposure to mobile stock trading was taken. Participants were asked to answer the question keeping in view the mobile app they use for stock trading. Hypothesis testing and model fit analysis was done by SEM technique, using SPSS and AMOS. Moderation

effect of perceived financial cost was studied for its effect on relationship of identified factors with behavioral intention.

Summary of Findings

Perceived information quality (PIQ), perceived security protection (PSP) and perceived privacy protection (PPP) were identified as the cognition-based, perceived risk-mitigating factors that influence risk perception in the context of mobile based online stock trading. Further, a new model, integrating TAM, perceived risk (PR) and above said risk mitigating factors was developed to determine user adaptation to mobile based digital transformation of stock trading. Perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) were found to have positive influence on behavioral intention (BI) to use mobile stock trading app (PU: $\beta = .32$, $p < 0.01$ and PEOU: $\beta = .41$, $p < 0.01$). As hypothesized, PIQ, PSP and PPP significantly dampened PR ((PIQ: $\beta = -.62$, PPP: $\beta = -.48$, PSP: $\beta = -.5$). PR was found to have significant negative relationship with BI (($\beta = -.29$, $p < 0.01$). Higher perceived financial cost (PFC) diminished the positive relationship of PU and PEOU with BI and further dampened the negative relationship of PR with BI. Composite Reliability and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) met the criteria of 0.70 and 0.50, respectively. Square root of AVE was greater than inter-construct correlations, establishing discriminant validity. The model fit indices (GFI>0.9, CFI>.95 and RMSEA<.05) confirmed a good model fitness.

Statement of Key Contributions

The theoretical contributions of this study are manifold. First, addressing the uniqueness of mobile stock trading, a new set of risk mitigation factors is identified. Integration of these risk

mitigation factors with perceived risk also attempts to explain why some of the prior studies have shown negative relationship between perceived risk and behavioral intention to be insignificant, while others have found it to be significant. We argue that these contrarian findings may be a function of salience of risk mitigating factors. Second is the development of comprehensive yet parsimonious theoretical model integrating the identified risk mitigating factors with perceived risk and TAM to determine influencers of behavioral intention in this domain. Thirdly, moderation effect of perceived financial cost on influencers of behavioral intention is evaluated.

Its practical implications are immense. Financial institutions, securities firms and stock brokers are investing heavily in automation of stock trading and introducing mobile apps for having competitive edge. The outcome of this study may guide them to design, develop and market their mobile app in an effective consumer-centric manner, making their investments in the right direction to have better competitive advantage.

SHADES OF BLUE AND THE SWEET SWOT: INVESTIGATING VIDEO AESTHETICS AND INFLUENCER GENDER EFFECTS ON VIEWER ENGAGEMENT

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Keywords: influencer marketing, video analytics, gender, viewer engagement

Description: This study investigates how social media influencers' video aesthetics impact viewer engagement behaviors on social media platforms and the impact of influencer gender.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Influencer marketing, though a relatively new form of native advertising, is already one of the most effective digital marketing tools that helps companies grow brand awareness and increase sales. In influencer marketing, knowledge about what specific video attributes drive what forms of online customer engagement is highly valued. The literature has revealed that medium-length and long videos posted during non-business hours and weekdays and those using a subjective language style, less-active events, and temporal indications are more likely to receive views, likes, and comments. Few studies, however, have investigated how visual modalities, such as brightness, contrast, visual complexity, and color distributions influence individuals' emotions and engagement behaviors. Furthermore, the interaction between gender and visual elements in social media videos has yet to be explored. Motivated by these, we address the following research questions: (1) In influencer video marketing, what visual

attributes drive digital consumer engagement? (2) Is the answer different for different types of viewer engagement outcomes such as likes, share, or comments? (3) Do these effects vary based on the gender of the influencer?

Method and Data

Building upon the visual framing literature and communication theory, we propose that visual modality impacts viewer engagement behaviors and such impact is not uniform across the range of viewer responses such as view, like, share, and comment. Moreover, the effects of visual modality are moderated by influencer gender. We collected data from YouTube. We focused on technology influencers who inform audiences about the latest tech products via posting online reviews, unboxing videos, and images. They share their experience, expertise, and passion for technology products on social media platforms to help fulfill viewers' needs. We analyzed videos from a sample of 15 male influencers and 15 female influencers in the summer of 2022, which generated a total of 96 videos. We use the OpenCV (Open-Source Computer Vision Library) platform and a visual aesthetic repository package on GitHub. After obtaining the visual aesthetics of videos, we conducted ordinary least squares regression analysis to investigate the impacts of videos on viewer behaviors. The moderating effect of influencer gender is also included in the analysis.

Summary of Findings

As the bloom of video marketing and influencer marketing, this study contributes to the marketing practice by providing firms with valuable guidance on improving the efficacy of influencer videos. The results show that videos with a bluer color scheme tend to trigger all engagement behaviors, and this effect will be stronger for videos created by male influencers. It indicates that when collaborating with male influencers, increasing the blue scheme in the video

is an effective manner to promote products by attracting more views and likes. But it will not trigger sharing or commenting behaviors in the network. Additionally, the relationship between video complexity and viewer engagement behaviors is an inverted U-shape, indicating that the level of video complexity needs to be controlled when creating videos because there is an optimal point past which too much complexity will reduce viewership.

Key Contributions

This paper identifies the video content features and maps them with specific social media engagement behaviors, including viewing, liking, sharing, and commenting. Through integrating marketing and information systems literature and tools, we contribute to the influencer marketing literature. Based on visual framing literature, colors influence the persuasiveness of information and are associated with emotions and perceptions. This study expands the discussion scope by including other key video modalities, such as brightness, saturation, and complexity. By mapping the relationships between multiple video modalities and different types of viewership, this study identifies the effects of video characteristics on specific engagement behaviors, which advances the understanding of video efficacy in both information systems and marketing fields. Moreover, different from prior literature that considers online consumer gender when investigating viewership in social media, this study focuses on influencer gender and elaborates how gender differences in the way of communication moderates the effects of visual aesthetics on engagement behaviors. It enriches the discussion on gender differences in influencer marketing literature.

SHOULD YOUR CHATBOT JOKE? DRIVING CONVERSION THROUGH THE HUMOUR OF A CHATBOT GREETING

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Keywords: chatbots, conversational marketing, engagement, conversion-to-lead, connection, trust

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: This research examines whether using humor in a chatbot greeting increases conversion to lead through the moderating variables of engagement and trust.

Method and Data: Participants of the study were recruited using mTurk. There were a total of 103 active participants. The qualified humorous group consisted of 57 respondents, while the neutral of 46 respondents. The participants were asked to follow a web link directing them to a fictional e-commerce brand constructed specifically for this study. The participants were virtually welcomed by the virtual e-commerce shopping assistant by an automatically prompting chat modal with a welcome message. The participants were exposed to either a humorous or a neutral chatbot welcome message. Once participants had completed their interaction with the chatbot, they were given a link to a post-interaction questionnaire.
A pretest for manipulation check was conducted. The pretest survey results demonstrated that the mean of perceived funniness of the welcome message in the humorous group was significantly higher compared to the control group. Measures were adopted from the following scales: User Engagement (UES) by O'Brien, Cairns and Hall (2018) [α=.898]; Trust from the Human-Computer Trust Model by Gulati, Sousa and Lamas (2019)) [α=.884]; Emotional Attachment towards the chatbot from Park et al. (2005)) [α=.935]. Conversion to Lead was measured by the intention to give out their email in the survey

Summary of Findings:

We conclude that humour in a chatbot's welcome message (humorous vs neutral) positively influences customers' trust, connection and conversion-to-lead via customer engagement as a mediator. This research hypothesized that humour might also have a direct effect on trust, connection, and conversion-to-lead. That was found to be true in all cases except for the trust, for which humour had no significant direct effect and instead, engagement as a mediator transferred all the effect from humour to trust, indicating full mediation. However, the relationship between humour and trust was only marginally significant level. In addition, the direct effect between humour and trust, even though marginally significant, was negative, suggesting that with the increase of humour, trust decreases.

These results are especially interesting in light of the positive direct effect of humour on connection. Can it be that with humour, users trust the chatbot less, and yet feel closer and more attached to it, leading them to expect less but still want to possibly continue interaction due to the positive feeling the humour induced? If so, this result could be of particular importance to the managers and chatbot designers.

Statement of Key Contribution: This study contributes to the development of practical and theoretical applications of the incorporation of social characteristics, namely humour, into chatbots and contributes to a better understanding of how humour can add to fostering positive consumer-brand connections. Therefore, the study contributes to the existing research on chatbots used in online businesses, combining and expanding previous research on human-computer interaction and, more specifically, human-chatbot interaction (e.g., Ciechanowski et al., 2019) as well as to the usage of humour in marketing contexts (e.g., Bompar et al., 2018).

References are available upon request.

SOUND OF CONSUMPTION: ASMR IN FOOD MARKETING

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Keywords: ASMR, social media, sensory overload, food consumption

Description: This essay explores the potential of ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) as a new marketing force by looking at its effects on consumption and experience, providing insight into how firms and influencers can better communicate their brands to consumers when creating content with ASMR.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

We examine whether ASMR content has the potential as a marketing strategy and address the following research questions: Can highlighting product-related sounds affect how people consume products and media? What are the underlying mechanisms that result in such effects? ASMR content is a distinct form of sensory input in that auditory stimuli simultaneously occur with directly related activities, and ASMR induces a physical reaction. In this regard, ASMR caused by particular stimuli might be associated with the sensory overload that influences consumer evaluations. It is worth noting that a cue perceived by primary senses (i.e., auditory and visual), relative to a cue perceived by secondary senses (i.e., olfactory, gustatory, and haptic), tends to heighten the likelihood of sensory overload. In addition, primary senses are more related to the intellect and spatial orientation, whereas secondary senses are more linked to pleasure, intimacy, and well-being. Drawing on these characteristics of sensory overload, we suggest that ASMR content, generally featuring visual and auditory stimuli, is susceptible to intense sensory overload, which subsequently leads to negative reactions. However, it can engender positive effects when the cue is perceived by secondary senses as well as primary senses, helping them reach the optimal level of stimulation.

Method and Data

To test our hypotheses, we conducted two online experiments to examine our predictions of ASMR content on consumption intention, the mediating role of sensory overload, and the activation of secondary senses. In the first study, one hundred eighty-six participated in a single-

factor design (ASMR: audio-on vs. audio-muted) in which they watched a female eating from a tray of sushi for 30 seconds. Then, participants indicated the number of sushi pieces they could eat right now, and their feelings (e.g., calm, disgust). Since sensory overload caused by auditory sensitivities is found to elicit reactions such as disgust, we used disgust as a proxy for sensory overload. In the second study, we used a coffee brewing video with the background music condition added to explore if it, compared to the other two conditions, leads to greater intended consumption. We aimed to have participants perceive the stimuli through lower and higher senses and, to some extent, attenuate the negativity of sensory overload. In this study, participants also indicated how much they like to make coffee the way the person in the video did. They directly reported sensory overload.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 revealed that sushi ASMR decreases intended consumption and increases a feeling of disgust. Further, we uncovered that disgust mediates the negative impact between sushi ASMR and consumption, such that ASMR leads to greater disgust, which results in less intention to eat sushi. Study 2 suggested no difference in intended coffee consumption between conditions, and as in Study 1, coffee brewing ASMR enhanced sensory overload. However, we revealed that sensory overload mediates the positive relationship between the content and coffee consumption, such that ASMR again results in greater overload, which but at this time increases intended coffee drinking volume relative to the two conditions. This shift is evidenced by the differences in initializing secondary senses across the condition. Participants in the ASMR condition reported that coffee feels hotter than those in the other two conditions, indicating activation of the haptic sense. We found a similar result for another DV, the intention to brew coffee. The two

studies illustrate that ASMR content generally leads to lowered consumption due to sensory overload. However, those effects can turn positive when stimuli leave room for audiences to use secondary senses such as smell and touch.

Key Contributions

We aim to make three contributions to the field of marketing. First, it adds to social media marketing by examining the potential of ASMR as a new marketing force. Over the years, brands and influencers have been using ASMR in their advertising and content to engage with consumers. This study sheds light on how firms and influencers can better communicate their brands to consumers when creating content with ASMR. Next, we make an impact on the sensory marketing literature by revealing the inverted U-shaped effect of sensory overload on consumer attitudes and behavior. The prior literature viewed sensory overload as the stimulation that negatively affects consumer reactions. We demonstrate that up to an inflection point, sensory overload felt by consumers may trigger ASMR, and lead to greater pleasure, spending, purchase intention, and media consumption. Lastly, we offer insights into creating ASMR content for marketers who seek to capitalize on that. Some types of content draw more attention from audiences, securing a wider reach, but it might not work well in transferring watching to actual behavior marketers care about. Our research helps marketers in their consideration of those trade-offs and identify the best strategy for leveraging ASMR.

“References are available upon request.”

SYNERGIZED EFFECTS BETWEEN TV AND ONLINE ADVERTISING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN SOCIAL TV SHOW

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Keywords: Social TV, Product Placement, Quasi Experiment, Product Sales, Online Search

Description: Our work provides the first empirical evidence for the positive effect of product placement in social shows on the sales of a high-involvement product (i.e., automobiles).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite the considerable progress made by the research regarding the causal impact of product placement in a real-world setting, several important questions remain unanswered. First, can product placement impact consumers' purchasing behaviors in high-involvement product categories (i.e., automobiles)? Goli et al. (2022) find that product placement increases the sales of tobacco, which requires an effortless decision-making process. Second, what is the impact of product placement on consumers' online searching behaviors? Fossen and Schweidel (2019) find that product placement is positively correlated with visits to the websites. However, the causal impact of product placement on consumers' online searching behaviors has not been

identified in the previous work. Third, is there a synergy between TV product placement and advertising on other channels? In the literature, there is limited work investigating the synergy effect between different formats of advertisements (Assael 2011, Batra and Keller 2016). The synergy between product placement and other formats of ads, if exist, is likely to have a significant application for firms' advertising allocation (Naik and Ramen 2003).

Method And Data

We examine the effect of product placement in *The Voice of China* (i.e., the Chinese version of *The Voice*), which we refer to as VoC hereafter, on the sales and online search of one of Chevrolet's flagship car models, Cruze. First launched in 2012, VoC integrated program content with social media by promoting live discussions about the program and encouraging the audience to vote for contestants on the social media platform. The second season of VoC aired between July 2013 and October 2013, during which Cruze was the only car model placed in the show (no car model was placed in the first season of VoC). For Cruze and its ten competing car models, we observe their monthly sales in 20 Chinese cities, their monthly advertising spending across channels (e.g., TV, in-print media, online), and their monthly online search volume, all between April 2013 and January 2014. We adopt a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) specification with two-way fixed effects and propensity score matching, following the methodological advancements widely applied in previous research. We assess the robustness of our findings using the Generalized Synthetic Control (GSC) method and a variety of alternative regression specifications, and find that the results are qualitatively similar.

Summary of Findings

We find that the placement of Cruze in the second season of VoC, on average, led to 29 more online search queries per month and city, and it lifted the sales of Cruze by 15.6%. We also find that Chevrolet's online advertising spending moderates the effect of product placement on the

sales of Cruze. Specifically, product placement was more effective when Chevrolet had spent more on online advertising. This finding thus demonstrates the synergy between product placement and online advertising. On the other hand, we find that advertising spending in other channels, including TV, in-print media, and offline, does not moderate the effect of product placement.

Statement of Key Contributions

First, to the best of our knowledge, our work is the first to investigate the causal impact of product placement on the sales and online search of a high-involvement product (i.e., automobiles). The previous research investigates either the correlation between product placement and consumer behaviors (Schweidel et al. 2014, Fossen and Schweidel 2019) or the impact of product placement on the sales of a low-involvement product (Goli et al. 2022). Second, our work investigates product placement in the novel setting of social shows. Marketing research on this emerging form of TV shows is limited. In social shows, the effectiveness of product placement is unclear, since they induce heightened program engagement which could enhance viewer's processing of product placement, but, they also lead to viewers' multi-tasking behaviors which could distract viewers from paying attention to product placement. Using the context of VoC, we find that product placement is effective in social shows. Third, following the call of Lamberton and Stephen (2016) for a deeper exploration of the interaction between online and offline marketing activities, we examine how a brand's online advertising moderates the effectiveness of product placement, which empirically supports the synergy between online and offline advertising in a new context.

THE EFFECT OF DESIRE FOR EXPERIENTIAL CREATION ON THE METAVERSE-USE BEHAVIOR: FOCUSING ON SELF-PRESENTATION

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Keywords: Metaverse, avatar, experiential creation, topic modelling,

Description: This is an experimental study of the self-presence experience generated by avatars and the desire for experimental creation in the Metaverse.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: Metaverses such as Roblox, Minecraft, and Zepeto entice users with new digital experiences, as evidenced by their rapid growth in user base. However, many researchers continue to view the Metaverse as digital games or SNS experiences. Existing research therefore lacks access to new Metaverse experiences. The anthropomorphism of avatars, one of the primary characteristics of the Metaverse, varies depending on the platform. This research suggests the level of avatar anthropomorphism has no effect on user behavior; however, the interaction effect between avatar anthropomorphism and appropriate context has a positive effect on user behavior. This study suggests, based on the Proteus effect, that an experience suitable for avatar anthropomorphism has a positive effect on user behavior by providing the Metaverse users with a self-presentation experience.

Method and Data: The mixed methodology employed topic modeling analysis for exploration

and a text-based experiment. Using Twitter's streaming API, the frequency of words was determined by collecting tweets about Roblox and Zepeto usage experiences. Based on experiments to select words for topic modeling analysis, a dictionary was compiled using the resulting words. LDA Mallet was utilized to produce the key word. In conclusion, an experiment was conducted to test the hypothesis derived from prior research. On the basis of M-turk, Americans participated in an experiment. Using the PROCESS macro, a logistic regression analysis was performed on the data.

Summary of Findings: The main words associated with self-presentation-related experiences in the metaverse are avatar, decorative object, creation and so on. The following are the experimental outcomes: The influence of experimental creation desire on user behavior is governed by avatar anthropomorphism. When Avatar anthropomorphism is low, a high desire for experiential creation was found to have a more positive effect on user behavior. When Avatar anthropomorphism is high, a low level of desire for experiential creation has a positive effect on usage behavior.

Key Contributions: The research on avatar anthropomorphism and the Proteus effects is expanded by examining how one of the most important characteristics of the Metaverse, avatar anthropomorphism, affects the Metaverse user experience. This study discovered that an appropriate desire for experiential creation based on avatar anthropomorphism has a positive impact on Metaverse-use behavior. Particularly, it demonstrates when and how the Metaverse experience can positively influence user behavior by demonstrating that the effect of avatar anthropomorphism and desire for experiential creation on the Metaverse is a self-presentation-enhanced experience.

References are available upon request.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The Effectiveness of Consumer Shared Native Ads on Social Media

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Keywords: native advertising, sharing, role ambiguity, social media

Research Question

When a brand posts content on social media, consumers are able to interact with the content in a number of ways. One impactful way for them to engage with the content is by sharing the ad with their own social network. By distributing the ad to their friends, the consumer becomes not only the sharer of the brand-generated content, but a co-creator of the ad. In one field experiment and two experiments using two of largest social media platforms globally, we examine how the relationship between the sharer and the receiver impacts ad performance. We find that ads are evaluated more (less) favorably when they are shared by close (casual) friends, a relationship mediated by role ambiguity. We then identify transaction cost salience as a moderator which provides managers actionable insight into how to improve performance of shared ads. In a media landscape often overwhelmed by ads, this research underscores the importance of understanding how consumers engage with ads on social media.

Method and Data

Using three studies across two cultural contexts to examine how consumers respond to ads depending on the closeness of their friendship with the sharer. The purpose of Study 1 is to test whether individuals have less favorable attitudes towards ads shared by casual friends relative to close friends using behavioral outcomes (likes, comments, and enrollment) as the dependent measures. The ads were shown on WeChat, the world's most popular social media platform and one that is familiar to our Chinese sample (Montag et al. 2018). We then test role ambiguity as the mediator in Study 2. Lastly, Study 3 tests the proposed moderator, salience of the transaction cost by manipulating whether pricing information is included in the shared ad.

Summary of Findings

Across three studies we present a model examining the effectiveness of shared native ads on social media. By examining consumers' relationships and using the literature on sharing and consumer relationships we provide a unique model of shared native ad performance. While consumers evaluate ads that are shared more favorably by their close friends, a relationship mediated by role ambiguity, we provide evidence of how brands can include additional information in their ads, such as increasing the transaction cost salience, which improves the performance of ads shared by casual friends.

Statement of Key Contributions

Sharing is a core function of social media which provides opportunities for brands; however, the literature on native advertising has not yet examined the effectiveness of shared native ads. While contributing to the literature on native advertising and sharing, our

investigation provides evidence that sharing ads, an important capability of social media, has implications for brands, social media platforms, and consumers.

While the focus of the native advertising literature to date has been ads shared by brands, introducing the consumer as the source of the ad is necessary given social media's focus on connection and sharing. Furthermore, by examining unique source- and content-related factors, we contribute to the native advertising literature. This research also contributes to the literature on sharing by introducing a novel type of shared digital information: native ads.

This research also makes contributions to practice for three groups of stakeholders. For brand managers, we illustrate that considering how ads are shared is important when determining the content of an ad and how to encourage consumer engagement with the brand-generated content. Furthermore, we identify a moderator that brands can use when designing ads and determining targeting strategies to ensure that ads are received favorably considering the individual sharing the content. Second, this research has implications for social media platforms who rely on advertising revenue. Specifically, to ensure that social media remains an attractive advertising platform, it is important to allow brands control over sharing settings and provide individuals the ability to share content with subsets of their social networks. Lastly, this research is relevant for consumers who can benefit from understanding how sharing on social media impacts their relationships.

THE IMPACT OF LIVE STREAMING MID-ROLL ADVERTISEMENTS

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Keywords: live streaming, digital marketing, digital advertisements, difference-in-differences

Description: We conduct an empirical study examining how providing the permission to use mid-roll advertisements (MRAs) in a live-streaming setting affects viewer consumption.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: We ask whether introducing mid-roll advertisements in a live-streaming context affects consumer responses. In particular, do audiences adjust their consumption behavior after the introduction of a policy providing MRA usage? We also explore the mechanisms in how this may occur.

Method and Data: We use scraped proprietary data from a live-streaming platform and examine a one-time policy shock which gave some streamers the capability to use MRAs on the platform. Since the policy only affected one sub-group on the platform, we were able to use a difference-in-differences estimation approach for our analysis.

Summary of Findings: We find evidence to suggest that the policy increased audience consumption of live streaming content. We also find that one key reason for this is because of increased time spent streaming by live streamers.

Statement of Key Contribution: We find evidence that providing usage permissions for MRAs can improve live streaming consumption behaviors, and that this positive effect occurs through increased streaming time by the streamers themselves. This is interesting as one may have originally thought that this policy would have led to a negative effect. Practitioners may be interested in this research due to the rapid growth of the live streaming space.

THE MAGIC OF IMAGINED TOUCH: HOW ONLINE RETAILERS CAN USE HAPTIC IMAGERY TO ENCOURAGE CONSUMPTION

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Keywords: haptic imagery, online shopping, sensory marketing, animal-based products

Description: Our research is the first to examine the effects of haptic imagery of animals used for luxury leather products on consumers' product choices: haptic imagery increases consumers' choice of real animal-based products over their synthetic counterparts through a decreased preference for synthetic leather products.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The primary purpose of this investigation is to understand consumers perceptions of the use of haptic imagery of raw materials in consumer products. We explore if haptic imagery of an animal for an animal-based product influence consumers' choice of and preference for luxury leather products (i.e., real or synthetic leather products)?

Method and Data

We conducted a pre-test to better understand consumers' perceived haptic comfort levels of various animals to choose appropriate animals as the stimuli for Study 1 and Study 2. We conducted Study 1 to examine whether haptic imagery of an animal will positively affect the recommendation choice of a real leather good over a synthetic one and whether the preference for a synthetic leather product will mediate the relationship. Study 1 employed a single-factor, two-level (haptic imagery, control) between-subjects experiment with 120 Mturk participants randomly assigned across conditions. We conducted Study 2 to examine whether a low haptic comfort level animal would reverse the effect of haptic imagery on the preference for a synthetic leather product. In addition, we also explored if using a baby animal would moderate the effect of haptic imagery on preference for a synthetic leather product made from a low haptic comfort level animal. Study 2 employed a two-factor (haptic imagery, control) x (baby, mature) between-subjects experiment with 300 Prolific participants randomly assigned across conditions.

Summary of Findings

Our research demonstrates that with haptic imagery on animals, consumers have a weaker preference for synthetic animal-based products and a greater choice of real animal-based

products. Our results suggest that when consumers imagine touching animals with low haptic comfort levels, their choice of a real leather product and preference for a synthetic leather good do not significantly differ from consumers without a haptic imagery experience. However, using young animals rather than mature counterparts as haptic imagery objects can buffer the attenuated haptic imagery effects triggered by animals with low haptic comfort levels. Thus, the findings of this research suggest that haptic imagery is a double-edged sword.

Key Contributions

This is the first research in marketing to study the effects of haptic imagery of animals on consumers' product choices for luxury leather products. Our research provides insights for online luxury retailers selling real leather products and brands promoting animal welfare by selling synthetic products. For example, online retailers could invite consumers to engage in haptic imagery of animals whose skins are the raw materials of luxury leather products, lowering their preference for synthetic leather products and increasing their choice of real leather products. However, retailers may not find haptic imagery an effective marketing strategy when they promote real leather products from animals with low haptic comfort levels (e.g., alligator, cobra, crocodile). Our research demonstrates that retailers can instead use juveniles of those animals with low haptic levels to buffer the weakened general haptic imagery effects. For brands that promote animal welfare, we suggest they not use haptic imagery to promote their synthetic leather products because haptic imagery may inadvertently decrease consumers' preference and choice of synthetic leather products.

References are available upon request.

THE ROLE OF GENDER IN EVALUATING ONLINE PRODUCT REVIEWS

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Keywords: Word-of-mouth, consumer-generated product reviews, information adoption

Description: This paper identifies important message features in online product reviews and examines which message features female and male consumers value more in evaluating helpfulness of online product reviews.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

This paper attempts to address the following research questions.

(1) What message features affect readers' information adoption (i.e., helpfulness perceptions)?

(2) What roles does gender play in determining helpfulness of product reviews?

Method and Data

Data were collected from real-world product reviews about seven hair-growth brands on Amazon.com. In total, 275 user reviews (136 reviews from women and 139 reviews from men) were selected for this study. The data were generated from each of the reviews and related comments and helpfulness ratings. Two datasets were created for female and male users. Multiple regression analysis was employed on each of the datasets to test the proposed hypotheses.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data analysis results, we find that, in determining the helpfulness of online product reviews, female consumers consider more heavily the following factors: average paragraph length, negative viewpoints, and inclusion of pictures. However, male consumers put more emphasis on positive viewpoints and usage of point format in online product reviews. Our analysis also suggests that the relationship between positive product reviews and review helpfulness is not linear among male consumers. This finding may reflect male consumers' tendency that, when they read strongly positive product reviews, they would become highly suspicious of those reviews and perceive those reviews as untrustworthy and unhelpful.

Key Contributions

This paper offers meaningful contributions to the marketing literature. First, this paper identifies specific gender differences in the context of evaluating online product reviews. Prior studies on online product reviews paid little attention to gender differences. Since female and male consumers process information differently in certain situations, it is important to investigate how differently female and male consumers process online product reviews. This paper finds that average paragraph length, negative viewpoints, and inclusion of pictures are important review characteristics for female consumers and that male consumers focus on positive viewpoints and usage of point format in product reviews. Second, this paper uncovers that positive reviews and negative ones may influence helpfulness perceptions of product reviews in different manners. Our findings indicate that negative reviews affect helpfulness perceptions in a linear fashion. In other words, the more negative reviews, the more helpful female consumers would find them.

However, positive reviews may affect helpfulness perceptions in a non-linear fashion. These findings are new knowledge in terms of understanding various factors that can affect how consumers evaluate online product reviews.

TITLE: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ACTIVITIES (SMMA) IN ENHANCING CUSTOMER BRAND ENGAGEMENT (CBE) AND ATTITUDE TOWARD M-BANKING DURING COVID-19 CRISIS: AN INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK.

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Keywords: Customer Brand Engagement (CBE); Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA); Mobile Banking; Fear of Covid-19; PLS-SEM analyses.

Description: Drawing on theoretical models from different literature streams (such as TAM and the uses and gratifications theory) we proposed an integrative framework that helped refreshing both the customer brand engagement and attitudes towards M-banking services within Tunisian banking institutions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

With the increased globalisation and technology advances, the banking sector is qualified by an intensified competitiveness and complexity (Beerli et al.,2004 ; Torres & Augusto 2018 ; Choudhoury, 2013). Moreover, with the lack of product's differentiation, banks have faced several serious issues during the last decade (Torres & Augusto,2018; Moliner et al., 2018). These institutions are still suffering due to the consequences of the subprime financial crisis (2009). Added to these existing evolutions, Covid-19 has affected the customer-bank relationship by accelerating the usage of technology during the lockdown, and by provoking a change in customer's behavioural patterns (Slama,2022). Hence, a new normal is being formed associating the digital age and the pandemic effect (Slama & Jaziri,2021).

Ensuring a continuous innovative sustainable customer-brand relationships could be reached by adopting social media marketing activities to enhance the customer engagement. This research is interested in the banking sector, and aims to afford reflections, about the priority of the transition to M-banking & social media marketing activities to engage customers, during the crisis time. Consequently, the research statement is "**to what extent banks are handling the "customer-centric-approach" thus by enhancing customer brand engagement and the attitude toward M-banking among bank' customers, especially, during the Covid-19 era?**"

Method And Data

This research follows a quantitative approach via a mixed mode survey (web & paper -based survey). The online survey was posted on Facebook groups specialized in financial services. The sample unit includes customers of Tunisian banks, following the bank's social media accounts & using M-banking apps. We used a non-probabilistic technique which is “Purposive Sampling " (Etikan et al.,2015, p.2). For the sample size determination, we used the G*Power analysis for sample size calculation with models containing several mediators and complex serial mediation (Memon et al.,2020).The model was tested by using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis with SmartPLS v.3.2.9 software (Ringle, Wende, and Becker 2015; Sarstedt et al. 2020). For the both measurement models (Lower and higher order Models) all scores of reliability and validity have been verified (convergent & discriminant validity) .

The hypotheses are accepted except the rejection of H5b (the hypothesis linking social media’s interaction directly to attitude toward M-banking).

Also, the serial mediational analysis revealed that social influence and the perceived usefulness (PU), fully mediated the relationship between interaction and attitudes towards M-banking.

In addition, Word of mouth (WOM) exerts a direct pronounced effect on Attitudes directly,and indirectly through the mediators perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU).

Summary of Findings:

The findings corroborate that social media marketing activities (SMMA) play a crucial role in assisting banking marketers and practitioners in triggering customer-brand engagement (CBE) among bank customers. Although interaction does not have a strong influence on CBE in the banking field, the whole effect of the five SMMA elements on CBE was meaningful (in terms of R^2) Therefore, we are considering the synergistic potential of interaction amongst SMMA (Cheung et al.,2019 (a); Ismail, 2017; Seo and Park, 2018,Godey et al.,2016).The addition of perceived risk among SMMA is presenting an important theoretical and empirical contribution based on the work of Sano (2015).Added to these findings ,we studied the role of age in moderating the relationship connecting CBE and "Customization,Trendiness & Perceived-risk" ,responding thus to the previous literature calls on investigating the moderating effect of socio-demographic variables (Godey et al., 2016) .

Also the Findings indicated that, WOM is a strong potential antecedent of attitude toward M-banking, consistent with the results of Hanafizadeh et al., (2014) and that of Mohammadi & Mehrad, (2015). Similarly ,considering social influence and social media interaction as two antecedents of (PU) and Attitudes is a quite contribution of this research since all conceptualizations based on technology acceptance model TAM have omitted the “social dimension perspective “.

Results support the existence of a complementary partial mediation path between WOM and attitude towards M-banking through PU & PEOU.

This research considers the role of interaction on social media's construct as a “bridge” Connecting both frameworks which is considered as novelty to the literature and the research field.

Statement of Key Contributions

On the conceptual level, this research provides a new integrative “nomological framework” in the banking marketing field by merging several variables and theories. From a managerial standpoint, it calls on marketing practitioners of banking institutions to rethink the SMMA related strategy by reviewing SMMA as an effective channel to increase CBE. Moreover, the findings reveal that customization, trendiness, interaction (INT) as well as decreasing perceived risk (PR) are relevant, among SMMA elements for building customer brand engagement (CBE). Hence, bank marketing strategists should start implementing interactive- content that is tailored ,trendy and not risky.

This is expected to stimulate consumers’ cognitive processing, affection and activation and in turn enhancing CBE (Cheung et al., 2019(a),(b) ; Jamid et al.,2018), Similarly, as the age plays a crucial role in moderating the relationship between (CBE) and SMMA (Customization,Trendiness,Percived-risk) ,marketing practitioners should reconsider this point for instance, for the generation Z and Y ,posting content that describes how banks would deal with the “Metaverse-world” would trigger their interest in the brand and consequently, their CBE.

Encouraging interaction within the brand-community, and allowing customers to be rewarded as “brand ambassadors”; namely, these actions, will improve the emotional and the activation dimension of CBE. From the M-banking perspective and to improve the customer’s adoption of new technologies, the bank marketing practitioners should propose tutorials and demonstrations by presenting M-banking features for their customers (Chouali, Souiden & Ladhari 2017 ; Naeem, 2020).

“References are available upon request.”

Topical Advancements in the Digital Landscape

Proposal for a Special Topic Session in 2023 Winter AMA Conference

Session Chairs
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Description

The increased proliferation of digital marketing has led brands to explore better ways to engage on online platforms. This special session aims to provide insights into the various technological advancements and behavioral mechanisms to provide novel and cost-effective solutions for brands to engage with their consumers and key stakeholders. The four studies investigate: 1) AI and AI-human based salesforce hiring using interview videos, 2) firm-generated voice personalization on digital media, 3) the (in)congruency of image and text-based emotions on brand perception and engagement, and 4) the impact of self-presentation concerns

on writing brand reviews. This session includes thirteen eminent scholars representing ten universities from the US and Italy.

Proposal

Digital media has become a quintessential part of our lives, the impact being more prominent during the pandemic, when these platforms became a critical way for users to network, interact, and engage with the world. Since 2015, the worldwide social media growth rate is at an average of 12.5% year-over-year, with users accessing an average of 6.6 online platforms on a monthly basis[1]. The general rise in digital and social media usage has elevated the opportunity for brands to enhance brand awareness and engagement with their users. With the growing importance of digital capabilities and technologies, more and more brands are investing in new technologies to provide a seamless experience for their customers and other key stakeholders. This special session aims to address some of the latest findings and developments in digital technologies and marketing tactics that can be used to deliver superior and cost-effective solutions, and enhance brand engagement. It will also provide new insights into the behavioral mechanisms that drive online users to engage with brands in a certain way.

We believe that the studies proposed in this session conform with the objectives of the "Digital and Social Media Marketing" track, which is focused on "leveraging new technologies to measure and increase customer engagement, … deliver superior and cost-effective solutions, and building AI capabilities to better understand and serve customer [and brands'] needs." This session is also consistent with the objectives of the conference as it focuses on the technological front to examine the "advances in automation and artificial intelligence [that] are transforming how firms innovate and engage consumers."

[1] https://backlinko.com/social-media-users

Digital marketing is defined as an "adaptive, technology-enabled process by which firms collaborate with customers and partners to jointly create, communicate, deliver, and sustain value for all stakeholders" (Kannan & Li 2017[2], pg. 23). The first study of our special session, presented by Ishita Chakraborty* (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Khai Chiong (University of Texas- Dallas), Howard Dover (University of Texas- Dallas), and K. Sudhir (Yale School of Management), investigates how AI can be utilized for a successful salesforce screening and selection. The authors develop an AI model of salesforce skill prediction and find that screening decisions are heavily impacted by audio-visual decisions, while selection decisions are heavily impacted by the textual content & linguistic features of the candidates. This paper also proposes a cost-effective way for brands to deploy AI in salesforce hiring with humans in the loop.

With increasing competition, brands are grappling with the issue of maintaining their "likeability" on social media[3]. One such measure that most voice products/ services brands (e.g., Alexa, Siri) have used is voice personalization. However, such personalization is often initiated by the consumers, based on the myriad options available such as accent, gender, and emotions. The second study in this special session, presented by Tongyao Shen* (Penn State University) and Min Ding (Penn State University), studies how voice personalization can be inferred and initiated by the brands based on the limited customer information available. This paper proposes the automatic identification of a likable voice for each target customer.

Despite the profuse utilization of a variety of social media communication styles by brands, such as texts and visuals, much of prior research has been focused on text data analysis as the go-to method to analyze user engagement towards the brands. The third study of this

[2] Kannan, P. K. (2017). Digital marketing: A framework, review and research agenda. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *34*(1), 22-45.
[3] https://buzzhivemarketing.com/2017/01/19/how-to-make-your-brand-more-likeable-on-social-media/

special session, presented by Buffy Mosley* (Texas A&M University), David Schweidel (Emory University), and Kunpeng Zhang (University of Maryland), examines the use of textual and visual content to determine how the emotional valence of the two elements drive consumer engagement and brand perception.

In the world of asymmetric information, it is critical that consumers (current or potential) are exposed to the right information on the brand's review page, which includes both positive and negative reviews. The last and final study of this special session, presented by Elisa Solinas (University of Southern California), Francesca Valsesia* (University of Washington), Joseph Nunes (University of Southern California), and Andrea Ordanini (Bocconi University), shows that users are reluctant to post negative ratings regarding a brand early on due to their self-presentation concerns. They find that the effect is moderated by how new a reviewer is on a specific platform, rather than how new the reviewer is to reviewing.

Collectively, all four research advances the digital and social media landscape by understanding the role of technology in assisting brands better serve the consumers and the behavioral mechanisms that drive consumer engagement on digital platforms. This special session involves 13 participants, including faculty and Ph.D. students, across 10 universities in the US and Italy. We plan to have each of the four research teams present their work for 15 mins, followed by 5 mins of Q&A and general discussion with the attendees. Digital and social media marketing has attracted significant interest from scholars across the tracks of consumer behavior, strategy, and modeling alike. Given the eclectic mix of research topics, we believe that this special session would attract scholars interested in social media engagement behavior, online reviews, the use of artificial intelligence in assisting brands' key stakeholders, personalization for voice products and services, text and video analysis, among various others. More detailed

information regarding the title, the participants and the presenter, and an abstract for each of the presentations can be found below:

Research Presentation 1

Title: AI and AI-human based Salesforce Hiring using Interview Videos

Authors: Ishita Chakraborty* (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Khai Chiong (University of Texas- Dallas), Howard Dover (University of Texas- Dallas), K. Sudhir (Yale School of Management)

Abstract: We study the problem of AI and AI-human based screening (eliminating bottom candidates) and selection (hiring top candidates) in salesforce hiring. Using videos of structured interviews of candidates and ratings from multiple recruiting experts on standard performance criteria, we develop an AI model of salesforce ``skill'' prediction by extracting theory-relevant objective measures of interviewee performance. Using the model, we address two issues: First, to aid interpretability, we assess what mode of unstructured data from the interview (text, audio, and video) and what specific behaviors (e.g., body language, conversation style) drive AI predictions of salesperson's ability. We find that while screening decisions are heavily impacted by audio-visual features like ``energetic voice" and ``open posture"; selection relies more heavily on textual content and linguistic features such as being precise and quantitative. We also find that there is an optimal amount of hand gesturing, body posture movement and conversational interactivity for success in selling. In addition, optimal amount of ``interactivity in conversations'' (i.e., frequency of turns in conversation between buyer and seller), ``willingness to listen'' (share of buyer speaking time) are important determinants of sales success. Second, we consider a hybrid AI-human model where we augment AI predictions with human interventions

in a Bayesian framework. The hybrid model improves accuracy but increases cost (of human labor). Hence, we propose a cost-effective way of deploying AI in salesforce hiring with humans in the loop --- use AI for screening and augment it with human judgments based on early stages of interview for selection.

Research Presentation 2

Title: Voice Personalization in Marketing Context

Authors: Tongyao Shen* (Penn State University), Min Ding (Penn State University)

Abstract: Voice personalization refers to generating unique voices to accommodate target customers based on their voice preferences. With the increasing use of voice products/services (such as voice assistants, audiobooks, and virtual agents in the call center), voice personalization shows great potential in various marketing contexts. Voice assistant platforms, such as Google Assistant, Apple Siri, Amazon Alexa, and Microsoft Cortana, all provide several voice options with different accents, gender, and emotions for the users to select. However, this voice personalization is initiated by customers/users. In this paper, we study how voice personalization can be initiated by firms. Specifically, we study how firms can infer a customer's voice preference using limited customer information and generate a likable voice for each target customer.

Research Presentation 3

Title: Effects of Image and Text-Based Emotions on Consumer Brand Perception and Engagement

Authors: Buffy Mosley* (Texas A&M University), David A. Schweidel (Emory University), Kunpeng Zhang (University of Maryland)

Abstract: The use of images and text within online word of mouth (WOM) has become a fundamental component of firm generated content (FGC); however, much extant research primarily focuses on the textual elements of online WOM. This research examines the use of textual and visual content to determine how the emotional valence of the two content elements drive consumer engagement and brand perception. Authors investigate the extent to which the two content elements are (in)congruent and the moderating effects of brand personality.

Research Presentation 4

Title: Starting Positive: The Impact of Self-Presentation Concerns on Consumer Reviews

Authors: Elisa Solinas* (University of Southern California), Francesca Valsesia (University of Washington), Joseph Nunes (University of Southern California), Andrea Ordanini (Bocconi University)

Abstract: This research identifies and explains a previously unidentified phenomenon in online consumer reviews - a negative trend in posted ratings at the reviewer level across products. Study 1 documents this trend using real-world data from Yelp. A series of laboratory studies provide evidence that self-presentation concerns contribute to the observed trend. Study 2 finds the negative trend emerges from a reluctance to post negative ratings early on (i.e., keeping “mum”), as opposed to a change in how experiences are evaluated as ratings accrue. Study 3 provides evidence reviewers’ reluctance is driven by concerns others will judge them harshly for sharing negative reviews. Study 4 finds the observed reluctance to post depends on how new a reviewer is to a specific review platform (i.e., audience), rather than how new they are to reviewing,

supporting a self-presentation explanation while ruling out alternative explanations such as an increase in expertise. Study 5 shows providing an expectation that negative ratings will be "bundled" with positive ones before being posted can attenuate reviewers' reluctance to post. From a consumer welfare perspective, consumers benefit from full information, yet we find reviewers' self-presentation concerns can leave users of online review platforms with censored information to rely upon.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT ON SOCIAL-MEDIA AND CONSUMER ADOPTION OF VACCINES

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Keywords: consumer choice, social media content, public health, endogeneity, instrument variable.

Description: In this research we investigate the impact of user-generated social media message characteristics –message concreteness and message emotions – specifically joy, fear, and surprise – on individual level choice. We study this in the context of consumer decision on whether to get vaccinated against Human Papillomavirus (HPV) – the most common sexually transmitted infection. Results show that particular message characteristics increase the efficacy of scial media exposure on consumer choice.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Individuals are increasingly using information generated by their peers – usually termed as user generated content (UGC) – from web- and mobile-based social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook to make consumption and purchase decisions – e.g., related to healthcare. Such UGC on social media allows users to share and describe experiences and these messages are considered to be “spontaneous, information rich, and live”. Yet, despite the richness embedded

in these messages, existing research on the impact of social media on consumer decision-making and choice has predominantly focused on relatively simple message characteristics like valence (positive or negative message) or ratings provided by the users and ignored the impact of key linguistic features embedded in these messages. Our research seeks to address this gap. Specifically, we investigate the impact of two key linguistic characteristics embedded within UGC messages – the concreteness of the message and the emotion expressed in the message in the form of joy, fear or surprise – on individual level decision regarding whether to get vaccinated against Human Papillomavirus (HPV) – the most common sexually transmitted infection.

Vaccines mostly target infectious diseases and getting vaccinated is a form of preventative behavior that not only enhances the protection accorded to the vaccinated individual but also enhances overall public health and welfare. Yet, even in developed countries like the US and UK, despite vaccies being available and affordable, vaccination rates are significantly lower than desired. Policymakers and marketers in the healthcare domain are hence facing an urgent need for understanding how to persuade individuals to get vaccinated. In this research we focus on understanding the impact of social media content on an individuals' vaccination decision.

Method And Data

We study the impact of message characteristics on UGC from social media on individual vaccination decision regarding the HPV vaccine for three reasons: First, compared to most common vaccines, the HPV vaccine is relatively new. Public awareness and realization about the vaccine is still nascent, formative, and undergoing considerable change. This enables us to capture the variation in social discussion and adoption regarding the vaccine. Second, there is currently only one supplier of the vaccine and the supplies are abundant; hence, there is minimal

marketing and/or competitive interaction effects that would obfuscate the role of social media message characteristics. Lastly, there hasn't been any widespread epidemic-level explosion of human papillomavirus incidents recorded in history. This is less likely to pollute the relationship we seek to study.

We compiled a unique, comprehensive dataset from three different sources. From the National Immunization Surveys conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 2013 through 2019, we obtained individual-level HPV vaccination status and demographic information for 113,363 teenagers. English language Twitter posts between January 1 2013 and December 31 2019 was obtained from a social media data consultancy company. This data included all "tweets" that contained any of the keywords related to the HPV vaccine. We used Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques to content analyze the tweet texts and constructed measures of message concreteness as well as joy, fear, and surprise. Finally, we obtained from the National Conference of State Legislatures records for historical, state-level legislation as well as programs and practices on the HPV vaccine. We estimated the choice model using standard probit estimation and an instrumental variable approach to account for the endogeneity of exposure to tweets with explicit HPV vaccine related content. We also used a modified form of Propensity Score Matching technique called as the Inverse Probability of Treatment Weighting to check for robustness.

Summary of Findings

The findings reveal that, when the message content is very concrete, more exposure to vaccination content on social media 'always' boosts the vaccination regardless of the emotion embedded in the message. In contrast, if the message content is not concrete (abstract), more

exposure to vaccination content social media may lead to higher or lower likelihood of vaccination, depending on the type of emotion expressed in these social media contents.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research extends the empirical evidence of media's impact on public health, from traditional media to social media which is unique and increasingly important in individual decision-making. We investigate the role of complex linguistic features of a message including the concreteness of the message and the emotions of joy, fear, and surprise as expressed in the message on enhancing or upressing the impact of an individual's exposure to these messages on their health-related decision. Our research reveals how these key message characteristics act as boundary conditions for the exposure effect. Our research thus not only adds value to the literature on media exposure's impact on health decisions, but also contributes to a broader set of literature on media exposure's impact on other product or behavior adoption by highlighting how content characteristics moderate media exposure's effect on adoption.

Practically, our findings highlight the power of 'more but simpler' health information exposure. On social media, policymakers and firms need to prepare less abstract (concrete) and easy-to-spread (viral) information for the public, rather than focusing on scientific details of vaccination. Our research also casts doubt on current social media health information auditing practices which remove tweets with health information that seems to go against prescriptions of public health authorities. We show that some of these posts have high level of concreteness and exposure to them increases the likelihood of getting vaccinated. Removing them may hence lower vaccination.

** References are available upon request*

"HOW CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION CHANGE WITH THE USE OF AR SHOPPING APPLICATION:

A CONCEPTUALL MODEL "

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Keywords: Digital Marketing, AR Technology, Online Retailors, User Experience.

Description: This study provides a conceptual model of how online businesses using AR technology in their purchase stage can have effects on customer satisfaction and their purchase intention, considering the mediation roles of customer experience and immersion.

ABSTRACT

The paper proposes a conceptual model of how different perceived levels of experiential AR application features have effects on customer experience, and in turn their satisfaction and purchase behavior. In addition, it put forward the mediation role of immersion between perceived levels of experiential AR application features and customers' experience.

INTRODUCTION

The world economy experienced dramatic up and downs after Covid-19 pandemic (Ostrom et al., 2021). Before COVID-19, ecommerce was rapidly expanding. However, the epidemic drove even more US customers online. According to Digital Commerce 360 projections, the coronavirus contributed $102.08 billion to US ecommerce in 2020 and $116.45 billion in 2021. On the other hand, innovative technologies like AR have entered to marketing discipline and business owners found these technologies useful for attracting consumers. As a result, nowadays more businesses are turning into AR technology to increase their sales. adopting such strategies for online shopping enhances the sense of real environment in digital platforms and it can increase consumers engagements in long-term.

The goal of this study is to understand how adopting AR technology by business owners could be effective in terms of their consumer's purchase intention and their levels of satisfaction. By doing a comparative study in these field, beneficial implications can be received by business owners and academics. AR technology has entered in different areas from fashion industry to beauty cosmetics. Worldwide brands like Ikea and Amazon utilizing AR services in their online selling strategies for their home furniture. It can be anticipated that by introducing Metaverse world, more

and more businesses will turn to such innovative technologies, so more research is needed for better and in depth understanding of relation between adopting AR technology, consumers' satisfaction, and their purchase intention. This study is going to answer: How is the consumers' experience of using AR applications affected, given different perceived level of experiential AR application features? How different perceived experience can result in different satisfaction levels and purchase intention?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Consumer experience is in the center of our framework. According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016), customer experience is defined by their responses during their shopping journey and these responses consist of multiple constructs like customers' cognitive, behavioral, emotional. in our research the main focus is on behavioral construct of consumers' experience. The following concepts are our main framework aspects for adopting AR technology buy business owners in their marketing strategies. 1) immersion defined by how an AR technology can reflect the realism with the use of different sensory feelings. 2)consumer experience as we defined before, and our main focus is on their behavioral responses. 3) experiential context defined as one of the constructs which identifies the positive points of adopting AR technologies for enhancing consumers' experience. 4) effectiveness of experiential AR application features including informative, personalizing, and interactivity features along the customers' experience and purchase stage of customers' journey.

Stimulus-Organism-Response Paradigm

By using the stimulus-organism-response S-O-R paradigm, retailers are able to understand the needed stimuli and their effects on consumers' behavior. This paradigm states that stimuli activate the cognitive processing of individuals and result in consumer responses like accepting or rejecting them (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). One of the cases where this paradigm can be adopted is with AR mobile applications investigating app features and consumer behavior. There are studies that examined different important mobile AR app characteristics that have consequences on users' reactions like purchase intention (Daassi and Debbabi, 2021). Our study can add value to the literature of mobile AR application concepts by understanding how AR application features are experienced and perceived by consumers. The features that are going to be studied in this research include information, personalized and interactivity features.

Different consumers' experiences have been studied in previous research, like interactivity by Poushneh and Vasquez-Parraga in 2017, and informativeness by Rese et al. in 2017, etc. We focus on Javornik's perspective (2016) and consider the perceived levels of the informative, personalization, and interactivity features. For better understanding, the informative aspect of these applications enhances the process of decision-making for consumers and in our research refers to the level of the product information provided by AR app which is perceived by consumers. This information can be in the form of text, images, videos, etc. (Pantano et al., 2017).

Personalization features refer to perceived level of the information provided based on individuals' desires and needs according to their preferences. The presence of this feature utilizes customers with saving personal time, search costs, and money. By interactivity features, we mean different contents that people can have access to, and when this interactivity is high, the quality of AR is better, resulting in more positive responses from consumers. In this research we focus on perceived

level of this feature by customers using the AR app, and this feature can be reflected into the technologically effective delivery process (Fiore et al., 2005). So, we propose the following hypotheses:

P1: The perceived level of informative feature of an experiential AR application positively influences customers' experience.

P2: The perceived level of personalizing feature of an experiential AR application positively influences customers' experience.

P3: The perceived level of interactivity features of an experiential AR application positively influences customers' experience.

Immersion

Immersion is a construct defined as how much a reality is near to its simulation made by technology using five human senses (Slater and Wilbur, 1997). According to Wedel et al. (2020) previous scholars investigated that how stimulated environments are immerse and if they get more immerse how consumers' behavior is going to be. Our main focus in this research is going to be on how vision sensory can affect the experiential effectiveness of available AR application features on consumers' experience. So, we can propose that:

P4: the effectiveness of experiential present AR application features on consumers' experience is mediated by immersion.

Information System Success Model

Information system success (ISS) determines users' behavior to understand their experience like satisfaction with using a service or product (Delone and Mclean, 2016; Schaarschmidt and Höber, 2017). Augmented reality is a new concept in retail and adopting the ISS model can utilize researchers to investigate this technology and understand how consumers react and respond to it in a shopping context. The current study provides more information and specifics about the acceptance and use of augmented reality (AR) technology for home furniture in retail and online platforms. Previous research has shown that if the quality of this system is high, then customers are more willing to continue using this technology (Kim and Hwang, 2012; Van Pinxteren et al., 2019). Services adopting AR features are expected to enhance consumers' experience because they provide customized services for consumers, and as this customization increases, high levels of customer satisfaction will be reached (Kim and Hwang, 2012; Murali et al., 2016). Therefore, customer satisfaction can be enhanced in online contexts using AR technology (Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013; Tom Dieck, Jung, Kim, & Moon, 2017). According to Srivastava and Kaul (2014), consumer experiences are the main factor for defining customer satisfaction. The amount of joy and pleasure experienced by consuming a product is reflected in the satisfaction term. It is defined as fulfilling desires and leads to a positive service or product experience (Chung et al., 2018). By doing this research, more value will be added to the consumer behavior literature. The level of satisfaction gained from using AR sheds light on the use of AR apps in the online furniture industry. Using this technology affects consumers' intention to purchase and customer returns (Keiningham et al., 2017; Poushneh and Vasquez-Parraga, 2017). So, we can propose the following hypothesis.

P5: consumers' experience using online shopping applications using AR technology positively influences consumers satisfaction during their purchase stage.

P6: consumers' experience using online shopping applications using AR technology positively influences purchase intentions during their purchase stage.

The proposed model is shown in figure 1.

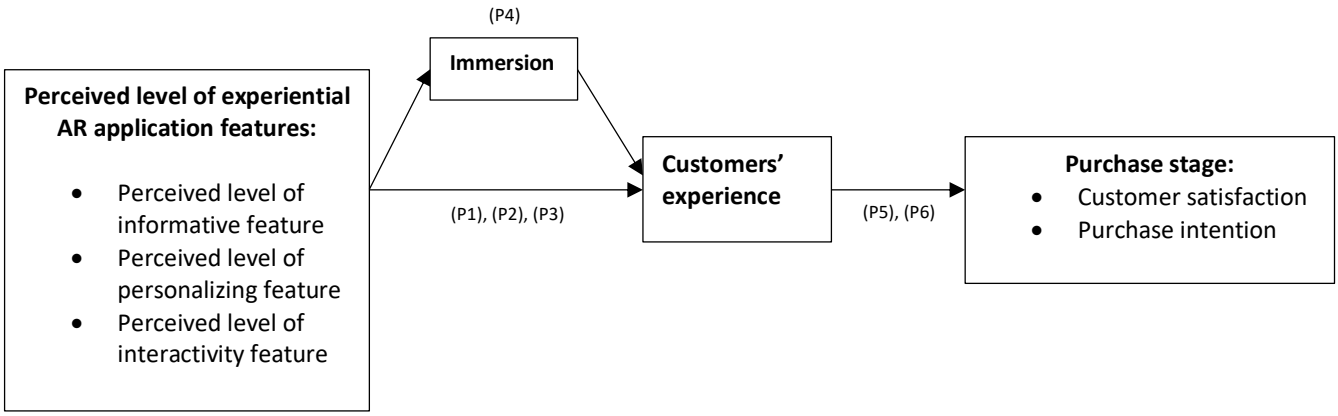

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

DATA

The perceived level of experiential AR application features are subjective constructs and can be measured by effective delivery process techniques. Perceived informative features can be measured by Rese et al. (2017) methods. By adopting Kim and Baek (2018) methods, we can measure perceived levels of personalization of AR apps, and Pantano et al. (2017) proposed a method for measuring perceived interactivity feature and can be used and adopted for our research. The technical features and characteristics of AR applications like video inputs can be studied by subjective data to measure the immersion. Assessing the quality of these inputs can be measured by Akhtar and Falk (2017) method, and how they proposed the results can reflect the immersion of AR technology. In conclusion, for measuring the effectiveness of experiential AR application, immersion, consumers' experience, and consumers satisfaction, we can use primary data by asking consumers experiencing AR technology within questioners and qualitative interviews.

The experience scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009) can be adopted to assess behavioral aspect of consumers' experience. Self-report data from questionnaires are useful for capturing consumers' behavior. For the satisfaction, customer satisfaction measurement is a standard practice in marketing discipline, and it has been defined by the results of comparing perceived performance delivery with the customers' expectation. This confirmation or disconfirmation creates user satisfaction (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). we are going to adopt Reichheld (2003) method of using Net Promoter Score (NPS) to gather our data for customer satisfaction.

For measuring purchase intention, at first, we can measure the number of sales in our study design which is done by our participants, furthermore for our final model, we can use secondary data from companies with AR technology for their online shopping applications, and asking them about the purchasing information of their consumers using their AR technology and information about the updates of their applications and specific changes in their sales according to these updates. This data set may be longitude for examining consumers' purchase intention.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we proposed that when online retailers adopting AR technology in their applications for customers' convenience, different levels of perceived experiential AR application features affect their experience. Informative, personalizing, and interactivity are three features that our study is going to investigate for their effects on users' experience. In addition, we proposed the mediating role of immersion between this perceived experiential and the customers' experience. We argued that the purchase stage behavior of a customer, like his or her satisfaction and purchase behavior, is influenced by his or her experience of using the retailers' AR technology.

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"LET ME INLUENCE YOU, I'M AN INFLUENCER"

BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS OF EFFECTS OF PERSUASION DISCLOSURE AND NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS ON FOLLOWERS' PURCHASE INTENTION AND DECISION

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Keywords: *social media influencer (SMI), persuasion, digital marketing, sponsorship disclosure, purchase decision, advertisement recognition*

Description: This research aims to successfully prove the effects of social media influencer categorizations and sponsorship disclosure beyond classic operationalizations like brand attitude and purchase intention in a leisure context and is comparing the results with already known findings of other industries.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A 2x3 between-subject experimental design was conducted based on the current state of the art of social media influencing, revealing that advertisement recognition and purchase intention have an inverse full serial mediation effect between sponsorship disclosure and purchase decision in a leisure context. These findings reveal numerous research gaps, serve as a reference point for future research efforts, and help marketers shape impactful social media influencer (SMI) marketing campaigns that support future sales and marketing practices and shape innovative business models in the sphere of SMI utilization. For the leisure context, this approach was one of the first attempts in the still relatively young SMI research field to successfully prove the effects of influencer categorizations and sponsorship disclosure beyond classic operationalizations like brand attitude and purchase intention.

Research Questions

Although the economic relevance of SMIs in areas such as beauty, luxury, and fashion (Sokolova and Kefi 2020; Lee and Watkins 2016) has been scientifically established, there are still no conclusive scientific findings regarding the strength of the effects of SMIs on leisure-related decision-making behavior of recipients in various contexts, as the phenomenon is relatively recent. Furthermore, for marketers, it is essential to understand what effects persuasive knowledge triggers in the target group when sponsorship is disclosed and how it should be handled to protect the marketers' interests while complying with the law (Kim & Kim, 2021). In the leisure context, there are no robust results on this yet. Therefore, this research is analyzing this situation and aims to test five hypotheses about sponsorship disclosure, recognition of advertising and their impact on purchase intention and decision in this specific context.

Method and Data

Similar to the work of De Veirman et al (2017) and Janssen et al. (2022) an experimental design was chosen. The sample includes 258 subjects who participated in the experiments in a controlled laboratory setting which was conducted in the behavioral lab of the University of St. Gallen. The subjects had to be registered beforehand over the behavioral lab platform. After a pretest and the evaluation of the manipulation and attention checks the data from 233 subjects was analyzed. The average age of the probands was around 24.7 years, with 61 % male and 29 % female participants. To test the underlying hypotheses, a sequential mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes (2022) Process-Macro (Model 6, 5,000 bootstrap repetitions). The independent variables sponsorship disclosure, advertisement recognition, and purchase intention were modeled as mediators with established operationalization, and the purchase decision was modeled as a dependent variable with a real option to miss out the compensation to get the chance to get the in the SMI-posts promoted trip.

Summary of Findings

In summary, it was found that the relationship between sponsorship disclosure and purchase decision is fully mediated by advertisement recognition and purchase intention serially, indirect effect ab=-.056, 95% CI-[-.153, -.002]). A direct effect of sponsorship disclosure on purchase intention without mediation could not be demonstrated. This research contributes to the current state of the literature by giving new insights into the effect of sponsored content of SMIs in the leisure context, which has not been the focus of other experimental settings. Results reveal that advertisement recognition and purchase intention have an inverse full serial mediation effect between sponsorship disclosure and purchase decision. Furthermore, this research went beyond the classic usage of brand attitude or purchase intention and operationalized a way to trigger actual behavior instead of intent. This is a novel approach in this research context, and it could be valuable to test and validate it in future research endeavors.

Key Contributions

This research contributes to the literature in four ways. First, it summarizes the current understanding of the effects of social media influencers and additionally examines the complexity of tourism decision-making. Second, it examines whether established findings, e.g. on the number of followers and the (active) perceived influence regarding an appetitive or aversive effect also apply to decision-making processes within tourism. Third, this research proposes a matrix of various influencer types and their differences with respect to eight main criteria. These findings extend the literature on digital marketing regarding decision making in tourism and the impact of SMIs and their messages. Lastly, based on the literature analysis and a SO(MOA)R-approach a processual model of influencing was established which may be further tested and developed in continuing behavioral experiments. For this purpose, a list of operationalizations

has already been developed for every model component. This research endeavor will shed further light on the question under which context settings the deployment of SMIs may be beneficial.

References are available on request.

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Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Underrepresented Consumers

FUNCTION VERSUS APPEARANCE: THE CONSEQUENCES OF HOW LARGE-BODIED INDIVIDUALS ARE PORTRAYED BY MARKETERS

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Keywords: large-bodied consumers, underrepresented consumers, advertising, social comparison, dehumanization

Description: Our research investigates how health-related brands can feature large-bodied individuals in their advertisements in a way that does not negatively impact consumers' intentions to purchase the advertised health-related product.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The average woman in the United States is between sizes 16 and 18. Consequently, brands are increasingly featuring large-bodied individuals in their marketing. Existing research provides inconsistent findings on how the presence of large-bodied individuals in advertising influences consumers' health and well-being. Given these conflicting findings, we seek to identify a strategy for marketers to portray large-bodied individuals in health-related marketing without negatively impacting consumers' intentions to purchase the advertised health-related product.

We propose that framing the body as a process (BAP) versus as an object (BAO) in the marketing message that accompanies images of large-bodied individuals in health-related advertising can increase purchase intentions for the advertised health-related product. We suggest

that this effect occurs because consumers increase perceptions of their own humanness after exposure to BAP (versus BAO) messaging, which makes them more likely to purchase the advertised health-related product.

Method and Data

In five experimental studies, we manipulated the marketing message (BAP vs. BAO) that accompanied images of large-bodied individuals in health-related advertisements. Participants in all five studies were randomly assigned to either the BAP or BAO conditions. In each study, participants evaluated the advertisement and filled out existing measures of perceived humanness and purchase intentions.

We recruited women-only samples in studies 1A, 2, and 3. Participants in these studies evaluated an advertisement for a health-related product that featured a large-bodied woman. We portrayed different large-bodied women in each of the three advertisements. For study 1B, we recruited a men-only sample and participants assessed an advertisement featuring a large-bodied man. In study 4, we recruited a balanced sample of women, straight men, and gay men and used the same stimuli from study 1A. We conducted our studies with a variety of health-related products including gym memberships (studies 1A, 1B, and 4), fitness trackers (study 2), and multivitamin dietary supplements (study 3) to increase the generalizability of our findings.

Summary of Findings

In study 1A, women reported significantly higher perceived humanness and purchase intentions for the target health-related product (a gym membership) in the BAP condition than in the BAO condition. Furthermore, perceived humanness mediated the relationship between messaging type and purchase intentions. The results of study 1B suggest that these effects do not replicate among men. In study 2, we replicated our findings from study 1A using a different

large-bodied individual and product (a fitness tracker). Study 3 provided participants with the opportunity to enter a raffle to win the target product (a bottle of multivitamin dietary supplements). Replicating previous studies, participants in study 3 exposed to the BAP advertisement reported higher perceived humanness and purchase intentions for the target product. Additionally, as a result of having higher perceived humanness, participants in the BAP condition were more likely to enter the raffle than participants in the BAO condition. Lastly, study 4 suggests that our reported findings hold among women and gay men but not straight men, highlighting that men's sexual orientation serves as a boundary condition for our observed effects.

Key Contributions

Our research contributes to the timely and practically relevant existing research investigating the effect of body diversity in advertising. We introduce body as a process (BAP) and body as an object (BAO) framing to the marketing literature and expand existing research on dehumanization by looking at dehumanization at the individual consumer level and investigating how different marketing messages can make consumers feel more or less human.

Further, we offer guidance for practitioners and highlight the need to move away from appearance-centric language in advertising, which most advertisements featuring large-bodied individuals currently use. Instead, practitioners should opt for functionality-centric language. While marketers have already begun including large-bodied individuals in health-related advertising, our research highlights the importance of pairing images of large-bodied individuals in health-related advertising with messaging that focusing on the body's functionality (versus its appearance). Moreover, our research underscores the importance of not just featuring diverse individuals who have historically been excluded from advertising but doing so in a way that does

not negatively impact consumers' intentions to purchase the advertised product. Furthermore, study 4 suggests that men's sexual orientation influences how they respond to the different messaging used in advertisements featuring large-bodied individuals. Future research should explore this effect.

GENDER DIVERSITY AT THE TOP:

HOW CONSUMERS RESPOND TO FEMALE- (VS. MALE-) LED COMPANIES

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Keywords: gender diversity, equity, inclusion, female CEOs

Description: This research shows that gender diversity in company leadership matters to consumers: the presence of female (vs. male) company leaders asymmetrically bolsters purchase intentions among female consumers, relative to male consumers.

Research Question. The prevalence of female leaders (e.g., CEOs) is growing at the helm of companies and in the boarder marketplace. For example, the Fortune 500 list marked a record number of female chief executive officers (41 CEOs) in 2021 (Hinchlife 2021). This milestone reflects a broader trend toward the growing inclusion of women in corporate boardrooms and C-suites in the U.S. and elsewhere. Although there are still few women at the top of the corporate ladder in absolute terms, companies are highlighting the growing presence of female leaders in corporate ranks and business. From ads featuring female leaders (e.g., Dick's Sporting Goods' Inside Moves campaign shows the company's eight female vice presidents, senior directors, and CEO), to initiatives by popular retailers (e.g., "Support Women-Owned Businesses" on Amazon.com), social media platforms (e.g., #WomenOwnedBusiness, #WomenOwned, #GirlBoss), and local shops (e.g., "Celebrating Our Women-Owned Business Partners" at one author's local university coop), female leaders are increasingly salient in the marketplace. Yet, little is known about how the presence of female (vs. male) company leaders shapes marketing outcomes and more specifically, the consumption preferences of distinct consumer segments. The present research examines this gap and proposes that gender diversity in company leadership matters to consumers.

Method and Data. In Study 1 students (n=428) learned about a company from the "Support Women-Owned Businesses" section versus the "Launchpad" section of Amazon.com. Participants made an incentive compatible choice between a $30 gift card from the target company versus a $20 from Amazon.com, and reported their gender. A binary logistic regression revealed the company leader × participant gender interaction: female consumers were more likely to choose the target gift card when it was led by a woman rather than a man, whereas male consumers' choice did not depend on the company leader. Study 2 (n=392 students) manipulated the leader's gender and measured participants' gender. Participants indicated their purchase intentions for the target company (dependent variable), perceptions of obstacles the company leader had to overcome (mediator 1), and perceptions of leadership quality (mediator 2). An ANOVA revealed a significant interaction on all measures. A moderated serial mediation analysis revealed a significant result: the effect of company leadership on purchase intentions was serially mediated by perceived obstacles and leadership quality among female consumers, but less so among male consumers. Study 3 (n=342 students) showed that highlighting obstacles that female leaders overcame on their way to the top bolstered male consumers' interest in female-led companies.

Summary of Findings. Three studies and one follow-up show that the presence of female (vs. male) company leaders asymmetrically impacts purchase intentions of female and male consumers: it significantly bolsters purchase intentions among female consumers, but this effect is eliminated or attenuated among male consumers. This happens because female consumers are more likely than male consumers to consider the steeper obstacles conquered by female (vs. male) leaders on their way to the top, which, in turn, boosts female (but not male) consumers' attributions of high leadership quality to female leaders. Externally highlighting obstacles overcome by female leaders bolsters male consumers' purchase intentions for female-led companies.

Statement of Key Contributions. Although gender diversity in business leadership has been growing and set multiple records last year (e.g., peak number of female CEOs at the helm of Fortune 500 companies), little is known about how gender diversity in company leadership impacts consumer behavior and marketing outcomes. By identifying segments and contexts in which female (vs. male) company leadership bolsters consumers' purchase intent, this research

advances the limited understanding of marketing implications of gender diversity in leadership and companies, and it addresses recent calls for research on business practices that can advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the marketplace. By documenting the asymmetric effect of female (vs. male) company leadership on preferences of female (vs. male) consumers, this research contributes to the broader literature on female (vs. male) leadership, which has suggested that the consequences of female (vs. male) leadership for organizations may be mixed, but has overlooked the role of individual audience characteristics and marketing outcomes. More generally, by showing that gender diversity in leadership matters to (many) consumers and that it often benefits companies, this research paves the way for future work on the role of gender diversity and leadership characteristics in consumer behavior and wellbeing.

HOW (NOT) TO SELL PRODUCTS TO PEOPLE OF COLOR

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Keywords: Targeting, inclusive design, suspicion, intentions

Description: This research examines how companies should effectively promote inclusive products to people of color.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

With diversity and inclusion becoming a priority for mainstream society (Edelman Research 2020), many products serving consumers from a broader range of racial/ethnic backgrounds have been introduced in recent years. In this article, we examine how people of color perceive and respond to the growing number of products designed with their specific needs in mind. We use "people of color" (POC) to refer to non-White racial and ethnic groups collectively (APA 2019) and "POC-focused products" to describe products designed to serve the specific needs of POC. Although POC can benefit from using POC-focused products, these products have drawn a mixed response. For instance, when Band-Aid announced their plans to launch bandages in various shades of brown and expressed their commitment to helping the Black community, Band-Aid was met with a deluge of comments ridiculing the brand and questioning its intentions, especially from the consumers Band-Aid wished to serve (Alcorn 2020). Whereas Band-Aid fumbled, other brands like Tru-Colour Bandages and Fenty Beauty have flourished. Given the varied success of POC-focused products, it is important to understand how to effectively position and promote POC-focused products and the psychological underpinnings of POC's responses.

Method And Data

Study 1 tested whether POC consumers respond to a product more negatively when it is promoted using race- compared to feature-salient targeting. The study followed a single factor (targeting: race-salient vs. feature-salient) within-subjects design. Black Americans viewed a

product promoted by race-salient targeting and a similar product promoted by feature-salient targeting and chose one product to receive as a sample.

Study 2 tested the proposed effect and mechanism with Asian Americans. Asian American participants were randomly assigned to evaluate reading glasses that were promoted by race-salient or feature-salient targeting. Then, participants indicated suspicions and perceived company intentions.

Study 3 examined whether a costly signal that indicates a company's genuine intentions to support POC would attenuate the negative effect of using race- versus feature-salient targeting. Participants were randomly assigned to a 2(targeting: race-salient vs. feature-salient) x 2(costly signal: absent vs. present) between-subjects design and completed the same evaluation, suspicion, and company intentions measures used in Study 2.

Study 4 tested product creator group membership as another moderator to attenuate the effect. Asian American women were randomly assigned to a 2(targeting: race-salient vs. feature-salient) x 2(product creator: outgroup vs. ingroup) between-subjects design and completed the same measures from previous studies.

Summary of Findings

Across four experiments, we show that POC consumers react to inclusive products promoted with race-salient targeting more negatively than the same products promoted with feature-salient targeting. We show that this effect is driven by heightened suspicions and inferred negative company intentions elicited by race- relative to feature-salient targeting. However, when the company conveys a genuine desire for inclusion such as incurring a financial cost to support POC or highlighting an ingroup product creator, the negative effect of race-salient

targeting is mitigated. Our results are robust: this effect holds across different POC groups (African and Asian Americans), different products (bandages, glasses, kinesiology tape, and eyelash curlers), and different consumer outcomes (incentive-compatible choice and evaluations).

Statement of Key Contributions

Given the historical marketplace exclusion of POC, recent empirical work primarily focuses on POC's responses to marketplace stigmatization and discrimination (e.g., Bone, et al. 2014; Crockett 2017). How POC respond to a company's attempts at inclusivity, a relatively new phenomenon, is less well understood. By examining POC's appraisals of inclusive products designed specifically for their needs, we show that explicitly calling out a POC group (race-salient targeting) draws extra suspicions regarding the company's intentions and is less effective than indirectly suggesting who the target consumer is (feature-salient targeting), providing an empirical counterpart to Patrick and Hollenbeck's (2021) conceptual work on inclusive design. Notably, this also runs counter to prior research suggesting that race- salient targeting may be an effective way to connect with POC through identity salience and familiarity (e.g., Grier et al. 2006). However, we do find that providing cues that indicate the company's intentions to be inclusive are genuine mitigate the negative effects of race- relative to feature-salient targeting. Finally, our research assists managers in devising effective strategies for appealing to a growing and important consumer segment. Our findings provide guidance to managers for mitigating the negative and enhancing the positive consequences of implementing race-salient targeting.

References are available upon request.

TITLE

Identifying Differential Effects of Emotions in Images on Donation Behavior for Black versus White Beneficiaries in Online Crowdsourcing Platforms

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Keyword: Facial Emotions, Race, Crowdfunding, Image Analysis

In this research, we show that facial emotion expressions in images uploaded by beneficiaries in crowdfunding platforms can impact donation amounts for white and black beneficiaries differently.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Though facial emotion expressions have been shown to influence crowdfunding outcomes, scholars are yet to understand how beneficiary's demographic profile might matter. In this regard, we ask: is the beneficiary's race an important element in understanding how facial emotion expressions impact crowdfunding outcomes? Due to racial stereotyping of emotion expression, it is possible that emotion expression in faces of black relative to white individuals might be undermined, leading to lower empathy for the funding needs of black relative to white individuals, and therefore lower donation amounts. If this logic holds in crowdfunding platforms, we expect to see significantly lower effects of facial emotion expressions in images on donation amounts for black than white beneficiaries.

Method and Data

We collected data for 5,000 projects within the eleven most popular categories as mentioned above on Gofundme.com for a fifteen-month period. after the second quarter of 2020. Each project has one cover image as per Gofundme requirements. To create a weekly panel of donations for the 5000 projects, we track changes in each project and all the raised donations over each week after their launch date, resulting in 22,371 observations in total at the project-week level. We use Azure API to extract happy and sad facial emotion scores from every image. We hired freelancers to read the project description and study the corresponding cover image to identify which face in an image belongs to the beneficiary. Due to lack of accurate race detecting AI, some freelancers were employed to identify the race of the beneficiary. We collected multiple other project level, project creator level and beneficiary level objective data from the platform website. We use multiple methods such as panel data regression as well as a HLM to estimate the effects of the interactions of beneficiary's race and facial emotions of donation amounts. We account for endogeneity and measurement error as well.

Summary of Findings

In terms of results of theoretical interest in this research, we assess the interactions between each emotion expression and beneficiary's race. We find that the positive effect of happy expression is more pronounced for a beneficiary identified as white than black. We interpret this result as the following: happy facial expressions in general increase empathy for a beneficiary as seen in higher donation amounts. However, the gain in donor empathy from showing happy facial expressions and corresponding gains in donation amounts are more pronounced for white than black beneficiaries. The negative effect of sad expression is less pronounced for a beneficiary identified as white than black. We interpret this result as the following: sad facial expressions in general reduce empathy for a beneficiary as seen in lower donation amounts. However, the empathy reduction and corresponding reduction in donation amounts are less pronounced for white than black beneficiaries. We interpret our results on the basis of empathy because there is a rich body of literature establishing that emotion expressions affect donor behavior via empathy. We also uncover systematic heterogeneity in the results.

Key Contributions

Crowdfunding platforms profess goals of equitable outcomes for all beneficiaries. As a result, platform managers should be interested in understanding how inequities arise in their platforms and possible solutions to mitigate inequities. Our research helps in this regard in multiple ways. First, we help by showing that images matter in influencing racial inequities. Second, our research suggests that black beneficiaries can influence donation amounts significantly less than white beneficiaries with the use of images showing happy and sad facial emotion expressions. Third, we suggest a factor that might mitigate such differences based on our finding that explicit mentions of the urgency of funding need in project descriptions can mitigate racial differences in the influence of happy and sad emotion expressions on donation amounts.

INCLUSIVE MARKETING IN THE WEB 4.0 METAVERSE

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Keywords: Metaverse, Physical disability, Inclusivity, Virtual reality

Description: The study aims to uncover the perceptions of physically disabled people regarding the Metaverse through an exploratory study whereby 13 experts and 22 consumers with disability were interviewed.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The Metaverse is referred to as the internet evolution into Web 4.0, known as the "Symbiotic Web". The Metaverse is based on a combination of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Blockchain. The innovation of the Metaverse can be of particular interest to people with physical disabilities as it may open new venues to increase their social inclusiveness. Previous studies and data have been insufficient regarding this topic, and they focused mainly on the importance of AI facilitated technologies on the daily lives of people with physical disabilities. Therefore, this study fills a considerable gap in the literature as it uncovers the perceptions of physically disabled people regarding the Metaverse, provides a deeper understanding of how physically disabled people consider their inclusivity to be represented on the Metaverse, and last but not least, forms a foundation for marketers to build on their related strategies.

Method and Data

The study adopted an exploratory approach, based on in-depth interviews with 22 consumers with physical disabilities, as well as 13 experts (e.g. marketing managers, digital marketers, psychiatrists, etc.). The interviews included a series of open-ended questions that tackled the effects of the Metaverse on the daily lives of people with physical disabilities and its impact on marketing. Five main themes were extracted from the consumers' interviews: (1) mobility-related, (2) self-embracement, (3) purchase platform, (4) convenience, and (5) in-store

accessibility. Experts' interviews were also categorized into the effects of the Metaverse on physically disabled people in terms of enhancing (1) social connection, (2) sensory experience, (3) equality, and (4) self-esteem, as well as (5) brands' and companies' willingness to market on the Metaverse.

Summary of findings

Consumer Interviews

Mobility-related

Virtual reality provides people with physical disabilities with an environment where mobility and seeking physical help is no longer an issue. Consumer interviews have widely shown how the Metaverse helps physically disabled people to be more independent in their movement, with little or no need for help from others.

Self-embracement

Virtual embodiment describes the virtual representation of users' physical appearance, behaviors, and ways of thinking that are like those in real life. The Metaverse offers consumers with physical disabilities the chance to create avatars that are similar to them both physically and socially.

Purchase platform

The Metaverse is a combination of the traditional shopping experience at a brick-and-mortar store and online shopping. New product creation that are customized to match the specific needs of consumers are expected to develop on the Metaverse. Therefore, the Metaverse will offer people

with physical disabilities with better opportunities to select, try, and purchase their product of interest.

Convenience

Everyday life and work will be much easier on the Metaverse. It is like being able to teleport to different locations and places without setting foot outside one's door, and work meetings could be done anywhere in the world while being completely immersed.

In-store accessibility

For the Metaverse to be inclusive, accessibility features, such as a captioning system for locations on the Metaverse to assist deaf people, audio description for the blind and visually impaired, need to be available for consumers with disabilities. Consumer interviews revealed various accessibility features related to store layouts that can be implemented on the Metaverse for an enhanced inclusivity.

Expert interviews

Social connection

The Metaverse is a multifaceted platform where several highly immersive virtual worlds are integrated. The ensuing immersion relies on social connections that could lead to a high level of social interactivity.

Sensory experiences

To enhance Metaverse-related consumers' sensory experiences, sound and sight are examples of key senses that will appeal to users, in addition to touch (e.g., haptic gloves), scent (e.g., OVR technology), and taste (e.g., Taste the TV).

Equality

A wider adoption of the Metaverse by different users would ensure inclusivity for all regardless of one's condition. This will in turn provide new equality opportunities for vulnerable societal segments. With the help of personalized avatars, an equal and sustainable society can be accordingly built.

Self-esteem

The virtual world that the Metaverse will provide to the society will tear down psychological barriers, increasing the self-esteem and confidence that many people, especially those with physical disabilities, suffer from in the real world.

Brands' and companies' willingness to market on the Metaverse.

Brands need to beware of providing excessive attention to people with physical disabilities as it might alienate the latter group who would like to be treated equally. Furthermore, immersive marketing on the Metaverse is key for successful brand marketing. Several strategies can make a difference on the Metaverse, especially product trial. Indeed, by using virtual and augmented realities, consumers can try a product before purchase.

Key contributions

This work highlights marketers' expectations regarding the Metaverse and its effects on physically disabled people. It provides brands with a clearer understanding of what marketing tactics to use in the Metaverse as it can be a way to increase social connection, self-esteem, and equality. Also, the findings reveal the hopes that physically disabled consumers have with regards to the extra convenience and freedom that the Metaverse will bring to their daily lifestyles. Moreover, the results show that companies and brands should take into consideration the virtual representations of physically-disabled consumers in the Metaverse when designing marketing and virtual store-related strategies on that platform.

References are available upon request.

LOW POWER WARM-UP EFFECT: UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECT OF POWER ON CREATIVITY OVER TIME

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Keywords: creativity, power, new product development, pre-registered

Description: This paper demonstrates the conditions under which low power individuals—who have been previously known to be less creative than high power individuals—can be as creative as high power individuals.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question: Existing research suggests that high power individuals (e.g., managers) are more creative than low power individuals (e.g., lower level employees), and thus have an advantage at tasks such as new product development. This is because they are more willing to break with convention. The high power advantage in creative tasks might not be inevitable, however. We ask the question of whether low power individuals can be as creative as high power individuals if they have the opportunity to warm up.

Method And Data: In this research, we utilized experiments. The following is a procedure from one of the studies. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions in a single-factor (power: high, low), between-subjects design. After signing a consent form, the participants were primed with high (vs. low) power using the same power prime from study 1. Afterwards, participants engaged in the structured imagination task, where they imagined traveling to a planet unlike earth and drawing an alien that is local to it (Ward, 1994). This task

captures the extent to which participants can overcome the cognitive constraint imposed by existing knowledge (e.g., extraterrestrials developed by science fiction writers; or animals on earth that have typical properties such as bilateral symmetry) and create a novel output. The participants were asked to generate five drawings, one after the other on separate pages. For our main analysis, we used a generalized linear model.

In a different study, participants were asked to generate new product ideas to test the robustness of our findings across different measurements of creativity.

Summary of Findings: In two experiments with multiple rounds in which participants were asked to perform a task that requires creativity, we found that power made people more creative but only at the beginning (i.e., in round 1). Individuals with low power improved their creative performance with a warm-up round, whereas the powerful did not. This boost in creativity of low power individuals eventually made them just as creative as individuals with high power.

Statement of Key Contributions: Because natural differences in power exist within organizations and the society, this research offers implications, including interventions to address social inequality. For instance, organizations should provide low (vs. high) power individuals (e.g., employees) with sufficient chance to "warm up" so that they can excel in being creative. From a societal perspective, policy makers should protect low power individuals (e.g., students from low socioeconomic status) by securing enough opportunities for them to be creative (e.g., affordable education costs), especially because education quality and/or amount is linked to higher income.

Theoretically, we contribute to the power literature by showing that low power individuals can be similarly creative as high power individuals. In so doing, we introduced the dynamic effect of power on task performance over time—for the first time, to the best of our knowledge. Second, we contribute to the creativity literature by showing that creativity can be enhanced through persistence, especially for low power individuals.

MAKING SENSE OF DIGNITY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE, EMERGING THEMES, AND ESTABLISHING FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: Dignity, Systematic literature review, Conceptual mapping, Thematic analysis

Description: The study follows a systematic literature review of the dignity domain as found in social sciences literature to understand the concept better and highlight major tensions emerging within the literature.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite the concept's crucial contribution towards the ethical and humanistic orientation of businesses, the discourse on 'dignity' in business studies is scant. Hence, the current study aims at reviewing the dignity domain as found in social sciences literature. The research questions addressed in the study are as follows:

1. What are the broad themes and sub-themes emerging from the dignity domain as found in social sciences literature?
2. What is the nature of overlap within the synthesized themes and sub-themes?

Summary of Findings

Three broad themes were synthesized namely, i) Dignity at the workplace: Navigating organizational hierarchies, structures, and stigmatized professions. It is conceptualized as the dignity resulting from the experience of employees through their work or interpersonal

interactions and also from the dignity shaped by organizational structures.; ii) Dignity as inherent value: Understanding normative dignity via the lenses of ethics, justice, rights, and equality. It recognizes dignity as a unifying human characteristic by which everyone has equal dignity. This conception of dignity is not contingent on meritocracy or social status. It rather acknowledges that human beings deserve dignity just by being humans. iii) Society as co-creator of dignity: Contingent dignity based on social functions, social roles, and social structures. It is conceptualized as the dignity constructed as a result of individual experiences as well as by the influence of social structures and actors during social interactions. There are also evident overlaps within the themes. For instance, the inherent dignity conception is embedded within both workplace and social dignity. On the other hand, the overlaps between sub-themes pronounce the co-constructive nature of dignity. The findings also suggest several tensions that emerge within the literature that could be addressed by interested scholars.

Key Contributions

The necessity to understand dignity better stems from its crucial implications spanning aid and development, business ethics, public policy, economics, organizational studies, and legal and constitutional studies. A plethora of conceptualizations of dignity has only led to confusion across the scholarly community leading researchers to call it a useless and stupid concept in the past. Thus, this study helps in the sensemaking of the domain. However, while appreciating the fluidity of the concept which spans several disciplines, the current study contributes by tying it all together which is expected make it easier for future researchers to get a holistic idea about the concept.

MARKETING SEGREGATED SCHOOLS TOWARD DESEGREGATION

Statement of contribution: This research examines how a school may alter its racial demographics, especially if the school is already racially segregated. As a marketing problem, we consider what attributes a majority Black school should highlight to recruit a White student and what attributes a majority White school should highlight to recruit a Black student. Notably, this question and research are important beyond consumer research scholars, as the public is often questioning how to address the growing segregation within the school system. While some research has shown that Black and White parents differ in their school preferences for their children (e.g., Ukanwa et al. 2022), little research has examined what information should be highlighted to these groups to sway them toward sending their children to racially discoordinated schools. The current research aims to fill this void. Notably, we theorize and find that when given information about a school's access to resources (e.g., high ranking school, high teacher experience, and high-income demographics), White parents will be more persuaded than Black parents to send their children to racially discoordinated spaces than they would have been otherwise. This information challenges their assumed deficiency in Black schools, leading them to be more willing to send their child to a Black school. When given information about a school's accessibility (e.g., commute time), Black parents will be more persuaded than White to send their children to racially discoordinated spaces than they would have been otherwise.

Extended: There has been an increase in racial school segregation since the 1960s (Orfield and Lee 2007). In 2022, most K-12 schools in the US are racially coordinated with the race of the parents (i.e. schools are primarily composed of students the same as the parent's race; Garcia 2022). This research asks, *how might a school alter its racial demographics, especially if the school is already racially segregated?* As a marketing problem, we consider what attributes a majority Black (White) school should highlight to recruit a White (Black) student. This research builds on a theory of status responses to historical racial segregation to build a model of desegregation marketing applied to the school choice context.

Previous research finds that Black and White parents differ in what they prioritize most in terms of preferences for school characteristics (e.g., school rating, teacher experience, etc., Ukanwa, Jones, and Turner 2022). We build on this research and theorize that discrepancies in ascribed status between Black and White people (Ouellet 2007) lead these groups of parents to have distinct baseline perceptions of racially discoordinated schools (i.e., schools that are primarily composed of students different from the parent's race). These discrepancies uniquely affect each group of parents' choice to send their child to a racially discoordinated school when given information about the school's desirability in specific school elements. We theorize that White parents are more persuaded than Black parents to send their child to a racially discoordinated school when given information about the school's resources. On the other hand, Black parents

are more persuaded than White parents to do so when given information about the school's accessibility.

These hypotheses are premised on historic differences in Black and White communities in accessibility and resources. Black communities have been historically deprived of resources (e.g., money; Oliver and Shapiro 2013). White communities, on the other hand, have had adequate access to these resources, but have historically excluded Black members from these areas. The US has made advancements in addressing these historic inequities (although much more progress is needed). However, an assumption that Black communities lack resources is likely still held among White people, who have relatively less interaction with Black communities to challenge these beliefs. Similarly, an assumption that White communities are still inaccessible is likely still held among Black people, as Black people have relatively less interaction with White communities (Cox et al. 2016).

We contend that, when given information about a school's access to resources (e.g., high ranking school, high teacher experience, and high-income demographics), White parents will be more persuaded than Black parents to send their children to racially discoordinated spaces than they would have been otherwise. This information challenges their assumed deficiency in Black schools, leading them to be more willing to send their child to a Black school. When given information about a school's accessibility (e.g., commute time), Black parents will be more persuaded than White to send their children to racially discoordinated spaces than they would have been otherwise.

To test these hypotheses, we examined the impact of discoordinated school information along each of the attributes mentioned above. We began by examining the impact of ranking information by conducting a 2 (race of parents: Black vs. White) x 2 (discoordinated performance information: present vs. absent) between-subjects designs. The dependent variable was the choice between a racially coordinated school (e.g., a primarily Black school offered to Black parents) and a racially discoordinated school (i.e., a primarily White school offered to Black parents).

A panel of parents participated in this study on preferences. They first read the national averages for school performance. Next, they were shown two schools from which to choose for their grade-school child. Those in the information: absent condition saw two schools – one primarily Black and one primarily White – with no additional information. Those in the information: present condition saw the same information, but also read that the discoordinated school was top performing relative to the national averages. Participants selected either the discoordinated school (coded as 1) or the coordinated school (coded as 0).

Results from the study are shown in figure 1A and represent the percentage of parents in each condition that selected the discoordinated school (i.e. increasing integration). As expected, there was a main effect for additional information, in that parents overall selected the discoordinated schools more when given information about the school's performance. However, there was also a significant interaction on preference for the discoordinated school. Although both groups preferred the racially discoordinated school when given information of its superior ranking, White parents were more influenced by the additional information than were Black parents (White: 881% increase (8% to 77% discoordinate selection, $\chi2 = 99.09$, $p < .0001$) vs. Black: 96% increase (34% to 66% discoordinate selection, $\chi2 = 17.57$, $p < .0001$) in choice of discoordinated school).

We conducted three additional studies on different panels of parents, examining how additional information on a school's teacher experience, income demographics, and commute influenced choice of a discoordinated school (see figures B-D). We found directionally consistent results. White parents were more influenced by the additional teacher experience (White: 212% increase, (11% to 35% discoordinate selection $\chi2 = 14.04$, $p < .0001$); vs. Black: 50% increase (38% to 57% discoordinate selection, $\chi2 = 4.04$, $p = .04$) in choice of discoordinated school) and high-income demographics than were Black parents (White: 461% increase, (9% to 51% discoordinate selection $\chi2 = 41.32$, $p < .0001$); vs. Black: 16% increase (40% to 47% discoordinate selection, $\chi2 = 1.29$, $p = .32$). There were no significant differences between Black and White parents in response to commute information ($p = .81$).

Ultimately, this work suggests that to market a discoordinate school to Black and White parents, a school's administration may benefit by highlighting specific attributes to Black and White parents. They should also consider the baseline perceptions that Black and White parents have about discoordinated schools. Challenging these assumptions through marketing may increase integration.

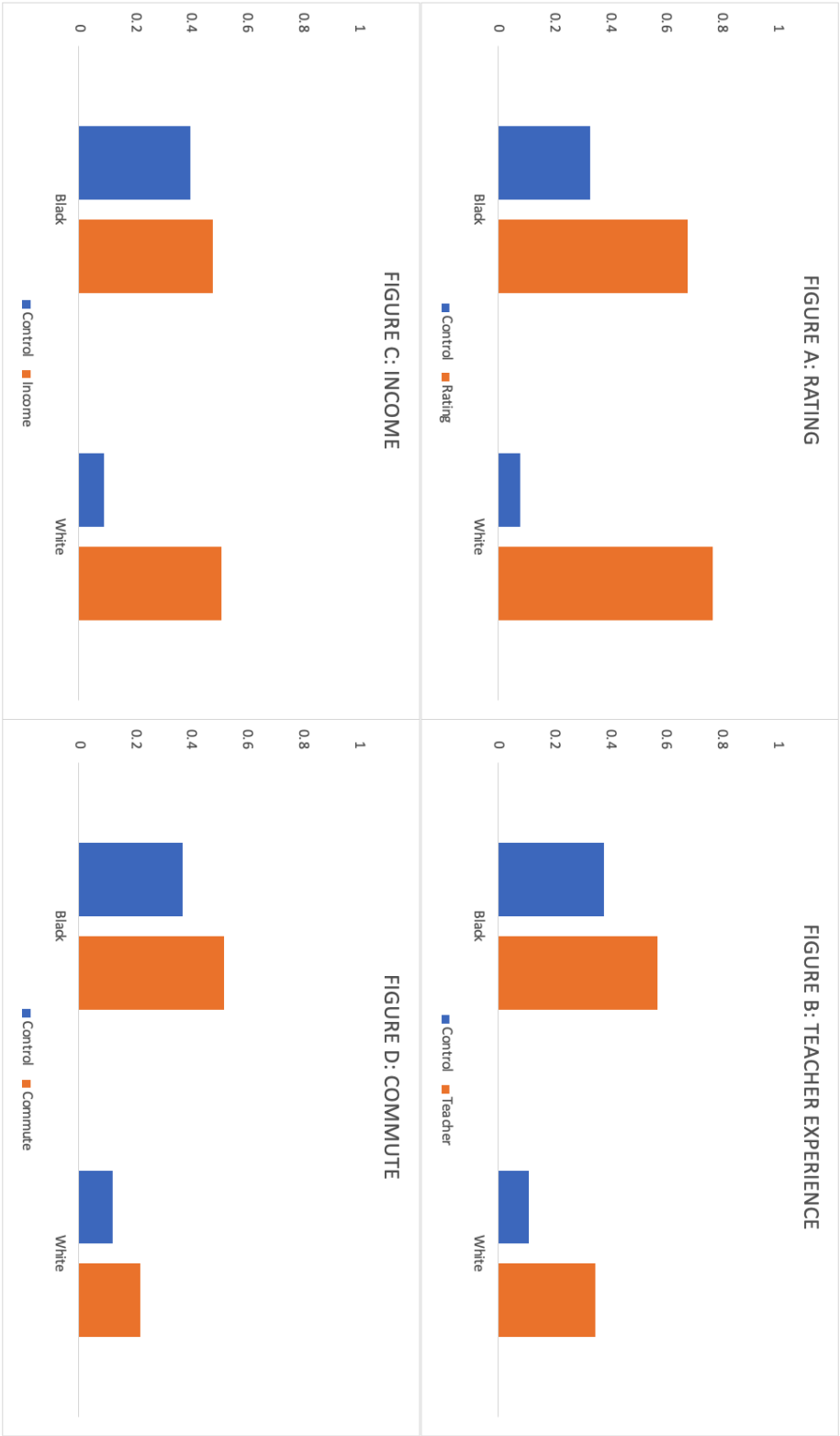
FIGURE A: RATING
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0
Black
White
Control
Rating
FIGURE B: TEACHER EXPERIENCE
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0
Black
White
Control
Teacher
FIGURE C: INCOME
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0
Black
White
Control
Income
FIGURE D: COMMUTE
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0
Black
White
Control
Commute

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Extended Abstract

MINORITY SERVICE PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE IN A DYADIC RELATIONSHIP

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Keywords: customer service, minority sales and service people, power and identity, racial dissimilarity in customer engagement

This paper brings out the perspective of minority service people and the role of power difference in customer engagement.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In this research, we study the impact of racial dissimilarity in service person–customer engagement, with a specific focus on bringing out the minority service person's perspective. A racially dissimilar engagement is defined here as the interaction between majority and minority ethnicities. We show that minority service people experience greater stress and spend less time with racially dissimilar (vs. similar) customers. We also show that the majority service people don't experience greater stress or spend less time with racially dissimilar (vs. similar) customers. Thus, there is an asymmetry between minority and majority service people when engaging with dissimilar customers.

The salience of one's social identity is different for majority and minority service people. With minorities being fewer in number, they are more distinctive in society, and hence

their social identity becomes more salient in the presence of identity-relevant cues. We reason that engagement with the majority customer is one such identity-relevant cue. This association with their minority identity leads to a perceived lower power relative to the majority customer. This perceived power leads to stress and less time being spent with dissimilar customers for minority service people. Perceived power is accordingly proposed as a mediator in our research.

Method and Data

We conducted an online study and a field study to test our predictions. In the online study, we recruited Mturk participants who had sales or service experience (n = 400, 200 majority and 200 minority participants). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions (similar vs. dissimilar consumer) in a between-participants design.

We conducted a 2 (service person ethnicity: minority vs. majority) x 2 (consumer type: similar vs. dissimilar) between-subject ANOVA on the dependent variables. The result indicated a significant two-way interactive effect of the service people's ethnicity and customer (dis)similarity on stress ($F(1, 381) = 3.925$, $p = .048$) and on time spent engaging customers ($F(1, 381) = 6.219$, $p = .013$).

We conducted a field study among minority service people in New York restaurants (n = 81) to test this effect in a real-world setting. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions (similar vs. dissimilar consumer) in a between-participants design. We conducted a t-test which showed a significantly increased level of stress when interacting with dissimilar customers vs. similar customers ($t(79) = 2.47$, $p = .016$). Another t-test showed significantly less time spent with dissimilar customers vs. similar customers ($t(79) = -2.67$, $p = .009$).

Summary of Finding

Both the online and field study showed a significant two-way interactive effect of the service people's ethnicity and customer (dis)similarity on our dependent variables: stress and time spent. The planned contrast between minority service people feeling stressed engaging with dissimilar customers ($M_{\text{StressMinorityServDissCons}} = 2.895$) vs. similar customers ($M_{\text{StressMinoritySerSimilarCons}} = 2.606$) was significant and in the predicted direction ($F(1, 381) = 4.128$, $p = .043$). The planned contrast between minority service people spending time engaging with dissimilar customers ($M_{\text{timeMinoritySerDissCons}} = 2.5$) vs. similar customers ($M_{\text{timeMinorityServSimCons}} = 2.925$) was significant and in the predicted direction ($F(1, 381) = 7.892$, $p = .005$). The results hence showed that minority service people experience greater stress and spend less time with racially dissimilar (vs. similar) customers. A mediation analysis showed that power as a mediator is significant for stress with 95% CI [-.0945, -.0070].

As predicted, the planned contrast for the majority service people engaging with dissimilar vs. similar customers for the dependent variables: stress ($p = .452$) or time spent engaging customers ($p = .492$) was not significant; showing that racial differences with customers will be less relevant for the majority service people.

Key Contributions

Sales and service sectors deploy an estimated 55 million people, with the share of minorities in these sectors rising from 20.4% in 2010 to 22.4% in 2021. However, despite sizeable minority participation in service roles, little research has been done in this domain from a minority service person's perspective.

The most common theoretical perspective used to explain a dissimilar buyer-seller engagement has been the "matching" hypothesis which does not explain the asymmetry between minority and majority service people's engagement with dissimilar (vs similar) customers. We

propose that power difference better explains the engagement between ethnically dissimilar service employees and customers. Our research thus provides a new theoretical mechanism to understand dissimilar service person-customer engagement.

This research also offers substantive implications. Diversity hires are widespread in the service sector. Managers need to understand the role of power differences in minority service people's engagement with customers and build and define training programs to mitigate the adverse effects of low power in service settings. Doing so will benefit all the parties involved in service encounters.

References are available upon request.

MIXED COUPLES, MIXED ATTITUDES: HOW INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIP REPRESENTATION INFLUENCES BRAND OUTCOMES

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Keywords: race, stereotyping, interracial relationships, branding.

Description: Across five experiments and a field study, we find that interracial couples in marketing contexts tend to enhance brand outcomes relative to monoracial dominant (i.e., White) couples; however, they tend to decrease brand outcomes compared to monoracial nondominant (i.e., minority) couples.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Interracial relationships are on the rise, with an increase in interracial marriages from 3% in 1967 to 19% in 2019 (Parker and Barroso 2021). The representation of interracial relationships in marketing has also grown (Block 2021); however, little research has examined whether this inclusion of interracial relationships is an effective marketing strategy. In this article, we examine how the use of interracial couples relative to that of monoracial dominant (i.e., White) and nondominant (i.e., minority) couples influences brand outcomes. Consistent with the notion we term "mixed attitudes," interracial couples in marketing appeals enhance brand outcomes compared to monoracial dominant (i.e., White) couples; however, they decrease brand outcomes relative to monoracial nondominant (i.e., minority) couples. Integrating work on the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (e.g., Fiske et al. 2002) with that on stereotype amplification and dilution (e.g., Hall et al. 2019), we posit that these effects may be driven by how the couple's composition of dominant (vs. nondominant) racial members either amplifies or dilutes perceived warmth which, in turn, drives brand outcomes.

Method and Data

We tested our reasoning across five experiments (four preregistered) and a field study on a social media platform. Study 1 first examined how Black-White interracial (vs. monoracial) couple representations influence brand outcomes. Also, study 1 tested our proposed process by examining whether amplified (vs. diluted) perceptions of couples' warmth drive brand outcomes, in addition to addressing the alternative explanation of perceived brand diversity. Study 2 used a balanced sample to test whether race of participant influences these core findings and tested for role of social desirability bias. Studies 3a and 3b examined whether the findings of studies 1 and 2 extend to Hispanic-White and Asian-White racial compositions, thus providing a critical test of our core theorizing that consumer responses to racial composition are driven by the presence of dominant (i.e., White) versus nondominant (i.e., minority) group members rather than being limited to a specific racial composition. Study 4 examined whether consumers' level of SDO

moderates the above effects and addresses brand morality as an alternative explanation. Finally, study 5 provides a test of our core effects in a real-world context (i.e., click rate of ads on Facebook).

Summary of Findings

Across five experiments and a field study, we find that interracial couples in marketing contexts tend to enhance brand outcomes relative to monoracial dominant (i.e., White) couples; however, they tend to decrease brand outcomes compared to monoracial nondominant (i.e., minority) couples. Drawing on the Stereotype Content Model, we find that these effects are primarily driven by how the couple's racial composition amplifies or dilutes perceived warmth. As monoracial couples possess consistent stereotype attributes, they amplify warmth perceptions. However, monoracial nondominant couples amplify warmth in a positive direction, increasing perceived warmth, while monoracial dominant couples amplify warmth in a negative direction leading to a decrease in perceived warmth. By contrast, interracial couples possess inconsistent stereotype attributes, leading to the dilution of perceived warmth wherein their perceived warmth is enhanced (vs. dampened) relative to monoracial dominant (vs. nondominant) couples.

Statement of Key Contributions

Marketing appeals increasingly feature interracial couples; however scant research has examined how interracial representation impacts brand outcomes. This work contributes to emergent research on the influence of diversity on consumer behavior. We examine how a range of interracial couples (i.e., Black-White, Hispanic-White, Asian-White) impact brand outcomes compared to monoracial couples. We also contribute to work on stereotyping by examining how the SCM underlies consumer responses to interracial (vs. monoracial) couples depicted in marketing-relevant contexts. Finally, our work holds managerial insight into the ever-growing use of diverse representation in marketing. Although we found that both interracial and monoracial nondominant couples are viewed as diverse, interracial couples outperformed monoracial dominant couples but not monoracial nondominant couples. Thus, our findings provide a more granular look into how consumers respond to and value diversity. For instance, brands which aim to enhance brand preference may effectively do so by increasing diversity representation in their marketing.

*References available upon request

THE CALM DURING THE STORM – AN UNDERSTANDING OF COPING MECHANISMS AMONG THE ELDERLY CITIZENS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Keywords: Coping Behavior of the elderly, self-efficacy appraisal, cultural trauma, severity appraisal, vulnerability appraisal

Description: An understanding of the coping mechanisms among the elderly citizens in developing countries during the covid-19 pandemic

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The elderly cohort of consumers is identified as a vulnerable population, especially during disaster situations. Age and ageism are significant risk factors that increase the physical and psycho-social burden on the elderly. In recent times there is considerable media coverage about the risks of COVID-19 to older people, including a discourse on the existing ageist sentiment and age discrimination in society and its negative impact on their well-being. The heightened ageism during the COVID-19 pandemic also increased in exclusion, inequity, and discrimination against older people. As a result, the elderly developed their own ways of coping with critical and risk-prone situations. However, extant research is thinly built around the empirical assessments of the coping behaviors of the elderly (Elledge et al., 2008; Sun et al., 2020). It is critical to understand how the elderly cohort developed their coping mechanisms and the impact of indigenous coping efforts on their lifestyle. To address this research gap, we evaluate the coping mechanisms and consumption behavior of the elderly during the pandemic in the developing countries of Iran and India. We examine the mediating role of culture, cultural memory, and past experiences of national disasters on the evolution of their coping mechanisms.

Method and Data

A total of 22 senior citizens from developing countries, India and Iran, were approached for an in-depth qualitative inquiry to assess the antecedents of coping behavior among the elderly. The context of the study is the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Four constructs were used for the study - Severity and vulnerability appraisal, Coping self-efficacy appraisal, Cultural trauma, and Coping

behavior. Before conducting full-scale interviews, the authors tested the questions through pilot interviews to ensure the clarity of the question guideline. The respondents were in the age group of 60 to 85 years and interviews were conducted via WhatsApp or by phone and lasted about 60-90 minutes each. Questions were sent beforehand by WhatsApp or email so that respondents had time to deliberate and provide in-depth insights into their responses. Each interview lasted about 60-90 minutes. The data was transcribed and analyzed for emergent themes. During the process, internal checking was conducted by the authors separately for enhancing the accuracy of manuscripts. The data was coded and analyzed to extract information that helped to develop and substantiate the proposed conceptual framework of the study. This facilitated a triangulation of the subject matter, which is less susceptible to individual bias.

Summary of Findings

This study shows a behavioral transition in the perception and coping behavior of elderly people during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the earlier stages, the elderly respondents showed emotions such as anxiety, depression, stress, fear, and panic. However, as the situation persisted they controlled their physical and mental well-being by conducting self-appraisals for severity, vulnerability, and coping self-efficacy methods. They adopted regular coping behavior mechanisms such as seeking more information, remaining communicative, enhancing mental and physical engagement, and diverting their minds towards new identity formation. They increased their engagement in new skills and artistic expressions, for example, arts and crafts, gardening, and poetry. Cultural trauma was examined via blame attribution, emotionality, identity formation, and artistic defense mechanisms. While emotionality and artistic developments were similar to the outcomes above, the aspect of blame attribution showed interesting progression. The respondents

expressed that initially, they blamed another country for the pandemic. Gradually they started blaming their own governments' incapacities to handle the pandemic. Specifically, in reference to marketing and consumerism, the results of the study show interesting outcomes related to consumption-based adjustments and frugal living lifestyles. These behavioral changes manifested as a reduction of non-essential and wasteful shopping and impulse buying.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study contributes towards a critical understanding of the behavior among the elderly population. Particularly, in the context of the elderly cohorts' age-based vulnerability and possible ageism, it is crucial knowledge to see how the elderly respondents employ coping mechanisms at all levels- behavioral, emotional, and problem focused. Specifically in reference to marketing and consumerism, the results of the study show interesting outcomes related to the consumption-based adjustments and frugal living lifestyles. These behavioral changes manifested as reduction of non-essential and wasteful shopping and impulse buying. Instead, there was an increase towards self-reliance by growing ones' food, reusing, conserving resources, and engaging in do-it-yourself (DIY) activities. The inclination towards DIY was particularly important as the notion of DIY is still underdeveloped in developing countries. These observations are crucial for marketing practitioners as they must recognize the importance of the elderly consumer cohort. New product offerings and services that are better aligned to this change in consumption tendencies of the elderly can be created. The study also provides policy makers new directions for designing relevant resource management strategies and improving existing recovery efforts for the elderly, especially since the pandemic is still an ongoing threat.

"References are available upon request."

THE "ME" IN ADVERTISEMENTS: THE IMPACT OF AD CONTENT ON BRAND EVALUATIONS AND CONSUMER WELL-BEING

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Keywords: advertisement, diversity, brand trust, purchase intentions, consumer well-being

Description: The present work uses an experimental study to examine how inclusive advertising impacts both brand evaluations and consumer well-being outcomes.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The present research is concerned with understanding how brands may craft their marketing campaigns to advance a more inclusive society and avoid causing harm to both consumers and their brand's performance. Specifically, this work addresses the following two research questions: (1) Do advertisements that display diverse individuals positively affect consumer well-being outcomes? and (2) Do advertisements that display diverse individuals have positive effects on brand outcomes?

Method and Data

The present study was conducted online and utilized a two-cell between-subjects design with random assignment to explore how the advertisement's content (inclusive vs. non-inclusive) impacts consumer well-being and brand outcomes. Within the study, all participants were

exposed to an advertisement for a fictitious athleisure-style apparel brand. The created advertisements were less than a minute long and were designed to mimic those frequently displayed on social media. To manipulate the diversity contained within each advertisement, the images of the individuals featured were carefully selected based on their perceived ethnicity, the presence of any visible disabilities, and their physical appearance. The control (non-inclusive) advertisement only included images of people that appeared to be white, able-bodied, and of similar body size (thin/muscular). For the inclusive advertisement, individuals of different ethnicities and body sizes, as well as individuals with physical disabilities, were featured as the brand's models.

Following exposure to the advertisement, participants were asked to respond to questions associated with the well-being and brand outcomes. Specifically, this research measured consumer well-being outcomes as the influence of the advertisement on participants' self-appraisal and subsequent mood following exposure. The brand outcomes that were examined included brand trust and purchase likelihood.

Summary of Findings

Findings suggest that utilizing inclusive advertisements positively impacts both consumer well-being and brand outcomes. For the consumer well-being outcomes, results revealed a significant main effect of advertisement content on self-appraisal, such that the presence of diversity in an advertisement was associated with more positive self-appraisals. There was also a significant main effect of advertisement content on mood, wherein the presence of diversity in an advertisement was associated with a more positive mood. Post-hoc analyses of the results

suggest that both traditionally represented and under-represented consumers experienced significant increases in mood following exposure to the advertisement with diverse models.

For the brand outcomes, results demonstrated a significant positive effect of advertisement content on purchase likelihood and brand trust. Participants that viewed the inclusive advertisement had greater purchase intentions and perceptions of brand trust than those that viewed the non-inclusive advertisement. Additional post-hoc analyses demonstrated that both of these positive effects were significant for traditionally represented and under-represented consumers. Finally, mediation analysis offered support for the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between advertisement content and purchase likelihood.

Key Contributions

The present research contributes to the literature by providing insight into how the use of inclusive advertising may benefit both consumers and brands. Whereas previous research has emphasized the negative consequences of advertising, the present work examines how model diversity, across the characteristics of race, size/shape, and ability, influences consumer reactions and behaviors. The findings from this research suggest that brands can improve well-being outcomes for both traditionally represented and under-represented consumers by utilizing diverse models in their advertisements. Further, this research extends academic understanding of the relationship between consumer perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and brand attitudes and purchase intentions. We speculate that consumers may view inclusive advertising practices as a signal of a brand's CSR efforts and may conclude that inclusive advertisements are the product of more ethical and trustworthy brands. Findings reveal that inclusive advertising

provides an opportunity for organizations to enhance consumer perceptions of brand trust and encourage purchase behavior.

Global and International Marketing

ANALYSIS OF NETWORK EFFECTS IN INDUSTRIAL NETWORKS: GEOGRAPHICAL APPROACH

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Keywords: network effects, B2B market, industrial networks, utility, Metcalfe's law.

Description: The article includes the original results of a study aimed at applying the theory of network effects for understanding and exploration of B2B networks on a contractual basis using the example of the geographical distribution of the company's partners.

ABSTRACT

The authors answer the question: How can the theory of network effects contribute to the understanding and exploration of B2B networks with a contractual basis? We consider our global contribution to be the emergence of prospects for studying industrial networks and network effects.

INTRODUCTION

The processes of digitalization of the world and globalization of relations have led to the actualization of the network approach in social and economic sciences, thanks to the opportunities for scaling initiatives and processes through network distribution. Network effects are investigated in the context of B2C, B2B and P2P markets. Understanding the value and utility of the network is necessary in view of several factors. Firstly, there are factors (especially in the digital environment) that are difficult to assess and predict. The utility of a product for

users may depend not only on the characteristics and qualities of the product itself, but also on access to the network of people using this product. Secondly, network effects research help managers make more informed decisions in the field of complex products. For example, in the context of P2P systems, which include decentralized finance and cryptocurrencies, network effects are a key factor determining the value of the platform (Alabi, 2020).

The network effect, as a phenomenon of proportional growth of utility to the growth of the square of participants, is more often used by researchers to evaluate social networks where people are participants (Katona, Zubcsek, & Sarvary, 2011; Aggarwal & Yu, 2012). The issue of using the network effect to measure the utility of intercompany networks remains insufficiently covered. The network effect was reflected in the B2B context in the study of B2B platforms that bring together sellers and buyers belonging to an independent intermediary. Some researchers note two-way network effects (Gong, 2020): with the growth of suppliers on the platform, the value for the buyer increases, and with the growth of buyers, the value for suppliers increases (Liu, Chen, & Gao, 2020). However, the impact of network effects on B2B networks formed by a participating firm (a focal firm) has not yet been studied. Such networks have a contractual basis rather than a platform basis.

The network approach in industrial marketing became widespread at the end of the XX century and became an influential paradigm for studying relationships with customers and other actors in the XXI century. Network organizations were considered in various contexts, with a focus on different units of analysis and offering differentiated issues for study: channel management and supply chain management (Pacman, Blankson, & Guzman, 2011; Möller, 2013), the study of markets as networks, macro networks (Achrol & Kotler, 1999) and the study of focal and strategic networks (Möller, Rajala, & Svahn, 2005).

Despite the widespread use of the network approach in industrial marketing, researchers practically do not use the achievements of the network effect theory to study the growth of value (utility) depending on the growth of the number of network participants. The absolute limitations

for achieving full equivalence between social networks and B2B networks are the limitations of potential participants and tougher barriers to entry into the network. Li and Pénard (2012) confirm the importance of the qualitative network effect, pointing out the insufficiency of only quantitative network effect for B2B markets. Participants in B2B relationships determine their performance through quantitative values (the main commercial goal is profit maximization). Thus, the purpose of this work is to determine the applicability of the network effect theory to study the growth of utility of B2B networks with a contractual basis.

RQ1: How can the theory of network effects contribute to the understanding and exploration of B2B networks with a contractual basis?

In the context of the B2B market, the company's partners will serve as nodes. The following quantitative and qualitative research methods will be used: a literature review, a case study on the example of Cisco and an analysis of the number of Cisco partners distributed over several geographic regions. To identify the features of network effects in B2B, data were collected on 47 839 Cisco partners and their distribution by country and three regions: America, EMEA, APJC. The results of empirical analysis revealed that the strength/importance of a node (network member) significantly exceeds similar indicators in B2C and P2P.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF NETWORK EFFECTS

The network approach is one of the dominant approaches of relationship marketing, which is aimed at managing the firm's relationships with other organizations (Möller and Halinen, 1999). Previously, industrial marketing focused on customer relationship management, but as it developed, industrial marketing began to include relationship management with various network actors (Grönroos, 1994) and focus on achieving different goals (Moller et al., 2020). Also, the emergence of digital platforms for B2B markets contributed to the actualization of the study of various forms of industrial networks. However, if B2B platforms are more like social networks, then industrial networks built around a focal firm have a completely different nature and require careful study of their management capabilities. In this paper, we respond to the call

of Marcovic et al. (2021) on the need for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of industrial marketing and attempt to integrate the economic theory of network effects into the management of industrial networks.

One of the methods that allows to give a quantitative (ordinal approach) assessment of the utility is the Robert Metcalfe model. It states that "the value of the network increases in proportion to the square of the number of its users: $n^2 * c$" (Metcalfe, 1996). In Metcalfe's research (2013) author recommended dividing the utility of the network by 2: «$(n^2 * c)/2$». These disagreements are associated with the logical development of the law itself, the emergence of new theories and practices, as well as the emerging Dot.com bubble (1995-2001).

The constant «c» also indicates the conditional utility of one "link" between users. This value can be included in a fairly large permissible range of possible values, be either less than 1 or more (Afuah, 2013). We can consider the model of the value of the network with a floating coefficient. This may be relevant in the case when the value of the opportunity to negotiate with one subscriber decreases with the growth of the audience (Afonso & Magalhäes, 2020). The utility of a user is positively related to the number of other users – the idea of "normal network effects" (telephony, software) (Allen, Chandrasekaran, & Gretz, 2021). According to Metcalfe, the marginal (added) utility of each new user is much greater than the previous one.

$$U_i^{'}(N) > 0$$

The utility of a type A user is positively dependent on the number of type B users (and vice versa) (payment systems: cardholders, game consoles: video game producers and players themselves, taxi aggregators: passengers and taxi drivers) - the idea of "two-way network effects" (Dou & He, 2017).

$$\mathrm{U}_{\mathrm{i}}^{\mathrm{A}\prime}(\mathrm{N}_{\mathrm{B}}) > 0 \qquad \mathrm{U}_{\mathrm{i}}^{\mathrm{B}\prime}(\mathrm{N}_{\mathrm{A}}) > 0$$

In this market, in addition to classical strategic barriers (for example, the criterion of "exclusivity" - restrictions on the transition from one platform to another), there are also non-strategic barriers, such as: a critical mass of users, user expectations and important stakeholders

(Hill, Sarkani, & Mazzuchi, 2021). The business models of the platforms differ in the composition of the combined groups, as well as in the way the value is monetized. Large companies exist in the so-called «business ecosystem» (a set of own or partner services united around one company) (Panico & Cennamo, 2022). A business ecosystem can include internal actors (shareholders, senior management, influencers, etc.) and external actors (partners, suppliers, influencers, etc.). Both groups of actors influence the state of B2B contacts.

The B2B model is an interaction model where one enterprise makes a commercial transaction with another (Shi, Li, & Zhao, 2014). B2B combines solutions for suppliers and for buyers, integrating them into a single system based on a central portal (Wallbach et al., 2019). There are several common features that unify high-tech markets: 1) new technologies markets are by nature riskier and more uncertain, need for large investments (Bahrami, Atkin, & Landin, 2019); 2) on the early stages they have lower competition pressure due to the absence of established network of consumers and clients; 3) at the beginning new solutions delivered by these players are not fully absorbed and often need time for adaption, testing and further large replication; 4) many cutting-edge solutions expose platform characteristics, which means that the value of a solution derive from its dissemination across territory/companies/consumers/physical systems (Benson, 2012). Probably, the most important difference between B2C and B2B markets lies in the fact that in B2C markets a firm achieves market power when it attracts more consumers. On the contrary, in B2B markets firms gain influential positions when they consolidate its partners. The microeconomics of platforms reverses the findings of traditional microeconomic analysis (Christiaans, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

Cisco was selected for analysis because it is one of the leaders in the ICT industry, has a long history and a solid portfolio of stakeholders: users, partners, suppliers, shareholders, etc. For 20 years since the Dot.com crisis, the company has remained one of the world leaders in the industry (with a capitalization of $230 billion for the 3rd quarter of 2021). Interaction with Cisco

partners is organized according to the principle of inter-company networks with central and marginal nodes. In the context of the business environment, it is difficult to talk about the full integration of firms; we are talking about weak quasi-integration: a large company is able to influence partners, for example, demanding from them to reduce the cost of product delivery/procurement and other concessions. Small companies can influence a large company by creating unique products and inflating prices. Such relationships increase the importance of network effects within B2B models (compared to networks of B2C and P2P platforms).

We use the number of: 1) countries in which partner companies are localized; 2) the partner companies. The number of partner countries may remain stable over many years, which, on the one hand, may indicate the constancy of utility (relative invariability), and, on the other hand, the growing values of the indicator C. The number of partners within the country may within a year change significantly. The research results depend on which factor to choose as a priority: the number of partner countries and their gradations or the number of partner companies and their gradations. Service users derive their utility from the distribution of partner networks in the form of constant product availability, cost savings, job creation, and other indirect effects (Rabah, Evstigneev, & Gama, 2021).

In this paper, score C will be used as an indicator of the quality of the established partner networks, this metric will be used primarily in the context of the geographic distribution of Cisco partners. Partners will be analyzed in an aggregated and anonymized form. All data was collected manually from the official Cisco website. As an analogy for utility (for a B2C platform), B2B markets use either the company's income or profit (since the company seeks to maximize its profit). In this paper, we will use data on the company's income for 2021.

Cisco divides all its partners into 3 global regions: 1) American; 2) Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA); 3) Asia Pacific, Japan and China (APJC). All companies were categorized by country, and then countries were categorized by region. As a result, we got a summary table

on the macro distribution of companies. Next, the indicator C is evaluated. It is calculated according to the following formula (from the formula of Metcalfe's law):

$$C = \frac{2*V_i}{n^2} \quad \text{where:}$$

V - company income divided by regions (analogue of utility); i – region index; n – number of partner companies; C – coefficient of strength/quality of connection (partner's value).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following features of the network effect when divided by country/region can be distinguished. Firstly, the distribution of companies by country does not always reflect the value of that company (Birkin, Clarke, & Clarke, 2010; Brancaccio, Kalouptsidi, & Papageorgiou, 2020). For example, a country may have a small number of partner companies, however, these companies play an important role in the region. Consequently, the value of these companies may have a higher value. In this study, only 12 countries have over 1000 partner companies. In total, more than 53% of all partners of Cisco are concentrated in these 12 countries. Secondly, there are duplicate (affiliated companies) branch companies from different countries. But to assess the network effect, it does not matter how many times a particular company appears in the list; it is important that there is an additional unit of the partner network to which we can connect.

The company has a total of 47 839 partners as of October 2021 (Cisco, 2021), of which 16623 or 34.7% are in the Americas, which can be explained by the abundance of partners in the US (9621 partners). And 11811 (24.7%) in EMEA, 19405 companies (40.6%) in the APJC region. Table 1 presents the key results of the network effects assessment based on the geographic location of partner companies. Americas region generates approximately 59% of Cisco's total revenue (or $7.7 billion), Europe-Africa region generates 26% of total revenue ($3.4 billion), Asia region generates 15% of total revenue ($1.96 billion). In the "Outcome" column, indicator C is calculated. It can be seen that companies in the Americas region have an average "network strength" of 56 points, while EMEA countries have 49, and APJC has 10. This concept

and methodology allows us to give an objective assessment of the weights of the company depending on which country the company belongs to.

Table 1. Key results of the network effects assessment

	Revenue by region, billion $	**Percentage in profit**	**Number of partners by region**	**Percentage of partners by region**	**Outcome (C – score)**
American	7,729	59%	16623	34,748%	55,94155
EMEA	3,406	26%	11811	24,689%	48,83164
APJC	1,965	15%	19405	40,563%	10,43675
Total	13,1	100%	47839	13,1	-

Another important parameter is the differentiation of Cisco's partners. The company uses its own specific format for dividing partners into groups. In the case of Cisco, partners are divided into 4 main groups: integrators, providers, developers, consultants (advisors) (Cisco, 2021): 1) Integrators (create end-to-end solutions for customers); 2) Vendors (experts in delivering managed and cloud solutions); 3) Developers (specialists involved in the development of circuits, mechanisms, hardware, software, sites and are able to implement a project from the concept stage to its implementation by technical means); 4) Advisers (consultants provide consulting support).

Each group has its own division into categories. For example, integrators are categorized into “global gold”, “gold”, “prime”, “regular”, and providers are classified into “gold”, “prime”, “regular”. It is logical to assume that each group of partners brings different benefits to Cisco. However, at the moment we do not have objective factors that would allow us to justify one or another weight of the company, so this thesis will be considered in subsequent papers. In subsequent works, the network density factor will also be taken into account.

CONCLUSION

Within the framework of this study, we sought to identify the potential of using network effects theory to study industrial networks built around a focal firm. Our research makes a significant contribution to the literature of industrial marketing and offers an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the value of B2B networks. This work strengthens the understanding of the complexity of industrial networks and the insufficiency of only quantitative assessment to determine their value. We found that geographical differences of partners have a significant

impact on the final value (unlike social networks). We consider our global contribution to be the emergence of prospects for studying industrial networks and network effects in tandem, strengthening economic theory and the industrial marketing agenda.

Relationships within a B2B system have stronger network connections. This is also explained by the fact that there is interdependence within these networks. At the same time, the strength of the network may differ depending on which side the network is viewed from. For a large company, communication with a small partner is less important (less power and value) than for a small company, communication with a large company. This allows large companies to manipulate their small partners. Firms accommodate such disagreements when negotiating to maximize their own utility by taking away the utility of their opponents. The company reallocates its resources depending on which group this or that partner belongs to.

Other benefits of computed results include the following:

A) The number of companies does not correlate with the ratio of the strength of the connection (the importance of the partner) within the region, as well as with the amount of income. Presumably, there are additional geographical factors that have a significant impact on the importance of a partner;

B) C-score in B2B is higher than in B2C platforms (in which it is assumed by default that the expectation of the bond strength tends to 1: M(C) -> 1) (Ransbotham, Kane, & Lurie, 2012);

C) The results of the work can be used to model the "domino effect" in B2B supply chains, when a disruption in one link leads to problems throughout the chain.

In addition to network effects influencing market factors within B2B, there is potential for network effect models to be used to build more complex market models, such as identifying the drivers of digital protectionism. Despite the fact that we studied one B2B case, which is an absolute limitation of our study, the assumption of the universality of the constructed model will allow us to study other forms of markets (B2C and P2P).

The absolute limitations of this study include the use of a single B2B case and the limited data on the partner network. At the same time, the chosen approach makes it possible to attempt to create a discussion about an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the industrial network, in particular between economic theory and industrial marketing.

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Proposal Submission for the Special Session

Conference Track: Global and International Marketing

Title: Better Marketing for a Better World: Experimental Evidence from Emerging Markets

Description

This special session aims to present and discuss novel research projects about field experiments that help us to understand how marketing can help create a better world. The common thread of these projects is their focus on using marketing principles, tools, and interventions to increase economic opportunity among those in disadvantaged circumstances, especially in emerging markets.

Objective

This session will present projects focused on using better marketing to improve economic and social outcomes among disadvantaged groups in emerging markets. These groups include consumers and entrepreneurs from around the globe: we will discuss the context of migrant workers in China, women doing a cancer screening test in India for the first time, entrepreneurs and consumers in rural India, and small business owners in South Africa.

Presentations in the session will address novel marketing questions such as: Can marketing data be used to improve migrant workers' well-being?; Can we enhance job meaningfulness with marketing tools?; What is the role of credibility in deciding not to do a cancer screening?; How can we mediate the effect of risk perception to increase a screening takeup?; Can we improve the outcomes of marketing students with a more diverse classroom?; Does the impact of learning marketing skills improve in a more diverse classroom?; How can we solve market failures in the adoption of socially beneficial products and services in emerging markets?

Given the novelty of the research questions examined in these studies, data to address them is not readily available. Even when observational data is available, causal identification is difficult due to the challenges of omitted variables or reverse causality. For these reasons, the authors use randomized controlled trials to overcome these problems and establish causal relations in marketing.

Contribution to the Discipline

Given the social and economic transformations in emerging markets, there exist entirely new phenomena and entirely new opportunities for marketing practitioners and academics to create impact. Moreover, these transformations offer unique opportunities for marketing scholars to develop new theoretical frameworks to explain new phenomena.

Studies in emerging markets provide marketing scholars the unique opportunity of using marketing tools to improve business outcomes drastically while getting a deeper understanding of the moderators and mediators of marketing problems. Phenomena that might appear marginal or unimportant in developed countries could be crucial in emerging markets (Chandy and Narasimhan 2015). The topics examined in the proposed session reflect some of these crucial phenomena.

Beyond the substantive and theoretical importance of these topics, the research projects of this session use randomized controlled field experiments that are increasingly prevalent in the social sciences. The adoption of these research designs results from the need to establish causality and has been part of the "credibility revolution" (Angrist & Pischke 2010) that has generated more rigorous methods for social sciences.

Each of the papers presented in this session contributes to developing this marketing research agenda and tackles the crucial question of how to increase the opportunities for those less favored. We expect that this session will inspire participants to pursue research in related areas, and yield rich discussions on the future of the field of marketing.

Structure and general orientation

The plan for this session is a brief introduction (5 minutes), four research presentations with Q&A (15 minutes each-10-12 minutes for presenting and the rest for Q&A), and brief concluding remarks (5 minutes), thus adding up to 65 minutes.

Likely audience

We expect the audience to include marketing scholars interested in 1) better marketing for a better world, 2) emerging markets, and 3) field experiments. As most of this work is related to approaches and outcomes that span sub-areas of marketing (strategy, consumer behavior, and quantitative marketing), we anticipate significant interest in this special session.

Key issues

The key issues and topics to be covered are as follows:

1. **Presentation: "Tell them how they did: Customer feedback and employee well-being"**
2. **Presentation: “Pump Priming: Solving Market Failures Through Investments in Marketing Interventions”**
3. **Presentation: "Effect of Source Credibility on the Uptake of the Offering and Willingness to Pay: Field Experiment on Cervical Cancer Screening"**
4. **Presentation: "Can Diverse Classes Enhance Marketing Learning?"**

The following pages present a table summary of the presenters and an abstract of each presentation.

Table Summary of Presenters, Authors, Affiliation, Titles, Locations, and Contact

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Abstract of Each Presentation:

1. **Tell them how they did: Customer feedback and employee well-being**

Ruhan Liu, Wanqing Zhang, Pradeep K. Chintagunta, and Jing Xu

According to the service-profit chain, front-line employees play a pivotal role in determining customer satisfaction and organizational performance; yet their well-being is subject to several threats, including role ambiguity, a lack of job meaning, and tension in employment relationships. Rather than viewing these issues as solely a human resources problem, in this paper, the authors ask the question: can marketing data, such as customer feedback, be used to improve employees' well-being and performance? To this end, they provide employees with i) individualized customer feedback, or ii) a combination of such feedback and firm public recognition as interventions. By conducting a randomized field experiment with 145 front-line employees of a housekeeping services platform in China, the authors find that such interventions enhance employee well-being and work performance. Specifically, exposure to customer feedback improves employee workplace well-being (e.g., job satisfaction), psychological well-being (e.g., self-acceptance), and service quality. Combining customer feedback and firm public recognition increases social well-being (e.g., employment relationships) and service hours. In terms of mechanisms, they show that the interventions increase employees' perceived role clarity and job meaningfulness. Text analysis of employee feedback also indicates that interventions boost employees' customer orientation and work motivation. This study provides both practical and theoretical insights into the cross-functional benefits of marketing data and contributes to the understanding of how marketing tools can be utilized for social sustainability and employee well-being.

2. Pump Priming: Solving Market Failures Through Investments In Marketing Interventions

Gaurav Mehta, Rajesh Chandy, Werner Reinartz, and Om Narasimhan

We show in this research that innovative marketing interventions, when combined with rigorous marketing metrics, can solve market failures in the adoption of new socially beneficial products. We study contexts where – despite clear benefits to adoption - demand is weak (often due to lack of awareness), and a thriving marketplace of transactions most assuredly does not exist. We introduce the concept of "pump priming": the stimulation of sales of a product category through early investments in marketing activities that educate consumers about problems created by current behaviours, and the advantages of new consumption behaviours. We argue that the ability to prime the pump for socially beneficial products could help address market failures that are often prevalent at the bottom of pyramid.

Although priming interventions can create social impact by promoting product adoption, they require significant financial investments. Not only are the necessary investments substantial, they are also prone to free-riding by potential new competitors. Non-monetized spillovers exist at multiple levels: investments by the focal firm could lead to sales for competing brands (brand spillover), or for competing channels (channel spillover) or for non-core customer segments (social spillover). Because the returns to these investments spill over to others, pump priming investments are often viewed as unviable for commercially-focused companies. Market failures are therefore too often seen as inevitable or unviable to solve.

We study the concept of pump priming through a randomized controlled trial involving 25,200 households in 240 rural villages in Uttar Pradesh, India. We propose and implement a unique collaboration between charitable foundations and for-profit

companies to overcome the free-riding problem endemic to implementing pump priming approaches. Specifically, a core thesis of the research is that pump priming activities, if validated in a rigorous and verifiable manner, can be funded through results-based financing that rewards the entity responsible for creating positive spillovers. Prior instances of such collaborations have faced daunting challenges around high costs of implementation and verification. We overcome these problems by implementing a low-cost blockchain and machine-learning based platform to build trust and transparency among the collaborating entities, precisely target otherwise excluded consumers, and objectively verify the results.

3. Effect of Source Credibility on the Uptake of the Offering and Willingness to Pay: Field Experiment on Cervical Cancer Screening

Anima Nivsarkar, Vedha Ponnappan, Prakash Satyavageeswaran, and Sundar Bharadwaj

This research examines the effects of credibility of a message source (informational vs normative) on consumers' willingness to pay via the mediating channel of risk perception. We hypothesize that when the source of a message is either informational (e.g., doctor) or normative (e.g., peer), the risk perception is higher as compared to when a definitive source is not specifically highlighted in the message. Using a field experiment for cervical cancer screening. To test our hypotheses, we conducted a cervical cancer screening-based field experiment in rural areas of northwest India. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in India among women between the age of 15-65 years, with a mortality of 77,348 in 2020 (IARC, 2022). Despite the high prevalence of cervical cancer in India and the effectiveness of screening tests, only 1.9% of women between the age of 30-49 years have ever undergone a screening test (NFHS, 2021). The study design comprised two treatment arms and one control arm with 450 women from 7 clinic areas assigned to be shown either the doctor or the peer or the control video such that each arm had an equal number of samples. While the core message (and the corresponding script) for the groups remained the same, we manipulated the message source across the three groups. We record the uptake of screening and the consumers' willingness to pay at the point of purchase. We demonstrate the mediating effect of risk perception on message source's impact on willingness to pay and highlight the differential impact of perceived susceptibility over severity. These findings point to the important role of source credibility in marketing communications and the mechanism of risk perception in consumer decisions.

4. Can Diverse Classes Enhance Marketing Learning?

Juan Espinosa-Balbuena, Stephen Anderson, and Rajesh Chandy

Business educators around the world increasingly seek to ensure diversity in the classes they run. This emphasis on diversity is based in part on an assumption that participants in more diverse classes are more likely to benefit from the material they learn. Remarkably, despite the strong emphasis on diversity in business education, there exists little causal evidence that diversity in the classroom improves learning and professional outcomes for those engaged in such learning. Specifically, to the best of our knowledge there exists no causal study of the impact of diversity in the outcomes from marketing classes.

In this research, we examine the impact of diversity on the performance of participants in marketing classes relative to finance classes. We argue that diversity is more important in marketing classes when compared to finance classes, because the former rely more on insights from across contexts and contingencies, whereas the latter rely more on practice and repetition in the implementation of rules. For these reasons, we hypothesize that diversity in a marketing classroom (when compared to a finance classroom) is more likely to enhance class dynamics (with richer discussions and participation) and lead to improved skills and ultimately better business outcomes.

We test this hypothesis using data from a field experiment of 852 small businesses in South Africa (270 assigned randomly to marketing training, 266 businesses assigned randomly to finance training, and 316 businesses to a control group). This training consisted of ten weeks of eight hours per week of face-to-face classroom time and additional application exercises and e-learning sessions delivered by a local training organization. Crucially, each classroom varied the level of diversity in terms of demographic background, experiences, and attainments. The marketing course focused on improving entrepreneurs' marketing and

sales activities, while the finance course provided entrepreneurs with basic accounting skills to improve their record-keeping practices and financial management.

Preliminary results from the analysis suggest crucial differences in the importance of diversity for marketing education relative to finance education. We expect our results to help us understand the crucial role of diversity in business training and, ultimately, to enhance business outcomes through better marketing education.

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CONSUMER EXPERIENCE OF VALUE IN CONSUMPTION JOURNEY: EVIDENCE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR BRANDING

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Keywords: Experience, Value, Journey, Branding

Description: The findings of this study benefit researchers and marketing practitioners who are interested in understanding consumers' experience of value in their consumption journey, and how to properly reconnect the consumers and reimagine the role of consumers in managers' branding decision during times of change.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This study aims to provide empirical insights into consumer experience, customer value, and consumer journey and links them to branding. Extant studies on consumer behavior suggest that these factors should be incorporated in future branding research. However, the relationships between these factors and branding are unclear. Meanwhile, although branding has been addressed as a possible solution to the critical global issue of international student mobility in the higher education (HE) sector, there remains a lack of studies on branding that explore these factors in this sector. Therefore, this study proposed the following research questions:

(1) What is the students' experience of the value of a university brand at different timelines during their consumption journey?

(2) How does students' experience of value from a university brand at different timelines during their consumption journey relate to university branding?

Method and Data

Previous thought-provoking studies of customer experience, customer value and customer journey have laid a foundation for developing the current research. This study used a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of consumers' experiences, perceptions of value, and consumption journeys with an organisation's brand. The study used the focus group interview technique for data collection, by following the guidelines suggested in previous studies. Data were collected from students in the Japanese HE sector. the Japanese HE sector was chosen as the research context because of Japan's evolving HE sector and few studies on HE have been conducted in Asia. Purposive sampling was used to recruit undergraduate participants who have been international students at a university since their first year of study. In total, 110 students from 7 geographical regions participated in the focus group interviews. This study used content analysis and followed suggestions in previous studies for data analysis and validation.

Summary of Findings

This study found:

- the contents of university branding regarding student experience from varied sources, perceived value in different categories, and student journey at different timelines.

- the association between these factors and the branding of a university in terms of brand image and brand association.
- the similarity and difference between the elements of student' experience of value in their consumption journey with regards to the branding of a university.

The findings suggest that it is important to identify essential sources of consumers' experience of value in their consumption journey; understand the differences in consumers' association of their value experience with an organization's brand at different timelines during their journey; and monitor the evolution of consumers' needs and wants at different timelines of their journey.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study provides empirical evidence that these factors consumer experience, customer value, and consumer journey function interactively in branding, and thus they can be employed simultaneously in branding research. Therefore, this study introduces these factors into the studies of branding and their associations with branding to researchers and provides managers and marketers with practical implications for branding. Meanwhile, this study provides insights into the relationships between these factors and university branding. Empirical evidence demonstrates the changing experience and view of the value of students at diverse timelines. This study thus highlights the understanding of such value from the perspective of their experiences at various timelines of their journey while branding a university; and the importance of identifying the underlying needs of experience and value at different timelines during their journey to optimize branding. Moreover, assessing students' experience and value perception needs to be considered an ongoing task to create desirable experiences and deliver

favorable values at the right time, with an evolving university–student relationship during their consumption journey.

DESIGN FOR A SERIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN CYBER-PHYSICAL REALITIES - DECIPHERING VISIONARY MANAGEMENT MODELS FOR MARKETING

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Keywords: literature review, entrepreneurially-driven-marketing, serial entrepreneurship, interdisciplinary Weltanschauung of marketing

Description: This paper provides an overview for entrepreneurship, innovation, leadership, and cybernetics by analyzing 36.348 articles published in 21 leading journals from 1960 until January 2022 to develop a new conceptual framework supporting marketers to operate in more complex and dynamic markets.

ABSTRACT

This research analyzes developments based on a holistic literature review of 21 leading journals in management science from 1960 to 2022 by using unsupervised machine learning, namely KNIME and Python, determining the evolutionary history of the fields and decipher the foundations of integrative models of serial entrepreneurship enhancing entrepreneurially-driven-marketing strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Especially in recent years, the world has been marked by unexpected crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which resulted in changing the business environment significantly. While these crises are still lingering on and have increased dramatically the range of entrepreneurial as well as marketers' pursuits, the enduring spirit of

creativity and perseverance will address these challenges. Therefore, a design for serial entrepreneurship to decipher visionary management models delivering profound recommendations to marketers will be delivered. By applying design thinking as the methodology of this article, it aims to first point out the status quo in entrepreneurship, leadership, innovation, and cybernetics. In a second step, the holistic second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model will be developed. Our framework is based on an interdisciplinary Weltanschauung of marketing by combining the sciences of entrepreneurship, cybernetics, and philosophy into a coherent whole thus supporting marketers to find their way in complex marketing situations.

2. METHOD

The author used a Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) algorithm for unsupervised topic modeling and Python as an additional tool for the following analyses. Several content analyses (CA) need to be examined to connect the existing managerial literature with cybernetic journals upon which the second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model for serial entrepreneurship in cyber-physical realities can be built. This is because a small number of latent topics are enough to represent a large corpus effectively. According to (Arun et al. 2010), such models have proved very effective. The related multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) was conducted to validate the mapping between the digitized keywords from 36,348 research articles and the topic labels and terms resulting from the performed LDA analysis. In this way, the scientific analysis of the "Lay of the Land" in innovation, entrepreneurship, leadership, and cybernetics with the techniques and tools of artificial intelligence were combined to achieve more precise and objective labeling of the "topic-keyword relationships." LDA assumes that each topic is associated with multiple terms and, conversely, terms may belong to multiple topics but with different effects on the overall topic distribution. Based on current developments in ML capabilities, this methodology provides a solid foundation not only for this research but

also for future approaches where a large amount of textual data is to be analyzed for a more holistic grounded theory design. A holistic view presents the most discussed past, present, and future topics within the main research areas. The use of unsupervised machine learning to analyze the massive number of articles in combination with the mixed research approach, namely quantitative and qualitative, ensures the robustness and applicability of the model referring to the most essential literature in the fields. Table 1 visualizes the method of the analysis.

Table 1: Method of the analysis

Data Import	Pre-Processing	Topic Detection via LDA	Grouping	Visualization
• Selection of 35,640 / 36,348 / 33,206 articles (21 top journals in entrepreneurship, innovation, leadership, and cybernetics) • Creation of relevant Excel list including all relevant information (authors, title, journal, keywords, abstract, citations, citations per year)	• Coding of keywords to generate 100 major topics per hand • Tokenization of information about title, authors, and keywords • Punctuation erasure • Filter out numbers • Delete words with less than 3 characters • Creation of stop list to exclude specific common words	• Single-parallel distributed implementation of LDA in KNIME for detecting the topics most relevant to the research project • The node uses the MALLET topic modeling library • Generation of 100 topics based on sensitivity analysis of 5 terms each • alpha = 0.01 and Beta = 0.001=> fine granularity	• Grouping of topic terms and weighting with qualitative evaluation • Pivoting of topics over years	• MCA was applied to identify the relationship between topic terms and keywords • MCA on the relevant journals for this research project • Time series plots with trendlines show assigned articles per topic over years • CA-analyses to present the interrelation of assigned topics to grouped years and journals • Box Plots
Main Interpretations Resulting from the analyses				
• MCA-Analyses indicate accurate results regarding the applied methodology • Entrepreneurial and cybernetical topics are identified as the most discussed topics in present and possible future due to the trend lines • Substantial scientific gap between cybernetics and management will be closed by this thesis				

The data analysis software “KNIME” was used for the analyses, a commercial API software with an AI-based drag-and-drop solution. A simple parallel distributed implementation of LDA by (Newman et al. 2009) using the sparse LDA sampling scheme and the data structure of (Yao et al. 2009) was used to identify the most relevant topics to the field of entrepreneurship, innovation, leadership, and cybernetics in the last seven decades within the existing literature. The 100 most essential topics in these disciplines are assessed by the unsupervised machine learning methods, and each article is assigned to one precise topic.

To show the interrelation of the assigned topics to grouped years, various CA-Analyses were performed. The frequency of published articles within a topic was based on a pivoting table drawn from the assigned topics over the years after LDA extraction. We chose a two-factor model to simplify the graphical representation. Topics (blue bubbles) that are closely related to a period (orange bubbles) are also geometrically (in terms of the Euclidean distance) close together. The bigger the topic bubble, the more articles were published on the topic, and the bigger the journals´ bubble, the more articles were published in the respective journals.

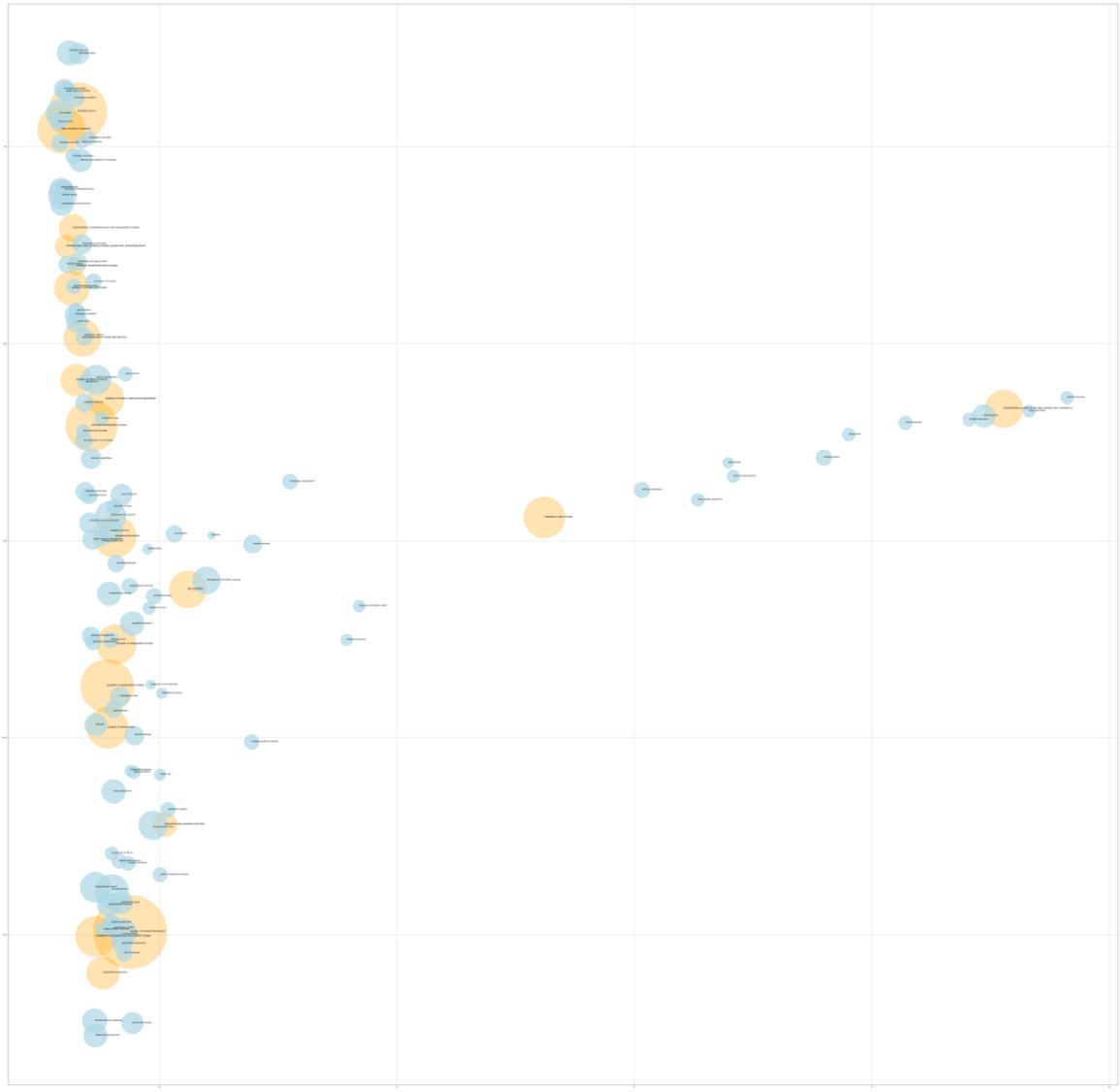

Figure 1: CA-Analysis incl. Cybernetics indicating the association of topics (blue bubbles) with time decades (orange bubbles). Size of the bubbles indicates the number of associated articles to either topic and year category respectively. Bubbles closer together indicate thematic proximity induced by the underlying LDA classifier.

3. CONTENT ANALYSIS – THE MOST CITED ARTICLES PER JOURNAL PER YEAR

In a second step, the authors analyzed which of the 100 labeled topics occur in the 840 most cited articles. The 40 most cited articles per journal per year, resulting in 840 articles, are categorized into ten distinct topics which are built by clustering the 100 most essential topics in management science, such as cybernetics, entrepreneurship, innovation, international management, leadership, marketing, operations research, and strategy in consultation with an expert in the managerial field. As the scope of this article is limited, not all of the 840 articles can be described in-depth. To give a short overview of the topic distribution regarding timespans and the categories which were discussed in the most essential literature since 1960, figure 2 is shown. The bigger the diameter, the more articles were published in the respective category and decade. It indicates the importance of cybernetics and entrepreneurship nowadays and the constant importance of marketing throughout the 62-year period.

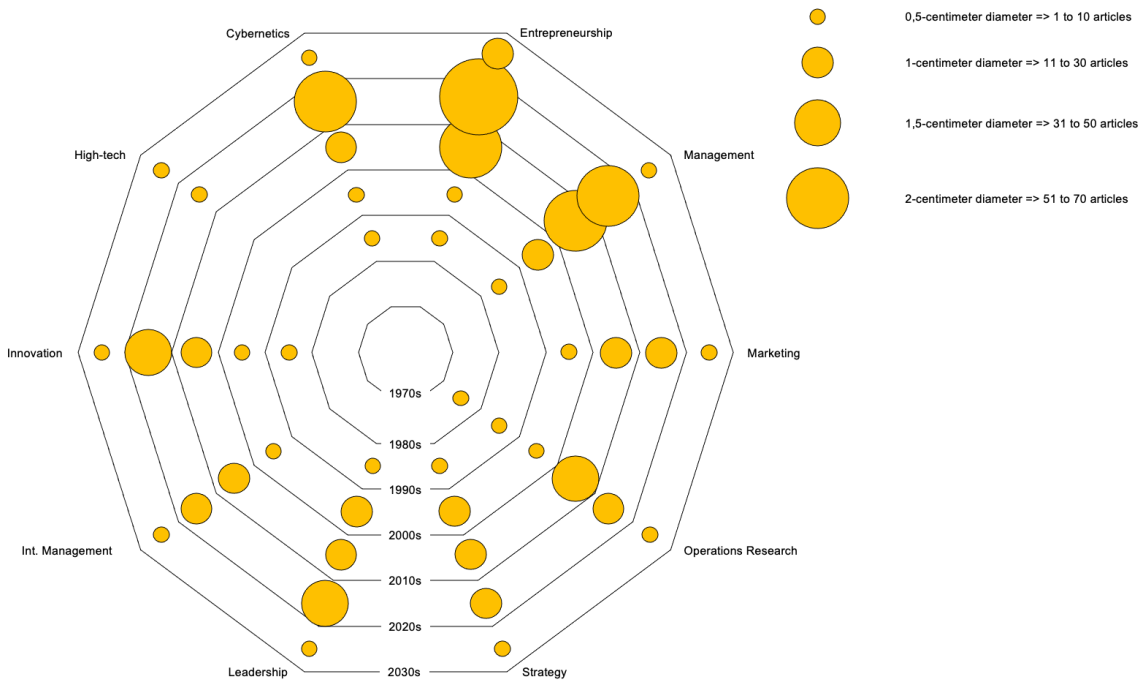

Figure 2: 840 most cited articles per year assigned to category and timespan

4. DECIPHERING VISIONARY MANAGEMENT MODELS VIA THE SECOND-ORDER ENTREPRENEURIAL DESIGN WELTANSCHAUUNG MODEL

4.1 DESIGN WELTANSCHAUUNG MODEL

By working through existing models and literature in Design Science, the Design Weltanschauung model developed by (Kamran et al. 2021) has been detected indicating the highest fit for this research to build upon. Operating in cyber-physical realities with global crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic indicate that businesses operate in markets shifting towards the complexity of massive proportions (Kamran 2020). The second axis is the time to react to upcoming crises and challenges becoming shorter from time to time (Kamran et al. 2021). Until an adequate strategy is formulated (Mintzberg et al. 2020), the crises could become even more severe because the situation could have already changed significantly (Beer 1993).

Building up on the DWA model, marketers must ask three key questions to themselves:

1. Who are we and what is our legitimacy?

In order to answer the legitimacy of firms and entrepreneurs, the dimension of the notion of legitimacy of the firm is crucial and needs to be added to the firm's ability of self-assessment (Schwaninger 2009). Although this dimension of organizational reality is not subject to radical changes, as it is the operational level of the companies, some significant changes may be necessary if market conditions are suitable for growth or the company recognizes weak market and industry signals that may develop into major disruptions in the future, whereupon the transformation dimension of the company's raison d'être may be considered (Kamran et al. 2021). To give an example, the raison d´etre of Elon Musk and his companies can be reduced to the following statement: Musk´s vision to turn humans into an interplanetary specie. For Musk, the survival of humanity depends on setting up an alternative planet which falls under

his responsibility to make it happen (Vance 2015), even if research indicates to consider this vision as unrealistic and unethical (Billings 2019).

2. What do we need to do today?

Firms must be capable to apply ambidexterity, meaning to exploit and explore simultaneously. From the theoretical dimension, the notion of dynamic capabilities needs to be introduced at this point. The term 'dynamic' refers to the ability to innovate competencies to achieve compliance with the changing business environment; certain innovative responses are required when time-to-market and timing are critical, the pace of technological change is rapid, and the nature of future competition and markets is hard to define. Capabilities emphasize the key role of strategic management in appropriately adapting, integrating, and reconfiguring internal and external organizational capabilities, resources, and functional competencies to meet the demands of a changing environment (Teece et al. 1997). The described notion of dynamic capabilities is strongly applicable to serial entrepreneurs and entrepreneurially- driven marketers such as Elon Musk. To give a practical example to the distinguished reader, Tesla was able to improve its manufacturing capabilities and cars. Simultaneously, the company constructed a worldwide network of free charging stations revolutionizing the automotive industry dramatically (Vance 2015). His companies do not respond on time to competitors´ innovations, they are ahead of competitors. What competitors and “usual” entrepreneurially driven marketers understand as the future corner referring to the DWA model, Musk understands as daily business answering the question of what needs to be done today.

3. What do we need to do in the future? (Kamran et al. 2021)

The most essential component of this model for second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model is the differentiation between the future and Jacques Derrida´s analogy of l´avenir. The future, that will comparably sure come, is predicted, and foreseeable. It is

considered the future of timetables, being controlled, handled, and programmed. On the opposite, l ´avenir is totally unexpectable and unpredictable signalling the otherness of the future and the coming arrivant (Trebežnik 2019). L´avenir is not an event with a beginning and ending point and cannot be pinned down. L´avenir will always escape philosophy and mastery (French 2022). However, the situation does not mean that we are powerless and incapable; the aporia is not the end of the road, but the beginning. While we cannot willfully actualize or make true an event, we can make ourselves available to the event. We can be true to and for the events (Trebežnik 2019). L´avenir is that which distinguishes or unhinges the movement in question (Martinon 2007). The analogy describes an individuum or event coming without the competitor being able to anticipate the arrival (Dick et al. 2005). The difference between le futur and l'avenir therefore is what the future does or what we do with the future (l'avenir) over what the future is or holds (le futur) (Martinon 2007). L´avenir is a certain impossibility, an aporetic structure, something that is to come, although it will never fully arrive (Derrida 2005). Furthermore, Derrida argues that l´avenir is "the other is what is never inventable and will never have waited for your invention. The call of the other is a call to come, and that happens only in multiple voices" (Derrida 2007). In order to enable a way out of the impasse of the present toward l´avenir, Derrida proposed to practice deconstruction which means to not be enclosed or dominated by the same or majority (White 2007). This dimension indicates the highest fit to decipher entrepreneurially driven marketers´ future success, supporting the need of a an extended DWA model by introducing a philosophical dimension based on Derrida´s l´avenir.

4.2 SECOND-ORDER ENTREPRENEURIAL DESIGN WELTANSCHAUUNG MODEL INTRODUCING L´AVENIR II

However, a philosophical and cybernetical perspective needs to be adopted to decipher he foundations of integrative models of serial entrepreneurship enhancing entrepreneurially-driven-marketing strategies. Therefore, the Design Weltanschauung model by (Kamran et al.

2021) needs to be examined via the second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model as illustrated in figure 3.

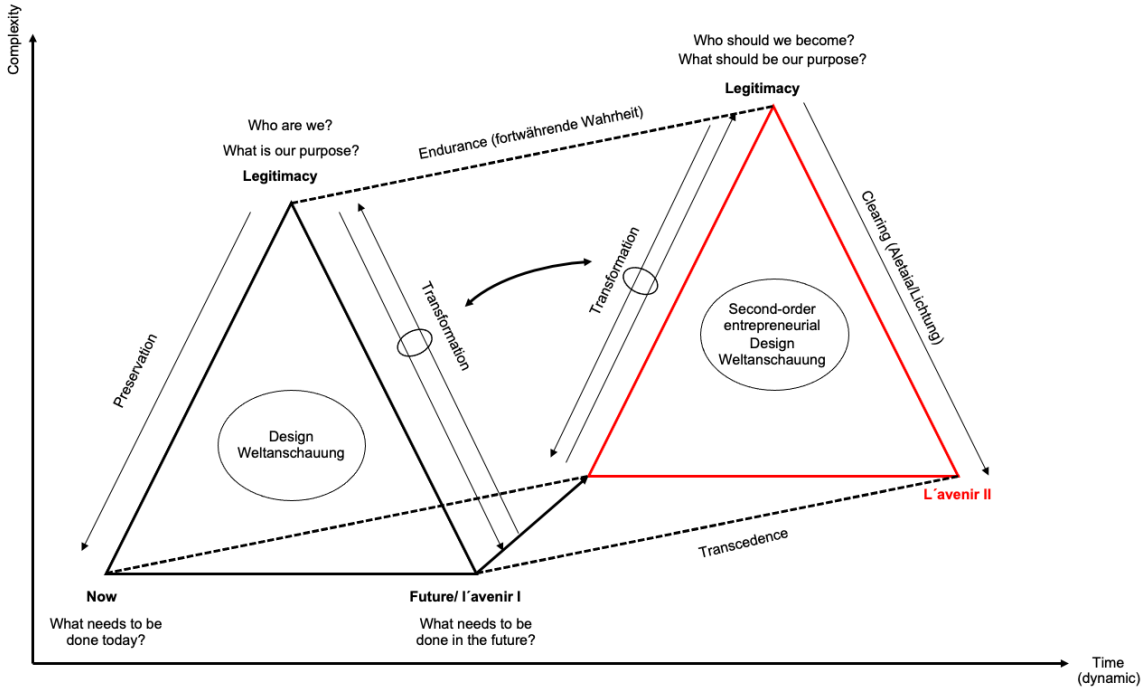

Figure 3:Second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model introducing l´avenir II

For "usual" companies, the Design Weltanschauung model by (Kamran et al. 2021) remains the valid model in Design Science to operate successfully in cyber-physical realities. However, the findings in previous chapters require to develop an additional layer to enhance entrepreneurially driven marketing strategies. Therefore, a philosophical and cybernetical dimension needs to be implemented to introduce l´avenir II enabling marketers to handle an even higher complexity and dynamic. Therefore, the marketer needs to follow the *fortwährenden Wahrheit* (Endurance) to remain its raison d´etre following the analogy of l´avenir II. Simultanoeusly, marketers must be able to transcendent the current knowledge and *Dasein* to base their operations on the second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model. They need to operate from a constructivist perspective. Knowledge does not represent "objective" facts, but is a compendium of concepts, conceptual relationships, and rules that have proven useful in the world (Foerster 1984). Foerster introduced the concept of second-

order cybernetics and gets rid of the control and regulation euphoria that characterized the first-order cybernetics of the time. In second-order cybernetics, the observer and the observed are inextricably intertwined. Second-order cybernetics brings into play the constant obligation to reflect the idiosyncrasies and blind spots of the observer, never to separate assertions from the individual who makes them, but always to evaluate them in a serious sense as the product of an individual. Going a step further, radical constructivism can be seen as an epistemology that offers a pragmatic approach to questions of reality, truth, and human understanding (Glasersfeld 1984). Knowledge is categorized according to its realizability in the realm of experience rather than according to the traditional philosophical position that it is constitutive of truth, i.e., that it corresponds to objective reality (phenomenology). The two basic principles of radical constructivism are:

- Knowledge is not passively received through the senses but is actively constructed by the cognizing subject, the learner,
- The function of cognition is the organization of the world of experience rather than the discovery of an independent reality (Walshe 2020).

Now what about the light of truth covered by the right side of the triangle? Is the clearing also in this case a more original dimension, in which there can only be something like truth? Yes, and even in an even deeper sense, because the essence of truth as αλήθεια, the coming forth from concealment into unconcealment - i.e. a coming to light that is essentially related to darkness - is the essence of the clearing itself. The essence of truth as αλήθεια, the emergence from the hidden into the unconcealed - that is, an emergence essentially related to darkness - is the essence of the clearing itself. Heidegger explains the Greek word αλήθεια as a “privative expression” (Heidegger 1972). On the one hand, the openness of Dasein, its being enlightened, and on the other hand, the unconcealment of Being, its becoming enlightened, expresses the original essence of truth, which remains veiled in the word “truth”. Heidegger also calls the

development of Dasein and the discovery of Being "openness" or "revelation" (Heidegger 1976). The openness of Dasein, as letting in on the being, is according to its essence a "letting-be" (Heidegger 1976) thus it is not only an ontic, but an ontological relation: as letting-be, letting-be does not only refer to the being, but only to being, i.e. to "*the open and its opennesses, which every being brings with itself, as it were. This open has been conceived by Western thought in its beginnings as τα άληθέα, the unconcealed*" (Heidegger 1976) in which only something can open: This area of reference is the clearing of being. *"The name of this clearing is αλήθεια"* (Heidegger 1976). "Clearing", even more than "truth" is the appropriate "translation" of αλήθεια as the realm of unconcealment arising from concealment. In order to translate the word αλήθεια in its fullest sense as "clearing", the following conditions must be met. If the clearing is the place, the realm of the truth event as a present happening, it must not be thought of as a place already given: Rather, it retains the literal sense of "clearing", i.e., it is the breaking open of an open. Connected with this is the essential relationship of darkness and light (of concealment and unconcealment), for the clearing points to an emergence from the irreducible, harboring darkness into the light (Amoroso 1983). All of the previously described philosophical and cybernetical dimensions foundations of integrative models of serial entrepreneurship enhancing entrepreneurially-driven-marketing strategies. Based on the findings, l´avenir II can be defined as follows:

I) Entrepreneurs need the ability to endure to follow the analogy of l´avenir II. The if-question is replaced by the when-question.

II) Knowing the science is a necessary prerequisite to participate in knowledge-exchange on *Augenhöhe*.

III) Risk-taking and focusing on entrepreneurial opportunities instead of boundaries and doubts.

IV) Being creative is a key pillar for entrepreneurs applying l´avenir II.

V) Co-creation is required for entrepreneurs to follow the analogy of l´avenir II.

VI) Referring to Kant, entrepreneurs need to follow the epistomogical "a priori" (before experience) instead of "posteriori" (after experience). This means, that basing its activities solely on experience does not allow to follow the analogy of l´avenir II for serial entrepreneurship in cyber-physical realities. To give an example, Musk achieved to develop reusable space vehicles without any experiences observed due to the novelty based on his visions, risk-taking, and ability to endure.

Figure 4:Key pillars l´avenir II

(Kant 1781)

To give an example, the foundation of Zip2 in 1995 as Elon Musk´s first company followed the analogy of l´avenir II. Nowadays, many revenue models of contemporary location-based services, smart cities, and web maps are based on Musk´s company founded over 20 years before competitors base their operations on this model. Before the foundation of Zip2, the Dasein of such opportunities was not given representing the unforeseeable future called l´avenir II.

5. CONCLUSION

We conclude by designing a foundational model deriving from the data observed to serve as the meta-framework, whereupon effective models of marketing management in the contemporary times of disruption and change could be established. For marketers of today and future, the second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model would deliver a boost in their capabilities and phenomenologically creative work of creating value. By enhancing the boundaries of serial entrepreneurship embedding a philosophical and cybernetical dimension, the essence of a competitive advantage can be achieved.

To summarize, entrepreneurs must ask three key questions to themselves building upon the second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model:

1. Who should we become and what should be our purpose?

2. What needs to be done in the future?

3. How to transcendent the future?

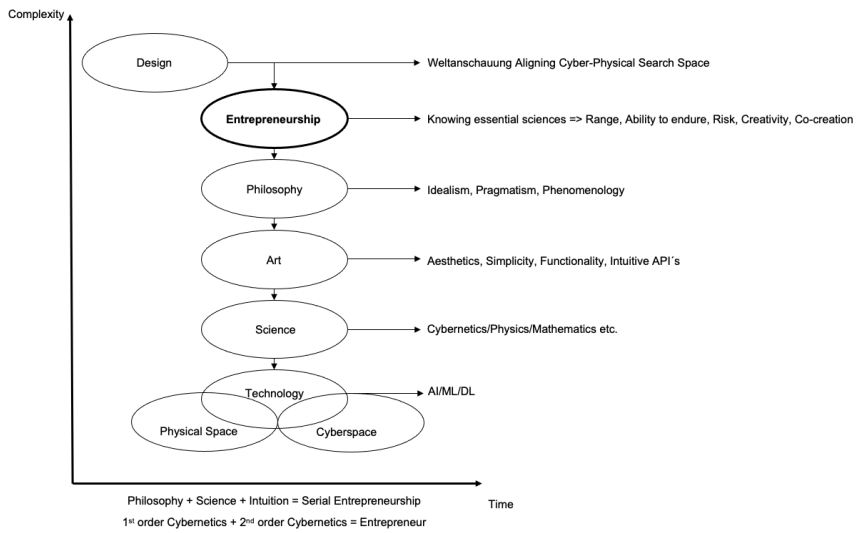

Figure 5:Describing the second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model Applied and Aligned Diverse Essential Fields for Serial Entrepreneurship Enhancing Entrepreneurially Driven Marketing

Figure 5 above displays the foundations of the second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model, where entrepreneurially driven marketers can navigate the turbulent markets within the dimensions of "transforming" the organizational raison d´etre by the structural dynamics of an ambidextrous embodiment (adapted by Kamran 2021), while focusing on the dimension of clearing/Lichtung that are essential to follow the analogy of l´avenir II. Therefore, figure 5 illustrates how designerly based serial entrepreneurship can be applied because the cyber-physical markets are moving toward increasing complexity and dynamics, leading to a reduced time to response effectively and also to innovate. Special attention needs to be given to the philosophical foundation which was presented in this chapter that define serial entrepreneurship from a designerly way of inquiry. In detail, idealism, pragmatism, and phenomenology need to be mentioned here. Kant´s idealism can be described as follows: Ideas, the raw matter of knowledge, must somehow be due to realities that exist independently of the human mind; but he held that such things must in themselves remain forever unknown. Human knowledge cannot reach them, because knowledge can arise only in the course of the synthesis of the ideas of the senses (Quarfood 2004). With phenomenology, the author refers to Heidegger´s phenomenology arguing that no research is free of any

judgement or influence of the researcher. *"Understanding is never without presuppositions. We do not, and cannot, understand anything from a purely objective position. We always understand from within the context of our disposition and involvement in the world*" (Johnson 2000). This theory does also go hand in hand with the constructivist perspective an entrepreneur needs to apply regarding the second-order entrepreneurial Design Weltanschauung model. Moreover, the dimensions of Aesthetics and Art (for further insight see Malik 2010) need to be embedded for successful serial entrepreneurship in cyber-physical realities.

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DOMESTIC BRAND TRANSGRESSIONS: HOW, WHEN, AND WHY HOME COUNTRY BIAS BACKFIRES

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Keywords: brand transgressions, domestic/foreign brands, social identity threat, brand forgiveness, domestic country bias

Description: Drawing from social identity threat theory and across a correlational study with real word data, an event study with real consumer responses, and two experimental studies, we find that domestic brand transgressions are perceived as stronger threats to home country consumers' social identity than transgressions originated by foreign brands and are thus less likely to be forgiven.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The primary purpose of this research is to shed light on how a transgressive brand's origin influences consumer reactions, brand value, and brand reputation. We draw from social identity theory that offers opposing predictions about how the origin of the transgressive brand affects consumer- and brand-related outcomes of such brand conduct violations. One line of reasoning predicts that consumers should forgive more easily transgressions originated by domestic (compared to foreign) brands (Brewer 1979) and be more lenient toward transgressive behaviors of domestic brands to protect their in-group market players. The counter theoretical prediction suggests that consumers punish home country brand transgressions severely to exemplify intolerable behavior, communicate forgiveness boundaries and maintain group norms (Mendoza et al., 2014) considering domestic brand transgressions as acts of in-group betrayal that should be punished more than foreign country ones. Our research focuses on examining these two opposing hypotheses and then proposing a managerial intervention that attenuates the effect by shifting consumers' attribution of the domestic transgression from dispositional factors (i.e., controllable brand behavior) to threatening situational factors (i.e., uncontrollable competitive pressure from out-group rivals) through post-transgression crisis communications. Subsequently, this research aims to offer evidence of long-term emotional persistence of domestic brand transgressions.

Method and Data

We use a multimethod approach across four studies. In Study 1 and Study 2, we use experiments to juxtapose the competing mechanisms regarding brand origin's effect on transgression forgiveness and to assess the effectiveness of post-transgression communications as managerial interventions mitigating punishment toward domestic

transgressive brands. In Study 3, we collected 230,000 tweets around two transgressive brands, United Airlines and VW, at three points: 3 months before the scandal, 3 months after the scandal, and 3 months following the scandal's one-year anniversary. We used tweets from users in the U.S. and Germany to have data on domestic and foreign perspectives. In Study 4, we tested the managerial impact of the origin-backfire effect using longitudinal secondary brand reputation data, employing a DID approach to compare a transgressive brand's reputational trajectories before and after the event to a control, non-transgressive domestic brand comparable in size, performance, and product characteristics. We used data acquired from YouGov on net brand reputation and net brand value regarding VW and BMW in the U.S. and Germany for the period ranging from 1 year before to three years after the scandal for a total of 5,852 daily observations.

Summary of Findings

International branding research has repeatedly showcased the home-court advantages brands enjoy over their foreign rivals when competing within own country boarders (e.g., Balabanis, Stathopoulou and Qiao 2019; Verlegh 2007). Nevertheless, extant research has neglected how this bias functions when domestic brands misbehave. Our research is a response to this void by examining competing theoretical perspectives on how consumers react to domestic brand transgressions. Across multiple empirical methods, we not only explain why domestic transgressions may not be forgiven by consumers, but also identify an intervention that firms can employ to attenuate post-transgression punishment. Our findings amply demonstrate that (1) domestic brand transgressions are seen as stronger threats to consumers' social identity and thus are forgiven less than transgressions by foreign brands; (2) forgiveness toward domestic transgressors can be partly restored through post-transgression interventions that make consumers justify brand misconduct as a response to competitive threats from foreign

rivals; (3) consumers' emotional reactions toward domestic transgressive brands persist over time, while they seem to wane for foreign transgressors; and (4) domestic transgressions lead to brand reputational damages and net value losses, which are larger and more resistant to restore at home compared to foreign markets.

Key Contributions

Consumers' home country bias is long known to assist domestic brands facing foreign rivals. However, conflicting predictions exist about how consumers react toward their home brands when they violate appropriate brand conduct standards. We find that – counter to the intuitive prediction that consumers should be more forgiving of domestic brand transgressions as means of in-group protection (prodigal son hypothesis) – consumers are actually less tolerant towards in-group brand transgressors because they trigger feelings of social identity threat (domestic treason hypothesis). This backfiring effect exhibits emotional persistence and hurts brand reputation in both magnitude and repair trajectory (i.e., at least three years post-transgression). We also test an attribution framing intervention to attenuate the effect and find that the origin-based forgiveness differential is eliminated when consumers receive brand-initiated, post-transgression communications that effectively construe the transgression as the in-group brand's response to a threat posed by an out-group rival. The findings reveal conditions under which the in-group country bias backfires and offer managerial interventions to mitigate the backlash.

EFFECTS OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ON CROSS-NATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN CORPORATE BRAND ABILITY ASSOCIATIONS - CHANGES DURING THE PANDEMIC

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Keywords: National Institutions, Corporate Brand, Ability Associations, COVID-19, Cross-National Research, Pfizer.

We analyze the roles of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive institutions for consumers' corporate brand ability associations in 20 countries over time and give novel insights into how these roles change for Pfizer and its competitors before and during the pandemic.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

During the pandemic, consumer behavior and brand preferences changed. However, whether consumers' corporate ability associations differ across countries or changed during the pandemic remains unclear.

Scholars have studied consumer behavior in the pandemic. National studies focus on motives or preferences for vaccinations or offerings, but only three address brands (Eger et al., 2021; Jabeen et al., 2022; Shoenberger et al., 2021). Few international studies exist; only five refer to institutions (Anastasiadou et al., 2020; Cho et al., 2022; Davvetas et al., 2022; Pantano et al., 2021; Prentice et al., 2021), but most focus on one point in time in two or three countries and therefore cannot truly theorize and test the effects of national institutions since countries differ in many ways.

Across more countries, two secondary data studies analyze national culture (Ahmadi et al., 2022; Dheer et al., 2021). We know little regarding national institutions' importance for consumer corporate brand evaluations during the pandemic.

Based on institutional theory, we aim to address calls and gaps and advance our knowledge on whether and how consumers' corporate ability associations differ across countries depending on national institutions. Moreover, we ask how the pandemic changed this dependence for Pfizer and its competitors.

Method and Data

The data derive from the cooperation with an MNC globally active in the health industry. The MNC annually conducts panel surveys regarding its own evaluation and that of four different major competitors in many countries. A marketing agency collected the data using a cross-national panel approach. We obtained competitor data for 2019 and 2021 and selected 20 countries in which data on Pfizer was available. After eliminating Mahalanobis distance-based outliers, 10,527 (11,834) respondents remained in the 2019 (2021) sample.

Individual-level variables were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale. We relied on established scales to measure corporate brand ability associations. For country-level data, we used prevailing measures from IB research to account for regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive institutions. We controlled for age, sex, perceived brand globalness, as well as cluster size to avoid unequal numbers of respondents per country to affect our results.

Reliability, validity, and discriminant validity yield satisfactory results. Intra-class correlation indicates that 15.3% (11.9%) of variance in corporate brand ability associations in 2019 (2021) is due to country differences. Multilevel reliability was tested using multilevel alpha, composite, and maximal reliability. Hypotheses were tested using multilevel mediation structural equation modeling with cross-level interaction effects in Mplus 8.3.

Summary of Findings

Regarding our first research question, the results show cross-national differences in corporate brand ability associations depend on the three prevalent concepts of organizational institutionalism. We find that regulative institutions, followed by national culture, explain most variance in consumers' corporate ability associations.

Regarding our second research question, we demonstrate how corporate ability associations increased and the effects of institutions decreased for Pfizer due to its unique ability. We observe that the still significant effects of regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive institutions on Pfizer's ability associations have been reduced during the pandemic. People in countries with lower levels of regulations or norms still valued Pfizer's abilities, but those in countries with higher respective institutions also valued them more strongly. The effect of embeddedness also decreased, suggesting people in less embedded societies valued Pfizer's ability to offer a vaccine more than they did before the pandemic. This shows a lower cross-national dependence of ability associations on institutions. Regulative institutions explain most country-level variance, followed by culture. Additionally, we find that the dependence of consumers' ability associations on national institutions for Pfizer's competitors decreased less strongly, but still significantly.

Statement of Key Contributions

First, we contribute to research by finding that regulative institutions, followed by culture, explain most variance in corporate ability associations. We show that people in less regulative and less normative countries value corporations' abilities more. Research has not linked normative institution to brand associations, but norms explain country-level variance, albeit weaker. We further demonstrate the strong role of embeddedness. Specifying general and specific mechanisms for the effect of institutions extends COVID-19 research, and our findings are stable for Pfizer and its competitors, and at two time points.

Second, we examine changing effects of institutions across nations throughout the pandemic. We demonstrate ability associations increased and the effects of institutions decreased for Pfizer, much more than for competitors who also benefit. We observe the still significant effects of national institutions on Pfizer's ability associations have been reduced. We contribute by studying changing individuals' consciousness and effects of mostly objectively stable institutions. Descriptive observations of a sharp increase in Pfizer's ability and awareness evaluations are interesting and may indicate a strong role of the confidence-building mechanism. The weaker reduction in the effects of regulations and culture for competitors indicates that Pfizer's ability associations are spilling over to other firms in its industry.

References are available upon request.

HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR FOOD BRANDS - GLOBAL OR LOCAL?

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Keywords: Global brand, local brand, Perceived Brand Globalness (PBG), Perceived Brand Localness (PBL), Global-local identity, Consumer ethnocentrism

Description: This paper examines how food product category characteristics, consumer dispositions - global-local identity and consumer ethnocentrism, and perceived brand globalness/localness influence preference for a global or a local food brand.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

When it comes to global and local brand preference, the extant literature offered various explanations -global brands are preferred due to their perceived higher quality, better functional value, and ability to reduce perceived risk associated with a product category (Özsomer, 2012; Steenkamp et al., 2003; Swoboda, Pennemann, & Taube, 2012) and due to their global presence and acceptability (Holt et al., 2004). But then again Steenkamp & Jong (2010) contended that being a global brand is not the only route to having a successful brand. Some consumers are ethnocentric and abhor foreign products to support their economy (Shimp and Sharma 1987). This work addressed the gap in the literature about understanding a brand's superiority be it global or local in a product category plays out in food product categories which are low involvement and with both private and public consumption as most of the present evidence is from high involvement product categories(Davvetas and Diamantopoulos 2016).

This study looked at how product category, global-local identity beliefs, and consumer ethnocentrism influences global and local brand preference in Indian food brands. It also studied the moderating effect of product category and consumer dispositions - global-local identity beliefs and consumer ethnocentrism on PBG and PBL effects and consumers' global/local brand preference.

Method and Data

A cross-sectional consumer survey (combination of telephone interviews and online web surveys) with 596 Indian respondents mostly from Gujarat and Maharashtra. The population was consumers who buy and/or eat branded food products. The dependent variable is brand preference (Ebrahim et al. 2016) and the independent variables are global-local identity (Tu, Khare, and Zhang 2012; Zhang and Khare 2009), consumer ethnocentrism (Shimp and Sharma 1987), perceived brand globalness (Batra et al. 2000) and perceived brand localness

(Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003) were measured using existing scales. The product category characteristic of providing functional/hedonic/global-symbolic/local-symbolic benefits was measured by asking respondents to rank the dominance of a particular benefit they associate with a food product category.

Global and local food brand pair for functional food product categories of wheat flour, tea, and dahi (curd); for hedonic food product categories of chocolate and ice-cream; for global-symbolic food product categories - instant noodles, pasta, and mayonnaise and local-symbolic food product categories of Indian sweets (mithai), Namkeen (ethnic savory snacks) and Ready-to-eat Poha/Upma (Indian breakfast meals) were used to elicit consumer brand preference responses. The scale reliability coefficients for brand preference and all independent variables were within limits.

Summary of Findings

The hypotheses were tested using t-tests and ANOVA and regression analysis. The results show that the influence of product category benefit-characteristic on global/local brand preference is contingent; with evidence that finds support only for the case of global-symbolic product category's positive association with global brand preference. Global brands were not preferred in the case of functional and hedonic food products. Local brands were also found to not be preferred in the case of local symbolic food products. Consumers with a high global identity preferred global food brands and consumers with a high local identity and highly ethnocentric consumers preferred local food brands.

Product category characteristics do not moderate the PBG/PBL relationship with global and local brand preferences. Consumer dispositions - high global identity, high local identity, and high consumer ethnocentrism also didn't influence the relationship between Perceived Brand Globalness (PBG)/Perceived Brand Localness (PBL) and global/local brand preference, except

for the functional and hedonic product categories where the high global identity of consumers positively influenced the association of perceived brand globalness and global brand preference.

Key Contributions

This study contributes to the global and local branding literature by looking at how product category, global-local identity beliefs, consumer ethnocentrism, and PBG/PBL effects influence global and local brand preference in food brands, bringing in the understudied context of branded food products with global and local origin in the Indian market. It confirmed that consumers with high global identities preferred global brands and those with high local identities and ethnocentric beliefs preferred local brands.

It provided empirical evidence in support of Diamantopoulos et al. (2019) contention of little statistical support for about the moderating role of consumer dispositions on PBG and global brand preference, as support was found for the moderating role of consumer's global identity on the relationship of global PBG and global brand preference for functional and hedonic food products, but not for symbolic global food products.

Brand managers need to be aware that the brands' positioning in global or local consumer culture matches with their global or local origin is important but doesn't guarantee consumers' preference. They may prioritize the globalness/localness of a brand image over consumer dispositions for brand positioning as the consumer dispositions' effect is diluted when the globalness/localness perception of brands is considered.

References available on request

HOW PERCEIVED BRAND GLOBALNESS, LOCALNESS, AND CONSUMER COSMOPOLITANISM AFFECT BRAND ATTITUDE: INTRODUCING THE CONCEPTS OF STATIC AND DYNAMIC DOMINANCE

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Keywords: Perceived brand globalness, perceived brand localness, consumer cosmopolitanism, brand attitude.

Description: In this article, we develop and empirically test an approach to analyze how perceived brand globalness, perceived brand localness and cosmopolitanism affect brand attitude.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The knowledge on how dispositions such as cosmopolitanism "influence consumer responses to specific brands (…) is still limited" (Diamantopoulos et al. 2019, p. 54). Particularly, prior research that has analyzed how cosmopolitanism moderates the effect of perceived brand globalness (PBG) on brand-related outcomes has yielded mixed results (Davvetas, Sichtmann, and Diamantopoulos 2015; Diamantopoulos et al. 2019), raising doubts about the managerial relevance of cosmopolitanism as a consumer segmentation variable. We aim to contribute to this literature by addressing two research questions: (1) Is PBG or perceived brand localness (PBL) a more important driver of consumers' brand attitude at specific levels of cosmopolitanism? (2) Does PBG or PBL become a more important driver of consumers' brand attitude as the level of consumers' cosmopolitanism changes? To address these questions, we draw on social identity complexity

(Roccas and Brewer 2002) and develop the concepts of static and dynamic dominance to analyze the effects of PBG, PBL, and cosmopolitanism on brand attitude. Whereas static dominance is a state and relates to our first research question, dynamic dominance represents a mechanism and relates to our second research question.

Method and Data

Drawing on a representative German consumer panel, we randomly assigned 1,704 respondents to one of 34 brands across six product categories in an online brand evaluation study. Respondents were either shown a brand logo (for real brands) or a textual description of a brand (for fictitious brands). Subsequently, participants were asked brand specific and personal questions. We drew on established scales to measure PBG (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003), PBL (Swoboda, Pennemann, and Taube 2012), brand attitude, (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003), and consumer cosmopolitanism (Riefler, Diamantopoulos, and Siguaw 2012). The measurement model fits the data well, and all constructs show appropriate psychometric properties. We also checked for common method variance, which did not pose a threat to our data. We analyzed our data using regression analysis and considered various control variables (e.g., brand familiarity, brand dummies, respondents' gender and age). Based on the regression results, we calculated and plotted the delta between the total effects of PBG and PBL on brand attitude (delta = $b_{PBG} + b_{PBG \times cosmopolitanism} - b_{PBL} - b_{PBL \times cosmopolitanism}$) at various levels of cosmopolitanism using the Johnson-Neyman technique (i.e., floodlight analysis; Spiller et al. 2013).

Summary of Findings

The results reveal three major patterns: First, PBL is a stronger driver of consumers' brand attitude than PBG at lower levels of consumer cosmopolitanism (i.e., static dominance of PBL over PBG). Second, PBG becomes a more important driver of consumers' brand attitude than PBL as the level of consumer cosmopolitanism increases (i.e., dynamic dominance of PBG over PBL). Third, at high

levels of consumer cosmopolitanism, we find no significant difference between the effects of PBG and PBL on consumers' brand attitude (i.e., no static dominance of neither PBG nor PBL).

Key Contributions

Our research is the first to jointly investigate the effects of PBG, PBL, and cosmopolitanism on consumers' brand attitude. This is relevant, because consumers with high levels of cosmopolitanism harbor both global and local orientations (e.g., Yoon, Cannon, and Yaprak 1996). Furthermore, drawing on social identity complexity, we conceptually develop how the global and local orientations inherent to cosmopolitans relate to each other. In this respect, the concepts of static and dynamic dominance provide a new and nuanced theoretical lens to cosmopolitanism research. Accordingly, we develop a novel approach to empirically analyze the effects of PBG, PBL, cosmopolitanism and their interactions on brand attitude. Rather than interpreting each of these effects separately, we compare them using our concepts of static and dynamic dominance. Overall, we show that brand localness is more important in fostering a favorable brand attitude of consumers with low levels of cosmopolitanism. Therefore, when addressing these consumers, managers should emphasize brand localness over brand globalness. In addition, brand globalness becomes increasingly relevant in fostering a favorable brand attitude as consumers' level of cosmopolitanism rises. We thus recommend brand managers to promote cues of both brand globalness and localness to consumers with high levels of cosmopolitanism.

References are available upon request.

MARKET-DRIVING THROUGH GLOBAL BRAND BUILDING AND DECOMMODITIZATION MODELS IN MEXICO'S HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY

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Keywords: Global brand; decommoditization; handicraft; market-driving; market orientation.

Description: A framework to explicate the market-driving strategies used by handicraft firms to drive the market and gain competitive advantage without disruptive technological innovation. The context of the study is Mexico's Artisanal Handicraft industry.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Despite extensive insights on the relationship between firms' market-driving strategies and disruptive innovation, a dearth of research exists in terms of understanding how firms drive markets without disruptive technological innovation. Therefore, our study responds to the call of scholars (e.g., Humphrey and Carpenter, 2018) to develop more studies on to explicate the market-driving strategies used by firms to drive the market without disruptive technological innovation. We propose a framework and explore two research questions: 1) What are the

market-driving practices of handicraft firms in Mexico? 2) How do firms in Mexico's artisanal handicraft industry create competitive edge with a market-driving mindset?

Method And Data

The methodology employed is qualitative. Qualitative interviews were suitable for data gathering considering the exploratory nature of the study. We gathered semi-structured interview data from producers, international wholesalers (distributors), retailers, customers, government officials and leaders of activists-foundations working with artisanal handicraft firms in Mexico. We selected the interview participants through connections with relevant informants in Mexico. In total, 19 handicraft firms were shortlisted. The shortlisted handicraft firms differed in size ranging from small independent to midsized firms. The interview data was collected via Zoom and via face-face interactions during two study abroad immersion field trips to the Bajio region in Mexico. The field trip gave us the opportunity to interact with handicraft firms at their production and retail locations. One of the field trips to the Bajio region in Mexico was funded through a Business International Education grant awarded by the Department of Education. During the field trip, we interacted with handicraft firms in different capacities—including observing, interviewing, and assisting with product production. We conducted 19 interviews with handicraft firms which resulted in 600 pages of interviews field notes, interview transcripts, pictures, and other archival information linked to handicraft firms' trade events.

Summary of Findings

We find that handicraft firms implement market-driving strategies through global brand building. We find that handicraft firms' market-driving behavior falls into four distinct categories: 1) an ability to develop and implement decommoditization strategies; 2) a focus on activism and

politicization that drives their marketing; 3) a desire to teach about their cultural heritage; and 4) a visionary business leader. To maintain a competitive edge, handicraft firms must maintain their unique positioning. They continue to innovate new ideas, develop relationships with government officials, cross-cultural liaisons, and customers, develop efficient supply chain capabilities and personalized customer relationship management to transform their ideas into unique product/service offerings (Doyle, 2001). Creating and implementing unique retail experiences for customers is essential to accomplishing luxury brand positioning.

Key Contributions

The findings from our study offer useful insights in three areas. First, we extend Humphrey and Carpenter's (2018) findings on how firms can influence or drive a market without disruptive and technological innovation. We find that artisanal handicraft firms employ strategies to influence consumer behavior and competitors' actions, which aligns with and contributes to previous findings in the literature (e.g., Humphrey and Carpenter, 2018; Jaworski, Kohli, and Sahay 2000). Second, unique to this study, we find that market-driving firms engage in "market activism" to tacitly recruit consumers and other artisans to campaign for their course and share their personal stories of hard work. Third, our findings revealed the handicraft firms influencing behaviors rely on developing the resources and capabilities to create a global brand through mastering decommoditization strategies.

References are available upon request.

REINVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF ATTRACTIVE MODEL IMAGES ON FEMALE CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD ADVERTISING IN A MUSLIM SOCIETY: IMAGE FORMAT, HIJAB USAGE, AND AGE AS MODERATORS

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Keywords: Model Attractiveness, Body Image Satisfaction, Hijab Usage, Age, Image Format

Description: This is a study reinvestigating the influence of attractive model image on female consumers' attitude toward advertising in a Muslim society.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The research findings about how images of attractive models influence consumer behavioral outcomes among female consumers are mixed and inconclusive, suggesting that the influence of attractive model images may be indirect and shaped by a variety of conditional boundaries not well understood. Previous literature has found that female consumers are likely to engage upward social comparisons with the models in advertising, which, in turn, has a negative impact on body image satisfaction (BIS). Based on affect heuristics, we believe that the emotion associated with BIS will spill over into advertising evaluation, thereby mediating the effect of attractive model images on attitude toward advertising. Prior research on social comparison have also shown that consumers' culture and age are important factors influencing how a social comparison is made. To better understand the focal relationship, this study examines the cultural factor by focusing on Muslim culture because Islam is the second-largest religion in the world and Muslims have unique definitions of physical beauty. It investigates two research questions: (1) how do attractive model images influence female consumers' attitude toward the advertising through BIS in a Muslim society? and (2) how is this indirect influence moderated by relevant image format, age, and hijab usage?

Method and Data

Three experiments were conducted on female consumers using an online survey with a manipulation of the model images (i.e., attractive vs. average). Experiment 1A, conducted on 504 Indonesian women (Hijab user = 269; non-user = 235) was aimed to test the mediating effect of BIS and the moderating effect of image format and hijab usage. This experiment used a 2 (attractive vs. average model image) × 2 (portrait vs. full-body image format) × 2 (hijab usage vs. no hijab usage) between-subjects design. Experiment 1B, conducted on 297 Taiwanese females, was aimed to test the moderating effect of image format in a non-Muslim society. This experiment used a 2 (attractive vs. average model image) × 2 (portrait vs. full-body image format) between-subjects design. Finally, Experiment 2, conducted on 160 Indonesian females, was aimed to validate the mediation effect of BIS and test the moderating role of age. We only used the portrait image format in this experiment because Experiment 1A had shown that the mediation effect of BIS only occurred with the portrait image format in Indonesia. This experiment used a 2 (attractive model image vs. average model image) × 3 (young vs. middle vs. late adulthood) between-subjects design.

Summary of Findings

Across three studies, the role of BIS was observed. When being exposed to an

attractive model image, female consumers are likely to engage in upward social comparisons and feel less satisfied with their own body image, which in turn results in unfavorable evaluations of the advertisement. Consistent with Muslim beauty norms, Indonesian females were found to engage in more appearance comparisons with the model portrait image than with the one showing a full-body curve. The negative indirect effect of an attractive model image was found only with the portrait image format in Indonesia. In contrast, in Taiwan, the indirect effect was observed only with the image showing the full-body curve. Finally, consistent with previous findings that older people and hijab users consider appearances less important and engage less in appearance comparison, they were found to be more resistant to the negative indirect effect of attractive model image on attitude toward advertising.

Key Contributions

This study contributes to the research on advertising and model attractiveness by identifying the full mediating role of BIS, and also explaining the mixed and inconclusive findings of prior studies. In addition, this is the first research identifying image format, age, and hijab usage as moderators on the indirect relationship between model image and consumers' attitudes toward advertisements. It provides additional insights into the theoretical implication of social comparison in the context of advertising. Moreover, this research addresses the importance of Muslim culture in

understanding consumer reactions to attractive model images. The findings of this research provide managerial implications for advertisers and consumer educators regarding the effect of advertising strategies in a Muslim society. For example, it identified the conditions how and when an attractive model image should be used or avoided for more favorable consumer behavioral outcomes in Muslim and non-Muslim societies.

SERVING BOTTOM-OF-THE-PYRAMID (BOP) MARKET AND RADICAL INNOVATION: A CONSTRAINT-BASED VIEW and EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

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Keywords: BOP market commitment, architectural knowledge search, modular knowledge search, strategic orientation, radical innovation

This paper examines a counter-intuitive phenomenon that serving BOP market can promote the development of radical innovation, for which we propose a theoretical framework and present empirical evidence.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In contrast to incremental innovation aiming at minor improvements of existing products and technologies, radical innovation provides substantially higher benefits than existing products by solving significant, novel customer problems and builds on new technologies that deviate from the evolution trajectory of existing technologies (Chandy and Tellis 1998). The conventional view presumes that radical innovation primarily serves the mainstream market with adequate incomes and resources to purchase the innovation, as it builds on expensive, cutting-edge technologies (Christensen 1997; Govindarajan et al. 2011; Zhou et al. 2005). Can radical innovation be possibly developed to serve the bottom-of-the-pyramid (BOP) market? As BOP people possess very low incomes and live under impoverished conditions (Nakata and Weidner 2012; Prahalad 2014), radical innovation seems unlikely to stem from this segment. Anecdotal evidence in prior research, however, shows that numerous breakthrough products have been developed in BOP market, such as portable ultrasound machine and over-the-air recharge technology (Anderson and Markides 2007; Immelt et al. 2009; Prahalad 2014). Despite the

discovery of this counterintuitive phenomenon, extant literature falls short of systematic research to explain why and how serving the BOP market can promote radical innovation.

Method and Data

We collected survey data among firms in China to test the hypotheses. Although China's economy has grown in a fast pace, it is the second largest BOP market in the world with a large proportion of the population at the low-income level (Hodgson 2017; Kantar Research Report 2015). We randomly selected and contacted 500 firms located in the economic development zones of both coastal provinces (Shandong, Jiangsu and Guangdong) and inland provinces (Henan and Shaanxi). We solicited the list of firms from the local governments administering the economic development zones. 296 firms agreed to participate in this survey. After dropping responses of managers from 58 firms who either failed to complete the survey or provided excessive missing values, we obtained a sample of 238 firms, with a response rate of 47.6%. Variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale unless otherwise indicated. For the new variables, *BOP market commitment*, *architectural knowledge search* and *modular knowledge search*, we developed the measurement items based on literature review and depth interviews with managers. For *radical innovation*, *technology orientation*, and *customer orientation*, we adapted the measures from prior studies. We controlled for the effects of firm-level factors, industry dummies, and characteristics of external environments.

Summary of Findings

BOP commitment motivates firms to engage in both architectural knowledge search and modular knowledge search, both of which in turn drive radical innovation. While both architectural and modular knowledge search strategies act as the operating mechanisms that channels the positive effect of BOP market commitment on radical innovation, customer

orientation strengthens (weakens) the positive effect of BOP market commitment on architectural (modular) knowledge search strategy. In contrast, technology orientation weakens (exerts little influence on) the positive effect of BOP market commitment on architectural (modular) knowledge search strategy.

Key Contributions

This paper contributes to marketing literature in the following ways. First, this paper develops and empirically tests a theoretical account of a counter-intuitive phenomenon – that is, why and how a firm's commitment to serving BOP market can lead to radical innovation (Anderson and Markides 2007; Prahalad 2012, 2014). Specifically, we unpack the operating mechanisms – i.e. knowledge search strategies (architectural and modular knowledge search) – that underlie the effects of serving BOP market on radical innovation. Second, we identify the boundary conditions of the operating mechanisms from the perspective of strategic orientation. Given that both search strategies function to address the constraints and needs of BOP consumers, the lack of fit between customer orientation (technology orientation) and modular (architectural) knowledge search reflects possible biases embedded in strategic orientation, thus revealing a blind spot in extant literature on strategic orientation (e.g. Gatignon and Xuereb 1997; Zhou et al. 2005). Third, this paper advances prior research on radical innovation by challenging an orthodox assumption that radical innovation is developed to serve mainstream market (Govindarajan et al. 2011; Zhou et al. 2005). Instead, we demonstrate that serving BOP market can incentivize firms to seek unconventional solutions that ultimately turn into radical innovation.

THE EMERGENCE OF HYBRID MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS

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Keywords: Marketing, organization, tension, hybrid, decentralization

Description: This paper examines how marketing organizations are adopting a hybrid approach to decentralizing and centralizing marketing activities in response to organizational tensions that are arising from increasing external pressures.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The research question answered in this paper is "How are marketing organizations adapting to increasing external pressures to ensure that they can sustain a competitive advantage that enables them to continue serving customer needs?" Specifically, we are interested in how companies are organizing their marketing activities globally despite the recent economic situation of degloblization (or stagflation). Do they decentralize or centralize all of their activities? Why or

why not? What factors are they considering when determining what to decentralize and centralize?

Method And Data

Academic literature is severely lacking regarding the impact of external challenges such as deglobalization on marketing organizations. We explore this impact in unprecedented depth, using (1) 25 interviews with senior executives, (2) a detailed case study with a global B2B industrial manufacturing company, (3) a six-month ethnography in one company, and (4) several focus group discussions.

Summary of Findings

External pressures caused by economic challenges such as deglobalization (or stagflation), should theoretically encourage a decentralized approach to value creation. However, we identify the emergence of hybrid marketing organizations in which marketing activities are neither fully decentralized or centralized, but are instead achieved through simultaneously applying both approaches. The reason marketing organizations are operating in this way is to ensure resilience and agility in a precarious world where external pressures can be very volatile.

Statement of Key Contributions

First, our study explains how unique and specific external factors including increased political, competitive, customer, and societal pressures create opposing tensions for marketing organizations. These pressures are moderated by shareholder, manager, and employee influences. Second, such tenisons are complex to manage because they demand opposing strategies for value creation. That is, managers feel an unprecedented tension to simultaneously centralize and decentralize their marketing organizations. Third, to balance this tension, managers are creating

“hybrid” marketing organizations— a new approach to creating value in which marketing organizations are neither entirely decentralized nor centralized; instead, they simultaneously use both approaches.

References are available upon request.

Marketing Strategy

A SELLER'S PERSPECTIVE ON DELIVERY PLATFORMS: THE CASE OF RESTAURANTS

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Keywords: Online platforms, B2B, online food delivery platforms, theories-in-use

Description: Qualitative study exploring the B2B relationship between online food delivery platforms and restaurants.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The pandemic forced consumers to change the way they experience many services and products, including the restaurant experience (Curry 2022). Online food delivery platforms became an important player in the dining experience by facilitating the interaction between restaurants and consumers. The participation of food delivery platforms, however, placed an additional burden on restaurant managers who had to deal with pricing (i.e., shared margins), operational (i.e., coordination), and customer service (i.e., customer communication) challenges. Restaurants must then consider the tradeoffs of collaborating with delivery platforms.

This paper looks to explore what the restaurant manager's experience is with adopting and using online food delivery platforms, specifically:

RQ1: What is the restaurant manager's perception of adopting online food delivery platforms?

Method and Data

Using a theories-in-use approach (Zeithaml, Jaworski, Kohli, Tuli, Ulaga, and Zaltman 2020), this paper explores restaurants' adoption of online food delivery platforms from the perspective of owners and managers and identifies recurring themes and factors influencing restaurants' decisions. An iterative process of analysis allowed for the comparison and identification of themes and concepts (Goulding 2005). We used a purposive sampling approach (Silverman and Marvasti 2008) to obtain relevant input from restaurant owners and managers.

Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face and through zoom. We used a snowballing technique and the interviews were conducted both during periods of high COVID-19 cases (Late December 2021 and January 2022) and periods of low COVID-19 cases

(October, November, and early December 2021) until saturation was reached. The interviews ranged from 15 minutes to an hour long. The names of both the managers and the restaurants were changed to conceal the participants' identities. Interviews were conducted in a flexible manner to allow for elaboration, probing, or follow-up questions. The data was analyzed through the constant comparison method (Goulding 2005). Four overall concepts emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data collected in the fifteen interviews.

Summary of Findings

We summarized the findings into four themes: complementarities, uncertainties, relationship quality, and loss of customer interaction.

Complementarities refer to comments about the role of platforms on restaurant performance. Restaurant owners acknowledged the value of the platforms to continue their operations and understood the need to pay a commission. The managers considered the commission as a fee for delivering their food and as a marketing/advertising fee.

Uncertainties include comments regarding the challenges managers faced with forecasting demand and scheduling staff. Managers felt a loss of control over operations by relying on demand through the platforms. They had to accept that the delivery and ordering processes were out of their hands. Managers could not manage important factors such as promotions, inventory, and staffing.

Relationship quality summarizes the manager's comments about the communication and the relationship with the platform. Most managers noted that they had little to no contact with the platform unless a problem occurred. Managers felt neglected, ignored, and frustrated. Managers felt that they were sharing their margins with the platforms but they were not treated fairly.

Customer interaction encompasses comments regarding the loss of communication with the customer. Managers said that the platform interfered with their connection with the customer. Managers could not handle customer complaints appropriately. Communication with the platform about customer satisfaction was deficient, at best.

Key Contributions

This study attempts to contribute to the literature in platform adoption. By focusing on the restaurant industry and delivery context, this study provides a seller perspective to the online platform literature, which has focused on the platform and the customer perspectives. The approach of this qualitative study offers data from subjects experiencing the phenomenon and summarizes the overall concerns of restaurant managers and owners. The study finds that restaurant owners and managers view online food delivery platforms as more than a delivery service, but as a complement to other parts of the business. The study also identifies managers' concerns about being unable to establish a relationship with both the platform and the customer. More research is needed to understand the business relationships between online platforms and sellers in other business contexts.

ANALYZING THE ESSENCE OF STRATEGY – TOWARDS ALIGING CYBERPHYSICAL DIMENSIONS IN MARKETING

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Keywords: metaverse, virtual worlds, strategic management, metaverse marketing, metaverse entry strategy

Description: This paper uses topic modeling to examine contemporary trends in marketing, management, and virtual worlds literature to produce content analyses that establish the current state, uncover interrelationships, and highlight the most influential literature.

ABSTRACT

This research utilizes topic modeling to examine trends in marketing, management, and virtual worlds literature to produce content analyses that establish the current state and ultimately uncover interdisciplinary knowledge gaps. We argue that these disjunctions and the increasing intertwinement of cyberphysical worlds challenges firms to adapt to the meta-ecosystem.

INTRODUCTION

Facebook's October 2021 rebrand to Meta marked the beginning of the transition from the metaverse as being purely understood as something out of a sci-fi domain, such as in Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash*, to a technological progression that revolutionizes marketing and commerce. Succeeding this announcement, a flurry of metaverse-related content began to surface, capturing the monetization potential through emerging means of brand exposure and

digital goods (NFTs). Despite the hype encompassing virtual worlds commencing in late 2021, the concept of a metaverse is by no means recent, which is echoed in the scholarly research around this topic. Milestones such as mentioning the term in the dystopian novel *Snow Crash* in 1992, followed by the release of the online virtual world game Second Life in 2003 and finally, the ongoing technological development towards Web 3.0 all precede the newfound attention on the subject.

Upon examination of metaverse-related literature, a clear divide can be detected between scientific literature, which focuses on the history and technology of virtual worlds, and non-scientific literature, which is intended for business professionals, thus taking a more practical approach. With this perceived gap in mind, the question arose of whether scholarly literature with a management-orientated approach to virtual worlds existed. In response to this, the state of current management, strategy, and entrepreneurship literature from top journals was established through content analyses to evaluate if virtual worlds/metaverse were mentioned, yet to discover another knowledge gap. Both gaps demonstrate an overall lack of interdisciplinary knowledge between management-oriented subjects and virtual worlds. Firstly, this gap presents the risk that future scholarly management publications will become further detached from the unprecedented opportunities and challenges that metaverses present. Secondly, it results in firms attempting to navigate the emerging meta-space in the dark, which could harm innovation and thus threatens their long-term survival in an ever-turbulent environment. On top of that, despite the widespread attention in magazine articles and professional reports alike, the mystery surrounding the metaverse persists, with many leaders of organizations still unsure of what the term entails, let alone how to incorporate the metaverse into their marketing activities.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

This research attempts to bridge the gap between the domains of strategic marketing and the emerging field of virtual worlds. Using the conceptualization tools of design thinking, a novel methodological framework is proposed: *MetaEntry*, which assists firms in developing a suitable metaverse entry strategy. *MetaEntry* takes its roots in the top-down strategic planning pyramid widespread in management literature. This highly structured approach to planning offers users distinct steps in designing an implementable strategy. Taking an abstract subject engulfed in mystery, the metaverse, and combining it with well-founded methodical framework results in a comprehensive model tailored specifically to the metaverse. These measures enhance the approachability of the subject and increase the likelihood of strategy realization. The model consists of various levels centered around the questions of *Why*, *How,* and *What. MetaEntry* is crafted generically with the conscious intention of being implementable in organizations across various industries, as the metaverse is boundless in its scope.

Figure 1: Overview of *MetaEntry*

METHOD

Textual data from the journals of the Strategic Management Society (SMS), which includes *Global Strategy Journal* (GSJ), *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal* (SEJ), and *Strategic Management Journal* (SMJ), along with scientific and reputable publications relating to the term "metaverse" are analyzed using a Machine Learning Algorithm (MLA) integrated into data analytics application KNIME. In particular, the MLA referenced is the Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), a generative probabilistic model for discrete data sets used for topic modeling (Tufts 2017). Topic modeling is frequently employed in information retrieval and data mining based on the notion that few latent subjects may adequately represent a more significant corpus (Arun et al. 2010). According to The Little Book of LDA by Tufts (2017), the term LDA can be explained as follows:

- **Latent:** Topic structures in a document are latent, which means they are not visible in the text
- **Dirichlet:** The Dirichlet distribution defines the mixture proportions of the topics in the documents and the words in each topic
- **Allocation:** Allocation of words to a given topic

With this, the complete quantity of textual material from 4,148 articles as listed in Table 1 are evaluated, creating an account of the historical background of these fields whilst illuminating significant topics.

Journal Name/Topic Domain	Number of Articles Analyzed
Strategic Management Society: Global Strategy Journal, Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, Strategic Management Journal	3,087
Articles related to the term "Metaverse" from various scientific sources	916
Articles related to the term "Metaverse" from reputable non-scientific sources, such as consulting firms, banks, etc.	145

Table 1: Overview of articles include in the machine analysis

First, the keywords from each article are compiled in a list and coded to generate 20-30 major topics. Then, this data is uploaded into a customized KNIME workflow, which utilizing LDA,

assigns each of the 20-30 topics with 3-10 weighted associated topic terms. Next, based on the weightings, the topics are grouped and labeled to produce one single topic per set of topic terms, as defined by the author and confirmed by two management specialists' interpretations. After that, the topic labels are aggregated into broader categories that enable qualitative content analyses that summarize the key findings of the most relevant articles within the dataset. Finally, this procedure is validated by a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) which confirms a correlation between the topics, topic terms, and keywords. The findings from the content analyses aid the early stages of the design thinking process, thus laying the foundation for the conceptualization of a metaverse strategy model.

CONTENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

SMS Journals

After isolating the 40 most cited articles per year per SMS journal (120 articles in total), the following categories are built: Globalization, Theory of the Firm, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship; thus, identifying the essential themes in current management research. Most articles were assigned to "Theory of the Firm" (35%), highlighting its significance. The category "Innovation" is presumed the most appropriate category for metaverse research to appear. However, none of the articles in this category refer to virtual worlds/metaverse or related technological innovations like AR/VR, blockchain, or NFTs, exposing a clear area of improvement that is touched upon in the *MetaEntry* Section.

Metaverse Articles

After the collection of 916 scientific and 145 non-scientific articles relating to virtual worlds/metaverse, the following categories were designed:

- Scientific: Network Computing, Avatar, Extended Reality (XR), Blockchain/Crypto/NFTs, Digital Economy, Metaverse, and Digital Twins

- Non-scientific: Blockchain/Crypto/NFTs, Digital Economy, Metaverse, and Digital Twins

Although four categories were mutual, the content of the articles assigned to like categories immensely varied; the scientific articles provided information for use by academics, such as the history and technology of virtual worlds. The non-scientific literature was aimed at business professionals, thereby taking a practical approach to metaverse information dissemination aided by multiple use cases. Therefore, two ideological realms exist in metaverse research, with studies in the scientific community lacking management orientation. A bridge connecting the gap between academia and the business community is constructed in this paper, with a practical element provided by *MetaEntry.*

METAENTRY: A NOVEL FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A METAVERSE STRATEGY

Despite the enormous potential and exciting technologies that virtual worlds offer, the omnipresent allure of the metaverse carries a significant amount of hype. Hype began to escalate ever since Facebook announced its rebranding to Meta in late 2021, along with its cyberphysical vision of a future of work, education, and play all encompassed in the metaverse. Sustaining the hype is the mass migration of renowned brands across diverse industries, from fashion to automotive, onto metaverse platforms, offering their users digital products (NFTs) and brand experience spaces. This hype makes it difficult for firms to decipher what real value leaping into the metaverse would generate – and if it is even a right fit for their current customer base. Using the metaverse as a marketing and commerce outlet depends on the behavior of the target group. If they are not particularly tech-savvy and can be successfully reached through offline and traditional e-commerce means, prematurely jumping into the metaverse may not be wise (Burgard & Kempf 2022). Nevertheless, the metaverse's potential for marketing and sales for younger target groups cannot be ignored. For instance, metaverse-like gaming platform

Roblox is extremely popular with children, with 75% of all children in the US between the ages of 9 and 12 using the platform ("Factbox: The nuts and bolts of Roblox | Reuters" n.d.). Numerous brands such as Nike, Kellogg's, and Forever 21 have built gamified experience worlds on the platform, illustrating the next generation of marketing capable of capturing new target groups, driving sales now, and building long-term brand loyalists.

Meta does not anticipate the metaverse to reach its full potential until ten years from now (Burgard & Kempf 2022). However, as more parties enter the metaverse, competition for space will intensify, and the prices for virtual real estate may coincide or eclipse those found in the physical world. Therefore, firms must begin thinking about their metaverse strategy; how they can reach new audiences through metaverse marketing and commerce. Yet, scholarly management literature fails to deliver marketing and commerce-oriented content that can guide them through the turbulent, rapidly developing technological environment, for instance by suggesting concrete means on how metaverse technology/platforms could be incorporated into their operations, marketing, and commerce activities. After examining the 120 most-cited articles from the SMS journals, it was concluded that the models presented therein cannot cope with this challenge. Therefore, a novel framework was constructed to offer a solution tailored to the metaverse. The logic has been adapted from a traditional strategic planning pyramid to encompass metaverse-specific criteria (see Figure 2). *MetaEntry* is intended to be used by firms as a step-by-step guide on achieveing their metaverse ambitions. By implementing a metaverse strategy, brand awareness and loyalty could increase with young, tech-savy target groups and even create new revenue streams, all of which ultimately safeguard firms for the future of marketing and commerce. The practical orientation of *MetaEntry* is deepened by providing use cases throughout the phases of the model, which strive to stimulate creative ideas on how

metaverse technologies/platforms can be used to support marketing and commerce activities.

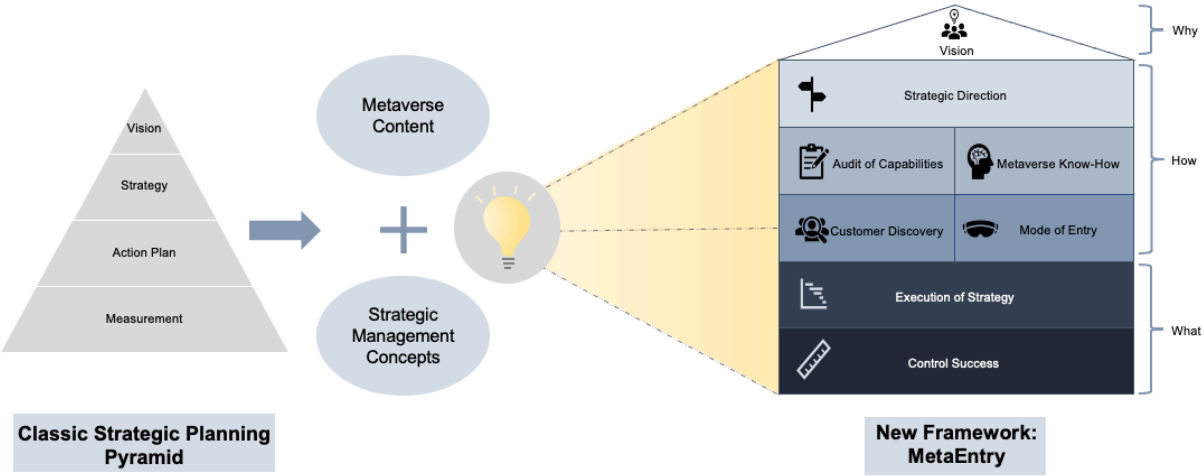

Figure 2: The conceptualization of *MetaEntry*

Development of Metaverse Vision

First, establish a team responsible for the development, oversight, and implementation of the metaverse strategy with clearly defined roles. Within the team, a culture of failure should be embedded: Encourage learning through experimentation with various use cases (Abovitz et al. 2022). After the team has been assembled, create a vision statement specifically for the metaverse strategy realization. Visualize what outcome the metaverse efforts will have on the customers. For instance, *connect in new ways* or *experience new realities*. Then, combine this desired outcome with who and why – which group is the organization targeting, and why will they achieve this outcome with specifically this offering? A complete vision statement could be: *Create content that allows young adults to feel connected to our brand through interactive experiences.* Since the metaverse is, for most organizations, unchartered territory, the vision should be kept broad so that organizations have room to experiment with various use cases.

Establishment of Strategic Direction

Then, the organization's current activities should be considered and how the metaverse can extend these into the digital realm. The focus could be on branding, marketing and sales of

digital goods, onboarding of employees, or experimenting with digital twins that use real-life data to improve operations in the physical world (Kronen 2022). The possibilities are many, but in the early stage, it is sensible to isolate a particular area and use case to focus on, enabling the progression to another use case if this one fails. If marketing is selected, a use case in this area could be the cyberphysical integration of marketing activities. As an example, Deliveroo employed Animal Crossing users as riders to deliver food to various islands. As a reward, players receive a special in-game item and promo code that can be redeemed in the physical world (Mileva 2021). The risks associated with the unpredictable environment of virtual worlds can be mitigated through adopting a multi-platform approach (Burgard & Kempf 2022), but this should only be considered after first learnings have already been acquired.

Internal Audit of Metaverse Know-How

Next, perform an internal audit of the current metaverse technological knowledge within the organization. Are related projects for reference available? Who was involved in these projects? Since the metaverse is an emerging field, the firm's current capabilities and knowhow in this area could be lacking. Dissecting the metaverse for all its facets highlights technological enablers such as VR and blockchain technology – without these, the decentralized immersive nature of the platforms would not be possible.

Consequently, firms should start acquiring talent with specialized skills to build a well-rounded team of experts in the fields of metaverse technologies: AI, VR, and online gaming (Burgard & Kempf 2022). Alternatively, external metaverse expertise can be sought by developing partnerships with builders on metaverse platforms or companies with core competencies in AI, VR, and digital twins. For illustration, Siemens partnered with AI and graphics champion Nvidia to leap into the industrial metaverse. Together, they developed a digital twin of their physics-based process simulator to add real-time AI, enabling productivity and process improvements (“Siemens and NVIDIA to Enable Industrial Metaverse” 2022).

Customer Discovery and Mode of Entry

Now, precise planning is an essential factor. The focal use case should be incorporated with the respective current activities, creating a streamlined integration between the digital and physical realms to ensure the feasibility of the plans. Valuable visualization tools that aid in planning customer interactions across multiple platforms, for instance customer journeys, can be employed. Clear identification of the customer touchpoints offers the possibility to position the metaverse efforts in the respective phase(s). If a fashion company plans to offer direct-to-avatar goods, they can opt to market their goods in both virtual worlds and e-commerce spaces but sell them exclusively in the virtual world. This case perfectly describes how Balenciaga partnered with Fortnite to design fashions for players' avatars (Mileva 2022), exhibiting the fusion between metaverse and web worlds and, by virtue, cyber-physically integrated consumer identities are born.

The planning phase would not be complete without selecting the appropriate metaverse to enter. Here, factors such as community size, growth, composition, engagement, and costs (e.g., for land) must be evaluated, as they vary across platforms (Kronen 2022). Strive to align these with the chosen strategic area and use case. Moreover, the mode of entry must be established in that decisions about buying real estate or renting a space in the metaverse must be made (Kronen 2022). Popular platforms wherein high-profile companies are active include Decentraland, The Sandbox, Roblox, Fortnite, Animal Crossing, and Blankos Block Party.

Execution of Strategy and Control of Success

Finally, the lower two tiers of *MetaEntry* concern the implementation of the strategy and control of the use case success. First, a plan with specific tasks leading up to the execution, i.e., the entry into the metaverse with the selected use case, must be drafted. With the target use case in action, initial feedback from metaverse users could lead to some minor adjustments

being necessary. These changes should be swiftly implemented to avoid compromising the project's success.

Lastly, after active presence in the metaverse has been reached, the project team must now measure the success of this use case. Measurement can be performed by transforming the vast amount of data collected into quantitative metrics such as KPIs that simplify its understandability. KPIs tailored to metaverse platforms emphasize movement and behaviour triggers; for example: Number of likes is measured by displays of affinity for certain objects through interactions such as dragging (Withana 2021). In addition, qualitative means of measurement reinforce the strategic alignment of the use case to the vision. This could mean for instance, the sentiment toward the focal brand in online gaming/metaverse communities or on social media. Ultimately, after first experiences are gathered, the use case's success has been evaluated, and lessons are learned, the team will determine if the chosen use case should be continued or abandoned in favor of moving on to another.

CONCLUSION

The metaverse provides ample novel opportunities for firms in marketing and commerce. However, these chances are accompanied by unprecedented challenges that prove difficult for firms to navigate. Despite the metaverse often being dismissed as future technology that is overhyped and currently out of reach, there is no denying that virtual realms will continute to permeate our behaviour and even identity, resulting in a cyberphysical existence of both inviduals and companies. Therefore, *MetaEntry,* which merges strategic planning with specific metaverse capabilities, aids in this transition into the cyberphysical era by offering firms a robust framework for developing and implementing a metaverse strategy.

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CEO Temporal Focus and Product Newness

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Marketing scholars have urged for upper echelons theory to be extended to the marketing field and to explore how CEOs' traits influence marketing outcomes. Despite these calls for research, only scant literature explores the influence of CEOs' traits on marketing outcomes. Responding to these calls, we explore if CEO temporal focus influences the level of innovation measured as product program newness. We further explore the mediating role of market orientation under boundary conditions of perceived time pressure and synchronicity preference for CEO temporal focus and product program newness relationship. We have received evidence supporting our hypothesis based on a sample of 264 firms. Our findings have significant implications for boards of directors and CEOs who want to serve customers more innovatively by launching new products and ensuring a high level of newness in those launched products.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS TO ACADEMICS AND PRACTITIONERS

Contribution to Academics

Our study contributes to the marketing strategy literature. Research exploring innovation outcomes about temporal focus did not explore innovation in terms of the newness of the products (Yadav et al., 2007). A firm launching new products may vary in terms of the newness dimension of firm innovation (Stock et al., 2019), a dimension we explore in this study.

Second, we explore the underlying mechanism through which CEO temporal focus influences firm innovativeness, where we shine a light on the moderating effect of two vital time-related constructs, namely perceived time pressure and synchronicity preference, and the mediating effect of marketing orientation. As scholars have called for more empirical research on time-related constructs and their association with firm-level outcomes (Gamache and McNamara, 2019; Shipp and Cole, 2015), the current research responds to this call.

Third, marketing scholars have criticized the upper echelons theory for the “black box” effect as there is a dearth of explanations on how CEO traits influence firm-level outcomes (Kashmiri et al., 2017). We extend this upper echelon literature stream by exploring the underlying mechanisms

Finally, as time has individual and relational perspectives, we also explore this relational perspective of time through CEO synchronization preference. This synchronization perspective is vital to explore in innovation management as product innovation implies dealing with uniqueness, uncertainty, and complexities associated with the product development process.

Contribution to Practitioners

Our findings suggest that if firms need to be high on market orientation and launch more innovative products, they will benefit from future temporal-focused CEOs more than past temporal-focused CEOs.

Firms can further improve their ability to innovate if future-focused CEOs have low perceived time pressure and a high ability to synchronize their pace of activities with stakeholders. Although CEOs with past temporal focus may not be beneficial for increasing firm innovativeness, the adverse impact of past focus on product program newness can be diminished if past temporal focused CEOs have lower perceived time pressure and can synchronize their pace of activities with stakeholders in question. CEOs, founders, and board of directors of SMEs may thus benefit from our research by encouraging CEOs to be more future-focused and pace their activities, especially those related to innovation.

INTRODUCTION

Though the role of human capital in innovation is of utmost significance, for SMEs, CEOs as central decision-makers are likely to most significantly impact the extent to which a firm is innovative (Strese et al., 2018). Exploring the role of CEO traits based on the upper echelons theory (that explores the influence of CEO traits on firm outcomes, Hambrick, 2007), scholars have emphasized the association between CEO temporal focus (that is, the focus on past, present, and future) and innovation outcomes, such as the rate of new product launches (Chandy and Prabhu, 2007; Nadkarni and Chen, 2014). However, we have limited knowledge about how CEOs' temporal focus (i.e., time orientation, Shipp et al., 2009) influences innovation. Although an individual may have multiple foci, i.e., they may focus on any period depending on different work or personal stimuli; however, early socialization experiences produce a general tendency to focus attention on either past, present, or future (Shipp et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the upper echelons theory has been criticized for the "black box" effect as there is a dearth of explanations on how CEO traits influence firm-level outcomes (Kashmiri et al., 2017). In the context of temporal perspective, scholars have emphasized exploring temporal perspectives along with other time-related constructs such as synchronization (preference for working at pace with others) and time pressure (Lévesque and Stephan, 2020). This is because these time constructs can influence how different temporal foci of individuals process information (Chen and Nadkarni, 2017), which then influences firm outcomes. CEOs' temporal focus and innovation relationship in such time construct context remains unexplored.

As marketing scholars have called for more research on the influence of CEO cognitive traits on a firm's innovation-related outcomes while delineating the path through which CEOs'

traits influence firms' outcomes (Chandy and Yadav, 2007; Stock et al., 2019), we respond to this call and specifically explore two research questions:

(a) How do CEOs' past and future temporal focus influence market orientation and hence product program newness (i.e., the mediating role of market orientation)?

(b) How do two critical temporal perspective dimensions, namely perceived time pressure and synchronization preference of CEOs, influence their temporal focus and TO relationship (i.e., the moderated mediated relationship)?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CEO Past Temporal Focus and Market Orientation

Individuals with past focus are more concerned with past events. Consequently, CEOs with a high past focus are more likely to direct their —field of vision and selective perception—toward past events. For innovation, this implies that past temporal-focused CEOs are more likely to pick cues from past innovations and thus invest in feedback-based learning to capture new product development opportunities (Davis et al., 2009). Past temporal-focused CEOs believe in feedback-based learning and find past R&D investments more reliable and durable (Nadkarni and Narayanan, 2007). As high market orientation favors more experimentation with customer-oriented new product designs and not reliance on existing designs (Hortinha et al., 2011), past temporal-focused CEOs are likely to negatively impact firms' market orientation.

Furthermore, focusing on past innovation bars CEOs from considering emerging designs, and consequently, novel innovation opportunities are missed (Shipp and Jansen, 2011). Hence, we hypothesize:

H1a: CEOs' past temporal focus negatively affects market orientation.

CEO Future Temporal Focus and Market orientation

For future-focused individuals, the effect of past knowledge diminishes over time (Gamache and McNamara, 2019). They often capture an opportunity to develop experience with more recent knowledge, thus developing products that range high on newness. Future-focused CEOs who have reduced association with past innovation successes may also develop a tolerance for ambiguity. This tolerance is vital for developing breakthrough capabilities where the firm's products are pushed into new, uncharted territories (Sung et al., 2017). Scholars also suggested that CEOs experimenting with new product development opportunities can better overcome technology familiarity traps and adopt more breakthrough practices (Ahuja and Lampert, 2001; Ozer and Tang, 2019).

High market orientation implies focusing on future-oriented goals. Strategic intent begins with future-oriented goals, and effective strategic intent emphasizes "a future-looking, longer-term perspective" (Kelley, 2009). Because CEOs high in future focus, compared to those low in future focus, tend to direct their attention toward the future and frequently think about futuristic goals and expectations (Gamache and McNamara, 2019; Shipp and Jansen, 2011), they tend to develop high market orientation. Hence, we hypothesize:

H1b: CEOs' future temporal focus has a positive relationship with market orientation.

Market orientation and Product Program Newness

Sainio et al. (2012) emphasized that a strong market orientation was a stepping stone for a new product line. This view was because firms high on market orientation firmly commit to R&D and utilize the latest technologies for better innovation. Gao et al. (2007) posited that market-oriented firms could build new technological solutions and thus offer new and advanced products to meet customer needs. With a timely and appropriate level of resource commitment by high market-

oriented firms, it becomes easy for firms to develop innovative products, thereby implying that market orientation positively impacts firm innovativeness. Scholars have repeatedly established the positive association between market orientation and product innovativeness (DeLuca et al., 2010; Wren et al., 2000).

As market-oriented businesses are less bounded by the reactive nature of the response to competitor action and proactively encompass new product ideation, they tend to launch new products, which are considered radical or disruptive innovations (Gatignon and Xuereb, 1997; Renko et al., 2009; Spanjol et al., 2011). Furthermore, in high market-oriented businesses, restrictions on innovation efforts are minimized, and the exploration of products satisfying consumer needs is encouraged. Consequently, market-oriented firms generate more technologically breakthrough products (Gotteland and Boule, 2006)). Hence, we hypothesize:

H2: Market orientation has a positive relationship with product program newness.

Mediation Influence of Market orientation on the CEO Temporal Focus and Product Program Newness Relationship

Upper echelons theory asserts that TMT traits influence firm outcomes. However, scholars have criticized this theory for the “black box” effect, which is the mechanism through which a CEO’s psychological, personality, or cognitive traits influence a firm’s outcome, which was largely unknown (Hambrick, 2007). Extant research suggests that upper echelon traits influence strategic decisions taken by firms, which then influence firms’ outcomes (Tuncdogan et al., 2017). For instance, Stock et al. (2019) found that upper echelons’ innovative behavior mediated their positive self-regard and product program newness relationship.

Our study explains how CEOs’ temporal focus is associated with market orientation and how firms' market orientation influences their product program newness. CEOs’ temporal focus

could likely influence product program newness through market orientation. This is because firms high on market orientation would be more inclined to invest in exploring customers' latent needs resulting in new products. Furthermore, CEOs' past and future temporal focus would influence investment in an existing or new line of products, determining product program newness (firm outcome). Hence, we hypothesize:

> **H3:** The relationship between CEOs (a) past and (b) future temporal focus and product program newness is mediated by the firms' market orientation.

Moderating Role of Synchrony Preference

Synchrony preference refers to individuals' differences in the extent to which they are willing to be temporally flexible, pacing their activities in synchronization with others (Leroy, 2015). It generates broad, tacitly understood rules for appropriate actions (Camerer and Vepsalainen, 1988) and mutually agreed communication codes (Teece et al., 1997). Individuals high on synchrony preferences are more compatible while interacting with stakeholders and are more open to adapting their pace with those with whom they interact. By contrast, individuals low on synchrony preference do not value synchronicity and prefer to follow their own pace or rhythm (Leroy et al., 2015). Their motivation is to continue with their pacing preferences and not adjust to the pace of others.

CEO Temporal Orientation and CEO Synchrony Preference

CEOs with past temporal focus tend to leverage already existing knowledge. This implies they do not proactively search for new information. However, CEOs remain open to new information (Shipp and Aeon, 2019), widespread among TMT members, suppliers, or customers involved in product development programs.

More past-focused CEOs can integrate different streams of knowledge (knowledge breadth) with past expertise in one domain (knowledge depth), such as integrating customer knowledge with competitor knowledge, leading to better market orientation (Zhou and Li, 2012). However, CEOs cannot accomplish this knowledge integration without input from stakeholders involved in innovation. Verona (1999) posited that a knowledge base alone is insufficient for developing new products; executives should be able to use knowledge integration mechanisms to capture, interpret, and deploy the firm's knowledge resources. Although CEOs with past temporal focus reduce a firm's market orientation, if they are high on synchronization preference, they can acquire, assimilate and integrate new information as shared by stakeholders and hence explore emerging consumer needs, thus diminishing their negative impact on market orientation of a firm. However, if they are low on synchronization preference, they would fail to assimilate and integrate knowledge as shared by TMT members, suppliers, and customers. They would rely on their past knowledge even more, thus further deteriorating the impact on market orientation.

Future-focused CEOs are inclined to explore new capabilities and resources that depart from organizations' existing knowledge base (Benner and Tushman, 2002). They have a proclination to learn, synthesize and integrate information related to new technology. However, CEOs may not possess this information completely, and they need to acquire it from non-competitive, complementary actors within their network, such as employees, functional heads, suppliers, and customers (Fossas-Olalla et al., 2015). When future-focused CEOs manage their pace of interaction and activities in synchronization with these complementary actors, effective exchange and integration of knowledge take place, and such CEOs can explore, and invest in continuous experimentation in creating customer value, thus increasing the market orientation of firms (Pérez-Luño et al., 2019). Hence, we hypothesize:

H4: Synchronicity preference moderates the (a) CEO past and (b) CEO future temporal focus and market orientation relationship, such that when synchronicity preference is high, the positive impact of CEO future focus on market orientation increases, and the negative effect of CEO past focus on market orientation decreases when synchronicity preference is low.

Moderating Role of CEO Time Pressure

Time pressure refers to the degree to which an individual feels increasing time costs or an impending deadline (Smith and Hayne, 1997). Not surprisingly, time pressure encourages individuals to formulate less ambitious goals for innovation (Hsu and Fan, 2010). This is because the search and application of new technology demand CEOs to engage in more creative behavior within the innovation process. Under high perceived time pressure, cognitive processes associated with technological solution search may be inhibited, thus decreasing market orientation (Amabile et al., 2002).

CEO Temporal Orientation and Time Pressure

Though future-focused CEOs would be high on market orientation; however, if they perceive time pressure to be high, their cognitive creativity to explore market trends and use them for developing new products decreases (Amabile et al., 2002). Furthermore, exploring market trends under time pressure would require more accurate information processing. Because it is difficult to access such accurate information related to customers and competitors in a short period (Pauchant and Mitroff, 1992), market orientation by future temporal-focused CEOs under high perceived time pressure would decrease.

Future-focused CEOs will try to quickly process and absorb relevant market-based knowledge as they are more interested in futuristic products. However, as they would quickly

scan, the future-focused CEOs' information processing would decline, adversely influencing their ability to accept new demands of consumers and reducing market orientation.

The preference of past temporal focus-oriented CEOs for exploiting already existing knowledge implies that they do not actively search for new knowledge about consumers' latent demands (Baron, 2006). However, if they come across new demand, their tendency to respond to new demand depends on perceived time pressure. Under low time pressure conditions, past temporal-focused CEOs would have ample time to consider ways to respond to emerging demand (Wersching, 2010). Thus, when past temporal-focused CEOs have ample time to access and process the information related to new consumer needs, they may use the information optimally, thus diminishing the negative impact on market orientation. Hence, we hypothesize:

> **H5:** Perceived time pressure moderates CEOs' temporal focus and market orientation relationship such that when perceived time pressure is low, the positive effect of CEOs' future focus on market orientation is increased, and the negative effect of CEO past focus on market orientation is decreased than when perceived time pressure is high.

METHODOLOGY

We used a multi-informant design to test the hypothesized model (Stock et al., 2019), where we surveyed CEOs and their subordinates in the product development team of SMEs in the United Kingdom. Using a research panel from a market research agency located in the UK, data was collected over one year, between 2021 to 2022, in three time periods. In January 2021 (time t1), we sent CEOs of 1,410 SMEs an email questionnaire with items on temporal focus and demographic variables. Following Stock et al. (2019), we requested CEOs for email (contact) addresses of at least five subordinates involved in the product development team. After two weeks (i.e., time t2), the subordinates and the CEOs received separate email survey

questionnaires. During this period, we asked CEOs questions about perceived time pressure, the technological orientation of the firm, and synchronistic preferences. Subordinates answered questions related to market orientation and CEO synchronistic preferences. As synchronization partly reflects the ability to become flexible with a team, which could be a desirable social trait, we asked both CEOs' and subordinates' synchronization questions. For the analysis of synchronistic preferences, we used responses given by subordinates. Though with CEOs' responses as well, statistically results remained unchanged.

Finally, in January 2022 (t3), both CEOs and subordinates were asked questions on product program newness. We received completed questionnaires from 264 SMEs, where CEOs and a minimum of three subordinates involved in a product development program responded to all questions asked. This represented a response rate of 18.72%. We evaluated differences in answers between early and late respondents to check for non-response bias. No significant difference was reported.

Operationalization

We used established scales to measure the study constructs. We measured the CEO's past and future temporal focus using Shipp et al.'s (2009) scale. Four items correspond to each of the constructs. We measured CEO time pressure using a three-item scale adapted from Semmer et al. (1999). Next, we measured CEO synchronization preference and market orientation using scales adapted from Leroy et al. (2014) and Jaworski and Kohli (1993). Finally, we measured product program newness using Stock and Zacharias' (2011) five-item scale. We measured all the scale items using a seven-point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha of the constructs ranged from 0.81 to 0.92.

We also controlled for variables based on prior research, including firm size, slack, dynamism, competitive intensity, and CEO present focus.

ANALYSIS

Following De Vellis (1991) and Richins and Dawson (1992), we first checked for the possibility of social desirability bias affecting the present study. We also employed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to ensure that the study variables were distinct constructs (Garba et al., 2018). We also used the Fornell and Larcker (1981) mechanism to assess the constructs' validity. All the constructs had acceptable discriminant validity. Our results also suggested that control variables had no significant impact on the mediator (market orientation) or dependent variable (product program newness).

Next, we tested the study hypotheses. The beta coefficients of CEO past temporal focus had a negative and statistically significant association with market orientation ($\beta = -0.17$, $p<0.001$). Also, CEO future temporal focus had a positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.15$, $p<0.001$) association with market orientation. We thus receive evidence in support of the two subsets of the first hypothesis. Next, we observed market orientation having a positive and statistically significant association with product program newness ($\beta = 0.18$, $p<0.001$), thus giving evidence in support of the second hypothesis.

Through hypothesis three, we speculated the indirect effects of CEO past and present temporal focus on product program newness via market orientation. The indirect effect of the CEO past temporal focus on product program newness was negative and statistically significant (θ =-0.0306; LCI=-0.0387; UCI=-0.0225). The indirect coefficient of future temporal focus on product program newness was negative and statistically significant (θ =0.0270; LCI=0.0214; UCI=0.0326). Thus, we receive evidence supporting both the subsets of hypothesis three.

The beta coefficient of the interaction effect of CEO past temporal focus and synchronicity preference on market orientation was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.09$, $p<0.01$). Also, the beta coefficient of the interaction effect of CEO future temporal focus and synchronicity preferences on market orientation was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.10$, $p<0.01$). Further analysis of the moderation effect at low, medium, and high values of synchronicity (one standard deviation below and above the mean) showed that as synchronicity increased, the negative influence of past temporal focus on market orientation decreased. Thus, we receive evidence supporting both the subsets of hypothesis four.

Finally, the interaction effect of CEO past temporal focus and perceived time pressure on market orientation was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.11$, $p<0.01$). Also, the interaction effect of CEO future temporal focus and perceived time pressure on market orientation was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.12$, $p<0.01$). Further analysis of the moderation effect at low, medium, and high values of perceived time pressure (one standard deviation below and above the mean) showed that as time pressure increased, the negative influence of past temporal focus on market orientation increased, and the positive influence of future temporal focus on market orientation decreased. We thus receive evidence in support of both the subsets of hypothesis five.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Scholars have explored several drivers of firm innovativeness, including the role of upper echelon personality traits (Talke et al., 2010). However, CEOs' cognitive traits have received less attention (Adomako, 2017). In this study, we investigate the association between CEO temporal focus and firm innovativeness under the moderated mediation effect of time pressure and synchronicity preference as moderators and the mediation effect of technological orientation.

Although extant literature explored the impact of the executive's temporal focus on several firm innovation outcomes (Yadav et al., 2007), the novelty aspect of the innovation was almost lacking. Third, the innovation literature has explored relatively less the technological orientation of a firm and its drivers (Al-Henzab et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2014). Given that technology has a critical role in innovation and product development, we explore the association between CEO temporal focus and market orientation of firms, thus extending implications of upper echelons theory on market orientation.

Furthermore, scholar experts on "time" literature have emphasized two aspects of time construct, i.e., time perspective (past, present, future temporal perspective) and time management (time allocation, pacing) (Lévesque and Stephan, 2020). Leveraging the time management dimension, we further explore the moderating impact of time pressure and CEOs' synchronization preference on CEO temporal focus and market orientation relationship.

For managers, those upper echelon teams, including the board of directors who want to increase product program newness, may encourage CEOs for future temporal foci. In contrast, those wanting to focus on less innovation can encourage CEOs for past temporal foci. Firms can conduct assessments of temporal foci for top executives' functioning, especially from an innovation perspective, and can arrange for coaching for required temporal foci.

Furthermore, firms must provide coaching and counseling to CEOs in a specific context. The negative impact of past temporal focus and the positive impact of future temporal focus on market orientation can be diminished and enhanced if firms can coach CEOs to lower their perceived time pressure and are encouraged to synchronize their pace of activities and social interactions with stakeholders involved in innovation.

Alternatively, as firms seek to hire new CEOs, they should ensure that CEOs have a future temporal focus if the firms want to be more innovative. Firms may use questionnaire instruments while recruiting candidates. Even during interviews, the speech of a candidate CEO can be considered a signal of temporal focus.

Moreover, firms can coach CEOs to reduce perceived time pressure and have flexible synchronization preferences. These attributes would further enhance the market orientation of future focus CEOs and reduce the adverse impact on market orientation by past temporal focus CEOs.

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Configurational modeling of causal ambiguities in complex enactments of marketing capabilities and performance outcomes

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Keywords: competence ambiguity, causal system ambiguity, performance, fuzzy set methods

Description: This study explores and empirically tests how configuration of marketing capabilities leads to competence and causal system ambiguity and how the latter associate with competitive advantage and high business performance.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

(1) Research Question(s)

Causal ambiguity concerns uncertainty among employees, managers, and competitors regarding the factors that contribute to firm performance (Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993) or a "lack of understanding about the link between resources or decisions and performance outcomes" (Cording et al. 2008: 744). The impact of marketing capability complementarities onto causal ambiguity and competitive advantage (and outstanding firm perform) have also been investigated in the strategic marketing literature (see e.g., Grewal and Slotegraaf, 2007; Dutta, Narasimhan and Rajiv, 1999; Moorman and Slotegraaf 1999; Morgan, Vorhies, and Mason, 2009; Ngo and O'Cass, 2012; Vorhies and Morgan, 2005). However, the latter studies do not split causal ambiguity into its component parts and asses their impact on competitive advantage and/or firm performance. Not knowing whether it is the inherent characteristics of firm assets and/or the ways they are combined (into superior competencies) may seriously damage a firm's ability to compete against competitors and achieve outstanding performance (Bettis et al., 1992; Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; King and Zeithaml, 2001). Our research questions follow: RQ1: How does the configuration of marketing capabilities combine with competence and causal system ambiguity? RQ2: How the latter factors associate with competitive advantage and high financial performance?

(2) Method and Data

Method. This study employs configuration theory. Configuration theory posits that for a specific business strategy there exists an ideal set of (i.e. a complex "gestalt" of multiple, interdependent, and mutually reinforcing) organizational characteristics that drive the business towards its strategic goals. Proponents of a configurational approach take a systemic and holistic view of organizations, where patterns or profiles rather than individual independent variables are related to an outcome such as performance.
Data. This study uses a sample of 572 Hungarian firms. The sampling frame was based on US Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes, following US industry-specific and area-specific classifications. The sampling frame was obtained from Dun & Bradstreet's company directory of Hungarian firms, which contained a pool of 18,293 B2B and B2C firms (B2B and B2C firms were equally represented in the sampling frame).

(3) Summary of Findings

(1) The findings indicate that competence and causal system ambiguity are distinct barriers-to-imitation and can help firms to achieve imitation superiority and high financial performance (/the absence of high financial performance).
(2) Furthermore, contrary to earlier research findings, results show that low competence ambiguity can combine with low causal system ambiguity and still lead to high financial performance.
(3) Configurations of marketing capabilities and internal and external firm contingencies can create typologies that portray cause-effect relationships between competence and causal system ambiguity.

(4) Key Contributions
(1) This study disentangles causal ambiguity related to marketing capabilities into competence ambiguity and causal system ambiguity and clarifies the configuration of the above factors with respect to competitive advantage and financial performance.
(2) The study extends prior work in marketing strategy using configurational thinking and tests complex configuration(s) of competence ambiguity and causal system ambiguity and creates typologies (or strategic archetypes). This can help managers and researchers to map the competitive landscape and guide strategic choices related to marketing resource deployment and reaching competitive advantage and outstanding performance (/the absence of it).

CONTRACT DESIGN AND SALES LEADERSHIP: EVIDENCE FROM FRANCHISE SYSTEMS

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Keywords: Survival analysis; franchising; top franchise ranking; sales leadership; contract design

Description: This study examines the details of contracts for sales leaders in the franchise industry over time to shed light on factors affecting their sales leadership.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

What are the contractual settings that sustain sales leadership in the franchising industry?

Method and Data

In this study, we tested our hypotheses using survival analysis on a longitudinal sample of 153 franchisors in the United States between 2013 and 2020 (1172 firm-year observations). Our unique dataset consists of an unbalanced panel dataset created by combining the Entrepreneur Magazine franchise list and Franchise Times Top 200 list.

We follow Sohl and Folta (2021) and use a discrete-time survival regression model with a complementary log-log structure to explore the drivers of survival in sales leadership. To ensure that our results are robust, we also used logit and Cox proportional hazard models. Moreover, we also used the proportional hazard model with Weibull distribution to produce more robust estimates in case of negative duration dependence (when older chains could have a lower

mortality rate or lower likelihood of exit). To reduce the potential endogeneity and be consistent with prior studies, we also used the one-year lag of independent variables.

Summary of Findings

Our results show that franchisors with higher royalty fees and those functioning solely based on offering multi-unit or master franchising have a higher likelihood of maintaining their sales leadership position. Moreover, we find that expansion via franchising and provision of financing to potential franchisees increase the probability of staying on the top franchise list for franchise chains. Our findings are robust to different survival analysis estimation techniques.

Key Contributions

The findings of this study contribute to the marketing, franchising, and organizational economics literature. First, we extend the application of survival analysis methods in franchising from examining factors that enhance the likelihood of surviving in the business to those that help franchisors maintain their positions on top-franchise rankings. This is imperative for the sustainable growth of franchise networks. Also, while previous studies have mainly focused on the survival likelihood of new-franchisors or all-franchisors, we turned the light on a subset of franchisors that are well-established and strive to maintain their sales leadership rather than survival only. Although there are some similarities in performance drivers between these two groups, we expect some differences because the latter group of franchisors have access to more resources and have different objectives. Second, we investigate the inter-organizational drivers of sales leadership in a Business-to-Business context, whereas most studies in the sales leadership literature have focused on the Business-to-Consumer or personal selling aspect of sales performance and leadership. For firms like franchisors with high reliance on franchising as a means of size expansion and sales growth, it is necessary to study inter-organizational drivers

of sales performance. Third, unlike most previous studies, we did not restrict our empirical test to one method but conducted comprehensive analyses using different survival models. We used discrete-time survival analysis, proportional hazard Cox models, proportional hazard models with Weibull distribution, and logit. Using different models ensures that our results are robust to the treatment of the time unit (continuous vs. discrete) and other survival analysis nuances, such as negative duration dependence and multiple entries and exits.

References are available upon request.

CORPORATE ACTIVISM: A BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: literature review; corporate sociopolitical activism; corporate sociopolitical advocacy; brand activism; CEO activism.

Description: This paper presents a systematic literature review and suggestions for further research on corporate activism.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

This research aims to present an overview of Corporate Activism (CA) research area, by integrating current knowledge via an aggregation of published articles. Besides we explore CA's definitions and characteristics, underlying theories, relationships, and relevant outcomes found by prior literature. These are organized in the form of a comprehensive framework of antecedents and consequences of CA. Moreover, avenues for future research are outlined. The main research questions guiding this study are: (i) what the current state of knowledge about CA is, (ii) how this knowledge can be integrated into research streams, and (iii) which research avenues can be drawn from it.

Method And Data

Our systematic review on CA is supported by bibliographic methods (Zupic and Čater 2015). Particularly, we applied a bibliographic coupling analysis to understand the underlying connections between articles based on their shared references and to trace the research streams underlying CA. Data collection and sample selection involved few steps. First, we selected the Web of Science (WOS) database and searched the following terms in the title, abstract, and author keywords fields, without restrictions of publication year: "brand activism", "CEO activism", "corporate activism", "corporate sociopolitical activism", "corporate political activism", "corporate political advocacy", "corporate social advocacy", and "corporate sociopolitical advocacy". The data collection occurred on April 29, 2022 and resulted in an initial sample of 93 articles. This initial sample was filtered considering several aspects: articles must be written in English; published in peer reviewed journals classified in the first and second quartiles of "Business, Management and Accounting" of Scimago Journal & Country Rank (SCI 2021); approach corporate, brand, and/or CEO activism as the main scope and core discussion. The final sample consisted of 49 articles, published in 29 different journals, during the 2016-2022 period by 110 authors.

Summary of Findings

Results reveal that literature on CA has considerably grown in less than a decade. This interest emerges from different disciplines, basically public relations, management and business, and marketing, indicating its interdisciplinary nature. The bibliographic coupling analysis showed that scientific research on CA is established around these three domains of knowledge. Each of these areas approaches the conceptualization, related concepts, antecedents, and consequences of the phenomenon, addressing both individual and organization levels in their analysis. Hence, we presented a comprehensive framework joining the theoretical considerations and empirical findings of prior literature from the different roots. Our framework states that there are external and internal factors preceding CA, and the internal factor can emerge from organization and/or individual level. For the consequences, a set of stakeholders might be affected and react with attitudes and/or behaviors in response of it. Suggestions for future research are to explore in which circumstances CA is more or less likely to happen (e.g., the identity orientation of both company and individuals as well as their politic ideology), to address strategic aspects of CA, to explore other contexts than developed Western countries, and to explore certain internal and external effects.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study contributes to previous research by uncovering the perspectives of CA, including three different business entities: company, brand, and individual (i.e., an organizational leader). The bibliometric analysis of articles revealed management, marketing, and public relations as the main research domains exploring CA, showing the multidisciplinary boundaries of this phenomenon. This quantitative analysis was complemented with a qualitative interpretation of the articles and research domains. These analyses led to a comprehensive framework of antecedents and consequences based on the conceptual discussion and empirical investigation of the mapped literature. Hence, future research directions are offered to assist researchers interested in further development of knowledge the theme. In terms of practical implications, as CA is increasingly growing and affecting organizations daily practices and performance, this research can also help practitioners to better understand this phenomenon. From this study, managers can access a scientific view of the underlying principles and interrelations within the CA field.

References are available upon request.

CREEPING BRAND REPUTATION FAILURE.

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Keywords: Supply Chain, Brand Failure, Deception, Supply Chain Performance

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The literature does not address the idea that brand reputations may creep toward failure. It does address many concepts that would affect brand reputation. It also addresses the idea that organizations often miss weak signals, a key element in the idea that brand reputations may appear to collapse, but that appearance can be deceptive. Few organizations commit heinous acts that send vast numbers of customers fleeing to other sellers. Rather, they more often ignore small problems for so long that their reputations have been undercut. This study addressed the gap in the literature by exploring the concept of creeping failure on brand reputation and collapse. The results suggest the negative effects of supplier deceptive behaviors on buyers' perceptions of supplier performance. Performance positively affects satisfaction which in turn positively affected word of mouth and reputation. The study highlights the importance of reputation management and careful consideration of warning signs that may be corroding reputation.

Research Questions.

In this research, we attempted to determine the intersection of brand performance, satisfaction, and deception on WOM among small business enterprises.

Method and Data

To access a larger group of SMEs, the authors accessed several Facebook groups that housed predominantly small business owners within the candle and bath and body industry. The authors' extended presence and engagement in observational research in the social media groups where the members of SMEs interacted and where the surveys were ultimately distributed suggests that buying firms often recommend suppliers to each other. With the pandemic and the employee exodus known as the Great Resignation, it has appeared that the Facebook groups in which SMEs interacted have increased the membership count resulting from a large influx of new business owners who started their businesses during the pandemic. Many seasoned business owners often served as a resource to the newly formed enterprises which included information on reputable suppliers. At the same time, as the disruptions, delays, and shortages began early in the pandemic and continue throughout, owners began sharing negative experiences with suppliers.

Summary of Findings

The findings clearly indicate that the supplier's performance is a strong predictor of satisfaction with the supplier which, in turn, strengthened the reputation and positively affected the WOM. The unsettling element of the model is not the strong relationship between the performance, satisfaction, reputation, and WOM but the unethical and deceptive supplier's behaviors are corroding these relationships like a threat that is creeping up only to strike this weakness at the worst possible time. Given that crises are typically slow evolving producing multiple warning signs and giving ample time to organizations to prevent the crisis from

becoming widespread. Therefore, paying attention to small warning signs could help suppliers prevent a widespread crisis.

Key Contributions

The covid-19 pandemic resulted in widespread disruptions. This worldwide crisis has affected everyone or nearly everyone across the globe and contributed to the higher prevalence of crisis. Not all crises are as unexpected as this. In fact, typically crisis is slow evolving. Much attention has been placed on the bright side of B2B relationships, but few studies focused on the darker side, particularly one that is slow evolving. While prior research extensively focused on supplier performance and the effects on satisfaction, reputation, and word of mouth, limited studies addressed the potential effects of supplier small misconduct on performance and reputation. At the same time, many studies exist on how to manage a crisis once it occurs and subsequent reputation recovery but few, if any, studies to date looked at the corroding effects of deception during major supply chain disruption and its effects on performance, satisfaction, and WOM. This study attempts to fill the gap in the existing literature by testing the comprehensive model of effects between suppliers' deceptive behaviors and performance as well as interrelationships between supplier performance, satisfaction with a supplier, WOM, and reputation.

References are available upon request.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS MANAGEMENT: CLOSING A CAPABILITY GAP IN THE CUSTOMER-FOCUSED STRUCTURE TOWARD CUSTOMER CENTRICITY IN B2B SERVICE CONTEXTS

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Keywords: Customer Success Management, Organizational Structure, Customer Centricity, Marketing Capabilities, Marketing Strategy

Description: This study analyzes the organizational implementation of customer success management and discusses how it contributes to reducing customer-centricity barriers and constitutes an adaptive organizational capability.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The customer success management (CSM) function is essential in service-oriented business-to-business industries (everything-as-a-service) through proactively managing post-sale customer relationships (Hochstein et al., 2020). CSM ensures the strategic outcomes (e.g., customer retention and cross-upselling) and relational outcomes (e.g., customer satisfaction and loyalty) on which those businesses depend. Driven by accelerating servitization and the

digital economy, managers and academia prioritize CSM while knowing little about CMS's organizational embeddedness (World Economic Forum, 2020; Ulaga & Kowalkowski, 2022). Hochstein et al. (2021) find that CSM is a structural alternative to within-person service sales ambidexterity and thus proposes an independent structural function between sales and customer support. Gainsight and RevOps Squared (2022) show that CSM primarily reports to the CEO. Therefore, the CSM organization needs to be further assessed based on established organizational characteristics (OCs) of centralization, integration, modularity, interdependence, formalization, and specialization (Lee, Kozlenkova & Palmatier, 2015; Mintzberg, 1979). Based on those OCs, the shared focus on relational outcomes, customer centricity, and long-term performance, we investigate CSM in the customer-focused structure (CFS). Therefore, our research question is: How is CSM embedded into the CFS, and how does the embeddedness lead to customer and supplier success?

Method and Data

We use a rigorous two-stage multi-method approach to answer this research question. First, we conducted ten explorative in-depth interviews with CS managers to obtain information inductively regarding the OCs. Second, we conducted four case studies of leading suppliers identified in the first-round interviews. Our findings are contextualized by using multiple cases from different servitization contexts. The case study method allows us to explore new phenomena in complex real-life settings (Miles et al., 2014; Yin, 2018). For each case study, we conducted semi-structured interviews in different regions and levels of seniority (15 additional interviews).

Our interview analysis used a hybrid approach of inductive explorative interviews and deductive coding of case studies. (Miles et al., 2014). We applied axial coding to relate the

OCs and their contribution to supplier and customer success (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Novel research should be linked to managerial relevance and insight (Aguinis et al., 2022). Therefore, we used qualitative content analysis of rich managerial data to evaluate the extent (low-moderate-high) of OCs. Finally, we triangulated our findings with implicit theoretical knowledge from the CSM literature (Eisenhardt, 1989). Throughout the research process, we rigorously applied the quality criteria of qualitative research (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2018).

Summary of Findings

Our findings support the CFS as the prevailing supplier organizational structure to ensure customer centricity. However, we find it is mixed with regional and matrix structures due to the complexity and instability of suppliers' and customers' business environments. Furthermore, we find that the recent evolution of CSM leads to instability while learning and implementing OCs. Context and history influence the organizational structure: transitioning (i.e., servitizing) suppliers are sales-centralized, and "born in the cloud" suppliers are CSM-centralized.

In summary, the CSM function exhibits moderate centralization, high integration, high modularity, moderate-to-high interdependence, moderate formalization, and low-to-moderate specialization. Modularity and formalization mediate the high integration to a moderate-to-high interdependence. The moderate centralization ensures the prioritization of churn with direct reporting to the C-level. The low-to-moderate specialization enables high integration, CSM operating as an orchestrator. We discuss the configuration of the OCs of the implementation of CSM in the CSM and find that they address barriers to customer centricity and constitute an adaptive organizational capability required to bridge the gap to dealing with aforementioned contingencies. Therefore, we show how CSM contributes to strategic and

relational outcomes through its OCs. Those findings are based on the contingency and configuration theory and the resource-based view.

Key Contributions

We have an increased understanding of a relevant phenomenon in service-oriented business-to-business industries previously overlooked by academic research. We contribute to the strategy and organizational field, showing that everything-as-a-service (XaaS) business models and contingencies create a targeted fit of structure and strategy (Lee, Kozlenkova & Palmatier, 2015). Our contribution to subscription-based service industries is more modest. However, our findings are relevant for other industries, given the contingencies of accelerating servitization, dynamic market environments, and customers demanding proof of value. Additionally, we contribute to the marketing literature, showing that the CSM function is tasked with building adaptive organizational capabilities to close the gap between complex, fast-evolving contingencies and the organizational ability to respond (Day, 2011). Furthermore, we show that CSM contributes to increasing customer centricity (Shah et al., 2006).

We aim to bring academic knowledge to practice. For executives, we provide concrete advice on setting up CSM. CS managers can elevate their understanding of their focal role. Crucially, executives of industries outside the XaaS supplier context, or executives of transitioning/servitizing businesses, can profit from the strategic imperative of the XaaS business model, an organizational structure in line with increased customer centricity and adaptive marketing capabilities. Thus, they can justify their XaaS transition.

References are available upon request.

** I use "we" to acknowledge the support from my chair, university, and (friendly) reviewers.*

CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCT STRATEGY

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Keywords: cutting-edge product strategy, knowledge solubility, path of excellence, devotion.

Description: It is postulated that in product strategy if 'research newness' refers to 'state-of-art', then 'development newness' refers to 'cutting-edge' and thus aspects of 'cutting-edge product strategy' is discussed in this paper.

ABSTRACT

Firms in emerging markets need not only a good product strategy but a cutting-edge product strategy to emerge as winners in the marketplace. This study examines the construct of 'cutting-edge product'; the distinguishing characteristics of cutting-edge products; distinct aspects of cutting-edge product strategy and draws implications for marketers.

INTRODUCTION

Product strategy is becoming increasingly significant in emerging markets such as India wherein governance initiatives in recent times include 'Make in India', and "Start-up India', that reflects an increasing thrust to make the country self-reliant and push it forward as a leading emerging market destination in the world. Business environment presents an increasingly aware and demanding market society with institutional voids gradually being filled up, with emerging government market reforms improving institutional structure with better information flows, better infrastructure, and good support of transaction enabler systems of information technology, servicing, financing, and logistics.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the above context, firms need not only a good product strategy but a cutting-edge product strategy to emerge as winners in the marketplace. This study attempts to examine the

definition of the construct of 'cutting-edge product', the distinguishing characteristics of cutting-edge products, distinct aspects of cutting-edge product strategy, and draws implications for marketers serving such emerging market firms. The process of product strategy that includes product market planning, issues to marketing organization, and the development of marketing programs to support the product strategy is discussed in textual literature (Lehmann and Winer, 2005), and not within the scope of this paper.

DEFINITION OF THE CONSTRUCT 'CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCT'

Efforts by the marketing strategist needs to be adequately backed up by a good product. In recent times with the rise of digital initiative of corporations, the feedback of users ripples through the market very quickly making it very essential that the firm has thought through the product optimally. In this context the definition of 'cutting-edge product' assumes significance.

Edge is the latent leverage a firm has in what it already does, and therefore needs less up-front investment in resources (assets / capabilities or competencies), time, and effort (Lewis and McKone, 2016). One common approach to create an edge involves going beyond the core offering (in including add-ons and enhancements), extending the outer boundaries of the product-market, segment, or brand (in including accessories and complements); such creation of edges needs to be actively managed and sustained. The conceptualization of the no-frills or base option with loadings is one such manifestation of edge product strategy. Cutting-edge is when a dimension of product strategy is leveraged, and this element / quality / factor is intense and sharp that gives the firm superiority over competitors. The recent surge in the 21st century for a progression to a digital economy, makes investment in digital strategies, an intense factor for firm superiority over competitors. When the cutting-edge manifests in the product, the marketer can label the market offering as a cutting-edge product, and a 'cutting-edge product strategy' can be postulated. Gillette's continuing innovations in blade technology and Intel's line modernization efforts since the 1980s are illustrations of cutting-edge product strategy. In

all cases of edge developments, the need to fulfil what is required of the firm from the customer / consumer / market is of prime importance. Going beyond cutting-edge products is the creation of new products / offerings (Lewis and McKone, 2016), possibly through radical technological innovations that may be fuelled by boundary-spanning demand-side search (Zhang, et. al, 2017).

CHARACTERISTICS OF CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCTS

MOTIVATING FACTORS

For cutting-edge products clear value benefits for the customers is a motivating factor. As such is the importance of value engineering and value reengineering analysis as a necessary part of cutting-edge product characteristics. For illustration, most consumer durables operate on electric power and hence low power consumption goods and services impart a cutting-edge advantage. Cutting-edge products should accommodate experiential marketing aspects; an illustration is that of smart mobile phones with the 'think' and 'relate' strategic experiential modules combined that directly corresponds to the computer-communication convergence. Cutting-edge products also may need to extend itself to include new features and new benefits. Performance quality superiority is another motivating factor, and this requires product performance redlines, noise reduction, compatibility, maintenance free options, if possible, by technology, and effective benchmarking metrics. Products that have no redlines on the emission dimension of performance quality, can be considered 'Green.'

Cutting-edge products are also motivated by change of styles (Ghosh et. al, 2006), fashions and fads. Cutting-edge products could also result from spinoffs that arise by inheritance of knowledge from their parents (Furlan and Grandinetti, 2016). For illustration microelectronics capability could lead to spinoffs in consumer electronics, power electronics, and defence electronics. Cutting-edge products could also result due to new business models as has arisen with Uber along with its software app transforming the taxi industry; Apple with

its reverse razor-blade model rewriting the area of personal entertainment; Amazon breaking ground with its online retailing. Cutting-edge products could also result from customer need gap, want gap, and benefit gap identification.

TECHNOLOGY FACTORS

Cutting-edge products could also be obtained by technology-assisted product development. Extant literature (Brossard et. al, 2018), discusses the use of virtual reality in prototyping, use of digital twins for upgradation of models or versions of products wherein the product modification is assisted by field-data, pitch-nights to accommodate and exploit the minimum viable product (MVP) capabilities of the start-up environment by large scale businesses, and innovation garages wherein forced cross-functional relationships is set-up with an intention to assist R&D teams and possibly develop MVPs with reduced procedural bottlenecks.

TAM (Technology-Assisted Marketing) is another useful alternative that could exploit one or more of virtual reality, augmented reality, artificial intelligence (voice recognition systems, text processing systems, image recognition systems, decision support advise, robots), machine-learning, and deep learning (Jarek and Grzegorz, 2019). The import being to cut product development times significantly if not substantially; act as a facilitator of transactions such as payments, delivery; ensure reduced human error in high volume transactions; and assist business analysts in obtaining insights and relationships from high volume data (or big data).

HYGIENE FACTORS

Cutting-edge product strategy should discharge its responsibility on a variety of hygiene factors, including being packaging friendly, logistics friendly, installation and commissioning friendly. Conformance quality levels for cutting-edge products include conformance to standards, provide required accuracy, good shelf life, durability, feature reduction vs enhancement possibility, feature scaling and loading, upgradability.

SERVICE DOMINANT FACTORS

Certain products survive well in service intensive environments to maintain their cutting-edge nature; DIY is a useful alternative in high service-expense economies. Operational quality friendly products are marketed at lower prices than performance superior products but are backed up by cutting-edge service to adequately compensate for loss of performance superiority. Illustrations could include products such as photo copiers or earthmoving equipment. Such products could be modular products being assembly friendly, repair friendly, and maintenance friendly. Cutting-edge services also include warnings / alerts on malfunctions; alerts on snags (malfunctions in null state of operation); service procedures to cope up with (i) breakdowns, (ii) run state malfunctions notifications in case of lower performance, (iii) shorter life, (iv) poor quality output, (v) higher rate of defective produced, and (vi) lower efficiency. Adequate care must be taken to eliminate lemons and built-in systems for teething problem detection and correction.

CONSUMPTION FACTORS

Cutting-edge products should be consumption friendly; as such they should be easy to learn, be not addictive, easy to use, and consumers judge that the products consume low psychic costs on usage.

ASPECTS OF CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCT STRATEGY

STRATEGIC PRODUCT-MARKET OPTIONS

The strategic product market options at different stages of market evolution, and each stage of the product (brand) life cycle (MCE-PBLC grid), is postulated to capture a wide range of product market strategies, that aids the useful deployment of cutting-edge products, as outlined in Table 1.

… Table 1 here … Strategic product-market options

Cells (1), (2), (3) are go-to-market strategies; Cell (1) includes teething stage strategies, product pioneer, Cell (2) includes boom possibilities, Cell (3) includes late market entrant, niche strategies. Cell (5) is early market entrant strategies including pre-emption as a strategy. Cell (6) is growth market strategies including consolidation. Cell (9) is early maturity strategies including leapfrog strategy or successive generation of existing technology. Cell (11) is mature market strategies including cost leadership, differentiation, market mechanisms (product leadership, performance superiority, operational excellence combined), synergy. Cell (7) is gain strategies and includes the value discipline of operational excellence. Cell (10) is market modification strategies which tantamount to sacrifice growth for profit strategies, and include market modification, product modification, marketing mix modification.

Cell (4), (8), (12), (13), (14), (15), (16) are end game strategies. Cell (4) is profitable survivor strategies; Cell (8) is harvest strategies; Cell (12) is maintenance strategies; Cell (13) is the bust situations; Cell (14) is the shakeout scenarios; Cell (15) requires firms to play and obtain niche positions; and Cell (16) firms are required to divest.

KNOWLEDGE SOLUBILITY

For an effective cutting-edge product strategy, a pre-requisite could be knowledge solubility; significant in products built on competencies, rather than only assets. Knowledge solubility refers to the absorptive capacity of the product in its technical and financial entirety by the user community. As such knowledge solubility includes in its gamut user friendly documentation, positive specification setting, easy to understand technical aspects, categorization of the specification details coupled with effective functionality, easy to comprehend or modular product design, and product solutions backed by good flow of process. Further the products should be easy to inspect with clear test procedures (such as clinical testing, hardness test, durability test), easy to bifurcate defectives and easy to store.

On the financial side, the firm should be able to implement cost optimization. As regards product entropy, (the percent of total cost to revenues of product; the percent of revenue not available for profit taking or profit making), ideal entropy is fifty percent with a dollar you make, a dollar you take. However ideal entropies are not possible in practice owing to government regulations, competitive intensities, industry practices of preferred rates, total cost of ownership and need to include overheads or sunk costs. In this regard is the importance of low loss systems with significance of value add and value add efficiency (value offered output / price paid for inputs). Consideration should also be given to offsetting of rise in real costs with rise in real revenues and the consequent gain or loss in real terms to the firm; this should be together examined with obsolescence costs (hence salvage value) and inadequate recoup of investments to judge how well the cutting-edge product has performed in financial terms. Net present value of future earning capacity is an important metric. The flip side is that the market should be able to bear the implications of the financial entirety of the product.

PRODUCT LEADERSHIP

Product leadership, performance superiority, and operational excellence are three aspects of a strategic thrust on 'market mechanisms.' Appropriate product leadership for cutting-edge products should address investment aspects, product line management techniques, go-to-market strategies, and as of recent times demonstrating edge in adapting to the digital eco-systems, during the go-to- market phase. Extant literature (Tanguy et. al, 2018) address the importance of firms having a digital strategy in place, with investments in digital technology to cope with the competitive environment and the marketplace. Successful product leadership should also be accompanied by brand building efforts, resource allocation processes, and product portfolio models based competitive product strategies.

THE EXTRA OUNCE FOR THE CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCT

Aspects of skills, knowledge, and behaviours must be carefully ingrained into the organization. Marketing organizations in emerging markets such as India have been aided by Skill India initiative of the Government of India. The path of knowledge leads to a definition of transformation of data to information to knowledge and consequently to realization. This path is the successive path of the process of intelligence. Figure 1 lays out the inter-relations.

… Figure 1 here …. Path of the process of intelligence

Realization could be of many types – insight, foresight, enlightenment, solution, challenge, difficulty, awakening or alertness, perception versus reality. It is realization that leads to the development of effective deliverables of cutting-edge systems.

The path of behaviours leading to capabilities and consequently to competencies should be derived after the firm has deployed its assets in accordance with the values and norms of the organization. Employee satisfaction is as important as customer satisfaction for effective behaviours in the organization; employee dissatisfaction is avoided if the marketing strategist takes care to address issues from an examination of the ground realities as well as perceived realities - both of the organization. Tightly coupled with the path of behaviours is employee motivation, and in this regard the role of effective leadership and employee empowerment becomes significant. Leaders are effective when the firm lends itself to a smooth process of unification of minds in a bottom-up fashion and the leader acts of a champion of this unification process. Employee empowerment is a powerful concept in businesses where the service dominant logic is effective. To an extent (Grundy, 2000) some amount of behavioural analysis, agenda setting, and methods to cope with difficulty and frustration are required to generate an effective path of behaviours. Further to this, researchers (Tommasetti et. al, 2017) have explored the area of customer value co-creation behaviour in the context of service processes

with the approach of service dominant logic and infer that co-creation is a consistent and common link between the cerebral, emotional, and social elements of both consumers and suppliers involved in service delivery. The composition of customer value co-creation activities includes co-production, co-learning, and connection.

The issue then arises whether there are any other aspects of firms in the path of capability driven organizations. It is the postulate of this paper that this 'what else' is the path of excellence. This path of excellence is an unflinching commitment; commitment on business side as relevant assurances coupled with appropriate transaction specific investments; commitment on the behavioural side as a resolve of high order. The commitment can be a possible fetish for service and can even raise itself to obsession, and the commitment may be associated on the soft side with communion principles to be called 'devotion'. The path of excellence also requires a need for consistent organizational learning.

IMPLICATIONS

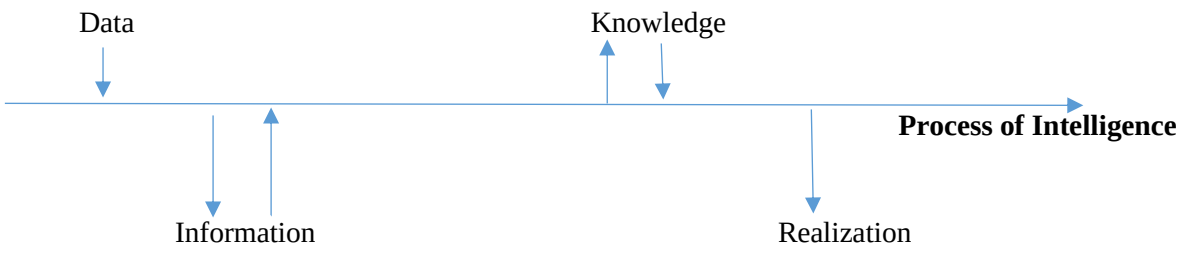
Marketing strategists in the emerging market scenario, need to accommodate the considerations of cutting-edge product strategies in their strategizing and conduct of a firm's activities. In an environment of evolving customers, evolving technologies, evolving institutional environment and reforms towards market-based processes, cutting-edge product delivers a certain amount of forward invention, that is necessary to gain a beach head in the overseas market, and beat the value propositions of advanced country multinationals in their home market. The forward invention must be significantly noticeable, acceptable to customers either in the home market or overseas and must be competitively priced in a global marketplace that is increasingly becoming value conscious. Cutting-edge products are a way and means of getting ahead in the market at low investments and hence competitively priced, especially when investments in product technology is increasing, new product development is costly and time consuming, and the technological unpredictability is becoming significant.

Table 1: Strategic Product-market Options

M(C)E → P(B)LC ↓	Introduction	Emergence	Maturity	Decline
Introduction	(1) GtMS	(2) GtMS	(3) GtMS	(4) EGS
Growth	(5) EMES	(6) GMS	(7) GS	(8) EGS
Maturity	(9) EMS	(10) MMoS	(11) MMS	(12) EGS
Decline	(13) EGS	(14) EGS	(15) EGS	(16) EGS

Note: M(C)E = Market (Category) Evolution; P(B)LC = Product (Brand) Life Cycle; GtMS = Go to Market Strategies; EGS = End Game Strategies; EMES = Early Market Entrant Strategies; GMS = Growth Market Strategies; GS = Gain Strategies; EMS = Early Maturity Strategies; MMoS = Market Modification Strategies; MMS = Mature Market Strategies

Figure 1: Path of the Process of Intelligence.



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INTUITIVE DECISION MAKING IN MARKETING

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Keywords: intuition, decision making, data, data driven decision making

Description: Through a series of qualitative interviews, this paper intends to better understand the value of intuition based decision making in an increasingly data driven world.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question This research seeks to advance a framework of the factors impacting the success of marketing practitioners engaging in intuitive decision making as opposed to data driven decision making (DDDM). Previous literature (e.g., Sleep, Hulland and Gooner 2018) has demonstrated the benefits and importance of engaging in DDDM, especially with the proliferation of volume and variety of data. Implicitly, intuitive decision making has been equated with poor quality decisions stemming from firms unable or unwilling to handle and process data (McAfee and Brynjolfsson 2012). Yet, prior literature in sales (e.g., Kardes 2006) show that intuition is often accurate, at least when it comes to observing human behavior. However, the research also points out that such intuition is accurate only when judgements are quick, unconscious and matched to prior experience (e.g., Dane and Pratt 2007) and does not distinguish among tasks. Thus, we seek to understand the value of intuition in a world of data.

Method and Data

To glean insights as to what induces DDDM within organizations, we use a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews. In total, we interviewed 13 practitioners

working at 8 companies in 7 business sectors from July 2021 till October 2021. We split the practitioners into 3 groups: Board & Business Unit Management, Marketing Management and Data Analytics & Market Research. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes, were recorded in a video-call after which a transcript was obtained. We then utilize an inductive grounded theory approach to discover themes from these semi-structured interviews of practitioners working across seven business sectors.

Summary of Findings

Our results indicate that a few themes determine the probability of success of an intuition versus data driven decision. The first is when decision makers see situations when there are simply no stark correct answers. These often involve decisions that deal with moral and ethical dimensions. Respondents also think that intuitive thinking is arguably more successful when the idea is to create something new and innovative. For instance, customers rarely envision a future 'radical' innovation making existing data of limited use. Other areas that are more subjective and harder to measure (such as uncovering emotions or unconscious goals) seem to benefit from intuitive decision making. Qualification of sales leads is believed to be more accurate when the salesperson uses intuition rather than trying to quantify lead behaviour through existing metrics. Managers also use judgement calls and intuition when faced with conflicting data. Managers often spend too much time trying to explain differences but finally reach a conclusion made on the basis of intuition and logic, justifying a trial and error approach to be more valued. Lastly, if speed of decision making is of essence, managers may be better off making intuitive calls rather than incur the opportunity cost of inaction.

Key Contributions to Academe and Practitioners

A firm looking to initiate or further develop data driven decision making (DDDM) would be well advised to focus resources on increasing the drivers of DDDM. Without the right set of resources, DDDM may be harder to achieve and the firm would continue to rely

on intuition, not reaping the rewards of DDDM. Our research however shows that managers need not be tied to data in making decisions even in high data capable companies. There are multiple scenarios where intuition based decision making might be more relevant and valuable.

From an academic perspective, this paper intends to fill a gap in the literature as to what determines the value of intuitive decision making. In line with authors such as Hayward and Preston (1998), we argue that linear rational models do not always perform satisfactorily. To the best of our knowledge, our research provides a paradigm where intuitive decision making may be more successful. This includes tasks that are ambiguous or predictive, when error costs are low and opportunity costs of inaction are high, when radical changes are sought and when affect and subjective judgements are critical.

DISRUPTIVE BUSINESS MODELS AND MARKET PERFORMANCE: THE ROLES OF TECHNOLOGICAL TURBULENCE AND ADAPTIVE MARKETING CAPABILITY

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Keywords: Disruptive Business Models, Market Performance, Technological Turbulence, Adaptive Marketing Capability, Resource-Based View

Description: This study examines the antecedents and market performance outcomes of disruptive business models on one hand and the boundary conditions of the disruptive business model–market performance relationship on the other hand.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In the ever-changing business environment, the development and implementation of disruptive business models (DBM) has become the order of the day. Leading firms are constantly searching for innovative approaches to conduct business operations in order to maximize organizational performance. Extant literature has examined the relationship between DBMs and organizational performance, however, findings are mixed as some studies find a positive linear association (Kim and Min 2015) while others find a nonlinear association (Karimi and Walter 2016). Furthermore, there is a dearth of literature examining the antecedents and boundary conditions of the DBM–Performance relationship (for exceptions see Christensen, 2006; Karimi & Walter, 2016; Kim & Min, 2015). To fill this gap in the literature, this study aims to examine the relationship between an organization's willingness to cannibalize and its ability to develop DBMs and the boundary conditions of technological turbulence and adaptive marketing capability on the DBM–Market Performance relationship.

As such, this paper aims to answer four inter-related research questions: (1) How does an organization's willingness to cannibalize contribute to an organization's ability to develop DBMs? (2) How do DBMs facilitate an organization's market performance outcomes? (3) To what extent does technological turbulence condition the DBM–Market Performance relationship? (4) To what extent does adaptive marketing capability condition the DBM–Market Performance relationship?

Method and Data

To shed light on the effect of DBM on performance, we first applied an exploratory qualitative approach based on in-depth interviews of 18 top-level managers in international firms. We then conducted a large-scale mail survey of 219 international firms with headquarters in the United Kingdom. The measurement properties of the multi-item constructs in the conceptual model were evaluated using CFA. The items were restricted to load on their preassigned factor, while the latent factors were set to correlate freely (Gerbing and Anderson 1988). Two CFA models were estimated with first and second order factors. The CFA results show overall good fit indices based on the guidelines provided by Bagozzi & Yi (2012). The Cronbach Alphas (α) and composite reliabilities (CR) scores for each multi-item construct are larger than .600 (Bagozzi, Yi, and Phillips 1991). Additionally, discriminant validity is established for each construct as the square root of the lowest average variance extracted (√AVE= .704) is higher than any inter-construct correlation between each pair of constructs (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Summary of Findings

To test the hypotheses of this study, hierarchical regression analysis was conducted and the results support our first hypothesis and indicate that willingness to cannibalize is positively related to DBM (b = .329, p = .000). Similarly, our second hypothesis is supported, and the results indicate that DBM is positively related to market performance (b = .099, p = .042). Regarding the interaction effects, hypothesis three is supported as the results (b = .124, p = .015) show that technological turbulence strengthens the positive relationship between DBM and market performance. However, hypothesis four is not supported as the results indicate that adaptive marketing capability weakens the positive relationship between DBM and market performance (b = -.109, p = .044). Due to this surprising finding, further analysis was

conducted to investigate the presence of a curvilinear moderating effect of adaptive marketing capability. However, the results do not support the presence of a curvilinear effect (b = .012, p = .729).

Statement of Key Contributions

This study extends the Resource Based View by examining the role of adaptive marketing capability on the disruptive business model – market performance relationship. This study draws insight from the RBV and the empirical data to show that disruptive business models (DBMs) are positively related to market performance and that adaptive marketing capability might not necessarily have a positive contribution to the DBM-market performance relationship. Furthermore, this study draws on the disruptive innovation theory to conceptualize DBMs and investigate its antecedents, performance outcomes and boundary conditions. We find that the organizational willingness to cannibalize has a positive relationship with the development of DBMs. In addition, our findings show that technological turbulence strengthens the positive relationship between DBM and market performance in line with the tenets of contingency theory.

An implication for managers is the importance of an enabling organizational culture to facilitate the development of DBMs. This is evident in managerial willingness to cannibalize existing products, services, or business models to adopt new and innovative disruptive business models. Managers also need to be aware of the influence of environmental forces such as technological changes as this provides a platform for the successful implementation of disruptive business models. Managers need to exercise caution in being overly responsive to the external environment as we find that adaptive marketing capability weakens the DBM-market performance relationship.

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT IN VALUE CO-CREATION: SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION

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Keywords: Customer orientation; Employee involvement in value co-creation; Job satisfaction; Job stress; Scale development

Description: A scale of employee involvement in value co-creation was developed

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question:

1. What are the evolving roles that service employees play in value co-creation?

2. How organizations can measure and engage employees in value co-creation?

Method and Data: To generate the items for the new scale, we conducted a comprehensive literature review as well as in-depth interviews with 12 frontline employees in a large port in the U.S. To purify the items and assess the reliability and validity of the construct, we conducted a survey with 298 employees in Southeastern

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China (178 usable surveys were collected). The questionnaire was sent to all 1,200 frontline employees in China (225 usable surveys) to test the hypothesized framework.

Summary of Findings: A scale of employee involvement in value co-creation was developed first, in which two dimensions including information communication and service adaptation were identified. Moreover, we use a larger sample to validate the scale and investigate the antecedents and consequences of employee involvement in value co-creation. The results show that both customer orientation and perceived organizational support are positively associated with employee involvement in value co-creation, which in turn influences employees' job satisfaction and job stress.

Key Contributions: This study addresses this research gap by introducing the concept of employee involvement in value co-creation, defined as employees' participation in the value co-creation process, including both required and voluntary behaviors that facilitate customers' value co-creation. In addition, we develop a scale of employee involvement in value co-creation. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first scale to capture employees' involvement in value co-creation in marketing literature. Given the important role played by employee involvement in customer value co-creation, the scale will benefit future research on value co-creation. The findings of the study provide implications to managers regarding where to focus their organizational resources and how to facilitate employee involvement in value co-creation.

EMPLOYEE UNIONIZATION AND TRADE CREDIT: THE MITIGATING ROLE OF MARKETING STRATEGIES

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Keywords: Employee unionization, trade credit, advertising, receivables, financial constraint, profitability, regression discontinuity

Description: Employee unionization causes a drop in the trade credit a firm receives from its suppliers, which is an unfavorable outcome for the firm. Boosting advertising or receivables attenuates the effect.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Does the unionization (vs. no unionization) of a firm's employees impact the trade credit the firm receives from its suppliers? How might marketing strategies moderate this impact.

Method and Data

We test our hypothesis empirically using as context 2,220 labor union elections conducted by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for 1,127 unique U.S. public firms during 1977-2019. Following Bradley, Kim, and Tian (2017) and Campello et al. (2017), we use the regression discontinuity design to measure the causal effect of unionization on trade credit.

Summary of Findings

Results suggest that unionization (vs. no unionization) of a firm's employees causes a 3.5% drop in the trade credit the firm receives from its suppliers relative to its total purchase costs. Further, this effect exists for only the firms that made low investments in advertising or receivables. This result supports our theory that a firm can nullify the adverse effects of employee unionization by boosting its investments in advertising or receivables. In support of our theory, we also document that employee unionization amplifies the firm's default risk, and

that the effect of unionization on trade credit exists for only the firms that have high level of financial constraint or low profitability. Supplementary analyses report that the unionization effect exists for elections that were held in non-right-to-work (non-RTW) states, supporting the logic that the effect is nullified in RTW states where employees have less incentive to unionize. Lastly, because trade credit is relevant to a firm's marketing and operations capabilities, we demonstrate that the effect exists only for firms that have low marketing capability or low operations capability.

Key Contributions

The primary contribution of our research is in showing that marketing can mitigate an effect that is seemingly unrelated to marketing. Specifically, we contribute to the theory of customer equity by documenting that the firm's investments in advertising and receivables arrest the repercussion of employee unionization on the trade credit the firm receives from its suppliers. The secondary contributions are to the disciplines of OB/HR, finance, and supply chain. More precisely, our contribution to the OB/HR literature is in documenting that employees' strategic decision of unionizing can influence decisions of the firm's other stakeholders (suppliers, in our research). This finding also adds to the theory on trade credit, which has predominantly interested academics in finance and supply chain disciplines. Because business-to-business (B2B) marketing academics have also studied the firm's exchange with its suppliers, this main effect also extends the B2B marketing's contribution to the multidisciplinary theory on buyer-supplier exchange.

Our findings are valuable to several nonacademic stakeholder groups. Employees and suppliers would benefit from knowing that a firm's employee unionization impacts a decision taken by suppliers—a firm stakeholder group that is seemingly unrelated to the labor market and

may thus receive little attention in times of labor unrest. Our findings suggest that suppliers should attend to labor turmoil at a customer firm. Investors would value knowing that employee unionization amplifies the firm's default risk and may thus consider being more watchful of employee unrest. Politicians, lawyers, and proponents and opponents of right-to-work laws can strengthen their case for why businesses benefit from supporting right-to-work laws. Lastly, we offer managers two actions that can help them nullify the adverse effect of employee unionization. They may choose to boost either their advertising investment or receivable investment before the elections occur.

References are available upon request.

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF TOP MANAGEMENT TEAM CHARACTERISTICS FOR BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATION

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Keywords: Innovation, Top Management Team, Upper Echelons, Chief Marketing Officer

Description: This study explores how an organization's top management team (TMT) affects its ability to develop and launch market breakthrough innovations, i.e., product innovations that generate superior customer value from existing technologies.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Breakthrough innovation is a key driver of firm survival and performance as well as economic and societal growth (Hauser, Tellis, and Griffin 2006; Qi Dong, McCarthy, and Schoenmakers 2017; Sorescu, Chandy, and Prabhu 2003). While multiple conceptualizations of innovation types exist (Gatignon et al. 2002), a commonly-used differentiation can be found in Chandy and Tellis' (1998) classification of incremental and breakthrough innovation: *Incremental* innovations represent marginal improvements of existing products, whereas *breakthrough* innovations constitute a substantial departure from existing products in terms of customer benefit per dollar or technology used (or both). From a marketing perspective, it is of particular interest how to generate *market breakthrough (MBT) innovations*, i.e., new products or services that offer superior customer value without necessitating a step change in the underlying technology. Building on expanding research exploring the implications of upper echelon characteristics for innovation outcomes, we address the question: Which characteristics of a firm's top management team (TMT) contribute to MBT innovation, and under what circumstances? More specifically, we investigate how the presence of a Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) affects MBT innovation outcomes, and how other TMT characteristics (CEO

insiderness and TMT firm tenure) as well as a firm's competitive environment (measured via competitive dynamism) moderate this relationship.

Method and Data

We use archival data from multiple sources to empirically test our hypotheses. TMT data is captured from firms' Form 10-Ks and complemented with information from company websites, LinkedIn profiles, and similar sources. *CMO presence* is a binary indicator capturing whether a firm employed a CMO in a given year. *CEO insiderness* refers to the CEO's time spent in the organization before being appointed as CEO. *TMT firm tenure* is defined as the average number of years TMT members have been employed in the firm. *Competitive dynamism* measures the five-year change in the Hirschman-Herfindahl Index (HHI) for the industry.

For innovation data, we gather press announcements via LexisNexis (Kashmiri, Nicol, and Arora 2017; Mudambi and Swift 2014). Announcements were triple-coded by a team of trained researchers, assessing the extent to which a product/service announcement represented an MBT (Chandy and Tellis 2000). The resulting variable *MBT innovation* thus represents an annual count of the number of innovations introduced.

Our sample comprises US manufacturing firms listed in the S&P 500 between 2008 and 2018. Our final sample consists of 1,697 firm-year observations from 222 firms. We use generalized estimating equation (GEE) regressions to test our hypotheses (Ballinger 2004; Liang and Zeger 1986).

Summary of Findings

We argue that, based on a deep understanding of customers and competitors, CMOs provide the TMT with critical insights into emerging market opportunities, enabling MBT innovation. In line with this reasoning, preliminary results show a significant and positive relationship between CMO presence and MBT innovation. Further, we hypothesize that CEO insiderness and higher TMT firm tenure limit CMOs' managerial discretion and thus attenuate this positive effect. Contrastingly, we argue that strong competitive dynamism increases CMOs' managerial discretion, in turn strengthening the hypothesized main effect. Our analyses support our argumentation, as we find significant and directionally consistent interaction terms for CEO insiderness, TMT firm tenure, and competitive dynamism.

Taken together, these findings show that a firm's TMT has a substantial impact on the number of MBT innovations introduced to the market. More specifically, they highlight the advantageousness of having a CMO position in the TMT, allowing an organization to leverage an in-depth understanding of customer needs and competitive landscapes to generate meaningful innovation even in the absence of technological step changes. In addition, our findings underscore that firms' organizational as well as environmental context affect CMOs' efficacy by limiting or extending their managerial discretion.

Key Contributions

With this research, we make several important theoretical contributions: First, our findings contribute to the nascent CMO literature (You et al. 2020) by showing that CMOs play a decisive role in developing superior offerings even without substantial technological advancements. Importantly, we thereby illuminate MBT innovation as a causal pathway for CMOs' positive impact on organizational performance (e.g., Germann, Ebbes, and Grewal 2015). Second, our study adds to research concerned with the implications of CEO insiderness

for organizational rigidity and strategic change (e.g., Zhu, Hu, and Shen 2020), extending earlier findings by studying insiderness in an innovation context. Third, we add to the broader upper echelons literature investigating the CMO-TMT interface, highlighting important organizational boundary conditions for the advantageousness of CMOs. Lastly, our research integrates a contingency view with the notion of managerial discretion. We contribute to both research streams by showing that the performance of functional executives depends on organizational and environmental context variables that can restrict or enhance an executive's discretion.

For practitioners, our findings provide vital guidance for executive selection and succession decisions. In addition, they can help firms understand mismatches regarding the human capital present in their leadership team.

References are available upon request.

HOW AND WHY DO A FIRM'S PRODUCT RECALLS IMPACT ITS CREDIT SALES AND CREDIT PURCHASES?

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Keywords: Product quality, trade credit, pricing power, receivables, payables, recalls

Description: A firm's product recalls increase its trade credit with suppliers and customers.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

How and why do a firm's product recalls impact its credit sales and credit purchases?

Method and Data

We answer our research question in the empirical context of U.S. automotive industry, sampling 671 manufacturer-year observations, covering 6,381 recalls initiated by 33 public automotive manufacturers in the United States between 1966 and 2020. We model the phenomenon by estimating regressions on our data.

Summary of Findings

We find that, on average, each additional recall by an automotive firm in a year increases by 5.7% (1.12%) the proportion of sales (purchases) that the firm makes on credit in the following year.

First, we reason that the firm's recalls raises customers' concerns about the quality of the firm's products. The heightened need to signal high-quality causes the firm to sell more on credit. Similarly, low perceived quality damages the firm's sales and thus constrains the firm on cash, causing it to purchase more on credit. Should this "quality signal mechanism" be true, the firm's advertising intensity—acting as a signal of quality—can mitigate the perception that the firm's products are low quality. Similarly, the firm's research and development (R&D) intensity

would signal the firm's commitment toward high quality, weakening the low-quality perception. Results broadly support our arguments. More precisely, we find that if a firm's advertising intensity is 10% more than the industry average, the positive effects of recalls on credit sales (credit purchases) weakens by a statistically significant 3.17% (2.58%). If the firm's R&D intensity is 10% more than the industry average, the positive effect of recalls on credit sales weakens by a statistically significant 3.26%, while their effect on credit purchases weakens by a statistically *insignificant* 1.77%.

Second, we posit that a firm's recalls damage its ability to price products above marginal costs—that is, *pricing power*. Diminished pricing power hurts the firm's ability to sell on cash, forcing it to sell more on credit. Moreover, lower power decreases the suppliers' willingness to sell to the firm on credit, thus decreasing the firm's credit purchases. A mediation model supports this "pricing power mechanism." Specifically, we find that each recall by a firm suppresses the firm' purchasing power by .1%, which in turn *increases* the firm's credit sales by about .5% and *decreases* its credit purchases by .17%. Purchasing power explains 7.63% of the total effect of recalls on credit sales and 14% of the total effect on credit purchases.

Key Contributions

Our foremost contribution to marketing theory is in positioning credit sales/purchases as *marketing* decisions. While marketing academics had framed (trade) "credit management as a marketing function" (Bartels 1964, p. 59), these two marketing decisions received from marketing academics negligible attention until recently (Astvansh and Jindal 2022; Frennea, Han, and Mittal 2019). In showing how and why product quality—a foundational marketing asset—impacts the firm's credit decisions on both sides of its value chain, we help the marketing discipline join the multidisciplinary discourse of management of trade credit.

Further, in showing that a dip in a firm's product quality (i.e., product recalls) can raise the firm's credit sales and credit purchases, we offer valuable evidence to product quality managers and corporate finance managers in B2B firms. Managers would value in the evidence that their investments in advertising and R&D can mitigate the effects of recalls on credit sales/purchases. Similarly, our research offers pricing managers the novel finding that the quality of their firms' products impacts the firm's pricing power, which in turn asymmetrically impacts its credit sales and credit purchases. Lastly, we built seven machine learning models to predict credit sales/purchases. Our aim was to check whether including recalls a feature to predict credit sales/purchases boosts the prediction accuracy and how important is recalls relative to other models. Managers who care about prediction would find this supplementary analysis useful.

References are available upon request.

LOCAL EMBEDDEDNESS:

HOW BRANDS BECOME PART OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

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Keywords: Local brands, embeddedness, small brands, grounded theory

Description: Brands become embedded in the local community by crafting a local identity, being involved in local affairs, and emphasizing local economic inputs which leads to consumer-brand intimacy.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is a local brand? How do local brands become embedded and respected members of their community? This question is becoming increasingly important to brands of variable sizes as consumers respond to globalist threats to their communities with a re-emphasis on local consumption. Few papers have examined what makes consumers prefer local brands or otherwise rooted to the community (Eichinger et al. 2021; Thompson and Arsel 2004). The present paper develops the novel construct of brand local embeddedness– the degree to which a brand is an integrated part of the local community. Furthermore, the present paper endeavors to uncover what makes a brand local and how brands can benefit from their local embeddedness.

METHOD AND DATA

Using grounded theory approaches, we recruited 30 participants to respond with their perceptions of local brands and then write essays describing what makes a brand part of a local community. In analyzing the responses, we extracted key words and phrases that exemplified our construct and bucketed common categories together to uncover three core layers of local embeddedness. These responses will serve as the basis for our future methodological approaches, in which we will develop a scale to determine the relative embeddedness of various brands and their market advantages.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Three prominent themes emerged from literature and research. Local embeddedness is defined by three dimensions– inputs, involvement, and identity. These dimensions describe respectively what layer in community the brand is embedded in from the most general to the most individual. The first, local inputs, pertains to how embedded a brand is in the local economy (and thereby keeping revenues local) though is reliance on local sourcing, local employment, and local ownership/management. The second, local involvement, pertains to how embedded a brand is in the local social fabric through participation in local events or organizations such as youth-team sponsorships or local charity donations. The third, local identity, describes how some local brands become embedded into the identity of a community and its citizens such that the brand comes to represent the community's (and its individual member') values and personality. Taken together, these three layers of embeddedness are predicted to increase consumer-brand intimacy behaviors.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

We contribute to the literature by being the first to systematically investigate how local brands become embedded into the various economic and social networks of a community. Brand local embeddedness is becoming increasingly important for brands as “shop local” movements gain steam, yet local branding has received scant attention in the literature. Our research thus addresses a major gap in marketing research and brand management providing important implications to research and practice. This is meaningful given that many local brands can stand to gain from becoming more local embedded (Dahl and Sorenson 2009; Martynovich 2017) and many global brands too are interested in local communities and markets (Thompson and Arsel 2004).

References available upon request.

Presentation 1

Regulatory Inspections: Marketing Determinants and Consequences

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Regulators often inspect a firm and its offerings. While one may assume that the regulatory inspections are independent of the firm's marketing, we demonstrate otherwise. Specifically, we empirically test whether marketing actions (lobbying and advertising) and assets (brand equity and brand reliability) influence the number of investigations opened by the U.S. automobile safety regulator against car brands. Using the census of 559 product safety investigations opened by the regulator against 34 car brands from July 2007 to October 2019, we find that lobbying and advertising suppress, brand equity amplifies, and lastly, brand reliability diminishes the number of investigations and the time to investigation. A sales response model indicates that these investigations hurt the brand's sales volume. Lastly, an event study documents that the opening of a severe (but not that of a nonsevere) investigation damages substantially the manufacturer's stock return. The findings showcase marketing's impact on outcomes in a firm's nonproduct market environment. We provide managers with marketing levers to influence regulatory inspections and help them know the consequences thereof in the product and financial markets.

Presentation 2

A Bump in the Road or a Pothole: Do Proactivity and CSR Matter within a Voluntary Recall Strategy?

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Even though product recalls happen more frequently than ever, prior research shows conflicting evidence as to whether voluntary/proactive recalls are beneficial or harmful to the firm. Some studies show that investors penalize proactive recalls (e.g., Chen et al. 2009), while others demonstrate recall delays result in higher penalties (e.g., Eilert et al. 2017; Zhao et al. 2013). Yet, prior research has not examined whether, within the context of voluntary recalls, the time to recall (i.e., proactivity) matters. In addition, firms are being held more accountable by their stakeholders. Firms can demonstrate accountability through proactive and responsible actions. Firms show accountability through not only voluntary and proactive recalls but also through corporate social responsibility (CSR). Prior literature has shown that CSR initiatives increase firm resources by responding to the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders (Mishra and Modi 2016). What we do not yet know is how CSR activities impact firm value within voluntary and proactive recalls. Leveraging stakeholder theory and the resource-based view of the firm, we answer the following within a voluntary recall context: (1) "Does time to recall impact firm value?" and (2) "How does CSR influence the relationship between time to recall and firm value?" Utilizing data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and CSRHub, we examine voluntary automotive recalls between 2009 and 2019. Using the event study methodology, our models account for the endogeneity of recall strategy and unobserved firm effects. The results indicate that within the context of voluntary recalls, the time to recall has a positive impact on firm value. This effect is strengthened for community CSR and

weakened for employee and environmental CSR. So, firms may find greater benefit from investments in community CSR when pursuing a voluntary recall strategy and recalling quickly (i.e., proactive). As such, this suggests that managers may benefit by making their community CSR initiatives salient when announcing a voluntary and proactive recall to leverage this positive relationship. However, we caution managers against making their employee and environmental CSR initiatives salient around the time of a voluntary recall announcement. Our study adds to the recall literature with additional evidence that a voluntary strategy is beneficial to firm value. More importantly, we show that time to recall matters within a voluntary recall context. Lastly, we build on prior research by showing boundary conditions that firms can use to enhance this effect.

Presentation 3

User-Generated Services in Online Communities

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Felipe Thomaz, Associate Professor of Marketing, University of Oxford
Sara Loughran Dommer, Assistant Professor of Marketing, The Pennsylvania State University

In seeking remedies following product or service failures, consumers often visit online communities to collaborate on solutions with like-minded others, a form of customer engagement termed user-generated service (UGSE). Online communities provide firms with an opportunity to view ongoing crises in real-time and a vehicle to involve themselves in service recovery. We develop a conceptual framework to test the impact of firm involvement in these communities on UGSE. We gather data on four firms across firm-owned and firm-unowned online communities to analyze over 59,000 service-seeking posts from 2013 to 2017. The results show that a firm's ownership of the platform in which the community exists negatively moderates the impact of customer sentiment, anger, and anxiety on UGSE volume. Additionally, firm employees' participation in the UGSE negatively moderates the impact of customer anxiety on engagement. We use an experiment to demonstrate that the negative impact of firm platform ownership extends beyond service-related engagement. These findings can help marketers tasked with fostering customer engagement and mitigating online brand crises consider the role firms should play in communities comprised of service-seeking customers.

Presentation 4

Increasing Recall Effectiveness for Consumer Products

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Firms struggle to respond to product recalls and achieve high recall effectiveness. In four studies, we examine the impact of firms' remedy choice and the interaction with firm reputation, danger to use the product, and communication effort on recall effectiveness of consumer products. In study 1 (secondary data), we demonstrate that recall effectiveness is higher if firms offer full (vs. partial) remedy, for firms with lower (vs. higher) reputation, if the product is more (vs. less) dangerous to use, and if the firm employs high (vs. low) communication efforts. Importantly, we find evidence that firm reputation, danger to use the product, and the firm's communication effort each interact with remedy. In the three subsequent experiments, we test the findings of the secondary data in a causal setting, focus our analyses on the interactions of remedy with firm reputation (study 2), danger to use the product (study 3), and firms' communication efforts (study 4), and derive guidelines on how to improve product recall effectiveness for consumer products.

* Denotes presenter

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

News Advertising Elasticities in a Hyper Partisan Political Context

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Research Question

Many advertisers avoid news media. News media executives warn that losing this advertising revenue impairs their ability to provide quality coverage. The present research offers an empirical examination of advertising elasticities for news and non-news content during the months surrounding the 2016 election in order to inform the advertising industry of the performance consequences of avoiding news media and to inform the news media how to best serve advertisers. The authors propose that viewers seeking to be informed, rather than distracted, select news, and this information seeking mental state is more conducive to considering advertisements, especially from a partisan aligned source, but it is shattered by very negative news (i.e., preferred candidate losing an election). Analysis of television viewership data from Nielsen merged with Google Search Trends reveals elasticities consistent with these propositions, which suggests that advertisers have performance motivations to support news media but their news media partners should avoid sensationalizing negative news. An

experiment confirms that a trusted news provider serves advertisers best with less sensationally negative content.

Method And Data

Study 1 examines the advertising elasticities for (1) news vs non-news, (2) partisan vs non- partisan news, and (3) negative vs positive news by examining the performance of television ads across all channels using a particular exogenous shock, the 2016 Presidential Election, as a determinant of news valence for viewers of different cable news channels. Study 2 then uses experimental methods to extend the findings from the first study across a wider range of news content in an online news article format and demonstrate that the effect is not specific to one political party or one ad format. While brand managers express concerns about ad performance on news content, the present studies address the concern by measuring ad elasticities using Google Trends data to observe relative Google search behavior for brands who advertised on TV across the observed time period as the performance outcome in Study 1 and recall of the advertised brand in Study 2.

Summary of Findings

Across two studies we find that (1) ads perform better on news, (2) performance is especially strong from trusted (i.e., partisan aligned) news sources, but (3) the news advertising premium is delicate in that it is erased when the news content is especially negative. We find that the news advertising premium is moderated by the news source and content valence. These effects are identified across two mediums, television and digital news, using two different measures of ad performance, a variety of news topics, and news content viewed as negative by conservative and democrat partisans. Importantly, the results add to the context effect literature

by showing evidence consistent with our theorizing that a primary source of context effects are attributable to media consumers selecting particular content which is reflective of an underlying desire to consumer (or escape) new information.

Statement of Key Contributions

Access to reliable and accurate information is vital during periods of disruption and uncertainty. The advertising industry's risk averse trend of pulling advertisements from news content opposes news publishers' ability to monetize fact-based journalism. By challenging existing notions that presume advertising near news content is suboptimal for brands, at least in terms of advertising performance, this research has implications for brands, news media, and society.

This research contributes to the literature on media, source, and content-related context effects in two ways. First, it examines source, content, and individual factors, and their interactions, within the context of news media to challenge practitioners' current news avoidance precaution. Second, this research examines a broader category of context effects related to how motives driving media selection impact ad performance.

This research has implications for news media publishers and advertisers. For news publishers, to maintain the news ad elasticity premium they must establish a reputation based on trust and reliability. Negative news content does impair the news premium. For the advertising industry, this research challenges current trends which limit ads from appearing along news content. Media and advertising partners can create mutually beneficial solutions for both brands and news media.

OPTIMAL OPERATIONAL POLICY IN DUOPOLY MARKET UNDER COST UNCERTAINTY

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Keywords: duopoly**,** optimal operational policy, cost uncertainty, Bayesian-Nash equilibrium, optimal marginal cost, dynamic markets

Description: This paper studies the optimal marketing strategy of a large firm in terms of effort in a duopoly market under cost uncertainty (i.e. when the firm is faced with a rival whose cost structure the firm is unaware of) and then the optimal marginal cost of marketing activities of the firm to minimize its cost of operations within a time frame.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Duopoly markets (e.g. Intel and AMD, Airbus and Boeing, MasterCard and Visa, Pepsi and Coca Cola, Android and IOS) are characterized by a large firm engaged in intense competition with a rival for a winning or losing payoff in a marketing activity while expending effort and also being affected by spillover effects from the rival. Past research in marketing has addressed optimal pricing strategy or optimal advertising strategy in such markets (e.g. Moorthy (1988), Chintagunta and Rao (1996), Bass et al (2005)). But there is few (if any) research on the optimal operational policy in terms of effort (man-hours) or the optimal marginal cost of operations in duopoly markets. Most papers take the marginal cost of operations for the firm as given and constant. This may not be the case during times of cost uncertainty when the economy is characterized by supply chain bottlenecks, geo-political tensions, fluctuating oil prices, and uncertainty caused by pandemics, wars, or extreme weather conditions. Firms are then looking to minimize their cost of operations and optimally plan their manpower requirements. Given the productivity of the firm, the incentive to compete and exert positive effort and avoid free riding, what is the firm's optimal policy in terms of effort and optimal marginal cost of operations in duopoly markets? How do these change with the parameters of the cost distribution under cost uncertainty in both static and dynamic markets?

Method and Data

The paper uses game theory (Bayesian Nash Equilibrium concept) for the static model and optimal control theory for the dynamic model. Using reasonable guess for the cost function and narrowing down the alternatives, it derives approximate formula for the optimal effort of the firm

in man-hours and optimal marginal cost of operations necessary to minimize the firm's cost of operations within a timeframe in a duopoly market under cost uncertainty.

Summary of Findings

The paper finds that when the payoff is uncertain, the optimum effort required is proportional to the average of the payoff's upper and lower limits. The spillover effect increases the optimum effort required. If payoffs are known with certainty, the spillover effect disappears.

When the lower limit of the cost distribution of the rival firm is zero (or non-zero), the optimum effort of the focal firm is directly proportional to the difference between the winning and losing payoffs and the upper limit of the cost distribution (and the lower limit for the non-zero case) and inversely proportional to the firm's own cost and a constant (a function of the different probability draws of cost and the ratio of the lower and upper limit of the cost distribution) with a defined range.

The optimal marginal cost of operations of the focal firm at any time in a dynamic market with uncertainty and a given discount rate is then derived for the case when the lower limit of the cost distribution is zero and for the case when the lower limit is non zero (but with small difference between the winning and losing payoffs and the lower limit of the cost distribution being greater than half of the upper limit). For both these cases, the marginal cost is found to increases as the upper limit of the cost distribution of the rival firm increases (twice the value in the second case compared to the first), and as the period under consideration increases. It decreases with the increase in the discount rate, an increase in the constant, and an increase in the ratio of the difference between the winning and losing payoff and the expected rate at which the net payoff w.r.t. cost increases (an exogenous variable affecting payoffs from one period to the next).

Uncertainty in the environment raises the expected rate at which the net payoff w.r.t. cost increases which raises the firm's cost which is passed on as increased prices to consumers. Since the marginal cost decreases with the increase in the discount rate, banks can increase the discount rate which decreases cost and hence prices charged to consumers.

Key Contributions

The paper shows how the distributional aspects of cost affect the optimal effort and optimal marginal cost of operations for firms under uncertainty and competition. Using reasonable guess for the cost function, it derives approximate formula for optimum effort and optimum marginal cost for a firm in a duopoly market (based on a constant with a defined range) thus providing managers with a range of values to limit their operations.

The analysis reveals that as the cost distribution limits shifts upwards, the stakes become higher, and consequently the effort required for a larger market share and the optimal marginal cost of operations also becomes higher. The formulas for effort in man-hours help firms in optimal manpower planning. The formulas for marginal cost of operation help managers target benchmarks leading to cost control. Moreover, the formulas are not context specific but overarching and can be applied to any marketing activity. Future research would study optimal operational policy of firms in oligopoly markets.

MOTIVATION, CAPABILITIES, RESOURCES, STRATEGY, AND DISPOSTION (MCRSD): A FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLICATION PRODUCTIVITY IN MARKETING

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Keywords: Strategy, Resource Based View, Cumulative Advantage Theory, Motivation, Research Productivity

Description: A study of the factors that lead to publication productivity in the leading academic marketing journals.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION. This research aims to explain and predict what factors drive marketing publication performance through development of a comprehensive predictive framework termed MCRSD (Motivation, Capabilities, Resources, Strategy, and Disposition) which entails: individual Motivation, Capabilities associated with an author's education, Resources associated with the universities where they serve as faculty, skill-building Strategy, and Disposition towards perseverance and feedback during the review process.

METHOD AND DATA. A qualitative study and two quantitative studies test and validate this framework to predict publication productivity in top marketing journals. The multi-method research is triangulated via a qualitative pilot study of highly productive scholars, a survey of marketing faculty, and an analysis of an original dataset of all faculty who have published in a top four marketing journal since 2009.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS. With gender as a control variable, findings show that institutional resources (*Faculty Academic Affiliation*) and disposition (*Perseverance* and *Following up on Feedback*) significantly impact publishing in a top four marketing journal. Findings also confirm that time constraints due to *Teaching* significantly reduce publication productivity.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS. The framework and findings contribute to the marketing literature on productivity and cumulative advantage theory.

Prioritizing values to be provided to online shoppers during website design and upgrade

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Abstract

Using a grounded theory approach, our previous study (Kakar, 2020) identified six types of values sought by online shoppers. This study generated a lot of interest when it was presented at a premier conference. There were many requests for follow-up studies. In this study we address one of the requests to determine which among these values should managers of online shopping websites focus to make them more attractive for shoppers and enhance their shopping intention. To find out we perform an Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) a well-established technique based on the current importance of the value attribute to the shopper and its current performance level. The findings of the study show that online shopping websites should focus on enchaining abstract values such as Hedonic, Social and Epistemic values to enhance shoppers' shopping intention from their website.

Statement of Contribution

Using IPA analysis and validating the findings using Penalty Reward Contrast analysis (PRCA) we identify which value attributes should be prioritized to enhance shopper' buying intention from the website. We found that of the six values sought by online shoppers the priority order is Hedonic Value > Social Value > Epistemic Value > Utilitarian value > Quality Value > Psychological Safety (comfort value). This finding will help managers of shopping to determine how they should economically design and upgrade their website value features to increase shoppers' buying intention from their websites for maximum return on investment.

Introduction

In our previous study presented at a top conference (Kakar, 2020) we identified the following values (see Table 1) sought by online shoppers. However, during presentation of the study the audience asked which of the six values website managers should focus on to increase shoppers' shopping intention from their website. We used the well stashed IPA analysis to find out

Items	Description
	Utilitarian Value (UV)
UV1	I save money when I shop at this website
UV2	The shipping charges are reasonable
UV3	My purchases are done cheaper at this shopping site than if I had made them elsewhere
UV4	I was able to get everything I needed at one stop
UV5	I was able to shop at this site without disruptions and delays

UV6	My order was delivered accurately
	Hedonic Value (HV)
HV1	I enjoy shopping at this site, not just because I am able to get my purchases done
HV2	I enjoy browsing this website even when I have no intention of buying anything
HV3	Shopping on this website is fun
HV4	In my opinion, shopping at this site is a pleasant way to spend leisure time
HV5	While shopping at this site, I feel happy
HV6	The website images are aesthetically pleasing
	Social Value (SV)
SV1	Patronizing this shopping site fits the impression that I want to give to others
SV2	I am eager to tell my friends/acquaintances about this shopping site
SV3	I feel that I belong to the group of shoppers who shop at this site
SV4	I found this shopping site to be consistent with my style
SV5	I felt like a smart shopper by shopping at this site
SV6	This shopping site gave me something that is personally important or pleasing for me
	Psychological Safety (PS)
PS1	I know if I made a mistake in the order the online retailer would offer me a second
PS2	I have concerns about cybersecurity at this website R
PS3	The website has a friendly return policy
PS4	When I buy at this site, I am guaranteed the best possible deal
PS5	I have concerns about identity theft when shopping online R
PS6	I have concerns about counterfeit goods when shopping online R
PS7	I trust this website
PS8	I feel assured about timely deliveries
PS9	If I have a question before placing the order, I get honest answers quickly
	Epistemic Value (EV)
EV1	I can examine the product almost as if I am shopping in a brick and mortar store
EV2	There is always something new and exciting when I browse this website
EV3	It is as if I am embarking on a great adventure when I visit this website
	Quality Value (QV)
QV1	The website is easy to locate
QV2	I can easily check my order status
QV3	The website is legible
QV4	I was able to find the website quickly
QV5	The web pages loaded quickly
QV6	It was easy to navigate the website
QV7	The website is well-organized
	Shopping Intention (SI)
SI1	If asked, I will recommend others to use this online shopping website
SI2	If I want to buy anything, I first consider this online shopping website
SI3	I can hardly consider changing to other shopping websites
SI4	I will continue to purchase frequently from this shopping website in future

Table 1. Final List of Items

Literature Review

IPA (importance–performance analysis)

Importance–performance analysis analyses quality attributes on two dimensions: their performance level and their importance to the customer. Evaluations of attributes on these two dimensions are then combined into a matrix that allows a firm to identify key drivers of satisfaction, to formulate improvement priorities, and to find areas of possible overkill and areas of ‘‘acceptable’’ disadvantages (Matzler, Bailom, Hinterhuber, Renzl and Pichler, 2004, Kakar, 2012ab, Kakar, 2014, Kakar, 2015abc, Kakar, 2016, Kakar, 2017, Kakar, 2018, Kakar, 2019)) (see Figure 1).

The importance-performance grid is constructed by plotting an attribute based on their current performance and their importance to the user. The importance-performance axes intersect at mean importance and mean performance. Attributes plotted in each of these quadrants are interpreted as follows:

A. Concentrate here. Users feel that the attribute is very important but indicate low satisfaction with performance.

B. Keep up with the good work. Users value this attribute and are pleased with its performance

C. Low priority. The product is rated low on this attribute, but users do not perceive it to be important.

D. Possible overkill. The product is perceived to be high in performance with respect to this attribute, but the user attaches only a small importance to it.

Extremely Important

A. Concentrate Here Fair Performance	B. Keep up the Good Work Excellent Performance
C. Low Priority	D. Possible Overkill

Slightly Important

Figure 1. Importance-Performance Analysis

In practice, IPA is considered a simple but effective tool (e.g., Hansen & Bush, 1999; Kakar and Kakar, 2019). It is potentially helpful in deciding how to best allocate scarce resources to maximize customer outcomes.

Method

Study setting

The same 222 subjects who participated in the Kakar (2020) previous study (Round 1) provided data in this Round 2 of the study.

Procedure and controls

The survey instrument was designed to minimize compounding and order effects. If the respondent is asked in one question about the importance of an attribute and in the next question about his performance with that attribute, his answer to the first may influence his response to the second. By grouping all the importance questions in one section and all performance questions in a later section, a temporal separation is created. Past research demonstrates that the temporal separation between measures reduces potential effects due to common method variance (Sharma et al., 2009). A sample question for performance of an item in the usability attribute scale included: "I save money when I shop at this website" anchored at 9 = extremely and 1 = not at all. A sample question for importance of the corresponding item was: "how important is it to be able to save money when I shop at this website" Anchored at 9 = critical and 1 = not at all. The shoppers' shopping intention from the website was measured using the construct items (see Table 1) anchored at 9=extremely and 1= not at all.

Method of analyses

To establish reliability and validity of the measures used in the study factor analysis was performed and internal reliabilities and correlation matrix of the measures were examined. After establishing the reliability and validity of the measures (Table 2) we plotted Figure 2 of the attribute importance and performance rating of the shoppers based on the IPA (see literature review section).

Results and Analysis

The factor analysis was conducted for dimension reduction on the data pertaining to all the 6 measurement scales and Online Shopping Intention scale. The results of varimax rotation show that the 6 factors extracted represented each of the 6 scales. All items of a scale loaded on the respective factors with no significant (> .40) cross loading between factors. We then measured the internal reliabilities of the scales used in the study. As can be seen from the Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha for all measures is greater than .70.

Name of the scale	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Utilitarian Value	.956	5
Quality Value	.941	4
Social Value	.889	4
Epistemic Value	.862	5
Hedonic Value	.884	4
Psychological Safety	.785	3

Table 2. Internal reliability of scales

From Figure 2 we can see that the Utilitarian Value, Quality Value and Psychological safety were shown in Quadrant B Keep up the good work because even though importance was very high there was no significant difference between importance and performance. In fact, the performance of

Psychological Safety was much higher than its importance and hence increase in performance of Psychological Safety is not expected to enhance the shopping intention of online shoppers. Abstract values such as Hedonic value and Social value have high importance but low performance and were assigned to Quadrant A Concentrate here. There is difference between performance and importance of epistemic value but the difference is much narrower compared to hedonic and socials values and hence was assigned quadrant C Low priority. None of the value attributes were assigned to Quadrant C Possible Overkill.

Name of the scale	**Importance**	**Standard Deviation**	**Performance**	**Standard Deviation**	**Difference**
Utilitarian Value	7.12	0.31	6.98	0.41	0.14
Quality Value	7.32	0.35	6.73	0,29	0.59
Social Value	6.17	0.67	3.88	0.56	2.29***
Epistemic Value	4.32	0.77	3.41	0.65	0.91*
Hedonic Value	6.84	0.62	4.21	0.71	2.63***
Psychological Safety	5.78	0.21	7.11	0.23	-1.67**

Table 3. Users' importance-performance ratings

Extremely Important

A. Concentrate Here • Hedonic Value • Social Value Fair	• Keep up the Good Work • Utilitarian Value • Quality Value • Psychological Safety Excellent
Performance B. Low Priority • Epistemic Value	Performance C. Possible Overkill

Slightly Important

Figure 2. IPA for Task Management Software attributes

To test the validity of these findings and expectations from IPA we examine how the shopping intention would be enhanced at low and high performance of these value attributes using PRCA. The results of this analysis and ranking order shown in Tables 4 and 5 below were found to be consistent with findings shown on Figure 2.

As we can see from Table 4 high Hedonic and Social Value had a positive impact on Shopping Intention while Low Hedonic and Social Value had a negative impact on Shopping Intention, thereby consistent with IPA analysis suggestion of concentrating on these values. The shopping intention at high Epistemic value was high at high levels and slightly low at low levels but both impacts were lower than those of Hedonic and Social Value and hence was consistent with low priority recommendation of IPA analysis. As expected, high Psychological Safety did not positively impact Shopping Intention significantly although low Psychological safety impacted Shopping Intention negatively. Increasing Utilitarian Value and Quality Value impacted Shopping Intention positively (although not to the quantum of Hedonic and social value) and decreasing Utilitarian value and Quality Value impacted Shopping Intention negatively, but the negative impact was much higher than the positive impact. Thus, the results of PRCA (Table 4 and 5) were consistent with IPA analysis suggestion for Utilitarian Value, Quality Value and Psychological Safety for Keeping up the good work by not allowing these values to decline.

Name of the Value	**Shopping Intention at High Value**	**Shopping Intention at Low Value**
Hedonic Value	0.337**	-0.161**
Social Value	0.267**	-0.135**
Epistemic Value	0.102*	-0.93*
Utilitarian Value	0.087*	-0.208***
Quality Value	0.078*	-0.212*
Psychological Safety	0.019	-0.073*

Table 4. Results of PRCA analysis of high and low values of Attribute on Shopping Intention

Name of the scale	**Ranks at High Level**	**Ranks at Low Level**
Hedonic Value	1	3
Social Value	2	4
Epistemic Value	3	5
Utilitarian Value	4	1
Quality Value	5	2
Psychological Safety	6	6

Table 5. Ranking of regression coefficients of PRCA

Discussion

The results have face validity. Online Shoppers also buy products from brick-and-mortar stores. Online websites have been known to provide higher Utilitarian Value to shoppers than physical stores but are known to derive higher hedonic and social value from physical stores. This is understandable because, although online store can also create atmospherics through aesthetically chosen colors, product display and music, these pleasures are more keenly experienced in instore shopping. Products in instore shopping outlets can be physically examined. Further the multi-sensory experiences such as sights, smells and taste can be experienced directly by the consumer in person in in-store shopping. These experiences at least yet cannot be fully replicated in online shopping. Online shopping is currently restricted to just of the two of five senses. Therefore, it is natural for online shoppers to crave these values from the comfort of their homes.

Online shopping websites not only compete with themselves for business but also with physical stores (Kakar and Kakar, 2020abcdef. Thus, enhancing abstract values such as hedonic, social and epistemic values will make them more competitive. Onsite websites using the latest emerging technologies can enhance these abstract values by allowing people to indulge in their fantasies and providing social presence, Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence can help in making online shopping an enjoyable and socially rewarding experience than instore shopping. Online shopping can be multi-sensory and real-life like experience through the use of aesthetically pleasing colors, images, videos and music, and simulation of presence of crowds. Live chats with trained sales assistants and collaborative online shopping through the use of co-browsing technologies can provide a socially engaging environment to people starved of social contact on online websites.

Conclusion

In this study, the IPA analysis provides useful insights for business mangers of online shopping websites. Enhancing features of shopping websites is expensive. IPA provides a method of determining how features should be prioritized given the limited resources to enhance online shopper buying intention and get maximum return on investment. The study suggests that of the six values sought by online shoppers the priority order to increase shopping intention of online shoppers is to enhance Hedonic Value > Social Value > Epistemic Value > Utilitarian value > Quality Value > Psychological Safety (comfort value). These findings of the study, as discussed, has face validity and were also corroborated by results of PRCA. The findings will help online shopping websites to not only strategically compete with other online shopping websites but also with brick-and-mortar stores for retail business.

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PROMOTING ONLINE REVIEW SHARING IN B2B CONTEXT: THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER-INITIATED CONTACTS, RELATIONSHIP DURATION, FREE-TIERED PRICING, AND COMPETITION

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Keywords: B2B, online reviews, competition, customer-initiated contacts, free-tiered pricing, relationship duration

Description: In this large-scale empirical study, we highlight the importance of online reviews and identify their drivers in the B2B context.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Research on online reviews has primarily focused on the context of business to consumer (B2C), but there is a dearth of research on the role of online reviews in the context of business to business (B2B) (Spina et al. 2013). This is surprising as, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the value of global B2B e-commerce sales was about $21 trillion in 2018 - almost five times that of B2C e-commerce sales. Furthermore, B2B buyers have always considered diverse information sources during the buying process (Moriarty and Spekman 1984), and many studies suggest that external personal sources of information are most

valued by B2B buyers (Alejandro et al. 2010). Online reviews provide B2B buyers with different points of view and help them identify aspects that have not been previously considered, thus, helping them make better decisions (Steward, Narus, and Roehm 2018). Unfortunately, fruitful findings from the existing literature (primarily based on B2C context) have limited applications in the B2B contexts because of the distinctive differences between B2B buyers and B2C consumers (Swani, Brown, and Milne 2014). Thus, in this study, we focus on identifying the drivers of online reviews, examining how those effects vary in different situations, and investigating the consequence of online review sharing in B2B context.

Method and Data

The data set is offered to us by an industry partner who develops 17 e-commerce website applications (apps) to sell on a B2B e-commerce platform's app store. The data set contains 2.6 million observations across seven years from more than two hundred thousand online e-commerce website owners. These owners develop their e-commerce websites using an open-source platform and have options to buy and install apps through the platform's app store, which has over 5000 apps from different app developers. We collect information on online reviews on this app store and match them with the provided transactional data.

Our dependent variable, whether a merchant provides an online review, is dichotomous. Thus, we use a binary logistic regression approach. However, a basic logistic regression is not invariant to the relative frequency of events in the data, producing biased logit coefficients that underestimate rare events (King and Zeng 2001). This is particularly relevant to our situation because the number of cases in which merchants provide online reviews is much smaller than that of cases in which merchants do not. Hence, we run an alternative complementary log-log model to address the rare event issue (Greene 2003).

Summary of Findings

Our findings show that B2B buyers' online review sharing behaviors are driven by relationship duration, customer-initiated contacts (CICs), free-tiered pricing, and competition. Specifically, the relationship duration has a U-shaped effect on online review sharing, meaning buyers are more likely to share online reviews either at the very early or at the very late stage of the relationship with the seller. Opposite to the effect of relationship duration, the number of customer-initiated contacts has an inverted U-shaped effect on online review sharing, meaning that an increase in the number of CICs increases the online review sharing behavior, but only up to a point. After that point, the greater number of CICs, the less likely buyers will share online reviews. Competition among buyers inhibits them from sharing online reviews, and offering free-tiered pricing promotes the behavior of online review sharing. We also find that sharing online reviews is negatively associated with churn.

Key Contributions

Theoretically, our research contributes to the scarce literature on online review sharing in the B2B context. Our findings show that B2B buyers' online review sharing behaviors are driven by customer-initiated contacts, relationship duration, free-tiered pricing, and competition. Notably, we find complex effects of CICs and relationship duration, such that CICs has an inverted U-shaped effect and relationship duration has a U-shaped effect on review sharing. Moreover, relationship duration has a moderating effect on the inverted U-shaped relationship between CICs and review sharing. In addition, our research advances the understanding of the behavior and not just the intention of online review sharing.

Managerially, our results suggest that B2B sellers can influence buyers' online sharing behavior by investing in relationship management and support services. Given the significance of early

stages of relationship, B2B sellers may be well advised to expend extra resources to strengthen relationship with new customers. As buyers are less likely to share online reviews after first few contacts, B2B sellers should monitor their support services to resolve buyers' concerns and inquiries in the first few contacts and provide alternative support strategies. B2B sellers may also consider offering a free-tiered pricing strategy to encourage buyers to share online reviews. As the effect of competition is negative, we encourage B2B sellers to implement appropriate strategies to lower buyers' attention toward competition, thus mitigating the negative effect of competition to promote review sharing.

References are available upon request.

PUT YOUR DATA WHERE THE MOUTH IS: UNDERSTANDING DATA AFFORDANCES TO SUPPORT MARKETING DECISION-MAKING

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Keywords: Affordance, Disaffordance, Data-driven decision-making, Data-sharing, Datafication

Description: Identifying data affordances with the help of data-sharing can help firms realize the full potential value of data and facilitate data-driven decision-making.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Affordance explicates the importance of human interactions with technologies and their artifacts to perceive what goals can be achieved by using them. As a technological artifact, data can have its own set of affordances. It is the role of social actors, such as marketing decision-makers, to perceive what purposes those data can serve. Once identified, they need to determine which data are essential to share with the network partners to achieve better business performances and which should be protected to shield firms' privacy and competitive advantage. However, the actual benefit from the perceived data affordances

can only be availed after a firm uses the data for planned actions. This brings us to our first research question: ***How can firms perceive and actualize data affordances?*** After the initial actualization process, firms need to evaluate the overall effect of data usage based on the outcome of the executed action. Additionally, due to the cascading nature of affordance, the actualization of initial affordances helps firms identify emergent perceived affordances from the existing data (Strong et al. 2014). This notion brings us to our second research question: ***How can firms evaluate the perceived and actualized affordances and identify emergent affordances?***

Summary of Findings

The authors posit that affordances can help firms perceive emergent action possibilities from the same dataset. Furthermore, used data can provide more than one set of affordances if the data are further analyzed in the same process loop. Through data sharing, firms can utilize their network partners' complementary data analytics resources, which can help them harness the true action potentials from data.

Statement of Key Contributions – 200 words

Marketing scholars have adopted affordance as a conceptual lens to investigate digital technologies that concern marketing strategy. Our study extends the application of the concept to the organizational level and in the context of immaterial technological artifacts, such as data. Through our proposed four-step process framework, we strive to capture the perception processes of both data affordance and disaffordance, as well as the actualization process of data affordance.

For firms, data-driven decision-making enables strategically and financially beneficial business predictions. However, due to the lack of in-house analytics capabilities, many

firms can not identify and exploit the full potential value of data. Data sharing with partners has been identified as an efficient solution to compensate for deficiencies in firms' analytics capabilities. If wrongly executed and operated, however, it may lead to the loss of firms' competitive advantage and result in a breach of privacy. By facilitating the process of differentiating data that require certain levels of governance and data that demand to be shared and analyzed for better mutual outcomes, affordance can augment the toolkit of marketing managers. Our proposed framework imposes urgency on and helps decision-makers from both private and government sectors to better realize the full-potential value of data.

References are available upon request.

STRATEGIC MARKETING FUNNEL MODELS IN HEALTHCARE:

THE ROLE OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AND PATIENTS IN THE REFERRAL PATHS AND THE CONSUMERIZATION OF HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work is to assess the dynamics of the interactions of the physicians with patients and family caregivers in healthcare, as a result of mapping the pathways of the treatment of the latter. For that we develop research to patients / family caregivers and healthcare professionals / business leaders to define the treatment pathways of patients with severe and chronic diseases, as well as the influence factors that shape the decision process of the final treatment and therapy at each stage of the pathway. This leads to the development of the healthcare patient referral path and influence drivers' model that attempts to create utility within the healthcare industry.

Keywords

Marketing funneling, patients' pathway, pharmaceutical marketing, healthcare professionals

1. Introduction & Objective of the Study

The transformation of healthcare because of the digitalization and the supply of massive information available to patients, family caregivers and physicians, leads to the "Consumerization of Healthcare", a phenomenon of focusing on the individual consumers' and patients' needs, rather than the healthcare market (Ekram, 2022). Although this is a trend that generates growth opportunities for the industry, it also creates the need to understand and map the patients' treatment pathways, to enable healthcare organizations to put an order on the available content and thereafter optimize the value of it.

1.1. Background

Healthcare is nowadays a complicated market and industry and contains multiple pillars, such as provision care, diagnosis, care financing and others. Given that the medical innovation of healthcare is more essential than ever, the healthcare industry is highly regulated to rightfully protect the safety of patients. Moreover, there are two recent trends, related with the digital and information era we are living in, that disrupt the industry; the adoption of digital solutions across all healthcare domains and the fact that patients and family caregivers, seek and now have access to more information around diseases and therapies. Such information was not available at the same levels and the same quantity and quality some decades ago. Because of that, it is important to identify the dynamics of the patients' interactions with physicians in healthcare because of mapping the pathways of treatment. Furthermore, as part of this effort we need to understand the factors that influence the decision process of a treatment or a therapy as the output of a fermentation process of the key stakeholders involved in the decision process (patients, family caregivers, physicians, etc.).

1.2. Objective of the Study

This work aims to examine the available theory and frameworks that can be applied to answer two queries; i) what are the dynamics of the decision-making process of serious chronic diseases patients? and ii) what are the influence factors of the final decision of a therapy? As a further step, the gaps in literature are identified and then dedicated research is set up to fulfil those gaps.

2. Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to examine the academic theory on decision making and consumer behaviour / action frameworks as well as the marketing funnel models and potentially define limitations and

potential gaps. In terms of inclusion / exclusion criteria of the literature review, we focus the research on the cognitive approach and exclude other approaches of the decision making (psychodynamic, the behaviourist, humanistic, etc.).

2.1. Behavioural Response Models

The behavioural response models suggest sequential responses and actions based on stimuli that trigger action but have the limitations of generalization as they are not considering the constant human and social learning and evolution. Models like this suggest action and reaction based on inputs and information processing (Engel, Kollat, Blackwell, 1968), fear drive (Leventhal, Safer, Panagis 1983), or behavioural beliefs and action towards those beliefs like the theory of planned behaviour or the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein, Ajzen, 1975).

2.2. Hierarchy of Effects Models

Regarding the "hierarchy of effects" and marketing funnel models, we start with AIDA model (Dukesmith, 1904; Elmo Lewis, 1909). The core aim of marketing is to encourage (new) consumers to buy and use what the companies are offering. Consequently, potential customers go through four phases when deciding whether to buy a product or a service and these correlate to the four phases of the model, ie. awareness, interest, desire, and action (Dukesmith, 1904). The main criticism of the model stands on the fact that the model was developed more than a hundred years ago and therefore may not be covering the complexity of the modern businesses and consumers. Nonetheless, several recent and modern marketing activations from a lot of companies, still follow a version of AIDA model. Additionally to AIDA, there are several variations of the model, like the AIDCAS model (Parker, 2016), the REAN model (Jackson, 2009) and the Cognitive - Affective - Conative model (Steiner, Lavidge, 1961), while the "See-Think-Do" model developed by Google (Kaushik, 2013) represents a useful example of the application of the model in the era of digital communication.

2.3. Other Healthcare Models

The health belief model (Becker, 1974; Rosenstock, 1974) suggests that health-related behaviours consider individual rationality, as the individuals arrive at relevant decisions after considering several factors like the perceived health status and condition, the level of risk, the costs and the benefits of the alternative behaviour changes and the presence of cues towards action (Becker, 1974; Rosenstock, 1974). In 2013, another

conceptual framework was designed to unify and guide diverse stakeholders in the emerging field of patient and family engagement, the family engagement model (Carman, et al., 2013). It was built after acquiring data from physicians, patients, caregivers and other stakeholders, with the objective to bring patient and family opinions to healthcare organizational design, governance, and public policy in order to be used in various efforts to advance patient and consumer engagement and also serve as the roadmap for patient and family engagement in healthcare (Carman, et al., 2013).

2.4. Summary and Limitations

Sufficient relevant models have been developed in the last century on both mapping the funneling towards consumption and purchase behaviors, as well as action and behavioral response through the cognitive lens. When deep diving in healthcare, we can see models describing the behavioral action vis a vis disease and therapy areas. In this area, the relatively recent conceptual model of patient and family engagement is a useful framework to understand the dynamics and influence of patients and key stakeholders within the patient pathway. The key gap from the literature is the mapping of the patient pathway as a dynamic funnel model with the interaction of patients and healthcare professionals. This may enable healthcare businesses (big pharma, med tech companies, hospitals) to understand the landscape and develop more efficient and effective marketing strategies and plans.

3. Research Methodologies and Data

The purpose of the research is to answer those three questions: i) what are the key factors that influence the decision of the patients and physicians, ii) what the weight of each of the factors is, at each stage of the funnel and iii) if there are stages in the funnel being more sensitive to external factors than others. For this work, two surveys to i) a group of patients and family caregivers (n=34) and to ii) healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses etc.) and leaders of healthcare companies treating chronic diseases (n=55), were developed, activated, and utilized to identify the influence of external drivers towards healthcare consumers and patients' reactions (Appendices I, II). The output, the analysis of the results, and the integration of the two pieces of research, suggest the development of a new model that maps and explains the patient referral paths, along with the influence factors of those paths. For both surveys, 89 respondents in total participated (18.0% patients, 20.2% family caregivers, 20.2% healthcare professionals, and 41.6% healthcare business leaders) from 21 countries.

The diseases in scope included i) cardiovascular diseases and strokes (ischemic heart disease, heart failure), ii) respiratory diseases & lower respiratory infections, iii) cancer, iv) Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, v) diabetes, vi) arthritis diseases, vii) obesity and other nutrition related diseases, that according to World Health Organization, accounted for approximately 44% of the global deaths in 2019 (World Health Organization, 2020). For the design of the surveys, two questionnaires were designed in Microsoft Forms and distributed via the network of the University of Warwick, Edwards Lifesciences, leveraging social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.). The surveys targeted patients, family caregivers, healthcare professionals and executives of healthcare businesses. The sample of the two surveys is fairly distributed in terms of gender (55% male, 45% female) and age group (1950-2001).

3.1. Limitations of the Sample

In terms of limitations of the research, although the sample of the two surveys captures all the deadliest diseases, it is disproportionately skewed towards cardiovascular diseases and strokes (50.6% of the sample), oncology (13.5%), dementias (12.3%). Given that the there is no statistically significant discrepancies on the responses of the sample of cardiovascular and strokes diseases compared to the rest of the diseases, and since indeed cardiovascular diseases are among the deadliest diseases in the world (World Health Organization, 2021) this limitation is not misleading the findings.

Furthermore, due to a network bias factor of collecting the data, although participants from several countries are represented in the sample, 31.5% of the respondents are Greek and 11.2% are Swiss, while the high distribution of countries (89 respondents / 21 countries), doesn't necessarily factor in any differences of the national healthcare systems. Nevertheless, no statistically significant discrepancies are observed across the individual samples of the different countries.

4. Analysis and Results

Starting the analysis, within the cognitive approach, we further examine the "Consumer Decision Model" that was originally developed by Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell. The model has gone through numerous revisions and its latest publication is depicted in the figure below (Figure 4.0.1). The model is structured around a decision process with seven steps: the need recognition followed by the search of information both internally and externally, the evaluation of alternatives, purchase, post purchase reflection and finally, divestment. These

decisions are influenced by two main factors. Firstly, stimuli are received and processed by the consumers in combination with previous memories depicted from past experiences, and secondly, external variables in the form of either environmental influences or individual differences (Blackwell, Miniard, 2001). The environmental influences include culture, social class, personal influence, and others, while the individual influences include consumer resource, motivation, involvement, and others (Blackwell, Miniard, 2001).

The Consumer Decision Model Applied in Healthcare Decisions

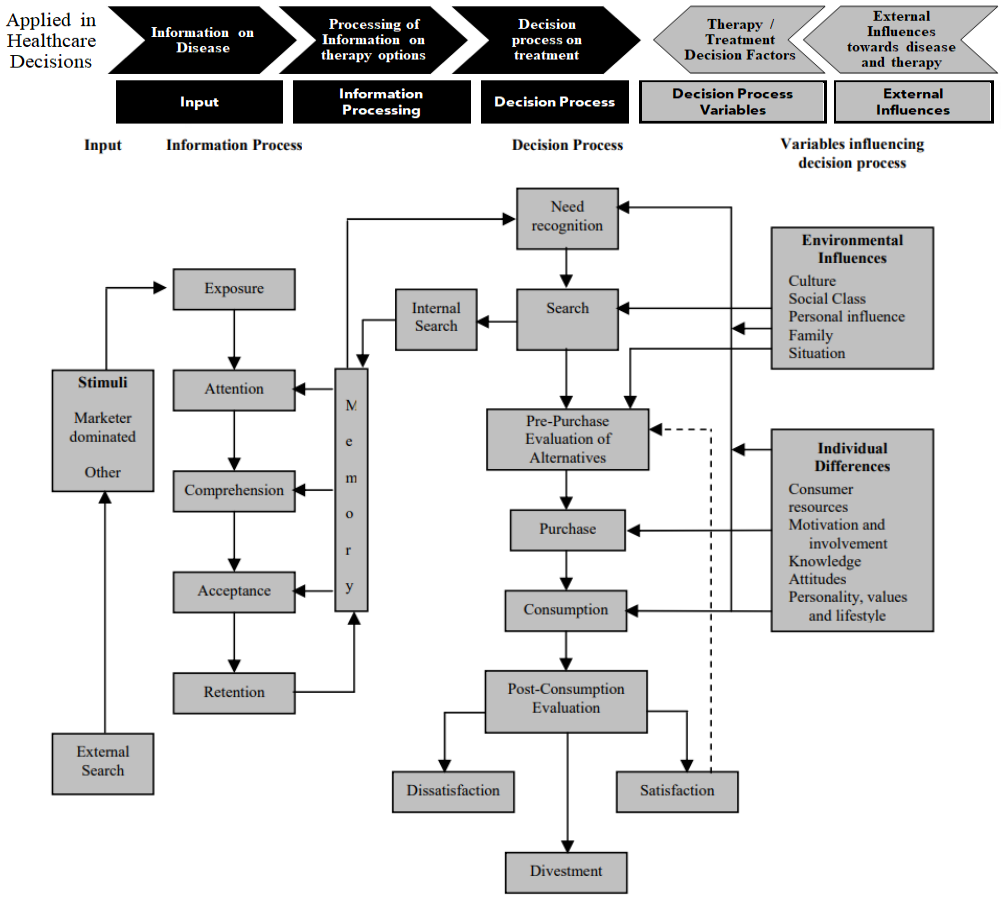


Figure 4.0.1. The Consumer Decision Model (Blackwell, Miniard et al. 2001)

The model and the process of consumer decisions is applied to healthcare consumers and patients. The "decision" process step contains the most relevant and critical step in the process. This is because the patients don't necessarily own information available for their internal search "memory" on treatments and therapies (input and information processing steps). Therefore, when the need is recognized at the decision process stage, i.e., when patients are informed on their disease, the initiation of the search from the patients is essential to understand and pre-evaluate alternatives that will lead to the choice of the right medical treatment. Moreover, the external factors ("variables influencing decision process" step) are influential to shaping the decision; those are usually stakeholders' opinions on the treatment (family, patient advocacy, etc.), with the most

important being the opinion of the healthcare professionals involved, either if they are referring physicians or interventional doctors.

4.1. Hierarchy of Effects and Funnelling of Healthcare Marketing

According to Chakravarty and Sarma, the hierarchy of effects models have changed to meet the needs of different periods: i) the traditional phase, ii) the pre-connectivity phase and iii) the digital phase (Chakravarty, Sarma, 2021) assessing different dynamics and drivers of the respective eras. Still the "funnel structure" contains the core of those models, trying to map the consumers decision process from the time they are aware of a need, to the time they finally choose the product or service to fulfill this need. In this section, the traditional Marketing funnel model is attempted to be used in healthcare to particularly understand the unique characteristics of this industry. For this, the AIDA model (Dukesmith, 1904; Elmo Lewis, 1909) is adapted to both stakeholders (patients and healthcare professionals) in scope, with the objective to deductively develop the first version of healthcare funnel model by using the existing theory. Specifically, attention, interest, desire and action may be translated to different stages for patients and healthcare professionals (Figure 4.1.2).

The Marketing Funnel Model

Figure 4.1.1. The AIDA Marketing Funnel Model

The Healthcare Decision Funnel Model Version 0.5

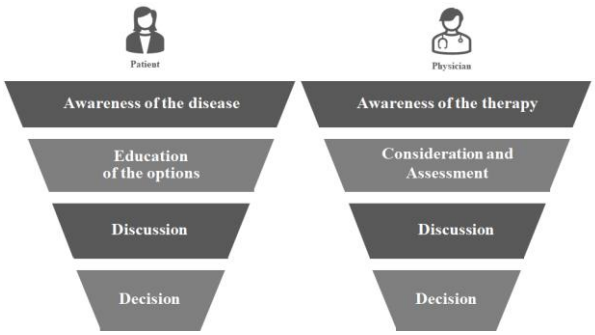


Figure 4.1.2. The Healthcare Decision Funnel Model Version 0.5 (Zervas, 2022)

The Healthcare Decision Funnel Model Version I

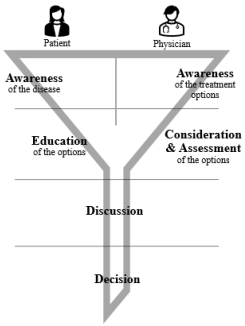


Figure 4.1.3. The Healthcare Funnel Model Version I

In the case of patients for instance, "attention" is this awareness stage that patients get into regarding their disease when they are notified of the existence of a disease. In the second stage they will try to educate themselves by seeking further information around potential options. Then a discussion will be developed between themselves and the respective doctors ("desire" to learn more) and this may lead to the "action" stage that will form the final decision of which therapy will be followed. Respectively for healthcare professionals, the first stage of the funnel may represent their awareness of therapies of certain diseases, then they may assess the options and consider further information like specialty guidelines. Then, the discussion with the patients

will take place and should lead to the decision of the treatment. Since the third and the fourth stages of the two individual funnels are the same and common for the patients and the healthcare professionals, we can integrate the two funnels to one (Figure 4.1.3).

This is the first version of our model (Figure 4.1.3), that may help the healthcare organizations to map the steps of patients' pathways and enable them to develop more efficient and valuable marketing plans for the patients and the healthcare systems. Nevertheless, the key element missing, is to identify and measure the main factors that influence the decision process towards therapies for patients and healthcare professionals. Moreover, we need to shed light on those stages in the funnel that may be less or more dependent on any factors of influence.

4.2. Findings from the Research

The two surveys that were conducted as part of this paper to patients and healthcare professionals, highlighted several factors influencing the information that the respective stakeholders seek and consume during the patient pathway. Specifically, the research showed the following:

1. Patients and family caregivers: There are various influence factors for the patients and family caregivers with the opinion of the interventional doctor being the most important one (70.6% of the sample), followed by the opinion of the referral doctor (67.6%), the "risk / benefit" of the treatment (67.6%) and the lifestyle implications (67.6%) or side effects of the therapy (55.9%). Other factors follow in the ranking like the role of research and the new treatments, the opinion of other patients, the information from the websites of companies or hospitals, the complexity or the pain of the treatment, the cost of the therapy and the insurance coverage, and the opinion of patients' associations and advocacy (Figure 4.2.1).
2. Healthcare Professionals: Publications and literature is considered the most influential factor to healthcare professionals together with specialty guidelines (both chosen by 78.2% of the sample), followed by the "risk vs. Benefit" assessment of the treatment (70.9%), patient's preference (69.1%) and other factors like the cost, the complexity of treatment, the implications of the therapy and side effects, research and availability of innovative treatments, the opinion of other doctors and information from health companies or hospital websites (Figure 4.2.2).

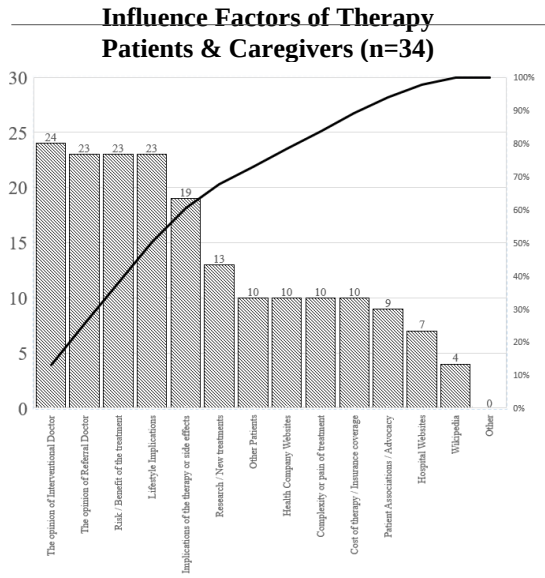


Figure 4.2.1. The Weight of Influence Factors to the Decision of Treatment According to Patients & Caregivers. Pareto Chart (Zervas, 2022)

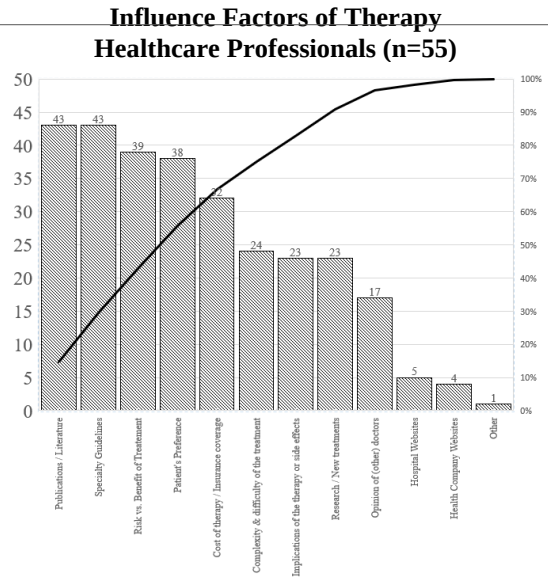


Figure 4.2.2. The Weight of Influence Factors to the Decision of Treatment According to Healthcare Professionals. Pareto Chart (Zervas, 2022)

Different influence factors are considered as inputs of the patients' pathway at different stages of the funnel. The opinion of the patient associations, for instance, is more influential to patients at the first stage (52.9%) of the funnel ("awareness" stage) while the implications of the therapy or side effects (70.6%) are an influencing factor when they assess and discuss therapy options with the doctors; the "discussion" stage. Those findings are generated when we asked the respondents of the two groups to choose the factors that are relevant to them at each stage of the process (Appendices III, IV).

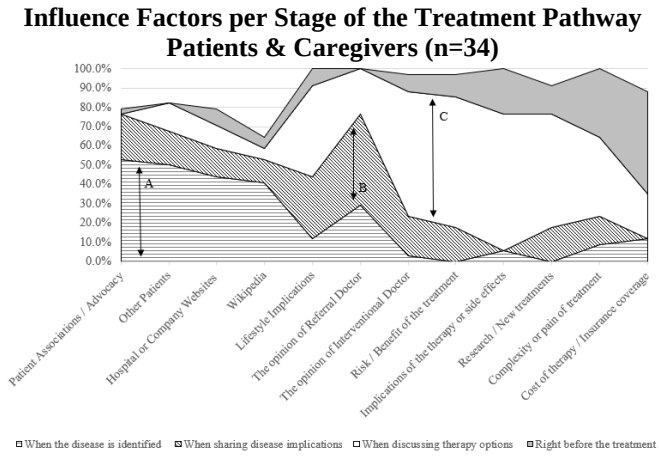


Figure 4.2.3. The Importance of Influence Factors at each stage of the decision process according to Patients & Caregivers. (Zervas, 2022)

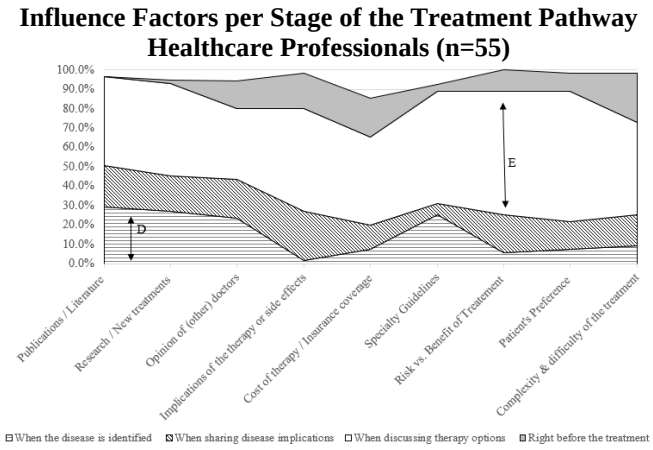


Figure 4.2.4. The Importance of Influence Factors at each stage of the decision process according to Healthcare Professionals. (Zervas, 2022)

The size of the marked lines or the area of each stage in the graphs, represent the importance of the influence factors vis a vis each stage of the funnel. The "risk / benefit of the treatment" for example, is one of the most answered factors at "discussion" stage from patients and caregivers; therefore, the distance represented by the line "C" is relatively longer in the chart 4.2.3. The second important finding is that not all stages of the funnel

are "born equal". The "discussion" stage between the doctors and the patients contains the most influential stage of the decision of the therapy or treatment.

4.3. Development of the Healthcare Patient Journey Model, Version II. Inductive Approach

The factors that were identified as influential can be assigned to each stakeholder at each stage based on the weight of responses of the study (Appendices III, IV). Moreover, the research proved that the discussion part of the model is the most essential and critical step of the treatment path; at this stage, the patients and the physicians meet and interact and this leads to the decision. Considering all those inputs, we suggest the "Healthcare Decision Funnel Model Version II" (Figure 4.3.1).

Moreover, the research proved that the discussion part of the model is the most essential and critical step of the treatment path; at this stage, the patients and the physicians meet and interact, and this leads to the decision. Considering all those inputs, we suggest the "Healthcare Decision Funnel Model Version II" (Figure 4.2.1).

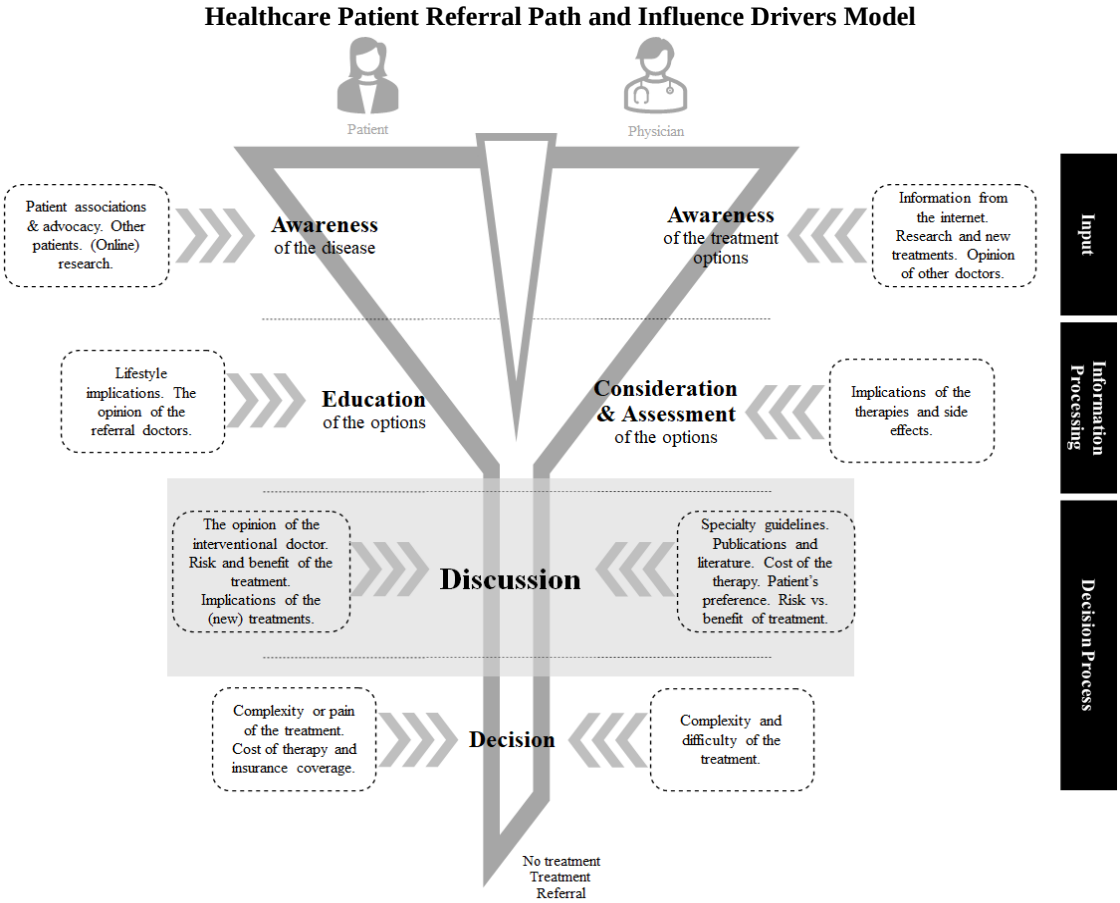


Figure 4.3.1. The Healthcare Decision Funnel Model Version II (Zervas, 2022)

On top of the influence factors that were allocated to each stage of the model, the - Engel – Blackwell model – stages (input, information processing, decision process) are applied. This model, as its previous version, suggests a tool to map the treatment path for patients and healthcare professionals and integrates it to a

common funnel format. Additionally, the model includes and separates the influence factors per stage, defining the most essential step regarding the final decision.

The awareness stages for the patients and the healthcare professionals attract most of the inputs that will be needed for the cognitive information processing which represents the second stage ("education" for patients and "consideration" of options for the healthcare professionals). The decision process starts with the common step of the interaction between the two stakeholders and is completed with the final decision that may be treatment or no treatment, or referral of the patient to another doctor. Specifically:

1. Stage 1: "Awareness" for the of the disease for the patients and "awareness" of the treatment options for the healthcare professionals. At this stage there are different factors influencing the respective stakeholders. Patient advocacy and online search may be a key source of information to patients, while healthcare professionals may look for relevant content and information from online sources regarding research on new treatments and the opinion of other doctors.
2. Stage 2: "Education" of the potential treatment options for the patients that are mainly influenced by the opinion of the referral doctors and by the lifestyle implications, and "consideration" and assessment of the treatment options for the healthcare professionals that are influenced by the implications of the therapies and side effects.
3. Stage 3: "Discussion" (common stage) where patients may be influenced by the opinion of the interventional doctors, risk and benefit of the treatment and implications of the (new) treatments, while healthcare professionals may be influenced by the specialty guidelines, the respective publications, cost of the therapy, patient's preference, etc.
4. Stage 4: "Decision" (common stage). At this stage, patients may be influenced by the complexity or pain of the treatment, cost of therapy and insurance coverage, while healthcare professionals, by the complexity and the difficulty of the treatment.

5. Discussion and Summary

The healthcare patient referral path and influence drivers' model, seems that can add value both on the theory and its practical implementation. The model helps extending and advancing existing theory, by also being a useful tool for patients, healthcare professionals and healthcare companies and organizations. This is mainly

because, due to the increased involvement of patients and family caregivers and their need to acquire more information related the disease and the treatment / therapy options, the inputs of the decision process become more complicated both for the healthcare professionals and the patients. But is this work delivering on the initial objective of the study? The aim of this work is to primarily understand how the decision-making process of serious chronic diseases works for patients and healthcare professionals, and secondarily what are the factors triggering, influencing, and shaping the final decisions towards therapy. Both queries are answered with the findings of the research and the model developed, given that the model is indeed mapping the potential stages of the patient pathway and the decision process and then it includes all the forces and the inputs that shape and influence the final decision.

6.1. Limitations of the Study and Further Areas of Research

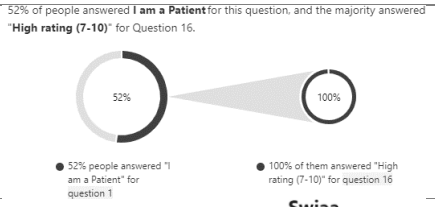
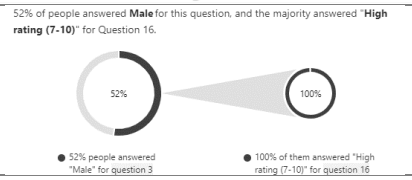
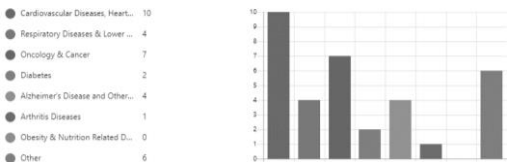
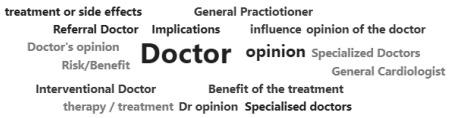
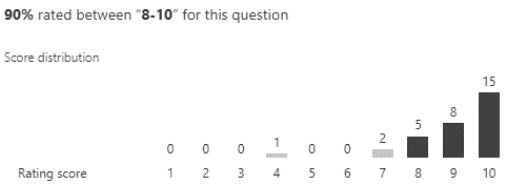
The main limitation of the study, is that the findings and the model developed, have not been proven to work across all countries. This is because the health systems, the nature of health insurance (private, semiprivate, public) and the structure of primary and secondary healthcare, varies across countries and regions. In some countries in eastern Europe for example, due to the absence of “general practitioner” specialty, there is the public perception that pharmacies represent the first line of healthcare and therefore the application of this model in an eastern European country would be different vs. a country that has a well-defined structure of different referral (general practitioner, cardiologist) and interventional medical specialties (surgeons).

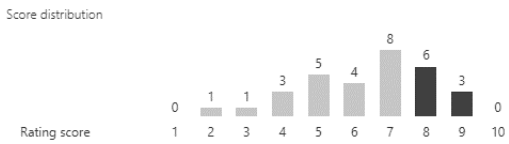
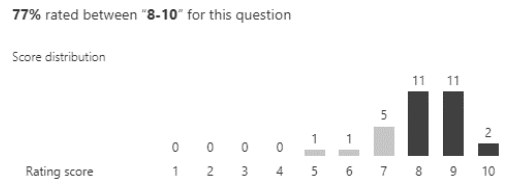
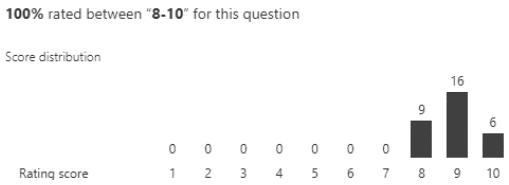
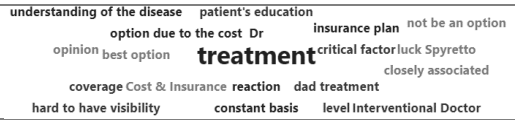
Regarding the potential future areas of research, there are two main domains that need to be examined further: the validation of the model in different regions and potential segmentation of the regions based on different needs or healthcare systems and the application of the model in a broader range of diseases. The model needs to be validated in different regions and countries and other important chronic diseases.

Appendices

Appendix I

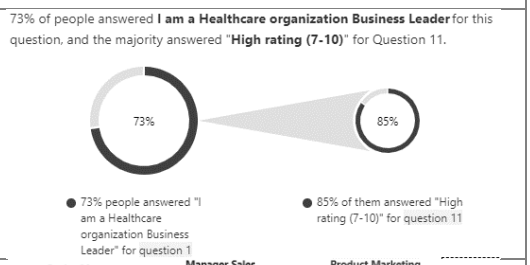
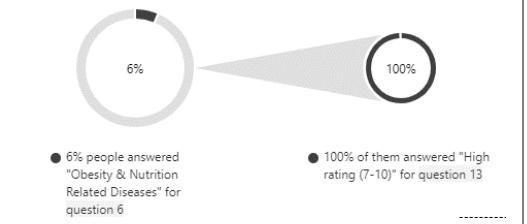
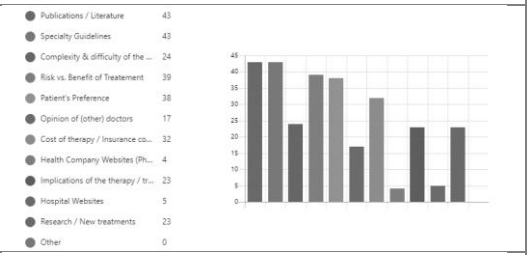
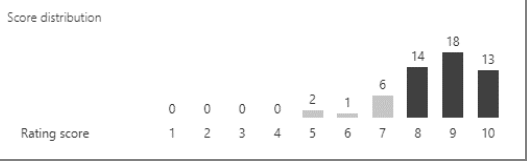
Questionnaire I: The Role of Patients & Family Caregivers in the Referral Paths. Sample: n=34. Powered by Microsoft Forms. Insights are generated by Microsoft Forms.

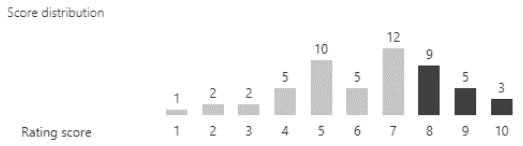
Questions (n=34)	Number of Responses	Use in the Research	Insights
1. What is your Role within the health treatment path?	**34**	Demographics. Distribution of Sample	
2. What is your Nationality?	**33**	Demographics. Distribution of Sample	
3. What is your Gender?	**34**	Demographics. Distribution of Sample	
4. What is your date of Birth?	**32**		*NA*
5. What is your Disease / Family member disease?	**34**	Reassurance that the deadliest diseases (World Health Organization, 2020), are depicted in the surveys	
6. What do you see as the most important areas of influence regarding the treatment / therapy of your disease?	**185**	Identification of the Influence Factors for the Patients and Family Caregivers	*Figure 5.5.1.*
7. Other factor of influence? (Please specify)	**9**		
8. Which one from the above, you consider as the most important factor of influence?	**34**	Identification of the weight of the Influence factors for the Patients and Family Caregivers	
9. What are the relevant factors of influence at each stage of your patient journey?	**408**	Allocate the influence factors to the respective stages of the funnel	*Figure 5.5.3.*
10. What is the importance of doctor's opinion on the treatment / therapy option? (10 most important)	**34**	Identification of the weight of the Influence factors for the Patients and Family Caregivers	

11. What is the importance of family's opinion on the treatment / therapy option? (10 most important)	**34**	Identification of the weight of the Influence factors for the Patients and Family Caregivers	
12. What is the importance of your owned online research on the treatment / therapy option? (10 most important)	**34**	Identification of the weight of the Influence factors for the Patients and Family Caregivers	
13. How would you rate your understanding of the disease and therapy options when you were informed about the disease? (10 most important)	**34**	Rating of the awareness of the disease and therapy from the Patients and Family Caregivers at each stage of the funnel	
14. How would you rate your understanding of the disease and therapy options after when you were firstly informed about the disease and after conducting some research? (10 most important)	**34**	Rating of the awareness of the disease and therapy from the Patients and Family Caregivers at each stage of the funnel	
15. How would you rate your understanding of the disease and therapy options after you discussed therapy options with your doctor? (10 most important)	**34**	Rating of the awareness of the disease and therapy from the Patients and Family Caregivers at each stage of the funnel	
16. How would you rate your understanding of the disease and therapy options after your treatment? (10 most important)	**34**	Rating of the awareness of the disease and therapy from the Patients and Family Caregivers at each stage of the funnel	
17. Anything else you want to share? (Add your Comments)	**7**	Additional Comments	

Appendix II

Questionnaire II: The Role of Healthcare Professionals in the Referral Paths. Sample: n=55. Powered by Microsoft Forms. Insights are generated by Microsoft Forms.

Questions (n=55)	Number of Responses	Use in the Research	Insights
1. What is your profession and your role within the health treatment path?	**55**	Demographics. Distribution of Sample	
2. What is your full Job Title?	**55**	Demographics. Distribution of Sample	
3. What is your Nationality?	**54**	Demographics. Distribution of Sample	
4. What is your Gender?	**55**		*NA*
5. What is your date of Birth?	**47**		*NA*
6. What is your specialty / type of diseases you are focusing on?	**54**	Reassurance that the deadliest diseases (World Health Organization, 2020), are depicted in the surveys	
7. What do you see as the most important areas of influence of the lead treatment? (Select multiple answers)	**292**	Identification of the Influence Factors for the Healthcare Professionals	
8. Other factor of influence? (Please specify)	**17**		
9. Which one from the above, you consider as the most important factor of influence?	**51**	Identification of the weight of the Influence factors for the Healthcare Professionals	
10. What is the factor that is the most influential factor at each stage of the patient journey?	**550**	Allocate the influence factors to the respective stages of the funnel	*Figure 5.5.4*
11. What is the importance of your / doctor's opinion on the treatment and	**55**	Identification of the weight of the Influence factors for the Healthcare Professionals	

therapy option? (10 most important)			
12. What is the importance of family's opinion on the treatment / therapy option? (10 most important)	**55**	Identification of the weight of the Influence factors for the Healthcare Professionals	
13. What is the importance of the patient led conducted online research on the treatment / therapy options? (10 most important)	**55**	Identification of the weight of the Influence factors for the Healthcare Professionals	
14. Anything else you want to share? (Add your Comments)	**7**	Additional Comments	

Appendix III

Detailed View and Results Distribution of the Question Q9: What are the relevant factors of influence at each stage of your patient journey? Questionnaire I: The Role of Patients & Family Caregivers in the Referral Paths. Sample: n=34.

Influence Factor	When the disease is identified	When sharing disease implications	When discussing therapy options	Right before the treatment	Not Relevant
Patient Associations / Advocacy	**52.9%**	**23.6%**	0.0%	2.9%	20.6%
Other Patients	**50.1%**	17.6%	14.7%	0.0%	17.6%
Hospital or Company Websites	**44.1%**	14.7%	11.8%	8.8%	20.6%
Wikipedia	**41.1%**	11.8%	5.9%	5.9%	**35.3%**
Lifestyle Implications	11.8%	**32.4%**	47.1%	8.7%	0.0%
The opinion of Referral Doctor	29.4%	**47.1%**	23.5%	0.0%	0.0%
The opinion of Interventional Doctor	2.9%	20.7%	**64.7%**	8.8%	2.9%
Risk / Benefit of the treatment	0.0%	17.7%	**67.6%**	11.8%	2.9%
Implications of the therapy or side effects	5.9%	0.0%	**70.6%**	**23.5%**	0.0%
Research / New treatments	0.0%	17.6%	**58.8%**	14.7%	8.9%
Complexity or pain of treatment	8.8%	14.7%	41.2%	**35.3%**	0.0%
Cost of therapy / Insurance coverage	11.8%	0.0%	23.5%	**52.9%**	11.8%

Appendix IV

Detailed View and Results Distribution of the Question Q10: What is the most influential factor at each stage of the patient journey? Questionnaire II: The Role of Healthcare Professionals in the Referral Paths. Sample: n=55.

Influence Factor	When the disease is identified	When sharing disease implications	When discussing therapy options	Right before the treatment	Not Relevant
Information from Internet (hospitals websites)	**54.5%**	9.1%	21.8%	5.5%	9.1%
Research / New treatments	**27.3%**	18.2%	47.3%	1.8%	5.4%
Opinion of (other) doctors	**23.6%**	20.0%	36.4%	14.5%	5.5%
Implications of the therapy or side effects	1.8%	**25.5%**	52.7%	18.2%	1.8%
Cost of therapy / Insurance coverage	7.3%	12.7%	**45.5%**	20.0%	14.5%
Specialty Guidelines	25.5%	5.5%	**58.2%**	3.5%	7.3%
Publications / Literature	29.1%	21.8%	**45.5%**	0.0%	3.6%
Risk vs. Benefit of Treatement	5.5%	20.0%	**63.6%**	10.9%	0.0%
Patient's Preference	7.3%	14.5%	**67.3%**	9.1%	1.8%
Complexity & difficulty of the treatment	9.1%	16.4%	47.3%	**25.5%**	1.7%

Appendix V

Detailed View of the Responses and Distribution of the Questions on the various influence factors for the Patients and the Healthcare Professionals.

Hcps Question 7: What do you see as the most important areas of influence of the lead treatment?

Influence Factor	Responses
Patient Associations / Advocacy	9
Other Patients	10
Hospital Websites	7
Health Company Websites	10
Wikipedia	4
The opinion of Referral Doctor	23
The opinion of Interventional Doctor	24
Risk / Benefit of the treatment	23
Implications of the therapy or side effects	19
Complexity or pain of treatment	10
Research / New treatments	13
Cost of therapy / Insurance coverage	10
Lifestyle Implications	23
Other	0

Hcps Question 6: What do you see as the most important areas of influence regarding the treatment / therapy of your disease?

Influence Factor	Responses
Publications / Literature	43
Specialty Guidelines	43
Complexity & difficulty of the treatment	24
Risk vs. Benefit of Treatement	39
Patient's Preference	38
Opinion of (other) doctors	17
Cost of therapy / Insurance coverage	32
Health Company Websites	4
Implications of the therapy or side effects	23
Hospital Websites	5
Research / New treatments	23
Other	1

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SUSTAINABLE SERVICE ECOSYSTEM DESIGN: TENSIONS AND ENGAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS

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Keywords: service ecosystem; actor engagement; service design; MaaS; sustainable service

Description: This study of a sustainable service ecosystem (SSE) in the shared mobility context reveals five *engagement constraints* (i.e., institutional, economic, legal, political, and technological) that influence the level of engagement, two *non-design related tensions* in SSE design (coopetition, and personal commitment), and three *design related tensions* (related to the value proposition, business model, and governance of the SSE).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Sustainable service ecosystems (SSE) represent self-contained systems consisting of various actors connected through interrelated activities and an underlying value-creating activity system, such as value propositions or business models, that particularly aim at transformative impact (cf. Amit and Zott 2015; Jacobides et al. 2018; Kretschmer et al. 2020; Vargo and Lusch 2016; Vink et al. 2021). Despite the promise and necessity of SSEs to generate transformative value, many have failed to emerge or have struggled to survive. By investigating the design process of an emerging SSE and the underlying factors that inhibit collaboration between its actors, this study answers calls to use the concept of *actor engagement* to further understand the dynamics of designing service ecosystems (Vink et al. 2021), as well as calls to further

research sustainable services (Huang et al. 2021; Ostrom et al. 2021) and SSEs (Field et al. 2021).

Method and Data

This paper is based on a longitudinal case study (2019–2021) of a regional Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) in Sweden: a contemporary and innovative SSE aiming to provide an integrated mobility solution by combining a variety of transportation services from multiple actors (e.g., public transit, ride-hailing, bike-sharing, car rental). The dataset was collected from a multitude of sources encompassing 26 in-depth interviews, participant observations and field notes originating from internal workshops, and internal documents and secondary evidence.

Summary of Findings

Actor engagement was defined as a "dynamic and iterative process that reflects actors' dispositions to invest resources in their interactions with other connected actors in a service system" (Brodie et al. 2019, p. 174). Our first important finding lays in the identification of five *engagement constraints* (i.e., institutional, economic, legal, political, and technological) that influence the level of actor engagement.

We also identify three *design related tensions* related to the value proposition, business model, and governance of the SSE; and two *non-design related tensions* that relate to unconscious reproductions of preexisting institutional arrangements and practices resisting the design-oriented changes and conflicting with the shaping of an SSE: coopetition, and personal commitment.

Finally, we find indications that the interplay between engagement and tensions can be perceived as a recursive process, as actor engagement can result in tensions, which in turn can influence the level of actor engagement.

Key Contributions

Our main contribution is the expansion of the actor engagement concept (Brodie et al. 2019). We also propose an understanding of disengagement processes (Chandler and Lusch 2015; Lehtinen et al. 2019). We further contribute to the service ecosystem design literature (Mele et al. 2018; Vink et al. 2021) through the identification of five tensions, and we provide insights into the interdependencies and dynamics in SSE design processes (Patrício et al. 2018; Sangiorgi et al. 2017; Vink et al. 2021).

While prior literature has provided a rich overview of antecedents to engagement (e.g., Baker et al. 2021; Danatzis et al.. 2021; Pansari and Kumar 2017), most studies have focused on individual psychological factors such as emotion, cognition or motivation. However, most participants in the design of a service ecosystem are organizational actors. Furthermore, whereas *engagement disposition* and *connectedness* are considered broad antecedents to *engagement behavior* (Ekman et al. 2021; Li et al. 2018), our findings show that high levels in engagement disposition and connectedness do not necessarily result in engagement behavior. Rather, our findings show that actor engagement in the design of a service ecosystem with sustainability as its central feature is strongly influenced by diverse constraints and tensions that inhibit the emergence of SSEs. These findings and contributions are synthesized into a roadmap for SSE managers to address these challenges.

References are available upon request.

The CIS Strategy as a Driver of Nation Branding

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Abstract

Nation branding aims to build, manage, enhance, and measure a country's reputation around the world. In political communication, The CIS Model1 points out that political actors not only need to create a political product/service (i.e., an idea/proposal) but also need to inform people about the product and support it. Using The CIS Strategy as a measurement tool, this study aims to examine its relationship with Nation Branding (i.e., Exports, Governance, Culture & Heritage, People, Tourism, and Investment & Immigration). A sample of 120 adults aged 18-25 (Gen Z) from the USA participated in the current study. The results show that two factors of Nation Branding (i.e., Governance and Investment & Immigration) have a significant positive relationship with the use of The CIS Strategy. In turn, the more the use of The CIS Strategy, the stronger the Nation's brand. The current study provides managerial implications and directions for further studies.

Keywords: US Government; The CIS Model; Nation Branding.

[1] The CIS Model is an Award-Winning Model developed by Dr. Nicos Antoniades and presented at the 7th International Conference on Management and Education Innovation, University of Greenwich, London, UK (April 2019).

1. Introduction

1.1 Nation Branding

Branding communicates and positions itself in the consumer's mind. Similarly, National Branding aims to strengthen investments, boost exports, and attract tourists and a skilled workforce; it stands between diplomacy and economic benefits. According to Johansson (2005), a country's brand includes exports, government policy, culture and heritage, people, tourist experience, and investment & immigration. A good policy of Nation Branding increases the country's image reliability and encourages potential customers and investors.

1.2 The CIS Model

According to Antoniades (2019), The CIS Model consists of three interrelated political determinants: the capability to Create, the capability to Inform, and the capability to Support. Political actors need to build on their own capabilities and effectively communicate their political products efficiently (Antoniades, 2023; 2019; Antoniades and Mohr, 2019). This author supports that (1) the creation of a political idea represents the development of a new consumer product or service, (2) giving adequate information about the political idea to the consumer-voter represents the back side of a consumer product package with all the necessary information, and (3) supporting the political idea represents the communication strategy to convince the consumer-voter about the political idea's benefits.

1.3 Aims of the Study

Generation Z are born after 1997. According to the Pew Research Center (2017), the people of this generation demand their governments play a more active role. Within this frame, and via regression analysis, the researcher tests (1) the relationship between The CIS Model and each one of the following six elements of Nation Branding (i.e., Exports, Governance, Culture &

Heritage, People, Tourism, and Investment & Immigration), and (2) the use of The CIS Model with Nation Branding (as a whole).

2. Research Methodology

Generation Z represents one-third of the global population. Their future economic well-being is important to their ability to thrive in the future. Three hundred online invitations were randomly sent via email. Thirty students were invited to participate. Each student sent the link to ten friends/classmates (aged 18-25). The final sample was 120 completed questionnaires, reaching a 40% response rate. The survey took place between 20 July and 20 November 2020.

This study used a structured approach with closed statements based on a 7-point Likert rating scale (1932) ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree), to measure each one of the proposed issues (i.e., Exports, Governance, Culture & Heritage, People, Tourism, and Investment & Immigration) and the level of use of The CIS Strategy (Create, Inform, and Support). The range captured the intensity of Generation Z's feelings for a given item (I.e.., Tourism).

3. Presentation of Results

3.1. Demographic Information

This study's sample consisted of 48% Men, 51% Women, and 1% X.

3.2. Hypothesis Testing

According to Table 1:

H1: The CIS Strategy does <u>not</u> have a significant positive impact on Exports.

H2: The CIS Strategy has a significant positive impact on Governance.

Table 1: The CIS Strategy & Each Element of Nation Branding

SUMMARY OUTPUT

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.718662
R Square	0.516474
Adjusted R Square	0.4908
Standard Error	1.101065
Observations	120

ANOVA

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	6	146.3301	24.38835	20.11668979	6.85E-16
Residual	113	136.9949	1.212344		
Total	119	283.325			

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95.0%*	*Upper 95.0%*
Intercept	1.264721	0.366625	3.449631	0.000789985	0.538371	1.991072	0.538371	1.991072
Exports	0.106375	0.082689	1.28645	0.200915631	-0.05745	0.270197	-0.05745	0.270197
Governance	0.694486	0.104138	6.668931	9.91741E-10	0.488171	0.900801	0.488171	0.900801
Culture & Heritage	0.054473	0.074784	0.728399	0.467876354	-0.09369	0.202633	-0.09369	0.202633
People	-0.11007	0.085158	-1.29257	0.198796945	-0.27879	0.058641	-0.27879	0.058641
Tourism	-0.36551	0.093295	-3.91778	0.000153446	-0.55035	-0.18068	-0.55035	-0.18068
Investment & Immigration	0.304438	0.084428	3.605902	0.000464396	0.137172	0.471705	0.137172	0.471705

H3: The CIS Strategy does not have a significant positive impact on Culture & Heritage.

H4: The CIS Strategy does not have a significant positive impact on People.

H5: The CIS Strategy does not have a positive impact on Tourism.

H6: The CIS Strategy has a significant positive impact on Investment & Immigration.

According to Table 2:

H7: The more the use of The CIS Strategy, the stronger the Nation's Brand.

Table 2: Nation Branding (as a whole) & The CIS Strategy

SUMMARY OUTPUT

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.493498
R Square	0.243541
Adjusted R Square	0.23713
Standard Error	0.993601
Observations	120

ANOVA

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	1	37.50525	37.50524525	37.98985585	1.02E-08
Residual	118	116.4948	0.987243684		
Total	119	154			

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95.0%*	*Upper 95.0%*
Intercept	2.594826	0.208214	12.46233094	2.9073E-23	2.182507	3.007146	2.182507	3.007146
The CIS	0.363834	0.05903	6.163591149	1.02222E-08	0.24694	0.480729	0.24694	0.480729

4. Conclusion

The results show that two factors of Nation Branding (i.e., Governance and Investment & Immigration) have a significant positive relationship with the use of The CIS Strategy. In turn, the more the use of The CIS Strategy, the stronger the Nation's Brand.

5. Limitations

The researcher did not have control over the data collection. The students who sent the invitations were the ones to confirm that these invitations were correctly and adequately sent and received by their friends/classmates (aged 18-25). Second, the sample was relatively small.

6. Further Research

New studies could obtain data from other States and/or other countries and also collect a larger sample. Further studies could collect samples from other consumer groups (i.e., Generation X and Baby Boomers). Finally, new research could test the relationship between The CIS Model and a government/political actor's performance concerning several other public issues (i.e., health care, cost of living, etc.).

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THE CONVERSION PRIVILEGES? EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF CONVERTIBLE DEBT ON MARKETING

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Keywords: convertible debt; strategic emphasis; firm performance; market turbulence

Description: This research investigates the effect of convertible debt on firm performance through the influence of strategic emphasis, as well as an important contingency.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In this study, we explore the effect of convertible debt – bondholders have options of converting the bond into specified shares of common stock at certain times during the bond's life – on firm performance through a marketing mechanism, viz. strategic emphasis. In addition, this research also investigates how the effect above varies in an important environment – market turbulence. We find that the adoption of convertible debt ultimately hurts the long-term firm performance, and this effect is mediated by a strategic emphasis shift towards exploitative activities (e.g., advertising expenses). We also find that market turbulence positively moderates this effect. In a turbulent market environment, firms that conduct convertible debt will be more

likely to invest in exploitative activities, which makes the negative effect of convertible debt on firm performance through strategic emphasis shift even stronger. Our research explains why and how convertible debt affects firm performance negatively under the marketing explanation.

Method and Data

We use the Compustat database for annual finance and marketing data. We test our hypotheses using the Fortune 500 firms that conduct convertible debt for the period from the year 2012-2018. Regression analysis was applied to analyze the data to examine the effects of convertible debt on performance. In addition, we also addressed the endogeneity by using instrument variables.

Summary of Findings

H1 predicts a direct negative relationship between convertible debt and firm performance. Based on the results, we found a significant negative result for the direct effect between convertible debt and firms' Tobins'q.

In addition, we found support for the mediation hypotheses (i.e., H2). The negative effect of firms' adoption of convertible debt on firm performance is mediated by shifting firms into a more exploitation-oriented development path, such that a convertible debt strategy results in strategic emphasis shifts into exploitation (i.e., invest more in advertising), which ultimately leads to a decrease of firm performance.

In support of H3, the positive interaction term indicates that in the market turbulent environment, firms that conduct convertible debt will be investing more in exploitative activities (i.e., advertising spending) relative to a non-turbulent environment. We can see that market turbulence reinforces the effect of convertible debt on strategic emphasis shift into exploitation.

Key Contributions

First, our study contributes to the convertible debt literature. Our study is the first to provide theoretical and empirical evidence explaining why and how convertible debt affects firm performance from a marketing perspective – by shifting the strategic emphasis of firms. Different from extant literature, we indicate that the adoption of convertible debt results in an agency relationship change, such that top managers will have aligned interest with convertible bondholders, to invest in exploitative activities. In addition, we explore how the effect varies under market turbulence.

Second, our study extends the conceptual boundaries of strategic emphasis. It examines the antecedents of strategic emphasis from a financial strategy perspective. It indicates that strategic emphasis is not only influenced by marketing strategies, as a firm-level orientation shift, it is also impacted by financial decision-making such as the convertible debt decision.

Third, our study reveals that managers should comprehensively analyze the effects of convertible debt since it will eventually hurt the long-term performance of firms. In addition, Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) and other marketing practitioners should be particularly aware of the negative effects of convertible debt in a turbulent market and communicate with other departments on how to avoid such negative consequences.

The Economic Value of Satisfied Customers in Times of High Inflation

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Keywords: Macroeconomy, customer satisfaction, cash flow

Description: The authors empirically demonstrate that a firm's customer satisfaction score weakens (strengthens) the unfavorable negative (favorable negative) association between inflation rate and a firm's cash flow level (cash flow variability).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

How does a firm's customer satisfaction score moderate the impact of inflation rate on the level of and variability in the firm's cash flow?

Method and Data

Firm-year serves as our unit of measurement for each variable in our reduced-form specifications of cash-flow level and cash-flow variability. We sampled 3172 firm-year observations, spanning 24 U.S. public firms in 72 industries from 1994 to 2020. A firm's cash-flow level in year t is its operating activities net cash flow (Compustat data item: OANCF) in year t divided by its total assets (AT) in t. The firm's cash-flow variability is the coefficient of variation in the firm's quarterly cash flows from year $t - 4$ to year t, divided by the coefficient of variation of quarterly cash flows for the stock market in the same five-year period.

A country's macroeconomy in a year reflects in inflation rate (the explanatory variable of our interest) and four others: GDP growth rate, unemployment rate, interest rate, and import price. Each of our two specifications controls for these four macroeconomy-year-level variables. We also control for nine firm-year-level variables and three industry-year-level variables (source: Compustat).

We sourced the data on U.S. inflation rate from World Bank. Data for the other four macroeconomic variables are from World Bank (for GDP growth rate and unemployment rate), Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (for interest rate and import price). We measured a firm's customer satisfaction using its score on the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). We instrument a firm-year's ACSI score by the weighted average of ACSI scores of the firm's peers in the same year (weight is inversely related to the distance between the focal firm and each of its peers on a four-dimensional positioning map).

Summary of Findings

First, for an average firm in an average year, a 1% increase in U.S. inflation rate in a year is associated with a *drop* in the firm's cash-flow level in the following year by $6 for each $1,000 in the firm's total assets. Because the median value of total assets for firms in our sample is $90 billion, the effect means that a 1% increase in inflation rate is associated with a drop in the firm's cash-flow level by $540 million. Replicating Gruca and Rego's (2005) finding, we report that a 1% increase a firm's customer satisfaction score in a year lifts its cash-flow level by $96 million in the following year. Lastly, and most importantly, each 1% increase in the firm's customer satisfaction score weakens the adverse association between inflation and cash-flow level by 5%, suggesting the economic value of satisfied customers in times of high inflation rate.

Second, a 1% increase in U.S. inflation rate in a year is associated with a *decline* in the variability in the firm's cash flow by 5.33%, relative to the variability in the stock value of the S&P 500 Index. Again, replicating Gruca and Rego's (2005) finding, we report that a 1% increase in a firm's customer satisfaction score lowers the variability in its cash flow by .48%. Lastly, each 1% increase in the firm's customer satisfaction score *strengthens* the negative

favorable association between inflation and cash-flow variability by 2.33%, further confirming the economic value of satisfied customers in times of high inflation rate.

Key Contributions

In documenting the economic value of satisfied customers in times of high inflation, we contribute to the literature on customer satisfaction. More broadly, in showing that inflation impacts a firm's level of and variability in cash flow and that customer satisfaction can moderate these effects, we add to the knowledge at the marketing-finance interface.

References are available upon request.

HOW DOES BRAND PERSONALITY MODERATE THE EFFECT OF PRODUCT RECALLS ON SALES AND THE ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS DURING RECALLS?

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Key words: brand personality, product recall, advertising, expectations, excitement, competence, sincerity

Description: The authors show that brand excitement aggravates the sales effect of recalls. Further, advertising by an exciting brand or a sincere brand mitigates, whereas that by a competent brand aggravates the drop in the effectiveness of advertising during recalls.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

How does brand personality moderate the sales effect of product recalls and the sales effectiveness of advertising during recalls?

Method and Data

We answer our research questions in the context of automobile recalls in the United States between January 2009 and October 2019. Integrating archival data from 10 sources, we create a database of 3,870 brand-month observations covering 35 automobile brands. We estimate regressions to test our hypotheses.

Summary of Findings

We find that the brand personality dimension of excitement aggravates the negative effect of recalls on sales, whereas neither competence nor sincerity moderates the sales effect of recalls.

We also find that whereas advertising by an exciting brand or by a sincere brand mitigates the sales losses during recalls, advertising by a competent brand aggravates the losses.

Key Contributions

The primary contribution of our research is to the empirical literature that documents how marketing can mitigate a drop in firm performance in the wake of a failure that impacts consumers (Cleeren, Van Heerde, and Dekimpe 2013; Gao et al. 2015; Liu and Shankar 2015; Van Heerde, Helsen, and Dekimpe 2007; Zhao, Zhao, and Helsen 2011; Zhou et al. 2019). We contribute by demonstrating that brand—the quintessential marketing *asset*—moderates (1) the effect of recalls on sales and (2) the sales effectiveness of advertising (the quintessential marketing *action*) during recalls.

We offer actionable takeaways for product quality managers, brand managers, and advertising managers. Specifically, we help product quality managers know the effect that low-quality products have on the brand's sales. Brand managers would find valuable the knowledge that high-excitement brands lose more sales due to recalls than their low-excitement counterparts. Advertising managers can use the findings that advertising during a recall helps an exciting and/or sincere brand, but hurts a competent brand is relevant and useful to advertising agencies and professionals.

References are available upon request.

THE WEIGHTING OF PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES IN MARKETING PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS

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Keywords: Metrics, Marketing Performance Measurement, Management Control, Comprehensiveness

Description: This survey-based cluster analysis examines the design of marketing performance measurement systems and identifies five ways of how companies prioritize different aspects of marketing performance; a comprehensive measurement approach considering all aspects of marketing performance is associated with the highest market success.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In today's volatile firm environment, marketing performance measurement systems (MPMS) are a valuable management tool to steer marketing activities towards predefined strategic objectives and demonstrate the value of marketing to top management. A key managerial challenge is to assess which combination of metrics is most useful for steering and assessing marketing performance. Caught between financial accountability and sustainable growth objectives, marketing executives face the question of which types of performance outcomes (e.g., customer mindset outcomes, behavioral outcomes, financial outcomes) should be assessed for marketing control.

However, few studies have examined what combinations of marketing metrics are deployed for marketing control. Consequently, little is known about what aspects of marketing performance are measured in company practice and how these are prioritized. To address this research gap,

the authors survey what marketing metrics are used for steering and infer how firms weigh different types of performance outcomes in their MPMS. Further analyses provide insight into how different measurement approaches are associated with market success and firm performance. The objective is to provide a differentiated description of MPMS design and infer the usefulness of the identified performance measurement approaches for specific company sectors.

Method and Data

A standardized written online survey targeted at marketing executives and board members in German-speaking countries was conducted to capture the marketing performance measurement activity of the participating companies. A literature-derived list of 29 marketing metrics was surveyed. The sample structure (n = 179 executives) largely corresponds to the business landscape in the German-speaking countries, characterized by a high share of small- and medium companies (SMEs).

A cluster analysis was performed to examine how firms weigh different types of performance outcomes in their MPMS. Based on the marketing performance outcome chain, the five performance outcome types customer mindset, customer behavior, customer-level, product-level, and accounting/financial performance constitute the five input variables for the analysis. The respective weighting of a performance dimension was operationalized as the indicated number of metrics used to assess performance in that dimension (measurement activity) – following the more metrics are deployed for one performance dimension, the more that dimension is valued by the participating company. The fusion algorithm consequently paired companies that have a similar use of metrics and weighting of performance dimensions. Market success and firm performance were self-reported by respondents, as most participating companies were not stock listed.

Summary of Findings

The cluster analysis reveals five ways of how companies use MPMS for marketing control. A brand, a behavioral, a comprehensive and a financial orientation as well as MPMS without an emphasis on a particular performance outcome type were identified.

The results show that, on average, industrial and retail companies strongly weigh financial aspects of performance, while consumer goods companies report a strong use of customer mindset metrics for marketing control. Service companies are over-represented in the cluster with a behavioral performance outcome orientation.

Cluster comparisons indicate that comprehensive control is associated with a more effective fulfilment of marketing core tasks, higher market success, and data-driven decision making. Companies who lack strategic focus or comprehensiveness perform significantly worse. Companies with comprehensive performance measurement are also significantly more content with their marketing control efforts than companies with a behavioral, financial or no orientation. The results also indicate that service companies employing a comprehensive measurement approach outperform service companies with other measurement approaches.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our study further explicates breadth in MPMS by examining what specific aspects of marketing performance are measured and prioritized, and thereby adds to studies on comprehensiveness. The results indicate that companies with comprehensive MPMS perform on average better in the market, are most satisfied with their own control efforts and embrace a more data-driven and investment-oriented culture. This supports the claim that the reconciliation of different performance outcomes drives benefits of marketing control. Our results also confirm the contextuality of MPMS design addressed in previous studies.

The results indicate that marketing executives should either strive for focused marketing control with a strategic emphasis on a particular performance outcome or employ a comprehensive

marketing control approach. A lack of strategic focus and metric use, on the other hand, is associated with significantly lower market success and firm performance. Service companies are most successful employing a comprehensive marketing performance measurement system.

References are available upon request.

TOWARDS THE DESIGN OF A DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR MARKETING - A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH COMBINING INSIGHTS FROM THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Keywords: Decision Support Systems, Cybernetics, Informed Decisions, Decision-Making.

Description: Unprecedented volatility characterizes current times, which makes it impossible for marketers to make informed decisions on future marketing strategies. Our research proposes a decision support system that enables executives in the marketing field to leverage their decision-making based on technological advances.

ABSTRACT

The research aims to design a decision support system (DSS) for executive-level marketing managers based on Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) methods for topic modeling from contemporary marketing literature. For this, we incorporated keywords drawn from 41,738 articles from the 25 leading scientific journals devoted to management, cybernetics, and marketing.

INTRODUCTION

DSSs were initially proposed in the mid-1960s (Fernandes, Vinagre, and Cortez 2015). A DSS is a computer program that analyses and prepares business data in order to guide managers and other executive users in making business decisions. DSSs mainly appear in domains of poorly structured decision environments. A problem is poorly structured if objectives, procedures, inputs and outputs cannot be separated (Arnott and Pervan 2008). To

"grasp" those problems, DSSs use high-volume data and empirical models to filter, aggregate, process and make available relevant information. The use of a DSS is giving decision-makers the possibility to find solutions for real-time problems. These problems can be semi-structured to unstructured and involve multiple attributes, goals or objectives(Nemati et al. 2002).

RESEARCH DESIGN

An unsupervised machine learning algorithm was applied to collect and analyze all 41,738 articles from the 25 leading scientific journals devoted to management, cybernetics, and marketing between 1936 and January 2022. Articles were collected from the database "Web of Science". Gaps in the database were filled by manual processing. Commentaries and editorials were excluded from this study.

Our focus is to extract topics drawn from the keywords of the research articles by using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) methods. Conceptual articles are not free from personal bias. LDA aims to extract "objective" topics from the large volume of articles available, purely based on probabilistic calculus. LDA assumes that each topic is associated with multiple terms and that terms can belong to multiple topics. However, these topics have different effects on the overall topic distribution. The methodology provides a robust foundation for this research and a way for future research to analyze a large amount of textual data for a more holistic grounded theory design.

As a first step, a content analysis of 25 top management journals was conducted. The scope of different journals are listed in Table 1. Only articles were analyzed whereas notes, errata or comments were not included. This type of analysis is used to achieve an objective, systematic and quantitative view of the published articles. In addition, it enables an interpretation of the

changing priorities of redactors, reviewers and authors that have shaped the development of the field (Furrer, Thomas, and Goussevskaia 2008).

Journal	SJR (2021)	JIF (2021)
Journal of Marketing Research	145	6.664
Journal of Consumer Research	194	8.612
AMS Review	21	3.137
Strategic Management Journal	300	7.815
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	183	14.904
Management Science	264	6.172
Journal of Marketing	253	15.360
International Journal of Research in Marketing	109	8.047
Journal of Retailing	145	11.190
Marketing Science	135	5.411
Academy of Management Journal	336	10.979
Operations Research	145	10.979
Journal of Service Research	130	10.052
Journal of Operations Management	199	6.720
Journal of Consumer Psychology	122	4.551
Journal of Supply Chain Management	98	8.025
Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal	53	5.761
Journal of Business Logistics	85	7.875
Production and Operations Management	120	4.638
Manufacturing & Service Operations Management	92	4.638
Global strategy journal	30	7.393
Long Range Planning	109	7.825
Decision Support Systems	161	6.969
Journal of Decision Systems	25	-
International Journal of Decision Support System Technology	12	-

Table 1: Extracted research journals incorporating the SJR-Score (h-index) and Journal Impact Factor as of 2021 (Source: Web of Science).

With the help of the KNIME Analyitics Platform, articles were divided into 100 main topics based on keywords. The keywords of the articles were taken from the Web of Science and CrossRef databases. The two databases obtain their information from the homepage of Springer-Verlag. To determine the most relevant topics from the management field over the last 66 years, a simple parallel distributed implementation of LDA by Newman et al. (2009) was used with the sparse LDA sampling scheme and the data structure of Yao, Mimno, and McCallum (2009).

One assumption made by the LDA is the "word bag" representation. It shows that the order of the words in the document is not crucial for the results. This is problematic from a semantic point of view, especially regarding language generation. However, this deficiency is not a significant limitation of the analysis regarding uncovering the pure structure of all documents. Another assumption is that the order of the documents is not essential. The time series analysis below shows that the interest in each topic can change during the process, so it can be helpful to estimate multiple LDAs over time. In this approach, the topic is a series of distributions across words. Therefore, an additional Correspondence Analysis (CA) was performed to assess the topic's relevance over decades. CA aims to reduce categorical (in this case textual data) to fewer dimensional data similar to the numerical counterpart of a Principal Component Analysis (PCA), which combines highly correlated variables into so-called factors.

The third assumption of LDA is that the number of subjects is known and fixed. The non-parametric Bays topic model delivers a sophisticated solution (Teh et al. 2006). In this model, the number of topics is pre-determined by the researchers. For complexity reductions, we chose a total of 100 topics. We also tested a model with 50 topics but the resulting topics were too coarse. New documents may contain topics not seen before. Therefore, when implementing the above topic model into a DSS infrastructure the LDA analysis has to be updated in frequent time horizons (e.g. monthly, quarterly or yearls) based on the actuality level necessary for the decision process.

Moreover, LDA assumes that topics are independent of each other. Therefore, neither correlations between topics nor hierarchical structures based on meta-topics and sub-topics are considered in this analysis (Maier et al. 2018). Therefore, a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) was used to examine the relationship between topic terms and keywords. It is an extension of the above mentioned CA on multi-dimensional level, i.e. it provides an analysis to identify patterns of relationships between several categorical dependent variables.

Figure 1 shows the MCA results for our 100-topic-term model. The results indicate an almost perfect fit of the extracted topics in relation to concatenated terms and documents subsumed to the topics, which can be viewed as a "proof of concept" of our analysis.

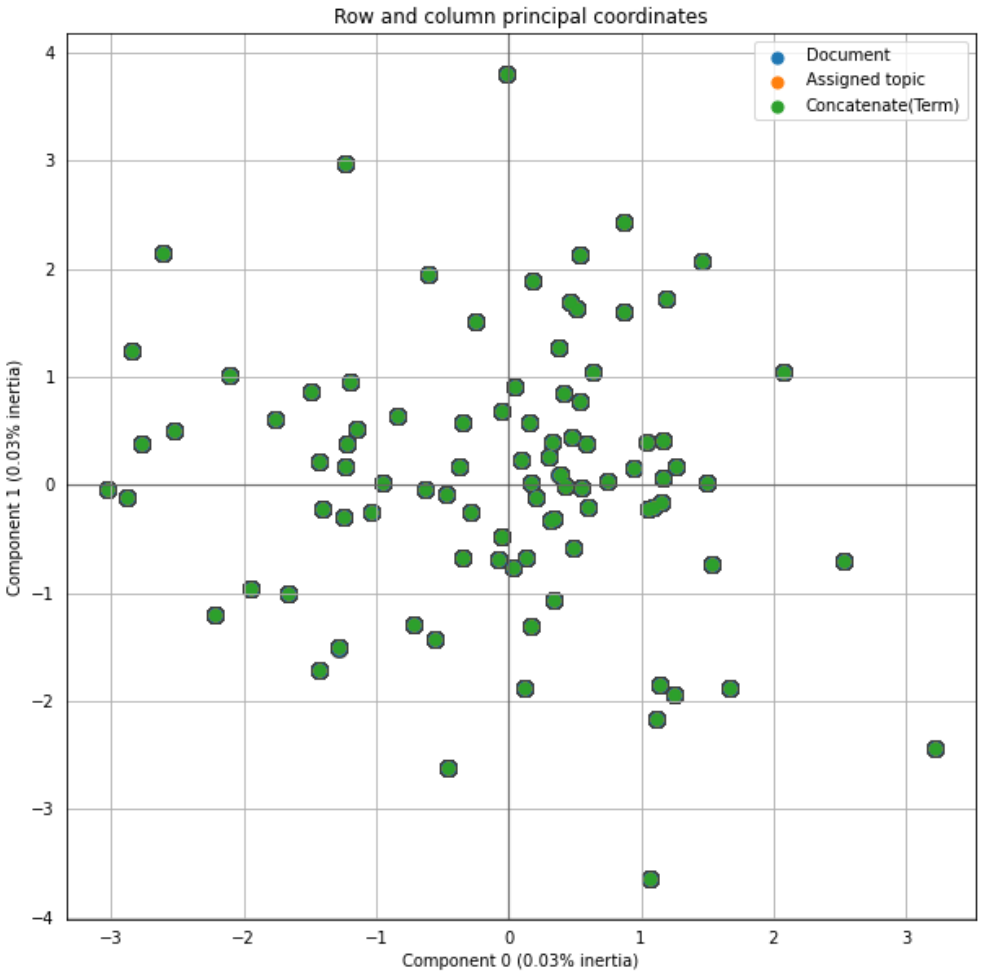

Figure 1: MCA analysis shows the proximity of observable keywords for research articles, topic assignments, and term assignments.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The CA shows the relationship between the assigned topics drawn from our LDA analysis and the grouped year intervals (Figure2). As decision criteria, we chose the frequency of articles published within a topic per year, which was automatically displayed, in form of a pivot table, drawn from the KNIME workflow. We chose a two-dimensional CA model to simplify the graphical representation. Topics (blue bubbles) in figure 2 that are closely related to periods

(orange bubbles) are also geometrically close to each other, in terms of Euclidean distance. The larger the topic bubble, the more articles were subsumed under this topic, and the larger the year bubble, the more articles were published during the respective period.

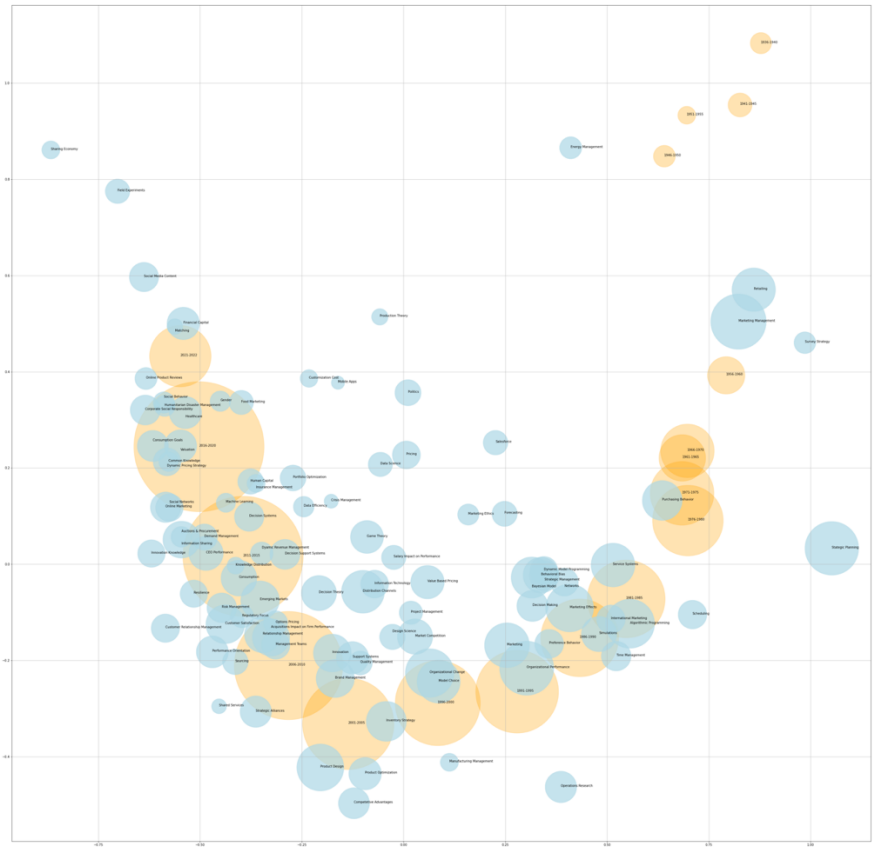

Figure 2: The CA analysis shows the connection of themes with time decades. The size of the bubbles represents the number of articles assigned to a year category or theme.

The two dimensions of the map in 2 can be interpreted as follows: Topics and year periods arrange a timeline in a parabolic shape. The top left of the graph shows the most recent article topics. There is a clear trend toward social media content (top right), but other topics such as "Corporate Social Responsibility", "Healthcare", and "Humanitarian Disaster Management" are also strongly associated with the modern era (2016-2021). Among them are topics from 2011 to 2015 such as "Decision Support Systems", "CEO Performance", and "Risk Management". Before this, "Innovation", "Management Teams", and "Sourcing", for example, can be identified as relevant topics from the years 2006 to 2010. Looking at the relevant articles from the turn of the millennium, "Inventory Strategy", "Organisational

Change", and "Product Design" play a major role. On the right-hand side of the diagram, particularly strong overlaps of topics are noticeable in the 1990s, in which "International Marketing", "Simulations", and "Algorithmic Programming" played a significant role. It is also worth mentioning that so-called ever-green themes can be identified that are connected across the board with decades and therefore appear in the center of the graphical analysis of figure 2. Examples of these topics are "Politics", "Data Science", "Game Theory", and "Forecasting". However, the Corona pandemic with its impact has also shifted traditional topics such as "Healthcare" and "Humanitarian Disaster Management" geometrically to the left in the topic coordinates in figure 2. The same applies to the field of "Machine Learning", which has formed a very relevant research field in the 2020s.

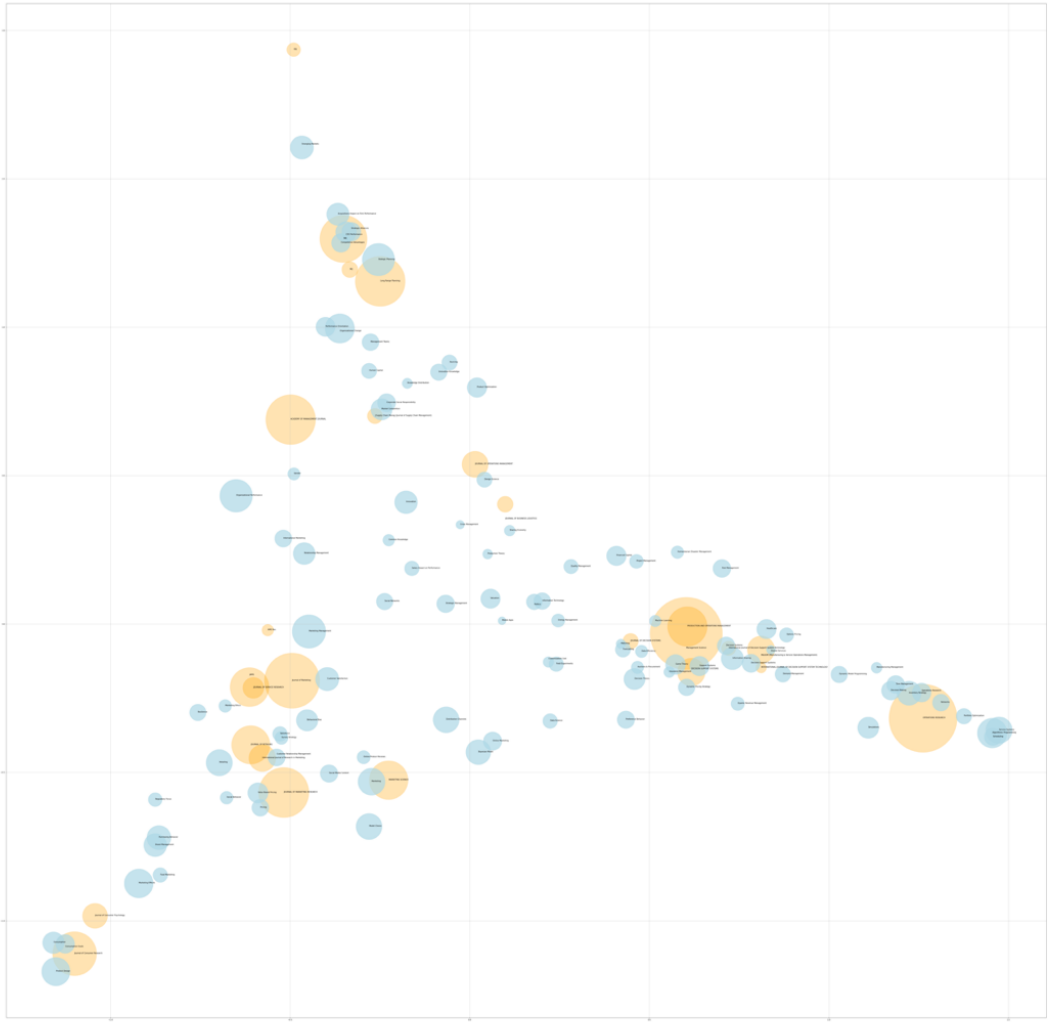

Figure 3: CA-Analysis indicating the association of topics with time decades. Size of the bubbles indicates the number of associated articles to either topic and year category respectively.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that there is a clear vertical separation in figure 2 of topics focusing on qualitative assessment with emphasis on individual aspects of consumers (top) and company-related aspects (bottom).

Figure 3 highlights the association between topics and journals. It becomes evident that the consulted journals are mainly oriented in three research directions. These three directions are management, branding, and operations. The management journals are at the top of the figure, operations journals are on the right and marketing journals are at the bottom left. The assignment of the journals with their associated topic underlines once again the robustness of our LDA model. Topics that are located in the middle of the figure can be found in several journals and thus research fields. Topics such as "CEO Performance", "Performance Orientation" and "Strategic Planning" are assigned to the management journal cluster. Topics such as "Purchasing Behavior", "Marketing Effects" and "Consumption" are reserved for the marketing journal cluster. When looking at the subject areas of the Operation Research Journals, topics such as Portfolio "Optimization", "Service Systems" and "Inventory Strategy" are distributed. Topics that have close ties in all underlying research areas are, for example, "Social Networks", "Information Technology" and "Field Experiments".

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Possible Marketing and Management applications emerge from the topics retrieved by our LDA analysis. As a result, we select healthcare, online media, agriculture, and supply chain management will play a crucial role for Marketing experts in the near future. The resulting DSS should be oriented around these topics. According to Ashby's law, a complex system can only be controlled by an equally complicated system: "Only variety can absorb variety" (Beer

1998). In the context of social systems, due to the enormous complexity of the system to be kept under control, one-to-one correspondence is not desirable. To control a system with a high degree of variety, there are two possibilities: variety damping and variety amplification. Variety dampeners are, for example, procedures such as clustering, which reduces a sample to a manageable number of groupings similar to our LDA analysis. Instead of this variety enhancers are, for example, advertisements that appeal to many potential customers despite a small number of employees in marketing.

It is necessary to provide integrated and pre-processed information to support the decision maker's understanding of the current situation. In addition, a memory function is essential because the amount of information in a complex model is very high, and this information needs to be captured and visualized to be useful for decision-making. Memory functions could be imbedded into our model by using Long-Short-Term-Memory (LSTM) algorithms, which are a subcategory of recurrent neural networks by adding an additional forget gate to the network architecture, thus separating significant information from superfluous noise. Through visualization processes, our model functions as a basis for decision-making that is used by a team and forms the basis for discussions. Our model thus provides information about the most relevant topics in the current management literature. In our research, we chose 100 topics that should be extracted by the LDA algorithm. By evaluating the associated keywords per topic, we could judge their relevance, as well as the quality of the fit to the associated articles, thus underpinning the robustness of out model. The results of this research provide a framework for a future DSS.

In the next step, the DSS needs to be implemented into a mobile app. This is essential to meet executives' needs for being in touch with up-to-date topics. The simplicity of the app is crucial since managers face permanent time pressure and thus cannot be distracted by overwhelming data representations.

Further, the DSS app should be a modular tool and, in this way, be adaptable to different needs of managers. Figure 4 displays possible modules that could be incorporated into the DSS app, thus building a so-called “Contemporary Management Cockpit" (CMC)

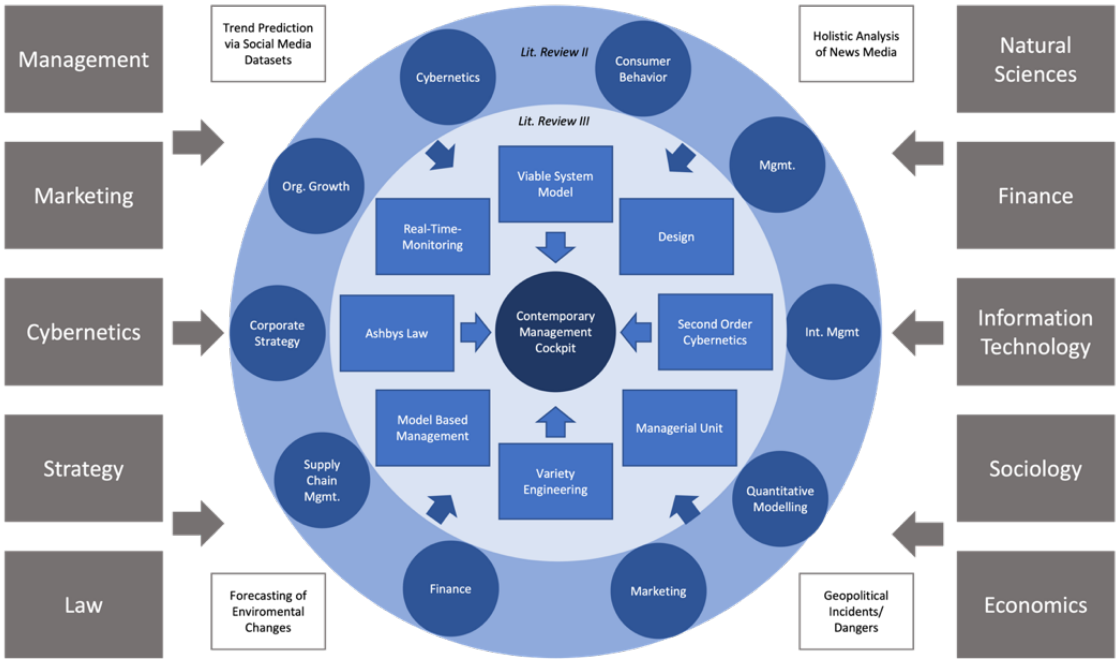

Figure 4: Contemporary Management Cockpit (Source: Author’s own illustration)

By looking at the most relevant topics retrieved by our LDA model, topics such as "Corporate Social Responsibility", "Healthcare", and "Humanitarian Disaster Management" have received a lot of research attention in the past five years and therefore should be incorporated into the CMC’s modular design. They build trends in modern Marketing and Management literature and will shape future decision-making. The DSS can predicts upcoming trends based on information from Social Media databases, such as Twitter, Instagram or Tik Tok.

SUMMARY

This research is one of the first papers to introduce LDA topic extraction for fast decision-making processes in the field of Management and Marketing. We base our analysis on the study of 41,738 research articles from 25 top journals in the respective field. As a result, our findings, pave the way for a collaboration between the holism of management science and the

decision for solid marketing strategies. Our approach will be beneficial for the continued viability of marketing and the evolution of DSS by including all actors involved in the decision-making process, thus forming a basis for more sustainable marketing investments. The resulting DSS app will make it possible to make informed decisions based on large amounts of data and in real time. The exponential volume of data sets affecting marketing decisions must be analyzed, organized, and processed. We highlight the opportunity to create a holistic approach that encompasses future topics in Marketing and Management based on a modular design of the emerging DSS, which culminates into a Contemporary Management Cockpit.

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WHAT MOMS REALLY CARE ABOUT WHEN BUYING BABY STROLLERS; A TOPIC MODELING APPROACH

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Keywords: Topic modeling, Latent dirichlet allocation, Online Review Analysis, Amazon stroller review.

Description: The current study empirically identifies what features of baby products, especially baby strollers, influence customer satisfaction by conducting topic modeling, a machine learning technique that analyzes text to determine cluster words for a set of online reviews.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Considering that baby products are purchased early in the family lifecycle of most households, with many bright prospects ahead, practitioners and academics in the marketing field of the baby products industry would welcome knowledge of what factors influence purchase decision and satisfaction judgment, warranting more research. With the technological changes and innovations within online shopping platforms, consumers' online reviews are becoming an important source for decision-making in the purchase of baby products, as the spontaneous and insightful feedback provided by other consumers is an authentic mixture of facts, real experience, opinions, impressions, and sentiments. The terms used in the reviews represent

identifiable dimensions of product experience that the consumers willingly choose to share. Hence, by analyzing online reviews and terms, one can extract the relevant dimensions of consumer satisfaction in using baby products.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore general consumer feedback about strollers and shed light on the features that influence consumers' satisfaction. This will ensure that marketers are informed of what considerations must be taken into account in implementing their marketing strategies. Altogether, this study explores the following research question:

RQ1: What features of baby strollers do consumers care about?

Method And Data (Not Applicable For Nonempirical Papers) – 200 Words

The current study used Amazon's customer review data on baby products from May 1996 to July 2014. The selected topic modeling method for this research is Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), as it is the simplest, most state-of-the-art and most used method in marketing. LDA is an unsupervised, probabilistic modeling method which extracts topics/themes from a collection of documents (in this case, reviews). The method uses a "Bag of Words" approach, where the semantics/meaning of the word is not evaluated. Rather, the method calculates the frequency of words and employs a Bayesian estimation framework to the text to infer the topics (i.e., distributions of words) and decompose each document into a mixture of topics, assuming that the most frequent words within a topic will present the relevance of the topic. LDA topic modeling algorithms automatically summarize extensive archives of text by discovering hidden topics or themes found within a set of documents. The basic idea behind this method is that certain words are more likely to be used with specific topics. The analysis process consists of three steps; pre-processing (i.e., getting the data and model ready to run), topic modeling (i.e., executing the LDA method), and post-processing (identifying the topics/themes to be used to understand the satisfaction features).

Summary of Findings

After analyzing a total of 5,788 reviews, a total of 20 topics were derived. Six attributes/features were developed by grouping similar topic subjects.

1. Safety: Judging from the words used here, “fall,” “trip,” and “crowd,” it can be interpreted that consumers were considering the function that prevents the baby from falling out of the stroller.
2. Economic advantage: The associated terms were “price,” “money,” and “value.” The topic covers terms such as “car seat,” “bassinet,” and “switch,” showing that the consumers were considering whether the stroller can also be used as a car seat.
3. Ease of maneuvering: Weights and transformability are factors that affect the ease of maneuvering, which are reflected in the topic with words such as "collapse," "compact," "pound" and "trunk."
4. Storage capacity: The topic is about space for baby food to be stored. Another topic regards space for caregivers’ things, such as “cup," "phone," or "key.”
5. Weatherproofness: The topic was about whether the product could protect the baby from rain. Another topic was about protection from the sun and used the words “shade,” “sun,” and “block.”
6. Customer service: Judging from the terms used, such as “problem,” “issue,” and “return,” it seems that consumers are concerned about the company’s management of customer service when problems arise.

Statement of Key Contributions

This study’s findings provide practical implications for online retailers who sell baby strollers. The results inform marketers as to which stroller attributes should be focused on and given management priority when creating and advertising their products. In addition, marketers are encouraged to develop an appropriate marketing strategy for parent consumers who are more demanding in regards to their babies. For example, according to the distribution of reviews per topic, the greatest review content is about storage capacity. Concerns about ease of maneuvering

also occupy a large portion. Marketers should pay attention to these points when setting up product development and advertising strategies.

In addition, the current study helps to understand stroller purchase trends based on a large amount of text data. Until now, it was challenging to interpret meaningful consumer opinions, because there was no consensus on a framework to derive such opinions regarding the use of a product like a stroller. This study is meaningful in that it improved the utilization of text analysis as a method to gain insights related to product usage. The keywords obtained from the topic modeling methodology will help expand the capabilities of current stroller products.

References are available uponrequest.

Retailing, Sharing Economy, and Customer Experience

A FRESH LOOK AT ONLINE RETAILING: EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COURIER SERVICE INTERACTIONS AND CUSTOMER OUTCOMES

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Keywords: couriers, moment of truth, online retailing, service quality

Description: This study examines the impact of the courier-customer interaction on retailer-related outcomes, considering different types of couriers.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Online purchases can be delivered by various types of couriers, such as those employed by unfamiliar (non-branded) logistics services providers, branded third-party providers (e.g., FedEx, DHL), or the online retailers' own delivery service. With the recognition that the supply chain continues through to the customer's door (not the store) and based on the services management literature that consistently affirms that "moments of truth" strongly influence key service outcomes (Groth et al. 2019), we argue that the encounter at the doorstep is another pivotal moment of truth, however brief, that should feature prominently in e-commerce marketing. Based on these findings and the well-known recency effect, the current research seeks to examine how interactions between couriers and customers shape three important customer outcomes: satisfaction with the online retailer, loyalty toward the retailer, and word of mouth (WOM) intentions.

Customer satisfaction with the courier also might function as a mediator and courier type as a moderator.

Method and Data

A scenario-based, one-factorial experiment was conducted, which involved 199 participants (53% female, mean age 27 years) who were randomly assigned to one of three scenarios describing a delivery situation: interaction with unfamiliar delivery service versus branded third-party logistics partner (DHL) versus proprietary delivery (Amazon delivery). For the statistical analysis of the mediation and moderation effects, we used the SPSS macro PROCESS (Hayes 2022). We ran individual analyses to investigate the mediating influence of satisfaction with the courier, as well as the direct relationships of courier service quality with the dependent variables: satisfaction, loyalty, and WOM. Next, a moderated mediation analysis was performed with courier type as a multicategorical moderator using indicator coding with the unfamiliar courier type (non-branded) as reference group. Both models included gender, monthly spending on Amazon, and monthly frequency of ordering online as controls.

Summary of Findings

As predicted, PROCESS Model 4 indicates a positive, direct effect of courier service quality on satisfaction with the courier. Courier service quality also exerts positive effects on all three retailer-related dependent variables. However, there is no indirect effect between satisfaction with the courier and any of the retailer-related dependent variables. Although not hypothesized, we find no significant relationship between satisfaction with the courier and the three outcomes. To further probe this issue, we conducted a follow-up analysis using model 14 in PROCESS. The results show a positive conditional effect of satisfaction with the courier on all three dependent variables only for the proprietary delivery (i.e., Amazon delivery). In addition, there is a negative

effect of satisfaction with the courier on retailer-related loyalty when the delivery is made by a branded third-party courier; there is no effect on satisfaction or WOM though. When the delivery is made by an unfamiliar logistics services provider, satisfaction with the courier has no effect on the three dependent variables. With PROCESS Model 5, we examine the conditional direct effects of this relationship in more detail. Only service quality for the proprietary delivery has a positive effect on all three outcomes. But if the delivery is executed by a branded third-party provider, its service quality has no effect on satisfaction with the retailer. We find similarly non-significant results for the service quality of the unfamiliar courier service.

Key Contributions

This research suggests that the delivery situation is a relevant stage in the e-customer journey by showing that it affects online vendor-related services marketing outcomes. Therefore, this study advances the notion that the delivery situation (i.e., the interaction between courier and customer) represents a neglected yet critical moment of truth. Indeed, even a brief face-to-face interaction can affect key outcomes. Additionally, we show that the strength of the service quality–outcomes relationships differs across courier types: only if the parcel is delivered by the online retailer's own proprietary delivery service, service quality positively influences the three outcomes. Delivery by a third-party provider, on the other hand, may actually have a negative impact on long-term relationship outcomes such as loyalty to the retailer. Practitioners benefit from this work as it addresses the only physical but frequently occurring face-to-face moment in the e-customer journey. The results make it evident that e-commerce firms must not only consider last-mile costs but also customers' delivery experience. Our results show that in the case of proprietary delivery services, the interaction between courier and customer translates into high

perceived service quality and satisfaction, suggesting that a proprietary (vs. non-branded or branded third-party) delivery service represents a competitive advantage.

AVOIDING A LOSS OR SECURING A GOOD DEAL? AN EMPIRICAL TESTIMONY TO THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PANIC BUYING AND PROMOTION-INDUCED STOCKPILING

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Keywords: panic buying, stockpiling, purchase behavior, consumer heterogeneity

Description: This paper empirically demonstrates that panic buying and promotion-induced stockpiling are inherently different phenomena, both in terms of how the behaviors occur and in terms of who engages in them.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

1. Research Question

Panic buying is a buying behavior where consumers stock up because they fear a shortage of certain products. It comes into play in times of crisis (e.g. hurricanes, Brexit, Ukraine war, COVID-19 pandemic). Panic buying is sometimes described using terminology from the literature on **promotion-induced stockpiling**, where a (price) promotion brings consumers to build up a greater inventory, by buying a larger quantity and/or by buying sooner than normal. Panic buying and promotion-induced stockpiling seem closely linked at first, as both are forms of inventory accumulation. However, there is an important conceptual difference: while promotion-induced stockpiling is driven by an incentive to make a (financial) gain, panic buying hinges on a fear of falling short.

This begs the question: does this difference in motivation between both phenomena also translate into different buying behavior? Our first objective is to empirically investigate how panic buying and promotion-induced stockpiling manifest themselves differently in terms of purchase behavior, specifically in buying sooner and/or more (RQ1). Moreover, the different motivations may trigger another type of consumer to react. Hence, as a second objective, we investigate how a selection of consumer characteristics moderate purchase behavior differently in light of panic and promotion (RQ2).

2. Method and Data

To compare promotion-induced stockpiling and panic buying in terms of buying sooner and/or more (RQ1), we employ the Type II Tobit regression model, where we include a daily panic index to capture panic buying and a daily household-specific weighted promotion index to capture promotion-induced stockpiling. We account for, among others, household inventory and price levels. To investigate the moderating effect of our set of consumer characteristics (RQ2), we employ a linear panel regression model and include the characteristics as interactions with both the promotion and panic indices.

We estimate both models using Dutch household scanner data between January 1st, 2018 and April 30th, 2020. We use the first year (i.e. 2018) as the initialization period to construct household characteristics and initialize inventory, and retain 5,749 households making 65,447 toilet paper purchases in the estimation period (i.e. January 2019–April 2020).

We focus our analyses on the *toilet paper* product category for two reasons. Firstly, toilet paper is a necessity product without obvious substitutes. Thus, households wish to avoid running out of it, and tend to panic buy it in times of panic. Secondly, as a non-perishable product frequently subjected to promotions, toilet paper also lends itself well to promotion-induced stockpiling.

3. Summary of Findings

Our results show that promotion-induced stockpiling and panic buying are inherently different, both in terms of *how the behaviors occur* and in terms of *who engages in them*.

Our Type II Tobit model (RQ1) revealed that promotions spur consumers to stockpile by buying *sooner* and *more*, while panic buying takes on the form of buying *sooner*. What is more, we find that in times of panic, consumers actually *decrease* the amount of toilet paper they buy per trip. This is a remarkable finding that challenges the popular image of an overflowing shopping cart as the symbol of panic buying behavior, but cannot be attributed to supply-side concerns or quantity limits, as we rule out these explanations in our research.

Moreover, whereas promotion-induced buying behavior is exhibited by a clear consumer profile, the panic buying consumer cannot be uniquely identified by our set of moderators, as it seems to be a behavior exhibited by a broad set of different consumer profiles (RQ2). Thus, contrary to popular and media belief, panic buyers are not one small group of 'selfish' consumers: many (and very diverse) people participate in it, making it a widespread, universal behavior.

4. Key Contributions

Our academic contribution is two-fold: we are – to the best of our knowledge – the first to empirically contrast panic buying and promotion-induced stockpiling. We do this by explicitly comparing both phenomena in terms of purchase behavior exhibited, as well as in terms of who engages in them. Secondly, we contribute to the panic buying literature by investigating disaggregate household panel data. As such, we add to previous research that has studied behavioral consequences of panic on aggregate measures; prohibiting a more fine-grained

analysis that decomposes panic buying into purchase timing and quantity at the household level and explores cross-household variations.

An explicit comparison of promotion-induced stockpiling and panic buying also benefits retailers and policymakers. We find that both behaviors manifest themselves differently, so retailer precautions that are typically in place for promotions are not appropriate in times of panic buying, and vice versa. For instance, quantity restrictions are known to increase promotion attractiveness. These limits are also sometimes used by policymakers to halt panic buying. As we find that consumers on average decrease their purchase quantities in times of panic, our research reveals such a policy measure could be ineffective in times of panic as opposed to a promotional setting.

CHECKING OBEDIENT CUSTOMERS FOR DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: frontline employees, services, dysfunctional customer behavior, customer satisfaction

Description: This paper shows that customers who are checked for dysfunctional behavior by a frontline employee perceive embarrassment from such a check (herein labeled a dysfunctional behavior check, or DBC), decreasing their satisfaction and loyalty.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

To prevent dysfunctional customer behavior, frontline employees (FLEs) frequently need to check customers (e.g., verify ID cards, check bags, run credit scores)—including those customers who behave well. As such, a *dysfunctional behavior check (DBC)* places the overwhelming majority of customers under suspicion of behaving poorly in order to prevent the dysfunctional behavior of a few. The repercussions of such checks on well-behaving customers may not be so straightforward. Some customers may respond negatively to a DBC because they feel that it is an intrusive and mistrusting way for the FLE to monitor and control them (Scheer and Stern 1992). Conversely, customers may react positively to a DBC because they recognize it is an important aspect of the FLE's competence and responsibility of ensuring a high-quality customer experience (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985). The possibility of mixed effects hence renders the examination of a DBC to be managerially important and theoretically interesting. Thus, our broad research question asks: what customer responses does a DBC evoke?

Method and Data

To empirically assess the effects of a DBC, we conducted seven studies. First, we scraped all available Yelp customer reviews between 2005 and 2021 for 199 New York City bars (n = 35,072), identified instances of a DBC, and estimated the effect of these instances of DBC on customers' star ratings. Second, we acquired a convenience sample of 18 local retail stores and observed the checkout procedure and noted instances of a DBC (Wieseke, Alavi, and Habel 2014). We also collected customer loyalty and additional scales through short surveys after the checkout procedure (n = 113). We then estimated the effect of a DBC on customer loyalty. Studies three through seven are scenario-based experiments in which we manipulated DBC and other factors and examined their effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Summary of Findings

On average, we find that a DBC exhibits negative effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty. This effect is negatively mediated by feelings of embarrassment and positively mediated by perceptions of security. These effects further depend on a customer's perceived normality of a DBC, such that a DBC decreases customer satisfaction and loyalty particularly strongly if customers do not perceive the DBC as being normal within the service process. In addition, we show that communicating a DBC as normal protocol alleviates its negative effects on the satisfaction and loyalty of customers who are inexperienced with a given service.

Key Contributions

Our study contributes to marketing research as follows. First, our work introduces the notion of a DBC as an important pre-incident tactic (e.g., Reynolds and Harris 2006) used by FLEs to avert dysfunctional customer behavior. That is, we empirically consider how FLEs can proactively prevent such behaviors from occurring in the first place. Second, we advance theoretical

mechanisms that lead to positive and negative consequences of a DBC, suggesting that there are beneficial effects and risks to a DBC. We illustrate that these mixed effects can be traced back to distinct affective and cognitive customer responses (i.e., felt embarrassment and perceived safety). Finally, we identify how certain and novel FLE strategies can be deployed in order to remedy the potentially damaging effects of a DBC. Our work also has straightforward implications for service providers. Most importantly, managers should recognize that, although a DBC may be in the best interest of the service provider, it may have unintended effects when it comes to customer satisfaction and loyalty. To ensure that a DBC is perceived positively by customers, managers should coach FLEs on how to frame and execute a DBC so that it reinforces normality perceptions, especially when dealing with customers who are inexperienced.

References are available upon request.

CONNECTING RETAIL EDUCATION TO RETAIL PRACTICE: HOW INNOVATIVE TEACHING FORMATS INFLUENCE STUDENTS' AND EMPLOYEES' TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

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Keywords: Retail Education, Marketing Education, Experiential Learning, Transformative Learning

Description: With this research, we investigate experiential learning formats and their effects on students' and employees' transformative learning.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Educational institutions struggle to make their courses more relevant to real-life challenges that students are about to be confronted with in their professional life (Durant et al, 2017). Researchers and practitioners question the transferability of knowledge gained in the classroom to real-life work environments (e.g., Petriglieri et al, 2011).

Many educational institutions use teaching formats that go beyond passive learning by promoting active learning via case studies, simulations, and group work (Hamer 2000). No doubt, these learning formats help students to develop cognitive, analytical, and communication skills

(Hopkins et al, 2011). However, they do not teach students how to apply the knowledge to the real world and, thus, are not that effective in preparing students for real-life work challenges (Grewal et al, 2018; Loewenstein et al, 2003).

In light of the heated debate on how to bridge the gap between the experiences that students make in the classroom and real-life work experiences (e.g., Durant et al. 2017), this paper examines how an innovative and experiential learning format may contribute to a more application-oriented and sustainable education among retail students and employees (i.e., transformative learning).

Method and Data

With this research, we investigate experiential learning formats and their effects on students' and employees' transformative learning. We conduct two qualitative studies.

The first study follows an ethnographic approach and analyzes more than 3'500 lines of text originating from 36 graduate students who participated in either an experiential or a non-experiential course and field notes from the research team teaching in or observing the two courses. The experimental course assigns small student groups with the task of increasing sales and profits of 30 products at an actual retail store. To achieve this, students can rearrange the store layout, product placements, and product presentations. The non-experiential course also requires students to work on real-life cases centered on one specific retailer throughout the whole semester. Students analyze the problem setting of the specific retailer and come up with a variety of tangible implications on how to solve this challenge.

In a second study, we conducted semi-structured interviews with retail employees of three stores that collaborated with the students of the experiential course. In sum, we conducted five interviews à 20 minutes with store management and three interviews à 20 minutes with frontline employees of the collaborating retailer.

Summary of Findings

Study 1. We used descriptive analysis to compare students' learned skills in the experiential and the non-experiential course. The skills reported in the experiential course are closely linked to key characteristics of transformative learning (i.e., interpersonal relations and teamwork [23.8%], interacting correctly with the store personnel [15.6%], and reflective thinking [11.1%]).

During a hermeneutical interpretive text analysis, five categories of transformative learning, which are idiosyncratic for experiential learning formats (Mezirow 1995), emerged. The categories were found in many text elements of the experiential course but in no text elements of the non-experiential course. The five categories focus on how students test and adapt the validity of their thoughts and behavior through self-reflection and discourse with others. Three of the five categories focus on the self (individual level) and two on the interactions between the self and others (collective level). The five categories are (1) empathy, (2) learning from others, (3) self-reflection, (4) transformation, and (5) personal development.

Study 2. The interview transcripts with store management and personnel validate the existence of the five categories of students' transformative learning, which we identified in study 1. Furthermore, we find that the students' trial-and-error mentality spilled over to store personnel.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our findings contribute to research and practice in three ways.

First, we contribute to the ongoing debate on how to bridge the gap between experiences that retail students make in the classroom and real-life work experiences (e.g., Durant et al. 2017). We show that experiential learning formats may trigger transformative learning among retail students through empathy, learning from others, critical self-reflection, perspective transformation, and

personal development. Thereby, we aim to fill the void on how real-life experiential tasks influence peoples' transformational learning process outside of the laboratory (e.g., Franco Valdez and Valdez Cervantes 2018).

Second, our findings yield implications for institutions of higher education and business practice in retailing and marketing (e.g., Woods et al. 2022). Given the increasing competition for "stationary" universities stemming from massive open online courses and the like, classes integrating real-life experiential learning can be a fruitful avenue for developing and sustaining a competitive advantage in higher business education.

Third, the experiential learning format presented in this research not only benefits students, but also frontline employees' who work together closely with students in these types of classes and gain feedback on their way of working.

References are available upon request.

CONSUMPTION STREAMS: A NEW METAPHOR FOR EXPLORING HOW CONSUMERS ENTER, CONTINUE WITH, AND EXIT SUBSCRIPTION BOX RETAIL

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Keywords: Subscription Box, Subscription Commerce, Qualitative Research, Depth Interview, Consumption Stream

Description: Based on depth interviews with subscription box users, we conceptualize and advance a novel metaphor – that of consumption streams – to demonstrate via eight distinct themes how consumers enter, continue with, and exit subscription box retail.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Initiated by Birchbox in 2010 (Toteva et al., 2021) and strengthened by the $1 billion acquisition of Dollar Shave Club by Unilever in 2016 (Bischof et al., 2020), the subscription box industry has grown 100% over the past five years (Chen et al., 2018). Given this scenario, there has been surprisingly little research on subscription boxes. Initial attempts at categorization delineated three major types: replenishment-based, curation-based, and access-based boxes (Chen et al.,

2018). Later research focused on two additional questions: 1) What are the characteristics of subscribers? and 2) What are the motivations for engaging in this type of retail? However, given the inherent limitations of prior research designs, extant work does not provide adequate insights for solving the subscription box industry's key challenge: high levels of churn.

The current project aims to address these limitations by focusing on the entire consumer journey associated with subscription boxes for replenishment-based and curation-based subscription boxes across a variety of products. We contextualize our findings against Fennell's (1978) product-use framework to understand similarities and differences across subscription box usage. Consequently, our focal research question is as follows: How do consumers experience different decision points within the subscription box journey?

Method and Data

Given the exploratory focus of our research, we opted for a qualitative approach to investigate consumer experiences of the two main types of subscription boxes in line with prior research (e.g., Gupta et al., 2020; Tao & Xu, 2018). We employed the depth interview methodology (McCracken, 1988) wherein we conducted interviews with respondents who were current or past users of replenishment-based and curation-based subscription boxes across a broad range of product categories.

12 subscription box users (2 men and 10 women) participated in the project over the course of five months. All interviews, averaging about 40 minutes each, were recorded and transcribed, and these transcripts formed the central dataset for subsequent analyses. All transcripts were uploaded to NVivo 12 and read and re-read separately by each member of the

research team. To understand the entirety of the consumer journey, we focused on respondent motivations to: (i) start subscribing to a box; (ii) continue with the subscription; and (iii) end the subscription. The overall analytical process was iterative, representing a recursive movement between parts of the data and the emerging themes, and adhered closely to the constant comparative method (Spiggle 1994).

Summary of Findings

Based on our analysis, we advance a new metaphor to describe subscription box retailing: consumption streams. Comprising a constant flow of products delivered to consumers with different frequencies, participating in the subscription box experience is akin to stepping inside a stream of consumable products. Consumers at any given point in time, therefore, have the option of continuing to stay in the stream or step out of it by either temporarily pausing the subscription or ending the subscription for the time being. Consequently, we map our thematic categories onto three possible decision points consumers face when participating in such consumption streams - initiation (entry), immersion (continuation), and egression (exit).

For the initiation stage, three key themes emerged in line with three distinct product-use situations detailed by Fennell (1978): *boxes as solutions to a problem*, *boxes as explorations of interest*, and *boxes as enjoyments of sensory pleasures*. For the immersion stage, three other themes emerged as key to consumer continuation: *retailer responsiveness*, *consumer incentivization*, and *experiential match*. Finally, for the egression stage, two themes emerged as reasons for consumer exits: *product stockpiling* and *market alternatives*.

Key Contributions

With this study, we make three key contributions to marketing literature. First, we advance a fresh conceptualization of subscription boxes as consumption streams. Our approach provides a new metaphor for understanding product offerings that take the form of a consistently delivered selection of one or more products to consumers at periodic intervals. Second, we provide an initial understanding of the elements that impact consumer decisions to enter, continue being in, or exit such consumption streams. Finally, we extend the growing body of recent work on subscription boxes by looking at them through Fennel's (1978) motivation classes.

From a marketing practice perspective, our research provides an additional level of understanding to subscription box retailers. As we find, while consumers may sign up for boxes due to a variety of reasons, retailers should attend to factors such as responsive customer care, occasional incentives, and a continuing degree of experiential match in order to retain subscribers. Given the continuing popularity of subscription boxes coupled with the simultaneously risky prospect of managing one as a business, our findings can help subscription box providers better tailor their market approach.

References are available upon request.

CROSS-BUYING IN RETAILING: THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER INSPIRATION

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Keywords: Cross-Selling, Cross-Buying, Psychological Mechanism, Customer Inspiration

Description: This paper investigates different antecedents of cross-buying and tests an underlying psychological mechanism explaining customers' cross-buying behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Retailers need to better leverage existing customer relationships in order to stay profitable (Zeithaml, 2000). One way of doing so is by cross-selling additional products to current customers (Kumar et al., 2008). Cross-selling refers to companies' proactive sales attempts (Rapp et al., 2015). Xu et al. (2022, p. 1) highlight that cross-selling is "one of the most important sales strategies retailers adopt to drive business revenue and increase customer lifetime value." Most cross-selling attempts have one common goal: companies want to increase customers' cross-buying behavior. Cross-buying or "add-on buying" refers to the *breadth of customer-firm relationships* (Bolton et al., 2004). It entails the number of different products, product categories,

or services purchased from a company over time (e.g., Kumar et al., 2016; Verhoef et al., 2001). A review of the literature revealed a total of 95 unique drivers of cross-buying. Among the most frequently studied antecedents of cross-buying, we find conflicting evidence about the direction and significance of the effects. The conflicting evidence calls for a better understanding of the psychological mechanism of customers' cross-buying behavior. We hypothesize that cross-buying decisions are driven by customer inspiration, a temporary motivational state (Böttger et al., 2017).

Method and Data

We ran a structural equation model to address the research gap. At first, measurement items for the antecedents and mediator were validated using confirmatory factor analysis. Subsequently, we tested a four-stage structural model to assess the effects of the antecedents and the mediator on cross-buying. We surveyed 841 American Walmart customers (49% female, M_{age}=40.2 years) that have made at least one purchase within the last 14 days about their purchase.

As drivers of cross-buying, we used 18 measures that were studied in at least two papers from our literature review. As an underlying psychological mechanism, we measured the ten items from Böttger et al.'s (2017) customer inspiration scale. We first asked participants about their cross-buying behavior at their last purchase. Afterward, we measured customer inspiration, followed by the 18 antecedents of cross-buying in randomized order. On average, customers purchased goods worth US$77.80 during their last purchase. Regarding the dependent variable (i.e., cross-buying), customers bought, on average, twelve different product entities (Range: [1,100]). The data show no issues with common method bias since the total variance extracted by one factor is 30.67% and is less than the recommended threshold of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Summary of Findings

Measurement model. The 75-item, 18-factor (three factors [i.e., past-revenue, cross-promotion, and cross-buying] were observed variables) were covariance structure measurement model has good fit statistics, discriminant validity, and internal consistency of all constructs in the model.

Structural model. To explore the role of customer inspiration, we ran four models to assess changes in the relationships as well as model fit characteristics. In the first step, we entered the covariates into the model. In the second model, we entered all 18 drivers of cross-buying into the model. In the third model, we added customer inspiration as a driver predicting cross-buying. Lastly, in the full model, customer inspiration served as a variable mediating the relationship between the drivers and cross-buying. Similar to the measurement model, the goodness-of-fit statistics for the full model (Model 4) were good and, most importantly, outpaced the other three models (χ^2/df=2.81, CFI=.90, IFI=.90, RMSEA=.046). Also, R^2 of cross-buying increased from .060 in Model 1, to .298 in Model 2, to .311 in Model 3, and .317 in Model 4. Both the model fit criteria and the explained variance suggest that integrating customer inspiration as a mediator leads to significantly better modeling results.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our findings contribute to research and practice in three ways.

First, no research has thoroughly examined consumers' psychological mechanism of cross-buying. Other scholars have only addressed context-dependent mechanisms (e.g., Bauer et al., 2022) or pointed them out in the discussion section of the paper (e.g., Kim et al., 2022). Our study sheds light on the underlying mechanisms and adds substantial insights to the ongoing discourse on cross-buying drivers (e.g., Kumar et al., 2008; Liu-Thompkins & Tam, 2013; Ngobo, 2004; Ravula et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2022).

Second, our study goes beyond *cross-selling the right product at the right time to the right customer* (Kamakura, 2007; Li et al., 2011). Customer inspiration as a motivational state (Böttger et al., 2017) drives cross-buying behavior by raising the awareness of what is desirable and thus awakening new customer needs. We establish the mantra of *inspiring the right customer with the right products at the right time*.

Third, by showing that customer inspiration fully mediates the effects of marketing activities and salespersons' customer orientation on cross-buying behavior, our findings help retailers better design cross-selling marketing activities.

References are available upon request.

CUSTOMER ENTITLEMENT: WHAT MAKES ENTITLED CUSTOMERS USE SELF-SERVE TECH IN A SERVICE ENVIRONMENT

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Keywords: Customer entitlement, self-service technology, effort willingness, frontline employees

Description: Investigating customers' behavior when interacting with self-service technologies by understanding their level of entitlement and effort willingness.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The introduction of technology into service environments has changed their frontline interactions with customers (Dabholkar 1996; Huang and Rust 2017). Automated technology and artificial intelligence have created the foundation for developing self-service technologies (SST), voice-recognition assistants, and humanoid robots that are changing the foundation of interactions between customers and services firms (De Keyser et al. 2019; Huang and Rust 2017; Inman and Nikolova 2017). Service providers not only invest in these technologies in the hopes of gaining a competitive advantage but also to reduce labor and operation costs (Hackett 1990).

Notably, much of this technology requires customers to engage in more effort as part of the service experience (e.g., scan and bag their purchases). This conflicts with the observation among marketers that consumers are becoming more entitled, demanding that service providers cater to their needs and exceed their expectations (Boyd and Helms 2005; Butori 2010; Conlon 2020; Stewart 2022). This introduces challenges for both service providers and consumers (Butori 2010). Therefore, it is crucial to more precisely identify which customer segments prefer technologies versus human employees in service environments and why to better design and implement service strategies.

In the current research, we investigate the role of entitlement in predicting consumers' resistance to technology-based service providers. Entitlement has been studied as a situational state (Li and Fumagalli 2021; Polyakova et al. 2020; Zitek et al. 2010) and as a chronic disposition that varies between consumers (Campbell et al. 2004; Fisk and Neville 2011; Wang and Zhang 2021). Entitlement is a component of narcissism and refers to "the extent to which an individual expects special treatment and automatic compliance with his or her expectations." (Boyd and Helms 2005). In a service context, entitlement is characterized by wanting special

attention and being catered to by the service provider, having higher expectations, having their needs met immediately, and responding with hostility when these expectations are not met (Boyd and Helms 2005; Fisk and Neville 2011; Grubbs and Exline 2016). Thus, entitled consumers may respond negatively to technology-based services, as this technology often requires the customer to fulfill parts of the service themselves in lieu of an employee. Given this, we predicted that customers with a higher (vs. lower) sense of entitlement are less willing to exert effort as part of the service process and, therefore, will show less favorability toward technology-based service providers (self-serve kiosks).

Previous research has investigated customers' evaluations of technologies in service environments and the consumer characteristics that shape these evaluations (Dabholkar 1996; Huang and Rust 2017; Meuter et al. 2000; Singh et al. 2017). For example, research has examined customers' evaluations of service employees using technology (Giebelhausen et al. 2014), the effect of recovery agents (employee vs. technology vs. fellow customers) on customers' recovery satisfaction (Ho et al. 2020), and other customers' motivation to help in SST service failures (Ho et al. 2020).

Technology researchers have also investigated the effect of attitude toward using technology (Bobbitt and Dabholkar 2001), understanding customers’ need type (e.g., intense or immediate), and perceived advantage on satisfaction (Meuter et al. 2000). However, there is a lack of research in understanding the role of customer entitlement in self-serve technology use. As a result, the current research provides a new theoretical understanding of customers' technology use intention by introducing customer entitlement as a predictor for customer behavior toward frontline service technologies.

Also, previous research has explained the motivations to use technology by technology readiness (Lin and Chang 2011), perceived ease of use, and perceived usefulness (Weijters et al. 2007), but the role of effort willingness is a novel explanation for customers' favorability toward self-service technology.

The importance of entitlement in marketing has been shown in the literature, including measurement development (Boyd and Helms 2005; Butori 2010), and the effect of entitlement on consumer behavior (Goor et al. 2020; Li and Fumagalli 2021; Zboja et al. 2016). Even though previous studies help understand the underlying reasons for how customers interact with technologies, there is also a need to provide a clearer way for managers to anticipate how different customers respond to technology in the service environment to inform strategic guidelines for implementing these technologies.

Research Question

This research investigates how consumers' sense of entitlement influences service interaction choice when there is technology on the frontline. It has been theoretically predicted and empirically found that entitled consumers are less favorable toward technology-based frontlines, due to their decreased willingness to exert effort during their service experience (effort willingness).

Methods and Data

Across three studies, we showed that customers with a higher sense of entitlement are less interested in interacting with self-serve technologies because they would like others to do the tasks for them; they have a low effort willingness.

Study 1. We tested if customers with a higher sense of entitlement would have a lower repurchase intention in a retail environment. We recruited three hundred and three undergraduate students from the business school's behavioral lab in exchange for course credits. Participants imagined they were at a grocery store that heavily used technology. Repurchase intentions. Effort willingness, and entitlement were measured (Butori 2010).

Study 2. e manipulated whether or not self-serve technology was framed as offering special, personalized service would attenuate the effect of entitlement on service preferences. Four hundred participants were recruited on MTurk. Participants read about a car rental company that allows customers to get their rental car through a self-serve kiosk and how the process works. Effort willingness customer entitlement were measured (Butori 2010).

Study 3. We tested if a financial incentive (discount) would attenuate the effect of entitlement by increasing highly entitled consumers' intentions to use self-serve technology. Two hundred forty-six undergraduate students participated in the study at the business school's behavioral lab Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (between-subject). Intention to use the self-serve kiosks was measured as the dependent variable. Effort willingness was measured and customer entitlement were also measured (Boyd and Helms 2005).

Summary of Findings

Our studies show that customers with a higher sense of entitlement had a stronger preference for interacting with human service providers over technology-based service providers and showed lower intentions to use technology-based service providers. This effect was mediated by effort willingness. This effect was found across different contexts, including a grocery store, car rental, and a café scenario. The effect of entitlement on service preferences was also robust to

interventions designed to attenuate it. Framing the technology as offering a personalized experience did not attenuate the effect (Study 2), nor did offering an incentive (i.e., discount) to use the technology-based option (study 3). Controlling for social interaction desire and age did not change the results.

Key Contributions

From a theoretical perspective, we offer a novel antecedent and explanation for understanding consumers' intentions to use technological interfaces. Although there is an abundance of research on frontline technology, there is still a need for insights into understanding the behavior of customers when interacting with technological frontline in service or retail environments. To bridge this gap, we introduced and investigated the effect of consumer entitlement in this domain, with effort willingness serving as a novel theoretical explanation for the effect of entitlement on service preference. These theoretical explanations help managers and practitioners urge their customers to use technologies more than before in areas where they struggle to promote their frontline technologies. By knowing that highly entitled customers are not interested in using self-serve kiosks because of their low effort willingness, this research also highlights potential challenges for managers who intend to use self-serve technologies in their stores' frontlines. We speculate that if managers highlight the advantages of self-service technologies (e.g., faster and smoother service experiences or automated self-service kiosks), it could help them better promote their store technologies and urge their customers to use them.

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CUSTOMER MISTREATMENT: A DYADIC PERSPECTIVE

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Keywords: Customer Mistreatment, Frontline Employee, Emotions as Social Information, Polynomial Regression

Description: This paper tests the dyadic impact of customer mistreatment on the frontline employee's emotions and the customer's perceptions of service quality and satisfaction.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question:

Unruly and rude customer behavior is on the rise. Estimates indicate that frontline employees (FLE) experience 10 episodes of customer mistreatment daily (Reynolds & Harris, 2009). Past research has investigated how FLEs feel upon experiencing poor treatment from customers. However, it is imperative to gain the customers' perspective of these poor interpersonal interactions to help improve the welfare of both the FLEs and the customers. This study contributes by examining both parties reports of customer mistreatment and downstream consequences for both the FLE and customer, namely the emotions expressed by FLE and the customer's evaluation of the interaction. Using Emotions as Social Information theory (Van Kleef, 2016), we argue that congruent reports of emotional expression is important for accurately inferential processing by the FLE, which we expect to improve the customer interaction leading to higher perceptions of customer satisfaction and service quality. Additionally, when the FLE

perceives the customer mistreatment as authentic, they will deem it as more appropriate, thereby lessening their own negative affective emotions.

Method and Data:

We have partnered with two restaurants to collect surveys from servers and their customers. We tested our hypotheses using a dyadic survey from both the customer and the frontline employee for a preliminary sample of 63 dyads.

First, we tested whether it was appropriate to use multilevel modeling due to the nested structure of customers within servers, however the interclass correlation revealed that the FLE did not account for a substantial portion of variance. Next, we used path analyses and polynomial regression. To test the effect of mistreatment congruence on the customer's satisfaction and perceptions of service quality we used polynomial regression and response surface to interpret the results. We conducted two separate regressions predicting service quality and customer satisfaction. The moderating effect of authenticity was tested using path analysis.

Summary of Findings:

As expected, customer mistreatment was significantly positively related to negative affect of the FLE. In the presence of authenticity, the positive relationship between negative affect and mistreatment should be diminished, and the negative relationship between positive affect and mistreatment should also diminish to lend support. The interaction was significant and negative. However, authenticity did not have an impact on the relationship between mistreatment and positive affect. Furthermore, authenticity had a significant negative relationship with the FLE negative affect. The results did not support that negative affect had a significant impact on the customer's satisfaction or service quality. Surprisingly, the FLE's positive affect decreased the

customers satisfaction. Additionally, authenticity had a significant positive effect on the customers' satisfaction.

The curvature of the line (b3 – b4 + b5) was significant and negative for service quality, implying that congruence results in higher levels of service quality than incongruent or diverging reports of customer mistreatment. The incongruent line for customer satisfaction was not significant.

Statement of Key Contributions:

This research addresses an important gap in marketing literature, by investigating functional outcomes of customer mistreatment as previous literature has mostly focused on the intuitive dysfunctional effects of deviant interpersonal behavior. Additionally, we find that authenticity is a key moderator that diminishes negative affect following mistreatment. Finally, we investigate the relationship between customer mistreatment, service quality, and customer satisfaction, expanding the customer mistreatment literature by including the transgressor's perspective. The findings have implications for marketing managers, such as sales and retail managers. We provide actionable insights for managers and frontline employees when they are faced with customer mistreatment.

References are available upon request.

DEFINING THE CONSUMER MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT JOURNEY: *YOUTUBE* REFLECTIONS ON ANTIDEPRESSANTS

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Keywords

UGC, Drug Reviews, *YouTube*, Mental Health, Consumer Treatment Journey

Description

Based on an analysis of 74 user-generated drug reviews posted to *YouTube*, we propose a novel framework to help managers better comprehend the consumer mental health treatment journey.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

When do individuals engage in the consumption of and production of user-generated content (UGC) about their mental health treatment journey?

Literature Review

Most consumer journey frameworks are difficult to adapt to non-linear, non-hedonic consumption experiences that "… require support from social networks that help consumers navigate uncertain and lonely pathways" like those found in healthcare (Schau & Akaka 2021, p. 15). Because chronic illnesses, like depression, require pharmaceutical (product) adjustments as pharmacological knowledge advances, consumer journeys for psychiatric drugs are typically complex, involve multiple interactions with a company and other customers, and are rarely linear (Schau & Akaka 2021; Lemon and Verhoef 2016; Voorhees et al. 2017).

UGC in online communities can provide insight into the mental health consumer journey (e.g., Hamilton et al. 2020). Consumer-generated content is more authentic than brand-generated content and can provide information the brand is unlikely to share (Mayrhofer et al. 2020). Health-related UGC has become more personal and consumer-centered (Chou et al. 2009), making UGC videos about mental disorder treatments a rich information source for marketing insights (e.g., Naslund et al. 2014, 2016).

This study contributes to marketing and mental health services by proposing a novel consumer mental health treatment journey framework based on UGC.

Conceptual Framework

Our consumer mental health treatment journey is based on two theoretical models: the extended Common-Sense Model of Self-Regulation (e-CSM) and Dellaert's (2019) Consumer Co-Production Network Model.

E-CSM is first used to evaluate UGC content because it explains how consumers view mental illness, medication decisions, and adherence or nonadherence (e.g., Brown et al. 2005). Then, we link UGC to one of the four stages of Dellaert's (2019) Consumer Co-Production Network Model to form the basis of the consumption process. Dellaert (2019) suggested a four-step consumer co-production journey, which includes looking for a product, buying it, using it, and thinking about the product and purchase.

Our framework shows how consumers create distinct UGC at each stage of their mental health treatment journey:

- *Search*. In this step, UGC-related situational stimuli are created and/or consumed.
- *Treatment (Purchase).* UGC reflects the consumer's understanding about the danger or severity of their illness.
- *Experience*. Consumers create and share UGC about their medication and treatment plan (Leventhal et al., 1980, 1992).
- *Reflection*. Consumers create UGC to evaluate their mental health treatment progress.

- *UGC Loop.* Consumer interaction and content creation create a UGC feedback loop.

Summary of Findings

This study conducted a qualitative content analysis of publicly available *YouTube* videos found by conducting searches with terms that include the drug's brand name and the word "review". 74 videos with over 610 minutes of narration were analyzed. These videos have received 3,983,101 views and 20,203 comments, with 46,824 likes and 2,713 dislikes.

Consumers overwhelmingly view antidepressants as a "necessity" in their personal treatment journeys, with 61 videos discussing the positive effects of the focal drug. Most patients (33 videos) prefer to seek information from their medical provider as opposed to other sources (6 videos). Drug regimen nonadherence was discussed in 34 videos. Most users stopped taking the drug once they felt better and no longer saw a need for antidepressants (13 videos), developed a negative attitude toward all pharmaceuticals (8 videos), forgot to take meds (7 videos), or were afraid of developing a physical addiction (6 videos). Consumers discussed negative side effects extensively (68 videos) while praising the positive effects of the drug (61 videos). The duration of the side effects ranged from a few days to several weeks.

Our research shows iterative and recursive nature of consumers' mental health treatment journeys: We find that consumers consume and/or produce UGC as part of their mental health treatment journey.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research contributes to a better understanding of the psychiatric medication treatment journey of mental health consumers. Marketing literature on this type of journey is still limited, particularly in need-based consumption situations involving consumers diagnosed with long-term chronic illnesses such as depression. Prior studies have concentrated on the consumer journey's search and experience stages (Ahuja & Williams 2010; Larson & Block 2016). Machin et al. (2019) explore aspects of the treatment journey by identifying key obstacles that can impede progress. Our research connects these studies via a novel consumer mental health treatment journey framework using marketing and health-related models.

Our study provides insight into the mental health care system and suggests improvements for service delivery. Consumers (94.5 percent) extensively discussed negative side effects while praising the drugs' positive effects (84.9 percent). Marketers and service providers must recognize that the purchasing process does not end with a written prescription. In fact, even after purchase (prescription), consumers may enter a state of uncertainty in which they fail to begin the prescription or take the full prescribed dosage. Consumers are particularly interested in information about side effects and product withdrawal.

References are available upon request.

Effects of Celebrity-Morphed Robot on Implicit Familiarity, Likeability, and Intention

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Service robots are becoming an integral part of different services, increasingly replacing human service providers. Despite these developments, extant research has yet to reveal dependable methods of enhancing the likeability of excessively humanlike robots and boosting consumer willingness to interact with them. To fill this gap, the current study examines consumer reactions to excessively anthropomorphized robots. Building on holistic face processing and the mere exposure theory, we explore the effect of implicit familiarity on the robot's likeability and subsequent intention to use the robot. Specifically, by digitally morphing an unfamiliar robot's face with a well-known celebrity's face, our study aims to understand consumers' perceived familiarity of as well as their affective and behavioral responses toward the robot. We propose that morphing a robot's face with that of a celebrity generates implicit familiarity, which in turn leads to greater likeability and an increase in consumers' desire to use the robot for recommendations.

Keywords: Humanlike robot; Face processing; Mere exposure; Implicit familiarity; Likeability

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS TO ACADEME AND PRACTITIONERS

The interest in robots has been traditionally high among marketing researchers and practitioners. In recent years, humanlike service robots have become one of the main areas for innovation in services, and their emergence represents a dramatic shift in the traditional service delivery process. Since service robots increasingly appear in the frontline and interact with customers, the reproduction of meaningful social interaction becomes essential. Robots must be anthropomorphic in order to engage humans in meaningful social interactions. Based on the degree of human-likeness, robots are classified into humanoids, resembling cartoon characters, and droids that mimic human appearance as closely as technically possible. According to the extant literature, droids can convey competence, but they usually elicit a sense of dislike. Firms usually adopt machinelike robots (i.e., mechanoids) or cartoon-looking humanoid robots to avoid this adverse effect associated with droids. Even though mechanoids and humanoids usually do not arouse dislike, they also have disadvantages. Specifically, the lack of anthropomorphic characteristics in mechanoid robots makes applying the usual social norms and standards of human-to-human interactions challenging. Humanoid robots are usually likable; however, they fail to communicate a sense of competence. By suggesting ways to increase droids' likeability, the current work provides practitioners the option of adopting both likable and competent-looking robots in the service delivery process. Our study also contributes to the literature by integrating holistic face processing and the mere exposure effect in the research revolving around robots. Our findings suggest that a droid's likeability can be increased if imperceptible familiarity cues are infused in the robot's face. The likeability, in turn, is associated with the greater intention to use the robot for recommendations. In sum, we suggest that holistic face processing and mere exposure effect may explain consumers' positive reaction toward the robot

with the morphed face. Future research is needed to explore this mechanism further and identify boundary conditions associated with introducing these robots in the service delivery process.

INTRODUCTION

"We, all of us, over-anthropomorphize humans, who are after all mere machines" (Brooks, 2002, p. 175).

The automation of production with the help of industrial robots has a long history (Yam et al., 2021); however, the implementation of robots in the service industry is a relatively novel phenomenon. Technological developments in artificial intelligence (AI) — a collection of technologies that has been furnishing machines with increasingly humanlike physical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities — deliver opportunities for creating intelligent robots (Gray and Wegner, 2012) with capabilities to perform complex tasks (Wirtz et al., 2018). Traditionally, the service delivery process was confined to human beings whose physical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities allow them to provide a wide range of services. Nowadays, however, with the help of AI, robots are gradually altering how consumers and firms obtain services. For instance, intelligent service robots (i.e., interactive robots enhanced with artificial intelligence) increasingly appear on the frontline. There are numerous instances where intelligent service robots interact with customers and deliver services. For example, humanoid "Pepper" robots developed by SoftBank Robotics have been sold worldwide since their introduction in 2014 and have been serving as waiters, greeters, information providers (Mende et al., 2021; Blut et al., 2021), and even nannies (Markushova, 2020). Macco Robotics introduced a robot called "Kime" that serves beverages and food. It has a humanlike head and torso with two arms inside the kiosk and can serve up to three hundred glasses of beverage per hour (Markushova, 2020). Bank of

Tokyo-Mitsubishi acquired programmable mini-robots called “NAO” that speak three languages: Japanese, Chinese, and English, and they can respond to customer requests with pre-recorded responses (Justice, 2015). The benefits associated with adopting service robots, such as speed, consistency, ability to work without interruption, complex data processing (Leo and Huh, 2020), and cost reduction (McLeay et al., 2021), catalyze the integration of robots in different service domains. According to Harris et al. (2018), service robots will increasingly substitute human service providers in different industries (e.g., hospitality, health care, and food service). Fortune Business Insights (2020) predicted that the service robotics market will reach US$41.49 billion by 2027. These developments and forecasts indicate a potential for service robots to modify the future of service work (Jörling et al., 2019; Yan et al., 2021).

Because service robots are increasingly moving to the frontline and participating in interpersonal interactions (Liu et al., 2022), furnishing robots with anthropomorphic features (i.e., appearance-related or behavioral humanlike qualities) is desired (Duffy, 2003; Broadbent, 2017) to elicit perceptions of social presence and achieve meaningful social interactions between humans and robots. Depending on how easily people perceive humanlike robots as different from real people, robots are categorized into two groups: humanoids and droids (Mara et al., 2022). Humanoids usually resemble cartoon characters; they have heads, arms, torsos, and sometimes legs. Droids, on the other hand, mimic human appearance as realistically as technically possible. For example, droid robots usually have eyelashes, head hair, skin, clothing, nose, eyebrows, and genderedness (Phillips et al., 2018).

The creation of robots that as closely resemble humans as possible is highly praised in robotics (Rubin, 2003; Mende et al., 2021). However, there is a possibility that consumers may find dealing with highly anthropomorphized or humanlike robots not as desirable. This

possibility is associated with the phenomenon known as the "uncanny valley" (Mori, 1970). Uncanny valley theory predicts a nonlinear relationship between the humanlike appearance of robots and the emotional response to them. According to this theory, the liking of robots increases with an increasing level of human-likeness to a point; however, after this point where the robots appear almost human, people may experience a sense of dislike (MacDorman and Chattopadhyay, 2016; Mori, 1970; Mori et al., 2012). To mitigate the effects of the uncanny valley, some firms employ machinelike robots (i.e., mechanoids), fearing that a high degree of human-likeness may bring about negative feelings (Blut et al., 2021; Mende et al., 2021), while others use humanoid robots that often look like cartoon characters (e.g., Pepper, NAO). However, mechanistic or machine-looking robots have minimal anthropomorphic features. Thus, they usually do not elicit perceptions of social presence (Niemelä et al., 2017), hindering customers from applying the usual social rules and expectations of human–human interactions (Zlatowski et al., 2015).

In contrast, humanoid robots trigger humanlike perceptions and are more likely to facilitate human-robot interactions (Blut et al., 2021), generating acceptance and likeability (Belanche et al., 2020). However, humanoids are usually perceived as cute and may fail to convey the perception of intelligence and capability (Murphy et., 2019). Droids, through their high degrees of human-likeness, can facilitate the application of social scripts and expectations of human–human interactions (Blut et al., 2021), enable emotional connection to them (Wang et al., 2015), and may convey competence (Liu et al., 2022). Meanwhile, to reach these positive outcomes, highly humanlike robots must not evoke a sense of dislike. Therefore, it is not only important to understand consumers' reactions to service robots in various service contexts but also to discover how these reactions can be altered to improve consumers' usage experience with

service robots. Specifically, it is essential to understand whether it is possible to increase the likeability of the robot when it is highly anthropomorphized (i.e., highly humanlike).

The research documented that humanlike robots are unnerving in part due to their facial appearance. Our study attempts to enrich this past work by examining the effect of morphing a robot's face with a familiar human face on the robot's likeability. We speculate based on the mere exposure effect (Zajonc, 2001) and holistic face processing (Bruce and Young, 1986) that such morphing may increase robot likeability. Specifically, Zajonc's (1968) mere exposure theory predicts that repeated exposure to a stimulus can enhance an individual's attitude toward the stimulus (e.g., increased liking). This positive affective response is stable over time (Bornstein, 1989) and can transmit to novel stimuli that have physical or structural similarities to those presented previously (Monahan et al., 2000). Therefore, we expect that morphing a robot's face with a familiar celebrity's face can increase the robot's likeability despite a lack of conscious recognition of the celebrity. Furthermore, people tend to evaluate stimuli based on a positive or negative valence (Bargh, 1997) and form approach-avoid behavioral motivations toward the stimuli (Chen and Bargh, 1999). Thus, if the celebrity is not at the center of a scandal or does not evoke negative attitude, the implicit familiarity may lead consumers to experience approach motivation toward the robot with a composite face.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Anthropomorphism

Throughout history, people have been fascinated with anthropomorphism (Gray et al., 2007), which is defined as the attribution of humanlike characteristics, properties, or mental or emotional states to objects, artifacts, or nonhuman agents (Epley et al., 2007; Waytz et al., 2010;

Crolic et al., 2022). Through anthropomorphism, human beings consciously or more often subconsciously (Epley et al., 2007) establish close relationships with the latter (Vidal, 2007). The research involving service robots documented that service robots' morphology is among the most important factors influencing customer perception of robots (e.g., Park, 2020) and induces consumption outcomes such as service encounter evaluation, revisit intention, and positive word of mouth intentions (Liu et al., 2022). These findings highlight the role of anthropomorphism in designing service robots and advise carefully considering how a robot may be styled for a specific context. For instance, when hedonic services are concerned, utilizing robots with a relatively low level of anthropomorphism may be more desirable, while for utilitarian services, it may be a better option to employ robots with a high level of anthropomorphism to convey competence (Liu et al., 2022; Belanche et al., 2020).

Regarding robot's morphology, there are three essential aspects that robot designers can manipulate: the surface of the entity, which includes the cover material (e.g., plastic, metal, or skin-like material called "frubber") (Geghart, 2018), robot dimensions (e.g., size), and human features (i.e., head size, eye-shape, facial expressions). Based on the level of human-likeness, Walters et al. (2008) categorized robots on three levels: (1) mechanoids that usually lack humanlike features and are relatively machinelike in appearance, (2) humanoids that have a non-realistic humanlike appearance with a relatively low level of anthropomorphism, and (3) droids (android if male, gynoid if female) that are designed to look and behave like a real human as much as it is technically possible (i.e., robots with a relatively high level of anthropomorphism). Phillips et al. (2018) revealed four underlying dimensions of a robot's perceived human-likeness: surface look (e.g., gender, skin, eyelashes), body manipulators (e.g., torso, arms, hands), facial features (e.g., head, eyes), and mechanical locomotion (i.e., wheels, treads/tracks). Hanson

Robotics presented several highly anthropomorphized and humanlike robots, one of which is Robot Sophia who is the first artificial intelligent (AI) robot to be granted citizenship. Similarly, Hiroshi Ishiguro designed highly anthropomorphic androids, such as the Geminoid HI-1 robot, which is an android copy of its creator.

Uncanny Valley

Although benefits of anthropomorphism have been well documented in the literature (Blut et al., 2021), there is a caveat. Specifically, to facilitate human–robot interaction, engineers have designed and rolled out droids that are excessively humanlike (Wang et al., 2015). Because droids are more humanlike than other machines, it may be possible for humans to relate to them and even connect emotionally (Wang et al., 2015). However, as droids become increasingly humanlike in appearance, some of them may fall into an uncanny valley (Mori, 1970) and evoke the feeling of uncanniness (Mara et al., 2022). Ho et al. (2008) found that uncanniness is associated with fear, disgust, nervousness, dislike, and shock. The central premise of uncanny valley theory is that increasing anthropomorphism (i.e., human-likeness) in robots does not necessarily result in a positive outcome; instead, it may elicit negative responses and descend into the uncanny valley when the degree of human-likeness is high. There is no agreed-upon mechanism explaining the uncanny valley phenomenon. Among the proposed explanations are the categorization tension (Burleigh et al., 2013), the salience of mortality (MacDorman and Ishiguro, 2006), the avoidance of pathogens (Roberts, 2012), and the challenge of human identity (Ferrari et al., 2016).

Research revolving around the uncanny valley — with some inconsistencies — revealed that droid robots were less likable and less approachable compared to human and humanoid robots (e.g., Carr et al., 2017). Mathur and Reichling (2016) examined the responses of

consumers to the faces of 80 real-world robots and showed that consumers found robotic faces more likable and trustworthy as they became less machinelike and more humanlike; however, as the robot faces appeared nearly human, the participants found them unlikable and less trustworthy. Thus, certain designs of robots may fall into the uncanny valley, which suggests that people react to highly anthropomorphized robots with apprehension or unease (Gray and Wegner, 2012). If humanlike robots elicit dislike, how might robot designers adjust the look of robots to reverse this feeling? To address this question, we turn to holistic face processing (Engell et al., 2007) and mere exposure theory (Zajonc, 1968).

Automatic Face Recognition

Human faces represent one of the most important or "special" visual stimuli (Tanner and Maeng, 2012) and convey a great deal of information (Bruce and Young, 2013), which people have evolved to decipher quite well (Engell et al., 2007). Neuroscientific research entertains two contrasting hypotheses — face-specificity and expertise hypotheses — as possible face processing mechanisms. The face-specificity hypothesis (Kanwisher and Yovel, 2006) maintains that there is an innate, specialized mechanism that exclusively handles face processing (Pascalis et al., 2012), while the expertise hypothesis stresses that a high level of familiarity is responsible for processing differences between faces and other objects (Richler and Gauthier, 2014). Regardless of this controversy, most researchers admit that adult human beings are experts in face processing, and face processing is improved with experience (Pascalis et al., 2012). Both face-specificity and expertise hypotheses converge on the notion of holistic processing of faces (i.e., processing all parts together, in contrast to feature or part-based, more analytic processing). Holistic face processing may explain people's ability to discern celebrities' faces from blurred pictures and caricatures, where individual features are not pronounced or may be distorted

(Bruce and Young, 1986). It is believed that holistic processing of faces automatically triggers categorization of the stimulus according to gender, age, ethnicity, and social traits (Oosterhof and Todorov, 2008) as well as recognition of the face at an individual level (Pascalis et al., 2012). In other words, when people look at faces, apart from deciding that the stimulus is a face, they automatically identify which face it is (Kanwisher and Yovel, 2006). Thus, the human brain, based solely on facial properties, makes automatic social judgments of others (e.g., how trustworthy they are) (Engell et al., 2007) without any conscious deliberation or intent (Hassin et al., 2005).

People make various trait judgments, including trustworthiness, aggressiveness, and competence, in as little as one hundred milliseconds of exposure to a neutral face (Willis and Todorov, 2006). Bargh (1997) suggested that people evaluate the encountered stimuli based on a positive or negative valence. This valence serves as an anchor for person-impression formation (Fiske et al., 2007) and evokes approach or avoid behavioral tendencies (Chen and Bargh, 1999). According to the neuroscience literature, the amygdala plays a primary role in automatically providing a high-level valence-based evaluation of agents prior to interacting with them (Amaral, 2002; Todorov and Engel, 2008).

Research has underscored the positive effect of familiarity and similarity on attraction to novel faces (Bailenson et al., 2008; Tanner and Maeng, 2012). These findings align with Zajonc's (1968) theory of mere exposure. Mere exposure theory suggests that repeated exposure to a stimulus may be a sufficient condition to enhance one's attitude toward that stimulus (Zajonc, 1968). Furthermore, previous research revealed that preference toward exposed (i.e., familiar) stimuli is observed and is paradoxically higher, even if discrimination from the novel stimuli (i.e., recognition of the exposed stimuli) is precluded (Kunst-Wilson et al., 1980; Zajonc,

1980; Bornstein, 1989). Thus, Zajonc (1980) suggested the following premises in the mere exposure theory: (1) affective reactions (such as liking) can be induced with minimal stimulus exposure, (2) affect primarily precedes cognitive processes, and (3) subliminal stimuli bring about greater attitude enhancement compared to that produced by "briefly presented, recognizable stimuli" (Bornstein, 1989).

Based on the above discussions, we expect that infusing the face of a droid robot with subtle familiar cues (e.g., the face of a famous person or a celebrity that does not result in conscious recognition) will result in implicit familiarity which in turn will lead to increased likeability of the robot and greater intention to use it.

H1: Morphing imperceptible celebrity facial cues with the face of an unfamiliar robot has a positive effect on implicit familiarity such that implicit familiarity will be greater with the morphed robot than with the unmorphed robot.

H2: Implicit familiarity with the robot leads to greater likeability of the robot, which in turn leads to greater intention to use the robot.

H3: Implicit familiarity with and likeability of the robot positively and serially mediate the effect of morphed robot on intention to use the robot.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

To test the proposed research hypotheses, we conducted a 2 (image type: morphed vs. unmorphed image of a humanlike robot) X 2 (tour recommendation type: a haunted ghost and vampire walking tour vs. a three-hour city tour of New Orleans) between-subjects experiment. Prior to the main study, we pretested five images that included an image of Han, the robot, and a wax figure of Leonardo DiCaprio, respectively. We used Adobe Photoshop to create the

morphed images. For example, in creating the morphed image of Han and Leonardo DiCaprio, we layered the image of Han with Leonardo DiCaprio's eyes, chin, and so on. We then used liquify filter and the Healing and Stamping tool to adjust and make the morphed image more real and balanced.

Fifty MTurk workers participated in the pretest for monetary compensation (M_{age}=36.25), with twenty-one participants self-identified as females. Only one participant indicated that the morph condition with DiCaprio's image resembles either Steven Seagal or Leonardo DiCaprio. A pairwise t-test indicated that the image of Han did not differ from the morphed image of Leonardo DiCaprio on human-likeness. Therefore, we retained the image of Han and the morphed image of Leonardo DiCaprio for the main study.

One hundred and sixty-five Prolific panelists participated in the main study for monetary compensation (M_{age}=35.3), with seventy-four participants self-identified as females. The participants were first randomly assigned to read a scenario in which they received tour recommendations (haunted ghost and vampire walking tour vs. three-hour tour of the city) by a robot tour guide visually represented by either the unmorphed image of Han or the morphed image of Han and Leonardo DiCaprio. The participants then responded to a short survey capturing variables of interest to the current study. We used existing scales to measure familiarity (α=.88, M=2.59, SD=1.51), likeability (α=.85, M=2.62, SD=1.51), and intention toward the robot (α=.95, M=3.27, SD=1.60). We also measured participants' general attitude toward robots (α=.93, M=4.33, SD=1.54). All measures were assessed on a seven-point Likert scale.

To test H1, we ran a one-way ANOVA. The results showed that the morphed image was perceived as more familiar than the unmorphed image ($M_{morphed}$=2.87 vs. $M_{unmorphed}$=2.31,

$t(162)=2.39$, $p=0.018$), supporting H1. To test H2, we ran Hayes PROCESS Model 4. The results revealed that familiarity increased likeability ($\beta=0.34$, $SE=0.06$, $p<0.001$), which in turn, increased intention to use the robot and follow the robot's recommendations ($\beta=0.65$, $SE=0.09$, $p<0.001$). The indirect effect of familiarity on intention through likeability was significant ($\beta=0.22$, $SE=0.05$, CI [0.13, 0.33]), indicating that likeability positively and fully mediated the effect of familiarity on intention. To test H3, we ran Hayes PROCESS Model 6. The results showed that familiarity and likeability positively and serially mediated the effect of a morphed (vs. unmorphed) image of a humanlike robot on intention to use the robot and follow the robot's recommendations ($\beta=0.12$, $SE=0.06$, CI [0.02, 0.25]), supporting H3. We included age, gender, attitude toward robots, and tour recommendation type as covariates in our analysis. While attitude toward robots had a positive effect on intention ($\beta=0.21$, $SE=0.07$, $p=0.003$), age, gender, and tour recommendation type did not affect intention.

DISCUSSION

The current study examines how consumers respond to a highly anthropomorphized robot whose face has been altered by morphing with a celebrity's face. In our experiment, we found that morphing triggers implicit familiarity with and likeability of the robot with a composite face without evoking conscious recognition of the celebrity. Furthermore, implicit familiarity and likeability serially mediate the positive relationship between the morphed robot and intention to use the robot. Our findings contribute to theory and practice in several ways. From a theoretical standpoint, this study integrates holistic face processing and mere exposure effect into research involving service robots. While existing research has documented both advantages and disadvantages associated with different types of robots (e.g., Mende et al., 2019; Yin et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2021), little is known about how to mitigate the negative effects these robots may

elicit. Even though we did not explicitly examined negative effects associated with excessively humanlike robots, i.e., droids, the findings from our study suggest that through morphing it is possible to increase likeability of these robots.

Our study also adds to mere exposure theory, holistic face processing, and extant research on anthropomorphism by evaluating consumers' reactions to droids. From a practical implication perspective, our study demonstrates that certain designs of droids can effectively boost consumers' positive affective response toward the robot through increased familiarity, which subsequently results in a greater intention to use the technology. Even though consumer attitude toward unmorphed droids may improve over time through repeated exposure, it requires additional resources and poses potential risks for marketers (e.g., customer churn, negative word of mouth). Therefore, utilizing robots with a celebrity morphed face in service delivery process can be a viable option for marketers and service providers.

Our study has several limitations. First, we only used one celebrity and one gender category in the experiment. Second, we did not test for the race effect. The research documented that race manipulations can impact the processing of faces (Richler and Gauthier, 2014). For instance, adult individuals are typically more proficient at recognizing same-race versus other-race faces (Pascalis et al., 2011). This phenomenon is known as the other-race effect (Meissner and Brigham, 2001). Third, we did not evaluate the possible effect of previously held beliefs about the celebrity. Jones et al. (2007) showed that the valence of experience matters for the automatic processing of facial stimuli. More specifically, negative experiences can negatively impact preferences for familiar facial cues, whereas positive experiences are more likely to generate positive preferences. Even though we measured the attitude toward the celebrity used in the morphed condition, 75% of respondents indicated either neutral or positive attitude toward

the actor. Future research can evaluate the possible moderating effects of race and negative attitude on the effect of morphing on downstream variables. Future research could also replicate the study with specific consumer segments (e.g., tech-savvy vs. not savvy) and with different robot types.

APPENDIX A

Robot stimuli (Robot Han on the left, robot with a composite face on the right)

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FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS IN PEER-TO-PEER SHARING ECONOMY SERVICES: AN EFFECTIVE BARRIER TO CUSTOMER MISBEHAVIOR?

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Keywords: customer misbehavior, sharing economy, peer-to-peer services, face-to-face interactions, experimental research

Description: We investigate the effects of host–guest interaction mode (face-to-face, online-only) and frequency on guests' intention to conceal property damage they may have caused in the context of peer-to-peer accommodation services.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Customer misbehavior, defined as intentional or unintentional actions by customers that violate the generally accepted norms of conduct in consumption settings (Fullerton and Punj 2004; Harris and Reynolds 2003), poses a major risk in peer-to-peer accommodation services. Often manifested as property damage, these violations impose a financial burden on platforms and hosts, especially when misbehaving guests deliberately conceal or avoid reporting the damages they caused, to avoid liability. Airbnb reportedly spends US$50 million annually in payouts to hosts suffering from property damage, including litigation settlements and property damage

compensations (Carville 2021). Extant research suggests that services in the sharing economy exhibit a high risk of misuse, mainly due to the lack of perceived ownership and the unsupervised use of the resources (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012; Schaefers et al. 2016). This risk is particularly high in peer-to-peer accommodation services, since the reliance on remote listing management methods and the lack of face-to-face interactions between hosts and guests might facilitate customer misbehavior. In this research, we aim to answer the following research question: How does the mode (face-to-face vs. online-only) and frequency of interaction among hosts and guests in peer-to-peer accommodation services impact guests' intention to conceal their misbehavior?

Method and Data

Using two sequential scenario-based experiments, we investigate the effects of host–guest interaction mode and frequency on guests' intention to conceal their misbehavior, with a focus on establishing the psychological mechanisms that underlie the effects and identifying potential contingencies. In Study 1, we employed a 2×2 between-subjects factorial design with four treatment groups. We manipulated guests' mode of interaction with the host (face-to-face, online-only) and membership in a virtual community (membership, no membership). Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental groups and received a scenario and a questionnaire. We assessed respondents' intention to conceal misbehavior as well as their social identification with the host. We performed mediation and moderated mediation analyses using PROCESS (version 4.0, Hayes 2021) to test our hypotheses. Building on the insights of Study 1, in Study 2, we explored potential implications of more or less frequent face-to-face interactions. In an unifactorial experimental design with three groups, we manipulated the

frequency (two, three, four) of face-to-face host–guest interactions. Following the scenario description, we assessed participants' intention to conceal misbehavior and social identification using the same measurements as in Study 1; in addition, we captured participants' irritation about repeated interactions with the host in our questionnaire. We analyzed the hypothesized mediation effects using PROCESS (version 4.0, Hayes 2021).

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, we find that guests who interacted face-to-face with their host exhibit a weaker intention to conceal their misbehavior, compared with those who interacted exclusively online. This effect is mediated by social identification: In the groups with face-to-face encounters, we find evidence of greater social identification than in the online-only groups. Additionally, our data reveal that membership in a virtual community moderates the effect of the host–guest interaction mode on social identification. As predicted, community membership evokes social identification, such that, above and beyond, the interaction mode does not affect members' social identification and thus intentions to conceal misbehavior. In turn, interaction mode exerts a significant effect on social identification and the intentions to conceal misbehavior for nonmembers.

In Study 2, we explored the impact of repeated face-to-face interactions (two, three, four) on the intention to conceal misbehavior. We find that guests who had three interactions exhibit more irritation and, as consequence, stronger intentions to conceal misbehavior than those with two interactions. One more interaction (i.e., four rather than three interactions) does not lead to more irritation or higher intentions to conceal misbehavior. Thus, going beyond two face-to-face interactions as a host sparks irritation in customers, irrespective of whether it is one additional or

two additional encounters. In addition, we find that increasing the number of face-to-face encounters only increases irritation; it does not enhance customers' social identification.

Key Contributions

In two scenario-based experiments, we identify both bright and dark side effects of host–guest face-to-face interactions in the context of peer-to-peer accommodation services. Our study contributes to service research in two main ways. First, we extend previous work on customer misbehavior in the sharing economy, particularly from the perspective of the service provider. Understanding how service providers (i.e., both platforms and hosts) may influence customers' intentions to conceal their misbehavior—by stimulating social identification and avoiding irritation— sheds light on the psychological mechanisms to speak to in order to prevent customer misbehavior. Second, we stress the relevance of interpersonal communication and the social cue richness of different communication media (face-to-face, online-only) as important instruments to effectively reduce customers' intentions to misbehave.

Our findings have two important implications for service managers. First, hosts should account for contradicting psychological mechanisms that may arise from repeated face-to-face interactions with their guests: social identification and irritation. According to our results, irritation arises after three face-to-face encounters, so we recommend hosts to limit such interactions to the moments of welcome and farewell (two encounters). Second, peer-to-peer platforms should consider establishing virtual communities to engage users, as a natural mechanism to foster social identification and reduce their intentions to misbehave when using the platform's services.

References are available upon request.

ONLINE COUNTERFEITING: THE STRIFE BETWEEN TRUST AND TRUTH

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Keywords: online counterfeiting, e-commerce, consumer trust, third party selling

Description: This paper conceptualises the problem of online counterfeiting in terms of e-commerce websites and empirically examine the effect of various determinants affecting consumer trust.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Smartphone penetration has strengthened the roots for e-commerce since varied options are available just a click away. But this has also increased the instances of online fraud. One such emerging issue is Online Counterfeiting. Though retail counterfeiting is discussed in literature thoroughly, counterfeiting that happens over the major e-commerce sites is still not given the required attention. This paper highlights the importance of studying this aspect as well as conceptualizes the problem of online counterfeiting in terms of e-commerce websites. It discuss

issues such as third-party selling employed by major e-commerce sites and how it affects the consumer trust towards online shopping. We aim to identify the various parameters related to e-commerce and online counterfeiting and study their impact over consumer trust. We further study the moderating role of awareness level regarding counterfeiting over the online mediums on the identified variables.

Method and Data

We employed survey method using a structured instrument to collect data through offline and online mediums. A filter question was asked if consumers purchased products using e-commerce websites in the past 3 months. Only those who agreed were further asked to fill up the questionnaire. Along with a cover letter, the questionnaire comprised of two sections. Section I dealt with questions related to demographics of the respondents and further inquired the frequency of online purchase. We also asked for the categories of products most purchased using online websites. Further, a question was asked whether the respondents ever received a fake item using the online platform for shopping. Total 195 questionnaires were filled and 15 questionnaires were excluded from the study in the data cleaning process due to missing data (14 such questionnaires) and inconsistent responses (1 questionnaire), thereby, 180 responses were relevant for the analysis. Data Analysis was conducted using SPSS 21.0 and AMOS Graphics 21.0. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed using AMOS 21.0 to analyse the structural relationships. For hypothesis H5, moderation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro in SPSS given by Andrew Hayes (2017).

Summary of Findings

The results of the study revealed that trust has a significant negative relation with unfavourable past experience, perceived level of deception, and perceived risk. A significant positive relation was found between perceived fairness of return policies and trust implying that return policies safeguard the virtual shopping experience when there is a temporal and physical separation between sellers and buyers. Further, the study confirmed the positive significant relation between trust and repurchase intention. The moderating role of awareness level seem to weaken the negative relation between perceived deception and trust. This might be due to the fact that consumers having awareness about counterfeits also possess the ability to judge the website credibility and make purchases only through trusted mediums. Further research is required to examine this aspect using multi-paradigmatic approach such as mixed methods of research.

Statement of Key Contributions:

The Existing literature on counterfeiting focuses on physical retailing and might not suffice the understanding of virtual environments due to the difference in its nature and character of

transactions. We utilize the Johnson's theory of deception to explain the nature of online counterfeiting. Deriving variables from previous research, composite framework is presented to make academic contribution in this unexplored area and provide a foundational approach in examining how consumer trust is affected due to online counterfeiting. Our model explaining the effect of online counterfeiting offers decision framework for e-commerce companies to upgrade how the information about products is presented. Pictures and description related to the product should emphasize on gaining the legitimate trust factor at the same time assuring the accuracy of information by third party sellers. Role of perceived deception and perceived risk can help e-commerce companies to analyse reasons why certain goods are preferred to be bought through physical inspection. We also observed that at higher level of awareness, the perceived deception cause the trust to fall more violently. Websites should regularly filter their product listings so as to remove any fake or counterfeit product to secure consumers' trust over the website by absence of any deceptive cues.

Note: References are available upon request.

PARADOXICAL SHARING BEHAVIOR: CONCEPTUALIZATION, SCALE DEVELOPMENT, AND VALIDATION

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Keywords: Collaborative consumption, sharing economy, paradox

Description: This research proposes a novel construct—paradoxical sharing behavior (PSB) and develops a corresponding measure.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Due to the enormous growth of sharing economy, collaborative consumption (CC) has become one of the widely adopted sharing platforms, for example, Airbnb and Uber (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012). CC is an exchange that is generally driven by monetary incentives and does not involve the transfer of legal ownership. It involves three dominant parties, including consumers, service providers, and sharing platforms. While studies on CC are growing, they predominately focus on the consumers' perspective and neglect the views of service providers. This gap is crucial as evidence shows a significant shortage in the service supply. We thus aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of service providers' sharing experience. Particularly, we take from a paradoxical perspective and develop a new, multi-dimensional construct called "*paradoxical sharing behavior (PSB)*", which describes service providers' behaviors that are seemingly competing, yet interrelated, to meet the demands arising from different roles (i.e., being an owner vs. a sharer) in sharing simultaneously and over

time. We empirically develop this new construct with seven studies across different sharing contexts to confirm the scale's reliability and validity.

Method and Data

Following prior research (Churchill 1979; Zhang et al. 2015), we first generated a pool of items (n=83) and went through Q-sorting for screening, resulting in 39 items. We purified our measure with exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with two samples (Study 1a: ride-sharing in Europe, n=215; Study 1b: accommodation sharing in the U.S., n=305), retaining 14 items.

To capture the essence of paradoxical sharing behavior (PSB), we adopted a double-barreled design. Following Zhang et al.'s (2015) approach, we collected a sample of potential accommodation sharers (Study 2: accommodation sharing, n=266) to test the appropriateness of this design. We examined the sequential and combined effects created by double-barreled items.

Next, we submitted our proposed model to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Study 3: luxury products sharing, n=250). We first confirmed the proposed model and compared it with alternative models. We further assessed the convergent validity by Cronbach's alpha, the average variance extracted (AVE), the composite reliability (CR) (Fornell and Larcker 1981), discriminant validity, and known-groups validity.

In addition, we explored the nomological validity of our measure with another sample (Study 4: accommodation sharing, n=365). We tested the correlations between PSB and theoretically relevant constructs, such as cognitive flexibility, organizational ambidexterity, and role integration.

Finally, we investigated the scale's predictive validity by collecting two samples from existing drivers (Study 5a: n=208) and accommodation sharers (Study 5b: n=205) in China.

Summary of Findings

In study 1a and 1b, we identified a four-factor model structure by EFA. Paradoxical sharing behavior (PSB) as a second-order construct is reflected by four behavioral dimensions based on psychological ownership (Control, self-identity, intimacy, and territoriality). Next, in study 2, we found that the double-barreled design of our items does not affect the meaning of content. The result implies that the design is appropriate. We then submitted our second-order four-factor model to CFA in study 3. We confirmed that the second-order four-factor model fit the data most. This model has the best model fit indexes (comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) as compared to alternative models with different factor structures. Our proposed model also achieves the convergent validity and discriminant validity by fulfilling the criterion of Cronbach's alpha, CR, and AVE suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Furthermore, study 4 demonstrates that PSB moderately correlates with theoretical relevant constructs but also significantly discriminates from them. The findings suggest the nomological and discriminant validity of our measure. In study 5a and 5b, we revealed the potential antecedents (holistic thinking, economic motive, and social motive) and consequences of PSB (service quality and extra-role behaviors). The results provide evidence for the predictive validity of our proposed measure.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research has key theoretical contributions. First, we developed a multi-dimensional measure for the novel concept of paradoxical sharing behavior (PSB), which enriches the CC theoretical framework by exploring the paradoxical roles confronted by service providers in sharing. Taking from a peer service provider's

perspective also provides a more nuanced understanding of the value cocreation process in CC. Furthermore, our proposed measure helps identify this meaningful construct and explains service provider behaviors above and beyond what we have already known from the literature of psychological ownership. Second, PSB represents a novel application of paradox concepts proposed at the organizational level (e.g., Andriopoulos and Lewis 2009; Hahn et al. 2014; Lewis and Smith 2014) to an individual level. This study helps facilitate further development of paradox theory in the future.

For practitioners, this research offers a clearer understanding of existing and potential service providers' feelings and concerns in sharing. First, sharing platforms may identify useful strategies for increasing service providers' participation by understanding their PSB. With service providers' active involvement in the P2P sharing network, sharing platforms can attain the critical mass that is essential for maintaining this consumption culture. Second, our research may help service providers overcome the PSB by understanding its roots. In return, they can better leverage their underutilized resources for a better living.

POINT REDEMPTIONS AND PROGRAM SALES IN COALITION LOYALTY PROGRAMS

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Keywords: Loyalty programs, Point redemption, Sales promotion, Cross-partner effect

Description: This paper investigates the cross-partner effects of program sales and point redemptions in coalition loyalty program.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Q1a: How do point redemptions of other stores from the same chain affect the focal store's program sales?

Q1b: How do point redemptions of other stores from different chains affect the focal store's program sales?

Q2a: How do point redemptions of other stores from the same store chain affect the focal store's point redemption?

Q2b: How do point redemptions of stores from different chains affect the focal store's point redemption?

Q3a: How do program sales of other stores from the same chain affect the focal store's point redemption?

Q3b: How do program sales of stores from different store chains affect the focal store's point redemption?

Method and Data

In this study, we analyze data from a popular coalition loyalty program in South Korea. The program rewards customers with promotional points for purchases; the points in the program do not expire. Customers can redeem points from any participating store and use any combination of points and cash in transactions. The points-to-cash exchange rate is straightforward: one point is equivalent to one South Korean won.

Each store belongs to one of the five well-known store chains. The store chains operate in cinemas, bakeries, coffeehouses, steakhouse restaurants, and drug and beauty stores. We employ a store-month panel dataset containing sales and point redemption information of 3,285 stores, with each store having 33 months of observation at maximum.

We propose a dynamic model that incorporates the lagged dependent variables (focal store's sales and point redemptions) and the current and lagged independent variables (other

stores' sales and point redemptions). We employ the system generalized method of moments to estimate our empirical models.

Summary of Findings

1. Sales of other stores from the same chain positively affect the focal store's current sales and future point redemptions. By contrast, point redemptions from other stores from the same chain negatively affect the focal store's current sales and future point redemptions.

2. Point redemptions from stores from different chains negatively affect the focal store's future sales and point redemptions. By contrast, sales from different chains positively affect the focal store's future sales and point redemptions.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research contributes to loyalty program literature in three ways. First, we complement the literature by investigating the role of point redemption in the cross-partner effect. Point redemption is an important indicator of customers' engagement with loyalty programs, with multiple benefits accruing to the partners when customers redeem points. In this research, we examine the impact of point redemptions of other stores on the focal store's own sales and point redemptions. Second, we differentiate the cross-partner effects in the competing stores from the same chain of the focal store and those from different chains. This differentiation is critical to managers because of the difference in competition between stores from the same chain and different chains. Third, we explore the dynamic effects of other stores' sales and point redemptions on the focal store's sales. This setting enables us to distinguish the current and lagged effects of other stores' activities, shedding light on the cross-partner effects over time.

References are available upon request.

POTENTIALS AND LIMITATIONS OF MOBILE AUGMENTED REALITY APPLICATIONS IN ONLINE RETAIL – A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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Keywords

Augmented Reality, Augmented Reality Applications, Mobile, Online Retail

Description

The research investigates the potentials and limitations of Mobile Augmented Reality applications in online retail and finds out that the applications are currently seen as add-ons to existing online stores.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The increasing competitive pressure in online retailing forces companies to use innovative information and communication technologies. For this reason, the present potentials and limitations of Mobile Augmented Reality (MAR) applications in online retailing are investigated by means of a systematic literature review and an empirical investigation in order to derive important implications for companies. To achieve the objective, the Purchase Decision Process Model, the Stimulus-Organism-Response Model, and the Technology

Acceptance Model were used as reference models to investigate the influence of MAR applications on users.

Method and Data

First, a systematic literature review was conducted. Therefore, relevant keywords that consider (Mobile) Augmented Reality applications in online retail as well as consumer and purchase intentions were defined. From this, search queries were compiled and used to search in the databases EBSCO host and Web of Science. In total, the systematic literature review consisted of 17 papers.

Second, a qualitative research approach with focus group interviews was conducted for data collection and analysis. The data was collected from two focus group interviews with a sample size of five participants each. To lead the focus group interviews, ten research questions were derived from the literature, referring to three categories: First, questions that consider general aspects such as attitude and the acceptance of MAR applications as well as barriers. Second, questions that ask for how specific features of MAR applications were perceived. And third, questions with an exploratory character which asked for the lack of payment devices, challenges as well as suggestions for improvement.

Summary of Findings

The results show that Mobile Augmented Reality applications in online retail have both potentials as well as limitations. It becomes clear that Mobile Augmented Reality applications are only seen as an add-on to the existing online store. Furthermore, the intention to use and the experiences already made when using applications contribute to the acceptance of MAR applications in online retailing.

With regards to the perception of product information, the possibility of interaction and visualization, no uniform picture emerged. However, the participants expressed a clear desire with regards to a direct payment service within the application.

Regarding barriers that prevent the use of MAR applications, privacy concerns, a lack of user-friendliness, and the hurdle of downloading another application were revealed. Additionally, the size of the smartphone as a mobile device and the Internet bandwidth were mentioned as additional challenges. Furthermore, the lack of clarity within the MAR application has led to the suggestions for extension of a comparison and a search function.

Key Contributions

First, MAR applications should only be used as add-ons to existing online shops. Accordingly, they serve as a supporting tool to obtain a better visual representation of the products in a 3D format.

Second, criteria such as consumers' usage intentions and previous experiences with MAR applications are relevant for their acceptance in online retailing.

Third, privacy concerns, a lack of user-friendliness, and the hurdle of downloading another application were identified as barriers that prevent the use. The size of the smartphone as a mobile device and the Internet bandwidth are also cited as further challenges as well as the lack of a payment device, which users have expressed as desirable within applications.

Fourth, regarding the product categories that have the greatest relevance for MAR applications, high-priced products are more likely to be considered as the presentation in MAR applications is more time-consuming and the decision to buy these products is usually extensive.

Fifth, the specific features of interaction and visualization were only partially perceived as positive, due to problems in the technical functionalities and a poor user-friendliness.

Finally, a lack of clarity within the MAR application led to a call for improvements of a comparison and search function.

References are available upon request.

PRIVATE LABELS IN A PRODUCT HARM CRISIS: SPILLOVER EFFECTS ACROSS RETAILERS

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Keywords: *Private labels, store brands, product harm crisis, spillover effects, cross-brand learning*

Description: *In an online experiment, we investigate the impact of a product harm crisis on consumer evaluations of a defective private label product, consumer evaluations of a competing retailer's non-defective private label product, and consumer evaluations of a non-defective national brand product.*

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In recent decades, product-harm crises (PHC) have received significant attention from academic researchers. However, PHC research almost exclusively focuses on national brands (NB), while research on private labels (PL), retailers' brands, is relatively scarce. Yet, there might be even more at stake for retailers and their PL than for manufacturers of national brands. First, PL possess significant market shares in many regions of the world (e.g., 40-50 percent in many Western European countries). Second, research suggests that PL of different retailers might be considered homogeneous in consumers' minds and that consumers transfer consumption experiences made with one retailer's PL to other retailers' PL (cross-brand learning). Due to the common characteristics of most PL, consumers categorize PL as one mental category. Hence, spillover effects between PL of different retailers are likely. Third, among the largest companies worldwide by revenue are many retailers. Considering the market shares of private labels and the potential spillover effects across different retailers' PL, PHC have the potential to damage retailers' revenues and profits seriously.

In this project, we investigate the effect of a PHC on (a) consumer evaluations of the focal retailer's defective PL product (retailer A), (b) consumer evaluations of a competing retailer's non-defective PL product (retailer B), and consumer evaluations of a non-defective national brand (NB) product.

Method and Data

We conducted an online experiment with a 2 x 2 plus control group between-subjects design. Factor 1 manipulated the severity of the product harm crisis (light vs. severe), and factor 2 manipulated the psychological distance (high vs. low).

We exposed subjects to a fictitious PHC scenario involving defective Covid-19 face masks. Depending on the experimental condition, we informed participants that the product was defective, that the lack of protection caused many Covid-19 infections, and that most infected suffer from a relatively light/severe disease course (Factor 1). In the low psychological distance conditions, we asked subjects to imagine they were affected by the defective product and suffered the reported consequences themselves (Factor 2). Eventually, participants evaluated (a) the defective Covid-19 face masks sold under the PL of retailer A, (b) non-defective Covid-19 face masks sold under the PL of retailer B, and (c) non-defective Covid-19 face masks of a NB. The four consumer evaluation dimensions are attitude, perceived quality, trust, and purchase intent.

The questionnaire also included attention checks, demographics, and a debriefing, which informed subjects about the fictitious scenario. We measured all constructs on established scales. We recruited participants via our Business School's online panel and randomly assigned them to the experimental groups. Our final sample consisted of 198 observations (female = 70%, M_{age} = 25.88, SD_{Age} = 6.75).

Summary of Findings

We conducted a series of regressions to test our hypothesis using the experimental conditions as group dummies and the control group as the baseline. For each evaluated product, we regressed the four group dummies on consumers' (a) attitude, (b) perceived quality, and (c) trust toward the focal product. Additionally, we regressed the four group dummies plus attitude, perceived quality, and trust on purchase intent of the focal product.

We find that the defective PL product of retailer A severely and significantly suffers on all consumers evaluations. Consumer evaluations towards the non-defective PL product of retailer B also decline significantly. We find no significant negative effect on the consumer evaluations of the non-defective NB product. On the contrary, purchase intent for the NB product significantly increases in the low psychological distance conditions (substitution effect).

Key Contributions

Our research project contributes to the literature about PL in general and literature about PL in the context of PHC in particular.

First, our results support research findings about consumers' perceived homogeneity of PL, consumers' categorization of PL as one mental category, and cross-brand learning across PL of different retailers. While retailers' PL products suffer from negative spillover effects caused by a competing retailer's defective PL products, NB products do not suffer from such negative spillover effects.

Second, we show that in addition to internal sources of information (e.g., consumption experiences), external sources (e.g., reports about a severe PHC of a competitor's PL) can cause cross-brand learning or spillover effects across the PL of different retailers, too.

Third, we provide an understanding of what drives purchase intent (a) for the defective PL products (attitude, perceived quality), (b) a non-defective PL product from competing retailers (attitude, trust), and (c) a non-defective NB product (trust).

Retailers and national brand manufacturers can use the insights from our study for crisis management and reduce potential spillover effects in the case of a PHC. Countermeasures should focus on consumers' trust.

References are available on request.

THE EFFECT OF EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION ON THE SALES OF READY-MADE MEALS IN ONLINE RETAIL

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Keywords: Online retail; Exclusive distribution; Product assortment; Competitive intensity; Ready-made meals

Description: This paper investigated the effects of exclusive distribution on the sales of ready-made meals in online retail.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Exclusive distribution is considered more attractive to consumers in terms of differentiation because it changes the product assortment of categories within a particular retailer (Barone and Roy 2010; Hansen and Solgaard 2006). Thus, retailers strive to obtain exclusive distribution rights from the corporate brand as an assortment differentiation strategy to achieve a competitive advantage (Gielens, Gijsbrechts, and Dekimpe 2014). Previous studies have demonstrated that exclusive distribution enhances the sales of retailers in the traditional offline retail environment

(e.g., Gielens, Gijsbrechts, and Dekimpe 2014; Mcgrath 1983). Online retail has a web space with infinite expandability; thus, it is possible to operate a diverse assortment of products compared to traditional offline channels that have limited display space (Baldauf, Eng-Larsson, and Isaksson 2021; Shen 2011). Despite these distinct characteristics, there is a lack of empirical studies demonstrating the effect of exclusive distribution on sales in the context of online retail. To address an important research gap, this study focuses on three key research questions:

1) How does exclusive distribution affect sales of ready-made meal products in online retail?
2) How does product assortment (width and depth) moderate the exclusive distribution–sales relationship?
3) How does within-category competitive intensity moderate the exclusive distribution–sales relationship?

Method and Data

This study used panel data on ready-made meal products in Korea provided by Market Kurly, a leading online grocery retailer. The data include monthly sales for 3,285 ready-made meal products from August 2018 to August 2021. Logarithmically transformed monthly sales were used as a dependent variable and exclusive distribution was used as an independent variable. This study used the product width/depth of corporate brands and the number of corporate brands within the category as the moderators. We calculated the total number of product categories (width) and the average number of SKUs per product category (depth) offered to Market Kurly by the corporate brand of product *i* on time *t*. To measure the intensity of competition within the product category, we calculated the total number of corporate brands offering products within the Market Kurly category that contained product *i* on time *t*.

This study used a stepwise panel regression model to sequentially estimate the main and moderating effects. The first step is the main effect model that introduced control variables, independent variable, and moderators to investigate the effect of exclusive distribution on sales. The second step is the moderating effect model that introduced interaction terms between the independent variable and moderators.

Summary of Findings

This study revealed the effect of exclusive distribution on the sales of retailers online. The results showed that the exclusive distribution had a positive effect on sales ($\beta = 0.422$, $p < 0.001$). In other words, sales are significantly higher for products that are exclusively distributed than for those that are not by modeling the exclusive distribution effect on sales in the context of online retailing. This study found that the two interaction terms had a positive impact on sales: exclusive distribution X product depth of corporate brands ($\beta = 0.015$, $p < 0.05$) and exclusive distribution X number of corporate brands within category ($\beta = 0.004$, $p < 0.001$). However, the interaction term between an exclusive distribution and product width of corporate brands had no significant effect on sales. In sum, exclusive distribution had a positive effect on sales, and the product depth of corporate brands and the number of corporate brands within a category had moderating effects on the exclusive distribution-sales relationship.

Key Contributions

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the understanding of the exclusive distribution effect on sales in an online retail environment. Existing research on exclusive

distribution has mostly focused on the offline environment. Our results demonstrate that exclusive distribution is an effective means of increasing sales in online retail. This study is the first to shed light on the moderating effect of product assortment and within-category competitive intensity in the relationship between exclusive distribution and sales. Our study empirically applies retail accordion theory (Hollander 1999) and Porter‘s (1980) five forces model to provide a theoretical explanation of why the effects of exclusive distribution vary with the characteristics of corporate brands and retailers.

From a managerial perspective, this study provides new insights into how online retailers can enhance the effectiveness of exclusive distribution on sales, suggesting that retailers should understand the product width and depth of corporate brands. Retailers may often have exclusive distribution agreements with corporate brands that have higher product depth that extend products within existing categories, rather than expanding products into new categories. Further, retailers can effectively improve sales by adopting an exclusive distribution strategy in a category with a high degree of competitive intensity.

Extended Abstract

THE GROWING POWER OF ONLINE JUGGERNAUTS: THE IMPACT OF PRIVATE LABEL ON NATIONAL BRANDS

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Keywords: E-commerce, online platforms, national brands, private labels, deep learning

Description: In this study, we investigate whether and how the introduction of Amazon private labels (PLs) affects the national brands (NBs)' performances.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – 200 Words

Increasingly, rather than offering a gateway to consumers for national brands (NBs), online platforms, such as Amazon, started competing upfront by offering private labels (PLs) in their own names (e.g., Amazon Basics). For example, in India, Amazon ran a systematic campaign of creating knockoffs and manipulated search results to boost its PLs. In the United States, Amazon was also accused of blatantly copying national brands (NBs)' bestselling products, inch for inch, and sell it off. This practice is deemed controversial and raises regulatory antitrust concerns leading to new proposed legislation in many jurisdictions.

The Ending Platform Monopolies Act proposed in 2021 passed the House Judiciary Committee in the United States, which prohibits large online platforms, like Amazon, from selling PLs on their platforms. However, it is still unclear whether these antitrust concerns are justified and whether NBs are negatively affected by platform's PLs. In this study, we aim to tackle these research challenges by answering the following questions:

1. Does the introduction of Amazon PLs affect the performance of national brands (NB) on the platform?
2. What are the underlying pathways of such effect?
3. What type of brands and PLs change the effect of PL introductions?

Method And Data – 200 Words

To address our research questions, we use Amazon as our empirical context. In 2009, Amazon introduced its most successful PL – Amazon Basics, which entail everyday household goods. To study whether and how the introduction of Amazon PLs affects the performance of NBs, we collected a unique dataset from multiple sources. This dataset enables us to track (1) the introduction date of Amazon PLs in office supplies between 2015 and 2018, (2) brand platform performance of more than 18,000 NBs before and after Amazon PL introductions between 2015 and 2018, and (3) the fine-grained level product information of NBs as well as PLs, including product image, product description text, and product pricing. Using the product information, we apply deep learning (DL) and natural language processing (NLP) methods to construct several product similarity measures.

We estimated a set of seven equations using a seemingly unrelated regression (SUR) estimation approach. The seven equations form a recursive system and assess the PL's impact on

NBs' sales, price, review valence, review volume, review standard deviation, one-party product availability, and third-party product (3P) availability, respectively.

Summary of Findings – 200 words

On average, PL introduction *directly* cannibalizes on NBs' sales. The cannibalization increases when PLs use similar (textual) product descriptions but different product images as NBs', and when NBs are low-priced and do not have strong presence in offline stores. Furthermore, NB's sales are *indirectly* lifted by PL introduction via increasing NBs' review volume and the product availability sold by third-party sellers. However, the indirect lift is insufficient to compensate for the *indirect* cannibalization caused by PL introduction via increasing NBs' price relative to PLs, reducing NBs' consumer review valence and homogeneity, and decreasing the product availability sold by platforms.

Statement of Key Contributions – 200 words

In doing so we intend to make the following contributions. First, our work contributes to the burgeoning literature that studies questions at the intersection of marketing and public policy such as platform monopoly. Platform monopolies attract attention from policymakers around the globe. To the best of our knowledge, this article is the first *empirical* study tackling this important public policy question. Our results show that, on average, PL introduction directly cannibalizes on NBs' sales. We thus address this important public policy question and provide empirical evidence that platform PLs are indeed detrimental to NBs.

In addition, our study contributes to the literature on PLs. Unlike offline stores where consumers can touch and feel the products, online platforms often lack haptic information. The intangible nature of the decision process in online environment forces consumers to pay more

attention to other indicators of quality and product performance, such as brand names, to compensate for the absence of physical contact. Given the intangible nature, it is largely unknown whether online platforms will be equally succussful as brick-and-mortar retailers to build PL programs. Our study shows that online platform can build succussful PLs and different types of cues may aggravate or alleviate such impact.

This is Not What I've Ordered: Aesthetic Failure in Food Delivery Services

Abstract

This work in progress paper investigates the aesthetic failures in food delivery services. It aims to extend our understanding of food consumption which is a multisensory experience disrupted by the lack of plating due the nature of delivery services. Our initial data collection explores Yelp reviews in a netnographic nature and next steps of data collection will include in depth interviews and experimental design. In the end, we are planning to offer concrete solutions to food preparation and service companies as well as third party delivery service operators in terms of how-to respond to service failures and recover customer satisfaction.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research extends our understanding of service failures by exploring aesthetic failures in food delivery services which are almost inescapable due to the nature of the service. This paper contributes to the conceptualization of aesthetic failure in food consumption by identifying emotional and practical responses of consumers to food delivery related failures. Additionally, this paper proposes to explain the relationship between food aesthetics, service quality perception and consumer satisfaction.

It is relevant for food industry companies e.g., restaurants, cafes, groceries etc.; as well as intermediary companies that are responsible for delivery such as UberEats, SkipTheDishes, DoorDash etc. by offering tangible action items in response to service failures and their recoveries. This research provides practical insights for businesses and brands to manage product, service and aesthetic failures related to food delivery.

Introduction

Food has been one of the most essential topics of exploration in consumption studies (i.e., Schifferstein et al. 2020) due to its connection to sensory experiences and health. The experience of food goes beyond its taste but also shape, color, scent, and texture. In other words, it is a multisensory experience for consumers closely tied to plating in addition to growing, preparing, and cooking. In the culinary world, the importance of plating at the food experience is acknowledged by restaurants and professional catering services. Yet, delivery services in which food is stored in a container for a certain amount of time, carried, and then consumed at home would be a very different experience than the chef has designed. In this work in progress paper we are aiming to explore aesthetic failures in the delivery services to further our understanding of consumer experiences of food consumption and offer actionable suggestions to restaurants and delivery service providers.

Literature Review

The role of visual aesthetics of the food in the consumer experience has been investigated in the literature (Alhelaili, 2015; Sheng et al., 2020), in terms of how visual aesthetics impact consumer perceptions of food (Suher et al. 2017, Castagna et al. 2021), how visual aesthetics of food could

improve mood (Privitera et al. 2013), the role of senses in food perception (Schifferstein et al. 2020), importance of color (Clydesdale, 1993; Kontukoski et al. 2016) and plating (Velasco et al. 2016) on consumers' aesthetic perceptions of food. Although these studies offer valuable insights, delivery services context needs further explorations due to its very nature with the lack of plating in conjunction to the importance of aesthetics. In the case of delivery, even though we would expect that visual aesthetics of food would be disrupted due to the nature of service, there is no comprehensive understanding of how consumers experience and respond to it.

There is a vast literature on product and service failures in consumer behavior studies offering solutions to brands in the situations of failure because it is almost inevitable. Consumers would like to see options in any given product or service but when it fails, they may experience regret (Steffel and Williams 2018), so that they defer the responsibility to another party. For companies, it is essential for them to respond to the failure in a timely and accurate way so that they would not lose their customers who are regretting their decision already. The studies suggest that the response timed immediately after the failure is most effective to save brands from negative evaluations (Roehm and Brady 2007). Another important aspect of the response for the brand to decide the content of the communication (You et al. 2020). The initial recovery efforts would decide whether the brand would be able to restore the consumer satisfaction (You et al. 2020). Even though companies spend considerable resources in addressing the complaints after failure to initiate recovery efforts, the complaints engender loyalty (Umashankar, Ward, and Dahl 2017). In that case, the loyalty is majorly by the strength of social ties between customers and brands (Umashankar, Ward, and Dahl 2017).

Unlike product failures, service failures involve a series of exchanges between the service provider and its customer. During the exchange, the brand has an opportunity to meet, exceed or fall below the customer's expectations by utilizing patterns of distributions (Sivakumar, Li and Dong 2014). As the stream of research indicates, the service failure has severe consequences for the companies and there are potential ways to recover the trust and maintain the loyalty. Yet, the severity of the service failure in the context of aesthetic failure has not been fully explored. Even though, any product and service failure carry potential harm to the brand image, this industry may carry more importance than other industries due to the unique symbolic aspect food carries. In this study, we aim to extend the literature on service failures by shedding light into the nature of aesthetic failure of delivery food.

Context

Due to the disruption that COVID-19 pandemic has caused, even the most sophisticated food services have switched to delivery services. While indoor dining has dropped significantly during the pandemic due to restrictions, food delivery has grown considerably. The largest delivery apps by market share, DoorDash and Uber Eats, have doubled their sales from the end of 2019 to the end of 2020 (Evans 2021, CNBC). In the United States, the food delivery market has more than doubled during the COVID-19 pandemic, following healthy historical growth of 8 percent. (Ahuja et al. 2021, McKinsey). Accordingly, the food industry at large has been investing in food delivery services to mimic restaurant dining as much as possible (Conger 2021, New York Times). Yet, the delivery food experience is still very different from a restaurant due to the perishable and easily

destructible state of plating. In this research we aim to explore the delivery food experience of consumers and how they make sense of service failure comes from plating.

Methodology

In this research, we utilized user-generated reviews from publicly available Yelp dataset. Within the Yelp dataset, we have randomly selected 200 reviews among the restaurant reviews with a 1 rating (lowest rating in Yelp) posted after March 2020 in order to capture the increased delivery services in the restaurant business. In our netnographic analysis of Yelp reviews, the primary source of data collection was the extraction of user generated reviews (Kozinets, 2020).

In the next stage of data collection, we are planning to conduct in-depth interviews (Belk et al. 2014) with consumers, restaurants and delivery personnel to paint an accurate picture of the flow of the delivery service. Our aim is to inform the experiments we're going to conduct to offer actionable items to companies.

In the final stage of data collection, we are planning to conduct an experiment. The goal of the experiment is to evaluate how differing levels of food aesthetics can influence the customers' evaluation of service quality, and ultimately satisfaction with the delivery service and restaurant. It is expected that when an aesthetic failure occurs then the participants will report lower levels of service quality and satisfaction.

Preliminary Findings

Our findings show that in the food delivery setting, food is presented to the consumer within a paper or plastic box whereas in the dine-in setting, it is presented on a wooden plate. The delivery plate is usually an unbalanced plate with a non-artistic presentation. The visuals from restaurant social media (i.e., Instagram) also show authentic serving of the traditional yogurt beverage that is served with the food. Even though the social media representation could be slightly different from the everyday serving and plating style of the restaurant, it still gives us a pretty good idea for what to expect. We find that in the dine-in visuals from social media, the plate is more balanced with a more artistic design (Velasco et al. 2016).

In our analysis, we found two main emerging themes: consumer perception of food delivery failures (i.e., service, product and aesthetic failure) and responses (i.e., emotional and practical response) (Figure 1). For *service failures*, consumers consider late delivery and misplaced orders as the main source of failure which is due to the 3rd party reliance of the restaurants. Therefore, it is important to have an understanding of who will be in charge to deal with the dissatisfied customers.

Initial data collection through archival sources in the form of netnography has offered us some descriptive aspects of the consumer experiences. We have identified two main *failure types* as: *aesthetic* and *taste* failures. The first is the main focus of the study as it is embedded in the nature of delivery service that is served in a container with little to no plating design. On the other hand, the taste of the food can be satisfying to consumers in the context of delivery. It is important to note that these failures are sometimes attained to the restaurant or the chef who prepared the food and sometimes to the delivery company or the delivery person who brought the food to the door

of consumers. The dynamic nature of attaining responsibility to different parties would require possibly different actions to recover the failure. In the experimental design stage, we aim to explore these scenarios as the next step of the study.

The next set of emerging themes is the flip side of the service failure which we named *consumer satisfaction types* as *emotional*, *physical* and *aesthetic* satisfaction. They can emerge as a response to the service or after the failure response. In other words, they are the goals that companies are aiming to achieve. Similar to the failures, consumers may attain the satisfaction of the food provided (a.k.a. the restaurant), delivery service or both. It is important to know for companies the nuances between these different types of satisfactions so that they successfully target them. Also, we are aiming to explore which type of satisfaction would generate better failure response and loyalty in the next stages of the data collection.

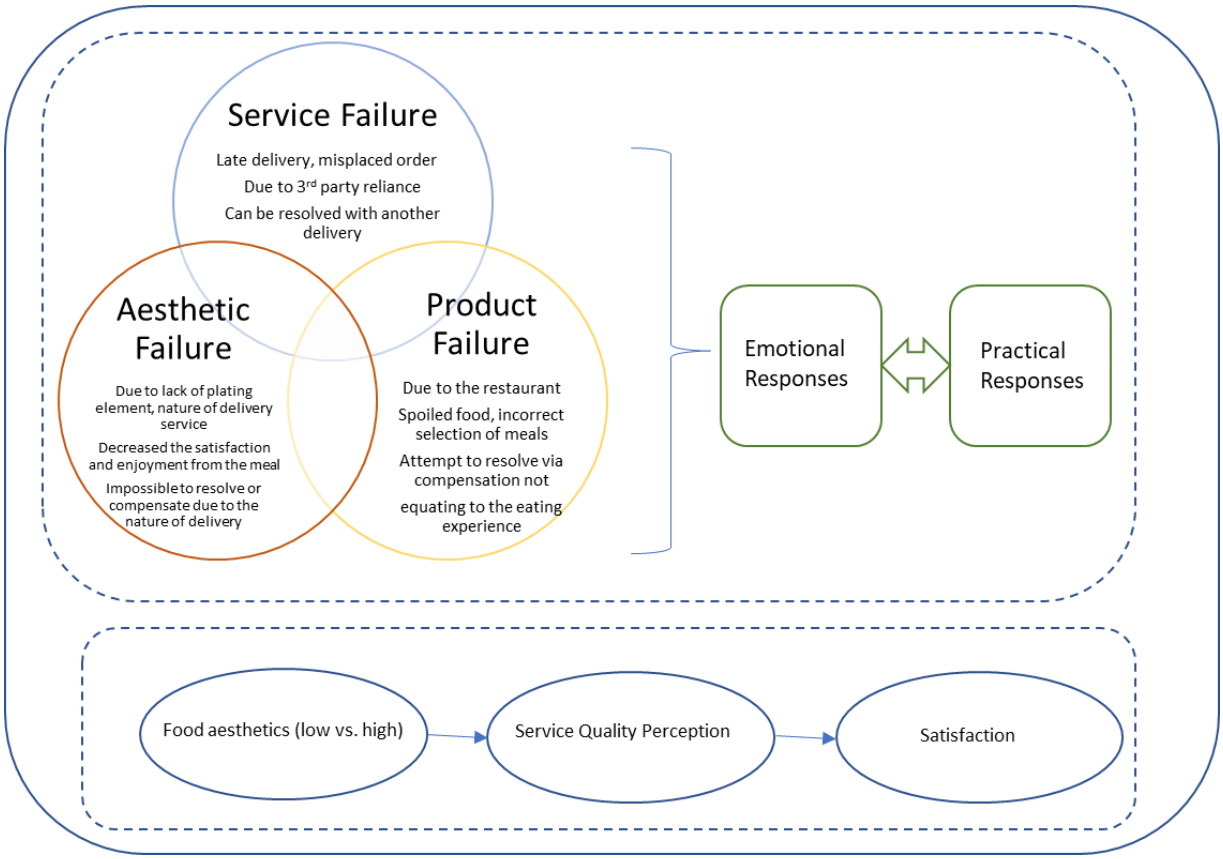
The last set of emerging themes is emotional responses consumers give to the service failures. As we know from the literature, food consumption is emotional and our analysis suggests that consumers have a wide array of responses to the service failure and recoveries from frustration and anger to cynical and humor. It is essential to understand which type of response comes from which type of failure and which type of emotional response requires which type of recovery for the targeted customer satisfaction. The further exploration of these questions would generate practical and actionable recommendations for companies. In the following steps of our data collection, we are planning to include experiments measuring different consumer and company responses to various scenarios.

Contribution and Discussion

This paper explores the changing environment of food delivery and how it affected the experiences of consumers. As literature suggests, visual aesthetics including its plating, color and share of the food is an essential part of the food experiences of consumers. Our research investigates product and service failures with an emphasis on aesthetic failures in the context of food delivery.

This paper contributes to the conceptualization of aesthetic failure in food consumption by identifying emotional and practical responses of consumers to food delivery related failures. In this research, we also provide practical insights for businesses and brands to manage product, service and aesthetic failures related to food delivery. Our paper opens up venues for discussion that is essential for restaurant businesses to deliver the best consumer experience possible. Our aim is to offer them tangible solutions to the disruption that restaurants have been facing. Future research could look at a variety of different restaurants. Additionally, communal versus individual food consumption could result in differences in aesthetic perceptions of food.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



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Understanding shopping cues and corresponding effects on customer responses: a systematic review approach

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Keywords: Systematic review, shopping cue, customer response, modality, thematic analysis.
Description: This paper focuses on the phenomenon of shopping cues (i.e., tangible and intangible shopping signals in the customer environment) that are embedded in a customer's shopping journey.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In this paper, we seek to elaborate the shopping cue dimensions and analyze multi-cue relationships from the literature in the past twelve years with a systematic review approach. The analysis covers cues' evaluation factors and corresponding customers' responses or business outcomes, across the retailing, service, and advertising domain. The following research questions guide our investigation:

RQ1. What are different components that building up shopping cue dimensions ?
RQ2. What do different shopping cues operate in concert?
RQ3. What are potential factors to evaluate shopping cues?
RQ4. How do different cues shape customer outcomes (e.g., purchase intention, product attitude and service satisfaction etc.) and affect business performance (e.g., store or brand image, sales, conversion rate etc.)?

Methodology and Data Collection

We carried out a four-step systematic review (Fink, 2010) following:

Step 1. selection of databases and keywords.
Step 2. application of practical screening criteria.
Step 3. application of methodological screening criteria.
Step 4. synthesizing research findings.

We decided to limit our search to the recent 13 years since the popularity of cue research and its reflection in the marketing field begun in 2010. Thus, the timeframe of this review captures the range between 2010 and 2023 (January). For logistical reasons, we only considered articles published in English. Thereafter, the abstract and the full text of each journal article were manually examined against three additional criteria, including:

1. It has been labeled in 'Business Category' in Web of Science.
2. Publication in academic journal outlets excludes conference proceedings, consulting reports, working papers, textbooks, master and doctoral dissertations, government reports and non-peer-reviewed articles.
3. Cue is the core topic of the study with title & abstract screening.
4. Studies are concerning online channels.

In total, we identified 151 journals that published papers related to shopping cues in the given time-frame.

Summary of Findings

We identify 122 shopping cues that have been discussed and categorize them into four overarching dimensions: (1) functionality (i.e., the essential purpose of the shopping cue), (2) context (i.e., the conditional state that determines the aim of a cue in which situation is designed for), (3) modality (i.e., the specific form in which cue transmits via the sensory input) and (4) channel (i.e., the shopping channel where customers access to shopping experience). These dimensions and their components form the basis of the shopping cue framework, capturing the essence of shopping cue as a concept in simple and precise terms. Additionally, we complement the practicality of shopping cue management with an analysis of the metadata (i.e., research theory and research method) distilled from shopping cue literature.

Statement of Key Contributions

In this paper, the systematic review is applied as a standardized lens to view shopping cue research. Its main contribution lies in moving from focusing on the mono shopping cue to integrating all key components of the shopping cue configuration. Specifically, following an inductive analysis of the shopping cue literature, this investigation finds that the shopping cue construct comprises four dimensions: nature, context, modality and channel. The value of this classification lies in enabling brands/firms and researchers to link the dimensions and their components in ways that have not been considered before. In this sense, a dialectical integration that may help move the field forward and reduce misunderstandings and difficulties in managing shopping cues. In addition, this research helped identify gaps in the existing literature and points to various (methodological) ways forward. As a result, scholars can accelerate empirical research that addresses the various challenges managers face (by connecting with other fields/disciplines, using novel methodologies, and linking the shopping cue elements with business and customer outcomes). Finally, this research may support managers in developing a better understanding of shopping experience through shopping cue-informed brand/firm audits and approaches to innovation.

References are available upon request.

UNDERSTANDING VENTURE CREATION IN RETAILING THROUGH ANCHOR EVENT ACTIVITIES

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Keywords: Anchor event, interactivity-based research, pop-up store, venture creation

This study complement existing research with insight in venture creation through interactivity-based research of organized activities from fifteen participating retailers in two pop-up stores as anchor events.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Scholarly attention is currently directed towards understanding venture creation (VC) as a process—the journey of new economic activities from nonexistence to existence, often studied through flow- or network models. To complement existing research on VC with more interactivity-based research of organized activities, this study examines two pop-up stores as anchor events involving on-site activities of fifteen participating retailers launching their new ventures. The pop-up stores were arranged in two middle-sized Norwegian cities and contained different brand stores that brought together actors of sub-networks and communities executing VC activities. The pop-up stores became on-site arenas for the retailers to create, maintain, and rejuvenate their networks, at the same time as becoming venues for temporal coordination of activities, involving existing and potential customers in their VC.

Research Question

In this work, we apply a conceptual framework based on frequently addressed dilemmas within entrepreneurship theory (discovery/creation, causation/effectuation) to further shed light on the broad aspect of on-site anchor event activities and their VC outcomes. The dilemma-based

concepts are applied as an analytic toolkit to pursue answers to the research question (RQ1): What is the nature of anchor event activities typically found within VC? and (RQ2): How does anchor event activities form VC outcomes? (RQ2).

Method and data

Our study combines researcher participation with 200 hours of observation and twenty in-depth interviews among 15 pop-up participating retailers. Data analysis followed established guidelines for hermeneutic analysis and was intimately intertwined with ongoing data collection. Data was coded and categorized in NVivo 12 software, iterated several times as patterns were steadily developing.

Summary of Findings

Our findings suggest that core anchor event activities typically found within VC are; concept- and product experimentation with visitors, arrangements to socialize (evening specials, auctions, and exhibitions), store-in-store concepts, arranged meeting places for peers and close connection with municipality and property owners. Further, this work points to four main VC outcomes derived from the core anchor event activities; (1) venture attention (2) venture idea-realization, (3) venture collaboration, and (4) venture extension. Our findings show that, depending on which anchor event activities applied, the outcomes vary.

Key Contributions

Theoretically, this study offers two main implications. First, anchor event activities are both discovered and created, following the logic of causation, at the same time as being experimental, based on “learning by doing” principles of effectuation during the execution. Second, our research enriches prior studies on VC as a process. In this work, VC activities and outcomes are understood through pop-up stores as on-site anchor event arenas, particularly suitable for interactivity-based research requested by the entrepreneurship field. Our findings clearly indicate that causal and effectual behaviours, together with discovery and creation, are

complementary and equivocally present in the VC process, providing the retailers who employ the different theoretical approaches concurrently with advantages when it comes to outcomes of venture attention, venture idea-realization, venture collaboration, and venture extension.

This study also reveals important managerial implications such as that retailers should allow themselves to find creative physical VC arenas (e.g., pop-up stores, showrooms), as well as collaborate with partners when discovering and creating concepts and activities based on new ideas. In this way, they allow themselves to both strategically plan for-and continually experiment with their venture.

UNRAVELLING THE PATH FROM CUSTOMER JOURNEY SEAMLESSNESS EXPERIENCE TO ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIOUR IN THE OMNICHANNEL RETAILING CONTEXT

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Keywords: Journey seamlessness; Omnichannel retailers; Self-brand connection; Customer engagement.

Description: This study aims to unravel the link between journey seamlessness experience and customer engagement behaviours, as well as the contingent role of self-brand connection and feeling of groundedness.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Nowadays, seamlessness experience has been considered an essential foundation of omnichannel retailing (Hsia et al., 2020). The omnichannel shopping experience is seamless when customers experience interconnected service content and synchronised product information (Chang & Li, 2022). The past decade has seen a flowering of academic works devoted to various viewpoints and forms of customer experience and consumer engagement behaviours in retailing contexts.

However, studies about the underlying mechanism linking seamlessness experience and customer engagement remain unexplored. Self-brand connection, which relates to how customers feel connected to a brand (Park et al., 2010), could be argued to be a bridge that links journey seamlessness experience and customer engagement behaviours. In addition, established brands can provide customers with a feeling of groundedness (Eichinger et al. 2021), making them find their brand experience more valuable (Brakus et al., 2009), and ultimately increase their engagement behaviours. Therefore, this study attempts to (1) examine the effect of journey seamlessness experience on customer engagement behaviours, (2) explore the mediating role of self-brand connection on the relationship between journey seamlessness experience and customer engagement behaviours, and (3) identify the moderating role of the feeling of groundedness in the effect of journey seamlessness experience on self-brand connection.

Method and Data

A survey was conducted with omnichannel retailing Vietnamese customers. The survey was conducted both online and through mall intercept. The survey screened consumers who have shopped more than one channel at retailers (e.g. two or more channels among traditional channels, websites, social networks, and mobile applications) within six months from the date of purchase to the date of sample collection. The survey was conducted at different times throughout the week to increase the sample's representativeness. Overall, 650 survey questionnaires were distributed, 514 responses were received, and 474 were retained after removing outliers. The scales for research constructs were adopted from extant literature: journey seamlessness experience was adapted based on Jaakkola & Terho (2021); Self-brand connection from Dorai et al. (2021). Feeling of groundedness (6 items) from Eichinger et al. (2021); customer engagement behaviours,

including customer referral behaviour, customer influencer behaviour, customer knowledge behaviour and customer purchase behaviour, from Kumar & Pansari (2016). All items were measured with a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) and were translated from English to Vietnamese and then backward-translated into English to ensure content equivalence. Vietnamese questionnaires were then used for the survey.

Summary of Findings

Hypothesis testing was conducted using Smart PLS. Assessment of scales showed satisfactory results for reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. The R2 values of customer influencer behaviour (0.485), customer knowledge behaviour (0.425), customer purchase behaviour (0.585), customer referral behaviour (0.336) and self-brand connection (0.438) all reached a substantial level (Cohen, 1988). Findings have shown that all hypotheses have been supported. These findings support previous research that emphasises the critical role of omnichannel customer experience in developing customer engagement behaviours in retailing (Quach et al., 2020). In particular, journey seamlessness experiences strongly impact customer purchase behaviour. Furthermore, the self-brand connection is found to mediate the effect of journey seamlessness experience and customer engagement behaviour; the results align with prior studies (Dorai et al., 2021; Loh et al., 2021). Finally, the current study provides evidence of the moderating effect of the feeling of groundedness on the positive relationship between journey seamlessness experience and self-brand connection. A brand can enhance the relationship between customer and firm through self-brand connection by providing customers with a feeling of groundedness through product consumption (Eichinger et al., 2021).

Key Contributions

The current research contributes to the literature on omnichannel retailers and customer engagement in two aspects. First, almost some early research on omnichannel retailing has focused on channel integration to create a seamless experience (Lee et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2018). In this study, the central inquiry is on how the seamlessness experience of a shopping journey influences customer engagement behaviours. Second, the result reveals the contingent roles of self-brand connection and feeling of groundedness in the path from seamlessness experience and customer engagement behaviours. From a managerial point of view, this study first points out that the journey seamlessness experience is the crucial determinant of customer engagement behaviours. Thus, omnichannel retailers should provide customers with the best journey seamlessness experience to get customers to engage actively. Second, omnichannel retailers should also pay attention to enhancing self-brand connection. Customers who have a strong sense of connection with the brand are more likely to engage with it (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Moore & Homer, 2008). Third, the product's attribute, design, and origin, which give the consumers a feeling of groundedness, are the top choices in the categories of the product range of omnichannel retailers.

References are available upon request.

UNWILLING TO GIVE UP GOOD DEEDS: THE INFLUENCE OF CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING ON ONLINE-BOUGHT PRODUCT RETURNS

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Keywords: product returns; cause-related marketing (CRM); moral self-image; self-affirmation

Description: The purpose of this research is to examine the effect of cause-related marketing (i.e., placing a thank-you letter with CRM information in the delivery package) on consumers' product return intention and the underlying mechanism of moral self-image and warm glow.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The return rate for online shopping has reached a very high level, which not only reduces e-retailers' sales margins and increases costs, but also reduces consumer satisfaction. Thus, online product returns remain a top concern for e-retailers and researchers.

The present research focuses on online product returns that the reason of return is product-related and primarily responsible for e-retailers or logistics service providers, and discusses whether placing a thank-you letter with cause-related marketing information in the delivery package, which we define as non-autonomous CRM, affects consumers' product return intention? If so, why?

Inspired by previous findings that purchase rewards, such as gifts or coupons, coming along with the delivery package reduce product return intention, and that consumers' engagement in cause-related marketing (CRM) campaigns brings them affective pleasure. We propose that a thank-you letter informs consumers that their purchase has contributed to a CRM campaign reduces product returns because consumers are unwilling to give up their boosted moral self-image and the positive feeling (i.e., warm glow) generated accordingly. If the underlying mechanism is correct, the focal effect will be diminished when self-affirmation is present (vs. no-affirmation).

Method and Data

Four studies were conducted to test our hypotheses. Study 1 was a field experiment that conducted in an online store on Taobao.com. This study adopted a single factor (CRM information: presence vs. absence vs. no-letter) between-subjects design, and the results showed that a thank-you letter with CRM information (77.27%) led to higher product keeping than a thank-you letter without CRM information (72.27%) and the no-letter condition (71.96%).

Study 2 (n = 203) adopted a single factor (CRM information: presence vs. absence vs. no-letter) between-subjects design. The results showed that a thank-you letter with CRM information led to higher product keeping intention, which further supported the basic effect in a lab experiment.

Study 3 (n = 197) adopted a single factor (CRM information: presence vs. absence) between-subjects design, and the results demonstrated that the effect of CRM on product keeping intention was serially mediated by moral self-image and warm glow.

Study 4 (n = 267) adopted a 2 (CRM information: presence vs. absence) × 2 (self-affirmation: yes vs. no) between-subjects design. The results indicated that the effect of CRM on product keep intention attenuated in the self-affirmation condition (vs. no-affirmation condition), which further confirmed the underlying mechanism of moral self-image.

Summary of Findings

The present research focuses on online product returns and explores the influence of non-autonomous CRM on consumers' product return intention. Through four studies (one field study included), this research finds that placing a thank-you letter with CRM information in the delivery package reduced consumers' intention to return the product, and moral self-image as well as warm glow mediated the focal effect. Purchasing CRM products is considered as a prosocial behavior, which aids to enhance consumers' positive moral self-image, and this consequently evokes the

positive feeling of warm glow. Therefore, returning the CRM product is parallel with giving up a good deed that one has already done, denying the moral self-image, and cancelling the corresponding positive feelings. As hedonic features are difficult to forfeit, consumers less willing to return a CRM product because they are unwilling to give up the boosted moral self-image and the pleasure brought by it. Furthermore, the focal effect attenuates when the positive self-view was already verified by self-affirmation manipulation, and consumers become less sensitive to the positive cue of moral self-image (i.e., involving in prosocial behaviors), affirming the underlying mechanism of moral self-image.

Key Contributions

Theoretically, the present work extends relevant literature both on product returns and CRM. This research contributes to the product returns literature in two ways. Firstly, unlike previous research that has taken an economic perspective, examining how to enhance consumers' perceived value of keeping a product to reduce their return intention. This research takes an affective perspective, examines how CRM can reduce product returns by influence consumers' affective feelings. Secondly, this research examines how to reduce returns after purchase, whereas previous research has focused on pre-purchase measures to reduce returns.

Dialoguing with CRM-related literatures, first, this research introduces a new form to implement CRM, examining how placing a thank-you letter with CRM information in the delivery package affects consumers' return intention. Second, this

research focuses on a different outcome variable, i.e., return intention, whereas previous research has focused on consumer purchases. Third, this research theoretically addresses and empirically demonstrates that moral self-image is a precondition for the generation of warm glow, further elucidating the mechanism underlying the effect of CRM on consumer behavior.

Practically, our research offers e-retailers an operational way to reduce return rates by placing a thank-you letter with CRM information in the delivery package.

VIRTUAL AGENT GENDER MATTERS, BUT MORE FOR WOMEN!? - THE EFFECT OF CONSUMER GENDER ON AGENT CHOICE

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Keywords: virtual agents, gender-matching effect, similarity-attraction, consumption motive, computers-are-social-actors

Description: This paper investigates how the consumer´s own gender influences the choice and the evaluation of a female or male gendered virtual recommendation agent.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Companies increasingly use virtual agents to accompany consumers in online purchase processes. Past research shows that people tend to behave socially towards systems like computers and virtual agents. Users project human characteristics and human behavior on virtual agents while partly responding to them as they would interact with a real human person. Even when consumers know that the agent they talk to is a system, they react with stereotyping behavior (e.g., users tend to rate attractive virtual agents as more competent than unattractive ones).

For human-human interaction contexts, it is well known that experiences, attitudes, and expectations shape how people perceive and treat other people. Perceptions and impression formation lead to social categorization and processes of stereotyping. Especially gender plays a major role in interactions and is subject of stereotyping. Therefore, this paper aims to shed light on whether people treat agents differently depending on their ascribed gender. Since stereotyping occurs through the formation of social categorization and the positioning of *ourselves* and the distancing of *myself* from others, this paper examines what role the consumer´s own gender might play in the formation of attitudes towards female and male virtual agents. Moreover, we explore the consumption motive as a boundary condition to the gender-matching effect.

Method and Data

Two online experiments with participants recruited from convenience samples were conducted to test the hypotheses. In the first study, we conducted a choice experiment and asked participants whether they would prefer a female or male virtual agent in a recommendation process of eyeglasses (N=206, 50% women, M_{age} = 52.96). We calculated a binary logistic regression with participant gender (0 = men, 1 = women) as independent variable and choice of the virtual agent as dependent variable.

In the second study, we conducted a 2 (agent´s gender: female vs. male) x 2 (own gender: men vs. women) x 2 (CM: hedonic vs. utilitarian) between-subjects experiment (N=380, 51.1% women, M_{age} = 41.59). Instead of measuring the choice of the agent´s gender, we manipulated whether participants received support from a female vs. male agent. Moreover, the consumption motive (hedonic vs. utilitarian) was manipulated. As dependent variable we measured trust in the virtual agent on a 7-point Likert scale. We decided on this because consumers mostly do not have the option to decide on the virtual agent that they want to be served by. We analyzed study two using ANOVAS with simple effect analysis.

Summary of Findings

This research investigates the relationship between the consumer gender and preferences for a virtual agent´s gender in online recommendation processes. We hypothesized a gender-matching effect, in particular, consumer choice of an agent increases when having gender similarity (vs. non-similarity). Moreover, drawing on past research on role expectations and experiential consumption behavior, we introduce the consumption motive (hedonic vs. utilitarian) as a boundary condition for the gender-matching effect. In two experimental studies, we found support that the gender-matching effect holds strongly for women but not for men. Women were roughly seven times more likely to choose the female agent than men. Men have no strong preference for male agents to support them in a digital advisory service. Our findings support the similarity-attraction theory and ingroup preference for women. We discovered women have a significantly higher trust in a female than a male agent. Notably, women´s preference for a female virtual agent is attenuated when they receive utilitarian recommendations. Women who are advised by a female agent have higher satisfaction with the virtual agent because it is an expression of identity. This matters in particular for hedonic motives, because they are generally closer associated with the self.

Key Contributions

The insights of this paper are highly relevant for both academia and practice, particularly for retailers to find a suitable virtual agent for offering a superior online service environment.

From a theoretical perspective, we contribute to the understanding of gender differences in the context of the adoption of virtual agents. As such, we show that for women, a female virtual agent is the preferred option, but men have no strong preference for a male agent. Further, we show that the consumption motive plays an important role, insofar as for hedonic recommendations, women trust the male agent even less.

From a managerial perspective, our findings suggest using several virtual agents for all consumers and different tasks. Specifically, in our choice study, we show that consumers choose different agents depending on their own gender. Companies with either a diverse product range or even hybrid products should consider offering various virtual agents that help customers to find products that differ in the extent to which they are hedonic or utilitarian.

Finally, our results are of high relevance for broader societal reasons as they demonstrate how consumers behave. We reveal that consumers treat virtual agents like “social actors”, and through assigning gender to the agent we triggered especially women to transfer human gender stereotypes to virtual agents.

References are available upon request.

WAIT TIL YOU 📖 ABOUT THE IMPACT 😊😐☹️ HAVE ON TIPPING

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Keywords: Tipping Behaviors, Emojis, Positive Emotions, Field Experiment

Description: Our research explores how the inclusion of emojis on transaction checks of foodservice establishments impacts consumer tipping behavior by transferring positive emotions from the emoji on the tip request to the consumer.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Emojis have become a common element in human communication, with the ability to communicate meaning and elicit emotional responses. Yet, little research has explored the strategic use of emojis by businesses. Our research explores how the inclusion of emojis on transaction checks of foodservice establishments impacts consumer tipping behavior. Drawing on emotional contagion theory, we posit that the effect of emojis on tipping occurs because of the transference of positive emotions from the emoji face present on the tip request to the consumer. Across three studies, we examine how emojis influence tip amount through positive emotions.

Method and Data

Our primary hypothesis was tested in a single-factor between-subjects field experiment at a foodservice establishment with two manipulated conditions (emojis: present vs. absent). The results found that the presence of an emoji increased the tip percentage compared to when no emoji was present (M_{Emoji} = 26.43% vs. $M_{No\ Emoji}$ = 22.86%; t (868) = -1.97, $p < .05$).

We then replicated the effect in a controlled laboratory experiment using a third-party food delivery scenario. The results supported participants tipped more when emojis were present (M_{Emoji} = 16.22%) than when only a percentage was given ($M_{No\ Emoji}$ = 14.66%; t (300) = -2.73, $p < .01$).

Then, in an online experiment with two conditions (emoji: present vs. absent) the underlying mechanism of positive emotions was explored. The results found the presence of emojis had a significant effect on positive emotions (a = 6.14, $p < .05$), which in turn increased tip percentage (b = .08, $p < .05$). The indirect effect of emoji presence on tip amount through positive emotions was significant (effect = .518, 95% CI [.045, 1.252]).

Summary of Findings

Across three studies, including both field and lab data, we show that consumer tipping behavior is increased when they are exposed to an emoji (as opposed to no emoji) on tipping requests. We also demonstrate that the presence of emojis increases the positive emotions experienced by consumers during the payment transaction, which in turn positively impacts tipping percentage. The effects are replicated in both field and lab studies across a variety of contexts, including on-premise dining and third-party delivery.

Key Contributions

The current work offers theoretical contributions to prior literature in three important but underexamined areas of consumer research: tipping behavior, visual cues, and emotional contagion. Prior literature has examined a variety of visual cues for increasing consumer tips for service staff, but has yet to consider textual paralanguage (e.g., emojis) as a means of influencing consumer tipping behavior. Practically, our research reveals a new method for increasing tips from consumers. In general, it is advantageous for foodservice establishments to employ methods which ensure their servers are maximizing their tips, as this leads to greater employee satisfaction and lower turnover. Tips provide a large portion of wages for many service employees; thus, factors that have a positive impact at the subconscious level are important to understand. With the use of electronic point-of-sale systems, inserting images onto guest checks is a simple method for food service operators to implement that would have a positive impact for employees.

What are the hierarchy of values sought by shoppers when shopping online?

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Abstract

Using a grounded theory approach, our study (Kakar and Kakar, 2022) identified 6 types of values derived by shoppers when shopping online. Although the participants in the debriefing session agreed with the values sought by them in during online shopping as well as with the items in these values, they asked whether we could analyze the data or collect more data to objectively find if there is a hierarchy among these values from the consumers' perspective. We found the request to be interesting and conducted another study to investigate. The findings show that as Quality Value and Psychological Safety (comfort value) provided by the software were at the lowest level, Utilitarian Value was at next higher level and Hedonic, Social and Epistemic Values were at the highest level.

Statement of Contribution

By finding out the hierarchical relationship among values, perhaps for the first time in literature, this study has implications for business managers in prioritizing the valuable features they should provide in their websites. Online websites should first ensure high levels of Psychological Safety and Quality Value (must-have values) to be accepted in the marketplace, followed by Utilitarian value (performance value) to compete successfully with other shopping websites. Once these values are fulfilled then websites can focus on providing hedonic Value, Social Value and Epistemic Value (Exciting Values) to attract and delight the online shopper.

Theory and Literature Review

We used the well-established Kano model (Löfgren and Witell, 2008) to assess which type of requirements and how they impact user satisfaction.

Frederick Herzberg and the two-factor theory

Investigators of consumer satisfaction have frequently adapted models and techniques from studies of job satisfaction (Pfaff, 1973; Czeipiel, Rosenberg and Akerele, 1974, Kakar, 2012ab)). The adaptations have face validity because the concept of satisfaction is common to both types of studies (Maddox, 1981, Kakar, 2015abc). Therefore, although the Motivation-Hygiene Theory was developed by Frederick Herzberg (1959) as an alternative to Maslow's theory (1954) for studying job satisfaction, it has contributed to a body of knowledge on customer satisfaction.

According to the Motivation-Hygiene theory (Herzberg and Synderman, 1967, Kakar, 2014) job satisfaction and dissatisfaction must be separated into two different continua, and are determined by two different sets of factors. Factors found to affect job satisfaction (recognition, achievement, work itself, advancement, and responsibility) are called "motivation factors." Factors found to affect job dissatisfaction (salary, company policies, technical competence, interpersonal relations and working conditions), called "hygiene factors" (Brenner and Carmack, 1971, Kakar, 2016ab). By implication, customer requirements can be classified into two categories, those that cause customer dissatisfaction if not fulfilled but no significant satisfaction if fulfilled and those that cause customer satisfaction if fulfilled but no dissatisfaction if not fulfilled. "Hygeine" factors are also called "Dissatisfiers" and "Motivation" factors are called "Satisfiers".

The Three-factor theory

Earlier empirical studies (Swan and Combs,1976; Maddox 1981; Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988; Johnston and Selvestro, 1990) of customer requirements found support for Herzberg's (Herzberg and Synderman,1967) two factors theory. However, later studies (Brandt, 1987; Brandt and Reffet, 1989; Stauss and Hentschel,1992; Johnston,1993; Anderson and Mittal,2000, Kakar, 2020abcdefg) found empirical support for a three-factor theory, the third factor leading to dissatisfaction as well as satisfaction. Today the three factor theory is widely accepted. The three-factor theory is popular in quality literature as the "theory of attractive quality" (Kano et al, 1993) and as discussed is based on and extends Herzberg's two factor theory. The three factors in the three-factor theory are:

Basic factors: They are prerequisites and must be satisfied first at least at threshold levels for the product to be accepted. The fulfillment of basic requirements is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for satisfaction. The customer takes Basic requirements for granted, and therefore does not explicitly ask for them. They are similar to Herzberg's "Hygiene factors" or "Dissatisfiers". The other names used for Basic factors are Minimum Requirements (Brandt, 1988), Must-be requirements (Kano et al, 1993). "The fulfillment of basic requirements is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for satisfaction" (Matzler, Fuchs and Schubert, 2004, Kakar, 2017).

Performance factors: These are requirements that the customer deliberately seeks to fulfill. They are uppermost in her consciousness. Fulfilling these requirements leads to customer satisfaction and not fulfilling them leads to dissatisfaction. The other name for Performance factors is One-dimensional requirements (Kano et al, 1993). As "Performance factors are typically directly connected to customers' explicit needs and desires .Therefore, a company should be competitive with regard to performance factors" (Matzler, Fuchs and Schubert, 2004).

Excitement factors: Excitement requirements are those that the customer did not expect. They surprise the user by adding unexpected value to the product thereby delighting her. The Excitement factors are similar to Herzberg's "Motivation factors" or "Satisfiers". The other names for Excitement requirements are Attractive requirements (Kano et al, 1993), Value enhancing requirements (Brandt, 1988). Implementing excitement features differentiate the product from competition.

We suggest that there is a hierarchical relationship amongst the three types of user requirements. Basic requirements are expected and threshold requirements for acceptance, Performance features are desired requirements and Delighters are Unexpected attributes that delight consumers. For example, if the restaurant is unhygienic, you will most likely never eat at that place. Thus, hygiene is a Basic requirement. If the food is of good quality and prices are reasonable then they are performance attributes which make the restaurant competitive. However, if a free drink is offered at the end of a good meal, that is an exciting feature. The customer is delightfully surprised as they never expected it. Therefore, Basic requirement such as hygiene in our example is at the lowest level of hierarchy without which the customer will not do business with you even if the food is good and the prices are reasonable. Similarly, Performance features are next level in the hierarchy. The customer will not be happy if a free drink is offered if the food is not of good quality or the prices are excessively high. The Exciting features are highest level in hierarchy. They can cause customer delight if the lower-level requirements (Basic and Performance) are taken care of.

Kano survey method: In the Kano Survey Method subjects respond to two questions for every attribute: the functional question "How do you feel if this feature is present?" and dysfunctional question "How do you feel if this feature is NOT present?" The first question concerns the reaction of the user if the product includes that feature, the second concerns his reaction if the website does not include that attribute. The user must choose one of the five possible options for the answers for both the functional and dysfunctional question: 1. I like it this way, 2. I expect it this way, 3. I am neutral, 4. I can live with it this way, 5. I dislike it this way. Asking both functional and dysfunctional question helps managers assess user priorities. If the user expects some attribute feature to be present, but can live without the feature, it is not a mandatory or critical feature. Based on the user responses to the questions in both functional and dysfunctional form for each of the user's requirements, the quickest way to assess the questionnaires is to map response for each attribute in Table 1 and using plurality of subject responses to determine the attribute category to which it belongs. The plurality of responses of all participants determines the overall category for the attribute.

Functional Question	Dysfunctional Question				
	Like	Expect	Neutral	Live with	Dislike
Like	Q	E	E	E	P
Expect	R	I	I	I	B
Neutral	R	I	I	I	B
Live with	R	I	I	I	B
Dislike	R	R	R	R	Q

B-Must have requirements or Basic Features
P-Performance requirements or Expected Features
E-Excitement requirements or Augmented Features
R-Reverse, i.e. wrong features, that would make the consumer experience worse
Q-Questionable, i.e. the consumer answers is inconsistent
I-Indifferent, i.e. the consumer does not care about this feature

Table 1. Kano Method used for categorizing Value Attributes

Method of Data Collection Round 2 of the study was conducted using the Kano survey method for 39 items from the previous study Kakar (2020) (see Table 2 for details). The same 222 subjects who participated in the Kakar (2020) previous study (Round 1) provided data. The subjects who provided their response to the Kano questionnaire were 19-24 years old. 51.3% respondents were female, and 49.7 % respondents were male. The average age of

respondents was 19-23.2 years and average length of online shopping experience of 5.1 years. A sample pair of questions question for item UV is "How do you feel if the shipping charges are reasonable on the shopping website" and "How do you feel if the shipping charges are not reasonable on the shopping website". The subject provides one of the following responses for each question "1. I like it this way, 2. I expect it this way, 3. I am neutral, 4. I can live with it this way, 5. I dislike it this way". If the plurality of subjects responses are Like it for the first functional question and disklike if for the first dysfunction question then using Table 1 the item is categorized as Performance value item.

To test the validity of the categorizations using the Penalty Reward Contrast Analysis Method (PRCA), subjects also rated their overall satisfaction with the websites using a single item 7 point scale (Andrews and Withey, 1976) with a neutral midpoint of 4, terrible at one end of the scale (1) and delighted at the other end of the scale (7): 1 - Terrible 2 – Unhappy 3 – Mostly Dissatisfied 4 – Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied 5 – Mostly Satisfied 6 – Pleased 7 – Delighted. Single-item measures offer advantages of being short, flexible, and easy to administer (Pomeroy, Clark and Philip, 2001). They are also less time consuming and not monotonous to complete (Gardner, Cummings, Dunham. and Pierce, 1998), thus reducing response biases (Drolet and Morrison, 2001a). Hence, they are appropriate for use in large scale studies (Robins, Hendin, and Trzesniewski, 2001).

Results and Analysis

The finding of the study is shown below. All items or attributes of Utilitarian Value were categorized by participants as Performance attributes, all items of Hedonic Value and Social Value were categorized by participants as Excitement attributes, all items of Quality Value and Psychological Safety were categorized by participants Must-have attributes, one item of Epistemic value was categorized as Performance attribute and 2 items were categorized as Excitement attributes.

Items	Description	
	Utilitarian Value (UV)	
UV1	I save money when I shop at this website	Performance
UV2	The shipping charges are reasonable	Performance
UV3	My purchases are done cheaper at this shopping site than if I had made them	Performance
UV4	I was able to get everything I needed at one stop	Performance
UV5	I was able to shop at this site without disruptions and delays	Performance
UV6	My order was delivered accurately	Performance
	Hedonic Value (HV)	
HV1	I enjoy shopping at this site	Excitement
HV2	I enjoy browsing this website even when I have no intention of buying anything	Excitement
HV3	Shopping on this website is fun	Excitement
HV4	In my opinion, shopping at this site is a pleasant way to spend leisure time	Excitement
HV5	While shopping at this site, I feel happy	Excitement
HV6	The website images are aesthetically pleasing	Excitement
	Social Value (SV)	
SV1	Patronizing this shopping site fits the impression that I want to give to others	Excitement
SV2	I am eager to tell my friends/acquaintances about this shopping site	Excitement

SV3	I feel that I belong to the group of shoppers who shop at this site	Excitement
SV4	I found this shopping site to be consistent with my style	Excitement
SV5	I felt like a smart shopper by shopping at this	Excitement
SV6	This shopping site gave me something that is personally important or pleasing for me	Excitement
	Psychological Safety (PS)	
PS1	I know if I made a mistake in the order the online retailer would offer me a second chance	Must Have
PS2	I have concerns about cybersecurity at this website R	Must Have
PS3	The website has a friendly return policy	Must Have
PS4	When I buy at this site, I am guaranteed the best possible deal	Must Have
PS5	I have concerns about identity theft when shopping online R	Must Have
PS6	I have concerns about counterfeit goods when shopping online R	Must Have
PS7	I feel secure about accepting deliveries from this online retailer	Must Have
PS8	I am assured about timely deliveries	Must Have
PS9	If I have a question before placing the order, I get honest answers quickly	Must Have
	Epistemic Value (EV)	
EV1	I can examine the product almost as if I am shopping in a brick-and-mortar store	Performance
EV2	There is always something new and exciting when I browse this website	Excitement
EV3	It is as if I am embarking on a great adventure when I visit this website	Excitement
	Quality Value (QV)	
QV1	The website is easy to locate	Must Have
QV2	I can easily check my order status	Must Have
QV3	The website is legible	Must Have
QV4	I was able to find the website quickly	Must Have
QV5	The web pages loaded quickly	Must Have
QV6	It was easy to navigate the website	Must Have
QV7	The website is well-organized	Must Have

Table 2. Results of Kano Categorization of Value Attributes

Testing Validity of Results

To test validity of these categorizations we adapt the widely accepted PRCA (Penalty Reward Contrast Analysis) (e.g., Brandt, 1987; Anderson and Mittal, 2000; Brandt, 1988; Matzler and Sauerwein, 2002; Mittal, Ross and Baldasare, 1998) technique to determine the dissatisfaction if a particular value (e.g., UV) for the website is low and satisfaction level if the value is high. Validation was done at the level of 6 Values as the sample size did not permit the validation to be done at the level of individual items. PRCA methods involves the use of regression analysis with two sets of dummy variables representing each value.

A value of (1, 0) indicates the level of a particular value derived by shopping from the website is high (1 SD above mean) and a value of (0, 1) indicates the value derived is low (1 SD below mean). Based on this coding scheme, multiple regression analysis was conducted with overall shopper satisfaction for the value-added set as dependent variable and the individual subject responses (high or low) to the 6 values of the websites as independent variable. Two regression coefficients are obtained after regression analyses — one to measure the impact when value provided by the website is high and when the value provided by the website is low. The results are summarized in Table 3 below.

Thus, PRCA analysis (Table 3) shows that UV is Performance value attributes, HV, SV and EV are Exciters and PS and QV are Must-Have value attributes. This is in accordance with their value categorizations of the items of these values in Table 2.

Name of the Value	Satisfaction at High Value	Dissatisfaction at Low Value
Utilitarian Value	0.337**	-0.321**
Hedonic Value	0.267**	-0.032
Social Value	0.206**	-0.045
Psychological safety	0.061	-0.437***
Epistemic Value	0.108*	-0.53
Quality Value	0.069	0.126*

***p<0.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001**

Table 3. Results of PRCA Analysis

Testing for Hierarchical Relationships

To test or hierarchical relationships, we used three sets of dummy variables with high and low values (see Table 4) below:

	BASIC		PERFORMANCE		EXCITEMENT		Dummy Variables
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	
HHH							1,1,1
HHL							1,1,0
HLH							1,0,1
HLL							1,0,0
LHH							0,1,1
LHL							0,1,0
LLH							0,0,1
LLL							0,0,0

Table 4. Dummy Variables used in Regression

Reorganizing the same data collected for PRCA, multiple regression analysis was conducted with overall shopper satisfaction as dependent variable and the high and low responses for Basic, Performance and Excitement attributes as independent variables. 8 regression coefficients were obtained for each dummy variable shown in Table 5 above. Based on our theory we expected HHH, HHL to have higher impact on user satisfaction (largest regression coefficient) and HLL, HLH, LHH, LHL LHH, LHL, LLH and LLL to have the lowest impact in the order listed.

All features with low user response to Basic requirements will not satisfy the online shopper even though the Performance and Exciting requirements are rated high. HLL implies that the website only meets the threshold level of acceptance for shoppers which may not be enough for the website to become competitive. In the case of HLH even though the Basic requirement and Excitement requirement are met and, the Excitement requirement does not meet the rule of hierarchy that the lower-level requirements should be fulfilled satisfactorily first (in this case Performance requirements) before higher level requirements (Exiting requirements) are fulfilled. The results in Table 5 are in line with these expectations.

	Regression Coefficients
HHH	0.430***
HHL	0.354***
HLH	0.082*
HLL	0.074*
LHH	0.057
LHL	0.045
LLH	0.039
LLL	0.008

Table 5. Results of Regression Analysis

Conclusion

The results of the study show that there is a hierarchical relationship among values sought by online shoppers. These findings can help product/ project managers to determine how to prioritize features to meet the business goals. Psychological Safety and Quality value are prerequisites, and the online shopping site is unlikely to succeed without providing these values. Utilitarian Value on the other hand is a performance attribute of the user. It will make the online shopping website competitive. The higher the utilitarian value the higher the shopper satisfaction. Hedonic Value, Social value and Epistemic Value are Exciters. They will differentiate the website from competition. In terms of priority, online websites should first ensure high levels of Psychological Safety and Quality Value to be accepted in the marketplace, followed by Utilitarian value to compete successfully with other shopping websites. Once these values are fulfilled then websites can focus on providing Hedonic Value, Social Value and Epistemic Value to delight the online shopper and differentiate their website from competition.

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Sales Management and Personal Selling

TITLE: 'SMALL TALK IS NOT THAT SMALL IN B2B SALES'! B2B SALESPERSONS' SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND SMALL TALK FACILITATING COLLECTION OF CUSTOMER-BASED INDIVIDUAL COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE ENHANCING SALES PERFORMANCE.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The last two decades have witnessed many studies that tracked the impact of social media technology in the B2B sales domain. Social media has been touted as a primary tool for collecting business information and facilitating information communication among buyers and sellers. However, the use of social media to collect non-business information and its significance has gone largely unnoticed in sales literature. The Technology-to Performance Chain of Task -Technology- Fit and Similarity-Attraction theory serving as the theoretical foundation, we developed and empirically tested a conceptual model in which B2B salesperson social media usage impacts salesperson performance indirectly through non-business talk (small talk).

METHODOLOGY

Our research findings are based on a cross-sectional survey, conducted among B2B salespeople working in multi-industry across India. We collected around 297 responses, of which 276 were complete and usable. We used the following established scales from the literature. Social media usage was measured using Agnihotri et al. (2016), adaptive selling using Robinson et al. (2002), creative selling was measured using Wang and Netemeyer (2004), outcome - based sales performance using Homburg et al. (2011). Items for customer-based individual competitive intelligence were adapted from word-of-mouth scales, i.e., Harrison-Walker (2001) and Goyette et al. (2010). Items for measuring small talk were developed by Kaski et al. (2018).

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

We tested our hypothesis using structural equation modeling. We have observed composite reliabilities for all constructs above 0.7 and average variance extracted above 0.5. In the confirmatory analysis, we found that the average variance extracted for each construct from its respective indicators is greater than the shared variance with every other construct in the model. Hence, the constructs demonstrated good discriminant validity. The $\chi 2$ was significant ($\chi 2$ =323.92, df =174, p =0.000); however, the other measures of fit (normed $\chi 2$ (CMIN/df) =1.862; RMSEA=0.056; CFI =0.957) show evidence of good fit of the model to the data given the complexity of the model (Hair et al. 2010). The loadings of all items on the constructs were statistically significant at $p<0.001$ (two-tailed), and all our hypotheses are supported.

FINDINGS

Our research is truly one of a kind to provide unique evidence of sellers using social media to collect non-business information (common grounds) and engage in non-business talk (small talk), facilitating relevant business information exchange (customer-based individual competitive intelligence) thereby translating into outcome sales performance.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The finer-grained theoretical development of an essential but relatively underresearched topic of 'small talk' involves great significance in sales literature regarding its novelty and practicality. We developed and empirically tested a theoretical model in which B2B salesperson social media usage positively influences salesperson performance indirectly through non-business talk (small talk) and securing customer-based individual competitive intelligence. The theoretical foundation for this study is built on the Technology-to Performance Chain of Task -Technology- Fit and Similarity-Attraction theory. This research is the first study investigating the role of salesperson social media use to collect non-business information (common grounds) and engage in non-business talk (small talk) to create enjoyable interactions with the customer that oils the buyer-seller relationship favouring relevant business information exchange (specifically customer-based individual competitive intelligence) for an efficient sales performance.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Our findings would be an eye-opener for the managers in the sales realm regarding the significance of salesperson social media usage for gathering both business and non-business information and translating it into sales performance through non-business talk (small talk) and securing individual competitive intelligence. Small talk is heavily underrated as inconsequential in business meetings, and some salespeople prefer diving straight into big topics of work-related matters. However, the reality is that the gentle and social approach of small talk acts as a gateway providing the salesperson an opportunity to connect, understand and establish a deeper buyer-seller relationship, thereby opening a big window of opportunities and is often far more effective than thrusting one's business cards into the hands of potential customers and people around. The conversation is more like peeling an onion, where one proceeds in layers by carefully choosing the conversation topics appropriate to the occasion and matching the level of the buyer-seller relationship. Salespeople should be trained to use social media to find innocuous topics of common interests as icebreakers, providing a positive way to connect and relate with the customer.

REFERENCES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

A LONGITUDINAL REVIEW OF THE SALES PERFORMANCE LITERATURE: A BIBLIOMETRIC AND MAIN PATH ANALYSIS

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Keywords: Network Analysis, Literature Review, Sales Performance, Main Path Analysis, Bibliometric Analysis

Description: A network analysis approach is used to examine almost 120 years of research focused on sales performance across most business disciplines to describe the trajectory of current knowledge.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The present research extends our understanding of sales by examining what has been done, where, when, and by whom to *take stock* of the accrued knowledge in the scientific literature devoted to sales performance, revealing research gaps, and elucidating emerging trends that can guide future research endeavors. Additionally, the vital question of what are the foundational building blocks and key intellectual developments in the current sales performance knowledge is illuminated.

Method and Data

This research adopts a three-step process to examine the sales performance literature: (1) a macro bibliometric analysis encompassing publications from multiple business fields indexed in the Web of Science is conducted, (2) a network analysis that expounds the conceptual, intellectual, and social structures that have produced the current insights is performed, and (3) a main path analysis that distills the sales performance knowledge down to its basic components, uncovering

the main artery from which all other sales performance knowledge flows from is presented and explained. The Web of Science Core Collection database (WebOS) was consulted to systematically retrieve the bibliometric data of relevant papers on sales performance based on their topic by examining the abstracts, titles, and keywords. Several inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to the business cross-disciplinary sample of peer-reviewed academic papers to obtain a final sample of 1,133. The bibliometric data was structured in a citation network to perform the analytic techniques of cluster analysis and main path analysis.

Summary of Findings

Our main findings support the ongoing transition of the sales function from a mere operational/tactical activity to a strategic imperative that influences not only the revenue-generation facet of a firm but ultimately shapes higher-order phenomena such as business model and strategy. Moreover, the relevance of market forces, intraorganizational sales environments, and business partners that can produce favorable network effects for selling organizations are presented as part of our analysis. However, the dominance of scientific knowledge produced exclusively from what we call the western perspective points to an imminent need for sales performance research that generalizes to international settings—a direct call for marketing scholars. Moreover, practitioners in non-western cultures should selectively consult the current scientific knowledge on sales performance to tailor the best practices accordingly in order to achieve positive effects in their organizations. Furthermore, the main path analysis uncovered twenty-six milestone articles that comprise six distinct clusters outlining the evolution and development of sales performance knowledge, including, (1) *satisfaction and salesperson performance*, (2) *job stress and turnover*, (3) *sales control systems and sales management*, (4)

relationship selling, (5) *customer orientation and leadership support*, and (6) *internal selling and salesperson's influence*.

Key Contributions

The current research makes several contributions. First, we systematically review the accrued academic literature across business disciplines (e.g., management, marketing, and finance) to provide an integrative view of the scientific knowledge focused on sales performance, noting that the sales function has transitioned from an exclusively *tactical* imperative to a *strategic* role. Thus, expanding previous works that only review sales and marketing-focused literature streams. Second, our analysis reaches beyond the traditional reliance on, and limits of, citation and co-citation frequency count generally used in bibliometric studies by conducting a main path analysis that distills the overall body of research on sales performance down to its basic components, uncovering the main conduits (or "themes") of the sales performance stream. The main path describes the shift in the focus of sales performance research from the external aspects of the selling environment to the internal ones, placing this topic at the vanguard of sales performance scientific inquiry.

*References are available upon request.

ALIGNMENT THROUGHOUT THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY - SHAPING THE MARKETING, SALES, IT INTERFACE

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Keywords: information technology; Marketing; Sales; alignment; case study;

Description: This study examines the working relationship between the Marketing, Sales, IT actors through four case studies along the customer journey and identifies six dimensions that determine the desired alignment of these actors.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In today's communications landscape, digital empowered and autonomous customers challenge the sales process by using IT enabled tools and in parallel IT enabled marketing changed the way Marketing and Sales promote products. This is thus a first indication that Marketing and Sales actors depend on the support and participation of IT to fulfil their tasks in customer interaction.

However, the actors from Marketing, Sales and IT (M-S-I) still act individually under the umbrella of the organization, especially in B2B firms, and struggle to interact with each other, because they have not been in a working relationship in the past that requires interplay, which has changed due to the digital autonomy of the customer. Although, each actor may be performing fine, the customer interaction could be perceived as a patchwork of interactions. Conclusively, this raises the question of how Marketing, Sales and IT interplay with each other in terms of customer interaction. To answer this question, an in-depth investigation was carried out conducting case studies of industrial companies that have benefitted from digitized Marketing, digitized Sales activities and IT developments in different sectors. Specifically, the customer journey model was used as the guiding framework for the exploration of the M-S-I interface.

Method and Data

A structured literature review has been carried out, which returned relatively few historical studies, which analysed all three M-S-I actors together, but extensive conceptual studies for a pair of actors. The captured models were used to validate the findings.

In the present study, the case-study approach assured the integration of the different perspectives of all three departments through interviews with matched triples (managers

as actors from all three departments in one company) in four different business units. In total, twelve semi-structured interviews with an average duration of 45 minutes were conducted with four triples at six stages of their working relationships. Interviewees in the four different firms occupied a variety of different positions, including SVP, CMO, and CIO, as well as directors, team leaders, and operational managers. Three of the twelve respondents were female. In addition, field notes and organization charts were included, providing construct validity to triangulation of the case-study data and limiting bias. The resulted coding scheme has been compared and adopted with conceptual studies from the literature outlined earlier. In result, the final coding scheme is a conglomerate of existing constructs of working relationship analyses and new abductively developed constructs.

Summary of Findings

The exploration of the interface of M-S-I actors in multiple case studies reveals that alignment is a necessary guiding principle for the interplay, which is shaped by various dimensions and intradimensional attributes. Six dimensions of alignment, namely "objectives", "power", "knowledge & skills", "resources & structural linkages", "information sharing & communication" and "mindset & orientations" shape the alignment of the M-S-I actors within this interface. These dimensions are grounded in the literature as domains or constructs. The resulting six dimensions contain in total 20 intradimensional attributes, called:

Objectives: *Goal Definition, KPI Measurement*;

Power: *Top Management, Responsibility, Mentality*;

Resources & Structural Linkage: *Proximity, Frequency, Availability, Teamwork*;

Information Sharing & Communication: *Digitalization, Provision, Transparency*;

Mindset & Orientations: *Willingness & Judgement, Care & Self-efficacy, Customer*

Oriented Thinking, and Corporate Maturity. The attributes provide guidance in how the alignment is shaped.

Existing frameworks originally designed for bilateral alignment taxonomies, which were proactively considered during this analysis, could be validated and applied to a scenario of three actors. However, over time, new domains of alignment have emerged and updating, e.g., in light of digitalization, has become necessary, reflected in new dimensions and attributes identified by this study and grounded in the literature.

Key Contributions

The study's contributions for future research are manifold. First, it is one of the first to consider the interface between Marketing, Sales and IT (M-S-I) comparing matched triple results of M-S-I actors. The conceptual contribution of this study could be applied to other disciplines to challenge further role stereotypes in organizations. Second, the results of this study open avenues for design oriented research to shape the interface, considering requirements for an optimal setup. Third, the study combines interdisciplinary alignment and demonstrates that existing models for working relationships are still relevant, but need an update because of digitalization and the relevance of Information Systems.

The findings aimed to continually incorporate practical relevance into the research methods. First, the dimensions of alignment, including their intradimensional attributes, help managers to understand the facets of alignment and provide scope for applying alignment measures. Second, it highlights the relevance of alignment between M-S-I in general, which is still evolving in the management context and was mentioned by many respondents as a general feedback after the interviews. Thus, we conclude that managers are invited to proactively integrate IT actors into customer interactions and create awareness of alignment along the customer journey.

B2B SALES OUTREACH: END USER LESSONS FOR SUPPLIER FIRMS

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Keywords: B2B sales, B2B buyers, end users, engagement initiative, experimental approach

Description

Answering recent calls for additional sales research on buyers, this research explores the drivers of business-to-business customer engagement for a key stakeholder group in the buying process, end users.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In B2B sales marketing, engagement at every level of a customer firm can be critically advantageous for supplier firms, and recent research reinforces the need for a more thorough understanding of all types of *customer engagement,* particularly for less-studied stakeholder groups in B2B business contexts, such as end users. End users are those in the customer firm who use supplier firms' products or services daily as part of their jobs and thus are experts who influence decisionmakers based on their unique knowledge. This research responds to this gap by proposing and empirically testing a model of end user engagement, providing important insights about these key influencers in the buying process.

Method and Data

With the help of a third-party panel provider, we sampled a group of software engineers who used, on a daily basis, cloud computing services provided by major international B2B companies. Cloud services provision is an appropriate context to explore strong feelings of connection because it can be a crucial tool for software engineers to complete their job tasks and excel in their work. With this sample, we employed a survey-based experiment using an actual B2B cloud services provider as the focal supplier firm brand. Respondents were assigned to one of three types of engagement initiative: request for peer-to-peer support, request for product feedback, and the control. The resulting data was then analyzed using a full structural equation analysis in MPLUS in a consecutive fashion, starting with a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), then the full path model, then the path model with the experimental conditions, and, finally, the path model with the experimental conditions and the hypothesized interactions.

Summary of Findings

Findings reveal the surprising lesson that offering opportunities for end users to provide advice to peers is a more effective nudge when it comes to prompting engagement behaviors that directly benefit supplier firms. Beyond encouraging useful product feedback, sales managers can and should also help establish end user communities for peer-to-peer connection – this subsequently cultivates engagement behaviors that benefit the sales team and the supplier firm more broadly. Our data demonstrates three additional key lessons for sales managers of B2B firms. First, end users are key influencers in the sales process through their engagement behaviors. Second, brand performance for end users should be operationalized in terms of daily job responsibilities to best understand end users' connection to supplier firm brands. Finally, sales managers should consider the meaningfulness of work for end users and brand attachment as important drivers of engagement behaviors.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research answers recent calls for additional sales research on buyers and buyer behaviors, most recently during the Summer AMA conference at the Sales SIG Special Session, "Understanding the Buyer's Perspective to Better Inform Professional Selling." It explores the drivers of business-to-business (B2B) customer engagement for a key stakeholder group for supplier firms in B2B sales: end users. End users are experts who can influence decisionmakers in the customer firm based on their unique knowledge. Nevertheless, they are frequently overlooked in practice and scholarship, even though they are key creators of value within the buying process and a unique source of feedback for supplier firms.

References are available upon request.

Digital Selling and Technostress: Preliminary Analysis

Extended Abstract

This study investigates the impact of digital selling on salespeople's perception of five different techno-stressors (techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-insecurity, techno-complexity and techno-uncertainty) and subsequent emotional exhaustion. Using a survey collected from the Qualtrics panel of 203 business-to-business sales professionals in the UK, we show that the use of video conferencing apps, customer relationship management systems and social media has differential influences on the perception of techno-stressors. The results show that although all three types of technologies influence salespeople's perceived techno-uncertainty, the use of social media is the predominant driver of technostress in sales, exposing salespeople with techno-overload, techno-invasion and techno-uncertainty. Results also reveal that four out of five techno-stressors (other than techno-uncertainty) have significant positive effects on salespeople's emotional exhaustion.

Key Contribution

The sales literature has extensively documented the benefit of technology adoption and digitalization in sales (e.g., Singh et al. 2019). However, the dark side of technology usage, especially technostress – stress emanating from the use of technology, has not received much attention (Tarafdar et al. 2014; 2015). This research contributes to the sales literature by showing how digital selling, defined as the use of multiple technologies to complete sales tasks, affect salespeople's technostress and emotional exhaustion. Specifically, by focusing on the use of three different types of technologies; video conferencing app, CRM and social media, this research investigates the effect of digital selling on salespeople's perceived techno-stressors (techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-insecurity, techno-uncertainty, and techno-complexity) (Tarafdar et al. 2014), and emotional exhaustion. To the best of the

authors' knowledge, this is the first study to explore the specific effects of the use of various digital selling tools on five different types of techno-stressors.

Using a survey collected from the Qualtrics panel of 203 business-to-business sales professionals in the UK, we show that different technologies may expose salespeople with different techno-stressors. Such that, although all three types of technologies influence salespeople's perceived techno-uncertainty, social media usage may be the predominant driver of technostress in sales, exposing salespeople with techno-overload, techno-invasion and techno-uncertainty. We also show that four out of five techno-stressors have significant positive effects on salespeople's emotional exhaustion. As many sales organisations have seen digital selling as a viable sales mode during the pandemic, sales directors should be aware of how digital selling can contribute to salespeople's technostress and emotional exhaustion. We suggest how they can strike a good balance of work-life balance in the era of digital selling.

Research Background and Objectives

Globally, 90 percent of business-to business sales organizations withdrew in-person sales from their sales channel and shifted to digital selling at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (McKinsey, 2021). Although the pandemic is becoming a thing of the past, digital selling is here to stay as many sales organizations saw the effectiveness and efficacy brought by this mode of selling (Bharadwaj & Shipley, 2020; McKinsey, 2021). Therefore, the use of sales technologies (ST), defined as any technologies that help salespeople complete daily sales tasks (Hunter & Perreault 2006), is vital for salespeople more than ever.

Based on the notion that salespeople are the least tech-savvy people (e.g., Ahearne et al., 2008), previous sales technologies (ST) studies focused on identifying factors that influence salespeople to accept or reject ST and how the use of ST lead to positive outcomes

such as effectiveness (sales performance) and efficiency (administrative performance). So far, the importance of using CRM and social media has been particularly highlighted in the literature. For example, the use of CRM is found to positively influence salespeople relationship building tasks (Hunter, 2019) such as communication effectiveness related to customers (e.g. Hunter & Perreault, 2007) customer service (e.g., Ahearne et al., 2007), adaptive selling (e.g., Hunter & Panagopoulos, 2015; Ohiom et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2019) and competitive knowledge creation (e.g., Holloway et al., 2013; Ohioma et al., 2019; Pulling et al., 2002) and lead generation (Roman et al., 2015) as well as sales performance (e.g., Onyemah et al., 2010; Rodriguez & Honeycutt, 2012; Hunter & Panagopoulos, 2015). This is because CRM provides salespeople with customer data and make call planning and reporting more efficient (e.g., Rapp et al., 2008; Montot & Bascoul, 2008). Similarly, the use of social media is also found to have many positive outcomes to salespeople such as information communications (Rodriguz et al., 2016; Agnihotri et al., 2017; Oglive et al., 2018), adaptive selling (Itani et al., 2017; Oglive et al., 2018), and outcome performance (Guenzi & Nijissen, 2020).

Although studies investigated some negative outcomes of ST usages, such as the links between distraction and social media usage (Guenzi & Nijissen, 2020), reduced performance due to the extreme use of CRM (Ahearne et al., 2004), the dark side of ST has not gained much attention in the past. One of these negative outcomes of ST usage is technostress – stress emanates from the use of technology (Tarafdar et al., 2014; 2015) which is particularly relevant to digital selling as this mode of selling hinges with the simultaneous use of multiple technologies. This is alarming as salespeople have already been known to be most susceptible to burnout due to their boundary-spanning role, being required to meet both customer and organizational demands (e.g., Babakus et al., 1999). As many popular businesses press reported, digitally enabled work during the pandemic led employees to experience *Zoom*

Fatigue (e.g., Weber, 2021) and salespeople's technostress and subsequent burnout have become a serious issue. Thus, it is important to understand how digital selling impact salespeople's technostress so that managers can effectively monitor and manage their sales force and their well-being as remote working has become a popular choice for many of salespeople even after the pandemic restrictions.

In line with the occupational stress literature (e.g., Lepine et al., 2004; 2005) the most recent conceptualization of technostress agrees that technostress is not inherently negative (Tarafdar et al., 2019). However, when individuals are exposed to any stress, regardless of eustress (challenging and motivational) or distress (threatening and demotivational), it will be detrimental to their health (e.g., Bakkar et al., 2014). The technostress literature identifies five different techno-stressors (Tarafdar et al., 2007) that salespeople may be exposed to as a result of interacting with technologies. These are: *techno-overload*, increased and faster workload due to the use of ST; *techno-invasion*, a perception that the use of ST is invading personal life (i.e., imbalanced work and private life); *techno-complexity*, feeling incompetent to use ST; *techno-insecurity*, job insecurity and fear of being replaced by technology or individuals with superior technological skills; and *techno-uncertainty*, an unsettling feeling of constantly required to learn and adjust to new ST (Tarafdar et al., 2007; 2014). Although the previous studies show that technostress thwarts salesperson's performance (Tarafdar et al., 2014; 2015) these studies did not measure the technology usage in their conceptual models, thus did not explore the impact of the usage of different technologies used by salespeople. Further, these studies did not investigate the effect of technology usage on each techno-stressors nor how each techno-stressors affects salespeople's well-being due to the construct operationalization since these studies treated techno-stressors as a 5-dimensional, higher-order construct (Tarafdar et al., 2014; 2015). Thus, this study takes a granular approach to the technostress phenomenon in sales and investigate the effect digital selling, referred to as

using multiple technologies to complete sales tasks, on the perception of each techno-stressors and their effects on emotional exhaustion (see Figure 1 for the conceptual model of this study). This study especially considers the use of following technologies; video conferencing apps, CRM and social media, as these enabled sales organizations to effectively sell during the pandemic (McKinsey, 2020). Against this background, this study investigates the following research questions:

RQ1 What are the effects of different technology use (i.e., CRM, video conferencing app and social media) on five techno-stressors?

RQ2 What are the effects of techno-stressors on salespeople's emotional exhaustion?

Methodology and Analysis

Sample and Data Collection

In order to test the effect of digital selling (i.e., the use of video conferencing apps, CRM and social media) on techno-stresorss and following emotional exhaustion, we collected survey response from 203 business-to-business (B2B) salespeople using Qualtrics. We included three attention-check questions to control the quality of the response. In summary, most of our sample are 31-40 years old (42.9%), male (69.0%), and had 6 to 10 years of sales experience (37.0%) and gender distribution in our sample is representative of B2B salesforce in the UK (64% male in 2020) (APPG, 2021) and covers various industries from manufacturing (31%) to B2B Retailing (13.3%).

Measures

We used pre-existing scales to measure all study constructs and each scale item was measured using 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). In order to capture digital selling, we operationalised this by measuring the use of video conferencing

apps, CRM, and social media, and we adopted a 3-items scale from Jones et al.'s (2002) technology utilization scale and modified to fit our study context. We used Tarafdar et al.'s (2007) technostress scale, using five techno-stressors. Finally, emotional exhaustion was measured by using a 4-item scale adopted from Rutherford et al.'s (2011) short-version of Maslach Burnout Inventory. We used emotional exhaustion because it is believed to be the first sign of burnout (Lewin & Sager, 2009; Maslach. 1982). We included salesperson's age, gender and sales experience as control variables as these may influence the level of technology usage (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Reliability and Validity

We conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate the convergent and discriminant validity of the study measures. Results revealed that the measurement model fits the data well ($\chi 2/df = 934.701/558 = 1.675$, CFI = 0.93, IFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.058). Furthermore, the standardized loadings of all measurement items to their constructs are significant ($p < 0.05$) and greater than (.716), demonstrating that convergent validity is present. The results also provide support for the presence of discriminant validity since all values of the average variances extracted (AVE) exceed the threshold of 0.50, and their square roots are greater than the correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The construct reliabilities of the study measures are confirmed as Cronbach's α values of all latent variables exceed the threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Since we collected self-reported data from a single respondent using a cross-sectional research design, our findings might be threatened by common method bias (CMB). We implemented several procedural remedies to control for possible common method bias (CMB) (Podsakoff et al., 2003), such as randomly ordering independent and dependent variables, ensuring respondents that there were no right or wrong answers, and responses

were anonymous, confidential and analysed in the aggregated terms. Additionally, the potential impact of CMB was statistically examined using Harman's single-factor test (Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Exploratory factor analysis revealed seven factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1 and a first factor account for only 35.58% of the total variance providing that CMB is not an issue in our data.

Results

We tested the effects of digital selling (i.e., the use of video conferencing apps, CRM and social media) on five techno-stressors and subsequent emotional exhaustion using structural equation modeling (SEM). Results show that the use of video conferencing apps and CRM positively and significantly influences techno-uncertainty (β = 0.216, $p < .01$; β = .153, $p < .05$). However, the use of these technologies did not have any significant impact on other techno-stressors. The results reveal that the use of social media positively and significantly influences techno-overload (β = .262, $p < .01$), techno-invasion (β = .299, $p < .01$), and techno-uncertainty (β = .243, $p < .01$). In terms of the effect of techno-stressors on salespeople's emotional exhaustion, the results show that while techno-overload (β = .179, $p < .05$), techno-invasion (β = .148, $p < .05$), techno-complexity (β = .318, $p < .01$), and techno-insecurity (β = .274, $p < .01$) have a positive and significant effect on emotional exhaustion, We also found significant impact of techno-uncertainty on emotional exhaustion, albeit negative (β = -.165, $p < .01$). Concerning the control variables, only salesperson experience is found to be significantly and negatively related to techno-uncertainty (β = -.181, $p < .05$). A summary of SEM results is provided in Table 1.

Discussions

An in depth scrutinization of the relevant literature revealed that the relationships between the use of different types of ST and each techno-stressors have not been investigated

before. Furthermore, although previous studies demonstrated that technostress negatively affects salespeople's performance (Tarafdar et al., 2014; 2015), the specific impacts of each techno-stressors on performance implications were overlooked. This study addresses these gaps and provides preliminary, yet insightful implications for academic research and sales managers by offering empirical results on the effect of digital selling (i.e., use of videoconferencing apps CRM and social media) on salespeople's perception of five techno-stressors and emotional exhaustion.

First and foremost, we found that social media was a more predominant driver of technostress among salespeople as the use of social media has positive significant relationships with techno-overload, techno-invasions, and techno-uncertainty, providing that the use of social media makes salespeople work more, imbalances their private and work lives, and makes them feel unsettled with updates and constant relearning of new functions and features. Interestingly, we observed that the use of video conferencing apps and CRM are only related to techno-uncertainty. These results suggest that digital selling in general expose salespeople to unsettled feeling with constant updates and constant relearning of these technologies. However, as counter intuitive as it may seem, techno-uncertainty was the only techno-stressors that had a significant negative effect on emotional exhaustion. In the following section, we provide detailed discussions for these results based on stages of sales process (Andzulis et al., 2013) considering that each technology has different purposes of use although salespeople are using them simultaneously.

Social Media

Although social media can be utilized in every stage of sales process (Andzulis et al., 2013), the extant empirical research suggests that social media platform like LinkedIn is particularly useful for prospecting and approaching stages (Andzulis et al., 2013). In terms of

prospecting, social media platforms like LinkedIn are particularly helpful for salespeople as this technology enhances the salespeople's ability to gather market and competitive knowledge, identify potential customers, and monitor discussions on LinkedIn groups (Itani et al., 2017; Rodriguez et al., 2012;). In terms of approach stage, LinkedIn posts and WhatsApp and other chat functions of the social media can be effective in communicating information towards customers (Ohioma et al., 2019). Additionally, social media usage drives salespeople to proactively engage with service activities (i.e., post-sales stage) as social media helps salespeople to respond to customers more quickly and frequently (Bowen et al. 2021).

Traditionally, social media was used to supplement the in-person relationship building activities such that salespeople would go to a networking event and meet potential clients, and connect via LinkedIn (Andzulis et al,. 2013). However, prospecting online from the scratch could be challenging as salespeople have to figure out the interests of customers often without having an opportunity to connect, such as networking and tradeshows. Although increased the service and touchpoints with customers may be a positive outcome of the social media usage (Bowen et al. 2021), these also means that salespeople' are pressured or expected to respond to customers request outside of business hours. As a result, they may spend more time on searching and surfing on social media for prospecting and may dealing with increased service needs that comes from customers which ultimately lead to work longer hours to deal with workload that is out of their capacity, and results in reduced personal and family time.

CRM

CRM is especially useful in creating customer reports, recording sales calls, and monitoring sales activities (Moutot & Bascoul, 2008) and it supports salespeople to keep

records of past customer behaviours and sales data, set reminder for calls (Andzulis et al., 2013). This means that the time when salespeople use CRM, they are at the stage of nurturing the relationship with customers. As this technology plays supporting function for organising sales activities, it may not have any significant effect techno-stressors other than techno-uncertainty. However, software updates and constant learning of new features can affect salespeople's technostress.

Video Conferencing apps

Although video conferencing apps existed before COVID-19, the use of video conferencing apps in sales process has dramatically increased during the pandemic Especially customer base of Zoom grew over 800% since 2017 (Dooley, 2020). Although we did not find any academic literature relating to video conferencing apps such as Zoom, Teams and Webex, these apps provide salespeople with frictionless online customer experience and replaced in-person meetings. Video conferencing apps are useful for approaching customers (introductory meeting), listening, close and follow-up stages of the sales process (Andzulis et al., 2013). It makes sense that this relatively new way of meeting comes with uncertainty, and "zoom etiquette" has become a popular search word (Close, 2022). Not just how to use the technology, but also how salespeople present themselves through the lens of a PC camera must have become a concern for salespeople.

However, to our surprise, the use of video conferencing apps did not have any effect on techno-overload or techno-invasion. As "zoom fatigue" became a phenomenon in business world especially during the pandemic and back-to-back zoom calls affected work-life balance (Weber, 2020) this result was unexpected. This may be that the positive outcomes of video conferencing, such as frictionless online meetings, increased touchpoints and saving time

from being on the road (commuting or travelling to customers offices and back), were more important especially during Covid-19 pandemic.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study provides initial insight into how digital selling affects salespeople's technostress and emotional exhaustion by focusing on the use of social media, CRM, and video conferencing apps and their relationship with five different techno-stressors. However, we recognise limitations in our study that should be address in future studies. Firstly, this study was based on cross-sectional data from a Qualtrics panel of B2B salespeople in the UK. We believe this panel data would be sufficient to gain initial insight, however future studies could employ, time-lagged or longitudinal data to see the causal relationships between the digital selling and techno-stressors as well as techno-stressors and emotional exhaustion. Secondly, the most recent conceptualisation of technostress (Tarafdar et al., 2019) propose that techno-stressors are not inherently negative, but these can also have positive effect on employees' well-being such as work engagement (Adeniji & Igarashi, 2022). Thus, more investigations into the boundary conditions, such as individual differences and organisational climate, where different techno-stressors are appraised as positive or negative are urgently needed. Thirdly, this study only looked into the use of social media, CRM, and video conferencing apps. However, forthcoming digital transformation would also include the implementation of AI technologies (Alavi & Habel 2020; Singh et al., 2019), as it is also important to investigate how more advanced technology in the sales would affect salespeople's technostress and coping processes. Finally, although the data for this study was collected after much of COVID-19 restrictions were eased in the UK (July 2021), we need to take our study results with a pinch of salt as much of the sales operation maybe conducted in a hybrid model where salespeople operate both online and in-person. The future study should

also explore the optimal balance of digital and in-person selling in managing salespeople's' well-being.

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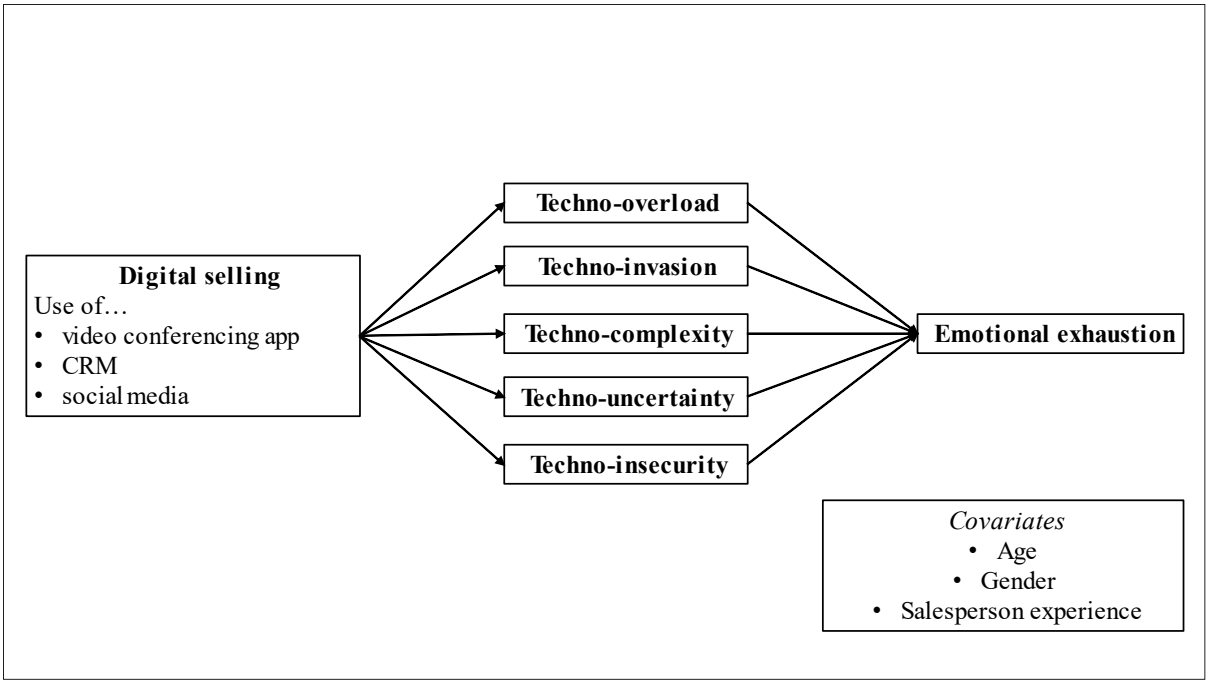
Tables and Figures

Table 1. Structural model results

Paths			
From	**To**	**Standardized Coefficient**	**t-value**
Video conferencing	Techno-overload	.087	1.047
	Techno-invasion	-.136	-1.646
	Techno-complexity	-.055	-.625
	Techno-uncertainty	.216	2.890**
	Techno-insecurity	-.056	-.654
CRM	Techno-overload	-.055	-.700
	Techno-invasion	.053	.676
	Techno-complexity	-.077	-.931
	Techno-uncertainty	.153	2.172*
	Techno-insecurity	-.021	-.254
Social media	Techno-overload	.262	3.090**
	Techno-invasion	.299	3.543**
	Techno-complexity	.025	.281
	Techno-uncertainty	.243	3.184**
	Techno-insecurity	.139	1.585
Techno-overload	Emotional exhaustion	.179	2.425*
Techno-invasion		.148	2.150*
Techno-complexity		.318	4.135**
Techno-uncertainty		-.165	-3.025**
Techno-insecurity		.274	3.052**
Controls:			
Age	Techno-overload	-.093	-1.023
	Techno-invasion	-.114	-1.259
	Techno-complexity	-.103	-1.066
	Techno-uncertainty	.090	1.094
	Techno-insecurity	-.088	-.933
	Emotional exhaustion	-.058	-.911
Gender	Techno-overload	.049	.719
	Techno-invasion	.000	.003
	Techno-complexity	-.019	-.260
	Techno-uncertainty	.015	.249
	Techno-insecurity	-.069	-.977
	Emotional exhaustion	.064	1.013
Salesperson experience	Techno-overload	-.036	-.405
	Techno-invasion	-.073	-.836
	Techno-complexity	-.039	-.421
	Techno-uncertainty	-.181	-2.280*
	Techno-insecurity	-.128	-1.405
	Emotional exhaustion	-.029	-.585
Fit indices: $\chi 2/df = 7.079/3 = 2.360$, CFI = 0.99, IFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.082			

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



HELPING SALESPEOPLE DETERMINE QUALIFIED LEADS FROM CHATBOT CONVERSATIONS

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Keywords: Chatbots, Artificial Intelligence (A.I.), Qualifying Sales Leads, Text Analytics, Personal Selling

Description: This research offers guidance on how salespeople can determine best lead opportunities based on prospective customers' conversations with A.I. chatbots.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

With the rise of technology for customer searching purposes, how can salespeople effectively use the information provided from chatbot interactions to determine the best lead to call on first?

Method And Data

We used a combination of three methods to understand whether chatbot conversations may be used for lead qualification. An automobile dealership provided data on approximately 700 transactions that were initiated through chat channels. The data obtained included: 1) conversations between leads and chatbots, 2) demographics, 3) automobile details, 4) sale (i.e., if the sale occurred), 5) internal scoring, and more. We first ran a topic model on the first several hundred conversations to glean initial insights. Going by empirical Eigen Scores to determine the number of topics, we ended up with six broad topics that we designated as: a) Contact, b) Staff, c) Financing, d) Immediacy, e) Specificity, and f) Time. The topics were not completely homogenous; so, as a second step, we ran these gross topics through a team of two independent graduate assistants who were asked to evaluate whether they would associate 'x' word with the topic. We retained the words that received similarly high scores and constructed a series of dictionaries. Using a Bag-Of-Words approach and subsequently, a penalized maximum likelihood estimation (Firth Logit), we estimate the predictive value (with regards to qualifying leads) of these topics.

Summary of Findings

Instant messaging and chatbots (i.e., artificial intelligence used for instant messaging) are one of the fastest-growing trends that can empower salespeople and marketers to generate new leads and connect with potential buyers. Our content analysis of the conversations with chatbots gave

indications of which leads were most likely to buy (or not). We find that those leads likely to buy discuss loyalty indicators and offer specific reasons for buying, including financing and urgency. On the other hand, those leads who offered too many details on features were unlikely to buy – in this case, perhaps they had something else in mind or were simply web-shopping to get the cheapest deal. Findings also suggest that customers who use excessive niceties such as "please" and "thank you" in the conversation may just be surfing the web and are less likely to be pursuing a purchase. While our findings confirm that chatbots offer benefits for salespeople in automobile dealerships, we also observed that the artificial intelligence can improve or risk potentially alienating and frustrating customers.

Statement of Key Contributions

While some research exists for how to drive traffic to a company's website, scant research has examined how to qualify leads derived from online chatbot conversations for salesperson follow-up. Lead qualification has often resorted to "gut feeling," with valuable time and money lost on trying to reach irrelevant leads. Our findings offer practical insights on the multiple signs that sales agents can look for when trying to determine if a customer is likely going to make a purchase. While our research offers some indication that a downside to chatbots exists, nearly two thirds of the leads had positive experiences and got their questions answered immediately. Nonetheless, we offer suggestions for improving the customers' overall experience based on the text analysis of conversations.

Overall, our text analysis findings were better at predicting purchases than the company's own internal scoring system. Thus, key contributions of this research include the fact that text analysis of conversations with A.I. can be used to glean keywords that predict purchasing – a key insight for salespeople as they determine which leads to follow up with. Second, our research offers insights into literature on lead qualification, which has received little empirical attention from scholars to date.

References are available upon request.

HOW TO FOSTER SALESPEOPLE'S SENSE OF PURPOSE THROUGH SOCIAL LEARNING – A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

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Keywords**:** Sense of purpose – Social Learning Theory – Customer orientation – Working Conditions

Description: Drawing on a review of the literature and social learning theory, this paper presents a conceptual framework on how sales organizations can influence their employees' sense of purpose by promoting customer-oriented behaviors.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

With the "war of talents'' raging and the aging workforce, recruitment and retention of skilled and motivated sales employees (SE) is a key challenge for organizations.

For the opportunity to work for an organization with purpose, as many as half of today's workforce would be willing to take a 15% pay cut. Millennial workers for example are 5.3 times more likely to stay when they have strong connection to their employer's purpose. Studies also indicate that even organizations benefit from growth by addressing purpose. 58% of organizations experienced 10% growth when they communicated a distinct purpose to their employees (KMPG).

Previous research on workplace motivation found that employee motivation has a largely positive impact on the organization and on employee loyalty. However, research in this area tended to ignore the influence that leaders can have on their employees' sense of purpose.

Research shows that employees can develop a sense of purpose when they learn about it from peers and leaders at different hierarchical levels of the organization. To approach the topic from a holistic perspective, we seek to answer the following research question: How can firms and sales managers effectively foster the sense of purpose of SE's?

Summary of Findings

SEs are an important resource for their respective organization. With the shortage of skilled employees and the war for talent raging, it is important for organizations to understand the expectations of their employees and meet these expectations effectively. Recently, having a sense of purpose at work increasingly assumes a key role for SEs. However, previous literature on SEs' sense of purpose lacks understanding about how sales organization can specifically influence their SEs' sense of purpose.

Through a literature review and drawing on social learning theory, we have proposed how sales organizations can increase their SEs' sense of purpose through fostering a customer-orientated culture and customer-oriented SE behaviors. Furthermore, we theorize how an improved perceived sense of purpose differentially affects key job outcomes like job satisfaction, sales performance, and SEs' health. We identify key reinforcing factors for sales managers and effective working conditions, which help sales organizations instill a strong sense of purpose' into their SEs. These measures target the learning process of SEs through own and observed experiences and effective communication.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our study contributes to marketing research on sales employee (SE) socialization and well-being. Past research identified general drivers and outcomes of employees' sense of purpose. We extend this past research by focusing on concrete measures sales organizations can apply to enhance SEs' sense of purpose. We propose an approach on how to leverage purpose reinforcing factors, such as customer feedback or incentives to enhance SEs' sense of purpose. Moreover, we derive propositions how good or poor working conditions can influence SEs' sense of purpose over time. Critically, we discuss

differential impacts of SEs' sense of purpose on the key SEs' outcomes of like job satisfaction or sales performance.

Our paper is especially relevant for sales organizations and managers. The shortage of skilled workers does not spare sales organizations. Undoubtedly, for SEs doing purposeful work is growing more important, constituting a key facet of their employer choice. The holistic approach offers organizations a way to meet the needs of the new generation of SEs, to effectively change leadership in sales and avoid lagging behind.

MULTI-TASKING INCENTIVES IN B2B SALES: FOSTERING MULTI-TASKING OR CREATING GOAL CONFUSION?

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Keywords: sales incentives, multi-tasking, natural field experiment, customer retention, customer acquisition

Description: Our paper investigates the effects of the implementation of a multi-tasking sales incentive on salespeople's customer acquisition and customer retention performance.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Just as multi-tasking is omnipresent for salespeople, e.g., in terms of customer acquisition and retention, so are multi-tasking sales incentives (MTIs) that simultaneously incentivize multiple goals in today's multi-facetted sales environment. We aim to uncover the performance implications of such an MTI in a sales context with multiple, potentially conflicting goals, which may affect how salespeople allocate their effort. To be more precise, we investigate the MTI's effect in a context where salespeople manage relationships to business-to-business customers (CRM). We follow recent calls for research by investigating the effectiveness of a bonus system with multiple performance measures, namely customer acquisition and retention performance and pose the research question:

> *How does a multi-tasking incentive affect salespeople's customer acquisition and customer retention performance?*

To provide a more detailed account of the mechanisms underlying salespeople's MTI, we examine contingency factors, namely, salespeople's customer relationship management competence as well as individual uncertainty in multi-tasking performance and ask:

> *How do the multi-tasking incentive's effects depend on individual contingencies, namely, on salespeople's CRM competence and multi-tasking performance uncertainty?*

Method And Data

To answer our research questions, we draw on a natural field experiment that took place in a Fortune 500 company from the telecommunication industry. Its sales force is responsible for customer acquisition and retention. The management piloted the MTI in one sales division (treatment group) as an additional temporary bonus system to increase motivation and

performance while the standard compensation scheme remained in place for all salespeople. The MTI is designed as a quota bonus system that rewards salespeople with a financial payout if they meet a quota in multi-tasking performance which is determined by the company as follows:

Multi-Tasking Performance = Customers acquired – Customers churned

Given the presence of salespeople who received the multi-tasking incentive (treatment group) and for whom the incentive system did not change (control group), we used difference-in-difference analyses. To investigate how the MTI implementation influenced salespeople's performance outcomes, we draw on daily transaction data reflecting the number of customers acquired and churned from both sales divisions before the implementation and during the incentive period. Our dataset consists of 179 salespeople from the treatment group, 35 from the control group, and, in sum, of 77.254 observations on a daily level in total.

Summary of Findings

Our difference-in-difference analyses revealed that the average treatment effect of the MTI on both salespeople's customer acquisition and customer retention performance is insignificant. However, the results of our study show that the MTI entailed ambivalent motivational effects for salespeople, potentially due to the conflicting goals. We observe effect patterns that point to what we call a "core competence" effect: With multi-tasking incentives, which might induce goal conflicts, salespeople tend to focus on the task in which they previously achieved higher performance, and initially deprioritize the task in which they had been less successful. To be more precise, salespeople with high (low) CRM competence, excel in customer retention (acquisition) performance but, in return, they sacrifice customer acquisition (retention). Furthermore, salesperson's past variance in multi-tasking performance moderates the MTI's

effect on customer retention. More precisely, salespeople with high variance in multi-tasking performance, implying performance uncertainty, experienced significant performance drops in customer retention.

Statement of Key Contributions

Past research on sales incentives (1) largely focused on the design and effects of incentives for single, specific tasks, (2) often on purely sales-related or financial outcomes and omitted qualitative performance, such as customer retention, and (3) usually studied multi-tasking settings theoretically. We extend this research by empirically studying the implementation of an MTI incentivizing customer acquisition and retention. First, we investigate how the MTI affects salespeople's performance in both dimensions and clarify that MTIs evoke goal conflicts which may inhibit beneficial effects in total. Second, our results point to an effect pattern which we label the "core competence effect" which implies that MTIs increase certain performance outcomes at the expense of others. Based on their core competence, and performance uncertainty, salespeople reallocate effort to tasks in which they feel capable, while deprioritizing tasks in which they showed less proficiency.

For designing MTIs, managers need to consider their salespeople' role, capabilities, and available resources when choosing KPIs for steering behavior. We advise managers to implement MTIs for salespeople with stable performance and when salespeople exhibit free capacities in resources, e.g., working time. Otherwise, managers may fall prey to the illusion that MTIs can easily realize simultaneous performance increments in multiple performance dimensions.

Salesperson Knowledge Sourcing from Internal Business Teams

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Keywords: Internal Business Team (IBT); Knowledge Sourcing; Selling; Sales Performance; Sales Management;

This research investigates salespeople's knowledge sourcing from diverse internal business team sub-groups and how these translate to sales performance.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Salespeople rely on the knowledge they source from different stakeholders within the internal business team (IBT) to increase their performance (e.g., Ahearne et al. 2013). The IBT comprises diverse members of the selling organization who "are involved in the customization, coordination, and/or fulfillment of the products and/or services required to satisfy a specific customer opportunity" (Plouffe et al. 2016, p. 108). While the performance effect of knowledge already gained from the overall IBT has been investigated (e.g., Bolander et al. 2015; Hughes, Le Bon and Rapp 2013; Gonzalez and Claro 2019), prior research offers only limited guidance on the impact of sourcing new knowledge from various members of the IBT and factors that moderate the effectiveness of these sourcing activities on performance.

Method and Data

We investigate this granular view of internal salesperson knowledge sourcing by developing a conceptual framework from interviews with salespeople and sales managers. Based on our qualitative study and social capital theory, we propose curvilinear relationships between salesperson sourcing from three different internal knowledge-sources and sales performance that changes depending on customer and product characteristics. We test the hypotheses with field data from 211 B2B salespeople.

Summary of Findings

Our findings reveal differential results on sales performance based on where the information is drawn from, and characteristics of the selling environment that moderate the relationships. We find an inverted U-shaped relationship between knowledge sourcing from sales-colleagues and sales performance. We further reveal that the relationship between knowledge sourcing from sales management and sales performance is contingent upon the adaptiveness of the goods and services

offered. In a similar vein, the relationship between knowledge sourcing from non-sales colleagues and sales performance hinges on the degree that salespeople are involved in the buying organization.

Key Contributions

We advance the literature on the IBT by identifying three distinct IBT groups within the selling organization salespeople mainly rely on when sourcing the knowledge needed in their selling activities. By defining and distinguishing IBT groups within the selling organization, we provide clarity around which member provides which kinds of information and that the reliance on one group can be detrimental to performance. Second, this study provides initial evidence on the extent to which knowledge sourcing from the specific groups within the IBT influences salespeople's performance. With limited time and resources available, clarifying where salespeople should focus their efforts is paramount. We find that too much (or too little) reliance on each group can be detrimental to performance. Finally, we identify that product adaptability and involvement with the buying team provide boundary conditions that impact the profitability of knowledge sourcing efforts. Managers can use our results to assess internal systems of connection and communication, adapt training to drive stronger internal collaboration, and focus teams on gathering and conveying more precise selling-related-knowledge across the IBT.

References are available upon request.

SHORT SELLING AND MANAGERS' VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE OF LIFE-THREATENING DEFECTS IN PRODUCTS: EVIDENCE FROM A NATURAL EXPERIMENT

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Keywords: Short selling, product quality, product recall, natural experiment, department power, news

Description: The threat of short selling causes managers to disclose life-threatening defects in the firm's products.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Does short-selling threat faced by a firm increase its number of recalls of products with life-threatening defects?

Method and Data

We test our arguments empirically, leveraging a natural field experiment in the United States. In 2005, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) established a pilot program exempting a randomly selected third of the stocks in the Russell 3000 index from all price restrictions of short selling. The exempted ("treatment") firms thus faced an increase in short selling threat, whereas the nonexempted ("control") firms did not face such an increase. The pilot went into effect on May 2, 2005 and ended on July 6, 2007 (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission 2007). We sampled firms whose products—specifically, biologics, cosmetics, (medical) devices, drugs, food, and veterinary—are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). We conduct a difference-in-difference analysis of 10,696 firm-quarter observations—covering 204 treatment firms and 410 control firms.

Summary of Findings

The analysis suggests that the rising threat of short selling faced by a firm increases the number of recalls of life-threatening defects in the firm's products. The result thus supports the argument that managers respond by self-disclosing negative information. Such a response suggests that short selling boosts consumer welfare.

We next explore heterogeneity in the above main effect. Recalls are the observed phenomenon that indicates failures in a firm's manufacturing (Bendig, Strese, and Brettel 2017; Kini et al. 2021). Interestingly, recalls are also a firm's corrective response to such failures (Hersel et al. 2019; Raithel and Hock 2021). Were our finding—that short-selling threat boosts consumer welfare—to be valid, a firm's focus on consumers should strengthen the main effect. In contrast, a focus on the quality of manufacturing should weaken the effect. We test this thesis by measuring the moderation effect of the power of a firm's marketing department (which indicates focus on consumers) and that of the operations department (which proxies focus on manufacturing). Results support our thesis—that is, marketing department power strengthens the consumer welfare effect of short selling, whereas operations department power weakens it.

We have thus far reasoned that short-sellers threaten managers because short sellers are purveyors of negative information about a firm's products. Were this reasoning to be valid, the managers' perceived threat would be stronger when such negative information can reach more stakeholders. Because media plays a critical role in diffusing information about firms (Graf-Vlachy et al. 2020), extensive media attention to a firm's products can lead negative product information to reach a large group of stakeholders. Accordingly, short sellers can pose a more salient threat to managers of firms whose products receive more extensive media coverage.

Consistent with our arguments, we show that the volume of news about a firm's products strengthens the effect of short selling threat on the number of recalls.

Supplementary analyses report that rising short-selling threat faced by a firm shortens its average time to recall (that is, the number of days between becoming aware of a defect and initiating a recall). Further, the threat elevates a firm's product responsibility score. These results lend further credibility to our finding that the threat of short selling boosts consumer welfare.

Key Contributions

Our foremost contribution to marketing theory is in positioning credit sales/purchases as *marketing* decisions. While marketing academics had framed (trade) "credit management as a marketing function" (Bartels 1964, p. 59), these two marketing decisions received from marketing academics negligible attention until recently (Astvansh and Jindal 2022; Frennea, Han, and Mittal 2019). In showing how and why product quality—a foundational marketing asset—impacts the firm's credit decisions on both sides of its value chain, we help the marketing discipline join the multidisciplinary discourse of management of trade credit.

Further, in showing that a dip in a firm's product quality (i.e., product recalls) can raise the firm's credit sales and credit purchases, we offer valuable evidence to product quality managers and corporate finance managers in B2B firms. Managers would value in the evidence that their investments in advertising and R&D can mitigate the effects of recalls on credit sales/purchases. Similarly, our research offers pricing managers the novel finding that the quality of their firms' products impacts the firm's pricing power, which in turn asymmetrically impacts its credit sales and credit purchases. Lastly, we built seven machine learning models to predict credit sales/purchases. Our aim was to check whether including recalls a feature to predict credit

sales/purchases boosts the prediction accuracy and how important is recalls relative to other models. Managers who care about prediction would find this supplementary analysis useful.

References are available upon request.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND UPPER ECHELONS IN B2B SETTINGS

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Keywords: social media, upper echelons, business-to-business marketing, sales management

Description: This study investigates the influence of CEO and CMO posting on LinkedIn on the sales process and sales revenue in a business-to-business (B2B) setting.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

RQ1. How does the content of CEO and CMO posts on LinkedIn affect sales revenue??

RQ2. How do additional marketing and sales actions create synergies (if any) with CEO and CMO LinkedIn posting?

Method and Data

Using data from 158 weeks (in the 2018-2021 time period) of a B2B service multinational firm, we run a VARX model. We compute the cumulative effects (i.e., contemporaneous and non-contemporaneous) of the different contents posted by both the CEO and CMO in a growing market, and calculate elasticities with impulse response functions (IRFs).

Summary of Findings

Our findings indicate that TMT posting on LinkedIn is associated directly and negatively with firm sales revenue (i.e., firm performance), and indirectly and positively via other related intermediary marketing and sales mechanisms (e.g., website visits). In addition, the focal firm seems to conduct a balanced strategy of posting the different types of content.

Key Contributions

1. We extend the literature on B2B social media by focalizing the study on testing the impact of TMT posts' content on firm performance. Moreover, our research provides a more parsimonious classification of posts' content in social media.

2. We determine the relationship across the different types of posts (sales, technical, social, and hiring). Interestingly, no full structure is available to connect the different types of posts with sales outcomes.

3. We provide empirical evidence to the interrelations between types of posts and website visits (and other intermediary outcomes).

References are available upon request.

THE VALUE OF GAMIFICATION IN VIRTUAL SALES TRAININGS – EVIDENCE FROM A FIELD EXPERIMENT

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Keywords: Virtual trainings, gamification, sales representatives, sales trainings

Description: This study provides field experimental evidence for the value of gamification for learning success in virtual sales trainings**.**

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In times of the recent pandemic, virtual trainings have become increasingly popular among sales practitioners. As compared to traditional trainings, virtual trainings are expected to create less training fatigue (due to flexible training hours), and stronger knowledge absorption (due to shorter knowledge increments) (Day, Dick and Eggleston 2010). However, virtual trainings suffer from high drop-out rates and lower engagement of the trainee (Santhanam, Liu, and Shen 2016), potentially rendering learning less effective. The key question is: How to design virtual trainings to gain high training success?

A popular development in the area of virtual trainings is the incorporation of gamification to increase the motivation of training participants using game-design rewarding and competitive elements (e.g., Hamari and Koivisto 2015). While the use of gamification is already relevant in practice, empirical evidence is still scarce (Landers 2019), and particularly little is known on the effectiveness of gamified virtual trainings in sales, an area where competition among employees is common and performance across individuals is highly heterogeneous (Atefi et

al. 2018). Hence, we investigate whether and how gamification in virtual sales trainings affects sales reps' motivation and the acquisition of sales knowledge.

Method and Data

We collected data from a multinational telecommunication company. As a major distribution channel, field sales agents are responsible for selling telecommunication services to consumers. The firm offers their sales agents sales trainings, teaching declarative sales knowledge on a voluntary and cost-free basis. Notably, the firm has not implemented gamification in prior trainings.

We conceptualized a field experiment and randomly and equally assigned 512 sales agents to a treatment group (gamified training) or control group (non-gamified training). Notably, the sales reps were not informed about the nature of training, preventing self-selection effects. Both groups received an online training in which sales agents learn characteristics of the product portfolio, compare offerings of the firm with those of competitors (to identify USPs), and create proposals for potential customers. After the training, participants of the gamification treatment group were invited to the sales quiz to test their newly acquired knowledge in a playful environment. Following one week after the training, we invited both groups to an online survey to assess their learning success, their motivation and training enjoyment. We test our hypotheses in a path model with maximum likelihood estimation.

Summary of Findings

First, we found that gamification in the virtual sales trainings effectively increases the sales reps' training enjoyment and training motivation. While training enjoyment has no direct impact on sales reps' declarative knowledge, it increases sales reps' training motivation. Further, training motivation significantly increases sales reps' declarative knowledge. That is, we find

evidence that a virtual sales training with gamification has a positive impact on sales reps' declarative knowledge by positively leveraging a sales reps' training enjoyment, which then increases training motivation and thereby yields higher declarative knowledge.

Second, we find a positive interaction effect of prior job experience (years in the job) on the impact of gamified virtual sales training on training enjoyment. That is, the higher the sales reps' job experience, the more positive is the impact of gamification on training enjoyment. Still, both, lower experienced sales reps and higher experienced sales reps show significantly higher training enjoyment when trainings entail gamified elements, although having different impact. The mediation chain describing the impact of gamification on declarative knowledge (via training enjoyment and training motivation) holds true for sales reps with lower job experience and sales reps with higher job experience.

Statement of Key Contributions

Our research contributes to sales research and practice. Apart from applications in consumer marketing on gamified consumer interactions, there is little research on the impact of gamification in sales. However, particularly in sales, where competition among employees is common and cherished and where performance levels vary highly, gamification may help to improve sales reps' success. We provide first evidence, that gamification in increasingly common virtual trainings can benefit sales reps training enjoyment and motivation, which translates into higher declarative sales knowledge – an important precondition for selling success. Contrary to what one might expect, we find that particularly experienced sales reps benefit from gamification. Our research offers a variety of new research opportunities on gamification and sales trainings, such as optimal design of gamified training elements, the

investigation of crucial contingencies (e.g., related to the person or training) and the transfer of knowledge into selling behaviors.

For sales practitioners we provide first evidence for the effectiveness of gamification in virtual trainings. Recently, virtual sales trainings gained high popularity. Although further research on gamification in virtual sales trainings is needed, gamification may constitute a (cost-efficient) means to overcome shortcomings of virtual trainings, such as low learners' engagement.

References are available upon request.

TRANSPARENT AND CONSISTENT VALUE-SHARING TO ENHANCE FAIRNESS PERCEPTIONS OF VALUE-BASED PRICING

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Keywords: value-based pricing, cost-based pricing, price fairness, value selling

Description: In two online experiments (n_1 = 117, n_2 = 199) with professionals as participants, we examine customer perceptions of unfairness regarding value-based pricing and explore how suppliers can reduce these perceptions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Finding an optimal pricing strategy in B2B is not only crucial for a supplier's profitability but also strongly impacts the relationship between supplier and buyer. The widely used approach of cost-based pricing seems to have certain drawbacks: "[T]he graveyard of business is filled with the skeletons of companies that attempted to base their prices solely on costs" (Backman, 1953, p. 153). After it was established in the 1950s that cost-based pricing is not an all-encompassing solution, more recent literature describes value-based pricing as a superior pricing approach for sellers (Hinterhuber, 2008; Ingenbleek et al., 2003). Specifically, prior research provides evidence that "the profit potential for having a value-oriented pricing strategy that works is far greater than with any other pricing approach" (Monroe, 2002, p. 36). In line with this literature, managers should utilize value-based pricing whenever possible. However, if value-based pricing is seen so positively from the supplier's perspective, the question arises as to how customers judge it. There is not much evidence available. However, one study finds that customers may perceive value-based pricing "as unfair and greedy" (Töytäri et al. 2017, p. 238). Going one step further, we ask the following research question: How can sellers switch to value-based pricing without harming their customer relationships?

Method And Data

With a series of two experiments, we address our research question and suggest and validate two possibilities of how suppliers could diminish unfairness perceptions of value-based pricing. The first experiment (pre-registered) was conducted as a 1 (pricing norm: CBP) × 1 (pricing approach: VBP) × 1 (reference price: lower) × 2 (reference about an equal value-sharing distribution: no, yes) between-subject design experiment with a final sample of

117 professionals from prolific. The second experiment (pre-registered) was conducted as a (pricing norm: CBP) × 2 (pricing approach: CBP, VBP) × 2 (price determination: ex-ante, ex-post) between-subject experiment with a final sample of 199 professionals from prolific.

Summary of Findings

In our first experiment ($n_1 = 117$), we investigate whether it is beneficial for suppliers if they transparently communicate to their customers that the value-sharing distribution (e.g., 40% of the customer value) is consistent across all their customers. We find that the presence of a reference value-sharing distribution significantly increases the perceived distributive price fairness [$t(114.74) = -3.477$, $p < .001$, $d = .642$].

In our second experiment ($n_2 = 199$), we investigate whether the customers' unfairness perceptions could be reduced if a value-based price is calculated based on actually achieved customer value (ex-post) compared to value estimates (ex-ante). In our experiment, we find that ex-post price determination, compared to ex-ante price determination, increases procedural price fairness [$t(184.320) = -2.482$, $p = .006$, $d = .355$]. Using ex-post prices leads to consistency between the actually achieved customer value and the price paid by the customer.

Key Contributions

Extant literature on value selling strongly focuses on the positive outcomes of value selling for suppliers (Hinterhuber & Liozu, 2012; Ingenbleek, Debruyne, Frambach, & Verhallen, 2003; Monroe, 2002) but often neglects the customer's point of view. In this present research, we thus focus on understanding the customer's perspective on value-based pricing. In doing so, we provide suppliers with guidelines on how to introduce value-based

pricing without severe adverse side effects. We recommend that managers explain value-based pricing carefully to their customers and give them time to get used to value-based pricing. But this is not sufficient: depending on the context, the following actions may be taken to increase customers' perception of fairness. First, value sharing should be transparent and consistent across customers. This could be achieved by transparently demonstrating that all customers pay the same percentage of customer value (independent of the absolute customer value). Second, value-based prices should be calculated transparently and consistently on achieved customer value (ex-post), not on estimates about customer value (ex-ante).

References are available upon request.

Understanding and mitigating the evolution of salesperson burnout: A within-person longitudinal analysis

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Keywords: Within-person; Burnout; Emotional Exhaustion; Longitudinal; Temporal process

The current paper examines the within-person temporal process of burnout, alongside examine how to mitigate the burnout process as it evolves

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

Burnout is now considered to be a worldwide problem (Browers 2022), with 63% of workers stating that they have experienced burnout in the last year (Asana 2022). Burnout is heavily linked to ‘the great resignation’ currently happening throughout the world, with a further 20% of workers expected to leave their job in 2022 (Ellerbeck 2022). It is unsurprising then, that burnout receives a great deal of attention in wide stream media. Making matters worse, interventions to reduce burnout have been largely ineffective (News18 2022).

Presently, sales researchers propose that diminished personal accomplishment is the beginning of the burnout process, and subsequently influences depersonalization, with emotional exhaustion the final stage of the burnout process, influenced by both preceding symptoms. However, existing literature is only cross sectional in nature, and unable to establish the within-person temporal process. Additionally, although research can look to mitigate burnout by examining its antecedents, since preceding symptoms influence subsequent symptoms, researchers can also seek to understand how to manage the process as it unfolds. Thus, the present study looks to understand the development, and mitigation of burnout over time within salespeople, seeking to aid managers in reducing the impact of burnout within their salesforce.

Method and Data

Participants were recruited via an online panel data company in the USA. Repeated-measures survey data was collected from salespeople in the USA at 1-month intervals. Data at times 1, 2, 3, and 4, was collected from 171, 165, 117, and 81 salespeople, respectively.

All scales used established existing measures, however since all data is self-report, common biased was a concern. Accordingly, a priori measures including measuring variables at different time points, and utilizing different scales and anchors, were used. All moderating variables were only examined at time one, as these were deemed to be stable across the 4-month period. For all measures examined at each time point, longitudinal measurement invariance tests were undertaken before conducting the confirmatory factor analysis. After measure purification, 3-item scales were used to measure *emotional exhaustion* (Bande, Fernández-Ferrín and Jaramillo 2015) (Cronbach's alpha = .95), *Depersonalization* (Cronbach's alpha = .90) and *diminished personal accomplishment* (Cronbach's alpha = .88) (Rutherford et al. 2011), *Positive* (Cronbach's alpha = .94) and *negative* (Cronbach's alpha = .88) *feedback* (George and Zhou (2001), and *active coping style* (Cronbach's alpha = .76) (Lewin and Sager 2009).

Summary of Findings

The current study provides some support for the burnout process initially proposed by Lewin and Sager (2007), however only in regard to the temporal order. Specifically, the results suggest burnout begins with diminishing feelings of personal accomplishment, concluding with emotional exhaustion, with increased depersonalizing also positively related to increased emotional exhaustion. However, the results suggest diminishing personal accomplishment has no impact upon depersonalization, casting doubt upon the proposed temporal process of burnout within salespeople. Such findings reinforce the importance of examining sales processes at the within-person level (See Childs, Lee, Dewsnap and Cadogan 2019).

When attempting to mitigate burnout, although positive feedback did not significantly influence the burnout process, negative feedback negatively moderated the impact of depersonalization on emotional exhaustion. Here, feedback may be perceived as an

information resource helping salespeople feel more positive about their future prospects and engage in their sales role. Additionally, active coping negatively moderated the relationship between depersonalization and emotional exhaustion. Salespeople who focus on finding solutions to their issues will be more likely to attempt to reduce their emotional exhaustion by addressing the problem head-on, placing them in a more positive frame of mind to tackle their issues, ultimately reducing feelings of emotional exhaustion.

Key contributions to academe and practitioners

The findings present two key academic contributions. First, the study is the first within sales literature to examine the within-person burnout process within salespeople, with findings suggesting the presently proposed burnout process is not entirely replicated at the within-person level. Second, in active coping style and negative feedback, the study identifies individual and managerial-level variables which can mitigate the impact of diminishing feelings of accomplishment and depersonalization, respectively, on subsequent emotional exhaustion. These variables may provide an informational value to salespeople, providing salespeople with valuable resources to be utilized when tackling emotional exhaustion. The study also casts doubt on the importance of positive feedback in reducing burnout.

Two key practical implications are also apparent. First, since changes in diminished personal accomplishment and depersonalization precede changes in emotional exhaustion, sales managers identifying these early symptoms can look reduce emotional exhaustion by addressing these burnout components. Second, when salespeople experience reducing feelings of accomplishment, managers may want to engage with their salespeople to provide solutions to their issues. In addition, when salespeople are increasingly depersonalizing, sales managers may wish to confront their salespeople regarding these behaviors, providing them with information-based feedback to help salespeople understand how to address their issues.

REFERENCE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

UNDERSTANDING SALES REPRESENTATIVES' UNRELIABLE EFFORT IN LEAD MANAGEMENT: THE CONTINGENT IMPACT OF MANAGERS' GOAL AND PROCESS CONTROL BEHAVIORS

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Keywords: Lead management, sales management, leadership control behaviors, sales force motivation

Description: The paper examines how sales managers might apply goal and process control leadership behaviors to strengthen the impact of sales representatives' feelings of responsibility on their lead management efforts.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Sales representatives (reps) frequently exhibit a lack of lead management effort, and sales managers need to determine why so that they can address the problem. Scant insights exist into which leadership behaviors might convert sales reps' lead management responsibilities into lead management efforts. This study is the first to address and empirically investigate this prevailing research void. We predict that sales reps' feelings of responsibility for lead management (i.e., perceived duty to engage and achieve results) influence their projected efforts (i.e., performed lead management activities and intentions to increase them in the future). We further investigate how sales managers might apply goal and process control behaviors to strengthen the impact of sales reps' feelings of responsibility on their lead management efforts. In turn, we highlight how and when sales managers might combine specific control behaviors to induce greater lead management effort by sales reps.

Method and Data

To assess our conceptual model, we apply a two-fold, mixed method, cross-sectional approach. First, to establish an initial sense of the drivers of sales reps' efforts and assess sales managers' dominant leadership behaviors in lead management, we conducted an exploratory, qualitative study with 11 sales managers and 10 sales reps. We analyzed the interviews according to the *grounded theory* method to gain an initial understanding of drivers of sales reps' individual lead management efforts, including the potential influences of sales managers' leadership behaviors. Second, to assess our derived conceptual model quantitatively, we analyzed cross-sectional survey data from 410 sales reps using structural equation modeling techniques.

Summary of Findings

In line with the hypothesized relationships, we find that sales reps' feelings of responsibility for lead management positively influences their lead management efforts. However, this effect is contingent on sales managers' level of goal and process control behaviors: whereas goal control alone decreases the positive effect of sales reps' feelings of responsibility for making lead management efforts, parallel use of process control reveals circumstances in which both control behaviors can have a combined, positive effect on efforts in lead management.

Key Contributions

Our study makes meaningful contributions to sales literature by offering a clearer understanding of the interdependent roles of motivational and managerial drivers of sales reps' lead management efforts. We provide cross-sectional evidence that the relationship between sales reps' feelings of responsibility and effort in lead management is ambiguous and dependent on sales managers' uses of goal and process control behaviors. Additionally,

results propose ways to circumvent possible negative effects of goal control behaviors through integration and cohesive use of process control behaviors in the unique lead management context. In doing so, our results significantly contribute to the present state of research in lead management and support in finding solutions to the infamous “sales lead black hole”.

Beyond that, our results provide sales managers with valuable implications on how to understand and raise their sales reps’ effort in lead management. We provide clear guidance on “the right mix” of goal and process control behaviors, dependent on sales reps’ feelings of responsibility in order to increase their effort in lead management. Moreover, we highlight some important boundary conditions in which using a single control behaviors may be a suitable strategy for addressing sales reps’ unreliable lead management efforts.

Sustainability, Policy and Societal Wellbeing

AI IN PUBLIC: THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY BIAS, FEARS OF PUBLIC SURVEILLANCE, AND MORAL TRADEOFFS ON PRIVACY CONCERNS

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Keywords: public AI, surveillance, bias, privacy fears, anonymization

Description: This paper aims to explore the interplay between privacy concerns, surveillance fears, and fears of technological biases on the citizens' willingness to support government surveillance technologies.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Applications of AI in public contexts fuel polemics among consumers and smart-city public policymakers alike, due to their underexplored impact on societal welfare. Consequentially, human responses to AI in public contexts are often assumed to be similar to AI experiences in consumer contexts, with potentially detrimental consequences because the main trade-offs between costs and benefits may differ across contexts. In the paper, we explore the mechanisms that affect citizens' attitudes towards public AI surveillance technologies and remedies that public policymakers advocate to reduce the negative attitudes of citizens. Government-implemented technologies are largely viewed as intrusive because of their adverse impact on individuals' privacy and potential harmful effects on citizens' rights (Dinev et al.,2008; Fox et al., 2021). However, the existing literature does not differ substantively between different costs that humans may feel in the public AI contexts. We augment nascent literature on the impact of technology biases and make the distinction between privacy fears, surveillance fears, and technology fallibility fears in public AI responses.

Research Question

Privacy concerns have a central role in technology adoption. Higher privacy concerns are shown to significantly decrease positive evaluation, trust, and willingness to disclose information or purchase, while they significantly increase perceived risk and protection behaviors (Okazaki et al., 2020). However, privacy has a strong contextual nature (e.g., people accept being monitored at the airport, but do not accept being monitored in their street) and is strongly affected by the perceived purpose of data collection (e.g., to improve shopping experiences online versus to maintain social order) (Nissenbaum, 2009). Due to the underlying weaknesses of analyzing privacy concerns in public settings through the lenses of personal control over information, previous studies tend to either ignore or bundle together

with privacy various other fears and moral tradeoffs, such as fears of surveillance, fears of algorithm fallibility, and capacity for discrimination. In this paper, we aim to investigate the role that privacy concerns play in contrast to other fears that people might experience while they interact with AI in public contexts. Overall, our main research question is to what extent do different types of fears impact the adoption of public AI solutions?

Method and Data

In Study 1, 400 participants (41% female, 1% non-binary; M_{age} = 25.6, SD_{age} = .09) on Prolific took part in a 2(bias awareness: high, low) × 2(data owner: company, government) between-subjects design study. At the beginning of the study, participants read a newspaper-like article discussing the decision of the Health Ministry of their country to introduce an AI app to collect data about the Covid-19 spread. Either the government or a high-tech company would be responsible for storing and analyzing the data. Moreover, according to an expert opinion, AI is a quite neutral versus biased tool policy makers could use to make decisions. In Study 2, we recruited 600 people (66% female, 2% non-binary) on Prolific. We employed a 2 (intrusiveness: low, high) between-subjects design. At the beginning of the study, we explained to participants that their government was planning to use an artificial intelligence system, embedded in surveillance cameras, to monitor whether people were wearing masks properly in public transport systems. In the high (*low*) intrusiveness condition, the system was (*not*) able to identify the person. In both studies, our dependent variable was the willingness to adopt the technological solution. Moreover, we measure privacy concerns, other fears, and demographics.

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, we show that privacy and surveillance concerns are reduced when the government (vs. firm) owns the data (in democratic countries with high trust in government index).

However, the fear of technology fallibility and biases (AI biases) moderates the relationship between privacy concerns and willingness to adopt. Thus, increasing transparency about the potential for algorithmic bias increases the fear of technology biases, which adversely affects privacy concerns reducing the potential adoption of AI solutions. However, those with high fear of AI bias are more likely to adopt when the government owns/holds the data. In Study 2, we analyze the potential of anonymization of data collection to remedy the perceived privacy concerns in public settings. The impact of data anonymization on willingness to support government surveillance technology goes through two parallel antecedents of privacy concerns: a reduction in perceived government intrusiveness and an increase in perceived fairness and justice. Reduced privacy concerns ultimately increase the perceived usefulness of AI systems and increase the willingness to adopt them.

Key Contributions

Our paper combines literature from public policy, organizational behaviour, information systems, and marketing to provide a more thorough understanding of human responses to AI in public contexts. Across two studies, we explore the difference in design characteristics of AI systems by looking at the difference in responses when government versus AI firm holds the data, showing that initial assumptions about government vs corporate surveillance effects does not hold on average, with negative attitudes being stronger towards corporate ownership of data in AI systems. Moreover, we are among the first studies to explore advocated remedies to privacy concerns in public contexts. We show that the alleged effects of data anonymization will not directly affect privacy concerns, but that it affects moral trade-offs (perceived fairness and justice) and perceived government intrusiveness. Finally, with our studies, we show the potential fears and remedying mechanisms that governmental agencies and policymakers should consider when deciding on the public implementation of AI systems.

References are available upon request.

BENEFIT OR BARRIER? TRUST IN GOVERNMENT DURING COVID-19 AND THE PUBLIC BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: trust in government, compliance behavior, Health Belief Model, cues to action, source credibility

Description: This study examines the effect of trust in government on behavior compliance through a parallel mechanism of perceived benefits and perceived barriers of following COVID-19 precautionary measures.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Questions

i. Whether/how does perceived trust in government affect the public compliance behavior a) directly and b) through the public's perceptions of the benefits of/barriers of following recommended COVID-19 measures?

ii. Whether/how does source credibility regarding COVID-19 information (as an external cue to action) influence perceived trust in government?

Method and Data

We collected cross-sectional online survey data to investigate compliance with COVID-19 health behavior and regulations implemented within New Brunswick. The survey yielded 5,759 responses. Of these, 3,723 respondents completed the survey. Those responses that took less than

500 seconds (approx. 8 minutes) on the survey (173 respondents) were removed along with 15 respondents identified as outliers, leaving 3,535 valid respondents.

Following the recommended procedure of Churchill (1979) for developing better measures for marketing constructs, we took steps to ensure the reliability and construct validity were within the acceptable range to establish the accuracy and consistency of measures within our analysis. Consistent with Gerbing & Anderson (1988), we conducted the preliminary technique of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and then confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Also, Due to the measurement technique for this study (self-reporting measures from the same sample in the survey), researchers took procedural and statistical remedies to mitigate the possibility of a third variable systematically affecting both independent and dependent constructs, common method bias (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015; Richardson et al., 2009; Podsakoff & Todor, 1985).

Appropriate to our theoretically based model, we utilized a serial parallel multiple mediation analysis (Hayes, 2017) and a structural equation modeling (SEM). To ensure the model analysis was conducted robustly, we utilized a double verification approach that involved analyzing the data through Haye's (2017) PROCESS modeling tool and the serial parallel relationship by SPSS Version 28. The results of direct and indirect effects among our constructs are available in this study.

Summary of Findings

We find empirical support for favorable public compliance behaviors occurring through two mechanisms of enhanced perceived benefit and diminished perceived barriers of precautionary health recommendations. For these mechanisms to actuate, our results corroborate the

importance of perceived trust in government that stems significantly from the source credibility. Our findings are robust to both SEM and PROCESS estimation techniques.

Key Contributions

Findings of this study yield key implications for public health and policymaking authorities as well as researchers interested in the intersection of consumer behavior and effective marketing communication. First, public health and government authorities can better design, communicate, and manage their public-protective communications to the public – given the state of trust in government and through benefit- versus barrier-oriented education to control and reduce the spread of virus in the society. Secondly, these insights can inform or warn authorities about the presence of a chain/process model that represents the cognitive process of how the public perceive, learn, and behave in the face of pandemics. Since high trust in governments increase the likelihood of public adherence to recommended behaviors, this study helps better understand the overlooked cognitive process that gives rise to trust and subsequently to compliant behaviors. Therefore, the overall idea behind the present study is to glean insights on how to manage the exponential spread of virus during pandemics by elucidating the origins of behavior (e.g., perceptions, trust, and stimuli). Finally, this research addresses ambiguities in the effect of trust in government by drawing from and advancing the Health Belief Model (HBM) as an explanatory framework for effective health communication. We do this by identifying the overlooked effect of source credibility as a cue to action (e.g., Johnson & Meischke, 1993).

References are available upon request.

CONSUMER PROTECTION REGULATION AND USER-GENERATED CONTENT IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

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Keywords

UGC, Drug Reviews, *YouTube*, Pharmaceutical, Mental Health

Description

This research explores the unintended byproducts of and potential consequences for consumers as a result of legislative and regulatory guidelines meant to protect them, which we call a value void.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

What happens when consumers are overwhelmed by the amount of information or lack the kind of information, they want about prescription drugs?

Literature Review

Although pharmaceutical companies' promotional activities and regulation around drug promotion have not advanced, the advent and pervasiveness of the internet have fundamentally changed consumers' needs and, more importantly, their interactions with companies about the products they consume. Consumers have evolved from passive recipients of marketing action to active co-producers of value and meaning as marketing has shifted from a transactional orientation to a relationship-focused orientation (Vargo and Lusch 2004).

User generated content (UGC) is particularly helpful and powerful in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries as consumers use UGC to learn about the experiences of others, as it can provide consumers not only with information about experiences, general sentiment, and agreement but also with direction in the form of recommendations (e.g., Lantzy et al. 2021; Villarroel Ordenes et al. 2017; Tang, Fang, and Wang 2014). UGC also provides value through support. Naslund and colleagues (2014) find that consumers use online content as a means to find peer support for medical conditions and learn from shared experiences.

Given the importance of UGC in the pharmaceutical industry as part of a consumer's quest for better health, we propose a value-void perspective that places the consumer at the center as an active participant and co-creator of content and thus value. Regulating or managing content must be responsive to its presence.

Conceptual Framework

We propose a value void perspective which we define as unintended consequences of regulation in the age of digital and social media. Specifically, we examine content-based value voids resulting from pharmaceutical regulation, the overwhelming amount and nature of content provided by producers, and the lack of value-providing content sought by consumers in a form that is accessible and easily processed. Our examination highlights three characteristics of these specific types of voids: (1) Content-based value voids exist when relevant and value-based content is absent or non-existent, (2) Relevant information may not exist from the consumers' perspective for a variety of reasons, and (3) Consider whether consumers can process the information that is presented to them.

Although information may be available to consumers about prescription drugs, value voids can still exist because this information is outdated or incomplete, is not in a channel preferred by consumers, and/or is not easily accessed or understood. We believe that consumers attempt to satisfy these unmet needs by creating UGC as well as seeking it along their customer journey. Online UGC may appear more relevant, accessible, clear, inclusive, and supportive than traditional marketing efforts with DTCA.

Summary of Findings

We examine consumer-generated YouTube video reviews of the ten most prescribed antidepressants to show how consumers fill this void. Our final dataset of 65 videos contained 525 minutes of UGC content about prescribed antidepressants to show how consumers fill this void. Our final dataset of 65 videos contained 525 minutes of UGC data (8 hours of videos; N = 65) and received almost 3.5 million views, 12,061 likes, 617 dislikes, and 3,500 comments.

The data set was iteratively coded in accordance with grounded theory and hermeneutical analysis until theoretical saturation was reached and no new insights emerged (Glasser and Strauss 1967; Thompson 1997).

Our qualitative analysis found that sharing included documenting their journey, sharing their drug experience, and helping others. Several consumers stated that they made the video due to a value void and a lack of information. Consumers reported that they searched YouTube for information because they found doctors, therapists, and the internet to be too clinical or inadequate. Thus, accurate data is accessible but not always readily available. Consumers sought engaging, pertinent, and personalized information regarding the drug experiences of others to assist them in deciding whether to take these essential medications.

Statement of Key Contributions

We argue that the treatment of consumers as passive recipients of pharmaceutical-related information that need protection is outdated as these new channels have shifted power to consumers and facilitated their active engagement in co-producing value. Our discussion of the value void perspective will have implications for regulators such as the FDA, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and consumer well-being. Our conceptualization of this gap in the information consumers want about prescription pharmaceutical drugs makes several contributions.

First, it shifts the focus from the manufacturer and regulator to the consumer. It is responsive to what the consumers' content needs are for their pharmaceutical buying and experience journey and considers whether these needs are being met. The value void perspective is inherently flexible and can be applied to other industries where information is

regulated - or in need of moderation - to protect consumers' safety. Further, by focusing on the consumer and their content needs, our perspective is communication channel-agnostic. As the digital transformation of healthcare (and other industries) continues and innovations emerge, any perspective used to develop consumer-facing content-based policy needs to guide this policy without becoming outdated quickly.

References are available upon request.

Does More Franchising Reduce a Chain's Environmental Damage?

Abstract

Restaurant chains are faced with the challenge of not only optimizing their economic performance but also optimizing their environmental performance. However, many studies have questioned the feasibility of maximizing economic and social performance in concert. In this study, we examine the effect of a key structural and strategic decision undertaken by restaurant chains as *franchising intensity*, which refers to the proportion of a chain's stores that are franchised. Specifically, we examine the effect of franchising intensity on the environmental damage caused by the chain. Then, we analyze the effect of environmental damage on the sales growth of the chain. Analyzing data on public restaurant chains, we show that higher levels of franchising intensity result in lower environmental damage, which increases sales growth of the chain. These results not only highlight the importance of franchising in the restaurant industry, but also underscore the importance of achieving higher environmental performance. Our results have implications for literature on franchising as well as environmental sustainability.

Statement of Key Contributions

We conducted this study with the aim of identifying a strategic decision by restaurant chains that positively affect both economic and social performance and, therefore, have significant implications on two streams of research: franchising and sustainability. Our study significantly contributes to the franchise literature by examining the environmental performance of a key franchising strategic decision: Franchising intensity. Franchise literature has been ignorant of the environmental impacts of franchising. This is surprising since franchising is an integral part of the U.S. economy as well as of the small business economy (Zamora-Appel and Jubran 2021). Thus, it is logical to examine the environmental implications of franchising intensity. We found that firms using franchising to a greater extent inflict less damage on environment. These finding supports the unique importance of franchising to the US economy that has been ignored. In addition to the economic benefits of franchising described in the past literature (Mallapragada and Srinivasan 2017; Srinivasan 2006), we suggest that franchising has environmental benefits as well. Our study results offer implications for the sustainability literature in two ways. First, our results show how restaurant firms can reduce environmental damage through franchising. Second, we show the economic viability of achieving high environmental performance by establishing the positive impact of environmental performance on a firm's sales growth. These results contribute to our understanding of the contentious issue of the economic viability of pursuing environmental goals. We shed a new light on the economic performance effect of franchising described in the past literature by demonstrating how high franchising intensity influences sales growth. The results highlight the importance of environmental performance by demonstrating that it serves as an explanatory mechanism through which a chain's franchising intensity influences sales growth.

Paper

Introduction

The World Resources Institute estimates that approximately one-third of all food produced in the world for human consumption is lost or wasted leading to loss of 940 billion

dollars every year, and generation of 8 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions resulting in high environmental damage (WFPUSA 2020). This environmental degradation can impact both economy and society profoundly. Putting this in perspective, if the food industry were a country, it would be the third-largest emitter of carbon dioxide after the United States and China (WFPUSA 2020). Accordingly, it is of utmost importance to identify key strategic decisions facing the food industry that can reduce the environmental damage. In this study, we take a step to this direction by focusing on the restaurant industry, which is one of the largest contributors to the environmental damage caused by the food industry sector (Davies and Konisky 2000).

Specifically, this study examines why some firms in the restaurant industry cause less environmental damage than others. To explain this, we believe that there is a crucial link between their store governance structure (i.e., franchising versus corporate ownership) and environmental performance. One of the key strategic decisions in the restaurant industry involves franchising, where the franchisor (also referred as the “chain”), the proprietor of the brand, allows its stores to be operated by franchisee owners (“owner” hereafter) under the guidelines of the franchisor. The restaurant industry relies heavily on franchising, with more than three quarters of restaurants being franchised (Johnson 2019). For instance, in the United States, there are over 200,000 franchised locations, that generate more than 282.90 billion USD in output and employ more than 3.88 million people (Lock 2021).

While the restaurant industry in general relies heavily on franchising, chains rely on franchising in varying degrees of intensity (Srinivasan 2006). It is very common for a company to franchise a portion of its stores, labeled as franchised stores, as well as to operate stores itself, labeled as corporate stores. For instance, McDonald's franchises more than 90 percent of its stores, while Panera Bread franchises 54 percent of its stores (Technomic 2021). Past literature

has examined the impact of this key structural variable—*franchising intensity*—which refers to the proportion of stores that are franchised on a variety of firm outcomes such as firm value (Srinivasan 2006), firm risk (Hsu, Kaufmann and Srinivasan 2017), innovativeness (Mallapragada and Srinivasan 2017) and firm financial performance (Hsu, Kaufmann and Srinivasan 2017). Although these outcomes, which are tied to the firm's bottom line, are no doubt important for stakeholders, there are outcomes related to the environmental impact of franchising intensity that also merit scholarly attention. This is important as past literature has demonstrated that changing a chain's franchising intensity can have profound effects on the chain's outcomes. Therefore, given the importance of reducing environmental damage by the restaurant industry and the importance of franchising intensity, it is important to theorize and empirically analyze the environmental implications of a chain's franchising intensity, which has not been accomplished yet.

We raise the following research question: *what are the environmental implications of a chain's franchising intensity?* Answering this question is important because of following reasons. First, the restaurant industry is one of the largest contributors to environmental damage, therefore it is important to examine the effect of a chain's franchising intensity on its environmental performance (Meager 2019). Second, franchising is a significant component of the restaurant industry, with more than 180,000 establishments in 2020 in the US alone and close to 4 million employees (Lock 2021). Lastly, although franchising may be considered as a potential avenue for fast expansion, organizations often choose to operate their own stores for various strategic reasons (Srinivasan 2006). Consequently, there may be implications for how each type of store arrangement influences the environmental performance. Thus, the answer to this question not only offers important implications for restaurant chains that want to create a

positive impact on the environment but also contribute to the fledgling literature on franchising and its impact on environment.

Our review of the past literature suggests two key shortcomings. First, the past literature has primarily focused on the economic implications of franchising intensity, even though understanding the environmental implications of franchising intensity is equally, if not more, vital given the reliance of the US economy on franchising (Mazareanu 2019). This lack of research connecting franchising intensity to environmental performance is concerning because chains can incorporate such findings while formulating their environmental strategy and influence their environmental performance as well as economic performance.

Second, lack of prior research on the environmental implications of franchising intensity means the impact of environmental damage of a chain on its economic performance remains unknown. Finding a positive link between a chain's environmental performance and its economic performance is likely to encourage firms to pursue such strategy more aggressively. Therefore, it is important to examine whether the environmental performance of a firm is reflected in its economic performance, as doing so would demonstrate the economic viability of achieving high environmental performance.

To address these shortcomings, we depart from the past literature in two ways. First, we theorize on the influence of a chain's franchising intensity on its environmental damage. *Environmental damage* refers to the total damage a chain's stores inflict on the environment (Levi and Nault 2004). Examining environmental damage is significant since previous literature has consistently examined the economic performance (e.g., stock return; Hsu et al. 2017) of franchising intensity while neglecting its potential influence on the environment. Second, we examine the economic performance, specifically sales growth of a chain that are causing more

(or less) environmental damage. In doing this, we highlight the dual performance implications— economic and environmental— of franchising intensity and examine whether it is viable for a chain to sustain both economic and environmental performances thereby answering the timely and important question on the economic sustainability of pursuing environmental goals.

Drawing on the logic of agency theory (Shapiro 2005), we posit that the higher the franchising intensity of a chain, the lower is the chain's environmental damage. Additionally, we predict that the lower (or higher) the environmental damage caused by a chain, the higher (or lower) is the growth in its sales. By analyzing 24 public restaurant firms from 2006 to 2018, we show that higher franchising intensity of a chain is in fact related to lower environmental damage. This lower (or higher) environmental damage further leads to higher (or lower) sales growth of the chain. In the next section, we present our theoretical framework and develop the hypotheses, after which we describe the research method and results.

Theoretical Foundations

Franchising intensity. Franchising is a contractual relationship between a chain and an owner (Kalnins and Lafontaine 2004). The chain allows owners to operate stores under its brand name in return for a royalty which is typically charged as a percentage of revenue generated by the franchised stores. On the other hand, the chain may also operate its own stores ("corporate stores") by deploying employee managers. Franchising is a dominant form of channel chains use to reach and serve customers (Combs and Ketchen Jr 2003). While some brands such as Subway utilize franchising as the sole channel (i.e., 100% franchised), many brands such as McDonald's use it cautiously and also operate corporate stores.

While economic impact of franchising intensity has been studied extensively (see Combs et al. 2011 for a review), its effect on environmental performance remains unstudied. As

increasing franchising intensity entails changes in the incentive structure of the stores, examining influence of franchising intensity on a chain's overall incentives towards other performance metrics such as environmental performance is warranted given the recent focus on environmental sustainability as firm performance (Delmas, Nairn-Birch and Lim 2015; El Ghoul, Guedhami, Kim and Park 2018). Therefore, it is imperative to examine performance implications beyond economic performance alone. Taking a chain's perspective, we identify franchising intensity as a chain's important strategic decision that has both environmental and economic implications.

Chains vary considerably in their franchising intensity and also change it over time due to strategic reasons. For instance, McDonald's has been increasing its franchising intensity over time since 2008 (from 65% in 2008 to 95% in 2018) (Haddon 2018). Additionally, while chains such as Chipotle (0% franchised) and Starbucks (42% franchised) prefer corporate stores, chains such as Domino's (94% franchised) and Subway (100% franchised) prefer franchised stores (Technomic 2021). This substantial variation in franchising intensity among chains and within chains over time reflects that franchising intensity is a chain's important strategic decision to be examined as chains allocate important resources to alter their franchising intensity.

Franchising intensity has received much scholarly attention. Research has shown that franchising intensity influences the outcomes of a chain in a variety of ways (Sorenson and Sørensen 2001; Srinivasan 2006). For instance, Mallapragada and Srinivasan (2017) show that franchising intensity increases a firm's innovativeness. Other studies show that higher franchising intensity produces positive returns only to an extent. For instance, studies in the domain of "dual distribution" or "plural forms" show that a moderate level of franchising intensity results in firm's higher intangible value (Srinivasan 2006) or profitability (Hsu and Jang

2009). Lastly, some studies also show the negative effects of franchising intensity. For instance, Hsu, Kaufmann and Srinivasan (2017) show that an increase in the franchising intensity of a chain is negatively associated with stock returns and idiosyncratic risk. Therefore, it appears franchising intensity has a multi-faceted influence on chain performance, which varies depending on the facet of chain performance and the context under which franchising intensity occurs.

Environmental performance. Multiple stakeholder groups surrounding a chain expect that chains must be sensitive to the damages store operations inflict on environment. Improving environmental performance (i.e., lowering environmental damage) is an important business goal for chains for the following reasons. First, they may face regulatory penalties if chains do not meet minimum standards for environmental performance. For instance, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other U.S. federal agencies are beginning to use metrics (Scope 1, 2, and 3) based on social costs associated with a firm's carbon dioxide emissions, waste going to landfills, and environmental damages resulting from the exploitation of natural resources (Sheet 2013; Kaufman et al. 2020), and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has recently proposed that firms would need to report specific climate-related information in their periodic reports, such as 10-K reports (SEC 2022).

Second, multiple stakeholders motivate chains to improve their environmental performance. For instance, customers, one of the most prominent stakeholder groups, are likely to have higher purchase intentions for more environmentally-friendly products. From the investors' point of view, past research has shown that investors reward firms that improve their environmental performance more (Biktimirov and Afego 2022). Hence, chains increasingly recognize the need to go beyond the traditional performance measures such as profits, return on investment, and shareholder value by improving environmental and social performance (Dowell

and Muthulingam 2017; Grewal, Chandrashekaran and Citrin 2010). Thus, it is imperative that chains enhance their environmental performance and reduce the social costs that their operations inflict on the environment.

Environmental Performance and Economic Performance. Another critical question for environmental performance is whether achieving high environmental performance leads to high economic performance. It is important to examine this link because prior literature has presented conflicting views on the economic implications of a firm's initiatives to enhance environmental performance. On one hand, studies have suggested that improving environmental performance enhances a firm's competitive advantage (Shrivastava 1995), operational efficiency (Eroglu and Hofer 2014) and product quality (Pil and Rothenberg 2003). On the other hand, some studies argue that firms face trade-offs between environmental performance and economic performance. For instance, Jacobs, Singhal and Subramanian (2010) found that markets react negatively to voluntary emission reductions. Kim and Lyon (2015) provide further empirical support that firms engage in "brown washing" by understating their environmental accomplishments in media communications to avoid negative market reactions. There are several studies that suggest the relationship between environmental performance and financial performance is not strictly negative or positive, suggesting that there may be a curvilinear relationship (i.e., U-shaped) between environmental performance and economic performance (Barnett and Salomon 2006). Therefore, the influence of environmental performance on economic performance remains ambivalent, and our study intends to shed light on this issue.

Theoretical Foundation. Drawing on the agency theory logic, we posit that the environment performance outcomes differ between a corporate store and a franchise store because of the different incentive structures facing them (Sorenson and Sørensen 2001). We

posit that owners are more motivated to take an active role in pursuing environmental sustainability than employee managers of corporate stores for the following reasons.

First, given that the United States does not have a federal recycling program, recycling decisions remain highly localized, allowing local communities to decide what to recycle and whether to recycle it (Cho 2020). We posit that owners will be more attentive and cognizant of the local community's needs for reducing waste and recycling than employee managers whose environmental motivations are not directly related to their salaries. This is because owners are likely to have a longer-term orientation towards their store operations because typical contract terms in restaurant franchising last 10 years on average with contract renewals for another 10 years (Sorenson and Sørensen 2001). Since environmental outcomes takes time to realize, owners can afford the patience to wait for the outcomes of environmentally sustainable practices to realize. On the other hand, employee managers are likely to have a short-term view of the store operations (average manager tenure in a store is less than three years; Bradach 1998), and their incentive structure does not allow them to think long term about the environmental performance in a local market. Furthermore, owners are more connected to their local market communities than employee managers of corporate stores, thereby promote a higher sense of neighborhood in the marketplace (Bevis 2019).

Second, while chains lease their resources to owners, such as production equipment, they do not lease those resources to employee managers. Instead, employee managers may order resources directly from chains. Due to this different arrangements, franchised stores try to be more sustainable than corporate stores. While owners are likely to pay for new resources out of their pocket, employee manager salaries are not affected by it. As a result, owners are likely to be more concerned about the maintenance and longevity of their equipment. Second, since a chain

retains ownership of the equipment leased to owners, it has a stronger incentive to remarket them or invest in designing an eco-friendlier product, resulting in a lower wastage and disposal (Agrawal, Ferguson, Toktay and Thomas 2012).

Hypotheses Development

The effect of a chain's franchising intensity on environmental damage. We posit that a chain's higher levels of franchising intensity lead to lower environmental damage because of the three reasons. *First*, chains monitor the corporate stores' operations closely to maintain uniformity at all corporate stores (Sorenson and Sørensen 2001). In order to do so, employee managers at those corporate stores are incentivized to follow the standard procedures strictly while discouraged to deviate from the standard operating procedures such as tackling the environmental challenges of the local market. Since environmental protection programs such as recycling are highly localized, employee managers are not incentivized to indulge in such activities. On the other hand, chains monitor franchised store operations to a lesser degree (Bradach 1998). Due to lower levels of monitoring by the chain, owners have more incentives to locally adapt to their operations to their stores' respective market conditions (Bradach 1998; Garg, Rasheed and Priem 2005; Sorenson and Sørensen 2001). Specifically, owners are likely to be more incentivized to respond to customers' call for improving their environmental performance at the local market. Since there are positive returns (e.g., higher customer satisfaction) to achieving higher environmental performance at the store level, owners are motivated to make efforts to reduce the environmental damage of their stores.

Second, higher levels of franchising intensity allow the chain to remain close to the voice of the communities of the local markets because owners are likely to be more connected to the local market than employee managers do (Sorenson and Sørensen 2001). A closer connection to

the local markets allows owners to attain a better understanding of the complex and idiosyncratic needs for environmental performance at the market level. Additionally, since owners are more closely connected with local communities than employee managers, they are therefore highly motivated to attain environmental performance for the local market than employee managers are.

Third, owners, who are entrepreneurs, are likely to be more capable than employee managers to handle the complex undertaking of pursuing environmental goals while achieving economic goals simultaneously. Owners have a longer-term view of the business as they sign long-term contracts with the chain and have high financial stake in the business. Therefore, they have greater capability to take risk-taking decisions such as initiating environmentally sustainable practices than employee managers do. In addition, chains do a more rigorous job of screening the owners than they do for recruiting employee managers because owners are subject to passing capital, personality, skills, and business experience requirements (Bradach 1998). Therefore, owners are likely to have higher levels of experience and ability to handle complexities of pursuing environmental performance goals at the local market than employee managers are. Therefore, we hypothesize that

H1: A chain's higher level of franchising intensity reduces the environmental damage.

The effect of environmental damage on sales growth. We posit that higher levels of environmental damage by a chain dampen its sales growth for three reasons. *First*, a chain's greater damage on environment is likely to be received negatively by customers, thereby leading to greater customer churn and consequently lower levels of customer retention. This is because customers find greater value in consuming environmentally sustainable products and services (Chernev and Blair 2015). For example, the low environmental impact of their products (e.g.,

low carbon emission) can motivate a chain to market their products as “green products” and increase their customer retention as customers value green consumption.

Second, a chain inflicting smaller damage on environment may increase its customer acquisition rate as new customers get attracted towards environmentally sustainable products. According to McKinsey (2020)’s research, more than 60 percent of customers and 70 percent of millennials consider environmental sustainability while making a purchase. Customers are known to align themselves with those brands that are compatible with their values and priorities (Keller 1993). Therefore, achieving lower environmental damage provides the chains with an opportunity to increase their customer acquisition.

Third, customers develop stronger relationships with those brands that pay closer attention to their environmental impact. Studies found that customers are now actively purchasing environmentally friendly products (Martins 2022). Therefore, reducing the environmental damage allows a chain to cultivate closer relationships with customers and develop higher brand loyalty, thereby leading to higher sales growth. Therefore, we hypothesize that

H2: A chain’s higher level of environmental damage lowers its sales growth.

Method and Results

Data and sample. We test our hypotheses using secondary data obtained from multiple sources. First, we identified Nation's Restaurant News (NRN) as a source of data on restaurant chains and their franchising intensity. Second, we merged the NRN data with Trucost data to obtain environmental impact data for the chains. Trucost provides environmental performance indicators for over 16,000 public companies worldwide. Lastly, we obtained the financial

performance data of chains from Compustat. The final sample consisted of 134 firm-year observations (with 24 unique restaurant chains) over a period of 2006-2018.

Sales Growth: This variable is calculated by taking the difference between sales in year t+1 and year t, and then divided by sales in year t.

Franchising intensity: This is calculated by dividing the number of franchised units by total number of units. This is a continuous measure of the intensity of franchising, with values ranging from 0 to 1, with a mean of .53 and a standard deviation of .35.

Environmental damage: Trucost uses a methodology that is vetted by independent academic advisory committees in order to calculate marginal costs of environmental damages. Trucost uses the Input-Output (IO) model to derive environmental costs by measuring damage quantities (e.g., pollutant mass or water volume) (Delmas, Etzion and Nairn-Birch 2013; Delmas, Nairn-Birch and Lim 2015). An important feature of Trucost model is its ability to calculate the environmental impact of each USD million of revenue that a firm earns in a specific year.

We included several control variables. To control for firm size, we used *Total Assets* (logged). Firm size is known to have an impact on environmental performance and firm's market growth. For the purpose of controlling for the profitability levels of the firm, we used *Return on Assets* (ROA). It is common practice to calculate ROA by dividing income before extraordinary items (IB) by total assets (AT). *Debt to Equity Ratio* is another important control variable that represents the ability of a firm to meet its financial obligations through its equity. It is an important control factor since it determines how the firm will leverage its debt to support its future growth. *Plant Property and Equipment* (PPEGT) was also included as a control variable. This variable considers the fact that some companies invest more in plants, properties, and equipment, which may impact the environment. Finally, we included *Inventory Turnover* as a

control variable in our models. We employed panel data fixed effect models to account for unobserved heterogeneity (i.e., firm-specific, and time-invariant unobserved factors) since we are using panel data. We report the correlations among the variables in table 1.

Results. The results are reported in Table 2. Hypothesis 1 is supported as the coefficient of franchising intensity is negative and significant (β=-2.100, $p<0.05$), indicating that a greater franchising intensity can lead to lower environmental damage. Furthermore, we found support for Hypothesis 2, which stated that higher environmental impact results in lower sales growth (β= -.661, $p<0.05$). We calculated the indirect effect of franchising intensity on sales growth via environmental damage by estimating both models simultaneously. The result shows that franchising intensity has a positive effect (β= -.135, $p<0.05$) on sales growth indirectly via environmental damage.

Table 1: Correlation Table

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1) Sales Growth	1							
(2) Environmental Damage	-0.220	1						
(3) Franchising Intensity	-0.002	-0.092	1					
(4) Total Assets (Log)	-0.009	0.807	-0.032	1				
(5) Return on Assets	-0.073	0.304	0.129	0.197	1			
(6) Debt to Equity Ratio	0.043	-0.204	-0.265	-0.034	-0.407	1		
(7) Plant, Property and Equipment	-0.039	0.595	0.110	0.637	0.171	-0.064	1	
(8) Inventory Turnover	-0.080	-0.257	0.007	-0.022	-0.007	-0.020	0.101	1.000

Table 2: Estimation results

Panel data fixed effects regression	Model 1 (DV= Environmental Damage)	Model 2 (DV= Sales Growth)
Controls		
Total Assets (Log)	.213* (.20)	-.091 (.12)
Return on Assets	-.058 (.58)	.658 (.71)
Debt to Equity Ratio	.062 (.19)	.344 (.23)
Plant, Property and Equipment	-.501 (.50)	-.916* (.44)
Inventory Turnover	-.002** (.00)	-.005*** (.00)
Independent Variables		
Franchising Intensity (H1)	-2.100**(.84)	-.593 (.38)
Environmental Damage (H2)		-.710* (.30)
No of observations	138	112
Standard errors are in parentheses and shaded cells are used for hypothesis test; Fixed effects and year dummies output not reported; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$		

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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN THE FORMATION OF PRODUCT PERCEPTION BIASES IN ETHICAL PRODUCTS

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Ethical product attributes do not always have a positive impact on product evaluations (e.g., Luchs et al. 2010). Specifically, in categories that depend on functional performance, consumers implicitly associate ethicality with a tradeoff in product strength (Mai et al. 2019) and perceive it as less effective in solving their functional goal (Skard et al. 2020). This is problematic as such perception biases can impede the market success of ethical alternatives in strength-related categories, reducing incentives for companies to shift to more ethical manufacturing processes (Janssen et al. 2020). In the face of shifting hygiene behavior resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, producers and consumers must understand when ethical attributes hinder ethical purchasing decisions and explore ways to counteract the underlying mechanisms.

Marketing scholars have widely examined the tradeoffs between product ethicality and strength, at least at an aggregate level (Acuti et al. 2022). However, the influence of individual differences among consumers on the formation of such inferences has been largely ignored. This is surprising, given that individual values are one of the most profoundly influencing factors in building product evaluations (Nash and Lewis 2006).

This study aims to identify when and for whom product ethicality compromises quality perceptions in strength-dependent categories. Our study offers interesting insights for marketing professionals, especially in product categories related to strength, such as personal care or household cleaning. Marketers can use our findings to analyze how they can effectively communicate the ethical attributes of a strength-related product without potentially harmful

consequences. In this way, our guidelines help marketers overcome the contradictory effect of consumers inferring poorer functional quality in strength-dependent categories, even when the ethical attribute has a weaker connection with the product itself (e.g., in the case of social ethicality). Furthermore, we provide insights into which target groups they need to address.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Conceptual Framework

Our study addresses the following research questions: *(1) How does the occurrence of negative product perception biases vary depending on individual consumer characteristics? (2) Are ethical attributes that align with the consumer's value orientation more effective in circumventing negative product quality inferences? (3) Is this effect influenced by the degree of physical contact with the product?*

An overview of our research model is depicted in Figure 1.

---- Insert Figure 1 here ----

In a purchasing situation, consumers have limited cognitive resources to process all product information presented (Kahneman 2003). To conserve cognitive energy, consumers typically apply heuristics as shortcuts to guide their decision making (Simon 1972). Past research established that such heuristics could lead to biased perceptions of an ethical product's quality when functional performance is essential (Luchs et al. 2010; Luchs and Kumar 2017). Product ethicality has two overarching dimensions, namely the ecological and the social dimension. While social attributes appeal to the welfare of others, ecological attributes focus on preserving the

environment (van Doorn and Verhoef 2015). We test the baseline relationship to show that consumers do not differentiate between the ethicality dimensions. We propose:

H1: For strength-related product, consumers infer lower quality (a) when the product carries an ecological label (vs. no label), and (b) when the product carries a social label (vs. no label).

Literature suggest that personal values play a leading role in consumers' cognitive structures (e.g., Brangule-Vlagsma et al. 2002). Consumers typically purchase products in congruence with their value orientation to achieve their goals (Gutman 1982). The principles of value congruence indicate that a match between the consumer's values and the product's attributes positively influence credibility, attitudes, and product choice (Zhang 2010).

Consumers with high biospheric values seek to improve the natural environment. Hence, we expect that value congruence between high biospheric values and ecological attributes will lead to a reduction in cognitive biases. Thus, we propose:

H2a: A high congruence between biospheric values and ecological product attributes the negative effect of product ethicality on quality evaluations.

Consumers with high altruistic values care for the welfare of others. We identify the closest link of altruistic values to social product attributes, as both focus on the well-being of others. We expect that value congruence between high altruistic values and ecological attributes will reduce cognitive biases. Thus, we propose:

H2b: A high congruence between altruistic values and social product attributes mitigates the negative effect of product ethicality on quality evaluations.

In contrary, consumers with high egoistic values place their own well-being before that of others, leading to value incongruencies in relation to ecological and socially ethical products (van Doorn and Verhoef 2015). Thus:

H2c: Value incongruence amplifies the negative effect of product ethicality on quality evaluations.

While some strength-related product categories naturally come into direct contact with the consumer's body (e.g., personal care products), others are primarily used externally (e.g., cleaning products). Previous research has found that contagion influences product evaluations (Bodur et al. 2014, Morales and Fitzsimons 2007). Contagion states that the perceived benefits and undesirable characteristics of an object or person are transferred to another person through a tangible or intangible connection (Meng and Leary 2021). Here, the effectiveness of contagion depends on the degree of physical contact between the source (i.e., the product) and the target (i.e., the consumer) (Angyal 1941). This implies that transferring the ethical product's benefits and disadvantages is much easier for products with high physical contact. Thus, we argue:

H3: The degree of physical contact with the product during consumption strengthens the relationship between product ethicality and perceived quality.

Method & Data

In a 3 (ethical attribute: ecological label vs. social label vs. no label) x 2 (physical contact during product consumption: high vs. low) experiment, we test our hypotheses on a representative sample of five hundred consumers residing in Germany. Sampling and data collection will be conducted via the online platform Prolific and will be completed by September 2022. The degree

of physical contact with the product during consumption will be manipulated within participants and the product ethicality will be manipulated between participants. During the experiment, participants will be asked to rate two products presented in a hypothetical online store. The two product categories represent the manipulation for the level of physical contact during consumption, namely toothpaste (= manipulation for high physical contact) and cleaning tabs (= manipulation for low physical contact). These categories were selected based on the results of a pre-test with students from RWTH Aachen University. Participants are randomly assigned to one of three ethicality conditions, namely the ecological, the social, or the control condition. Our dependent variable, perceived product quality, will be measured using Newman et al.'s (2014) well-established construct with a 5-item semantic differential scale. Manipulation and attentional controls will follow Summers and Perdue (1986). Control variables include consumer demographics, green self-identity, label credibility, health awareness, and socially desirable behaviors (e.g., Gershoff and Frels 2015).

Preliminary Results and Contribution

Once finalized, our study contributes to understanding how consumers evaluate strength-related products with ethical attributes. From a theoretical perspective, our study supports prior research showing that sustainability can be a disadvantage in categories where strength-related attributes are valued (Luchs et al. 2010; Mai et al. 2019; Olson 2013; Skard et al. 2020). We add to the debate around negative perceptual biases (the *sustainability liability*) by laying out how individual differences, namely consumer value orientations, influence the prevalence of such biases. We further provide insights into the role of value congruity and unfold the mechanisms for

different dimensions of product ethicality. Finally, this study aims to lay out mechanisms to counteract adverse product inferences and target ethical products to a broader audience.

From a managerial perspective, marketers can use our results to analyze what ethical information can effectively communicate the ethical quality of products without drawing negative compensatory inferences. In this way, we provide marketers of products that depend on the strength of the product with insights into which target audience they should address..

Tables & Figures

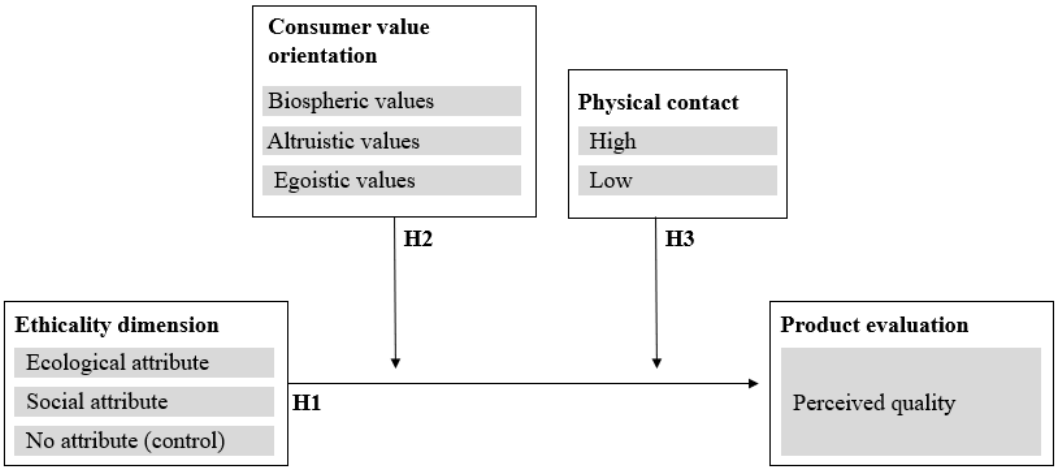

Figure 1: Research model

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2023 Winter AMA Final Abstract Submission

GOING GREEN DESPITE CONSUMER INEFFECTIVENESS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP OF COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

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Keywords: psychological ownership, community, environmental behaviors, sustainability, ritual, perceived consumer ineffectiveness

Description: This paper views environmental behaviors through the ritual lens, and find psychological ownership of one's community leads to pro-environment behaviors, and perceived environmental ineffectiveness has a positive impact on the relationship.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

How does psychological ownership of the community impact consumer pro-environmental behaviors? And what is the role of perceived consumer environmental ineffectiveness in this relationship?

Method and Data

We address the research question with a mixed research design, using surveys and a scenario-based experiment. The conceptual framework is tested with Process models.

Summary of Findings

Results show that psychological ownership of community impacted environmental behavior both directly and through the mediator of environmental concern. Perceived environmental ineffectiveness produced favorable environmental outcomes by strengthening the mediated link between psychological ownership and environmental behaviors.

Key Contributions

Our research contributes to the literature in several important ways. First, this research identifies a quasi-endowment effect that extends from psychological ownership through environmental concern, and subsequently resulting in the protection of the environment through engagement in environmental behaviors. Environmental concern as a mediator transmits the effect of psychological ownership to environmental behaviors. Second, this research extends the burgeoning psychological literature on ritual to the domain of environmental behaviors, including consumption decisions and behaviors. Finally, it illustrates how perceived consumer ineffectiveness impacts the aforementioned mediated effect.

HEALTH MESSAGING FOR PREVENTATIVE CARE: THE ROLE OF NEED FOR COGNITION VERSUS NEED FOR AFFECTIVE PROCESSING IN VACCINE ACCEPTANCE

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Keywords: Vaccine hesitancy, public health messaging, need for cognition, affective processing, mixed methods

Description

In recognition of the complexity and nuances of vaccine hesitancy, an explanatory mixed methods research approach provides insight into how individuals' need for cognition and need for affective processing impacts the reception and understanding of messaging about COVID-19 vaccine development and subsequent vaccine acceptance.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The development of COVID-19 vaccines at a record pace was possible because vaccine manufacturers, governments, policymakers, and global health organizations worked together to address the health and economic challenges of the pandemic. Yet regrettably, current evidence suggests that information disseminated regarding the pace of development may have contributed to COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. Indeed, even several years after the introduction of the first COVID-19 vaccines, some individuals express hesitancy to accept the primary COVID-19 cycle and subsequent boosters, leading to sub-optimal vaccination rates across most global communities where vaccines are available, despite extension public health communications about the benefits of vaccination. Therefore, the main goal of this research is to understand how messaging about vaccine development pace and how processing styles influence willingness to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Method and Data

Explanatory sequential is an underused approach in marketing research and is especially well suited for complex topics with multiple drivers and segments, particularly those with public policy implications, such as vaccine hesitancy. Vaccine hesitancy is multifaceted, with many remaining questions on how to persuade individuals to accept vaccines. We may be able to simply observe or measure vaccine uptake but the process behind this crucial decision is less clear. Vaccine acceptance depends on both individual differences in information processing and specific concerns regarding vaccines. Thus, for this research we employ an explanatory

sequential approach, with first a quantitative experimental approach followed by qualitative inquiry using parallel variables. For the quantitative experimental phase, respondents completed an online survey assessing willingness to accept the COVID-19 based on measured individual need for cognition and dissimilar messaging about vaccine development. For the subsequent qualitative phase, a different sample of respondents read and provided feedback on the background information provided in the first study, answering both parallel questions and additional in-depth open-ended questions.

Summary of Findings

In the first quantitative study, we find that vaccine hesitant individuals may be more willing to accept a vaccine when information matches their processing style and needs. Findings from a second qualitative study illustrate further that the need for affective, as compared to cognitive processing, exists separately from a tendency to have low or high processing styles. Importantly, this inclination for affective filtering is present even when the material presented is factual and scientific. The type of neutral, informational messaging used in both studies is simple to deploy in the field.

Statement of Key Contributions

Results from two studies indicate that public health authorities and healthcare providers need a better understanding of what individuals extract from public health messaging in order to improve acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccines. Neutral, informational material can be appreciated in different ways depending on individual tendencies. Importantly, for this relatively

new vaccine, much misinformation has been shared among different population segments and continues to spread regarding how quickly the vaccine was developed. Furthermore, practitioners should consider consumers' need for affective processing for complex health decisions, such as getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Public health messaging should emphasize how the COVID-19 vaccines were developed following strict safety protocols and that they are effective in preventing serious diseases and death. Healthcare providers should also be attentive to patients' preferences for information processing and adjust their communications based on individual conversations and offer neutral evidence for vaccine acceptance. Rather than highly personalized communication aimed at reassuring different concerns around vaccines, reassuring communication about the development of specific vaccines is easier to implement and perhaps more impactful.

References are available upon request.

HOW DO CSI ATTRIBUTIONS MODERATE THE EFFECTS OF A CSI INCIDENT ON CORPORATE REPUTATION?

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Keywords: corporate social irresponsibility, corporate social responsibility, attributions, reputation, organizational motives.

Description: Drawing on the attribution literature, this study develops and tests a model that explains how perceived organizational motives behind an irresponsible incident moderate the effects of 'bad news' on corporate reputation.

ABSTRACT

This study suggests that the information about corporate social irresponsibility can tarnish corporate reputation providing that such news reduces perceived corporate social responsibility. Perceived market-, unethicality-, and difficulty-driven motives behind an irresponsible incident appear to be boundary conditions of this relationship.

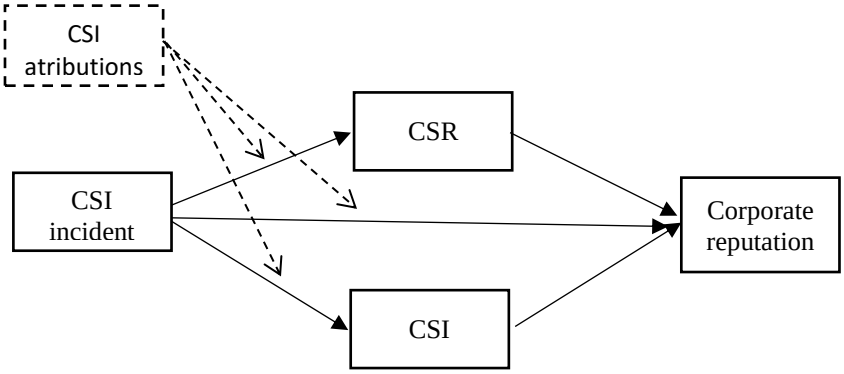
INTRODUCTION

A good reputation is one of the most valuable assets a company can have. However, a reputation is not an indestructible resource. Corporate socially irresponsible (CSI hereafter) incidents create reputational risk (Nardella, Brammer, and Surdu 2020). Large corporate scandals have demonstrated that information surrounding irresponsible corporate behaviour can tarnish a good reputation. However, research has also proved that a company can defend its reputation despite a record of irresponsibility and consumers are willing to forgive the firm (Fetscherin and Sampedro 2019). Thus, our understanding of the erosion of corporate reputation is limited. Indeed, the role played by perceived corporate social irresponsibility in these processes is largely unclear. The literature is dominated by papers providing evidence on how 'doing good' strengthens corporate reputation. Still, few studies have addressed the effects of 'doing bad' on corporate reputation, though reputation is the first asset that a CSI incident can harm.

To extend our understanding of this process, the present research has a twofold objective. First, to examine how corporate social responsibility (CSR) and irresponsibility (CSI) mediate the effects of a CSI event on corporate reputation. Second, to demonstrate how the perceived organisational motives behind an irresponsible event moderate this parallel mediation relationship (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Conceptual model



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

To explain the effects of a negative event on corporate reputation, this research assumes that a CSI incident is an unethical, deliberative corporate act that harms stakeholders (Lange and Washburn 2012). Information about such incidents reduce perceived CSR, and this perception subsequently shapes corporate reputation. According to the moral capital theory, CSR acts like an insurance policy (Godfrey 2005). In line with this notion, accumulated positive information can protect a company against harmful incidents (Peloza, 2006). Thus, CSR is expected to act like a filter that reduces the negative effects of a CSI incident on corporate reputation. Hence, the study proposes the following hypothesis.

H1. CSR mediates the relationship between the irresponsibility appraisal of a CSI incident and corporate reputation.

Recent studies have revealed that stakeholders not only perceive corporate responsibility, but they can simultaneously notice corporate irresponsibility (Price and Sun 2017). This implies that information on CSR does not necessarily aggregate with evidence of corporate misbehaviour into the same construct. Thus, CSR and CSI, despite being both linked in a wider sense to ethicality, can be regarded as separate constructs (Clark, Riera, and Iborra 2021). Therefore, considering the effects of a CSI event on corporate reputation, the present research first distinguishes between CSR and CSI, and second differentiates between the appraisal of a negative event and the assessment of the whole company in terms of irresponsibility.

The literature on brand hate suggests that when consumers perceive a company unfavourably, they have negative feelings about the entity, and so are likely to have negative expectations about its future behaviour (Kucuk 2020). Thus, information about corporate misbehaviour can negatively affect corporate reputation through its contributions to CSI.

Hence, this study conceptualises CSI as a mediator between the irresponsibility assessment of a corporate incident and corporate reputation.

H2. CSI mediates the relationship between the irresponsibility appraisal of a CSI incident and corporate reputation.

To move forward in our understanding of the effects of a negative corporate event, this study assumes that consumers spontaneously engage in sense-making, trying to understand the reasons behind a company's failure to meet ethical norms. In general, a CSI incident can be attributed to a corporate culprit or to external factors. Internal attributions increase corporate blame, which simultaneously contributes to the perceived irresponsibility of an incident (Lange and Washburn 2012). Accordingly, Antonetti and Maklan (2016), in their model of moral outrage, have shown that when consumers attribute greed to the company, this belief enhances the perceived (un)fairness and subsequent negative feelings towards the culprit. Similarly, Guckian, Chapman, Lickel, and Markowitz (2020) have demonstrated that attributing corporate misbehaviour to un unethical corporate culture than to a few rogue employees induces stronger punitive responses of consumers.

This study distinguishes between market-driven attributions and unethically-driven attributions. Market-driven attributions involve beliefs that a company commits a CSI incident to improve its performance and strive to achieve a competitive advantage over other companies in the industry, whereas unethically-driven attributions refer to consumer beliefs that corporate wrongdoing stems from an unethical corporate culture (Guckian et al., 2020). Taking these arguments together, the study develops the following hypothesis.

H3. (a) Market-driven and (b) unethically-driven attributions, strengthen the negative effects of a CSI incident on corporate reputation.

However, not only internal organisational factors can lead to corporate wrongdoing. Irresponsible corporate behaviour can be related to external causes such as financial distress (Zheng and Chun 2017) that may stem from high expectations of debtholders, severe competition, or prevailing unethical practices in an industry (Arli et al. 2017). Attribution theory suggests that perceiving reasons for an incident outside the actor reduces thier responsibility for an event (Weiner 1995). Accordingly, existing studies suggest that external CSI attributions may lessen consumers' punitive intentions (Eckhardt, Belk, and Devinney 2010). Taking these arguments together, the present study proposes the following hypothesis.

H4. Difficulty-driven attributions reduce the negative effects of a CSI incident on corporate reputation.

STUDY 1

Method

To test the hypotheses, this paper uses data from a larger research project on CSI and corporate reputation. Study 1 examines the mediating roles of CSR and CSI on the negative effects of an irresponsible incident. In this study, 120 participants (M_{age} = 39.3, SD_{age} = 12.3; 50% females) derived from a nationwide consumer panel were randomly assigned to two groups. Both groups were provided with information about the same CSI incident (a company operating in the clothing industry accused of exploiting employees in a foreign subsidiary). However, to obtain greater variability in terms of CSR and CSI, one group was provided with information that questionable operations were conducted by an ethical company that faced large debts and shareholder pressure; the other group was provided with a scenario depicting a company that behaved irresponsibly without any external pressure. This manipulation resulted in differences in perceived corporate responsibility (M_1 = 3.8 vs M_2 = 1.8, t (118) = -11.285, p < .001) and corporate irresponsibility (M_1 = 2.3 vs M_2 = 4.2, t (118) = -10.3, p <

.001). Both groups were balanced in terms of gender (female 50% vs 50%) and age (M_1 = 40.62, SD_1 = 12.5 vs M_2 = 39.92, SD_2 = 12.2).

The measures included the irresponsibility appraisal of a corporate incident, perceived CSR, CSI, and corporate reputation. Building on existing research (Grappi, Romani, and Bagozzi 2013; Lange and Washburn 2012), this study operationalised incident irresponsibility by four items. To operationalise CSR measures from Wagner, Lutz, and Weitz (2009) were used. CSI was operationalised similarly as in the paper by Swaen, Demoulin, and Pauwels-Delassus (2021). Finally, the corporate reputation scale was adapted from Xie and Keh (2016).

The measurement model demonstrated that all the items significantly loaded on the constructs. The fit indices revealed an acceptable fit to the data: $\chi 2$ (71) = 104.189, $p < .01$, P CMIN/DF = 1.467, RMSEA = .063 with 90% CI = .034 - .087, CFI = .985, RMR = .043 (Brown 2006). Considering convergent validity, AVEs for every construct exceeded .50 and CR values were greater than .70. The square root of AVEs for CSR and CSI were greater than the correlations between them, providing support for their independence (Hair et al. 2006). Similarly, the square root of AVEs for the irresponsibility appraisal of a CSI incident was greater than its correlation with the perceived CSI of the company.

Results

To examine the impact of a CSI incident on corporate reputation as mediated by CSR and CSI, a series of regression analyses using Hayes' Process macro for SPSS was carried out (Hayes 2018). Specifically, the study used Model 4, which calculates direct, indirect (*IE*), and total effects based on bootstrap samples.

According to hypothesis H1, a CSI incident affected corporate reputation through CSR (*IE* = -.427, 95 % *CI*: -.581 to -.229). As expected, the information about the incident had a negative impact on corporate CSR (b = -.882, $p < .001$), which subsequently contributed to

corporate reputation (b = .484, p < .001). This mediation was only partial as a CSI incident also directly affected corporate reputation (b = -.206, p < .01). However, the indirect impacts were two times greater than their direct counterparts (*IE* = -.427 vs b = -.206). In other words, most of the negative effects went through CSR. Contrary to the predictions of H2, the mediating effects of organisational CSI remained insignificant (*IE* = -.087, 95 % *CI*: -.267 to .029). Specifically, information about a negative event significantly contributed to perceived organisational CSI (b = .748, p < .001); however, the CSI effects remained insignificant to corporate reputation (b = -.116, p > .05).

STUDY 2

Method

Study 2 aimed to (1) validate the mediation findings and (2) examine how perceived motives behind misbehaviour moderate the effects of such an incident. To collect data, Study 2 used a survey conducted on respondents from the BIOSTAT panel, a large online panel of Polish citizens. The sample comprised 244 individuals aged between 18 to 65 years (M = 39.8, SD = 12.4). At the beginning of the study, participants were provided with a scenario depicting a CSI incident in a chain of stores selling consumer electronics. The domain of irresponsibility was employee exploitation. To measure the irresponsibility of a CSI incident, CSR, CSI, and corporate reputation, this study used the same scales as Study 1.

Perceived organisational motives behind a CSI incident were operationalised by three sets of items measuring market-, unethicality-, and difficulty-driven attributions. These measures build on previous research aimed at developing CSI attribution scales (Zasuwa and Razmus 2021). All the attributions scales used in the present study had acceptable values in terms of convergent and discriminant validity. Specifically, AVEs for every construct exceeded .50 and CR values were greater than .70.

Results

To validate the mediation findings, Study 2 performed the same analytical approach as Study 1. Again, CSR significantly mediated the relationships between information about negative corporate behaviour and corporate reputation (*IE* = -.246, 95 % *CI*: -.404 to -.101), whereas the mediating effects of CSI remained insignificant (*IE* = .002, 95 % *CI*: -.064 to .058). As in Study 1, CSR was a partial mediator. However, this time the magnitude of the indirect effect was smaller, but still greater than the direct effect (*IE* = -.246 vs *b* = -.217).

Given that the mediating effects of CSI were insignificant, the study performed moderated mediation analyses with CSR as an intermediate variable between a CSI incident and corporate reputation. To test this model, Hayes' PROCESS macro, Model 8 was used (Hayes 2018).

In line with hypothesis H3a, a market-driven attribution significantly interacted with a CSI incident irresponsibility appraisal ($b = -.236$, $p < .01$), increasing the negative effects of perceived organisational CSR on corporate reputation (*MMI* = -.076, 95 % *CI*: -.152 to -.008). The moderating effect on the direct relation between negative corporate behaviour and corporate reputation was insignificant ($b = .082$, $p > .05$). Contrary to hypothesis H3b, perceived corporate unethicality behind a CSI incident did not aggravate the negative effects of a CSI event. Surprisingly, data from this study suggested that unethicality attributions can lessen the negative effects of a CSI incident, both on perceived organisational CSR ($b = .215$, $p < .05$) and on corporate reputation ($b = .244$, $p < .05$). Finally, this research revealed that when consumers perceive a CSI incident as occurring because the company faces difficulties, this reduces the negative effects of the aforementioned CSI incident on CSR ($b = .162$, $p < .05$). However, this effect was too weak to impose significant moderating effects on the whole mediation process (*MMI* = .050, 95 % *CI*: -.026 to .136). Considering the moderating role of difficulty-driven attributions on the direct relationship between a CSI incident and

corporate reputation, the data showed that the interaction term was positive but insignificant ($b = .029$, $p > .05$).

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study extends the understanding of how information about a CSI incident affects corporate reputation. Specifically, the research suggests that perceived CSR partially mediates the negative effects of a CSI incident on corporate reputation. From a wider perspective, this finding joins other studies suggesting that CSR can act as a reputation shield against negative information (Godfrey, 2005). Considering the moderating effects of perceived organisational motives behind a CSI incident, this research showed that the negative impact of a CSI incident could be lessened if consumers consider corporate behaviour to be forced and thus out of the company's control. This evidence corroborates the blame theory, noting that external pressure behind behaviour reduces observers' tendency to blame the culprit (Malle, Guglielmo, and Monroe 2014). The research also demonstrated that a company's perceived efforts to achieve a better market performance behind a CSI incident aggravated the negative effects for corporate reputation. Thus, the negative effects of market-driven attributions suggest that justifying irresponsible corporate incidents by referring to the company's economic role in society can exacerbate a reputational crisis.

The perceived corporate role in a crisis incident is of key importance for developing a successful crisis management strategy (Coombs and Holladay 1996). Thus, the knowledge about the effects of CSI attribution can be useful for mitigating reputational damage. For example, the effects of difficulty-driven attributions suggest that open communication with stakeholders can reduce reputational costs of unpopular decisions made because of external pressure (e.g., layoffs due to financial distress).

Although the present paper contributes to our understanding of how CSI attributions affect corporate reputation, it does have conceptual and methodological limitations. Contrary to the predictions, unethically-driven attributions reduced the impacts of irresponsible event. A possible explanation might be that people who considered the company as more unethical mostly evaluated the company unfavourably, and that there was no room to assess the company more harshly. Thus, future studies addressing the effects of unethicality are recommended to consider constructs that express more negative attitudes such as brand hate.

While considering other limitations, it is worth mentioning that this study examined moderating effects of organisation-level CSI attributions (difficulty-, unethicality-, and market-driven attributions); however, corporate misbehaviour can also be attributed to individual behaviour (Pearce and Manz 2011), for instance, to a manager or to industry characteristics (Arli et al. 2017). Further research is therefore needed to examine the moderating effects of these cognitions.

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IMPROVING FINANCIAL WELL-BEING: USING COMPETITIVENESS TO INCREASE SAVINGS BEHAVIOR

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Keywords: Competitiveness, savings, retirement planning

Description: This study examines how competitiveness influences savings and retirement savings behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The current state of financial well-being of Americans is bleak with many reporting difficulty saving money on a regular basis (Dholakia et al. 2016). Considering the need for research on savings and retirement planning, this research investigates a possible influence that could be useful to consumers and policy makers – competitiveness. Recent research suggests that activating a competitive orientation through resource scarcity guides consumers' decision making towards advancing their own welfare (Roux et al. 2015). Thus, it may be beneficial for

people to have a competitive orientation towards savings because it activates decision making to advance their own welfare. Overall, there is very little research on the influence of competitiveness on consumer behavior in general (Mowen 2004) and on savings and retirement planning in particular. The current research attempts to address this gap with two studies that focus on how to encourage consumers to increase their savings and retirement accounts. The first study examines whether a competitive savings scenario will increase savings behavior among students who are awarded a scholarship. The second study investigates a retirement savings scenario and whether competitiveness and a reward scenario will increase contributions to a 401(k) account.

Method and Data

Experiment 1

Students were recruited from two different universities and a total of 169 students completed the survey (M_{age} = 23, 54% male). We included a between-subjects factor for the savings cue condition that had four conditions. Participants were asked to imagine that they received the following information about a scholarship that they applied for. Participants were shown one of the four emails that corresponds to the different savings conditions. All the emails stated "Congratulations! You have been awarded the $1,000 Beal Scholarship along with 100 other students" followed by information about the scholarship.

Experiment 2

A total of 305 participants recruited from Prolific completed the survey (M_{age} = 45, age range 19 to 82, 52% female). All participants were asked to imagine that their workplace was enrolling employees into a 401k plan and now is the time when an employee can change their contribution amount. Four between-subjects savings conditions were randomly assigned to

participants that differed based on the information regarding the 401(k) plan. After participants chose the percentage they would put into their 401(k), they were then randomly assigned to one of three ranking conditions to indicate approximately where they were ranked in terms of their contributions as compared to others.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this research was to investigate an important consumer behavior topic that affects all Americans – savings behavior. To investigate this relationship, we conducted two studies with experimental designs to manipulate competitiveness. The results from these studies show that competitiveness can be influenced in a savings and retirement scenario to increase the amount that people will contribute to their savings accounts.

Experiment 1

The first experiment showed evidence that adding a competitive component that includes a bonus for the top contributors significantly increased planned contributions to savings by over 30% compared to just a condition that gives a reward to randomly selected people, a control condition and a condition that stated the average amount saved (the social norm condition).

Experiment 2

The second experiment showed evidence that including a competitive reward in order to encourage employees to save for retirement significantly increases savings contributions as compared to giving consumers information on what the socially normative contribution amount is, having a randomly selected award, or recognizing top contributors (without any award attached). In addition, we find that letting participants know where they rank in terms of their contributions can encourage some of the average and lowest contributors to contribute significantly more to their savings.

Key Contributions

This research fills important gaps in both the competitiveness literature as well as answers the call for more research on initiatives to improve financial well-being (Brüggen et al. 2017). There is very little research on the influence of competitiveness on consumer behavior in general (Mowen 2004) and on saving in particular. Furthermore, there is a need for more research on the positive behaviors associated with a competitive personality (Houston et al. 2015). An important finding of this study is that competitiveness increased savings behavior and did so better than social norms. This finding helps tease apart some of the relationship between social norms and competitiveness since a competitive mindset can involve social comparison (Mowen 2000). It also mitigates a drawback to using social norms since social norms might be counterproductive at times and reduce savings if savings participation is relatively low (Wiener and Doescher 2008).

This study reveals important insights on retirement planning behavior, a topic of considerable interest among policy makers, governmental agencies (e.g., the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau), non-profit organizations (e.g., TIAA and the National Council on Aging), and for-profit companies with retirement plans for their employees. This study provides a unique, easy to implement strategy to increase savings and retirement planning that these types of agencies can carry out using minimal resources and enforcement. To use this strategy, companies should use a competitive scenario in their communication about retirement savings accounts to increase savings behavior. They should also implement further communication to those who rank at the bottom to increase their savings amounts.

References available upon request

MY LEADER, MY LODESTAR? – THE INFLUENCE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON PERCEIVED CSR PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CSR CLIMATE

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Keywords: Corporate social responsibility (CSR), CSR perceptions, servant leadership, organizational CSR climate

Description: This research examines the mediating role of perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the relationship of servant leadership (CSR) and organizational CSR climate.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Corporate social responsibility is one of the central issues for scholars and practitioners in the current century (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012). Research is increasingly shifting its focus to individual-level analysis, exploring the microfoundations of CSR (e.g., Burbano, 2016; Gond et al., 2017). Rupp et al. (2013) point out the importance of analyzing "how employees perceive and respond to acts of corporate social responsibility or irresponsibility." Research shows that CSR is a useful tool for managing employee attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Bhattacharya et al., 2008; Vlachos et al., 2014). Aside from noting that the microfoundations of CSR are generally under-researched (e.g., Ng et al. 2019), Tekleab et

al. (2020) emphasize that "relatively little attention has been given to the role of employees' relational motives, particularly in relation to their immediate leaders."

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Servant leadership is positively related to organizational CSR climate

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Servant leadership is positively related to perceived corporate social responsibility

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Perceived corporate social responsibility is positively related to organizational CSR climate

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Perceived corporate social responsibility mediates the relationship between servant leadership and organizational CSR climate

Method And Data

For our empirical study, a single-firm approach was chosen. We cooperated with a German DAX company from the food industry for data collection. A comprehensive pretest (N=8) was conducted to validate the questionnaire by researchers and practitioners. The data collection took place in the partner company's offices in Berlin (Germany), Amsterdam (Netherlands) and London (UK) from the end of January 2022 to the end of March 2022. To achieve a high response rate, the online survey was sent to the employees by the respective managing director of the office. Furthermore, the confidentiality and importance of the survey was pointed out in several reminder emails. A total of 2327 employees technically received the email. We received 249 responses for an overall response rate of 11%. After checking for incomplete and invalid data, 192 complete responses were identified. More specifically, we identified 31 responses with missing values for our main constructs and 26 responses that were answered in less than ten minutes, indicating careless survey participation (Ward & Meade, 2023).

Summary of Findings

By applying hierarchical regression modeling, our analysis reveals in the baseline model with control variables only that office affiliation is positively related to organizational CSR climate ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.05$). There is no significant relationship between the other control variables and organizational CSR climate. In the full model, our analysis exhibits that servant leadership is significantly, positively related to organizational CSR climate ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, our results confirm our hypothesis H1.

We discovered a significant relationship between perceived CSR and office affiliation in the baseline model using only control variables ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.1$). For our hypothesis H2 that servant leadership is positively correlated with perceived corporate social responsibility, we found substantial support in our full model ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, there is a significant positive relationship between perceived CSR and organizational CSR climate ($\beta = 0.82$, $p < 0.01$), which confirms our hypothesis H3.

Our results indicate that perceived corporate social responsibility mediates the relationship between servant leadership and organizational CSR climate. In more detail, there is a significant, positive indirect effect ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, our hypothesis H4 is confirmed by our analysis.

Statement of Key Contributions

With our study, we make a theoretical and practical contribution at the intersection of leadership, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and internal branding. From a theoretical standpoint, our study advances scientific knowledge in at least two different ways.

First, in the field of leadership research, our study contributes to a broader understanding of the impact of social relationships and servant leadership on employees. The study expands our knowledge of how employees perceive their companies' CSR engagement, and which impact their social relationships and leaders have. This is the first study to examine

the relationship between servant leadership and organizational CSR climate through perceived CSR.

Second, our research extends the understanding of internal branding through perceived CSR performance by investigating the antecedents and outcomes of those employee perceptions. We focus on a better understanding of how employees perceive corporate social responsibility as a crucial part of internal branding.

In addition to theoretical research contributions, our study has high practical relevance at the intersection of leadership, corporate social responsibility, and internal branding. Our research provides direct insights for management on the extent to which servant leadership can have direct effects on employees' CSR perceptions and organizational CSR climate.

NEW PATHS FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT: CASES OF SERVITIZATION IN JAPAN

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Keywords: Sustainable management, Servitization, Path creation, Boundary spanning, Internal customer orientation

Description: This study presents a conceptual framework that companies can use to create new paths for sustainable management that consider the environment and society rather than just their profits by integrating organizational research and marketing research knowledge.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION –Owing to depleting resources and pollution, our society expects firms to be sustainable and environmentally conscious (McAfee, 2019). Even though sustainable consumption behavior became more detailed and specific in providing solutions (e.g., White *et al.*, 2019), most companies encourage their customers to spend more. In recent years, servitization is emerging, which means moving from a product-centric business model to a service-centric approach (Kowalkowski et al., 2017). This is a very beneficial trend in terms of dematerialization, however, firms still adapt to customers' needs to enhance their competitiveness (Baines et al., 2020). Even if managers feel the need for change, their behavior is reinforced by the mechanisms that maintain the existing practices (Arthur, 1989, 1994); hence, they cannot deviate from them. Such dilemmas have been discussed in the context of path dependency (Sydow *et al.*,

2009) and path creation (Garud and Karnøe, 2001). The path studies mainly focused on the key actors (boundary spanner), not key success connections (boundary spanning), it is not enough to understand how to make win-win status (Chandy *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, we ask "why and how can companies break out of their existing structure and achieve new servitization developments and management structure that is sustainable?"

METHOD – To answer the research question, two firms were used as representative cases. In this study, "requires control of behavioral events" is unnecessary, but "focuses on contemporary events" is required. The research question asks *why* and *how* the research problem takes the form it does; subsequently, a case study method is appropriate (Yin, 2002: p. 5), and it also allows researchers to closely examine data within a specific context (Ebneyamini and Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018). Based on the theoretical background and the research method mentioned above, the grounded theory approach (GTA) is used to explore, analyze, and discuss the cases in detail. For the GTA, all interviews were transcribed and applied open, axial coding, which converged into theory as follows (Corbin and Strauss, 2014): breaking down data into manageable analytic pieces; brainstorming with data to arrive at possible meanings, and delineating the concepts (open coding); elaborating concepts to form categories; integrating categories into a core category and other categories; and analyzing data for context. The results of the GTA analysis were confirmed by two researchers and interviewees. All interviewees were informed of the aim of the interview in advance and consented. All contents were recorded under their permissions and checked as well.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – The GTA analysis identified three key concepts and seven root components. The three key concepts are "Organizational changes reflect company principles and activities," "Internal customer orientation and changing of target customer base," and "Results of long-term thinking and continuous innovations." The first concept is rooted in management integrity: "Organizational changes reflect company principles and activities," eliciting employee

engagement and changing the status quo of the company. This influences the other two core categories and is accelerated by servitization and path creation, resulting in sustainable management. The second key concept is “Internal customer orientation and changing of target customer base.” This means that an internal customer orientation can lead to early internal sharing of signs that customer targets are not a good match as perceived by front-line employees, allowing for a shift in strategy, such as setting new customer targets. The foundation for risk-taking and servitization is based on this internal customer orientation, and the cycle of internal customer orientation also creates an environment in which employees take ownership and adapt to change, which is the key to a successful transition to servitization. The third key concept is “Results of long-term thinking and continuous innovations.” This affected presidents’ continuous searching actions.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS – This study contributes by presenting a conceptual framework that companies can use to create new paths for sustainable management that are considerate of the environment and society rather than just their own profits. This is achieved by integrating organizational research and marketing research knowledge. Existing research on path creation has focused on entities where entrepreneurs are key players in creating new paths as boundary linkers, (that is, boundary spanners). Building on this, this study focuses on the process and key events that create new paths, that is, boundary spanning. Consequently, this study adds to Garud & Karnøe's (2001) findings of boundary spanning with the specific objective of setting a path to sustainable management. It is also a contribution that provides additional insight into the path to the win-win situation described by Chandy et al. (2021). Furthermore, this study demonstrates that integrating the approaches of servitization, organizational transformation, and internal customer orientation—through adopting new digital technologies and managerial integrity—is effective in path creation. This research elaborated on the effectiveness of merging organizational research and marketing concepts for path creation, which requires a deviation from

company profits, toward sustainable management.

References are available upon request.

PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE RETURN OF END-OF-USE MEDICINES FOR HEALTH SUSTAINABILITY: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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Keywords: End-of-use medicines, Circular economy, Health sustainability, Medicine redispensing, Medicine reuse

Description: This study attempts to empirically examine the effect of multiple behavioral attributes like health sustainability consciousness, ascription of responsibility, social norms, altruistic values, self-efficacy and response efficacy beliefs, response cost, personal norms, and attitude, on the intention to return end-of-use medicines for redispensing using survey method followed by partial least square-structural equation modeling.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Medicine wastage in households in the form of end-of-use (EOU-M) and end-of-life (EOL-M) medicines is a global concern, challenging health and environmental sustainability. In the absence of a proper return mechanism EOU-M (unused, uncontaminated, and unexpired) are left to expire in households, and medicine so wasted is a lost opportunity as it denies someone's access to healthcare. In the context of EOU-M, implementing a circular economy (CE) strategy is a promising approach for reducing medicine wastage by making EOU-M available for redistribution through repository mechanisms and creating opportunities for recycling raw materials. However, collective human participation is essential to implement such return or recycling programs successfully. Therefore, understanding the role of certain behavioral aspects in influencing an individual's EOU-M return intention is necessary. Hence this study aims to develop a theoretical framework and validate it for understanding human behavior concerning the return of EOU-M. The study empirically examines the direct effects of health sustainability consciousness (HSC), ascription of responsibility (AR), social norms (SN), altruistic values (AV), mediating effects of personal norms (PN) and attitude (ATT), and moderating effects of self and response efficacy beliefs (SEB, REB) and response cost (RC) on the intention of an individual to return EOU-M.

Method and Data

Perceptions were sought using a structured questionnaire, and the indicators to measure constructs were adapted from existing literature and expert consultation. The survey questionnaire constituted two parts: The first part constituted questions on demographic characteristics, and the second part consisted of closed-ended questions related to the constructs for measurement on a five-point Likert scale which measured the level of

importance for HSC, AR, SN, AV, PN, and the level of agreement for ATT, SEB, REB, RC, and BI. An online survey method was used, and we forwarded the link containing the online questionnaire to the email addresses of potential respondents residing in urban areas, which were collected from various social media platforms and medical stores. Besides, we pasted the link on the social media walls of Facebook, LinkedIn, and a few networking sites. During the data collection period, which lasted for 30 days, 238 responses were recorded. The sample size achieved was adequate according to the apriori sample calculator for structural equation modeling (SEM) (https://www.danielsoper.com/statcalc/calculator.aspx?id=89). The obtained data were analyzed first using SPSS for the descriptive and exploratory factor analysis. Subsequently, the developed model was analyzed using partial least square-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using WarpPLS 8.0 software.

Summary of Findings

The estimated model showed an adequate fit, and the internal consistency of the scale was confirmed through the reliability test. The estimated model reported an R^2 value of 0.7 to conclude adequate predictive validity and confirmed that the model's independent variables explain the substantial variance of the outcome. Upon analyzing the direct effects of antecedents on BI, it was observed that only the AV- BI path was significant. All antecedents were able to activate either PN or ATT, which are in accordance with theoretical frameworks. But SN was not significantly predicting PN or ATT. We observed that due to the mediating effect of AR, the total effect of HSC on PN and BI has increased significantly. The effect of AR and AV on ATT increases in magnitude under the mediation effect of PN significantly. Also, PN predicts BI mediated through ATT without having a significant direct effect. Among the exogenous variables, HSC and AV evoke better contributions through PN and ATT mediating effects. The moderating effect of SEB and RC was not significant in any of the paths. For REB, a significant

negative effect was observed in the path (REB*PN)*ATT, which is contradictory to the protection motivation theory.

Key Contributions

Research on theoretical aspects of sustainability-oriented behaviors in the context of circularity of end-of-use medicines is unexplored. In this study, we have framed, tested, and validated a theoretical model integrating well-established behavioral theories like TPB, NAM, PMT, and VBN theory, and it reveals many salient linkages in the context of EOU-M return that can contribute to the body of knowledge. Among the variables considered, health sustainability consciousness and altruistic values contributed more toward intention formation. We conclude that individuals are more likely to have the intention to return to the EOU-M if he or she is conscious of the sustainability challenges and the need to bring circularity to EOU-M. Strengthening the sense of responsibility and altruistic value orientation through communication strategies and social campaigns can be a practical strategy to inculcate the intention to return to EOU-M. The research on integrating circular economy principles of pharmaceutical products is in its budding stage. Policymakers must attempt to identify and implement a policy mix of source-directed and user-oriented strategies in bringing circularity of EOU-M in collaboration with various stakeholders. This research's insights can help frame strategies to endorse public participation in bringing the circularity of EOU-M for health and environment sustainability.

References are available upon request

RECYCLED BUT FROM WHAT? CONSUMERS' PERCEIVED CONTAMINATION TOWARD RECYCLED PRODUCTS MADE FROM DIFFERENT MATERIALS*

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Keywords: Recycled material, contamination, disgust, sustainable marketing, consumer behavior

Description: This study examines the effect of recycled products and the recycled material type on consumers' product evaluations and purchase intention.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Today many brands launch sustainable products and use communication messages such as "T-shirts made from recycled plastic", "bags made from recycled rubber". Firms using these messages aim to create positive consumer attitude towards the brand, product and the company, and foster buying behavior. However, the case could be different. One of the barriers that prevent the positive attitude formation and behavior of consumers toward these messages, is seen in product contamination literature (Argo, Dahl and Morales, 2006; Morales and Fitzsimons, 2007; Meng and

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Leary, 2021). We proposed that consumers could find products that are made from recycled disgust-eliciting materials such as plastic as contaminated and disgusting thus can have negative attitudes and lower levels of purchase intention. This study examines the effect of recycled products and the recycled material type on consumers' product evaluations and purchase intention. Based on the contamination literature, we examined whether the products recycled from disgust-eliciting materials would increase consumers' perceived contamination and disgust which in turn decrease their purchase intention and whether this effect would be valid for recycled/not-recycled product contexts.

Method And Data

A pre-study and a 2x2 between-subjects experiment were conducted. Based on the pre-study results, a T-shirt made from plastics was found to be more disgusting than a T-shirt made from cotton ($M_{plastic}$= 4.40, M_{cotton} 1.07, p=0.00) and were chosen to be used in the main study. A 2 (Recycling: mentioned, not mentioned) x 2 (Material: plastic, cotton) between-subjects experimental design was conducted. 289 respondents were randomly assigned to four experimental conditions and they read scenarios about a T-shirt made from (i) recycled plastic, (ii) recycled cotton, (iii) plastics, (iv) cotton. Then participants' purchase intention was measured by one item; "If you were looking to buy a product in this category, how likely would you buy this specific product?" (1 = Extremely unlikely, 7 = Extremely likely), and their general product evaluation was measured by a scale adapted from Argo, Dahl and Morales (2006) (good/bad, favorable/unfavorable, satisfactory/unsatisfactory, negative/positive, disliked/liked). We asked participants' perceived disgust toward the T-shirt ("disgusted," "revolted," "gross," "unclean"; *1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree;* adapted from Argo, Dahl and Morales, 2006; Morales and Fitzsimons, 2007) and their perceived contamination (1=Dirty, 7=Clean).

Summary of Findings

2x2 Factorial ANOVA results showed that, emphasizing the product being recycled increases the purchase intention for T-shirt made from plastic ($M_{plastic}$ = 2.40, SD =1.69; $M_{recycled_plastic}$ = 4.49, SD= 1.85, t (115)= 6.39, p = 0.00), but not for the T-shirt made from cotton ($M_{recycled_cotton}$ = 5.20, SD = 1.25, M_{cotton} = 5.06, SD = 1.51, t (117)= 0.54, p=0.59). But more importantly, consumers' purchase intention toward a T-shirt made from recycled plastic (M= 4.49, SD = 1.85) was significantly lower than their purchase intention toward a T-shirt made from recycled cotton (M = 5.20, SD= 1.25, t (98.68)= -2.38, p = 0.019). Findings were similar for consumers' general product evaluation except there was no significant product evaluation difference between recycled plastic vs. recycled cotton T-shirt.

Also, a mediation analysis (Model 4, PROCESS macro, (Hayes, 2022)) revealed a significant mediation of the relationship between the recycled material (recycled cotton and recycled plastic) and purchase intention of the T-shirt via consumer disgust perceptions (β= .397, SE= .173, 95% Confidence Interval [CI] = .102 to .765. Type of the recycled material significantly predicted consumer disgust perceptions (β= .397, SE = 0.269, t(109) = -3.016, p= .003), and in turn consumer disgust perceptions significantly predicted purchase intention (β= - .488, SE = 0.173, t(107) = -2.819, p= .006). Consumer perceived contamination is also found to mediate the relationship similarly.

Statement of Key Contributions

Since our research examines a real-world phenomenon of firms emphasizing the usage of different types of recycled materials in their products, our findings can have important implications both for profit, non-profit companies and policy makers. Our findings show that consumers' purchase intention for a product made of materials that elicit disgust such as plastic is significantly lower than the products made of not-disgust-eliciting materials such as cotton even if they are mentioned to be recycled. Thus, firms should be careful when using recycled materials in their communication messages or product labels while they are promoting their sustainable products. From the point of literature, this research has contributions both for sustainable marketing and contamination

research streams since it examines the effect of sustainable products from a contamination literature perspective.

References are available upon request.

RESPONSIBILITY BEYOND THE POINT OF SALE – HOW PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP REDUCES SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS

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Keywords: Sustainable Consumption, Product Stewardship, Extended Producer Responsibility, Scope 3 Emissions

Description: We propose a framework that provides managers with concrete product stewardship actions and boundary conditions to lower Scope 3 emissions in the consumption phase of their products.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Scope 3 emissions in the consumption phase occur indirectly in a company's downstream value chain. They result from consumer activities in a company's value chain that are not owned or under the company's control (Bhatia et al. 2011). To reduce their emissions, companies need to evaluate the impact of their products and consider their Scope 3 impact. Building on stewardship theory in general and the emerging concept of product stewardship specifically, the overall goal of this study is to conceptualize product stewardship in the context of a product's consumption phase. This led us to face the following research questions:

(1) How can companies extend product stewardship to the consumption phase to reduce Scope 3 emissions in their downstream value chain?

(2) What factors influence the implementation and success of specific product stewardship measures?

Method and Data

To answer the research questions, we adopted the grounded theory approach (Corbin and Strauss 1990). Based on an explorative interview study conducted with 67 managers, we are mapping the process of how companies can successfully implement product stewardship in the consumption phase. The research setting focused on managers in the consumer goods industry with significant working experience in the field. After transcribing the recorded interviews, two researchers from our team independently analyzed the data. Therefore, we iteratively performed (1) open coding, (2) axial coding, and (3) selective coding (Corbin and Strauss 1990). To reach a consensus within the research team, we included a standard comparison method with discussions of points of disagreement to create stability of code lengths, positions, and categories as well as for analytic efficiency (Cascio et al. 2019).

Summary of Findings

Based on the notion of stewardship theory and literature on sustainable consumption, we extend the emerging concept of product stewardship and its application to the consumption phase. Using a qualitative interview study, we develop a process framework for product stewardship in the consumption phase. The framework proposed in this study identifies business opportunities, economic reasons, and intrinsic motivation of companies as antecedents of product stewardship after the Point of Sale. Moreover, it differentiates the product stewardship process in a measurement, action, and evaluation phase to lower Scope 3 emissions. Two groups of boundary conditions (consumer-related and company-related) influence the possibility of the product stewardship process to reduce Scope 3 emissions in the consumption phase.

The proposed framework helps companies by suggesting concrete actions to reduce their downstream Scope 3 emissions and, thus, their overall environmental footprint.

Statement of Key Contributions

This research contributes to stewardship theory from an organizational perspective in various ways. Firstly, it provides a definition of the emerging concept of product stewardship and applies it to the context of reducing a company's greenhouse gas emissions. Secondly, it explicitly conceptualizes product stewardship in the consumption phase, i.e., beyond a company's direct sphere of influence, thus adding a new perspective to product stewardship research. Lastly, this research adds knowledge on the implementation of product stewardship in a company by describing a product stewardship process and its influencing factors.

Our findings also have practical implications. Due to political and societal pressure, managers are increasingly required to reduce their company's environmental footprint. This paper addresses this challenge by providing managerial guidelines on how a product stewardship process with the aim of reducing Scope 3 emissions should be structured. Furthermore, it derives specific measures managers can apply to mitigate downstream Scope 3 emissions.

References are available upon request.

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION OF GENERATION Z: AN EXTENSION OF THE KAB FRAMEWORK

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Keywords: Socially Responsible Consumption, Generation Z, KAB framework, General and specific knowledge

Description: This research investigates how different types of knowledge and perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) influence youngsters' responsible consumption behaviors (Generation Z) through attitude change.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Of all consumers, generation Z is an influential group for responsible consumption behaviors (RCB). They are those born after 1997 and before 2012 (Dimock 2019) and are known as the "post-millennials." This group of consumers is considered more open-minded, willing to accept social responsibility and purchase goods with sustainable goals. According to McKinsey and Company (2019), generation Z in the U.S. represents nearly $143 billion in purchasing power and is predicted to grow continuously. Thus, to effectively promote responsible consumption, generation Z is a potential cohort that should be emphasized. However, until now, questions on ways to promote responsible consumption among this cohort of consumers are not well addressed.

Against these backdrops, our study extends the knowledge-attitude-behavior (KAB) framework by examining the roles of knowledge (general and specific) and perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) in influencing one's attitude and RCB. Through three studies (including a cross-sectional study, a longitudinal survey study, and a field experiment), we enriched the KAB model by examining the role of PCE in driving one's RCB. Second, we revealed a positive carryover effect of one's general knowledge toward RCB over time. Lastly, we decomposed knowledge into general and specific knowledge and uncovered their interaction effects in promoting RCB.

Method and Data

Study 1 aims to examine the KAB model together with a proposed additional construct - PCE. We collected a sample of 230 undergraduate students (born between 1997 to 2012) in Hong Kong. They were asked to rate the scale of general knowledge, attitude toward RCB, PCE, and RCB. We employed Mplus 7 to test the effects of general knowledge and PCE on RCB simultaneously through structural equation modeling (SEM).

Study 2 first retests the effects of general knowledge and PCE on RCB, then examine the carryover effect of general knowledge. We collected a sample of 143 secondary school students (born after 1997 and before 2012) in Hong Kong. Participants first completed a questionnaire assessing their initial general knowledge (T1). One month later (T2), participants responded to another questionnaire, which included items of accumulated general knowledge, attitude, RCB, and PCE. We then examined a serial mediation model, that general knowledge (T2) and attitude (T2) are the mediators, with Model 6 in PROCESS.

Study 3 aims to examine the moderating effects of specific knowledge on the carryover effects of general knowledge on RCB, as well as the PCE's effect on RCB.

We recruited a sample of 200 teenagers in Hong Kong using a one-factor (Specific Knowledge: high vs. low levels) between-subjects design and randomly assigned them to one of the conditions. Participants in the "high" condition joint a responsible consumption programme for two days. In contrast, those in the "low" condition attended normal classes that are not related to RCB. Two weeks before the programme, all participants completed a questionnaire to assess their initial level of general knowledge on responsible consumption (T1). All participants were asked to fill in another questionnaire that measured their general knowledge (T2), attitude (T2), PCE (T2), and RCB (T2) after completing the programme.

Summary of Findings

Study 1 indicates that general knowledge and PCE have positive effects on RCB. Together, general knowledge and PCE account for 26% variance of RCB, which is 13% higher than general knowledge alone. Meanwhile, attitude toward RCB fully mediates the influences of these two antecedents on RCB, providing evidence that PCE and general knowledge are likely to increase the likelihood of performing RCB through attitude.

In study 2, besides further validating the KAB model and the effect of PCE through SEM, we revealed that general knowledge has a carryover effect on RCB. General knowledge (T2) and attitude (T2) significantly mediate the effect of general knowledge (T1) on RCB (T2). The result confirms that general knowledge is accumulative and may create influence on future knowledge learning continuously, suggesting the importance of knowledge toward RCB.

In the last study, we first revealed the moderating effects of specific knowledge (T2) between general knowledge (T1) and RCB. Particularly, we found that participants in the *low* specific knowledge condition are more likely to conduct RCB

when they are equipped with more general knowledge about responsible consumption initially. In contrast, participants in the *high* specific knowledge condition are not influenced by the originally held general knowledge (T1) because specific knowledge is more influential than general knowledge. Next, we found that such an interacting effect is mediated by general knowledge (T2) but not PCE (T2), forming a significant mediated moderation. The conditional effects of this moderated mediation show that the general knowledge carryover effects only appear in the *low* specific knowledge condition, but not in the *high* specific knowledge condition. In addition, general knowledge (T2) and PCE (T2) have significant influences on RCB (T2).

Statement of Key Contributions

This study contributes to academia and practitioners in various aspects. Theoretically, this research enriches literature of responsible consumption by applying the KAB model in a new context with a specific focus on the uprising influential cohort of generation Z. First, our study enriches the KAB model by including PCE as an antecedent. Specifically, PCE has a positive effect on responsible consumption behaviors mediated by attitude. Second, our study offers insights related to knowledge formation by suggesting a carryover effect of knowledge, which consequentially affects one's attitude and RCB. Our findings show that responsible consumption knowledge could be accumulated, affecting the learning of similar knowledge in the future. Lastly, this study decomposes knowledge into general and specific knowledge and empirically examines their effects on one's responsible consumption behaviors. Our findings reveal that specific knowledge plays a more important role than general knowledge in influencing responsible consumption.

Practically, this research contributes to the design of a more effective responsible consumption programme. Practitioners can strategically balance the

weighting of general and specific knowledge. They may also include a pre-programme before the major event to enhance the learning effectiveness in the main stage. Meanwhile, our findings reveal that education could be an effective means of promoting responsible consumption in generation Z. This group of consumers are more open and hold more favorable views toward RCB when they become knowledgeable about responsible consumption. Third, our study shows that practitioners can enhance RCB by increasing teenagers' PCE. They could provide evidence that teenagers' actions are meaningful and may contribute to a better environment.

SCOPING THE LITERATURE ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION: TYPOLOGY AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: Sustainable consumption, sustainable consumer behavior, typology, research agenda.

Description: This paper outlines a literature review, conceptual typology, and research agenda on sustainable consumption, and thus organizes existing literature on sustainable consumption and its related concepts with improved clarity.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In the light of the climate crisis (Ripple et al., 2020) and global shortcomings in environmental and social sustainability (Raworth, 2017), academics, marketers, nonprofits, and policy makers are interested in promoting sustainable consumption (White et al., 2019). However, sustainable consumption serves as an umbrella term for various related concepts, and research on sustainable consumption is fragmented into several streams. Furthermore, previous conceptualizations of sustainable consumption are limited either because they are tied to specific contexts (e.g., clothing consumption, Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022), synthesize only a subset of concepts related to sustainable consumption (e.g., Lim, 2017), or focus on one specific facet of sustainability (e.g., environmental sustainability, García-de-Frutos et al., 2018). Thus, it is challenging to formulate a coherent understanding of the scope of sustainable consumption and position different research streams within the broader body of

research on sustainable consumption. This is problematic from the perspectives of intellectual dialogue and theoretical progress. Therefore, this paper aims to organize the existing literature and provide a coherent yet holistic understanding of the scope of sustainable consumption. Consequently, this paper addresses the following research questions: *Which different types of sustainable consumption have been discussed in academic research? What are their main characteristics and differences?*

Method And Data

This paper is based on a scoping review of the literature on sustainable consumption (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Munn et al., 2018). The literature search was conducted using a keyword string on Scopus and complemented with an ad hoc literature search on Google Scholar. The articles selected for further analysis are written in English and published in peer reviewed academic journals, conferences, and books. Furthermore, the analysis focuses on conceptual articles or literature reviews that focus on sustainable consumption and provide an explicit definition of sustainable consumption or one of its forms. The analysis of the literature started with the identification and recording of relevant passages of text from the articles (e.g., definition sustainable consumption and research focus). This was followed by the identification of distinct analytical categories, i.e., types of sustainable consumption. Finally, the categories were compared and contrasted to recognize differences between and common patterns within each category of sustainable consumption.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analyzed articles, sustainable consumption can be broadly defined as consumption that has a long-term orientation and considers the environmental, economic, and social sustainability implications of the entire consumption lifecycle. Furthermore, the

following types of sustainable consumption are identified: Reducing the negative sustainability consequences of current consumption patterns; using resources more efficiently; creating societal change through acts of consumption; and tempering or resisting consumption.

Future research is recommended to analyze, under which conditions each type of sustainable consumption has the most significant sustainability impacts, and thus guide consumer researchers towards the most relevant types of sustainable consumption. To address this question, future research would benefit from a systematic review and comparison of the macro and micro level antecedents and consequences of each type of sustainable consumption, including the psychological and societal barriers inhibiting each type of sustainable consumption. In addition, the different approaches to sustainable consumption should be compared in different contexts, such as affluent versus less affluent societies, because consumers in these contexts have varying possibilities to engage in sustainable consumption. Finally, further research is suggested to map and compare the marketing implications of each approach to sustainable consumption.

Statement of Key Contributions

By developing a typology of sustainable consumption, this paper organizes existing literature on sustainable consumption and its related concepts with improved clarity. This paper thus extends previous conceptualizations of sustainable consumption by considering a broad range of different types of sustainable consumption and organizing them into a typology. The typology enables positioning individual pieces of research within the broad field of sustainable consumption and reveals fruitful areas for future inquiry around this important topic. This work is valuable for marketing practitioners and policy makers who aim to advance sustainable consumption, as it sheds light on the various forms that

sustainable consumption may take. In addition, the typology has the potential to serve as a basis for new insights on how marketers and policy makers can best promote each of the identified forms of sustainable consumption.

References are available upon request.

TALKING THE ALTRUISTIC TALK BUT WALKING THE EGOISTIC WALK? CONSUMERS‘ PURCHASING GOALS FOR DIFFERENT SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT BENEFITS

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Keywords: sustainable product benefits, sustainable purchasing goals, consumer motivation, egoism, altruism

Description: This research proposes a conceptual framework to distinguish between different types of sustainable product benefits and suggests how these satisfy consumer goals.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

The demand for sustainability is no longer an ideology of a marginal group of activists but has reached the average consumers. Brands are proactively increasing their sustainable product offerings by implementing sustainable product benefits, defined for the scope of this paper as a single sustainability-associated product component which contributes toward the satisfaction of consumer needs, in their newly developed products. However, despite the expressed sustainable purchasing intentions by consumers, the market for sustainable product’s full potential remains untapped; for instance, 36% of consumers willing to buy FMCGs with sustainable packaging did eventually not engage in the planned purchasing, resulting in a value action gap of US$806bn.

While research has acknowledged that sustainability may be a liability when a product category is associated as incongruent with sustainability, it remains unclear which components, that is sustainable product benefits, determine the favourability of sustainable

features and how they are evaluated. A gap remains in explaining which different types of sustainable product benefits exist and how consumers use them to evaluate the achievement of their goals to buy sustainably.

Thus, this research aims to answer the question, of whether and how sustainable product attributes differ in satisfying consumers‘ sustainable purchasing goals.

Summary of Findings

Based on literature review a conceptual framework is suggested, that distinguished between different types of sustainable product benefits as a configuration of their product relation and which sustainable purchasing goals are satisfied.

The dimension of “Sustainable Product Relation” defines whether the sustainable product benefit is part of the product’s core, thus, being necessary for the product’s functionality such as ingredients, or the product’s periphery, being independent of the product’s functionality like a product’s packaging. The dimension of “Sustainable Purchasing Goal Satisfaction” indicated which type of goals are satisfied by a particular type of sustainable product benefit. The goals to be satisfied may be either egoistically motivated, emphasizing the consumers’ goals, or address altruistic aims.

Both ends of the two dimensions are not mutually exclusive, such as sustainable product benefits can be both, part of the product’s core and periphery, and likewise satisfy egoistic and altruistically motivated sustainable purchasing goals at the same time. The two dimensions are defined as continua, thus indicating relative compositions of the dimension’s extrema.

As a result of the configuration of the continua of “Sustainable Product Relation” and “Sustainable Purchasing Goal Satisfaction”, a taxonomy of five distinct types of sustainable product benefits is proposed.

Statement of Key Contributions

While most of the previous research focused on sustainable products, this research contributes by proposing a new view of analysing sustainability on a more modular level by suggesting a novel taxonomy of sustainable product benefits.

First, this research sheds light on consumers' motivation to buy sustainable products. By acknowledging that consumers have egoistic and altruistic goals, which also may be simultaneously present, to engage in sustainable purchasing, this paper suggests that depending on a product’s positioning, sustainable product benefits may be leveraged to signal the satisfaction of egoistic, altruistic or both sustainable purchasing goals.

Second, analysing sustainability on a product benefit level may enrich the already established view that sustainability is a contextual asset or liability. By distinguishing between sustainable product benefits as cues for sustainability and understanding which type of motivation it addresses, a better understanding of why consumers are discounting or appraising their evaluation and which product benefits are the cause.

This, last, also may give additional insights for practitioners to effectively design their products. For example, if the consumer is expected to satisfy an egoistically motivated sustainable purchasing goal, the sustainable product benefit should be in congruence with the product category to avoid triggering adverse effects.

References are available upon request

THE IMPACT OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING POSITIONING ON WELL-BEING: WORK VS. HOBBIES

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Keywords: sharing economy; user innovation; PERMA; flourishing

Description: This study explored why knowledge sharing improves well-being through a quantitative survey and identified altruism as an important motivation.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

In recent years, there have been more opportunities for individuals to begin utilizing their knowledge and experience. However, the knowledge and ideas that individuals possess are not yet fully utilized. For instance, user innovation research (e.g. von Hippel, 2005) has long discussed how to elicit innovative ideas that are sticky to individuals. Aoki (2021) found a solution in knowledge sharing. Furthermore, Aoki (2021; 2022) showed that knowledge sharing participants not only earned rewards but also improved their well-being. This paper sheds light on this positive relationship between knowledge sharing and well-being.

Knowledge sharing participants include both those who do so through work and as an extension of hobbies. This study examines whether there is a difference in the paths that the participants followed in either case. In psychology, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations have been discussed as contradictory since Deci (1975), who stated that monetary incentives could delegitimize intrinsic motivation. Behavioral economics research has pointed out that when monetary incentives are introduced into a market where social incentives function, the former ceases to function (e.g. Heyman & Ariely, 2004). This study examines whether there are differences between the two groups in terms of motivation and well-being.

Method And Data

To answer the research question, a quantitative study was conducted. Respondents aged 18-65 years old were screened from the consumer panel of a research firm. The knowledge sharing participants and non-participants were first compared by their level of well-being, then within the knowledge sharing participants, the motivations and level of well-being of the workers and hobbyists were compared.

The level of well-being was based on the concept of flourishing which consists of five elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and

accomplishment (PERMA), as presented by Seligman (2011), followed by Aoki (2021; 2022). Butler and Kern (2016) developed a measurement of PERMA which consists of 15 questions (three for each element of PERMA) where the respondents rate on an 11-point scale from 0 to 10.

Motivations to participate in knowledge sharing were surveyed using the motivation classification of participants in firm-initiated co-creation community, as presented by Füller (2010). Data were obtained using a 7-point Likert scale for 10 items, covering intrinsic to extrinsic motivations.

Summary of Findings

First, the flourishing of knowledge sharing participants (n=1,031) and non-participants (n=983) were compared, and the former showed a significantly higher level in all PERMA elements. Second, a comparison of “workers” (n=419) and “hobbyists” (n=612) showed no significant difference in flourishing between the two groups. Interestingly, compared to the hobbyists, the workers showed a significantly higher level of altruism, in addition to monetary rewards, as motivations to participate in knowledge sharing. Finally, an analysis of the relationship between motivation to participate in knowledge sharing and flourishing quantitatively showed that altruism has an impact on all PERMA items, while “intrinsic playful task” does so on four elements except accomplishment. Moreover,

“information seeking" has significant effects on positive emotion and accomplishment, and curiosity does so on engagement. Intrinsic motivations were shown to contribute to increased flourishing.

Statement of Key Contributions

It was proven that people can improve their well-being by using their knowledge and experience to help others, whether for income or as a hobby. The results show that knowledge sharing participants improve their flourishing by contributing to others while enjoying themselves, obtaining necessary information, and satisfying their intellectual curiosity.

The results are relevant for policy makers promoting sharing economies as well as for companies considering permitting their employees to have secondary employment. The expansion of knowledge sharing will not only bring economic benefits to people, but also improve well-being. It could even support corporate purpose driven management. Furthermore, it will end up increasing social welfare by tapping into unused resources.

Special Interest Group (SIG) Programming

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: HOW LEFT-DIGIT PRICING JUSTIFIES FOOD WASTE?

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Keywords: Food Waste, Pricing, Left-Digit Effect, Sustainable Consumption, Food Policy

Description: Left-digit pricing (e.g., tag of $2.99 instead of $3.00) increases food waste; however, retailers can contribute to reducing waste by including a reference price (e.g., tag of $4.00, now $2.99).

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Retailers often use left-digit pricing (e.g., a tag of $2.99 instead of $3.00) to drive consumption preferences. Our research shows that left-digit pricing can increase food waste – especially when it is not accompanied by a reference price (e.g., a tag of $4.00, now $2.99). We suggest that the presence of a reference price increases the perceived quality of the featured product. That is, the consumers utilize the higher tag of the reference price (i.e., $4.00) as a perceptual cue to form their 'price-quality' inferences. Contrarily, without a reference price (i.e., $2.99), consumers would be uncertain about the product's quality and, thus, are more likely to justify wasting food. The results of our initial study support this hypothesis. The current research provides novel insights by bridging the behavioral pricing

and food-waste literature. Furthermore, our work has substantive implications as it identifies an often-used pricing format that can reduce food waste at the point of purchase.

Research Question

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "*there are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread*" (Rosa, 2017). It is estimated that between 720 and 811 million people faced malnourishment in 2020 (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, 2021). Yet, nearly 931 million tons or 17% of the food produced globally was wasted at the consumption stage – with 74 kgs. of food wasted per capita (United Nations Environment Program, 2021). To address this challenge, the United Nations has targeted to halve the per-capita global food waste by 2030 (Sustainable Development Goal 12.3; United Nations, 2017). Furthermore, researchers have examined different contextual (e.g., expiration date labels, bonus deals, household routines, etc.), product-related (e.g., attitude to aesthetically unappealing foods), and individual factors (e.g., food-waste-aversion) that influence consumer-related food waste. Extending this literature, we investigate the effect of visuals depicting left-digit pricing (i.e., price format that decreases the left-most digit by one and ends a few cents below the rounded price - $2.99 instead of $3.00; Thomas & Morwitz, 2005). Specifically, we study: "*how does left-digit pricing in advertising and product visuals affect consumer food waste behavior?*"

Methods and Data

Participants (N = 404; M_{age} = 35.36; 38.72% female; 1 participant was excluded for failing the attention check) were recruited from the U.K. through the Prolific Academic platform. They were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions in 2 (reference price:

absent vs. present) x 2 (left-most digit: low vs. high) between-subjects experiment. The scenario asked the participants to imagine observing a restaurant's menu board featuring a five-cheese pizza. Then, the participants viewed the food visual (with pricing information) depending on the between-subjects condition: (1) reference price absent, low-left digit, condition: £9.99; (2) reference price absent, high-left digit, condition: £10.00; (3) reference price present, low-left digit, condition: £11.00, now £9.99; and (4) reference price present, high-left digit, condition: £11.01, now £10.00. Upon viewing the food picture, participants were asked to visualize how it would be when they were finished eating the pizza – in particular, the amount of pizza that they would likely leave on their plate. Subsequently, participants shared their attitude to food waste aversion (6-items scale; Raghunathan & Chandrasekaran, 2020), restrained eating behavior (10-items scale; Herman & Polivy, 1975), hours since the last eating (proxy of hunger), dietary restrictions, time-of-day, age, and gender.

Summary of Findings

The findings of two-way ANCOVA found a non-significant main effect of reference price (absent vs. present; $p = .60$) and left-digit price (low vs. high; $p = .53$) but a significant reference price x left-digit pricing interaction ($F_{(1,393)} = 4.82$, $p = .03$, partial-$\eta^2 = .01$). Pair-wise comparison showed that left-digit pricing without an accompanying reference price (£9.99 vs. £10.00) led to significantly higher food waste ($p = .03$) when the left-digit was low ($M_{low\ left\text{-}most\ digit} = 5.74$) than high ($M_{high\ left\text{-}most\ digit} = 6.10$). However, there was no significant difference on food waste for left-digit pricing with accompanying reference price (£11.00, now £9.99 vs. £11.01, now £10.00; $M_{low\ left\text{-}most\ digit} = 6.08$ vs. $M_{high\ left\text{-}most\ digit} = 5.89$, $p = .24$). Among the covariates, gender had a significant effect ($p < .01$). Furthermore, dietary

restrictions and differences in restrained eating (both $p = .06$) were found to be marginally significant. However, the 2-way (p's > .54) and 3-way interactions (p's > .17) of these covariates with the predictor variables were not significant. These results provided initial evidence that left-digit pricing, without an accompanying reference price, leads to higher food waste.

Key Contributions

This paper studies the effect of left-digit pricing, with or without a reference or comparison price, on the food waste behavior of consumers. The insights from this research are important because of their implication for the phenomena of global food waste and the increasing policy focus to reduce waste at the consumption stage (related to United Nations SDG 12.3). It is estimated that the food wasted annually can feed the world's under-nourished people four times over (United Nations Environment Program, 2021). Our research aims to provide a substantive insight to policy makers on the adverse consequences of a commonly used marketing tactic (i.e., left-digit pricing) on food waste at the point of purchase. Simultaneously, the paper offers a marketing-based solution to retailers, who can contribute to reducing food waste by simply adding a reference price along with the left-digit pricing – to anchor the consumer's price-quality judgments. From a theoretical standpoint, we contribute to the limited research on the effects of in-store stimuli and promotional pricing on food waste. To develop these insights, we draw on the behavioral pricing and numeric cognition literature and bridge it with the growing literature on consumer-related food waste.

References

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Proposed Marketing for Higher Education SIG Special Session

2023 AMA Winter Academic Conference

Marketing to Evolving Consumers: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Session Co-Chairs & Discussion Leaders

Siti Aqilah Jahari, Assistant Professor of Marketing, Monash University
Ashley Hass, Assistant Professor of Marketing, University of Portland
Jacqueline Eastman, Professor of Marketing, Florida Gulf Coast University
Rajesh Iyer, Professor of Marketing, Bradley University

Papers / Authors

Paper 1	**Food for Thought: How Left-digit Pricing Justifies Foodwaste?** Sumit Malik, Monash University Eda Savin, IE Business School Aylin Aydinli, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Paper 2	**Corporate DEI Initiatives, Customer Engagement, and Firm Value** Siavash Rashidi-Sabet, Texas Tech University Ankit Anand, Texas Tech University Sreedhar Madhavaram, Texas Tech University
Paper 3	**Shopping Addiction and Product Returns: Scale Development and Empirical Findings** Kevin McGuire, University of Oklahoma Jeffrey Schmidt, University of Oklahoma Kenneth Peterson, University of Oklahoma
Paper 4	**Forever and Always? How Audience Growth Impacts Influencer-Follower Relationships** Brittany Beck, Louisiana Tech University

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: HOW LEFT-DIGIT PRICING JUSTIFIES FOODWASTE?

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our work has substantive implications as it identifiesan often-used pricing format that can reduce food waste at the point of purchase.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "*there are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread*" (Rosa, 2017). It is estimated that between 720 and 811 million people faced malnourishment in 2020 (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, 2021). Yet, nearly 931 million tons or 17% of the food produced globally was wastedat the consumption stage – with 74 kgs. of food wasted per capita (United Nations Environment Program, 2021). To address this challenge, the United Nations has targeted to halve the per-capita global food waste by 2030 (Sustainable Development Goal 12.3; United Nations, 2017). Furthermore, researchers have examined different contextual (e.g., expiration date labels, bonus deals, household routines, etc.), product-related (e.g., attitude to aesthetically unappealing foods), and individual factors (e.g., food-waste-aversion) that influence consumer-related food waste. Extending this literature, we investigate the effect ofvisuals depicting left-digit pricing (i.e., price format that decreases the left-most digit by oneand ends a few cents below the rounded price - $2.99 instead of $3.00; Thomas & Morwitz,2005). Specifically, we study: "*how does left-digit pricing in advertising and product visualsaffect consumer food waste behavior?*"

METHODS AND DATA

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of two-way ANCOVA found a non-significant main effect of reference price (absent vs. present; p = .60) and left-digit price (low vs. high; p = .53) but a significantreference price x left-digit pricing interaction ($F(1,393)$ = 4.82, p = .03, partial-η^2 = .01). Pair- wise comparison showed that left-digit pricing without an accompanying reference price (£9.99 vs. £10.00) led to significantly higher food waste (p = .03) when the left-digit was low($M_{low\ left\text{-}most\ digit}$ = 5.74) than high ($M_{high\ left\text{-}most\ digit}$ = 6.10). However, there was no significant difference on food waste for left-digit pricing with accompanying reference price (£11.00, now £9.99 vs. £11.01, now £10.00; $M_{low\ left\text{-}most\ digit}$ = 6.08 vs. $M_{high\ left\text{-}most\ digit}$ = 5.89, p = .24).Among the covariates, gender had a significant effect (p < .01). Furthermore, dietary restrictions and differences in restrained eating (both p = .06) were found to be marginally significant. However, the 2-way (p's > .54) and 3-way interactions (p's > .17) of these covariates with the predictor variables were not significant. These results provided initial evidence that left-

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KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper studies the effect of left-digit pricing, with or without a reference orcomparison price, on the food waste behavior of consumers. The insights from this researchare important because of their implication for the phenomena of global food waste and the increasing policy focus to reduce waste at the consumption stage (related to United Nations SDG 12.3). It is estimated that the food wasted annually can feed the world's under-nourishedpeople four times over (United Nations Environment Program, 2021). Our research aims to provide a substantive insight to policy makers on the adverse consequences of a commonly used marketing tactic (i.e., left-digit pricing) on food waste at the point of purchase. Simultaneously, the paper offers a marketing-based solution to retailers, who can contributeto reducing food waste by simply adding a reference price along with the left-digit pricing – to anchor the consumer's price-quality judgments. From a theoretical standpoint, we contribute to the limited research on the effects of in-store stimuli and promotional pricing on food waste. To develop these insights, we draw on the behavioral pricing and numeric cognition literature and bridge it with the growing literature on consumer-related food waste.

References are available upon request.

CORPORATE DEI INITIATIVES, CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT, AND FIRM VALUE

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Keywords: Diversity, equity, and inclusion, customer engagement, firm value, self-esteem, event study.

Description: The paper examines effects of different types of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion(DEI) announcements on customer engagement and shareholder engagement.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is an important social issue for corporates and in the wake of George Floyd's death the business case for DEI is even stronger. DEI issues are relevant to multiple stakeholders including customers, employees, shareholders, and regulators. Accordingly, corporations are rushing to announce DEI initiatives in response to pressure from relevant stakeholders. For instance, JP Morgan Chase has committed to invest $30 billion to advance racial equity whereas Mr. Potato Head is dropping Mr. from its brand name to promote gender equality and inclusion among its customer bases. However, many such initiatives are impression management, also known as *woke-washing* in the domain of DEI-related issues.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand and differentiate between different types of DEI initiatives and assess their impact on customer behavior and investors' reactions.

Through this research, first, we aim to understand and offer a typology of various corporate DEI initiatives. Second, we examine the effects of different types of DEI initiatives on customer engagement and the valence of sentiment towards the firm's DEI announcement. Finally, we understand the economic impact of different types of DEI initiatives by understanding the effect of such initiatives on firm value post the announcement of different DEI initiatives.

METHOD AND DATA

To answer our research questions, we use a multimethod approach where we collect firms' consumer-related DEI announcements from year 2019. We compile our data using multiple sources. For instance, we collect DEI announcements data using Factiva database, use Twitter data to collect information on customer engagement with the firm, and finally, use The Center for Research in Security Prices (CRSP) database to collect information on stock market returns data to understand investors' reactions. We use event study methodology to understand the effect of different types of DEI initiatives on customer engagement and firm value (abnormal stock returns). The abnormal stock return at the time of DEI announcement is the equity value beyond the expected returns using Fama-French three factor model including the momentum factor. The abnormal return over a period of time around the earnings announcement is cumulative abnormal returns (CAR).

Next, we specify a regression model that to understand the effect of DEI announcements on stock returns through CAR and customer engagement through Twitter's tweet volume and valence post DEI announcements. We also account for industry fixed effects to account for observed heterogeneity and time fixed effects to account for any seasonal changes.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Our findings suggest that firms mainly announce consumer-related DEI initiatives on the topics of financial resource allocation to DEI strategies, social justice related announcements, and announcement related to LGBTQ-related issues. Our preliminary results on the effect of different types of DEI announcements indicate that investors do not respond to all DEI announcements (□ = .26%, $p>0.2$). On the other hand, we find that investors are mainly interested in DEI announcements related to financial resource allocation to DEI issues (□ = .47%,$p<0.05$). The results indicate that on average financial resources for DEI issues result in higher shareholder engagement. Although our analysis for customer engagement using event study and lab experiment is still under process, we expect that customers react positively to all the types of DEI announcement as customers think about social issues more than financial issues. Our (expected) results that varies across different stakeholders shed light on the importance of different types of DEI issues for different stakeholders. For instance, customers care about DEI announcements related to social justice and LGBTQ issues while shareholders are mainly interested in the financial aspects of DEI announcements.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

In today's world**,** DEI issues are one the most important social issues that are relevant to consumers, shareholders, and businesses. However, the marketing literature is scant on DEI issues as opposed to management research that focuses on workplace diversity and their effects of firm performances. Therefore, in this study, we attempt to understand the effect of different types of consumer-specific DEI initiatives (announcements) on customer engagement, mediating mechanism, and shareholder engagement. Our research has implication both for researchers and practitioners.

To the theory, our study is the first one to offer typology of different types of consumer-specific DEI initiatives that are relevant to marketing. We draw on racial formation theory that explains goal directed actions of organizations both at the micro and macro level. Therefore, our research is important for both consumer research to understand the consumer behavior at the micro level as well as for marketing strategyresearchers to understand the (macro) firm-level marketing strategies related to DEI.

To the practice side, our research would help the focal firm in understanding DEI issues that matters differently to different stakeholders. For instance, shareholders are interested in financial aspects of DEI announcements while consumers may be interested in all types of DEI initiatives. Our research would help managers in designing optimal DEI programs for consumers to maximize customer engagement and investors who can minimize their risks by investing in firms that care for social causes in alignment with consumers' expectations.

References are available upon request.

SHOPPING ADDICTION AND PRODUCT RETURNS: SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

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Keywords: Serial returners; shopping addiction; overconsumption; compulsive buying behavior; product returns.

Description: This paper examines the relationship between shopping addiction and product return behavior, developing new scales that are used to build and test a model of this relationship using survey data.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Clearly shopping addiction causes great harm to consumers suffering its effects, while the effects on firms are less established. In order to more fully understand the effects on all stakeholders and advance the conversation towards potential interventions, this paper focuses on the relationship between shopping addiction and consumer product return behavior. While this is the primary relationship that this study is exploring, the model that we develop also includes the constructs of shopping enjoyment, consumer spending self-control, and shopping mission. These are important both to the relationship between shopping addiction and product return behavior,

and provide valuable context in the ongoing effort to better understand the entire phenomenon of shopping addiction.

METHOD AND DATA

We went through four rounds of scale development, data collection, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and scale revision to develop the scales for the new constructs of shopping mission and serial return behavior. For the other three constructs of interest, existing scales were used. After pre-testing and refining, data for our model was collected through the Amazon M-Turk platform with a final valid sample size of approximately 2,500 responses. After collecting the data, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the five constructs, resulting in a very strong model fit. Finally, a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach was used to test the relationships.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

For our primary relationship of interest, we did find a positive association between shopping addiction and serial return behavior. We also found that there is a negative association between compulsive buying behavior and consumer spending self-control. In contrast, there is a positive association between compulsive buying behavior and consumer shopping enjoyment and there is a positive association between compulsive buying behavior and shopping mission. Additionally, we found a positive association between shopping enjoyment and shopping mission. We did not find any relationships between consumer spending self-control and serial return behavior or between shopping mission and serial return behavior.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

There are two major areas of contribution that this paper offers. First, it extends the understanding of compulsive buying behavior. Compulsive buying behavior is related to product

return behavior, which is an important finding as it illustrates the value that firms can gain by helping consumers combat shopping addiction and offers a potential new warning sign to both individuals and firms when consumers may be suffering from shopping addiction. It also contributes to the understanding of compulsive buying behavior by tracking one of the eventual destinations of unnecessary purchases. Secondly, this study contributes to marketing research through the development of multiple new consumer behavior scales. Over 2,500 surveys were completed in the data collection portion of this project, through which scales relating to shopping mission, serial return behavior, consumer perceptions of return policies, and consumer shopping outcomes were developed and validated.

FOREVER AND ALWAYS? HOW FAME IMPACTS THE INFLUENCER-FOLLOWER RELATIONSHIP.

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Keywords: influencer marketing, social media influencers, social media, celebrity, followers.

Description: Perceptions, such as authenticity, formed by followers of a social media influencer may change over time as said influencer increases in fame (i.e., increase in audience size; follower count) which may negatively impact brand partnerships downstream.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Social media influencers have charmed industry professionals and academic scholars alike for their ability to create captivating content that engages audiences and sways purchasing decisions. However, influencers are ultimately dependent on the consumers who follow them which suggests that the power of influencer marketing is in the ability for influencers to develop strong, lasting connections (often referred to as parasocial relationships) with their followers (Hu, Min, Han, & Liu, 2020). However, scant research examines how the influencer-follower relationship is impacted as an influencer achieves greater fame, which may inadvertently reduce the qualities of the influencer that attracted their original audience. As a result, an influencer's relationship with their followers may become more distant and their recommendations may be

perceived as less authentic or credible and, ultimately, less impactful on the partnered brand's bottom line. Given that such characteristics are what give influencers an advantage over traditional celebrities (Schouten, Janssen, Verspaget, 2020), it is important to gain a better understanding of how these consumer perceptions change as a result of increased influencer fame. Thus, this exploratory study aims to answer the following question: How does the influencer-follower relationship change as an influencer achieves greater fame (i.e., increases their follower count)?

METHOD AND DATA

Due to its unique nature, scholars call for a need to develop theories for the basis of influencer marketing research rather than relying on celebrity literature (Rosengren & Campbell, 2021). Taking this into account, this exploratory research aims to utilize grounded theory methodology via qualitative, in-depth interviews to fundamentally assess consumers' perceptions of the phenomenon. Participants were primarily recruited within the southern region of the United States during December of 2022. The final participant count is forthcoming as interviews are still actively being conducted as of January 2023.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The results of this exploratory study are forthcoming as interviews are still actively being conducted. An attempt to code results prematurely may lead to false or misleading conclusions. Findings will be presented in-person during the academic conference.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Understanding how the influencer-follower relationship changes as an influencer amasses greater fame (i.e., increases in follower count) is fundamental to influencer marketing. Many social media influencers aim to consistently increase their follower count as this allows for elevated visibility and, potentially, more brand partnerships with greater payouts. This is in consideration

of how SMIs are typically paid (i.e., sponsored posts are priced as a variable of the SMI's follower count). As such, findings from this research aim to inform how influencers can maintain close relationships with their followers which will, in part, allow for more successful brand partnerships. Further, insights from this research will aid marketing managers in determining which characteristics to evaluate when selecting SMIs. Typically, brands aim to partner with SMIs who have the largest follower count among their niche in hopes of garnering greater brand awareness or conversions. However, this research counterintuitively suggests that selecting an influencer with the largest following may result in the lowest returns and reinforces the importance of relational characteristics in regards to the influencer-follower relationship.

References are available upon request.

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2023 AMA Winter Academic Conference

Marketing to Evolving Consumers: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Session Co-Chairs & Discussion Leaders

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Ashley Hass, Assistant Professor of Marketing, University of Portland
Jacqueline Eastman, Professor of Marketing, Florida Gulf Coast University
Rajesh Iyer, Professor of Marketing, Bradley University

Papers / Authors

Paper 1 **A Good Cause Is Not Enough: An Examination of How Cause-Related Storytelling Impacts Consumers' Brand Associations, Purchase Intention, And Recommendation Intention**
Chu-Yen Pai, Texas Tech University
Debra Laverie, Texas Tech University,
Hui-Mei Wang, Fu Jen Catholic University

Paper 2 **The Business Case Against (and for) Product Gendering**
Justin Sieow, University of Connecticut
Christina Kan, University of Connecticut

Paper 3 **Talking the Altruistic Talk but Walking the Egoistic Walk? Consumers' Purchasing Goals for Different Sustainable Product Benefits**
Steffen Baecker, IE Business School - IE University

Paper 4 **The Gift Return Taboo: Givers' and Recipients' Differing Views on Gift Returns**
Stella Tavallaei, Florida International University
Julian Givi, West Virginia University

A GOOD CAUSE IS NOT ENOUGH: AN EXAMINATION OF HOW CAUSE-RELATED STORYTELLING IMPACTS CONSUMERS' BRAND ASSOCIATIONS, PURCHASE INTENTION, AND RECOMMENDATION INTENTION

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Debra Laverie, Texas Tech University

Hui-Mei Wang, Fu Jen Catholic University

For further information, please contact Chu-Yen Pai, Ph.D. student, Texas Tech University (chupai@ttu.edu).

Keywords: cause marketing, storytelling marketing, story credibility, brand association

Description: This paper demonstrates that (1) a cause-related storytelling strategy may significantly transfer the attributes consumers focused on and increase their recommendation intention but not for purchase intent, and (2) high perceived story credibility may significantly strengthen purchase and recommendation intentions.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

We study the impact of cause-related storytelling marketing on consumers' cognitions and behaviors (e.g., brand associations, purchase and recommendation intentions) by examining this strategy in a for-profit context. Hence, we address two research questions: (1) Does marketers' cause-related storytelling influence consumers' brand associations and intentions to purchase and recommend? (2) Does perceived story credibility impact the proposed causal relationships?

METHOD AND DATA

In this study, we use the brand story of TOMS as the manipulation in our experimental interviews. The study began with personal interviews to explore how cause-related storytelling influences consumers' brand associations and purchase/ recommendation intentions. Besides, the effects of perceived story credibility were also examined. We recruited 70 college students at a university in Taiwan. Participants were randomly assigned to treatment or control groups with the distinction that the treatment group viewed TOMS's cause-related storytelling advertisement while the control group did not. We used the qualitative inductive method to code the adjectives based on brand associations and adopted the proposed brand association taxonomy to categorize the adjectives. Also, we analyzed the impact of cause-related storytelling on purchase intention, recommendation intention, and perceived story credibility by applying t-Tests to examine the differences in the three variables.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

We found that cause-related storytelling can significantly transfer participants' attention from product functional attributes (e.g., product materials and styles) to corporate emotional attributes (e.g., philanthropic images). With cause-related storytelling, consumers see not only a brand's product or service but also its corporate emotional attributes. Further, we did not find that cause-related storytelling caused a higher purchase intention. However, a higher recommendation intention was found, indicating that the low intent to purchase may not hinder consumers from recommending the brand to others. In addition, we reveal that high perceived story credibility significantly increases recommendation intention.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

We extend marketing research in cause-related marketing and storytelling by examining

the effects of cause-related storytelling on consumers' brand associations, purchase intention, and recommendation intention. In addition, we investigate the impact of perceived story credibility on purchase intention and recommendation intention. Our findings demonstrate that a brand using a cause-related storytelling strategy (vs. without) can significantly switch consumers' associations with the brand from product functional attributes to corporate emotional attributes. Specifically, cause-related storytelling makes consumers attentive to the good cause that the brand is supporting and consumers associate the brand with its philanthropic images rather than the actual market offerings (i.e., product-related attributes). We also found that exposure to a cause-related story enhances consumers' intent to recommend a charitable brand to others. However, such a positive impact was not seen on consumers' purchase intention, unlike prior studies on cause-related marketing. We attribute the results of non-significant purchase intention between treatment and control groups to the low perceived story credibility. Our findings suggest that high perceived story credibility increases consumers' purchase intention and recommendation intention, stressing the importance of story credibility. Our results summarize that a good cause may not be enough for consumers; consumers desire cause-related storytelling and, more importantly, a credible one.

References are available upon request.

THE BUSINESS CASE AGAINST (AND FOR) PRODUCT GENDERING

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Keywords: Product Gendering, Marketplace Metacognition, Consumer Identity, Manipulative Intent

Description: In this research, we show that the use of genders cues to suggest a particular gender as the typical user of the product (i.e., product gendering) leads to reduced consumer preference, when compared to a similar product that does not involve gender cues.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Within existing consumer research, product gendering has largely been examined from a consumer identity perspective which suggests that consumption choices “help define, reinforce, and communicate the identities that consumers hold” (Bhattacharjee, Berger, and Menon 2014, 295); leading to more favorable consumer evaluations because of a greater perceived fit between the self and the product (Bhattacharjee et al. 2014; Reed 2004). However, the consumer identity account provides a partial understanding of how consumers respond to product gendering (Drake and Radford 2017) because consumer awareness of product gendering has gradually heightened in recent years. In fact, regardless of identities and habits, consumers all questioned the marketer’s

urge to separate "gender-neutral products into their masculine and feminine counterparts" (Drake and Radford 2017, 412). Wright (2002) describes this awareness of marketing actions as a form of social intelligence that consumers develop overtime (i.e., marketplace metacognition), and argues that consumers can tap upon this intelligence to interpretmarketing actions. From a marketplace metacognition perspective then, given heightened consumer awareness of product gendering, one should expect lower consumer preference toward gendered (vs. ungendered) products in general. Thus, we investigate product gendering from the marketplace metacognition perspective, and demonstrate that product gendering decreases consumer preference in general.

METHOD AND DATA

We conducted three studies: (1) topic modeling on social media data, (2) two main effect experiments, and (3) a parallel mediation experiment. In study one, we examined consumer discussion on gendered products through topic modeling to discern if consumers recognize product gendering as a marketing tactic. We first generated a list of 89 gendered products from news articles from Factiva and ProQuest between January 2010 to May 2022, and then searched social media (e.g., hashtags, reviews) for consumer backlash, campaigns, or discontent toward the gendered product in question. In total, 3434 consumer generated comments and reviews were scraped. We employed topic modeling following established procedures to clean the dataset (e.g., removing "stop" words, stemming words; Humphreys and Wang 2018), select the number of topics using established metrics (e.g., CaoJuan2009, Deveaud2014, and Perplexity; Berger et al. 2020; Schmitt, Brakus, and Biraglia 2022), and interpret the topics (e.g., Tirunillai and Tellis 2014). Subsequently, across three experiments, we recruited undergraduates and MTurk participants to (1) provide support for our hypothesis that gendered (vs. ungendered) products leads to lower consumer preference, and (2) explicate the underlying mechanism and demonstrate

that product gendering induces greater inference of manipulative intent which, inturn reduces consumer preference.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

First, topic modeling suggests that consumers recognize product gendering as a marketing action as evidenced by the explicit questioning of companies' thought process and demands for companies to stop product gendering. This provides preliminary support for the marketplace metacognition perspective to product gendering. Within our dataset, we observed consumers mocking companies for believing that simply gendering a product would make consumers fall in love with the product in question when the actual benefit of the gendered product is unclear and/or non-existent.

Second, through three experiments, we provide support for our hypothesis that consumers exhibit lower preference for gendered (vs. ungendered) products. Additionally, we show that inference of manipulative intent acts as the underlying process mechanism driving the effect of product gendering on product liking. Importantly, we also observe that product gendering does very little, if at all, in terms of creating a greater perceived fit between a product and the consumer. Even when a gendered product is shown to a consumer of the intended gender, product gendering does not seem to engender greater perceived fit in a manner that increases product liking. Ultimately, these findings suggest that product gendering as a marketing tactic seems to result in a lose-lose situation.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Theoretically, we contribute to the marketplace metacognition literature by demonstrating that consumers do indeed possess some level of marketplace social intelligence as it pertains to product gendering practices. In doing so, we advance our understanding of how consumers

respond to and navigate the marketer's use of gender as an identity appeal. Moreover, we also contribute specifically to the persuasion knowledge literature by uncovering consumer inference of manipulative intent as the underlying process through which product gendering affects consumer preference.

Managerially, our research speaks directly to the use of gender as a demographical segmentation variable. Our findings suggest that marketing a product using gender cues to reach consumers of a specific gender does not work in general – for not only do gender cues do little to attract consumers of the intended gender, and gender cues also alienate consumers of the non-intended gender. At the same time, however, our results also indicate the existence of certain instances whereby product gendering empowers and provide safety to consumers – an area we plan to further investigate. In all, we hope this developing research encourages companies to handle product gendering with the proper level of care and consideration necessary to avoid the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

TALKING THE ALTRUISTIC TALK BUT WALKING THE EGOISTIC WALK? CONSUMERS' PURCHASING GOALS FOR DIFFERENT SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT BENEFITS

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Keywords: sustainable product benefits, sustainable purchasing goals, consumer motivation, egoism, altruism

Description: This research proposes a conceptual framework to distinguish between different types of sustainable product benefits and suggests how these satisfy consumer goals.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

The demand for sustainability is no longer an ideology of a marginal group of activists but has reached the average consumers. Brands are proactively increasing their sustainable product offerings by implementing sustainable product benefits, defined for the scope of this paper as a single sustainability-associated product component which contributes toward the satisfaction of consumer needs, in their newly developed products. However, despite the expressed sustainable purchasing intentions by consumers, the market for sustainable product's fullpotential remains untapped; for instance, 36% of consumers willing to buy FMCGs with sustainable packaging did eventually not engage in the planned purchasing, resulting in avalue

action gap of US$806bn. While research has acknowledged that sustainability may be a liability when a product category is associated as incongruent with sustainability, it remains unclear which components, that is sustainable product benefits, determine the favorability of sustainable features and how they are evaluated. A gap remains in explaining which different types of sustainable product benefits exist and how consumers use them to evaluate the achievement of their goals to buy sustainably. Thus, this research aims to answer the question, of whether and how sustainable product attributes differ in satisfying consumers' sustainable purchasing goals.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on literature review a conceptual framework is suggested, that distinguished between different types of sustainable product benefits as a configuration of their product relation and which sustainable purchasing goals are satisfied.

The dimension of "Sustainable Product Relation" defines whether the sustainable product benefit is part of the product's core, thus, being necessary for the product's functionality suchas ingredients, or the product's periphery, being independent of the product's functionality like a product's packaging. The dimension of "Sustainable Purchasing Goal Satisfaction" indicated which type of goals are satisfied by a particular type of sustainable product benefit. The goals to be satisfied may be either egoistically motivated, emphasizing the consumers' goals, or address altruistic aims.

Both ends of the two dimensions are not mutually exclusive, such as sustainable product benefits can be both, part of the product's core and periphery, and likewise satisfy egoistic and altruistically motivated sustainable purchasing goals at the same time. The two dimensions are defined as continua, thus indicating relative compositions of the dimension'sextrema.

As a result of the configuration of the continua of "Sustainable Product Relation" and

“Sustainable Purchasing Goal Satisfaction”, a taxonomy of five distinct types of sustainable product benefits is proposed.

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

While most of the previous research focused on sustainable products, this research contributesby proposing a new view of analysing sustainability on a more modular level by suggesting a novel taxonomy of sustainable product benefits.

First, this research sheds light on consumers' motivation to buy sustainable products. By acknowledging that consumers have egoistic and altruistic goals, which also may be simultaneously present, to engage in sustainable purchasing, this paper suggests that depending on a product’s positioning, sustainable product benefits may be leveraged to signal the satisfaction of egoistic, altruistic or both sustainable purchasing goals.

Second, analysing sustainability on a product benefit level may enrich the already established view that sustainability is a contextual asset or liability. By distinguishing between sustainableproduct benefits as cues for sustainability and understanding which type of motivation it addresses, a better understanding of why consumers are discounting or appraising their evaluation and which product benefits are the cause.

This, last, also may give additional insights for practitioners to effectively design their products. For example, if the consumer is expected to satisfy an egoistically motivated sustainable purchasing goal, the sustainable product benefit should be in congruence with the product category to avoid triggering adverse effects.

References are available upon request.

THE GIFT RETURN TABOO: GIVERS' AND RECIPIENTS' DIFFERING VIEWS ON GIFT RETURNS

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Keywords: gift-giving, gift returns, self-other decision making, social norms

Description: regifting and returning gifts are both socially taboo behaviors and both involve the recipient not using the gift as the giver intended.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

We study recipients' and givers' preferences regarding whether an unwanted gift should be returned (vs. kept). In other words, whenever a recipient receives a gift from a giver that misses the mark, are they less likely, more likely, or as likely to return the gift as the giver would prefer? Also, we focus on cases in which the giver would be aware that the recipient returned the gift, though we do explore giver awareness as a theoretically relevant moderator. What might inform recipients' and givers' preferences regarding whether an undesired gift should be returned (vs. kept)?

METHOD AND DATA

In study 1, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (Role: *Recipient*

vs. *Giver*). Participants read a vignette in which they (gave) received a K-Cup coffee maker from (to) their friend as a birthday gift. However, the K-Cup coffee maker was not a fit for their taste. But if they (recipient) return the gifted K-cup coffee maker, the friend (they) would find out. Then, participants indicated whether they would (prefer that they) return the gifted K-cup coffee maker. Following a two-item measure of entitlement. Finally, they imagined that they decided to return the gifted K-cup coffee maker and completed a two-item measure of offensiveness Participants in the Giver condition completed the study in the same manner as those in the Recipient condition, except from the giver's perspective. In study 2, we test our prediction that recipients become more open to returning gifts in cases where the giver would not learn that they returned the gift. The procedure was similar to study one except having the condition that giver would never learn about the gift return. Finally, our last study was very similar to Study 1, except the gift was given for the winter holidays and the vignette specified it was "National Gift Returns Day" on the day that the recipient was considering returning the gift.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In our studies we showed that recipients were less likely to return the gift than givers preferred (*Recipient*: 40%; *Giver*: 88%; Wald $\chi^2 = 36.70$, $p < .001$). Also, recipients (vs. givers) responded lower on the Entitlement Index ($M_{Recipient} = 4.91$, $SD_{Recipient} = 1.70$ vs. $M_{Giver} = 6.28$, $SD_{Giver} = 1.20$; F (1, 174) = 37.53, $p < .001$). Further, recipients (vs. givers) responded higher on the Offensiveness Index ($M_{Recipient} = 3.47$, $SD_{Recipient} = 1.97$ vs. $M_{Giver} = 1.81$, $SD_{Giver} = 1.56$; F (1, 174) = 38.27, $p < .001$). Results of study 2 showed that, there were differences across conditions in the percentage of participants preferring for the gift to be returned (Wald $\chi^2 = 20.24$, $p < .001$). When the giver would know if the recipient returned the gift, recipients were less likely to return the gift than givers preferred (*Recipient*: 59%; *Giver*: 94%; Wald $\chi^2 = 18.56$, $p < .001$). More

importantly, recipients' aversion to exchanging gifts attenuated whenever the giver would not know if the recipient returned the gift (*Recipient*: 59%; *Recipient – Unaware Giver*: 78%; Wald $\chi^2 = 2.44$, $p = .016$). Results of study 3 was also consistent with prior studies, in the *Occasion – Control* conditions, recipients were far less likely to return the gift than givers preferred (*Recipient – Control*: 43%; *Giver – Control*: 97%; Wald $\chi^2 = 120.93$, $p < .001$). In the *Occasion – National Gift Returns Day* conditions, recipients were also less likely to return the gift than givers preferred, but the asymmetry was notably smaller than the difference in the *Occasion – Control* conditions (*Recipient – National Gift Returns Day*: 53%; *Giver – National Gift Returns Day*: 94%; Wald $\chi^2 = 63.48$, $p < .001$).

STATEMENT OF KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Across three studies, we show that gift-recipients are less likely to return gifts that miss the mark than gift-givers would prefer. This asymmetry is serially mediated by perceptions of entitlement and offense. Recipients feel more strongly than givers that a giver retains entitlement over a gift after it is given, which leads recipients to overestimate how offended a giver is when they learn that a recipient has returned a gift. Indeed, we demonstrate that recipients become more willing to return gifts in cases where givers will not find out about the return, as offensiveness is not relevant in these situations. Finally, consistent with the idea that returning gifts is socially taboo, we show that the mismatch between recipients and givers in their preferences for returning (vs. keeping) gifts attenuates when a specific occasion—National Gift Returns Day—makes gift returns less taboo.

Proposed Marketing for Higher Education SIG Special Session

2023 AMA Winter Academic Conference

Marketing to Evolving Consumers: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Session Co-Chairs & Discussion Leaders

Siti Aqilah Jahari, Assistant Professor of Marketing, Monash University
Ashley Hass, Assistant Professor of Marketing, University of Portland
Jacqueline Eastman, Professor of Marketing, Florida Gulf Coast University
Rajesh Iyer, Professor of Marketing, Bradley University

Papers / Authors

Paper 1	**Malaysian Chinese Food Practices and Consumption Behavior: A Practice-based Approach using News Articles** Yee Wen Lim, Monash University Juliana Angeline French, Monash University
Paper 2	**Integrating Impulse Buying and the Anchoring Effect Theory on Essential and Non-Essential Products** Yee Qin Lee, Monash University Soo Yeong Ewe, Monash University Ghazala Khan, Monash University
Paper 3	**Consumer Well-Being (2000-2022): A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research** Parth Salunke, MICA Varsha Jain, MICA
Paper 4	**Discovering the Phenomena for Goods and Services Consumption in Luxury Weddings for Short-Lived Moments** Damini Goyal Gupta, MICA Varsha Jain, MICA Russell W. Belk, York University
Paper 5	**Me, Myself, and Influencers: Examining the Impact of Social Media Influencers on Offline and Virtual Self-discrepancies and Consumer Behaviors in Offline and Virtual Spaces** Shehzala, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad Anand Kumar Jaiswal, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad

MALAYSIAN CHINESE FOOD PRACTICES AND CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR: A PRACTICE-BASED APPROACH USING NEWS ARTICLES

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Keywords: Practice Theory, Food culture and consumption, Malaysian Chinese, News articles,Qualitative

Description: Using the lens of practice theory, this paper examines the food practices and consumption behaviour of Malaysian Chinese, particularly how the media portrays the food practices and consumption behaviour of Malaysian Chinese and shapes the meaning of Malaysian Chinese food culture.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Practice theorists view consumption as an outcome of practice. As suggested by Warde (2005), people consume products and services not to accomplish individual purposes but to achieve social practices. In other words, an individual's needs, wants and demands that are backed by his buying power are shaped by his practices.

Following Warde's (2013) theorization that eating is a complex practice, this paper proposes to view food practices as a process that starts from sourcing food ingredients, preparing and cooking food, eating food, buying food and also gifting food.

As markets and consumers are always evolving, this paper contributes to consumer behavior literature and practice by focusing on how food practices and consumption behavior

are formed and how they evolve, as well as how culture is portrayed and shaped by the media. This study moves the field forward by extending practice theory into the consumer behavior realm. Hence, by using news articles as the main research material, this paper adoptspractice theory as the theoretical lens, seeking to answer the research question of "How does the media portray the food consumption behavior of Malaysian Chinese and shape the meanings of Malaysian Chinese food culture?"

METHOD AND DATA

This research was done based on an analysis of Sin Chew Daily, a Malaysian Chinese vernacular newspaper, that lasted 2 years from September 2019 to August 2021. A purposive sampling method was employed while skimming through newspapers, where all articles relatedto food and culture were set aside. Following Dresler and Fuchs's (2021) thematic analysis, this study involves the following analytic process: (a) getting familiarized with the data, (b) identifying broad initial codes, (c) collapsing relevant codes to find sub-themes, (d) grouping sub-themes to generate main themes, (e) reviewing all codes and themes, (f) redefining and renaming themes.

Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously in an Excel sheet. The analysis process started with initial coding (Level 1) of the newspaper article text line by line and incident by incident. Only useful lines or incidents that inform the research question were coded. Then, the initial codes were compared, so that similar codes could be collapsed into categories (Level 2) and themes (Level 3). Meanwhile, memos on the researcher's reflective thoughts about the data were also written. The initial codes, categories and themes were compiled using a hierarchy chart, which both authors discussed until all categories and themes were well defined.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This paper enlightens that Sin Chew Daily newspaper, as a form of media, uses three

strategiesto portray the food practices and consumption behaviour of Malaysian Chinese as well as shape the meaning of Malaysian Chinese food culture. From a practice theory perspective, these strategies were conducted by utilizing the three components of practice: objects, doings and meanings.

Firstly, Sin Chew Daily exemplifies the appreciation for Malaysian Chinese food culture and the persistence of practice. This strategy embodies the culture as significant and important for the Malaysian Chinese community by linking objects, doings, and meanings together.

Secondly, Sin Chew Daily highlights the challenges faced by Malaysian Chinese foodculture and the probable disappearance of practice. This strategy addresses the struggles and issues of a culture that fears a loss of tradition, by destabilizing the linkages between objects, doings and meaning.

Thirdly, Sin Chew Daily envisions the future of Malaysian Chinese food culture and the evolution of practice. This strategy creates hope for continuity of culture embracing new norms, that involves innovation and realignment of objects, doings and meanings.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

In light of markets and consumers that are constantly evolving, this paper contributes to consumer behavior literature and practice by focusing on how food practices and consumption behavior are formed and how they evolve. This study also moves the field forward by extending practice theory into the consumer behavior realm. Looking from the perspective ofmeaning transfer in consumer behavior, consumer goods have the significance of carrying and communicating cultural meanings. McCracken (1986) proposed that the media is the gatekeeper of meaning transfer. However, media actually does not just communicate meaningbut also shapes consumer perception by selecting the information to

be included in the news, practicing valuation to present a topic as (in)congruent with cultural norms and lastly realizingthe legitimacy of an entity by virtue of representing it (Humphreys, 2010). The media has the power to shape the meaning of culture. This paper thus contributes to the literature by showinghow Malaysian Chinese culture is portrayed and shaped by the media.

References are available upon request.

INTEGRATING IMPULSE BUYING AND THE ANCHORING EFFECT THEORY ON ESSENTIAL AND NON-ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS

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Keywords: anchoring effect, impulse buying, price estimations, willingness to pay, purchaseintentions

Description: This paper investigates the impact of integrating the anchoring effect in impulsebuying condition on consumer purchasing behavior (i.e., price estimation, willingness to payand purchase intentions), as well as the moderating effect of product familiarity on such relationships.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Consumer impulse buying behavior has gained high attention among researchers. The currentliterature shows that marketers usually use the difference in product price to induce consumers'buying intention, for instance, showing the original price to be much higher than the discountedprice to induce purchase intention. As consumers are easily influenced by the first piece of information they view, the tactics to show a huge discount in price will cause a bias in decisiontowards the initially presented information (i.e. the anchoring effect). Although the existing literature has documented the effect of anchoring on price estimation, little research has been done to investigate its impact on consumer behavior, especially the condition where

consumers are informed about other consumers' impulse buying behavior. This topic is essential to the knowledge relating to consumer sustainable consumption, as overspending behavior should be minimized to reduce general waste among the community. This study intends to address two research questions: (1) does the anchoring effect (in impulse buying) affect consumer purchasing behaviour? (2) how does the extent of product familiarity moderate the effect of anchoring on consumer behavior.

METHOD AND DATA

An experiment was conducted to address the research questions for this study. A total of 122 participants were recruited through snowball sampling and online recruitment. Participants ages ranged from 20 to 28. Majority (59.8%) of the participants are females, 61.5% are full- time working adults. A 2 (high anchor vs. low anchor) x 2 (high product familiarity vs. low product familiarity) between-subject design was employed. The experimental scenario shown to participants was adopted from Sultan et al. (2011) with modifications. During the experiment, participants were shown presentation slides about the predetermined scenario, which directed participants to visualize themselves in an impulse-buying scenario. Participantsthen answered a questionnaire based on their analyses of the two types of products presented. The dependent variables were measured with established measurement scales. A repeated- measures analysis of variance (RM-ANOVA) was employed to analyze the dependent variables. ANOVA was used to test the interaction term of product familiarity. Manipulation checks showed that the manipulation was successful. Results show that when in high condition (high anchor points), consumers tend to have higher price estimation and willingness to pay for both essential and non-essential products. Consumers have a lower intention to purchase the products when exposed to higher anchor conditions. However, the effect of anchoring on purchase intentions is moderated by the level of product familiarity for non-essential products.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Results indicate a positive direct relationship between the anchoring effect (in impulse buying) on price estimation, and willingness to pay and a negative direct relationship with purchase intentions. Consumers generally expect a higher price (i.e. price estimations, willingness to pay) when they are exposed to a higher anchor condition than when exposed to a lower anchor condition. Relatively, consumers have a lower intention to purchase the products when it is ofa higher price range. This highlights that consumers often make decisions with adherence to the anchoring effect, regardless of the type of products. Besides, consumers' level of product familiarity was identified to moderate the relationship between anchoring (in impulse buying) on purchase intentions for non-essential products. Consumers in the low anchor condition whohave higher familiarity with the products show a lower purchase intention than those with a lower familiarity. This indicates that consumers are bound by their product familiarity level todecide on purchase intentions.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

A major theoretical contribution of this study is the integration of the anchoring effect in impulse buying and its effects on consumer decision-making. The current study provides evidence of the anchoring effect in impulse buying on consumers' price estimations, willingness to pay and purchase intentions in the context of essential and non-essential products. These findings enhance the theoretical understanding of the conditions under which consumers would translate information received into actual purchasing decisions. This research further contributes by showing that the anchoring effect (in impulse buying) affects consumer decisions regardless of the differentiation in product categories. Remarkably, the discovery of the effect of anchoring on purchase intentions in the context of essential products is new to marketing literature. The third contribution revolves around the moderating effect of product familiarity on purchase intentions for non-essential products. The findings will give consumers

attention to their readiness to accept the information presented in the market. Marketers and retailers can utilize this concept and apply appropriate marketing strategies with a balance of factual elements with ethnicity to encourage sales. The realization of these newly developed aspects would provide insights into the integration of anchoring and impulse buying on consumer decisions and yield practical implications for consumers, marketers, and retailers inassessing their future resource allocations.

References are available upon request.

CONSUMER WELL-BEING (2000-2022): A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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Keywords: Wellbeing, Consumer, Bibliographic coupling, Consumer well-being, Systematic literature review

Description: The paper analyses the intellectual structure of consumer well-being research byidentifying five themes, prominent theoretical underpinnings and provides a future research agenda.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

1) What is the intellectual structure of consumer well-being literature?
2) What are the most used theoretical lenses in consumer well-being research?
3) What potentially promising future research avenues emerge from bibliographic coupling analysis and possible theoretical lenses for future studies?

METHOD AND DATA

This systematic review follows the stringent protocols provided by scholars to assess the literature. A four-step process was followed that included keywords & search databases, scholarly filtration, manual screening & coding, and bibliometric analysis. The search string

includes "CONSUMER*" AND ("WELLBEING" OR "WELL-BEING" OR "WELL BEING") and was added to the scholarly database. Further, journal articles were reviewed from business, management, hospitality, leisure, and tourism. A total of 240 articles were selected for final analysis. The analysis was done with data-driven quantitative software biblioshny (R-Programming based software) and VOS Viewer.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study consolidates the research articles on consumer well-being comprehensively. It highlights the descriptive performance, such as year-wise publication trends, journal sources, top-cited articles, and keyword clouds through quantitative examination that reveals the increasing trend and importance of consumer well-being research. The intellectual structure was analyzed through bibliographic coupling, and five thematic clusters that uncover the present research field are (1) experiential, multicultural, and conation, (2) services and digital, (3) ecology and hospitality, (4) sustainability and consumption, and (5) social and ethical.

Further, the dominant theories in the literature were identified, such as self-determination theory, affective restoration theory, social capital theory, need hierarchy theory, bottom-up spillover effect theory, and social identity theory. Thus, this review demonstrates the research perspective on consumer well-being to academicians, scholars, and practitioners by uncovering the present research field and outlining future research directions to advance the literature.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

This review makes several key contributions with an integrated view of streams such as business, management, hospitality, leisure, and tourism. First, descriptive performance analysis was conducted with the intellectual structure of consumer well-being research and describes five key themes in the present literature. Second, it discussed the most dominant theoretical lenses adopted by scholars and demonstrated that new theories could be developed with

existing theories in the parlance of consumer well-being. Third, it outlines future research directions to advance research studies among the five cluster themes and theoretical underpinnings. Fourth, it defines consumer well-being in business and management after reviewing all the studies and foundational conceptual reviews related to well-being, which academicians and practitioners can leverage to enhance consumer well-being. Fifth, this review enunciates the increasing importance of consumer well-being research, primarily subjective well-being, that can help managers to identify several touchpoints to enhance consumer well-being.

DISCOVERING THE PHENOMENA FOR GOODS AND SERVICES CONSUMPTION IN LUXURY WEDDINGS FOR SHORT-LIVED MOMENTS

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Keywords: Luxury wedding, Luxury consumption, Consumer Experience, Weddings, Luxury, Services, Meaning

Description: The paper explores the phenomenon of luxury consumption during weddings, particularly in India.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

One of the most ubiquitous institutions of collective societies, such as India, is weddings (Chadda & Deb, 2013). Weddings are mechanisms of stability, familial lineage, and sometimes compensation systems (Bhardwaj et al., 2022). Weddings involve the bride's and groom's communities and the primary culture in which the wedding is consummated (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2002).

For this reason, weddings offer tangible connections between those within the community and those outside. Also, long-lasting transformations in those immediately participating in the rituals (Otnes & Pleck, 2003) are seen. This connection has been historically strengthened based on the sameness of social status, which is premised on the future couple's

caste, class, religion, and education. These aspects offer the social and economic competency reflected by the goods exchanged and services rendered. Thus, products and services are essential in each stage of the wedding process. Hence, we pose the following research questions that would allow illumination of the phenomenon of luxury consumption during weddings using India as the bed of study.

RQ1: How is meaning-making constructed during a wedding?

RQ2: How is the phenomenon of luxury goods and services consumed during luxury weddings for short-lived moments?

RQ3: What are the manifestations of such luxury consumption during weddings?

METHOD AND DATA

Our study aimed to explore the phenomenon of luxury consumption at weddings. Given the research objectives, we adopted an inductive approach. We conducted a multi-cited ethnography with in-depth interviews with primary participants encompassing the bride, the groom, the wedding planners, and direct and distant family members. The multi-cited ethnography conducted on ten Indian Luxury Weddings helped researchers understand and broaden the experiences of attendees of a wedding to gain insights. Similarly, semi-structured in-depth interviews with twenty participants comprising of the wedding planners (3), the brides (5), the grooms (5), and close and extended family members (7) (such as fathers, mothers, siblings, and cousins) helped researchers understand participants' lived experiences (Silverman, 2013). We also used the Straussian grounded theory approach, allowing us to analyze social processes by constantly comparing data and Field's procedures (Kenny & Fourie, 2015). Insights of the multi-cited ethnography and interviews were integrated, and three consecutive stages were used to analyze the data: initial design, in-course extension, and full-frame development (Fetters et al., 2013). In the course of this, the authors analyzed individual interview transcripts using open coding and axial coding. In the next section, we present the

findings in detail.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study focused on understanding the phenomenon of luxury consumption during weddings for short-lived moments. Extensive analysis from the multi-cited ethnography and in-depth qualitative interview data resulted in a better understanding of the phenomenon of luxury consumption during weddings in India. A central theme emerged from the analysis: the phenomenon of consumption of luxury goods and services at weddings for short-lived moments. This insight contained three facets: ritualistic consumption, status-building consumption, and short-lived, momentary consumption. The first facet involved ritualistic consumption that is connected to the luxury consumption happening during the wedding as a part of religious and festive rituals such as ring exchange, kanyadaan, baraat (procession), bidaai, and so on. The second facet was status-building consumption that aimed to reflect the "status" or "image" of the family/individual involved in the wedding. The third facet of luxury consumption during weddings was short-lived, momentary consumption (Jain et al., 2015). It means that luxury products and services, incredibly personalized gifts (well-framed pictures from selfie points), personalized services (providing a personal concierge), personalized food and beverages (modifying the dishes as per individual tastes and preferences), new technologies, and so on, are consumed to provide royalty and short-lived sensory experiences to people.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Theoretical Contributions

There are two significant contributions from the present study. First, we extend the literature on the wedding as a consumption phenomenon. Second, we find royalty to be THE keyword for luxury consumption in weddings. Third, the findings also emphasize the influence of short-lived sentiments on luxury products and services consumption. This consumption is

usually personalized to provide memorable experiences to the consumer. Hence, making sentiments more important than emotions. In this study, feelings are momentary and influenced by luxury consumption during weddings.

Managerial Implications

The first implication for the luxury good or service provider is that the manager must be equipped to deal with the symbolic values (self-expressive and social values) of luxury products and services (Gupta et al., 2022; Jung Choo et al., 2012), which should be reflected throughout their delivery. Second, our findings indicate that luxury weddings revolve around creating personalized experiences for attendees. These personalized experiences provide sensory experiences to consumers. Therefore, luxury brand managers should also create sensory experiences by personalizing their services to evoke positive feelings and provide immediate and sharable pleasures to consumers, such as quick gratification while producing luxury goods or delivering luxury services.

References are available upon request.

ME, MYSELF, AND INFLUENCERS: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON OFFLINE AND VIRTUAL SELF-DISCREPANCIES AND CONSUMER BEHAVIORS IN OFFLINE AND VIRTUAL SPACES

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Keywords: Social-media influencers, virtual self, self-discrepancies

Description: Across two lab experiments, we provide empirical evidence for how individuals reconcile self-discrepancies by actively seeking more information about influencers' consumed brands and products to attain that ideal, which in turn shapes consumption behavior towards endorsed brands more effectively than traditional advertising.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

Social media platforms can act as salient spaces for engaging in social comparisons with other social media users, and there is a need for research that examines, if and what could bethe potential differences between an individual's understanding of his/her actual and ideal self in a traditional sense, as compared to a virtual sense. In the present paper, we examine how traditional self-discrepancies as well as virtual self-discrepancies impact consumer behavior, and the differences between these behaviors across virtual and offline spaces.

METHOD AND DATA

We conducted a 2-level between-subjects experiment (brand endorsement post versus influencer endorsement post) with 80 female participants in the age group 19-22 for our first experiment. For our second experiment, we conducted a 2-level between-subjects experiment (exposure to social media influencer profile versus exposure to non-influencer social media user profile) with 81 female participants in the age group 19-22. The respondents were students enrolled in the undergraduate program at an Indian university.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Overall, we find that self-discrepancy increases upon exposure to social media influencers, as does the desire to learn more about and the intent to purchase the products or brands recommended by the influencer. The fact that such an effect prevails even when the consumer has no knowledge about the brand and its products or the influencer herself, and the product belongs to a very high involvement category is compelling evidence for the effectiveness and value of influencer marketing. This is especially relevant because most studies treat self-discrepancy as a variable that interacts with exposure to influencer marketing and its impact on consumer behavior as a moderating force, whereas the fact that such exposure itself can lead to self-discrepancies highlights that not only does exposure affect the individual's behavior, but it also affects the individual himself/herself. In addition, given that increasingly many, if not all social interactions transpire over social media platforms, we contribute to theory and practice by examining the impact of exposure to influencer content on an individual's virtual self-discrepancy, and their behaviors and intentions for offline and virtual self-presentation. Notably, we find that the tendency to engage in consumption behaviors to support that virtual and actual self-presentation in line with the recommendations of other social media users is higher when the comparison is made with influencers than regular social media users, and this is shaped by the high self-discrepancies arising out of exposure to social media influencers

(versus regular users). We also find that while there are no significant differences between the purchase intent for the socially acceptable outfit for virtual or offline self-presentation, there isa very large and significant difference for the purchase intent for the less acceptable outfit between virtual and offline self-presentation and identify boundary conditions for the effectiveness and influence of social media influencers.

References are available upon request.

ME, MYSELF, AND INFLUENCERS: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON OFFLINE AND VIRTUAL SELF-DISCREPANCIES AND CONSUMER BEHAVIORS IN OFFLINE AND VIRTUAL SPACES

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Keywords: Social-media influencers, virtual self, self-discrepancies

Across two lab experiments, we provide empirical evidence for how individuals reconcile self-discrepancies by actively seeking more information about influencers' consumed brands and products to attain that ideal, which in turn shapes consumption behavior towards endorsed brands more effectively than traditional advertising.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question

Social media platforms can act as salient spaces for engaging in social comparisons with other social media users, and there is a need for research that examines, if and what could be the potential differences between an individual's understanding of his/her actual and ideal self in a traditional sense, as compared to a virtual sense. In the present paper, we examine how traditional self-discrepancies as well as virtual self-discrepancies impact consumer behavior, and the differences between these behaviors across virtual and offline spaces.

Method and Data

We conducted a 2-level between-subjects experiment (brand endorsement post versus influencer endorsement post) with 80 female participants in the age group 19-22 for our first experiment. For our second experiment, we conducted a 2-level between-subjects experiment (exposure to social media influencer profile versus exposure to non-influencer social media user profile) with 81 female participants in the age group 19-22. The respondents were students enrolled in the undergraduate program at an Indian university.

Summary of Findings and Key Contributions

Overall, we find that self-discrepancy increases upon exposure to social media influencers, as does the desire to learn more about and the intent to purchase the products or brands recommended by the influencer. The fact that such an effect prevails even when the consumer has no knowledge about the brand and its products or the influencer herself, and the product

belongs to a very high involvement category is compelling evidence for the effectiveness and value of influencer marketing. This is especially relevant because most studies treat self-discrepancy as a variable that interacts with exposure to influencer marketing and its impact on consumer behavior as a moderating force, whereas the fact that such exposure itself can lead to self-discrepancies highlights that not only does exposure affect the individual's behavior, but it also affects the individual himself/herself. In addition, given that increasingly many, if not all social interactions transpire over social media platforms, we contribute to theory and practice by examining the impact of exposure to influencer content on an individual's virtual self-discrepancy, and their behaviors and intentions for offline and virtual self-presentation. Notably, we find that the tendency to engage in consumption behaviors to support that virtual and actual self-presentation in line with the recommendations of other social media users is higher when the comparison is made with influencers than regular social media users, and this is shaped by the high self-discrepancies arising out of exposure to social media influencers (versus regular users). We also find that while there are no significant differences between the purchase intent for the socially acceptable outfit for virtual or offline self-presentation, there is a very large and significant difference for the purchase intent for the less acceptable outfit between virtual and offline self-presentation and identify boundary conditions for the effectiveness and influence of social media influencers.

SHOPPING ADDICTION AND PRODUCT RETURNS: SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

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Keywords: Serial returners; shopping addiction; overconsumption; compulsive buying behavior; product returns.

Description: This paper examines the relationship between shopping addiction and product return behavior, developing new scales that are used to build and test a model of this relationship using survey data.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT:

Research Question: Clearly shopping addiction causes great harm to consumers suffering its effects, while the effects on firms are less established. In order to more fully understand the effects on all stakeholders and advance the conversation towards potential interventions, this paper focuses on the relationship between shopping addiction and consumer product return behavior. While this is the primary relationship that this study is exploring, the model that we develop also includes the constructs of shopping enjoyment, consumer spending self-control, and shopping mission. These are important both to the relationship between shopping addiction and product return behavior, and provide valuable context in the ongoing effort to better understand the entire phenomenon of shopping addiction.

Method and Data: We went through four rounds of scale development, data collection, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and scale revision to develop the scales for the new constructs of shopping mission and serial return behavior. For the other three constructs of interest, existing scales were used. After pre-testing and refining, data for our model was collected through the Amazon M-Turk platform with a final valid sample size of approximately 2,500 responses. After collecting the data, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the five constructs, resulting in a very strong model fit. Finally, a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach was used to test the relationships.

Summary of Findings: For our primary relationship of interest, we did find a positive association between shopping addiction and serial return behavior. We also found that there is a negative association between compulsive buying behavior and consumer spending self-control. In contrast, there is a positive association between compulsive buying behavior and consumer shopping enjoyment and there is a positive association between compulsive buying behavior and shopping mission. Additionally, we found a positive association between shopping enjoyment and shopping mission. We did not find any relationships between consumer spending self-control and serial return behavior or between shopping mission and serial return behavior.

Key Contributions: There are two major areas of contribution that this paper offers. First, it extends the understanding of compulsive buying behavior. Compulsive buying behavior is related to product return behavior, which is an important finding as it illustrates the value that firms can gain by helping consumers combat shopping addiction and offers a potential new warning sign to both individuals and firms when consumers may be suffering from shopping addiction. It also contributes to the understanding of compulsive buying behavior by tracking one of the eventual destinations of unnecessary purchases. Secondly, this study contributes to

marketing research through the development of multiple new consumer behavior scales. Over 2,500 surveys were completed in the data collection portion of this project, through which scales relating to shopping mission, serial return behavior, consumer perceptions of return policies, and consumer shopping outcomes were developed and validated.

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